

(INTER)DISCIPLINARITIES: THE "NEW RELATIONALITY"?

..... APRIL 24-25, 2010

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY 1, Harry Hickman Building Room 105

8:00-9:00	Registration	
9:00-9:15	Opening Address	R.B.J. Walker (UVic)
9:15-10:30	*Plenary Address	Warren Magnussen (UVic), <i>Seeing Like a City: The Politics of Relationality</i>
10:45-12:00	Panel 1 – The Urban	Discussant Serena Kataoka (UVic)
	Delacey Tedesco (UVic)	Urbanization and the New Relationality: Political Ontology, Politicization and Aporetic Logic
	Timothy Durant (Oregon)	City Development and the Role of Relationality in Urban Politics
12:00-12:45	Lunch	
12:45-2:30	Panel 2 – Relational Ecologies	Discussant Michael Lukas (UVic)
	Richard Spavin (Utoronto)	Climate Theory: Relativism or Relationality? A comparative Analysis of Montaigne and Bodin
	Gordon Ruby (Uvic)	A Comparison of Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism: Towards a Biocentric Politics (?)
	Anita Girvan (Uvic)	Impoverished climates: re-inscribing lost perspectives in understandings of climate change
2:30-2:45	Break	
2:45-4:45	Panel 3 – The (Inter)national and the Global	Discussant Maria Koblanck (UVic)
	Alexis Hillyard (Ualberta)	A Postcolonial Engagement with Teacher's Beliefs about Global Education

	Shelane Jorgenson (Ualberta)	<u>Moving beyond moral relativism and neocolonialism in educating for global citizenship</u>
	Can Mutlu (Uottawa)	<u>Where I End and You Begin? A Topological Study of Borders, Jurisdictions and Scales in International Relations</u>
	Roberto Yamato (PUC-Rio)	<u>On the Limits of 'International Human' Law and Society: (re)thinking the political theory of international law, and questioning the 'pirate' in Schmitt</u>
4:45-5:00	Break	
5:00-6:30	*Keynote Address	Mark B. Salter (UOttawa), <u>/: the suture</u>

DAY 2, Harry Hickman Building Room 105

9:00-10:45	Panel 4 – Materialisms	Discussant Fred Spears (UVic)
	Terry Mckall (UVic)	<u>Toward a Critical Biology: Interdisciplinarity, Neuroscience, and a New Model of Subject Formation</u>
	Stefan Morales (Acadia)	<u>The Soil-Food Web: Cultivating New Alliances Between Earthlings</u>
	Beatriz Revelles (Utrecht)	<u>New Materialism: Cutting Across Disciplines</u>
10:45-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:45	Panel 5 – Aesthetics and Media	Discussant Jeanette Parker (UVic)
	Maggie Bossé (UVic)	<u>Structure and Aesthetics. The Predicament of the Improviser</u>
	Heather Cosidetto (Goldsmith)	<u>Exploded Enclosed: The Authority of the Subject in the Media Ages</u>
	Jakub Zdebik (UWO)	<u>Networks of Corruption: The Aesthetics of Mark Lombardi's Relational Diagrams</u>
12:45-1:30	Lunch	
1:30-3:15	Panel 6 – (De)colonization	Discussant Simon Glezos (UVic)

Irina Goundareva
(UBC)

[Demonstrating Relationality in the Works of J. L. Borges on Translation](#)

Kelly Aguirre
(UVic)

[Decolonization as Aporia, or Windmills in the Mind?: The Poststructuralist Challenge to the Idea of Indigenous Self-determination](#)

Adam Molnar
(UVic)

[Provincializing Critical Realism: reflections on critical realism and postcolonial thought](#)

3:15-3:30

Break

3:30-5:15

**Panel 7 –
Relationality in
Gender**

Discussant Andrea B. Gill (UVic)

Lisa Poole
(UVic)

[The Bisexual Alternative: The Emergence of an Incoherent Sexual Identity](#)

Dales Laing
(Uvic)

[Deleuzoguattarian Explorations of Gender: Becoming-Genderqueer](#)

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Getting to the University of Victoria:

<http://web.uvic.ca/sustainability/TransportationTravelChoices.htm>

Getting around the campus/to the Harry Hickman Building (map grid 3B):

<http://www.uvic.ca/maps/2dmap.html>

Contact: relationality2010@ymail.com

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SUTURE

Keynote Address

Mark B. Salter (Ottawa)

24/04/10 5:00-6:30pm

Harry Hickman Building

Room 105

How is the knot between sovereignty, territory, and law woven together? What are the mechanisms that suspend the binding of inside and outside and appear unproblematic? IR and political theory are both missing a theory of borders, or rather theories of bordering. Would that we could find them in anthropology, sociology, or geography - but the political falls out of these kinds of studies and we are left with anthropologies of borderlands, the work-crime practices of cross-border communities, or the empty geopolitics of the 'territorial trap.' How are the domestic and international bordered within a finite, comprehensible world that is both distinguished and deferred? This is the crucial theory missing: what is the / between inside and outside? Are there more or less /s? Using the theory of the suture, found in filmic theory and elsewhere, this paper interrogates how borders not only divide, but knit together that which they separate. Many examples, visual, historical, and amusing, are included.

