

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Contested Canada

Navigating Past, Present and Future Sovereignties

20th Annual Conference of the Emerging Scholars Forum of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries

Questions of sovereignty are at the core of the study of Canada. From Indigenous nations and their quest for the recognition of treaty rights, to Quebec nationalism, to the Prairie Provinces' current rejection of Canadian federalism, the concept of sovereignty, or perhaps *sovereignties*, continues to dominate the Canadian political and cultural landscape.

Indigenous sovereignties are continually questioned and violently contested through the ongoing appropriation of Indigenous land, environmental destruction, and the imposition of Eurocentric forms of government on Indigenous nations, while outlawing traditional leadership structures. On a more individual scale, Indigenous people are disproportionately imprisoned, and Indigenous parents are more likely to be deprived of access to their children. For many Indigenous communities, clean drinking water, nutritious and/or traditional food, or sufficient access to health care are not available, a problem which is especially present in the (sub)arctic.

For their part, settlers have always been preoccupied with questions of sovereignty, from the Royal Proclamation that allowed for the dispossession of Native land to the Canadian nationalist movements which sought independence from imperial influences, as well as the Quebec referenda on sovereignty. However, the topic has recently risen to the fore of national politics again, in particular through legislation passed by Alberta and Saskatchewan which threaten the Canadian federation as a whole. Other recent developments such as the death of Queen Elizabeth II have led many to further question the future of the Canadian state in its current form. Furthermore, the so-called "Freedom Convoy," with its opposition to vaccination mandates, the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as debates over medical assistance in dying (MAID) legislation raised questions of bodily sovereignty and personal autonomy.

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Le Canada Contesté :

Naviguer entre les souverainetés passées, présentes et futures

20ème Conférence annuelle du Forum de la Relève Académique de L'Association d'Études Canadiennes dans les Pays de Langue Allemande (GKS)

Les questions de souveraineté se trouvent au cœur de l'étude du Canada. Qu'il s'agisse des nations autochtones et de leur quête de reconnaissance des droits issus de traités, du nationalisme québécois ou du rejet actuel du fédéralisme canadien par les provinces des Prairies, le concept de souveraineté, ou peut-être de souverainetés, domine toujours le paysage politique et culturel canadien.

Les souverainetés autochtones sont continuellement remises en question et violemment contestées par l'appropriation continue des terres autochtones, la destruction de l'environnement et l'imposition de formes occidentales de gouvernement aux nations autochtones, tout en interdisant les structures de gestion traditionnelles. À une échelle plus individuelle, les autochtones sont emprisonnés de manière disproportionnée et les parents autochtones sont plus probablement privés de leurs enfants. De nombreuses communautés autochtones ne disposent pas d'eau potable, d'aliments nutritifs et/ou traditionnels, ni d'un accès suffisant aux soins de santé, un problème particulièrement présent dans les régions (sub)arctiques.

Pour leur part, les colons ont toujours été préoccupés par les questions de souveraineté, depuis la Proclamation royale qui a permis la dépossession des terres autochtones jusqu'aux mouvements nationalistes canadiens qui ont cherché à se libérer des influences impériales, en passant par les référendums québécois sur la souveraineté du Québec. Le sujet est récemment revenu sur le devant de la scène politique nationale, notamment par le biais des lois adoptées par l'Alberta et la Saskatchewan qui menacent la fédération canadienne dans son ensemble. D'autres événements récents, tels que le décès de la reine Elizabeth II, ont soulevé de nombreuses questions sur l'avenir de l'État canadien dans sa forme actuelle. En outre, le soi-disant « Convoi de la liberté », avec son opposition aux mandats de vaccination, le mouvement *Black Lives Matter*, ainsi que les débats sur la législation sur l'euthanasie ont soulevé des questions sur la souveraineté corporelle et l'autonomie personnelle.

KEYNOTE

“As Long as the Sun Shines”: Treaty-Making and Sovereignty in Indigenous Ontario

Prof. Dr. Manuel Menrath & Mike Metatawabin

Difficulties of understanding often arise between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. This is not only due to language, but also to different cultural worldviews and experiences. In particular, intercultural differences regarding the interpretation of the National Treaties continue to burden bilateral relations to this day. In the first part of the presentation, Manuel Menrath examines the example of National Treaty No. 9, which regulates shared land use in northern Ontario. Nation-building, Sovereignty and indigenous agency also play an essential role. Since one should not only talk about indigenous people, but with them, the second part of the presentation will be joined by the Cree Mike Metatawabin from Canada. He will present his view of the Treaty and describe what it means to be a member of a First Nation.



The historian **Manuel Menrath** has been studying the indigenous history of North America for more than ten years. (In his publication *Mission Sitting Bull* (Schöningh Paderborn, 2016), he describes how missionaries from Switzerland tried to convert the Sioux in the USA in the 19th century. In his latest book, *Under the Northern Lights* (Galiani Berlin, 2020), he lets Cree and Ojibwe from Ontario have their say. He has been a lecturer at the University of Lucerne for many years and currently heads the project "Postcolonial Visibility" at the Lucerne University of Teacher Education, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, in which he deals with indigenous memory cultures from Canada.



