

LANDBODY



Landbody: Indigeneity's Radical Commitments

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Center for 21st Century Studies | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Panel Abstracts



Breakout Session 1

Bodies

Jinah Kim

(Communication Studies / CSU Northridge)

“Unburied Dead and Watery Graves in the Asian Pacific Islands”

In this presentation I draw on Pacific Islander theories and histories of decolonization against American military imperialism and Asian settler colonialism to address 21st-century narratives and visual cultural artifacts across the Pacific Arena. This visual culture centers dead bodies that are precariously buried, were refused a burial, or refuse to remain dead. The gaze on these ‘unruly dead’ enables a disinterment of silenced and erased histories of violence across the transpacific and within hemispheric circuits of European and Asian settler colonialisms that exist in tension with U.S. military, political and economic dominance. In the refusal to stay buried, these islander bodies refuse to represent reconciliation and coherence, forcing into the present American military and settler colonial violences that aim at eradication to the point of invisibility. Pacific Islander conceptions of land have always existed in relation to the Oceanic. The notions of landbody that I examine thus support the unburied in exerting pressures for justice beyond normatively imagined relationships between human and inhuman, the living, the dead and the inanimate.

Aimee Carrillo Rowe

(Communication Studies / CSU Northridge)

“‘Ofrendas of the Flesh’: Xicana Art and the Cultural Production of an Indigenist Landbody”

This paper analyzes Xicana artists’ use of the female body to symbolize Earth in ways that both challenge and participate in the ongoing settlement of land. I analyze interviews with artists and the visual art they create to explore how the trope of the female body as earth stages the land as sacred and personifies the land as Earth Mother. The re/iteration of these converging images constructs an indigenist (Contreras 2008) landbody that functions in complex and contradictory ways. Xicana artists leverage the female landbody to politicize human connections to the non-human world as well as spatial configurations of power and settler colonial relationships to land, migration, militarism, and landedness. Yet even as these cultural productions might align with Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty, Xicana art also conjures the female landbody as a mythic pre-conquest past that participates in the mythification of Indianness and the erasure of contemporary Indigenous struggles. These tensions signal the various ways that Xicana and Indigenous feminist struggles might, in many ways, be incommensurate—at times converging and in other ways deviating from one another. My paper explores resulting questions of land that are critical to forging contingent Xicana-Indigenous collaborations, including questions about

shared and distinct space, histories, and relationships to Anglo American settler colonialism and imperialism.

Franklin K. R. Kline

(English / UW-Milwaukee)

“American Cherokee” (a performance piece)

A reading of poems that explore racial identity and the messy existential business that comes with having a Cherokee Nation ID, a Michigan driver’s license, and a rented apartment. These poems use humor and colloquial American speech to explore, subvert, and hopefully destroy the weird and arbitrary boundaries set upon the bodies of Native folks via the weird and arbitrary boundaries set upon the arbitrary landmass called the United States of America. They seek to investigate and denigrate classical Native stereotypes like alcoholism, simplicity, love of basketball, and a hardwired mystical connection to the capital-e Earth. Targeting the various horrible systemic –isms that plague American life in 2016, these poems ultimately seek, especially in the context of this interdisciplinary conference, to reify and toy around with Joy Harjo’s sentiment that “the quantum physicists have it right; they are beginning to think like Indians.”

Confronting Being

Noura Elwazani

(Women’s Studies / Texas Woman’s University)

“Neo-Cartesianism, Ontological Ignorance, and (Un)Correlated Knowing and Being: An Anzaldúan Perspective on Western Speculative Ontologies”

The paper seeks to answer the following question: To what extent does the dismissal and/or underrepresentation of women of colors’ theories within emerging theories of speculative realisms and new materialisms reinforce a neo-Cartesian approach to indigenous thought and worldviews? Grounded in Gloria Anzaldúa’s theory on identity and onto-epistemology that demonstrate a connectionist approach to humans and nonhumans, this paper argues that existing neo-Cartesian approaches to indigenous modes of existence constitute what I call an ontological ignorance that shapes and reinforces academic assumptions, guarded by orthodox disciplinary boundaries between the fields of philosophy and women’s studies. Despite their significant contributions to ontology, agency, and subjectivity, these different strands of theories demonstrate an ignorance about indigenous worldviews that is pervasive, yet hardly theorized, and, finally, should be examined along with Charles Mill’s “white [epistemic] ignorance” that characterizes Western thought. The paper concludes with listing a number of the opportunities we can gain from centralizing Anzaldúa’s theory within the field of philosophy and the extent to which this approach can help us further explore the embedded ignorances that shape our (dis)connectionist theories of being and knowing.