Plenary Address Warren Magnussen (Victoria)

Seeing Like a City: The Politics of Relationality

24/04/10 9:15-10:15am

Harry Hickman Building Room 105

(INTER)DISCIPLINARITIES:

THE "NEW RELATIONALITY"?

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10:45-12:00	Panel 1 – The Urban	Discussant Serena Kataoka (UVic)

Urbanization and the New Relationality: Political Ontology, Politicization, and Aporetic Logic *Delacey Tedesco, University of Victoria*

We live, we are told, in an urbanizing world. However, this seemingly simple empirical statement opens an intensely difficult question: how can we approach urbanization as a political problem when urbanization takes its meaning not only through definitions of but relationships between politics, nature, and culture? To be more precise: how are we to think about the form of relationality embedded within urbanization as a process, a concept, and a method of analysis? Developing an analysis of urbanization that locates its logical core in the dual meaning of its suffixes – which reference both ‘becoming like’ and ‘being made like’ – I suggest that urbanization functions through a simultaneous and constitutive possibility, necessity, and impossibility. In other words, urbanization functions logically through the constitution of aporetic rather than either dialectical or ecological relations. This aporetic relationality encompasses not only urbanization’s ostensibly material transition from rural to urban, but also the cognate conceptual relations that are assumed within urbanization, such as nature and culture, self-determination and the externally determined, and even relation and separation. Therefore, to take urbanization as a method of analysis is to locate the aporetic logic of always separated relations and always related separations, the impossibility of complete separation and the impossibility of complete relation. This aporetic logic enables very real political effects, both material and conceptual, as my broader research into the rapid urbanization of Kelowna, BC, makes clear. Insofar as we aim to develop new political analyses rather than new political ontologies, the gesture towards relationality suggests that understanding the logics by which urbanization generates and sustains a series of long-standing relationships is the crucial first step towards politicizing these logics and their effects.

City development and the role of relationality in urban politics *Timothy Durant, University of Oregon*

This research looks to understand the political development of cities. Its focus is on the role of meaning “construction” in politics. The contestation over meaning has often been at the center of political analysis and debate – such as in “politics of identity” or regarding the nature of particular policies themselves. Here, however, I wish to study how that meaning is constructed, rather than simply struggle over what something “means.” Mustafa Emirbayer, building on the work of Dewey and Bentley, argues that there are two general ways of constructing meaning: substantively and relationally. Substantive thought sees entities (things, beings) as representing the fundamental unit of inquiry, with relationships being secondary. Meaning and significance are not found in the relational spaces (or the relational matrices entities are enmeshed in), but in the entities themselves. This is in contrast to relational thought, where meaning is derived from the changing

role entities play in transactions. Hence, meaning is embedded in the transactions that compose relational spaces and not in some prior essence. I argue that the employment of these two types of meaning construction have significant implications regarding the patterns which leave their imprint on politics (i.e., path dependencies, orders, and critical junctures); and the transformative events which signal shifts within these patterns and lead to durable changes in political authority. Social science theorist as diverse as James Scott, Iris Young, Jane Jacobs, and Fung and Wright, have all, to varying degrees, exposed the workings of relational meaning in city politics, though often only tangentially. In this work meaning construction is foregrounded in the study of community development projects. Community development projects represent constitutive sites of the government-civil society relationship where the meaning of policies and government action is contested and formed between multivariate actors of different strata and institutions, allowing multiple vantage points on meaning construction in the political process. Through discursive analysis and process tracing the role of meaning construction in shaping political processes can be examined – allowing avenues of change to be highlighted and “structural” critiques of these patterns as explanation to be addressed.

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12:45-2:30 **Panel 2 –** Discussant Michael Lukas (UVic)
 Relational Ecologies

Climate Theory: Relativism or Relationality? A Comparative Analysis of Montaigne and Bodin

Richard Spavin, University of Toronto

In the 16th Century, the French humanist thinker Jean Bodin wrote extensively on “climate theory”, the idea that human beings are physically and psychologically determined by their geographical situation in the world and the cosmos. The *milieu*, of which temperature would be the dominant terrestrial factor, is thought to explain political and cultural differences between men. For Bodin, these differences are in relation to one another and adhere to a humanistic ideal of cosmological equilibrium. If warmth and coldness are set against each other in a necessary opposition, it is because the cosmos is balanced and harmonious. Montaigne, on whom Bodin had a significant influence, would later interpret climate theory in a chorographical world view, where geographical regions are conceived of as separate and distinct entities that can be located on maps and not as correlative situations on an armillary sphere. As did many others at the end of the 16th Century, Montaigne opposed the idea of cosmography, its theoretical abstractness as well as its categorisation of diversity. For Montaigne, difference can be the only general rule induced from the burgeoning travel literature of the time. His use of climate theory argues for cultural relativism, against not only intercultural hierarchy, but intercultural comparison, which together fuel the ideology of the religious and colonial missions in the New World. In comparing these two interpretations of climate theory, my paper will, on the one hand, explain the fallacious arguments that abound in Montaigne’s scepticism (tautology and *Grincipi Grincipia*), and, on the other, rethink the notion of relativism through relationality. Jean Bodin’s adventurous correlations between polarized climactic regions are evidently outlandish, but the method of argumentation follows the same logic of a structural anthropology that binds humanity together underneath the surface of its undeniable diversity.

