



Studying Indigenous Literatures and Cultures of Turtle Island in Europe:

Questions of Methodology, Positionality, Accountability, and Research Ethics



**Online Workshop organized by the Emerging Scholars' Forum of the Association for
Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries (GKS), May 5-6, 2022**

While in standard literary analysis discussion of one's position is rarely identified and discussed, it is, I suggest, a necessity in Indigenous Studies. (Reder 8)

In this workshop, we wish to reflect on how to respectfully engage with Indigenous critical and creative thought from European localities, positionalities, and perspectives. In this sense, we take up Deanna Reder's (Métis) call for rigorous self-reflection. At the same time, we heed Sam McKegney's warning that non-Indigenous scholars who use positionality as a critical lens may ultimately perpetuate "strategies of ethical disengagement" (81), an evasion of accountability, and an escapism into self-centered introspection of the critic's own inadequacies that fails to challenge the academic status quo.

This workshop perceives Canada as a framework that demands critical interrogation. It builds on the understanding that Canadian national borders do not align with Indigenous concepts, knowledges, relations, and sovereignties. Furthermore, it understands Indigenous Studies as a discipline in its own right, on its own terms, that centers Indigenous ways of knowing, communities, and cultures. While as such Indigenous Studies is established in its own, expanding departments across Turtle Island, institutional contexts in Europe, for the most part, lack a departmental structure that recognizes the position of Indigenous Studies as an independent discipline. Lee Maracle's (Stó:lō) and Kimberly Blaeser's (Chippewa) critical reckoning with Eurowestern academia in the early 1990s thus resonates today in, as Margaret Kovach (Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux) writes, "an academy that is still colonial" (175).

This workshop's exploration of its four key elements—methodology, positionality, accountability, and research ethics—is based on the critical awareness that studying Indigenous thoughts and cultures from within Europe takes place within uneven power structures. This understanding also includes the complex ways in which European institutions, including universities, have been implicated in the enduring legacies of genocide, colonialism, capitalism, Christianity, and patriarchy, among others. Even though these systems have been key to dispossessing Indigenous peoples and marginalizing their knowledges, Indigenous peoples have been resisting such oppression for a long time. Within the specific contexts of engaging with Indigenous literatures and theories in Europe, we are interested in discussing the possibilities and limits of practicing solidarity in scholarship in terms of "uneasy" solidarity based on incommensurability (Tuck and Yang 3) and forms of "critical co-resistance" (Coulthard and Simpson 250).

Format & Submission:

This workshop will take place online from May 5-6, 2022, and features contributions by Dr Renae Watchman (Diné & Tsalagi) and Prof Dr Hartmut Lutz as confirmed speakers. In conversation with their talks, the workshop includes panels for scholars of all levels—BA, MA, PhD, Postdoc—to present their research projects and work in progress, which engage with Indigenous critical and creative thoughts. This workshop is designed in particular for early career researchers as it aims to provide a safe space for them to discuss their specific needs, challenges, and difficulties, which they might encounter or have encountered during their research, including their questions and concerns regarding methodology, positionality, accountability, and research ethics. We invite contributions in the form of short talks or alternative formats, such as artwork, video-clips, or collaborative work.

Please submit the following until March 31:

- an abstract of ca. 250 words
- a short bio of ca. 100 words
- a response of ca. 250 words to the question: How have you come to study Indigenous literatures and cultures?

To submit your proposal, please send your abstract, bio and response in a single file (.doc/.docx/.pdf) to the organizing committee at indigenoustudiesworkshop@gmail.com

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the organizers at indigenoustudiesworkshop@gmail.com

Speakers:

- Dr Renae Watchman (Diné & Tsalagi) (McMaster University)
- Prof Dr Hartmut Lutz (University of Greifswald)

Workshop organizers:

- Atalie Gerhard, *Saarland University / IRTG Diversity: Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces*
- Johanna Lederer, *Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt / RTG Practicing Place: Socio-Cultural Practices and Epistemic Configurations*
- Manuel Sousa Oliveira, *University of Porto / CETAPS*
- Alisa Preusser, *University of Potsdam*

Contact: indigenoustudiesworkshop@gmail.com

Works Cited:

- Blaeser, Kimberly. "Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Centre." *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature*, edited by Jeannette Armstrong, Theytus Books, 1993, pp. 51-62.
- Coulthard, Glen, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. "Grounded Normativity/ Place-Based Solidarity." *American Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, 2016, pp. 249-55.
- Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. U of Toronto P, 2009.
- Maracle, Lee. *Memory Serves and Other Essays: Oratories*. NeWest P, 2015.
- McKegney, Sam. "Strategies for Ethical Engagement: An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars of Native Literatures." 2008. *Learn. Teach. Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures*, edited by Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra, Wilfried Laurier UP, 2016, pp. 79-87.
- Reder, Deanna. "Introduction: Position." *Learn. Teach. Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures*, edited by Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra, Wilfried Laurier UP, 2016, pp. 7-17.
- Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.