Mike Metatawabin is from the First Nation community of Fort Albany located along the western James Bay shore of Northern Ontario. He is a survivor of the St. Anne's Indian Residential School that operated in the community. Mr. Metatawabin's background is in communications and broadcasting in the Cree language for radio and television. He has served in a number of community leadership roles, including chief, since 1998, and continues to be involved in advocacy and community development. As a board member on a voluntary basis, Mr. Metatawabin has assisted in bringing reliable energy and fibre optic cable and technology to the homes of Fort Albany, Kashechewan and Attawapiskat through Five Nations Energy and the First Nation owned Western James Bay Telecommunications Network. This forms the basis and platform for his presentation on lived experiences in remote communities.

Feminist Sovereignty(s) - Dimensions of the Toronto SlutWalk-Movement

Jan-Arne Hirschberger

What initially started in 2011 as a local reaction to police constable Michael Sanguinetti's remark that women "should avoid dressing like sluts" (cf. Herriot 2015, 22) to not get sexually assaulted or harassed soon became a transnational movement – the so called SlutWalks. The first SlutWalk took place in Toronto on 3 April 2011 and attracted "several thousand protesters" (Herriot 2015, 23) with the goal to address issues of so-called slut-shaming and victim-blaming. The name giving form of protest was to march in "varying degrees of provocative dress" (Hunt 2018, 542) and thereby reclaiming not only "ownership (...) of (...) (partially) naked, sexualized bodies" (ibid.) but also of the term slut (ibid.). However, using "nudity [as a] key tactical tool" (ibid.) sparked various forms of criticisms from different perspectives. Given this case I want to highlight the various contested sovereignties of the SlutWalk movement. Three main dimensions seem to be important for the discussion of contested sovereignties in the Canadian context. First, the SlutWalk movement presents itself as a fight for the bodily sovereignty of women. Secondly, the criticism from the human rights organization "Black Women's Blueprint" focuses on the racial dimensions of the SlutWalk. The organization claims, that they understand the re-affirmation and self-description as a "slut" as a privilege, which Black Women do not have "without validating the already historically entrenched ideology (...) about what and who the Black woman is." (Black Women's Blueprint 2016, 10). The third aspect stems from the feminist critique that the SlutWalk only reinforces the objectification and pornification of the female body. My argument is that this case exemplifies how contested the idea is of how bodily sovereignty of Women looks like and how diverse the strategies as well as the criticisms regarding this issue are.

References:

- Black Women's Blueprint (2016): An Open letter from Black women to the SlutWalk. In: *Gender and Society*, Vol. 30, no. 1, Feb. 2016, pp. 9-13.
- Herriot, Lindsay (2015): SlutWalk: Contextualizing the movement. In: *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 53, 2015, pp. 22-30.
- Hunt, Theresa Ann (2018): A movement divided: SlutWalks, protest repertoires and the privilege of nudity. In: *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 17, no.5, pp. 541-557.

Jan-Arne Hirschberger: I am currently studying Political Science and Philosophy/Ethics (M.Ed. and M.A.) at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen. My main fields of interests are political/social philosophy, feminist/intersectionality theories and post-/de-colonial theories. I am also interested in German Idealism, especially Schelling. Despite that I have visited Canada several times as a tourist, I have not yet done any research projects particularly about Canada. This is something, however, I want to change and get to know Canada, its history, politics and society from an academic point of view. I learned about the SlutWalk Movement through a seminar about prostitution politics and it caught my interest due to the movement's various dimensions, its strategy and its criticisms.

Settler Colonialism and the #FreedomConvoy: On Affect, Discourse, and Online Mobilization

Talia Vogt

This paper investigates the affective formation of Canada’s “Freedom Convoy” protest movement on Twitter between January and February 2022, inquiring how participants harnessed digital flows of emotion to mobilize online and how this process was structured by discourse. Based on data collected through digital ethnography and drawing on affect theory and critical discourse studies, this paper is broken into two parts. It firstly identifies key protest symbols and examines how these symbols amplified participants’ affective responses to help foster the “Freedom Convoy” community. Secondly, it historicizes these symbols and anchors them in their broader discursive field to understand how their historical context fuels their affective power. Utilizing the analytical framework of 'digital affect culture', this paper highlights the key symbols of 'freedom' (versus 'tyranny'), the Canadian flag, and the figure of Justin Trudeau, and demonstrates how these symbols served as key affective devices which spurred community formation. It then argues that these symbols gained their affective power in the context of Canada's settler-colonial nation-building project, illustrating how protestors’ engagement with these symbols was motivated by a settler-colonial orientation to the world. Overall, this research shows how the "Freedom Convoy's" affective community developed and mobilized by harnessing settler-colonial affect on Twitter, and demonstrates how discourse informs and motivates affect. Particularly considering the connections of settler colonialism to fascism, in today's climate of rising neofascism, understanding how the settler-colonial project underpinned this movement is paramount for working towards an antifascist—and anticolonial—future, one in which discussions of sovereignty, national history, and national identity are paramount.