A Comparison of Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism: Towards a Biocentric Politics (?)

Gordon Ruby, University of Victoria

I would like to present a paper related to ecologies. I am exploring the problem of anthropocentrism that pervades western thought – and many dominant political institutions – as a barrier to recognizing ecological limits to growth. The anthropocentric ontology exists within the logic of the state as well as within the discipline of classical economics – both of which reinforce the tendency to reproduce anthropocentric thought and politics. The problem is that these institutions and the logic behind them advance a reductionist approach (one that observes the components of a system – both subjects and objects – without adequately considering the relations between them), an approach that has been criticized for its inability to adequately acknowledge the human (condition) as a small part of the planet and/or nature, instead of viewing humans as subjugating or having dominion over the former two.

I propose that instead of advocating for and perpetuating an anthropocentric approach, it is important to consider a biocentric approach – that humans are basically a part of nature; we need to account for our actions with that ontology in mind in order to ‘properly’ gauge how our actions relate to broader questions of *sustainability*. This approach calls into question the fundamental subject/object distinction that enables humans as political subjects and all other elements in the earth as objects.

The main question I pose is: what does a biocentric politics look like; namely, what does it mean to enact a politics that internalizes this biocentric ontology?

Impoverished climates: re-inscribing lost perspectives in understandings of climate change

Anita Girvan, Uvic

Establishing the facticity of climate change itself has been the driving force for the almost exclusively scientific lens trained on this phenomenon to date. While an emerging interest in the social, political and cultural aspects of climate change is allowing some interventions outside of the authority of science, much of the public discourse is still centered on the presentation of facts, usually in the form of quantitative measurements and predictions. Further, there is a pretense in much debate that values should not interfere with the facts at hand: climate change is upon us and we must act urgently to avoid the worst-case scenarios. Underlying all of these quantitative, and thus far, unsuccessful attempts to tame and discipline the climate into a mathematical problem and solution model, is the nebulous biosphere of what Haraway calls “natureculture” – a place where climate takes on a host of meanings, including the metaphoric, and the symbolic as well as the material. This paper argues that any engagement with the issue of climate change should first shift its focus from climate change as a purified, impoverished “matter-of-fact”, to climate change as what Bruno Latour calls a “matter-of-concern” – a knotty and sometimes messy conglomeration of cultural and physical ecology.

I use Bruno Latour’s notions of “matters of fact” versus “matters of concern” as a means of making explicit that climate change implicates systems beyond the atmospheric and thus, to insist on the importance of cultural ecologies in the mapping of the cultural-political terrain of future planetary life. This first shift reveals that the matter of climate change is always already populated with ‘humans’ and ‘natures’, fused in complex ways; therefore, any attempt to address the issue must also be fused, complex and dialogic. While Latour’s work does temper the singular authority of science, it can also tend to reify the logic of a lab in which the objects of study ‘speak’, but are ultimately disciplined in a specific way; such a context also may perform a kind of purification. In order to go beyond the potential sterility of Latour’s perspective, this paper also weaves in cultural narratives of climate, such as Julie Cruikshank’s *Do glaciers Listen?* – a treatise on indigenous peoples longitudinal knowledge of the behavior of glaciers in the Northwest. In revealing how cultural narratives and artistic expressions are both shaped by and in turn shape understandings of

the materiality of climate, this paper suggests that such expressions are key sources of intervention in shaping responses to climatic changes.

This paper does not disavow the important work of climate science, but rather argues in favour of the legitimization of perspectives which allow the cultural meanings of climate to intersect productively with our constantly shifting understandings of the atmospheric climate. As climate geographer, Mike Hulme suggests, "... we need to see how we can use the idea of climate change – the matrix of ecological functions, power relationships, cultural discourses and material flows that climate change reveals – to rethink how we take forward our political, social, economic and personal projects over the decades to come" (2009, p 362). The enrichment of understandings of climate will not 'solve' climate change, but will enable alternative perspectives to first expand the discussion of the matter to ultimately inform fuller and more deliberative responses to this central issue of our time.

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2:45-4:45

**Panel 3 –
The (Inter)national
and the Global**

Discussant Maria Koblanck (UVic)

A Postcolonial Engagement with Teacher's Beliefs about Global Education

Alexis Hillyard, University of Alberta

Across the Canadian educational landscape, Global Education is a phenomenon growing in popularity and practice. Although Global Education mandates have received attention in curricula throughout the country, Global Education programs are implemented inconsistently and sporadically. Consequently, there are many diverse rationales and ideological underpinnings for Global Education that remain unproblematized. This paper discusses the findings of a small-scale qualitative study involving teacher beliefs about Global Education. The relationship between teacher beliefs and attitudes and their own philosophies of Global Education, and how these beliefs are linked to reinforcing or dismantling colonial discourses, is explored. Using a postcolonial lens, this study seeks to "honestly examine the intellectual and ideological traditions" (Johnson, 1993, p. 3) of Global Education and to disrupt any elements that may re-inscribe notions of western superiority and reinforce the 'us/them' binary. Postcolonialism, in this study, is used as a dislocating discourse aimed at excavating dominant Eurocentric theories and practices that are themselves "implicated in the long history of European colonialism" (Giroux, 1992, p. 20). As Willinsky (1998) contends, "there is a need to examine education's continuing contributions to what were and what continue to be colonizing divisions of the world" (p. 16). Through an exploration of teacher beliefs, practices, and attitudes, this study hopes to inform pre-service teacher education programs.

