



Reflections from the Organising Committee on the 2021 Emerging Scholars Symposium

Beyond Distances and Intimacies,

Dear community,

Earlier this month we gathered virtually for our 8th Emerging Scholars Symposium on Oral History, Digital Storytelling, and Creative Practices. With the chosen title of *Distances and Intimacies*, we invited students and emergent scholars to map and explore the production of intimacy and distance in their research, and to engage with these two concepts from a range of different disciplinary, theoretical, methodological, and creative perspectives.

As in every year, the symposium was a richly interdisciplinary offering. Everyone's thoughtful contributions – whether through presenting, moderating, questioning, commenting, and active listening – resulted in an insightful, generous, and indeed complex event that got us thinking about how to address instances of cultural appropriation, and how this impacts the many people who feel the brunt of past and present-day oppression.

Conversations about cultural appropriation are challenging and can evoke strong emotions and reactions, but they are necessary to make room for growth and knowledge. As the organising committee, we are committed to fostering spaces that are respectful and accessible for historically marginalised communities. We acknowledge that systemic racism exists within academia. As such, the question of cultural appropriation goes much further than this particular incident, to how structural inequalities and politics of race and privilege affect our communities. At COHDS, we have always tried to address this systemic violence and structural imbalance through the practice of oral history, but we continue to learn, listen, and strive to do better.

As we continuously reflect on the repair work that needs to be done within our own field, we encourage you to continue to think through considerations of cultural appropriation carefully. Education has been (and continues to be) used as a tool for oppression. However, education has also played an essential role in confronting and dismantling systems of oppression. We hope that the participants carry these conversations with them and continue to reflect on how to engage with other communities in ways that are not harmful or exploitive.

If you wish to learn more about shared authority, cultural appropriation, or how to engage respectfully with Indigenous communities in your research, check out the ethics page on our website and the resources below!

Indigenous educational resources for faculty and students <https://www.concordia.ca/library/guides/indigenous-fac-res.html>

Resources for decolonizing & indigenizing the curriculum
<https://www.concordia.ca/ctl/decolonization/resources.html>

First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's research protocol
[https://arcticnet.ulaval.ca/docs/First Nations in Quebec and Labrador Research Protocol EN.pdf](https://arcticnet.ulaval.ca/docs/First_Nations_in_Quebec_and_Labrador_Research_Protocol_EN.pdf)

Guidelines for Research with Aboriginal Women
<https://www.mikana.ca/en/resources/>

Indigenous Ally Toolkit
http://reseauumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf

Cultural Appreciation or Cultural Appropriation?

<https://www.aihfs.org/pdf/8-1-16%20Cultural%20Appropriation.pdf>

Panel on Cultural appropriation and Systemic racism

<https://coco-net.org/cultural-appropriation-panel/>

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Organising Committee, 8th Emerging Scholars Symposium on Oral History, Digital Storytelling, and Creative Practice