David Temin

(Political Science / University of Minnesota)

“Estranged Sympathies: Indigeneity’s Challenge to the Comparative Turn in Political Theory”

In this paper, I read the absence of indigeneity in Comparative Political Theory as indicative of a peculiar disavowal of the politics of settler-colonial occupation that long pre-dates the more recently avowed spatiotemporal marker of globalization. While some theorists have focused solely on a primarily Euro-american narrative that seeks to rework and reimagine the site of the *demos* under globalization, others have turned to engage with “non-western” political theorists under the banner of “Comparative Political Theory.” The latter often lean on a critical cosmopolitanism that seeks to move from engagement with non-western philosophical traditions or embodied practices to a more genuinely “global” political theory. Few of these theorists, though, include any of the political histories and distinctive ontologies and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples in the purview of the “other” of the West.

In order to theorize the absence of Indigenous peoples in the contested conception of otherness of Comparative Political Theory, I present the concept of “estranged sympathies.” I define “estranged sympathy” as the condition through which (we) settler political theorists perform ethical knowledge about distant others in ways that serve to reaffirm our presence as those positioned to ethically salvage the imperial past of the West. Indigenous peoples’ practices of survivance—both local and transnational—challenge this estrangement of settler pathos away from the stolen lands (and stealing of Indigenous responsibilities towards lands) we occupy. The irreducibly territorial and violently rooted realities of settler-colonial occupation demands a prior commitment to decolonization.

Alice Kehoe

(Anthropology, emerita / Marquette University)

“ ‘Indigeneity’ – Background to the Politically Correct Term”

“Indigeneity” is a term typical of academese, nominalizing the adjective “indigenous,” creating a thing out of a quality, distancing discussion from real-world praxis. The thing is coddled in academia’s ivory towers while on the ground, colonial regimes continue to assert hegemony. The United States holds its “tribes” lands in trust under Department of Interior; Canada uses the term “First Nations” while insisting their lands belong to the Crown. That abstract thing “indigeneity” doesn’t exist in Amazon forests or the Mississippi Choctaw shopping mall. In this paper I trace “inherent sovereignty” and “indigenous rights” to Felix Cohen, who wrote the three pillars of the U. S. Indian New Deal: 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, 1940 *Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, and 1946 Indian Claims Commission Act. Cohen was a Boas-guided Social Democrat committed to overturning injustices against Indian people and nations. His two major legislations were gutted and distorted by Congress and its appointees; the *Handbook* survives in spite of

Government efforts to gut it. Cohen opens the *Handbook* with the extraordinary sentence, “The Indian is a human being.” He did not write about “indigeneity” or “indigenous” rights, he wrote about human rights, and sovereignty recognized by making treaties. Cohen died, age 46, in 1953. The bloodless revolution he promoted was shifted to powerless bodies such as the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Meanwhile, Western Primitivism continues strong, dichotomizing Us from non-Western Others now called “indigenes” (see Adam Kuper’s *The Reinvention of Primitive Society*, 2005).

Enacting Consciousness

Benjamin Campbell
(Anthropology / UW-Milwaukee)

“Animal Body: San Hunting Practices and Trance Dancing as Indigeneity”

The San of southern Africa are one of the exemplars of indigenous groups, having inhabited the Kalahari Desert for at least 60,000 years. During this time there has been many changes in the human occupation of the Kalahari, but the land itself has changed little in comparison. Similarly, anthropological notions of the ethnographic present and history have changed over the past 200 years, even as historical changes have altered the relationship of indigenous people to the land they live with. Thus the issue of San indigeneity remains a matter of much dispute among anthropologists and archeologists, with no real hope of resolution on the horizon.

In this presentation, I suggest that it’s the San’s perceived relationship to, and experience of, the animals they hunt that is the critical link in understanding their experience of the autochthonic. In other words, indigeneity for the San is not the landbody, but more immediately, the animalbody. This relationship is most clearly revealed in the San great dance in which trance dancers are thought to take on the attributes of powerful animals and so obtain their embodied powers for healing. We will watch David Attenborough’s very short video, “Human Mammal, Human Hunter,” to better appreciate the bodily basis of the San great dance before discussing how the experience is represented in San rock art and tales, and possibly the brain. I will end with a consideration of whether indigeneity can be separated from the autochthonic.