Moving beyond moral relativism and neocolonialism in educating for global citizenship

Shelane Jorgenson, University of Alberta

Several writers have described the aim of global citizenship education as developing in students a global ethic of social justice. By claiming the status of global citizen, Dower (2003) suggests that one also accepts a certain kind of engagement and relationality in exercising responsibility and attitudes towards human beings. Educators have attempted to achieve these objectives by sending students abroad to volunteer in 'developing' countries. As these predominantly privileged, western students venture out to take part in cross-cultural programs under the name of global citizenship

education, several questions are raised about the kinds of imperialistic trends that are being reproduced and challenged in doing so. Post-colonial critics have stated, for instance, that such programs have the potential to perpetuate the epistemic violence of colonialism by ignoring the ways in which students appropriate the 'developing world' as 'other' as use these experiences to solely benefit themselves. In order to address such issues and concerns, I conducted a qualitative study in 2009, using post-colonial theory, to analyze the experiences and reflections of six participants who participated in a Canadian university global citizenship program in Thailand. This paper will talk about some of the insights gleaned from this study, in particular, how culture and perceived cultural differences bring forth dimensions of ambivalence, moral relativism and cultural hybridity and the affects of this on students' understanding of their identity and agency as global citizens. Based on these insights, I will also talk about important recommendations for global citizenship programs to develop a global ethic of social justice. For instance, students need to be better informed and reflexive about the social-historical context of the country they are visiting as well as their positionality in relation to the people with whom they engage.

Where I End and You Begin? A Topological Study of Borders, Jurisdictions and Scales in International Relations

Can Mutlu, University of Ottawa

*There's a gap in between
There's a gap where we meet
Where I end and you begin
Radiohead, 2003*

Beyond their – problematic – function, borders act as referent objects for International Relations. They symbolize both an end and a beginning; provide a space where the "national" gives way to the "international". Moreover, their function, location and purpose as the space between inside and outside forms the basis of one of International Relations' main ontological givens; as a field based on the inside/outside dynamic, International Relations relies on borders to provide order to the international structure. In this case, however, theory does not match practice; borders, understood as institutions originating from differing policies of bordering spaces, no longer overlap. As a result of globalization, regionalization and the emergence of international networks and trans-border policy cooperation, borders resemble a matrix rather than a single line. A topological conceptualization of this matrix brings different scales, jurisdictions and policy areas together in order to conceptualize a complex multiplicity that otherwise create a multitude of tensions – such as openness and closure, re-bordering and de-bordering. By developing this alternative conceptualization of borders as complex multiplicities, this papers engages with a broader set of questions on the ontological givens of International Relations: If borders are no longer harmonious and overlapping, then what does this mean for (b)ordering of the international structure? What are the implications of challenging this ontological given in IR? How should we theorize the international instead?

On the Limits of 'International Human' Law and Society: (re)thinking the political theory of international law, and questioning the 'pirate' in Schmitt.

Roberto Yamato, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)

In this paper I will develop an analysis of the problem of the limits of what I call 'international human' law and society. Such limits, I will argue, are spaces of violent relations and separations, spaces between internalities and externalities, inclusions and exclusions that structure the international political-juridical imagination. Moreover, I will argue that these limits and practices of

delimitation involve a fundamental (and indeed perturbing) distinction between the 'human' and the 'human', between the proper 'human' and the *improper, quasi* or *dehumanized* 'human'. In the first part of the paper, I will argue that international law is based on a political theory premised on certain assumptions about the 'world', the 'international', the 'national', 'humanity' and the 'human', and about their (proper/improper) places, limits and relations. Here, I will question some of these assumptions, and will propose rethinking and re-imagining *international* law and society as '*international human*'. I will suggest that the individual 'human' has always been central to the political theory of international law – even if only invisibly, assumed as an *insider*, simply with-*in* the *other* ("proper") space of ("sovereign") law and society. This questioning and re-imagination will lead to that problem, and thus to that distinction between the 'human' and the 'human'. In the second part of the paper, I will focus on the problem of the limits of 'international human' law and society, and will do it by questioning the place and role of the 'pirate' in Carl Schmitt. Through the analysis of some of his conceptual relations and differentiations, I will argue that the "exceptional" (legal) category of the 'pirate' is not only structurally important (if not essential) for his concept of the 'enemy' – and, thus, of the 'political' –, but also that it is an important starting point for engaging that problem, and that fundamental distinction. I will conclude with some comments about the costs of not questioning – or of naturalizing – the 'pirate' in Schmitt, and about the importance of (re)thinking and politicizing those 'international human' limits.

