



# Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society Speakers' Abstracts

**Maria Beldi Alcantar**

*Indigenous Youth: perceptions of body*

The conception of the body for indigenous peoples is very different than the Western society, as known it is not made by members and organs but is total. The aim of this work is to demonstrate how the indigenous youth have a dialog about the bio-cultural conception of the body. In indigenous schools, teachers teach the biological body, but in daily life they have other perceptions, as a kind of resemantization of holistic and fragmentations, resulting in what Bhabha calls hybridizations conceptions of body. This is important to know, because any intervention from a bicultural point of view leads to an open dialogue, and the practice of this process is very helpful for the Western societies in terms of the adhesions of the treatment.

**Alysha Edwards**

*Issues in Culture Heritage Studies and Anthropology: Reflecting on the Challenges Posed by the 'Inconvenient Indian'*

In present day cultural heritage studies (anthropology), we can recognize the progress made towards meaningful and ethical research through inclusive relationships in academia with communities that traditionally, would be the subject of research in anthropology and archaeology. Recognizing this, while my experience in academia is limited, here I offer observations and critiques to what are considered 'issues in cultural heritage studies'. Here it can be argued, the issue is within anthropology- as a discipline struggling to move beyond traditional styles of academic research, where the Aboriginal desire for representation and consultation has challenged and continues to challenge what is or was considered the study of culture. Here, I discuss political and theoretical issues relevant to heritage ownership, representation, Indigenous knowledges, the 'crisis of accumulation', and the growing development of Indigenous studies and the implications for anthropology.

**Neyooxet Greymorning**

*ASLA Raising Indigenous Voices*

In 2014, while on sabbatical I happen to learn about a young man teaching an Aboriginal language to a group of adults in Coffs Harbour over a two-week period from 9 am to noon. I was immediately curious how some 12 or more were able to give up 3 hours a day for two weeks so I decided to find out where they were and drop in on them, and thus began a sustained relationship toward revitalizing the Gumbayngirr language through ASLA. In my presentation I will talk generally about ASLA language teacher training workshops and strategies, and specifically how sustained training workshops enabled a small group of committed adult language learners to rise above the loss of their last first language fluent speaker in 2020 to become highly proficient speakers of Gumbayngirr and establish a first ever Gumbayngirr passive immersion language school in the state of New South Wales, Australia.

**Rylan Higgins**

*Is Reconciliation Dead at Saint Mary's University?*

Saint Mary's University (SMU) is located on the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people in what they call Kjiipuktuk, but which most settlers call Halifax. The Mi'kmaq flag can be seen from the window in the Anthropology office, many talks and lectures start with a land acknowledgement, and there are a range of "cultural" events throughout the year meant to signal that SMU is taking reconciliation seriously. However, there is growing frustration among the small number of indigenous scholars on campus that the university has made far too little progress in meaningfully responding to the Calls to Action in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Report. What has happened at SMU feels increasingly tokenistic. In this talk, I will explain the current and evolving response by concerned faculty members who fear SMU will never achieve even rudimentary goals when it comes to respecting and raising Indigenous voices on our campus.



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**Julia Hodgins**

*Bending refractions: Tracing the Persistence of Colonial Imagery about Canadian Indigenous Women*

The assumptions about differences between Europeans and earlier inhabitants of the “new Continent” linger in the culture, underpinning social interactions and, in some cases, even policy that remains in vigour. What gives power to such ideas already disproved by science? Ethnographers had studied the chronicles and accounts of explorers, missionaries, and other actors during the Encounter Era when Europeans – British and French primarily – approached Canadian land. Their perceptions of the life of indigenous Canadians, particularly of women, soon became the core content that played a strategic role in enabling the colonization of Canada. For specific reasons, these new social patterns that shaped the interactions between fur traders and pre-colonial Canadians have survived through the centuries. This presentation explores the social forces that facilitate the survival of such content under the light of social science theory aiming to explain the process. This research revisits scholarship and scours textual sources to question the tectonic sources of privilege in Canadian culture.

