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Wendy Brady is Wiradjuri and grew up in Sydney. She is currently the Academic Coordinator, in the Koori Centre at the University of Sydney. Dr. Wendy Brady's areas of research interest are colonisation and the formation of identity, Indigenous models of research practice, and Indigenous histories. Her research has taken her to Taiwan at the invitation of the Taiwan National University to join a group of international scholars to develop educational models for teaching Formosan children, the Indigenous people of Taiwan. She also visited Ben Gurion University in Israel as a participant in the Bedouin Studies program. Wendy has published extensively in the areas of post-colonial studies, identity, indigenous knowledge and indigenous research ethics.

The Conflict of Knowing in the Academy

The majority of universities in Australia contain within them a majority of non-Indigenous academics who must strive to prove their expertise in a given discipline. They are required to prove new fields of research and the ability to acquire ever increasing levels of knowledge in their area. The competitive nature of that acquisition means that there are constant disputes, critiques and desires to discover, own and produce new knowledge. When a field or discipline area is challenged regarding its rights over that knowledge or the authenticity of the knowledge it can result in conflict that can turn into a war of words and active resistance to those challenges. Two disciplines that have had to deal with a 'conflict of knowing' in Australia are history and anthropology. There are others, but these have been two very public and often bitter disputes over who has ownership of the knowledge, as well as the accuracy of that knowledge.

The most publicised conflict was between non-Indigenous academics and historians over genocide of Indigenous populations in Australia. The battle often focused on the accuracy of numbers, where it occurred, how often and to whom. Recently one academic has reportedly challenged the concept of terra nullius and so the conflict continues. What remains obvious by its absence is the Indigenous perspective or authority in these confrontations. The right to even dispute Indigenous knowledge is being retained by non-Indigenous academics.

As an Indigenous academic that conflict of knowing is reproducing, yet again, the colonialist practice of owning the body, mind and knowledge of Indigenous peoples. The conflict is between members of the dominant culture, with the occasional Indigenous voice 'allowed' into the dispute. We have made significant changes in the retention and control of the distribution of Indigenous knowledge, but the authenticity and acceptance of that knowledge is still at a distance in what is seen as the main or central body of knowledge of the academy.

The experience of living as an Indigenous person in a colonised society is restructured into courses on 'whiteness', or the experience of invasion and the ongoing act of colonisation is transformed into programs of historical study that aim to prove the myth of a glorious past, and ultimately that non-Indigenous knowledge is a superior form of knowing to Indigenous knowledge.

My intention in this paper is to explore the strategies for subverting these 'conflicts of knowing' and methods for inserting Indigenous ways of knowing into the academy.