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5:00-6:30 ***Keynote Address**
HHB Room 105

/: the suture

Mark B. Salter, University of Ottawa

How is the knot between sovereignty, territory, and law woven together? What are the mechanisms that suspend the binding of inside and outside and appear unproblematic? IR and political theory are both missing a theory of borders, or rather theories of bordering. Would that we could find them in anthropology, sociology, or geography – but the political falls out of these kinds of studies and we are left with anthropologies of borderlands, the work-crime practices of cross-border communities, or the empty geopolitics of the "territorial trap." How are the domestic and international bordered within a finite, comprehensible world that is both distinguished and deferred? This is the crucial theory missing: what is the / between inside and outside? Are there more or less /s? Using the theory of the suture, found in filmic theory and elsewhere, this paper interrogates how borders not only divide, but knit together that which they separate. Many examples, visual, historical, and amusing, are included.

Mark B. Salter is an associate professor at the School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa. He is editor of *Mapping Transatlantic Security Relations, Politics at the Airport* and *Global Policing and Surveillance: borders, security identity* with Elia Zureik. He is the sole author of *Rights of Passage: the passport in international relations* and *Barbarians and Civilization in International Relations* (also published in Chinese). Recent research appears in *Geopolitics, Citizenship Studies, International Political Sociology, Alternatives, Security Dialogue, the Journal of Air Transport Management, and the Journal of Transportation Security*. In 2007, he was the recipient of the National Capital Educator's Award and the Excellence in Education Prize at the University of Ottawa. In autumn 2008, he was Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities, Wolfson College, and Visiting Scholar at the Centre of International Studies at the University of Cambridge.

He is currently researching “Politics of the Spaces In-between” that connects the theoretical work on states of exception with empirical research on interstitial sites in global politics.

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DAY 2, HARRY HICKMAN BUILDING ROOM 105

9:00-10:45 **Panel 4 –** Discussant Fred Spears (UVic)
 Materialisms

Toward a Critical Biology: Interdisciplinarity, Neuroscience, and a New Model of Subject Formation

Terry Mckall, University of Victoria

Much of the current discussion around the formation of subjectivity and around possible modes of resistance to a particular modern (or postmodern/human) subjectivity has focused on the role social practices and social formations have in producing the subject. However, very little of this work has been concerned with the material, biological mechanisms through which this subjectivity must be expressed. This oversight, often intentional and conducted with no lack of disdain for the biological, is problematic as it overlaps with an explosion of interest in subjectivity and social learning in the Neurosciences, especially following the discovery and rapid rise to prominence of mirror neurons. A recent discovery in the Neurosciences, mirror neurons are thought to be specifically designed to enable social learning, predominantly through the observation of social situations and through mimicry. Given the position of authority that the so-called objective sciences currently enjoy and the increasing encroachment of scientific discourse into the domain of the critical theory the refusal on the part of theorists to engage with Neuroscience is threatens to miss the opportunity to contest the discourse of Neuroscience and establish meaningful debate. Far from deferring to the authority of the Neurosciences, my argument emerges from a sense of respect for Neuroscience that is necessary for any interdisciplinary project as much as from recognition of the necessity of critical engagement with the problematic discourse that is developing in that field. Specifically, I adopt a position opposite William Connolly’s passive adoption of recent work in Neuroscience in the service of a Neo-Liberal discourse of subjectivity. When liberated from a discourse of static biology mirror neurons open a space in which the processes of embodiment, without which subject formation would not be possible, enable new pathways of resistance to the dominant mode of subjectivity.

“The Soil Food Web: Cultivating New Alliances Between Earthlings.”

Stefan Morales, Acadia University

How can we grasp our relationship to the Earth through the earth? In dealing with the human and its relationship to the soil food web, I will trace translations and enrollments as they occur through the sense of scent, and taste using Thomas A. Sebeok’s concept of the chemical sign. What world do we share with nonhumans when we cultivate the soil? Employing Gilles Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense* to criticize phenomenological encounters with the soil food web as subjectcentered, I will argue that the mundane eating and defecating tendencies shared by all earthlings is the basis of any real alliance with the Earth. Though the Earth and its earthlings share what may be called flesh (organic and nonorganic), it is what passes *through* and is exchanged *by* flesh that interests me. Moving from retracing the new assemblies of plants, animals, and microbes that are produced through cultivated efforts at rearranging the mundane, my paper will explore the question of the time that is shared

(or not) between these earthlings. Using Deleuze's articulation of the time of *Aion* as an intrusion of the future and the past into a present which is always divided between them, I will argue that the history of both the past and the future of the eating and defecating tendencies of earthlings is a history "whose interest lies in the fact that one does not know *a priori* what history it is a question of" (Stengers).

To not know what history we are acting within is to amplify the radical uncertainty of all earthlings' history within the Earth's, allowing us room enough to ask: 'why must we know *a priori* what history (anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic) the ecological catastrophe is a question of, in order to act?'

New Materialism: cutting across disciplines

Beatriz Revelles, University of Utrecht

The purpose of this paper will be to introduce and analyse New Materialism as an example of becoming-theory thanks to transversality, among other characteristics. Thus, it addresses new materialism and is going to have three parts. In the first part I will discuss the theory of New Materialism offering a descriptive and explanatory introduction of it. This theory, though still in the process of being constructed (van der Tuin, 2009; Sheridan, 2002; Kirby, 1997; Colebrook, 2008; DeLanda, 2006), is part of a wider movement in critical theory away from theories associated with the linguistic turn, which allies it with Barad's notion of apparatus (among others). Basing my paper mainly on Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphjin's (under review) articles I will try to draw upon the debate that this theory has created (Ahmed, 2008; van der Tuin, 2008; Davis, 2009). Pointed as the "Third-Wave epistemology" (van der Tuin, 2009), New Materialism has at its core a profound critique towards representationalism, dualistic and paradoxical perspectives, negative and progressive narratives towards past epistemologies (van der Tuin, 2009).