Talia Vogt is an anthropologist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada, and a settler on Treaty 13 territory on the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. In 2022 she obtained her master’s degree in sociocultural anthropology from the University of Toronto, where her dissertation concentrated on the discursive and affective formation of Canada’s “Freedom Convoy” community on Twitter and anchored its development in Canada’s history of settler colonialism. Broadly, her work takes an interdisciplinary approach integrating anthropology with semiotics, history, and media studies. Her research interests include social media, settler colonialism, and fascism in Canada and the United States, investigating how historical power structures evolve and operate in contemporary digital media landscapes. She currently works as an anthropologist in the field of design research concentrating on emerging technologies, and in her free time is also an author.

Freedom to Wear Religious Symbols and the so-called Freedom Convoy

Dr. Matt Sheedy

In my paper I provide a comparative discourse analysis of two recent conflicts in Canada: “the freedom to wear religious symbols” and the so-called Freedom Convoy. In introducing this comparison, I pay particular attention to normative conceptions of Canadian identity, including multicultural secularism, Québec nationalism, and what Charles Taylor calls the ‘politics of recognition.’ For my analysis, I explore gaps between government and media rhetoric with narratives from people ‘on the ground’ impacted by these developments. Whereas Québec’s Bill 21 limited the participation of racialized communities (particularly Muslim women) from a variety of public spaces, the ‘Freedom Convoy’ marked a response to government policies during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and claimed to speak on behalf of truckers and the working class. The first example has had a direct impact on bodily sovereignty (especially Muslim women, Sikh men, and orthodox Jews), while the second was largely a shibboleth that stood-in for a host of grievances during a time of political unease. Moreover, these two events reflect a broader crisis in how sovereignty is perceived in popular and political culture. To demonstrate this latter point, I explore how mainstream and social media rhetoric on ‘freedom of speech’ has contributed to the ability of disparate social actors to utilize this discourse—effectively or ineffectively—in order to achieve ends that suit their own ideological preferences rather than an adherence to consistent principles. In the case of Québec, I argue that this rhetoric conceals a cultural-nationalist agenda, whereas in the case of the ‘Freedom Convoy,’ a more diffuse set of grievances, ranging from white nationalism, anti-Trudeau sentiment, anti-vax, and anti-labour ideology, stood in as projections of anger that reflect growing fragmentation and (literal) provincialism throughout the nation.

Matt Sheedy (PhD) is Visiting Assistant Professor in the North American Studies Program at the University of Bonn. His teaching and research interests include critical social theory, theories of secularism and religion, along with contemporary representations of Islam, atheism, Christianity, and Indigenous North American traditions in popular and political culture.

The Constitution Express: Using Anticolonial Solidarity to Challenge Canadian Sovereignty

Simone Steadman-Gantous

This study aims to highlight the Constitution Express as a moment when Indigenous calls for anticolonial solidarity succeeded in challenging Canadian state sovereignty. The Constitution Express was a grassroots movement running from 1980 to 1981 organised to protest the patriation of the Canadian constitution under the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau. The proposed constitution made no mention of Indigenous rights, thus threatening to relieve the Canadian government of any formal responsibility towards Indigenous peoples. Primarily organised by the Union of British Columbia Chiefs, the Constitution Express began as a train ride from Vancouver to Ottawa, where Indigenous leaders argued that patriation could not move forward without Indigenous consent. It soon took on an international character, as activists travelled to such diverse locations as New York, Western Europe, and finally London, carrying out lobbying and education campaigns. Their efforts to gain international support included a significant focus on calling for solidarity from nations that they considered to be part of the “Third World”. In exploring why this was the case, this study unearths underexamined histories of Indigenous interactions with Third worldism and anticolonial solidarity during the 1980s. Drawing from news stories, interviews, and documents disseminated by the Constitution Express, I argue that the Constitution Express engaged in anticolonial worldmaking through their solidarity work, using it to challenge Canadian sovereignty and argue for Indigenous self-determination. In part because of these solidarity efforts, the movement succeeded in amending the Canadian constitution to recognize and affirm the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Constitution Express represents a powerful example of the potential of anticolonial solidarity work to resist Canadian settler-colonial hegemony.

Simone Steadman-Gantous is a student of Global History, a joint master’s program at Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She is originally from Montreal, Quebec, Canada, where she received her bachelor’s in Public History at Concordia University. Her research interests include Indigenous internationalism, Indigenous protest movements in North America, and grassroots forms of anticolonial solidarity.