**Andrew Hugos**

*Maintaining language, culture and cohesiveness*

Maintaining indigenous language, culture and group identity is a significant challenge for people whose heritage and lifestyle is different from the mainstream of society. Once daily use of the language of one's forbears is lost, the number of native speakers will decline rapidly. Cultural traditions and customs may begin to be set aside as well. Within a few generations mainstream modernity may all but absorb members of heritage groups. The paper will look at a number of groups and languages: Mayan, Aztec, Navajo and Cherokee tribes as well as Quakers, Amish and Mennonites. I will seek to determine what factors influence the survival and growth in the use of languages as well as declines in the number of native speakers. Also, cultural mores will be examined to seek their relationship to maintaining the identity of heritage groups and languages. For instance, to what degree a group can foster interaction with the mainstream society while still avoiding assimilation into the dominant culture. Also, how can a group incentivize young people to remain and live within their heritage group. What techniques are employed to keep group culture vibrant and alive? Technology too will be examined seeking to determine if advances in technology inherently degrade heritage cultures, or if technologies can be adapted to support cultures other than the mainstream culture.

**Judit Kadar**

*Unique Indigenous Voice Raising: Identity Negotiation in Mixedblood Narratives*

On the threshold of some emerging areas, like Critical Indigenous and Critical Mixed-Race Studies, this presentation is to address two RIVAS2023 foci: revitalization and indigenous identity, specifically the “broken taboos and uncomfortable truths” of Mixedblood identity on the Southwestern Borderland. A brief reference to visual arts and Canadian literature will be offered, too. Fiction by Gunn Allen, Silko, Owens and Harjo presents the combination of Pueblo Indian, Latino/a and various non-Indigenous heritages making each individual unique in terms of ethno-cultural identity. “Conflicting blood” may generate various challenges and can turn into a blended cultural asset. I explore how the colonizer-versus-colonized ancestry may challenge the individual in the clashing western and Indigenous cosmologies and indicate the difficulties of reconnecting with tribal heritage. We can observe the fluctuation between more social identities, the problems of shame, stigma and ethnic choice, cognitive dissonance, authenticity, identification and validation, questions like “How do we gather in a good way?”, or how post-racial nations in North America perceive Indigeneity as part of the blend. Ethnic Positioning in Southwestern Mixed Heritage Writing (2022) answers these questions.





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**Raymond Kelly**

*Empowering the Giyipara: Aboriginal Language and Cultural Education Possibilities*

The current desire by the Australian education system for the inclusion of Aboriginal languages from early childhood to tertiary levels evokes a range of responses from within Aboriginal communities. Firstly, there has not been a true reconciliation acknowledging the centuries-long structural displacement of our peoples and languages, nor of the critical and destructive role which both the education system and educators themselves played in this process. Secondly, the education system continues to seek a homogenous Aboriginal voice- which conforms to the 'expert' analysis of White linguists and privileges those voices over community based 'enculturated listeners'. This paper considers the author's attempts to mediate these difficulties through a model of giyipara, liberating language from the pages of ethnographies and from a static position which will ultimately empower colonial linguicide. Using examples from his own teaching in multiple contexts, the paper will show that giyipara is a practice of adaptability, growth, where multiple opinions can flourish and both truth telling and learning can occur.

**Longshibeni N. Kithan**

*Traditional Water Knowledge in times of crisis: A study of the Indigenous Lotha Nagas in Northeast India*

Globally, the increasing quest for adequate and clean water has necessitated innovative ways of engaging with water at different policy formulation and execution levels. Further, Traditional water knowledge is conceived as highly useful for cognizance of water's quality and quantity concerns. In this connection, a study was undertaken among the Lotha Nagas in Northeast India for its potential water knowledge. This knowledge was passed down several generations through word of mouth (oral tradition). Although conflicts and struggles with water persist among the Lotha Nagas, newer forms of resilience and adaptation have become evident with the evolved social system. This backdrop discusses the traditional perception, valuation, and management of water, as derived from the oral narratives of the Lotha Nagas of Nagaland state in northeast India. The oral narratives, which are the persuasive surviving account of the Lotha Nagas, offer a window to the indigenous worldview, enable thinking with water, and infer lessons that may facilitate solutions to contemporary water problems.