What is more, I believe that this theory offers an alternative reading to the so controversial concepts (currently in academy) "language", "representation", "one" and "other". This will be part of the second part of the paper: its take on the debates of the concepts before mentioned (as such as the internal debate that this theory has provoked).

In addition, it provides with a new methodology (which serves at the same time as object of study) which is configured around a cartographical approach which cuts across different disciplines to provide as many different axis of signification as possible in order to approach the object of study (van der Tuin & Rick Dolphjin, under review). This will be introduced in part three of the paper. I will give a practical example of how to use this transversal methodology based on the appliance of Barad's notion of the apparatus in political sciences (which is part of my project of investigation at present day).

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11:00-12:45 **Panel 5 –** Discussant Jeanette Parker (UVic)
Aesthetics and Media

Structure and Aesthetics. The Predicament of the Improviser

Maggie Bossé, University of Victoria

*"Most intolerable, to be sure, and terrible par excellence would be for me a life entirely devoid of habits, a life that would demand perpetual improvisation. That would be my exile and my Siberia"— Nietzsche, Book Four of *The Gay Science*.*

The focus of this paper will be choreography's other, or the improvising body. I'll have to dance around this subject because, as Rita Marcalo's recent performance *Involuntary Dances* demonstrates, it is elusive and imprecise. It cannot be asked to perform, or speak, or keep promises, without moving back into the realm of choreography. Thus, I will mainly be talking about improvisation as an impossibility, or at best a temperamental glimmer. It is not like what the 'touchy-feely' apologists for improvisation often say; it isn't a way of reclaiming bodily agency; it isn't expressive, or a way of studying human interaction, or new relational ethics, or anything like radical freedom. I won't be taking part in any of this hyperbolic celebration of improv in this presentation. No, choreography's other—the improvising body—is frozen, stubborn, ineloquent, confused, and stuttering. It isn't impressive and it *certainly* isn't entertaining. In this paper, I will argue that the artistic quest for 'pure' improvisation, specifically in dance, is ultimately solipsistic. I'll do this by showing how choreography, broadly interpreted to include structure, discipline, recognizable form, or habit, is indispensable if dance is to remain at all 'relational'.

The Exploded Enclosed: The Authority of the Subject in the Media Ages

Heather Cosidetto, Goldsmith College London

Electronic communications and interactive media constitute the festivity of commodity: the gloss of interactivity in the exchange of capital and power is akin to the comic allure of court jest and other ritual mocking of authority within the very confines of the ruler's domain. The pre-modern festival was a periodic role inversion, and as we have seen a decline in the boundlessness of this notion of festival, we too have seen the concretization of social roles, directly correlating with the fragmentation and increasing certainty of information. Historically, this role inversion had allocated positions in time and space, where as these inversions today occupy a ceaseless and delocalized exchange. It was necessary for the form of these inversions to change to something slightly irrerecognizable, to be useful to both proletariat and leader alike, as the distinction between sovereign and subject, producer and consumer, is no longer clear. The use-value of electronic communication, and in particular interactive media in forms such as the internet, computer games, and interactive art, is a seriously contended arena. The internet and other multimedia interactive applications, more than simply compound mediums for communication, have the potential to remove neither institutions nor hierarchies, but the yoke that binds social performativity to a stage.

In a discussion of how people's social activities are mediated, we would begin with an investigation into the relationship between reader and text, and subsequently, between reader and author. An account of the dynamics of this relationship is the product of post-structuralist discourse. This would lead us to the deconstruction of social roles and epistemological breakdowns, and the subsequent reconvergence of social subjects as well as academic disciplines. The virtuality of new media technologies illustrate a trend towards disembodiment, a disentanglement from the contested body of the subject. These threads feed into assessments of electronic communications and interactive media, and their potential for social reform.

Networks of Corruption: The Aesthetics of Mark Lombardi's Relational Diagrams

Dr. Jakub Zdebik, University of Western Ontario

Mark Lombardi's artistic oeuvre consists of diagrams composed of curved and straight lines precisely drawn on paper. His frenetic spirographic patterns expose "networks of transactions, spheres of influence" and financial corruption. Lombardi works can be compared to Hans Haacke's politically charged art projects such as *Shapolsky et al.*, (1971) in which he meticulously traces the links between dilapidated buildings in New York, faceless financial institutions that own them and the members of the Guggenheim's board of directors who control them. But Lombardi's networks are far more global in scope and intricate in the constellation-like configuration of monetary deals

involving governments, politicians, banks and corporations as exemplified by such works as *World Finance Corporation and Associates, ca. 1970-84: Miami, Ajman, and Bogota-Caracas (Brigadia 2506: Cuban Anti-Castro Bay of Pigs Veteran)* (1999) and *Oliver North, Lake Resources of Panama, and the Iran-Contra Operations, ca. 1984-86* (1999). With their minimal diagrammatic aesthetics, Lombardi's artworks are visual representations of nebulous, clandestine and often invisible corruption.