White Men in Red Serge: Imperial Masculinity and the Mountie Myth on the Canadian Prairies

Isaac Würmann

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the creation of the North-West Mounted Police, now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or in more common parlance as “Mounties.” Resembling the semi-military colonial police forces in other reaches of the declining British empire, the NWMP was formed to clear the North-West for white Euro-Canadian settlement and establish Canadian sovereignty over a vast region of northern North America. The RCMP has since established an international reputation as one of the world’s most beloved police forces and are a recognizable cultural export of Canada, usually depicted in their famous red uniform and riding their trusty steed. Their iconicity is in large part due to the distinct brand of masculinity cultivated by the Mounties, who were portrayed as respectable Anglo-Celtic men who brought “law and order” to the West. In this paper, I review parliamentary reports submitted by the NWMP during its first decade of existence to understand how “Mountie masculinity” was forged through the force’s mythic encounters with the “wild” North-West and their violent actions against Indigenous communities. That the Mountie continues to be regarded so positively around the world is surprising enough considering the racist, sexist, and often violent nature of its inception on the edge of empire. It is even more surprising when one considers the controversies that have recently plagued the RCMP, including reports of sexual assaults against women in the force and their inadequate handling of the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. By looking at the Prairie region of Canada, where the archetype of the NWMP officer was developed and tested and where the system of gender they introduced continues to be felt most violently, this paper seeks to understand how “Mountie masculinity” can be considered as both a product and producer of history.

Isaac Würmann is a Master’s student in North American studies at Freie Universität Berlin. He is interested in the history of gender and sexuality on the Canadian prairies.

Searching for the Truth Behind the High Arctic Relocation

Kim Lea Brune

My presentation stems from a term paper I wrote for a BA class on indigenous identity and settler colonialism in Canada. Between 1953 and 1955 the Canadian government launched the High Arctic Relocation, a program for resettling several Inuit families from their homeland in northern Quebec into the High Arctic region. Promised a land with abounding recourses, the Inuit were instead confronted with a harsh and unfamiliar landscape, unable to return to their homes and families. The relocation has since been criticized for being ill-planned, inhumane, and coercive, with the government issuing an official apology in 2010 for failing in their fiduciary responsibilities. This paper explores the ongoing debate surrounding the government's motivations and the implications for ongoing reconciliation efforts. The Canadian government states that the primary motivation was to improve the well-being of Inuit and to preserve their traditional way of life. Considerable controversy and debate surround the government's implementation of the program, raising questions about whether its "true" intention was to assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic in times of geo-political threats, by essentially using the Inuit as human flagpoles. This claim was explored in a 1994 Royal Commission and debated in much of the literature on the Relocation, but crucially omitted from the 2010 apology. More recent claims have proposed that the potential to consolidate and control the income of Inuit settlements convinced senior officials to support the project. Determining the motivations and intent is crucial in identifying the failure of the government and the reparations for the Inuit affected, yet it also overshadows the experience of the Inuit, once again centering the settler's history.

Kim Lea Brune is a BA student at the John F. Kennedy Institute for American Studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Her interest in Indigenous matters originates in previous research on Indigenous language revitalization as well as a student job in a project to support underrepresented languages online.

Nurturing Resistance: Food Sovereignty in *Jonny Appleseed* and *The Seed Keeper*

Nicole Koenigsknecht

“Nurturing Resistance: Food Sovereignty in *Jonny Appleseed* and *The Seed Keeper*” investigates how Indigenous literary characters engage in subsistence practices—growing, preparing, and consuming food—as a means of resisting the resource extraction, industrial agriculture, and ecological degradation perpetrated by settler-colonial powers on traditional unceded First Nation and Métis territories in present-day Manitoba and Minnesota. Rooted in critical environmental studies, this paper reads works of fiction by authors Diane Wilson (Dakhóta) and Joshua Whitehead (Two-Spirit Oji-nêhiyaw member of Peguis First Nation) as “case studies” that contribute to a better understanding of the real-life struggles Indigenous people face to reclaim and maintain traditional food ways. North American settler society’s aggressive consumption of land, resources, and even Indigenous bodies looms large in both novels. In Wilson’s and Whitehead’s texts, Indigenous characters undermine these exploitative Euro-American power structures and challenge cultural hegemony by exerting bodily autonomy, nurturing familial relationships, and cultivating (traditional) foods. Multiple generations of Dakhóta women in *The Seedkeeper* struggle against the cultural and environmental destruction inflicted upon their traditional homeland by Euro-American settlers. Whitehead’s protagonist Jonny similarly connects to his ancestors and sustains friendships through the sharing of meals. This analysis explores the fraught connection between the highly processed commodity foods that simultaneously bring Jonny and his relatives closer together while also contributing to the high rates of diet-related diseases within his community. Despite the pervading food insecurity he experiences in Peguis First Nation and in Winnipeg, Jonny and his family manage to carry on traditional food practices while also creating new traditions of their own. In both novels the struggle for food sovereignty reaches far beyond physical survival. For Indigenous characters, cultural survival is inextricably rooted in food sovereignty.

