

Kress, M., & Horn-Miller, K. (Eds.). (2023). *Land as relation: Teaching and learning through place, people and practices.* Canadian Scholars. 406 pages. ISBN: 978-1-77338-339-2

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Scholars Margaret Kress and Kahente Horn-Miller weave a rich and compelling narrative in their edited book, *Land as Relation: Teaching and Learning through Place, People, and Practices*. They set out the book's premise early in its introduction, writing that "[t]his time of social unrest, pandemics, climate change, and environmental decay and destruction, largely instigated by the single-handed actions of humankind" necessitated an "imperative to change the narrative, the directive, and the actions of all humans" (Kress & Horn-Miller, 2023, p. xiii). They then unpack their vision of this work in an onto-epistemology of land as relation across 25 chapters. To organize these chapters, the editors organized the book thematically. The first nine chapters explore the theme, *Embodying Place*; another nine chapters, *Pedagogies of Land*; and the last theme, *Spirit of the Land: Learning with our Relations*, is engaged through seven chapters.

The first part of the book, *Embodying Place*, emphasizes connectedness and relationships, with humans, non-humans, and other-than-humans, all grounded in relations with (the) land itself. Herein, the authors situate place and relations in, with, and through place as an onto-epistemology, with the chapters drawing on storytelling, conversations, and other narrative and descriptive accounts proffered as land-based learning. Part 1, therefore, sets up the book's overarching theme of land-based learning as onto-epistemology very well, with each author drawing on and from a place of knowing. Kahente Horn-Miller (Kaniienkehaka) in Chapter 1 tells and performs the Sky Woman story, illuminating storytelling and performing as practices in and of land-based learning. In Chapter 2, Blackfoot architect and Knowledge Keeper Douglas Cardinal explores the rich ties between Indigenous sustainability and relationships with Elders, spiritual leaders, and (the) land. In Chapter 3, Laara Fitznor, sister Elsie Fitzner, and niece Wanda Bateman converse about what it means to live with the waters and land in and of their Cree territory. And, in Chapter 4, Juan Carlos Palomino Berndt (Kukama Amazon) and Barbara Robinson (Saskatchewan settler) explore North-South perspectives and experiences relative to geographies, languages, and traditions. Indeed, the theme of land as onto-epistemology continues in chapters five through nine. Chapter 5 is an exploration of traditional beliefs, myths, and festivals of the (non-Indo-European) Basque. Chapter 6, an Inuit treatise of the *Lands of the Caribou Peoples* as a place of knowing. Chapter 7, an exploration of the political practices of Indigenous women and femme individuals in defending land, wind, and water among the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico. Chapter 8, a Métis woman's perspective of how living with the land necessitates being in community with others. And Chapter 9, an Incan history of spiritual eco-culture and cosmology through Quechua lands. Overall, all nine chapters in this first part of the book weave a rich narrative of relatedness and interdependence across and through eco-cultures, ceremonies, and geographies.

With the theme of land-based learning as onto-epistemology firmly etched in the first part, the second part of the book unpacks teaching in, with, and through (the) land and is therefore aptly titled, *Pedagogies of Land*. The authors in this section continue to illuminate our learning through the eyes and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, in offering us a rich and reverent view of how the land has been

preserved and respected over time, and the lessons we can learn with and through (our relations and relationship with) the land. Themes of nurture, sustenance, connectedness, sustainability, and reciprocity abound in part two of the book. Chapters explore classroom teachings through land-centered education and course content. For instance, Chapter 10 explores experiential learning through interfacing with the land, drawing on the concept of mapping strategies and databases to link students to the land; Chapter 16 centers land-based teachings in emphasizing a strength-based approach to teaching Mathematics; and Chapter 17 highlights the land as a pedagogical center in bridging the ontological divide between traditional and scientific ecological knowledge. Altogether, the nine chapters in part two of the book make connections between the land, waters, and skies, and readers are introduced to the concept of Indigenous pedagogies for survival *and* as a way of life. This second part of the book, therefore, makes a concerted effort to demonstrate the interconnectedness of our relationships with and to the land and each other and is a compelling call to situate our cultural sustenance and sustainability in this understanding.

The third part of the book, *Spirit of the Land: Learning with our Relations*, anchors the book very well. The theme of land-based learning as onto-epistemology continues to reverberate throughout the chapters. Authors are respectful to and honour Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and other spiritual leaders in nurturing learning about and respect for the sacredness of the land and for storytelling as an intergenerational pedagogy. For instance, in Chapter 19, Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiim, a member of the Stó:lō Nation, reflects on her experiences with Indigenous Elders in her journey in learning and researching about traditional and lived stories to create an Indigenous storywork framework. And in Chapter 23, four scholars – three of them Indigenous (one a Knowledge Keeper) and a white settler – examine their relationship with the land and water to show how land-centered teaching and learning is central to Indigenousization and decolonization. Just as in the previous parts of the book, here too, we see land and life-forms, including human and non-human, positioned as essential to identity and way of knowing, being, and doing. Chapter 19, for example, explores the notion of water as a spirit, and Chapter 24, the notion of rocks as ancient ancestors and plants as medicine to help situate how Indigenous ancestors connect and reach out to us. The overarching notion of being in community with the land is therefore pushed in this last section, serving as an effective anchor to the book.

Overall, we found the book descriptive and compelling. Humans' individual and collective roles in safeguarding what is currently an uncertain future were emphasized. The book's main premise was well woven throughout but keenly reflected in Chapter 3, when the chapter authors write:

When we are on the land, we need to show respect: respecting the land means to give back what you take and not to take more than what is needed. This is what my grandparents and mom taught me; we honour what they did to give our generation and the next one, good teachings and habits. (Fitznor et al., 2023, p. 52)

In this way, not only was the role of Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders in ensuring that the land is preserved for future generations highlighted throughout the book, but readers were pointed to Indigenous methods of conservation of the earth's resources as a way to not only help in securing the sustainability of the land but also our own physical and spiritual sustenance in and through it. The point was repeatedly made across chapters that studying and being in relation with the land is the foundation of knowledge and key to physical and spiritual wellbeing. Respect, reverence, reciprocity, and community were therefore prevalent themes across the book's chapters. Further, the discussion questions posed at the end of each chapter anchored and extended learning, pushing readers' thinking and understanding relative to land-based learning as onto-epistemology. The book, therefore, appeals to a broad audience, Indigenous and settler, in setting us on a path of reflection towards ending the degradation of the earth and encouraging us to look more critically at the land and our relations in and with it and with all who and which are a part of it. We therefore highly recommend this book to readers of the Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy.

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Dr. Donna H. Swapp is an Associate Professor, Educational Leadership, at the Faculty of Education, University of Regina. Her research interests and teaching are in the areas of school leadership, including the work and wellbeing of school leaders, critical education policy analysis, social justice leadership, and decolonizing educational leadership. Donna draws on postcolonial, decolonial, and other critical frame-

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