I will analyse Lombardi's drawings of relational charts according to the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. I will specifically focus on their rhizomatic schematization of power under the concept of the diagram which produces virtual yet real spaces of productive representation.

I will support these concepts with the writings of a philosopher who had a great influence on Deleuze—Gilbert Simondon. Simondon is the author of *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*, in which he constructs a philosophical system encompassing an ontological totality ranging from crystalline formations, cellular division, animal evolution, societal formation and human psychology according to the material model of analogy. I will use his concept of *transduction*, which is a communicative analogical relational concept between individuals and societies, in order to supplement Deleuze's rhizomatic diagrams in the exploration of Lombardi's art.

Through Lombardi's schematic art, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizomatic diagram and Simondon's analogical transduction theory, I will articulate how the visualization of real yet invisible networks is important to reverse their clandestinity.

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1:30-3:15 **Panel 6 –** Discussant Simon Glezos (UVic)
 (De)colonization

Demonstrating relationality in works of J. L. Borges on translation

Irina Goundareva, UBC

Any translation is strongly related to the source language culture, the target audience and the purpose of translation. I find very true the theory of translation of J. L. Borges who states that it is impossible to make a loyal translation of a piece of work belonging to a different culture or time without exercising free translation. Borges believes that solving practical problems specific to the text to be translated is more important for the job of a translator. In order to demonstrate Borges' point of view on translation, I look at several of his essays and short stories that touch on this topic.

"Two ways of translation" talks about two types of source texts, classical and romantic literature, and therefore, two way of translation. In "The Homeric versions" he argues that a translated text is not inferior to the original. In "The music of the words and translation", Borges says that the reader is prejudiced by reading the original before the translation. In "Pierre Menard, the author of Quijote", the writer shows that the main role of a translator is rewriting the original works in another language, adapting it to the new target audience. In addition, staying loyal to the source text is not as important as creating the same impact on the reader, as the original did in its own time. Finally, "The search of Averroes" points out the importance of understanding the culture in order to succeed in translation. Borges tries to fight the opinion of some researchers in the field that language is independent of culture and that language has no connection with the time when it is spoken.

In conclusion, culture and language are strongly related to translation because as seen in the contemporary literary examples of J. L. Borges, a good translator has to understand well the source and target culture, and have an ability to express himself clearly in the target language. The

mutual influence of language and culture on translation should be brought to the attention of current new translators in order to avoid serious problems of misinterpretation of the text or confusion of the readers.

Decolonization as Aporia, or Windmills in the Mind?: The Poststructuralist Challenge to the Idea of Indigenous Self-determination

Kelly Aguirre, University of Victoria

Vine Deloria Jr. suggested that to make the potential for ‘intellectual self-determination’ a preoccupation of thinking on decolonization for Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island/North America is tantamount to tilting at “windmills in the mind.” Yet, there is a continual confrontation with demands for both cognizability to the dominant political order in Settler states and also Indigenous ‘authenticity’ in the articulation of claims to establish their ‘validity.’ This leads to what can be described as a kind of double bind in which conceptions of liberation may always be determinable as derivative of the complex associations with one’s oppressors and thereby always ‘fraudulent’ or incomplete – that they imply a vicious regress. Thus following Deloria Jr.’s provocation, it is pertinent to seriously assess if energy expended on this concern just stymies getting underway with ‘action’ and recreates the idea of immutable Indigenous dependency pervading colonizing discourse. However, to respond to ‘post-modern’ variations on this theme it seems imperative to assert an understanding of collective ‘freedom in *relationality*’ that is not reducible to a replication of a disciplinary Euro-Western political *rationality*.

This paper will address the question of how to square an appreciation of Indigenous ontologies that emphasize interrelatedness and a critique of post-Enlightenment humanism which is immanent in much Indigenous resistive or decolonial critique on the one hand, with the need to formulate a politics in terms of boundaries that seem contiguous with conceptions of sovereignty, nation/peoplehood and territory out of Euro-Western modernity on the other, which can be exposed to denunciation as being in contradiction to ‘Indigenous values’ and reproductive of a repression that an idea of the decolonial is expected to transcend. In this regard it directly speaks to the persistent issue of conflating the theoretical clout of the antihumanist strains of poststructuralist critique with a foreclosure on certain forms of ‘strategic’ political argumentation around contesting violently asymmetrical relations of force between peoples (to treat them as agent driven binary systems, like ‘colonialism’) and demands for socio-economic ‘independence’ (never assumed as complete). It must not be deemed a self-defeating move to promote a politics that emphasizes a delineation of ‘identities’ and divisions, as only a tactical response to hegemony or as an attempt to salvage components of Enlightenment humanism as ‘inoperable organs’ for a discourse of liberation to survive –all this affirms is European narcissism. I would like to suggest that is possible to find in indigenous philosophies of the self the capacity and necessity for the definition of identity, the discernment or creation of pattern, in a universe of flux and contingency.