Nicole Koenigsknecht is currently finishing her Master of Arts in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at the University of Vienna in Austria. She works predominantly within the field of North American literary and cultural studies. Her current areas of research include Indigenous literatures, settler colonialism, and American mythologies. Originally from Michigan, USA, she is particularly passionate about literature from the Great Lakes and Great Plains regions of North America. Her forthcoming master’s thesis examines how Indigenous literary characters engage in traditional subsistence practices involving growing, preparing, and consuming food as acts of resistance against settler-colonial hegemony.

Hyperscenarios of Discovery in the Cyberwilderness

Can Aydın

The relationship between writing and Indigenous peoples is complicated, to say the least. Ever since first contact, the colonizers used writing to implement and justify forms of violence against Indigenous peoples. Starting from the early years of colonization of the New World, the act of writing has become the hegemonic mode of producing and exchanging information. Diana Taylor points out to “scenarios of discovery” (53) which started with the accounts of European colonizers to legitimize their oppression of Indigenous peoples. They construct power relations where the active, i.e., the discoverer is the “one who ‘sees’ and controls the scene” (61). In this regard, “the native is the show; the civilized observer the privileged spectator” (64). Moreover, three centuries later, the Native American Boarding School System implemented writing as a tool for cultural assimilation into the settler society. Having these in mind, Scott Richard Lyons argues for a “[r]hetorical sovereignty” which is the inherent right and ability of [Indigenous] peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires” (ibid.). In my contribution, I argue that in *Jonny Appleseed*, the Indigenous protagonist Jonny, and consequently, the Indigenous author Joshua Whitehead, performs his rhetorical sovereignty by reproducing a hyperscenario of discovery in cyberspace. Jonny performs online sexual work where the customers want him “to play NDN” (Whitehead 25). Jonny is able to exploit the exoticization of Indigeneity within the dominant Canadian Culture for his personal gain. He can be read as a trickster shapeshifter. “Once I know what kind of body they want, I can make myself over. I can be an Apache NDN who scalps cowboys on the frontier, even though truthfully, I am Oji-Cree” (Whitehead 25). Jonny is able to make his non-Indigenous customers believe that they ‘found’ Jonny in wilderness of the cyberspace, passively waiting, whereas he is the one in control of this scenario. I argue that the novel thus presents a cyber instance of (re-)gaining rhetorical sovereignty in Lyon's sense.

Can Aydın is a research associate who is currently working on his PhD at TU Dresden in American Studies. His dissertation focuses on contemporary poetry, and prose created by queer Indigenous authors and poets such as Billy-Ray Belcourt, Joshua Whitehead and Tommy Pico in which Indigeneity and queerness are explored against and within the settler states of the U.S. and Canada.

Representation of Future Sovereignities in *Salt Fish Girl* and *The Tiger Flu*

Sababa Monjur

Engaging with the future is never more pressing than in uncertain times marked by the proliferation of existential crises, structural inequalities, and environmental degradation. With a conceptual focus on future sovereignties, this paper addresses how non-human sovereignty is continually questioned and contested by the violent anthropocentric biopolitical regimes in *Salt Fish Girl* and *The Tiger Flu* by Larissa Lai. The quest of the enslaved clones in both texts are infused with contemporary crises – climate catastrophe, entrenched exclusion and racism, and homophobia. By scrutinizing the extractive techno-capitalist policies that exploit the marginalized communities – the Sonia sisters and the Grist sisters respectively, the paper discusses how Lai raises questions regarding the bodily autonomy and advocates for non-human sovereignty in the following order: First, the paper illustrates how, on the one hand, the female clones in *Salt Fish Girl* are denied reproductive rights and their children are murdered by the authority while the Grist Mother-double's self-replication in *The Tiger Flu* is considered 'unnatural' on the other. Secondly, the paper inspects how these cloned female bodies are used as test-subjects for resource extraction: the Sonia sisters are treated as disposable biomaterial in the former and the Grist sisters are not only executed but also consumed in the name of scientific experiments in the latter. Lastly, the historical perspective of exclusion is taken into consideration as both Sonia and Grist sisters were created from the DNA of Asian women which problematizes the hierarchical positioning of the non-human. Drawing heavily on Donna Haraway, the paper suggests that Lai simultaneously highlights the potential for abuse of the non-human that raises ethical questions about non-human sovereignty and hopes for a more inclusive future that will be shaped by the desire to rediscover kinship and reclaim agency.

Sababa Monjur is currently enrolled as a doctoral student at Philipps University, Marburg. She earned her MA in North American Studies from the same institute. Her research interest includes science fiction, utopian studies, gender studies, environmental studies, and ecofeminism. The latter area is the focus of her dissertation. She is a member of Nachwuchsforum der Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien and Science Fiction Research Association. She was a visiting graduate student at University of Toronto, Canada as the recipient of ICCS Graduate Scholarship 2022.

