



## **Reframing the Human: Making New Sense of Nonsense of Eurocentric Discourses surrounding Aboriginal Peoples**

*Professor Marie Battiste, University of Saskatchewan, Canada*

This presentation aims to build awareness of Eurocentrism, the grand narrative of contemporary society, and the narratives and discourses that have constructed an imagined reality of Aboriginal peoples from which colonization and cognitive imperialism could be achieved. It reveals the nature of dispositional theory as used to characterize Aboriginal peoples as authors not victims of their situations. It aims to unpack the colonial blame frames of Eurocentrism, build new frames to interrupt the colonial blame frames within Eurocentrism/racism, and reimagine and restore Indigenous knowledge systems as strength based learning for both Aboriginal learners and non-Aboriginal learners. How these can be applied to education and to violence prevention work is offered.

Marie Battiste, a Mi'kmaq, is an educator from the Potlo'tek First Nations of Cape Breton (Unama'kik), Nova Scotia. She is the academic director of the Aboriginal Educational Research Centre Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan and a leading scholar in the Indigenous humanities

## **Landscapes of Terminal Capitalism, Aporias of Responsibility: Lifeworlds Inherited, Inhabited and Bequeathed**

*Professor Myra Hird, Queen's University, Canada*

My research considers waste as a form of what I call terminal capitalism; a state whereby our only solution for dealing with the toxicity our relentless consumption and planetary depletion generates is by producing permanently temporary waste deposits for imagined futures to resolve. Canada's waste landscape is as much colonial as it is ecological, as much inherited as it is bequeathed to future generations to resolve. Through a compendium of field notes, participant observation, interviews, and archival research, this address examines three Canadian waste landscapes that invite questions about what is and is not meant to be seen, uncovered, dealt with, admired, entrusted, and forgotten. This address reflects upon what it means to be interested in and curious about our waste legacy: how to prepare for, represent, and participate in waste landscapes, attending as much to geo-biological processes as human political-economic practices.

Myra J. Hird is Professor and Queen's National Scholar in the School of Environmental Studies, Queen's University, Canada ([www.myrahird.com](http://www.myrahird.com)). Professor Hird is Director of the *genera Research Group* (gRG), an interdisciplinary research network of collaborating natural, social, and humanities scholars, and Director of *Waste Flow*, an interdisciplinary research project focused on waste as a global scientific-technical and socio-ethical issue ([www.wasteflow.ca](http://www.wasteflow.ca)). Hird has published eight books and over fifty articles and book chapters on a diversity of topics relating to science studies.

## Life and Death in Geontology

*Professor Elizabeth Povinelli, Columbia University, USA*

The problems of finitude and precarity have centered discussions in Western philosophy and critical theory from Heidegger to Butler. Whether as an awareness of finitude as that which forms Dasein or as an inability to predict and secure existence, finitude and precarity have been premised on a distinctly human mode of extinguishment. This paper asks how the problem of life and death is disturbed when we shift the paradigmatic axis from human- and all biologically-defined life - to geos and geological existence.

Elizabeth Povinelli is an internationally acclaimed scholar in anthropology and the environmental humanities. Her primary interest is in "anthropologies of the otherwise." These studies focus on communities with other (alternative) ways of being and acting in the world in the time of late liberalism. Her recent work on geontologies, produced in collaboration with an Aboriginal community in Northern Australia, is an example of another way of understanding identity, based on the connection between human biographies and geologies of place. Her research into "otherwise" ways of thinking and acting, which draw closely from Indigenous epistemologies, bring fresh insights into rethinking the relations between humans and the geophysical environments in which we live.

## Kinship and Witness in this Time of Loss

*Professor Deborah Bird Rose, University of New South Wales, Australia*

We alive today are forever in debt, and forever called. The beauty of country calls us, and so does damage, death, and the past. This is life. My paper draws on my learning with Aboriginal people and with other teachers. I will take the analysis in two directions: first the great "we" of today, and second, the great challenges of "today." (1) "We"--these loops of connectivities; the living, the dead, and those yet to be born; organic and inorganic; at home and far away; ephemeral and enduring--the great kindred in all its networked relationships and specificities of place, time, and story. (2) The gifts of life and death traverse the flow of connectivities between past and future. Today in this time of loss we the kindred face into the unknown, unknowable, and unimaginable. We are called into witness: into modes of presence and forms of action and gratitude.

Deborah Bird Rose is a leading figure in the emerging environmental humanities movement and a prize-winning author of several books on Indigenous animal relations and cosmologies. She has a long history of working with Australian Aboriginal people on land claims and in other decolonizing contexts. In both scholarly and practical arenas, her work is focused on the convergence of social and ecological justice. Her current research focuses on human-animal relationships in this time of anthropogenic extinctions and on the question of what constitutes ethical relationships in this era of loss.

## Indians, animals, dirt: Place-thought and agency amidst Indigenous cosmologies

*Vanessa Watts-Powless, Queen's University, Canada*

This talk will examine the corrupted relations between Indigenous humans, non-humans and place as effected by Euro-western attempts at dispossession. These designs have been strategically and violently imposed to both appropriate Indigenous territory and simultaneously devalue essentialized relations within place. We see this exemplified not only in terms of destruction and the devaluing of place, but consequently amongst the human and non-human populations inherent to these territories. Place carries with it not only a unique physiology and design, but also extends itself to other living beings (i.e. humans) in terms of agency, a way of being, a responsibility, an ethics, etc. By re-centering the relationships inherent in Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee cosmologies between place, human, and non-humans, we can access the intentions of place and continue to revalue our sacred relationships.

Vanessa Watts-Powless is in the final year of her doctoral studies at Queen's University, and is currently in her first year of a limited-term appointment as an Assistant Professor at McMaster University.



RSVP by September 15th to [nelsonn@uvic.ca](mailto:nelsonn@uvic.ca)  
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