Provincializing Critical Realism: reflections on critical realism and postcolonial thought

Adam Molnar, University of Victoria

Problems of postcolonial narrative have rarely entered the purview of Euro-American philosophies of social science. It comes as little surprise that, as a result of its preoccupation with settling philosophical scores with the natural sciences, critical realism has had a very limited engagement with postcolonial theories. Social theoretical debates in critical realist literature have only recently taken up the epistemological dilemmas revealed through various –isms – of modernism, postmodernisms, and post-structuralism, although they have yet to address postcolonialism(s) in any substantial way. However, the opposite is also true: postcolonialist thinkers have yet to take on critical realism in any meaningfully critical way, irrespective of their shared history of

epistemological lineages. Pulling at the relational threads between these divergent approaches, I pursue a selective engagement between critical realism and the problems presented by postcolonial historian Dipesh Chakrabarty's influential text *Provincializing Europe (PE)*. In *PE*, Chakrabarty argues that notions of Western Eurocentrism are embedded in the languages and practices of the social sciences, wherein European universals are uncritically enacted through scholarly discussions about space, time, capitalism, rationality, and modernity. Accordingly, I explore Chakrabarty's call for a social science (and history) that is both necessary for critical engagement with colonial oppression and that also strives to make visible the structure of its narrative forms to reveal its implicit oppressive and discriminatory strategies. The core questions this paper asks are: How might a relational epistemological and methodological exchange between critical realism and Chakrabarty's postcolonial contribution raise important new questions about the critique of historicism and social science? How might critical realism be put to service in the critique advanced in *Provincializing Europe*, if at all? Conversely, what does it mean to "provincialize" critical realism? The paper proceeds with an epistemological discussion on the problems of relationality associated with thought and place (geo-historical narratives) as well as the difficulties of thinking relationalities of "sameness and/or difference" through the essentialism vs. anti-essentialism debate. Acknowledging that this task is already inherently implicated in reproducing a set of modernist-Eurocentric assumptions, the final section of the paper opens a critical line on provincializing critical realism itself. Here, I argue that to provincialize critical realism is to take up onto-theological grounds and examine critical realism's own metaphysical assumptions in order to more fully understand the related implications of its epistemological and methodological assemblages.

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3:30-5:15 **Panel 7 –** Discussant Andrea B. Gill (UVic)
Relationality in
Gender

The Bisexual Alternative: The Emergence of an Incoherent Sexual Identity

Lisa Poole, University of Victoria

This paper explores how bisexuality can be seen as a subversive identity and as such offers genuine alternatives to the sexual binary, monosexuality, and even gender based definitions of sexuality. Queer theorists endeavour to expose and deconstruct the incoherencies between apparently stable categories of sex, gender, and sexual orientation and destabilize heterosexuality as the norm (Jagose 1996: 3). For example, Butler's (1990) understanding of bisexuality questions the value of identity categories within the sexual binary as they often operate in the service of oppressive, exclusionary, regulatory heteronormative regimes. However, her analysis is limiting as it does not offer much in the way of agency or opportunity for sexual politics. For Butler, bisexual constructs are constrained by the culture that produces them, and therefore can never be anything other than situated in that culture. This forecloses the option of dynamic qualitative alternatives and diminishes agency and the possibility for substantial change.

Conversely, bisexuality could be said to be characterized by emergence, "that is situations in which the conjunction of two or more features or aspects gives rise to new phenomena, which have properties that are irreducible to those of their constituents, even though the later are necessary for their existence" (Sayer 2006: 12). In this way bisexuality can be seen as having relational and emergent properties that are different from its constituents, heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Seeing bisexuality as relational and emergent opens up the possibility of new phenomena and has the potential to disrupt the binary and gender based definitions of sexuality. It re-establishes agency and the capacity to create social and political alternatives to the status quo.

There are political implications and possibilities for sexual politics in the analysis of bisexuality as an incoherent alternative to fixed identities within the sexual binary. The challenge then becomes that we do not render bisexuality static once established as a subversive identity.

Deleuzoguattarian Explorations of Gender: Becoming-Genderqueer

Dales Laing, University of Victoria

This project arises out of my lived experiences, out of the gendered terrain I have traversed; from the lives I have tried to live, the bodies I have attempted to embody, the coherence of being I have thought for so long as essential to my life. These selves, these bodies, are contingent, fluid, interconnected, incoherent, and co-constituted while still being heavily sedimented in the history of bodies and being. These selves are genderqueer. A term emerging out of the transgender and queer communities, genderqueer is difficult to define. That being said, I define my own understanding of genderqueer as follows: gendered practices that are fluid, in process, in-flux and challenge the reification, separation and determinism of binary (male and female) conceptions of gender and subjectivity. Desiring-machines, partial objects, pure multiplicity, rhizomes and production: the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari is overflowing with concepts that resonate with my experiences of genderqueer. Their very orientation to possibility, to a (unconscious) level of multiplicity and creativity instantly meshed with the issues of genderqueer practices and bodies that I had been exploring. This paper explores how Deleuzoguattarian ontology can be a useful in exploring experiences and practices of genderqueer. Specifically, this paper explores notions of subjectivity in the realm of genderqueer through a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming, and the relational processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. In doing so, I am able to discuss the limitations of current queer politics, and the ways Deleuze and Guattari, through a discussion of genderqueer, may be used to recognize the realm of potentiality, of creativity and production; realms that can be used to fuel different approaches to gender activism.

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