Maria Regina Firmino-Castillo
(Anthropology & Transdisciplinary Studies / California Institute of Integral Studies & University of New Mexico)

“Indigenous Survivance through Performance: An Embodied and Telluric Ontological Praxis”

Colonialism is built upon the destruction of the ontologies of the colonized (Fanon ([1952] 2008) and the imposition of an ontology of domination over bodies and lands (Blaser 2013). Because ontologies are transmitted through performance, colonial regimes seek to control it. At the same time, performance can regenerate the worlds colonialism seeks to destroy. Building on Taylor’s

(2003) notion that performance is embodied epistemology, I propose that performance is also ontological and *telluric*, or *of the earth*: human bodies perform in relation to other beings within ecosystems, establishing relations, categories, and hierarchies. These enactments of power can manifest as interdependence and reciprocity, or distinction and dominance. By performing ontologies of relationality and intersubjectivity into being, Indigenous performance can potentially challenge the delusional ontological universality that, as Blaser (2013) argued, undergirds imperialist domination over human and non-human beings, as well as ecosystems and territories. I discuss these theoretical propositions through two examples of Indigenous performance I participated in as artist and researcher: Oxlaval Q'anil, a dance project that emerged in 2013 in an Ixil Mayan community targeted for genocide during Guatemala's war, and Dancing Earth, an itinerant and inter-tribal U.S.-based company founded eleven years ago. These projects demonstrate that Indigenous performance is not monolithic or static; practices arise from particular histories and ecologies to regenerate myriad ontological possibilities. Through these means, historical memory is not only reproduced; it is creatively catalyzed to activate the present and future survivance (Vizenor 2008) of lands/bodies living under constant transformation.

Keywords: Indigeneity, survivance, decolonization, embodiment, environment, territory, performance studies, ontology, pluriverse, Ixil Maya, diasporic Indigeneity.

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P. J. Brendese

(Political Science / Johns Hopkins)

"Environmental Racism, First Nations and Segregated Time"

This essay is part of a book project entitled "The Race of Segregated Time." Segregated time refers to how experiences of temporality diverge across peoples, how a range of political subjects are viewed as occupants of different time zones, and how these divergent temporal spheres are mutually entwined. A closer look at this entwinement reveals how racialized strategies of political power are implicated in segregated temporality and the corresponding efforts to counter

its impact. Racial inequalities are frequently experienced as impositions on human time and resistance to racial inequalities are likewise frequently figured in temporal terms. More generally, racial stigma has historically functioned as a marker of those who belong to a prior time, and makes legible those who are either supposedly less evolved, not coeval with the dominant race and distinguishes populations who ultimately fall below the threshold of humanity. Among the most glaring issues of segregated time is how the foreshortened lifetimes of subordinate racial groups are utilized to leverage the relatively extended lifespans of racially dominant populations.

When it comes to segregated time, racial others are typically the last to receive goods, services and status but the first to go in terms of who is vulnerable to the proliferation of disposable people in neoliberal times. This is certainly true when it comes to First Nations and the environmental racism that disproportionately impacts indigenous populations. But it's also true that the very aboriginal peoples who have been stigmatized as "behind the times" as embodied anachronisms, have been among the first when it comes to the diagnoses and even political organizing against the destructiveness of climate change and Western anthropocentrism. Likewise, indigenous relationships to time have been employed by colonials as evidence of Native backwardness, and as a supporting rationale used to justify their expropriation and extermination. With the above in mind, in this essay I attempt to initiate a practice of critical receptivity to alternative conceptions of time and cosmology. Among the potential benefits of this comparative endeavor is the possibility of disclosing our own hidden investments in cosmologies that we never quite recognized as such.

I begin by sketching the political and theoretical stakes at play in the relays between divergent notions of time and cosmology, as well as why cosmology matters. In contrast to the present-centered orientation of right-based liberalism--what I call "white time"--I pay particular attention to indigenous experiences of time and space as inhabited by deceased ancestors and the trans-generational calculus often at play in the political decision making of aboriginal peoples. I then reflect on the polysynthetic metaphysic of nature at work in certain indigenous cosmologies that destabilize philosophical investments in the presentism of Newtonian time and Cartesian thought. The interrogation of white time promises to open up onto a more generative and generous mode of apprehending a world that is "Other wise"—a world that we don't merely *think* but we *experience*.

