

CONFERENCIA

“Agential Environments and Non-human Becoming in Indigenous Epistemologies of Land Aliveness”

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ORGANIZAN:

- Programa Interuniversitario de Doutoramento en Estudos Ingleses Avanzados
- Feminario de Investigación Feminismos e Resistencias do Grupo de Investigación Consolidado BIFEGA: Estudos Literarios e Culturais, Tradución e Interpretación

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Abstract

This talk attends to the ways in which land is inherently agential and communicative. It draws on the work of Warren Carriou and Vanessa Watts as frameworks from which to consider how “it is the land itself that communicates to humans through stories” (Carriou 2). Thus understood, agency is not limited to humans or non-human animals, but rather that land itself is animate and “full of thought, desire, contemplation and will” (Watts 23). Epistemologies of land aliveness generate profound shifts in relationality between environments and inhabitants, questioning settler-colonial narratives of society as human action on the world. These ideas will further be considered alongside Danis Goulet’s (dir.) short film *Wakening* to consider how the film’s depiction of a post-apocalyptic city can also be a site for the reclamation of territory – in which “the deep past” and “the foreseen future” are part of “an ongoing relationship” in which colonialism is a “temporary rather than [a] permanent reality” (Carriou 5). Following the warrior Weesakechak’s attempts to locate the Weetigo of Cree history, *Wakening* illustrates the way in which the agency of the land is not separate from that of the humans and non-humans that populate it, but rather is agential and animate. Instead, the film suggests that the agency of the land, and the ability to communicate with it and have it choose to communicate as well, may be muted within settler-colonial habitats, but are nonetheless still present.

Bio

Dr. Andrea Ruthven lectures in English at the University of the Balearic Islands where she teaches in the field of English for Specific Purposes. She holds a BA and an MA in English from the University of Guelph, Canada, and a PhD in Construction and Representation of Cultural Identities from the University of Barcelona.

Her research is focused on contemporary women's writing in English, with a special interest in speculative fictions and how these engage with questions of gender, sexuality, representation, and materiality. She has published several book chapters and journal articles in specialized journals and international volumes on *The Hunger Games* and *Ms. Marvel*, among others. She has co-edited with Belén Martín-Lucas the volume *Narratives of Difference in Globalized Cultures* (Palgrave 2017).

She is currently a researcher in the ministry funded project 'Cinema and Environment: Affective Ecologies in the Anthropocene' (PID2019-110068GA-I00), as well as a member of TransCanadian Networks (RED2018-102643-T) project. She is a contributing researcher with British and comparative cultural studies: identities and representation (BRICCS) at the University of the Balearic Islands and ADHUC Centre de Recerca. Teoria, Gènere, Sexualitat at the University of Barcelona.