PANEL 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY & INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Decolonizing Dualistic and Anthropocentric Structures: Environmental Sovereignty based on Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Laura Michler

Since environmental ethics is mainly informed by traditional Western ethical thinking, Indigenous perspectives remain underrepresented and situated at the margins. Zoe Todd (Métis) notes that in many cases Indigenous peoples are not even included in academic research, which speaks to the ongoing challenge of colonization. The gap between Indigenous and Western approaches to the environment can be fruitfully explored by having a closer look at the underlying worldviews that support these different epistemologies. Whereas Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) emphasize respect and reciprocity among human beings and nature, Western worldviews are commonly informed by dualistic structures and anthropocentrism. This tension between these two worldviews presents a challenge for environmental ethics in terms of finding common ground regarding biocentrism and how it can be practiced. Within my research I investigate the links of dualism and anthropocentrism to colonialism, xenophobia and racism. As emphasized by Deborah B. McGregor (Anishinaabe), analyzing these connections and exploring the gap between IKS and Western approaches is necessary to achieve Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) and to find a path to-ward reconciliation. Yet, IEJ and reconciliation cannot be realized if Indigenous communities struggle to protect the environment. For instance, according to Amnesty International, Wet’suwet’en land defenders in Canada are at risk of serious human rights violations as the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline has reportedly begun under the Wedzin Kwa (Morice River). This violation of the community’s right to self-determination reflects a step backwards in Canada’s journey toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The tensions between Indigenous and Western worldviews are reflected in these injustices and violations and therefore understanding IKS is one step closer to the recognition of Indigenous rights in terms of environmental self-determination.

Laura Michler: My name is Laura Michler and I am enrolled in the Master program of Philosophy at the University of Bonn since April 2021. During my Bachelor program I studied Philosophy and English Studies. Currently I am working on my master thesis in which I focus on the fields of environmental ethics and justice and Indigenous studies. In addition to my studies, I work as a research assistant at the Center for Science and Thought (CST), Institute for Philosophy at the University of Bonn since July 2020. Before that I worked as a student assistant in the International Office, University of Bonn (from August 2019 until June 2020). Previous to my studies, I have been to Canada for a year (Work&Travel and WWOOFing).

Competing Energy Sovereignties in Canada

Emiliano Castillo Jara

Connecting political economy of energy transitions and settler colonial literatures, this paper provides a theoretical explanation of the conflicting and overlapping energy sovereignties in Canada. Energy sovereignty has (re)emerged as central issue in global politics due to the energy transition race, COVID-19 supply chains disruptions and the war in Ukraine. Based on critical discourse analysis, this work specifically looks at how different actors mobilize and legitimize competing sovereignty claims over fossil fuel resources and infrastructures. At international level, fossil fuel projects in Canada, including those labeled as carbon-neutral, are part of larger infrastructure networks primarily designed to provide crude oil to carbon-intensive industries in the United States (US). US energy dominance over Canada is institutionalized through the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which allows U.S.-based energy and financial corporations to access and control Canadian fossil fuels reserves. At national level, the federal government and the oil-rich province of Alberta are engaged in a legal dispute over a carbon tax plan. Whereas the former frames climate change as a national security concern to justify the imposition of its decarbonization agenda, the latter claims the federal administration has no right to infringe provincial jurisdiction over fossil fuel development on environmental grounds. Federal-provincial tensions reinforce assertions of settler sovereignty as they normalize the expansion of fossil fuel activities on Indigenous Peoples' lands, rendering them as empty spaces and energy sacrifice zones. Across Canada, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis are involved in energy development in contrasting ways, ranging from co-investment in hydrocarbon operations to ownership of renewable energy projects. In doing so, they seek to assert land sovereignty and influence energy policymaking. In discussing the complexities of energy sovereignty, this article contributes to debates on the contestations around energy transition pathways

Emiliano Castillo Jara is a Geography PhD candidate at the Governance & Sustainability Lab at Trier University. He did his Master's in International Relations and Political Science at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Drawing on political ecology and energy geography perspectives, his research project explores the contested politics of tar sands infrastructures in Canada.

Reclaiming Sovereignty: Strategies of Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention in the Canadian Arctic

Gabriela Kwiatek

Since the late 1980s, there has been an unusually high number of suicides and cases of self-harm among the Indigenous inhabitants of the Canadian Arctic, the Inuit. Particularly drastic are the statistics on child and adolescent suicides. This appears to be primarily a symptom of historical trauma which was acquired due to the colonization and assimilation processes and passed down from generation to generation. Federal policies such as residential schools, forced relocations and settlement have directly contributed to severing family ties and abandoning traditional lifestyles. Over the years the federal government tried to address the issue of the Inuit youth suicide crisis through various proposals. However, the best strategies to end the suicide crisis are the ones respecting and incorporating Indigenous leadership, upholding kinship-centered traditions and ceremonies, and investing in psychological support and family therapy for the first inhabitants of the Arctic. To effectively address the problem, a solution must be comprehensive and Inuit-specific rather than symptom-focused. In recent years, three suicide prevention strategy programs were announced. In 2010 “Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy”, in 2013 “National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy Program Framework”, and in 2017 “Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan 2017-2022”, so far the most detailed and most engaging one.