**Ram Babu Maallavarapu, Kalyana Rao Kathi**

*Implementation of MGNREGA Schemes in the Tribal Areas of South Odisha State, India: Impact and Outcomes; A Study of Eight Villages/Habitations Covering Four Grama Panchayats Representing Two Blocks In The Koraput District Through The Emic Anthropological Perspective*

The proposed paper aims to analyse the process of implementation, and the impacts and outcomes of the MGNREGA initiatives in the Scheduled Areas (SAs)—tribal areas of the Koraput District in particular and the South Odisha State, India in general covering—the concerns of livelihoods, magnitude of human migrations and effects of the pandemic (COVID 19) through the emic anthropological perspectives.



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## **Georges De Medts**

### *Plants, old knowledge and bright future in Naturally Native*

The film offers Red-Horse the opportunity to confront a range of problems which Native peoples face in their everyday lives, such as violence against Native women, the persistence of racist imagery in sports mascots, and cultural appropriation. On their way to establishing their business, the sisters encounter racism and blood quantum requirements, to finally find support from their matrilineal tribe, thus re-connecting with their relatives. Ultimately, Naturally Native is a bright and optimistic narrative that supports and imagines a future for Indigenous peoples. The idea of producing and selling health and beauty products is rooted in the knowledge from the past, which the protagonists use to create something new adapted to the present-day needs, and therefore, is definitely turned towards the future. Showing Native culture as the material from which creation arises, Naturally Native illustrates how art can open up a space of sovereignty in which environmental issues and self-determination meet.

## **Tyler Pennock**

### *Kwenahociiishaac: Oral Tradition as a Subversive Teaching Practice*

This presentation brings together texts that influence me and my experiences as a Teacher, Language Instructor, Creative Writer, and Youth worker, and now Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. It will be creative telling of how I've navigated the inclusion Indigenous perspectives in the Academy, using interpretations of First Wives Club, Heart Berries, and Monkey Beach. I will also include some of my own published and in-progress works. Relying on the works of Edward Said, Judith Butler, and Basil Johnston, my hope is to creatively expose and interrogate my creeping suspicion that continuity of Indigenous perspectives in global literature may require a shift in our collective appreciation of intertextuality within oral traditions.

## **Bimadoshka Pucan**

### *Forensic Document Analysis of Treaty 45.5*


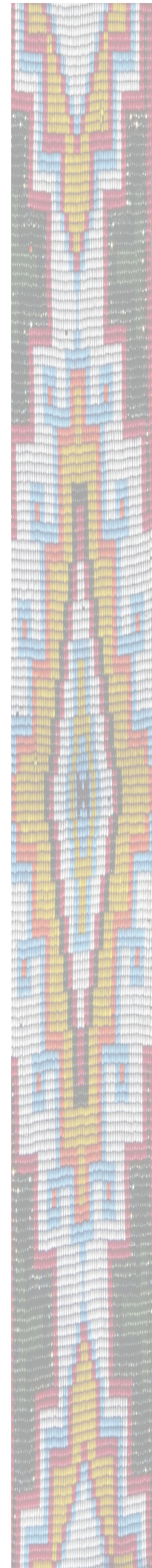
Forensic Document Analysis of Treaty 45.5 The recent retrieval of the Sir Francis Bond Head Treaty Pipe of 1836 (smoked at Manitowaning, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada) by Anishinaabeg leadership and archivists has called the attention of Anishinaabeg scholars. As a member of the Saugeen First Nation, my research into "Treaty 45 and a Half" begins with Bond Head's reference to the "Crooked Place" (Niagara Falls, 1794) and carries through the treaty process of 1836 and into the ongoing aftermath of what should be considered the greatest theft of Indians Lands known to the colonized world. This presentation highlights forensic document analysis, community oral history and future community commitments prior to publication.