Breakout Session 2

Spaces of Contestation

Audra Mitchell | Zoe Todd

(Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada | Carleton University)

“Earth Violence: Indigeneity and the Anthropocene”

According to discourses on the Anthropocene, human action has fundamentally transformed the Earth. A burgeoning critical literature has helped to highlight the structures and dynamics of power and modes of agency that have fuelled this transformation. Yet little attention has been paid to the foundational role of violence - in particular colonial violence - in dominant forms of Anthropocene discourse and world-making. This violence is epitomized in several proposed “signatures” of the Anthropocene: the genocide of Indigenous peoples (Maslin and Lewis 2014); the unfolding global extinction crisis; and the “slow violence” (Nixon 2010) of nuclear testing, which disfigures unique multispecies worlds. Within dominant Western secular scientific discourses, these enormous harms are framed (and euphemized) in clinical terms that erase the violence they enact - for instance, “depopulation,” “biodiversity loss” or “pollution.” Moreover, many proposed responses to Anthropocene threats--for instance, geo- and bio-engineering--further extend and magnify the logic of colonial violence.

Our contribution calls for engagement with the work of Indigenous scholars telling alternative stories of massive, violent global change and disrupting the framing and policing of the Anthropocene by (mostly) Euro-North American male scientists. We ask how alternative (hi)stories of violent global change can be communicated through art, story and movement (dance, theatre). We also aim to explore how indigenous philosophies, ontologies and legal orders are engaging questions about global change and relationships to the “earth system,” including ways to contend catastrophic change and the ending of worlds.

Kerstin Reibold

(Global Studies / University of Mannheim, Germany)

“What Can Rawls Tell Us about Indigenous Land Rights?”

My paper is going to discuss which factors need to be taken into account to solve distributive conflicts about land justly. I will argue that the Rawlsian Theory of Justice offers a viable route to decide on land distribution, given that one includes two considerations that are inherent in his theory but often overlooked:

First, I will turn to the importance of land for indigenous peoples' self-respect. According to Rawls, self-respect is the most important primary good and is partly secured by ensuring people's status equality. In the case of indigenous people this status equality will partly depend on the way in which their culture and history of oppression will be dealt with by the dominant society. Here land becomes a central symbol both because of indigenous cultural and spiritual attachment to it and because of its status as "what was stolen." This twofold attachment to land makes indigenous land rights a central concern if a state wants to ensure the same social bases of self-respect for everyone.

This leads to the second consideration which concerns the applicability of the difference principle to conflicts over land. These conflicts are often framed as conflicts over access to economic resources. Yet, this ignores the other, social inequalities that Rawls also had in mind when formulating the difference-principle. If one pays attention to this dimension of equality, it becomes obvious that while everyone might gain economically, indigenous people lose in almost any other sphere. I will argue that the loss of land or control over the land has disastrous effects on the culture, social fabric and self-respect of indigenous peoples, thus not justifying the negation of their land rights except for some extreme cases.

Ashkan Rezvani Naraghi

(Urban Studies / UW-Milwaukee)

"From Qahvihkhanih (Coffeeshouse) to Café: Westernization through Placelessness"

The period between the First and Second World Wars brought structural changes to Iranian society. The First Pahlavi state (1925-1941) began social projects to transform traditional Iranian society into a modern westernized one. On the one hand, the establishment of a powerful central government, development of the state bureaucracy, nationalization of the education system, and state-sponsored industrialization produced a modern middle class, which could follow the desired Western lifestyle. On the other hand, the state systematically attempted to transform the traditional lifestyle of the other social groups by banning their social practices and regulating their spaces. This paper investigates this process by examining the dichotomy of qahvihkhanih (coffeeshouse) and café. The former was the center of diverse social interactions at the heart of old neighborhoods of the cities with centuries of background. The latter was a Western style space providing a new type of social life for the modern urban middle class. By examining these symbols of traditional Iranian and modern western social spaces, this paper demonstrates how the policies of the state promoted one and abolished the other. It argues that spatial policies of the state were effective tools for the transformation of Iranian society.

Time and Story

Eva-Maria Müller

(Literary and Cultural Studies / University of Gießen, Germany)

“Narrating the Mountainbody: Critical Consumptions in Travel Literature of the Alps and Rockies”

Considering the very specific landbody of mountains, this paper wants to explore how contemporary literature makes use of corporal language to critically address colonial consumptions and touristic exploitations of mountain people and place. Drawing from Canadian and Austrian mountain fiction, I will first address how the inseparable link between mountains and their peoples has been disrupted in alpine explorations from 19th-century colonial endeavours to the present-day tourist economy. I will highlight how mountain literature renders alpine explorers consumers who understand landscape primarily as a resource to satisfy their own hunger for heroism and masculinity. Just how strongly alpine spaces were approached as landscapes, whose purpose it is to serve not only the pleasure of mountaineers, but also the body of empire, will be addressed in the opening section of my paper. The ignorance, violation, and disrespect that the mountainbody experienced in these moments become apparent in the literature of Angie Abdou, Elfriede Jelinek, Thomas Wharton, and Felix Mitterer. In a second step, I will analyse these texts with regard to their presentation of the mountain travel industry as consuming desired landscapes, well-funded tourists, and dispossessed locals alike.