I will briefly outline how particular federal policies and programs in the Canadian Arctic have impacted the communal well-being of the Inuit, explain the specifics of this crisis, including the most common risk factors for Inuit youth, and review the most important strategies aimed at decreasing suicide rates among Inuit youth and ultimately achieving *saimaqatigiiniq*.

Gabriela Kwiatek is a North American Studies Master’s student at Jagiellonian University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree after defending a thesis on the topic of “The Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women in 21st Century Canada in the Context of Eugenics”. She is a member of the Polish Association of Canadian Studies and the North American Studies Academic Society at Jagiellonian University. She recently completed an internship at the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw and was a speaker at several national and international conferences, discussing topics related to Canadian foreign policy, diplomacy as well as internal, Indigenous affairs. She is currently working on a research project on “Turtle Island’s First Nations and Aotearoa’s Māori – collaboration in the field of decolonization of birthing practices” partially funded by Inicjatywa Doskonałości UJ.

Reliving the Indigenous Body: The 'Becoming-Material' of Indigenous Ghost and Zombie Characters

Jula Eberth

Indigenous horror fiction offers a variety of spectral or zombie characters that come back to 'haunt' or interact with the living. As their bodies fight for materiality and withstand decomposing, the embodied narratives and histories in these bodies resist being forgotten, gain agency for their own motivations and find their ways back into the consciousness and knowledges of the living and of literature. They counteract the notion of the 'Indian ghost' as haunting asynchronous remnant of the past that serves only as a spiritual guide or as a warning and find ways to use their (un-)dead bodies as sites of resistance. For this submission, I will critically examine the motif of the 'Indian Ghost' prominent in North American 'settler gothic horror', exploring how the notion of American and Canadian nationalism and its claim on the land is partly dependent on the image that Indigenous existence and sovereignty is placed within the immaterial realm of ghosts and imagination. By exploring different ghost and zombie-like characters in works by Stephen Graham Jones and Nathan Niigan Noodin Adler, my research places Indigenous sovereignty and existentialism in the realm of the material, especially in the materiality of the body and draws links to Indigenous peoples' personal narratives, histories, knowledges, and identities as being embodied in the body and bodily practices. With 'becoming-material' again, the bodies of Indigenous ghosts and zombies resist being silenced and forgotten, drawing important links to body politics and resistant strategies through the body which have strong relevance for contemporary Indigenous resistance and sovereignty politics.

Jula Ebert: I am currently in my bachelor's program for Linguistics, Culture and Literature Studies, where my main subjects are English and American Studies, as well as Art History at TU Dresden. After having spent around eight months in British Columbia in 2017-2018 and being more involved in American and Canadian Studies, I have decided for my bachelors thesis to focus on the interconnection of Indigenous Studies and New Materialisms. Afterwards, I am planning to pursue a masters and a PhD in the field of American Studies. Besides my interest in American Culture and Literature, I love spending time in museums and theatres and around dogs of all shapes and sizes.

Le régionalisme littéraire dans les nouvelles « Un vagabond frappe à notre porte » de Gabrielle Roy et « Chauffe le poêle ! » de Germaine Guèvremont

Afaf El yaakoubi

Après la publication du *Survenant*, Germaine Guèvremont continue son aventure avec la famille des Beauchemin dans sa nouvelle intitulée « Chauffe le poêle ». Appelée une nouvelle régionaliste ou nouvelle de mœurs paysannes, elle décrit une réalité campagnarde et rurale dans une période de Noël. Elle met sur un piédestal la campagne comme un entourage modeste qui assure le bonheur familial et la prospérité de la vie. « Chauffe la poêle » représente un cadre chaleureux et conviviale dans le plus sacré moment de l'année: l'avant-veille de Noël.

La contemporaine de Germaine Guèvremont, Gabriel Roy, connue par œuvre mettant sur un piédestal un réalisme social et interculturel, met également en avant la rusticité dans des écrits comme dans sa nouvelle typique : « Un vagabond frappe à notre porte ». Elle raconte la vie rustique et simple de la famille Trudeau menée dans un endroit lointain et éloigné de la Plaine. Cette vie calme sera interrompue par l'avènement d'un étranger qui dit être un cousin du père Arthur qui a émigré au Québec il y a longtemps. L'inconnu les informe des nouvelles de la famille du Québec, or les Trudeau se montrent méfiants et soupçonneux de ses informations. Le cousin demeure trois semaines et les passe à raconter des contes interminables. Dans une atmosphère chaleureuse, la famille Trudeau se rassemble autour de lui pour les apprécier.

