

*Editorial Note*

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The following monographic study evolved from a paper given at the *Watershed* Cultural Studies Congress held at the University of Barcelona, Spain, 13-17 January in 2014. There, in a panel on the changing character of higher education, David Hoffman addressed the issue of abandonment amongst immigrant scholars attempting to get a foothold in Finnish academia. While Finland is, in theory, a top performer in the education sector and the envy of many a country for its high standard of welfare, democracy, freedom and equality, Hoffman argued that immigrant mobility within Finnish academia actually pointed into an opposing direction, refuting the reputation of equal opportunity that the country had forged for itself over a long period of time. Hoffman's team's research laid bare an emergent hierarchisation and stratification in Finnish academia identifiable as 'methodological nationalism', which responds to the transnational character of capitalism and aims to contain the forces of globalisation within Finnish academia inasmuch that access to, and mobility of immigrant scholars within the tertiary educational system are complicated precisely on the assumption that there is no competitive difference between national and foreign candidates for posts. In other words, there is a wishful thinking that in its assumption of equality and equity in fact obscures the very inequality that and informs permeates the career opportunities generated by the system.

Hoffman, of North-American origins, forms part of the Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER) as a senior researcher and works together with a group of immigrant scholars in the research group *Education and Social Change*, whose members had all signed the text that was submitted to the editors of the *Coolabah* post-conference issue "After the Water Has Been Shed" in response to a call for papers. Upon reading the essay, it became immediately clear that the topic addressed needed more space and attention than a mere article in a journal volume. The proposed essay was already 15,000 words long, and still felt it could do with more detail, development and clarification. The editors therefore contacted Hoffman and his team and proposed the possibility of publishing a monographic issue of *Coolabah*, entirely dedicated to their study. It would offer a springboard for a novel approach

to research in the tertiary educational sector by introducing auto-ethnography as the prevalent critical approach to tackle the problematics of researching a framework of which the researchers themselves form part, or from within. It would also offer a group of well-informed young-career academics an opportunity to voice a set of controversial ideas in a larger, international arena and so find transcultural and transnational support for their analysis. In these times of increasingly precarious academic work, which affects our younger generations of scholars, one cannot offer less.

Cornelis Martin Renes, co-editor  
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