In the field of inquiry surrounding critical consumptions, the practice of narration takes a key-role since the consumed land is presented as a living entity that possess a narrative agency of its own. Mountains are not neutral backdrops to human life but communicate with the people who inhabit and seek to capitalise on them. How mountaintexts, in their mythical and contemporary manifestations, bring the living network surrounding mountains and the conceptual primacy of connection and locale to the fore, will thus be the central interest of this paper.

Diana Rose

(Visual Studies / UC Santa Cruz)

“Enduring Time in Maya Practices of Renewal”

The coloniality paradigm has constructed current visions of indigenous people that put them in a distant past and in a permanent state of lesser development; the Maya are such an example. Many modern Maya artists make references to their ancestral past and lands, as they look to connect with traditions and philosophies of their ancestors and in these ways write their own history, which is used by the establishment to confirm ideas of primitivism. These practices of connecting the past with the present and future also existed in ancient Maya culture. This paper links ancient Maya ceremonies where multiple temporalities coexisted, with contemporary practices where the past is incorporated into the present - as recorded in their respective visual art. These efforts of the Maya, both ancient and modern, to refer to their past do not deny ideas

of change and ‘progress.’ On the contrary, it is these acts of recalling the ancestors and mythical pasts that allows for continuity, renewal and in turn guarantee a future. This study places both ancient and contemporary Maya artistic practices at the same level, looking for their shared ideas of time and history-making, without making claims of unchanged continuity. Exploring these Maya philosophies of time as represented in their visual culture contributes to broader discussions of multiple time dimensions that complicate the more common idea of a linear and progressive notion of time, and gives us the opportunity as scholars to approach indigenous issues with their own theories.

Naomi Greyser

(Rhetoric and English / University of Iowa)

“Affective Geographies across Paper and Ink, Land and Body, Time and Space”

Charlotte Roderique (Northern Paiute; Burns Tribal Chairperson) recently protested the occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge by the armed “Citizens For Constitutional Freedom”: “We have no sympathy for those who are trying to take their land from its rightful owners,” she stated (January 2016). This paper situates Roderique’s comment in a long history of sympathy’s role in contouring the North American continent, including in “checkerboard[ing]” Paiute homelands (Roderique). I do so by taking up sentimentalism - a rhetorical mode that represents tears and evokes sympathy by understanding affect in material terms and material space in emotional terms.

In 1883 Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, Paiute advocate, described Washoe women crying over their husbands’ murder, noting that, “such weeping was enough to make the very mountains weep to see them” (63). Hopkins’ figure of mountainous sympathy registers the cruelty of the U.S. settler state on the surface of the land. Hopkins used sentimentalism to counter the Dawes Act of 1887. Meeting with Senator Dawes, Hopkins countered his pernicious claims of sympathetic incorporation of tribal lands into the settler state with a map of “sympathetic distance” among neighbors

Re-reading claims of “inclusion” such as the Dawes Act as statist elimination has been a crucial mode of indigenous activism and sovereignty. Audra Simpson (Mohawk; 2014) explains that “one sovereignty can be embedded in another” (177), a critical geography that charts converged space as contested. Sympathy could displace and depopulate, and also could re-assert presence and resist incorporation. Engaging with mouldering sentimental books, eroding tufa formations and the precipitation of salt in rain and tears, I establish sympathy’s role in claiming and contesting space across surfaces and substances — paper and ink, stone and water, bodies of land and people. In the process, sympathy shows up as grounded in feelings, sensations and dis/connected arrangements of land, self and polity.

Breakout Session 3

Re-Sources

Jubin Cheruvelli

(Anthropology / Michigan State University)

“Justice in Natural Places: Tribal Challenges in Natural Resources Sovereignty, Governance, and Management”

Tribal environmental and resource agencies face considerable challenges in protecting the diversity of natural resources and traditional practices on Tribal lands. Further, Tribal communities are also increasingly concerned about the role of resource extraction and pollutants on adjacent ceded and treated territories in the Northern Great Lakes. Tribal agencies have made considerable efforts to engage with these concerns but are often inadequately positioned to address them due to dominant historical, settler colonial priorities and legal frameworks in place. Further, Tribal communities also are burdened with inadequate resources to undertake (assess and publicize) many of these efforts. In order to understand these roadblocks, I undertake an inter-tribal survey and policy analysis to assess priorities, actions and limitations. The analysis determines that Tribal efforts have been enhanced by federal and state level relationships and these same relationships have also limited and stymied Sovereign efforts to adequately address Tribal needs. The existing conditions highlight alignment with federal funding, reporting, regulatory and legal frameworks. The alignment with federal standards also presents a number of mismatches between Tribal and federal standards of environmental value and quality. An understanding of these mismatches and road blocks can provide a better road map for sovereign approaches that serve long-term Tribal natural resources welfare in the Upper Great Lakes.