L'attachement à la terre, la convivialité et le religieux dans « Chauffe le poêle » de Germaine Guèvremont et la présence du conteur dans « Un vagabond frappe à notre porte » de Gabriel Roy nous laissent entrevoir un caractère régionaliste des deux nouvelles. En suivant un plan analytique nous tenons à savoir en quoi ces nouvelles peuvent-elle être considérées comme des nouvelles régionalistes (on peut également dire « nouvelle du terroir ») ?

Afaf El yaakoubi: Je suis Afaf El yaakoubi, titulaire d'un master en Francophonie, politique linguistique et éducative à la Faculté des Sciences de l'Éducation, Université Mohamed V de Rabat, au Maroc. Actuellement inscrite en troisième année du cycle doctoral en Éducation, culture, art et didactique des langues et de la littérature française. Mon projet doctoral porte sur la problématique de l'appropriation culturelle entre éthique et usurpation de légitimité dans le contexte québécois. Il relève à la fois des domaines anthropologique et littéraire. Dans mes recherches, je m'intéresse aux enjeux de l'immigration intellectuelle des écrivains et des artistes au Québec.

Reclaiming Narratives: A Close Reading of Kent Monkman's Exhibition "Being Legendary" at the Royal Ontario Museum (October 8, 2022 – April 16, 2023)

Marie Hummel

Kent Monkman is one of the most prominent Indigenous artists in Canada, known for appropriating Western artistic painting traditions and changing their narratives. American frontier paintings such as those by Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole, or Asher Brown Durand usually tell the story of empty lands and natural riches. In their visual imaginary of sublime landscape, it seems like the American continent was only waiting for the European colonizers to extract its resources and begin settlement. The myth of terra nullius contributes to what Lawrence Buell calls the "aesthetic of the not-there" (143), which relies on a romanticized idea of untouched nature. Indigenous communities and their lives were not shown, except as ghostly figures and examples of an ostensibly vanishing race (see Bergland).

Monkman's newest exhibition "Being Legendary" is an addition to his work, as it tells a new history of Turtle Island, privileging Cree worldviews. Narrated by his time-travelling, gender-fluid alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, a legendary being herself, the exhibition honors Indigenous knowledge keeping and the long and interwoven past Cree people have with their lands. With the help of irony, satire, and hyperbole Miss Chief creates a humorous narrative that takes the viewer on a journey through time: beginning with the creation of the first human and concluding with a glance towards the glorious future of Indigenous peoples, celebrating current voices of the Cree community.

In this talk, I want to engage more deeply with Kent Monkman's art practice by paying particular attention to the ways his paintings subvert the colonial gaze and redirect it at the Euro-American viewer. I am also interested in the overarching narrative of the exhibition and consider how (Indigenous) storytelling reshapes and reflects contemporary worldviews

Bibliography:

Bergland, Renée. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Dartmouth College Press, 2000.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination. Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. HUP, 1996.

Marie Hummel is a graduate student at TU Dresden in the fields of North American studies as well as Art History. She just started working on her master's thesis tentatively titled "Reclaiming Narratives. A Close Reading of Kent Monkman's exhibition Being Legendary at the Royal Ontario Museum." A four-week research stay in Toronto was kindly funded by the GKS to visit the exhibition in person, talk with museum educators, and conduct on-site research in libraries and archives.

Indigenous Reservations and Metropolitan Centers; Slow Violence and Its Dynamics in Thomas King's *The Back of the Turtle* (2014)

Grigorios Iliopoulos

The presentation will offer the examination of the relationship between the urban center of Toronto and the rural parts of British Columbia in Thomas King's *The Back of the Turtle*. Emphasis will be placed upon Indigenous Canadians inhabiting reservations and the manner in which urban centers commit acts of slow and structural violence (Robb Nixon 2010, Johan Galtung 1969) over them by regulating their environment and rights from afar. The city remains a hub of official/governmental power (Ana Maria Fraile-Marcos 2014) casting its influence far beyond its limits into the vastness of the Canadian space. Regulations concerning the environment and its natural resources but also the identities and citizen rights of Indigenous Canadians are examples of the aforementioned emanating powers of the city. The characters in King's novel attempt to find the agency they have been stripped from and readdress these issues. Finally, the dynamics between an active/outreaching urban hub and an exploited rural area can be seen around us in several countries, thus King's ideas about a small densely populated area exerting its influence over a vast natural one can be extrapolated to fit the conditions of even non-Canadian contexts.

Grigorios Iliopoulos: I am a PhD Candidate in the School of English, Department of American Literature and Culture at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Currently, I am in my second year of my PhD. My doctoral dissertation focuses on contemporary Canadian literature and the city of Toronto. I also hold a BA in English Language and Literature, and an MA in English and American Studies from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. My research interests include urban studies, Canadian studies, spatial and geocritical studies, and contemporary North American literature. As a part of my PhD I have audited classes from the Department of Architecture of AUTH, worked as an assistant librarian and taught a first-year course on academic writing and research skills in the School of English. Furthermore, I work as an English language teacher in a language center in Thessaloniki.