## **Charlotte Ross**

### *Adult Cree Silent Speakers: Awakening the Cree language*

Silent or latent speakers are adults who were raised hearing their Indigenous language, understand it but are not active speakers (Basham, 2008; FPCC). This doctoral research gives voice to their experiences and is one of the first research studies that focus on the journey of spoken language loss and language recovery for adult Cree silent speakers in Canada. Their unique language strength encapsulates understanding the language including the physical sound memory of intonation, pitch and rise. In combination with the spiritual connection to language that silent speakers have, this can provide them with an opportunity to awaken the spoken language with a strong foundation of language learning. Based on survey results, interviews and focus groups, I will share my research findings to strengthen Indigenous language revitalization.





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## **Ezekiel Stear**

### ***Riding the Hyper-Lizard: Nahua Futurities in a Huastecan Maize God Narrative***

The Nahua story “Chicomexochitl huan Tenantzitzimitl” (“Seven Corn and the Angry Grandmother”) depicts the Huastecan maize deity Chicomexochitl facing trials from his malevolent grandmother Tenantzitzimitl. Outsmarting her, Chicomexochitl journeys and overcomes physical challenges in search of his father. Analyzing Eduardo de la Cruz’s (Nahua) version recorded from his elders (2015, University of Warsaw), I emphasize the story’s future-oriented content in parallels between the plot and the corn life cycle. Victoriano de la Cruz (Nahua) has analyzed how the story links ancestral cultural forms and contemporary rituals. Alan Sandstrom and Peregrina Llanes have also examined references to rituals in the story. Drawing on work by Laura Harjo (Muskoke) and Emalani Case (Hawaiian) regarding Indigenous futurities, I examine Nahua futurities specific to this narrative. Focusing on Chicomexochitl’s gathering of strength to overcome hardships and support Nahua wellbeing, I argue that the text posits a futurity based on the life, death, and rebirth cycles of corn. My reading affirms Nahua lifeways and extends the concept of Indigenous futurities beyond Native groups in current U.S. territory, shedding light on path-seeking activities of the Nahuas.

## **Paulette Steeves**

### ***Indigenous Archaeology and Pyroepistemology: Reclaiming and Reviving Deep Indigenous History***

Indigenous archaeologies privilege Indigenous voices, weaving Indigenous knowledge, and histories through Western centered Indigenous histories to reclaim and revive Indigenous histories and humanities erased and denied by Western archaeology. This is not an archaeology of resistance; it is an archaeology of reclaiming, revivance and healing. Archaeologists often identify the Indigenous people of Turtle Island as Asians from Asia, a culture and country that did not exist in the deep past. Yet, in many Indigenous genesis histories, Indigenous people say they have been here since time immemorial. The traditional western archaeological story argues that Indigenous people have been in the Western Hemisphere for 12- 15 kya. Disconnecting Indigenous people from their ancient homelands and identities is violent, destructive, and ongoing. In listening to oral histories and weaving them through archaeological evidence, I argue that Indigenous people have been in the Western Hemisphere for over 130 kya. Reclaiming and rewriting deep Indigenous history and relinking Indigenous people to their ancient homelands is a path to healing for Indigenous people.

## **Shay Sullivan**

### ***A Linguistic Intervention Reflection: Pushing Linguists to get Involved in Endangered Language Revitalization***

This paper details a Linguistic Intervention Project conducted at the University of Colorado, Boulder (CU). This intervention sought to educate other linguists in my department about endangered language revitalization more broadly, through discussing my work in the field of language revitalization as a practitioner of Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA<sup>®</sup>). The goals of this project were to 1) educate other linguists about ASLA<sup>®</sup> and my experience as a practitioner, both student and teacher, 2) engage my fellow linguists in seminar-like discussions about the role of the linguist and what it means to do good language work in a community with low speaker numbers, 3) encourage and inspire other linguists to think about their work and how it can benefit or be modified to benefit language revival efforts. Because linguistics operates in a greater colonial agenda housed in Anthropology, more interventions such as these should be carried out in future spheres in which academic linguists operate, not only to push a decolonial way of engaging in language work, but also to engage linguists positively in language revitalization efforts.