Nan Kim

(History / UW-Milwaukee)

“Ruins of Global Militarism, Embodiment of Dissent: Gangjeong Village’s Culture of Peace and Life Movement”

On South Korea’s Jeju Island, the recent completion of a contested naval base’s construction has marked a time of transition for the anti-base movement there. The new military complex, built upon the ruin of a sacred site, is ostensibly a South Korean base, but mutual defense treaty agreements also make it accessible to US warships and nuclear submarines. Peace activists therefore warn that the base’s proximity to China inevitably escalates military tensions and elevates risks for future conflicts in the region. Through activism and network-building, the village has established itself as a vital node among transnational peace movements.

Gangjeong activists have become known for the range and prodigiousness of their creative production, generating a milieu of artistic, literary, and polemical practice dedicated to

collectively refusing the culture of war. Beyond dissent against the wrongful dispossession of territory, at the heart of this movement is the anguished memory of Gureombi, a continuous 1.2 kilometer stretch of coastal habitat and volcanic rock formation, long regarded as sacred land. In 2012, against the outraged protests of local residents, international activists, and global advocacy groups, Gureombi was blasted by dynamite and destroyed. Although the campaign to preserve the site did not prevail, the memory of Gureombi's destruction now serves as touchstone for a wider demilitarization movement. This paper explores the place of Gureombi at the center of the "Culture of Peace and Life Movement," which goes beyond a strictly anti-base campaign to inform an alternative political community's embodied opposition to the logic of global militarism itself.

Rachel Cypher
(Anthropology / UC Santa Cruz)
"Belonging in the Pampas"

More than any other temperate grassland biome, the pampas grasslands of Argentina were overwhelmed by alien plant invasions post-European contact. Recent work at the intersection of anthropology and ecology has shown that these grasslands, once understood as "natural," are in fact anthropogenic: the outcome of thousands of years of indigenous landscape management systems that influenced vegetation compositions and patterns, creating a heterogeneous plant and animal harvesting system.

Although the role of ecological change in the divestment of Amerindians from their lifeways has received less attention, scholars are beginning to trace how landscape change resulting from the displacement of indigenous management regimes was a major factor in the breakdown of Amerindian ability to survive post-contact. This new research allows us to ask: how do the social lives of plants guide landscape management, which in turn facilitates particular struggles over class and race? As the advance of industrial soy production in Argentina makes headlines in relation to the clashes between elite promises of wealth, on the one hand, and indigenous resistance, on the other, this question is even more salient.

This project traces the resonances between these two periods through "ecologies of belonging": in each case, cultural survival and control over resource management are inextricably linked. By following ecologies of belonging through both the indigenous and European presence in the pampas of Argentina, this research project examines how landscape assemblages motivate ethnic hierarchies and exclusions in the making of class structure and landscape transformation, in terms of what belongs in the landscape.

Reclamation

Annemarie McLaren

(History / Australian National University)

“Bounty, Barter or Bond? Material Transactions and Aboriginal-Colonial Relations in Early New South Wales”

From the moment the First Fleet reached Port Jackson, uneasy and uncertain encounters between colonists and local indigenous people were mediated through the exchange of objects. While these initial transactions are well known and documented, the role that exchanges of material objects continued to play in colonists’ interactions with Aboriginal people, and the social and symbolic meanings these acquired as they began to circulate in the colony’s hinterland, requires further investigation. This paper considers the acquisition, use and perception of European clothing, brass plates and blankets by Aboriginal people as a small colonial outpost became a permanent and growing presence transforming the social, environmental and economic landscape. A context-sensitive and practice-based ethno-historical reading of the newspapers, journals, accounts, ordinances, inventories, images and artefacts suggests that the exchange of material items between the colonists and Aboriginal people played an intensely social as well as functional role and that Aboriginal people played an active and engaged part in these transactions. Specifically, the perception, deployment and acquisition of brass plates, blankets and clothing by Aboriginal people – all European artefacts affiliated with exchange relationships and status – emerges as an under-recognised means by which to approach the dynamic and creative strategies of Aboriginal people to different phases and pressures of colonial expansion within the first fifty years of settlement.

