

## **Intersections of Environmental Humanities and Indigenous Studies**

ASLE 2017 Pre-Conference Seminar

Tuesday, June 20, 1-5 pm

### *Theme*

This pre-conference seminar seeks to advance discussion of the intersections between Indigenous studies and ecocriticism. In addition to familiarizing participants with earlier connections between these fields, the seminar will serve as an opportunity to envision future collaborations and interdisciplinary work. Given the steady growth of Native American and Indigenous Studies, as well as the developments of posthumanism and the material turn, new critical projects and perspectives are arising in addition to—or as elaborations of—abiding scholarly investigations of land, colonialism, resistance, revitalization, language, and identity. The robust, sustained engagement with Indigenous artists, texts, and topics at ASLE conferences, not to mention urgent, contemporary socio-political issues (e.g., #NoDAPL, the official declaration of the Anthropocene, political declarations on the rights of Nature, Indigenous “resurgence” and Indigenous cosmologies in the realm of politics), suggests that this seminar would be well received at the 2017 conference. The seminar promises to be an enriching gathering, one that will help launch the Indigenous Ecocriticism special interest group as it offers in-depth discussion and imagination of the relationships between ecocriticism and Indigenous studies.

### *Structure*

Participants will be asked to submit position papers (7-10 pages) ahead of the seminar. Questions for consideration include

- *Keywords for Environmental Studies* (NYU P, 2016) features an entry on “indigeneity,” while *Native Studies Keywords* (Arizona State UP, 2015) devotes a section to “land.” What are the significant commonalities and differences in the ways land and indigeneity are theorized in ecocriticism and Indigenous studies? What is the state of the relationship(s) between the fields of ecocriticism and Indigenous studies?

- What challenges do scholars and activists face when discussing indigeneities in the Americas (and beyond)?
- How are urban Indigenous identities engaged in critiquing (settler) colonialism? How are they connected to issues around *land*?
- In what ways does Indigenous ecocriticism offer new spaces to discuss projects for resistance and revival of subjugated knowledges?
- In what ways do globalizing Indigenous identities or trans-Indigenous identities come to bear on global environmental issues? What insights does indigeneity bring to debates about scale (e.g., between local and global)?
- How have Indigenous knowledges and cosmologies changed the course of environmental justice movements? How can scholarly work on environmental

justice best support scholarly work on decolonization, and vice versa? Where are such projects aligned and where do they diverge?

Receiving the papers in advance, the seminar coordinators will trace common themes and interests in order to further organize the seminar. The seminar will begin with participant introductions and opening remarks from the coordinators, including the common themes. Participants will briefly reiterate the main points of their position papers, after which breakout sessions will offer more extensive exchanges on particular themes and positions. The final hour will be devoted to synthesizing the position papers in order to outline and draft a document of our findings, which will serve the Indigenous Ecocriticism special interest group and the ASLE membership. Depending on their availability, Indigenous community members in the Detroit area may be invited to present in the seminar.

#### *Coordinators*

**Abigail Pérez Aguilera** is an Adjunct Faculty Member at Westminster College. She researches and writes about contemporary Indigenous movements, literature written by women of colour and its connections to environmental social movements, forced displacement, gender violence, and global politics. Her most recent work appears in *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies: Conversations from Earth to Cosmos* (ed. Joni Adamson and Salma Monani; Routledge, 2017).

**Kyle Bladow** is Assistant Professor of Native American Studies at Northland College. His current work seeks to place material ecocriticism into better dialogue with Indigenous studies. Earlier work appears in *Gastronomica*, *New International Voices in Ecocriticism*, and *A Bioregional Imagination*; he has also served as Managing Editor for *ISLE*.

#### **Seminar Recommended Reading**

Adamson, Joni. *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2001.

---. "Cosmovisions: Environmental Justice, Transnational American Studies, and Indigenous Literature." *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*. Ed. Greg Garrard. New York: Oxford UP, 2014. 172-87.

Adamson, Joni and Salma Monani, eds. *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies: Conversations from Earth to Cosmos*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Barrenechea, Antonio, and Heidrun Moertl. "Hemispheric Indigenous Studies: Introduction." *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal* 11.2 (2013): 109-23.

Castellanos, María Bianet, Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, and Arturo J. Aldama, eds. *Comparative indigeneities of the Américas: Toward a hemispheric approach*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012.

Clifford, James. *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013.

De la Cadena, Marisol. "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual reflections beyond 'politics.'" *Cultural anthropology* 25.2 (2010): 334-370.

- Gaard, Greta. "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Ed. Greta Gaard. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993. 295-314.
- Stewart-Harawira, Makere. *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization*. Zed Books, 2005.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013.
- LaDuke, Winona. *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Cambridge: South End P, 1999. Print.
- Nadasdy, Paul. "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism." *Ethnohistory* 52:2 (Spring 2005): 292-331.
- Ray, Sarah Jaquette. *The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American Culture*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2013.
- Schweninger, Lee. *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2008.
- Simpson, Leanne, ed. *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2008.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed, 1999.
- Turner, Dale. *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.
- Waters, Anne, ed. *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Whyte, Kyle Powys. "On the Role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a Collaborative Concept: A Philosophical Study." *Ecological Processes* 2.7 (April 2013): 1-12. *Ecological Processes*. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- Wildcat, Daniel. *Red Alert!: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2009.