Melinda Hinkson

(History / Deakin University, Australia)

“Of Place and its Faultlines: A View from Warlpiri County”

Warlpiri constitute the largest language community of Aboriginal people in Central Australia. Across the eight decades since settlers began to comprehensively displace Warlpiri from their nomadic existence as hunter-gatherers, the lived nature of Warlpiri relationships to sacred places has been decisively transformed. As has been the case for indigenous people across the world, the abiding significance of place has been challenged and mediated by radical transformations in living arrangements, by the increasing encroachment of governmental regimes and technologies, by the codification of tradition and culture, and by the lure of other places and the attendant promise of better ways of life.

At a time when Warlpiri communities are experiencing existential crisis, this paper looks back to the self-determination era, broadly encompassing the period 1972-1996, in which governmental policy explicitly aimed at shifting the possibilities for Aboriginal lives onto new, open, optimistic ground. More recently dismissed as a failure by a new generation of politicians and commentators, including a number of prominent indigenous leaders, the paper asks: What were

the structural elements of the self-determination regime as experienced on the ground by Aboriginal people?

The paper draws upon interviews and a rich repository of Warlpiri video that provides a fascinating window onto the experiments, hopes and frustrations that attended the self-determination era. In doing so it prises open and reflects upon an erstwhile conundrum — while successive governmental regimes have attempted to produce docile sedentarised subjects, people who would live in one place, the moral imperative of being Warlpiri insists on mobility to dynamically attend to responsibilities to care for a network of places. The paper concludes by asking what are the legacies of the ‘failed experiment’ of self-determination in the present? How do these legacies shape the way Warlpiri imagine places and associated ways of being for themselves in the twenty-first century?

Breakout Session 4

Land Agents

Stina Attebery

(English / UC Riverside)

“‘Gas Masks as Medicine’: Toxic Landbodies in Indigenous Speculative Art”

Native studies scholars from Gregory Cajete to Lisa Brooks to Daniel R. Wildcat have argued persuasively that the ecological knowledge and cultural practices of Native communities serve as a crucial model of environmentally sustainable science in our increasingly endangered world. Central to a range of indigenous ecological scientific knowledges is the ontological indeterminacy between humans and the animal and plant beings that make up the environment. In this respect, indigenous scientific knowledges predate but have a great affinity with feminist science and technology studies (STS) theorizations of the environment as a space of human-animal-other networks. While feminist STS scholars and indigenous scholars take a similar approach to rethinking the complex relationships humans have with particular landscapes, there has been less attention to indigenous perspectives in a recent topic of interest to STS scholars—environmental toxicity. As Stacy Alaimo argues, toxicity “may render it nearly impossible for humans to imagine that our own well-being is disconnected from that of the rest of the planet” (*Bodily Natures* 18). Alaimo’s work takes on new stakes when placed in dialogue with indigenous land rights politics, as toxic waste disposal and pollutants are an important issue for many indigenous nations. To explore these issues I turn to Yakama Nation pop artist Bunky Echo-Hawk, whose series on environmental racism called “Gas Masks and Medicine” depicts a surreal world of human and animal figures with monstrous gas mask faces living in a toxic landscape. While Echo-Hawk’s art is disturbing, he foregrounds toxicity in order to explore possibilities for witnessing and seeking justice.

Shanae Aurora Martinez
(English / UW–Milwaukee)

“Intervening on Academic Tourism: Indigenous Narrative Agency in Deborah Miranda’s *Bad Indians*”

Deborah Miranda’s *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* offers a critical approach to the academic and touristic narratives that dominate the Franciscan missionary history in California at the intersection of Indigenous and imperialist forces. This paper argues that *Bad Indians* is part of a genealogy of narrative interventions on academic tourism by asserting the agency of the land to destabilize EuroAmerican hierarchical assumptions about both narrative and place. Borrowing from Doreen Massey’s proposition, “that we recognize space as the product of interrelations,” (*For Space* 9) this paper analyzes how Indigenous and non-Indigenous narratives negotiate worldviews in particular geographical places to construct, and more importantly, to intervene upon institutional spaces. Academic institutions are thus rendered mobile and variable because they are dependent upon the relational agency of other temporally and spatially situated narratives with social and political ramifications. I argue that narrative interventions can dismantle the assumptions underlying institutionalized hierarchies of knowledge production. Miranda’s text illuminates the larger genealogy of narrative interventions on institutional knowledge with geopolitical ramifications spanning the imperial rule of New Spain, Mexico, and the United States of America. As a literary analysis, this project emphasizes the significance of narratives about places that construct transnational spaces, which Indigenous peoples navigate and negotiate to intervene on oppressive institutionalized discourses by asserting narratives committed to centralizing the agency of Indigenous peoples and lands.

Snežana Vuletić
(Literary and Cultural Studies / The International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture, Germany & University of Stockholm, Sweden)

“Indigenous Igbo Land and Stories of the Colonial Disruption in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*”

Among the indigenous Igbo, the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria, the land is significant not only as a living and farming space but also as a space onto which local histories and futures, social and cultural values, traditions, customs, and identities are inscribed. The connection between the Igbo and their land, being one of the central aspects of Igbo cosmology, found its resonance in modern Igbo Anglophone literature which marked a return to indigenous Igbo identities and worldviews as a form of writing back to colonial discourses. In light of that, this paper aims at showing that in one of the most celebrated works of Igbo Anglophone literature, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, indigenous Igbo land figures as much more than a neutral backdrop to the colonial disruption; it participates in telling the story of it. Becoming an object of negotiation between the Igbo and the British, the piece of land called the Evil Forest registers the

nature and effects of the colonial disruption and tells the story of the transformation in the perception of indigenous land, indigenous Igbo social organisation, and Igbo cosmology.

Indigenizing Epistemologies

Lara Ghisleni

(Anthropology / UW–Milwaukee)

“Landscape and (In)visibility in Archaeological Narratives of Transition and Rupture”

Naming and sorting practices in archaeology do not neutrally categorize chronology, locales, and items of material culture, but help construct claims about time, place, and identity. This extends to how processes of change and continuity are conceived, what landscapes become visible and privileged, and who is elided or struggles to co-exist. Despite challenges posed to the colonial framing of the prehistory/history divide, such dichotomies are often recapitulated in the persistence of disciplinary divisions as well as the language used to compartmentalize time and classify material. This presentation articulates with calls to destabilize archaeology’s discursive objects from confinement in unidirectional and oppositional narratives—ruptures that distance the past from the present and known from knower, cleave continuity from change, and presuppose development from the “proto-” to the standard. Directing attention to the language underwriting interpretive assumptions, I trace naming and sorting practices in a context—that of Roman studies in Britain—whose origins and disciplinary boundaries reiterate the temporal and spatial vocabulary of colonial paradigms, exploring how the language of archaeological taxonomies works to make certain temporalities and landscapes (in)visible. I argue that an alternative approach should not be confined to the level of interpretive outcome, but rather challenge the conditions of relationality in knowledge production—including inherited ontological and epistemological ruptures in the discipline. This attempts to resist a theoretical apparatus that relegates being to one or the other side of a dividing line, instead grappling with the implications and commitments of knowing as webs of relating and living in.

Robert Geroux

(Political Science / Indiana University Purdue University--Indianapolis [IUPUI])

“From Code to Colonized Body: Genomics, Biomaterial Health and the Native Subject”

My project compares two important studies: the botched examination of Havasupai DNA by anthropologists at ASU (1989-2010), and the Clemente et al. (2015) study of microbiome order of the Yanomami. There is much common ground between the two studies: for example, both tribes fall under the gaze of scientific interest because of their geographic and cultural isolation. An even more important contrast, however, has to do with the locus of code. The series of Havasupai studies engaged in decoding and “testing” sequences of the human genome, whereas the Clemente study engaged in an examination of the microbiome. I want to spend a good deal of time theorizing in the space of this difference (genome→microbiome); I want to ask questions.

For example: what happens when researchers become interested in the Native subject, not as a cipher of “natural” vulnerability or endemic disorder (see Kelm 1998), but rather as a signifier of vigor and biomial health above and against the decline caused by Western habits of diet, hygiene and medicine? Does the exemplary (non-contact) Native represent an inversion of the narrative of colonial occupation, or merely its newest (neoliberal) phase, perhaps as part of the “quantified self” movement? What happens in a conceptual and legal sense when the sequence of interest no longer comes from the body’s genome (as in the case of the Havasupai blood samples), but from a colony of organisms that inhabits the body? In the absence of any clear precedent established by *Havasupai Tribe v. Arizona State Board of Regents* (2008), we seem to face new and important questions of property and power. Do tribes own the code present in (their) biomial space, or does the facticity of (microbiotic) colonization and symbiotic separateness open up space for expropriation and deployment along lines of commodification? Finally, outside the frame of redress within the system of North American courts, what are political means available for Native tribes and individuals to seize the code of symbiotic colonies living within them? How can they act as sovereign agents rather than (or perhaps as well as) scientific subjects?