

International Studies Association 2008 Venture Research Workshop Grant Report

Title: *Post-Imperial Futures: Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism in Critical International Relations Theory and Praxis*

Chair: Jacqueline Lasky, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH-M)

Workshop

The one-day workshop at the 2008 ISA Annual Convention in San Francisco was incredibly worthwhile and quite successful. All the papers presented approached the topic – the intersection of anarchism, indigenism and feminism – in novel and substantive ways. Some papers provided 'case-studies' in various locales across the globe, while other papers offered broad thematic engagements concerning 'the state' and inter-state system. The workshop proved to be a valuable and unique opportunity to bring into dialogue scholars from various theoretical, philosophical and practical perspectives. All participants and observers demonstrated a commitment to thinking through and working towards what post-imperial futures might be. The limitations of the academic setting and the formality of paper presentations were noted by many, and attempts were made to indigenize, feminize and infuse anarchism into the space of the workshop. Here is a brief summary of the papers presented and the subsequent questions and discussions.

"Indigenism, Anarchism, Feminism: an Emerging Framework for Exploring Post-Imperial Futures in International Relations" – Jacqueline Lasky, UH-M

Focusing on inadequately developed areas of International Relations theory, this paper explores the intersections of three well-established, but often separately considered traditions: anarchism, indigenism and feminism, and the praxis potential therein. By privileging what has been violently subordinated – specifically the anarchism and feminism within indigenism – I broadly outline an emerging framework for exploring post-imperial futures. This paper 1) provides a brief overview of the roots of this intersectionality, 2) considers the contours of these engagements in building an analytical framework, 3) briefly examines the praxis evident in contemporary case-studies, and 4) explores the routes of this intersectionality evident in critical IR. I conclude that this emerging framework of indigenism—anarchism—feminism reveals the potential for directly relating to each other and changing our relationships with each other in ways that withdraw consent from the interlocking system of capitalism, heteropatriarchy and white supremacy racism, thereby re-creating alternatives that empower our collective personhoods now.

"Anarcha-Indigenism: Encounters, Resonances, and Tensions" – Richard Day, Queen's University

This paper begins with a sketch of the common ground shared by certain feminisms, anarchisms, and indigenisms, while at the same time noting important disparities between these internally complex traditions of theory and practice. It then turns to a discussion of the forms that relations between these identities have taken in the past, and might take in the future. In thinking about the future, it interrogates the possibilities and perils of adopting the discourse of 'international relations' in these contexts, with specific attention to three key themes: non-statist federations of national/non-national communities and peoples; evolving protocols of interaction between such communities; the necessity of working on/with relations of both political and 'social' solidarity.

"Becoming Anarchism, Feminism, Indigeneity" – Kathy Ferguson, UH-M

This paper makes use of Deleuze's and Guattari's ideas for "becoming minoritarian" to seek shared ground among anarchist, feminist, and indigenous theories and practices. I foreground shared commitments to process, temporality and becoming over structure, stasis and being among some writers in these philosophies. Within each of these reservoirs of theory and practice one can find compelling expressions of rhizomatic, decentered, horizontal social imaginaries rather than arboreal, united, vertical ones. The paper also inquires into the limitation of "becoming minoritarian" for developing anarchist/feminist/indigenous intersections, asking what we are not able to do when we work through this lense.

"'Only a Stranger at Home': Urban Indigeneity and the Ontopolitics of International Relations" – Jason Adams, UH-M

This paper argues that the intersectionality of anarchism, indigenism and feminism is well-suited as a conceptual tool to the relation of indigeneity and world politics, especially when considered within the framework of "the city" as the contemporary locale of the "frontiers of the state". Because of the manner in which each of these threads confounds the binaries upon which IR relies (anarchism for liberty/equality, indigenism for nation/state and feminism for public/private) a powerful resonance machine is enacted between the three, through which the paradoxical reimagining of the city as indigenous, yet simultaneously radically pluralistic and egalitarian space, becomes possible. Rather than suggesting only a different understanding "International Relations" then, which would limit the approach to the affirmation of tribal sovereignty and cultural autonomy alone, I argue that the specificity of urban indigeneity suggests an alternate form of relationality, one beyond the ontopolitics of "the nation" itself, but not necessarily in opposition to particular forms of it. Once the figure of "the Indian" has been rendered as irreducible to nature (as opposed to culture), to the country (as opposed to the city) and to the local (as opposed to the global), the multiplicity of Indianness, or, more exactly, of "indigeneity", becomes something that absolutely must be reckoned with by IR scholars, no longer as "international" or even "transnational", but rather, as "transversal".

"From Identity to Equality: The Zapatistas" – Todd May, Clemson University

One of the scourges of recent progressive movements has been the rise of identity politics. Meant to affirm the irreducibility and integrity of various struggles (ex. the irreducibility of racial injustice to class struggle), identity politics has resulted in the ghettoization of progressive resistance and put up obstacles in the way of solidarity across struggles. One recent resistance movement that might look identitarian but is not is the Zapatista movement in southern Mexico. This presentation will look in depth at that movement. The lens for seeing the movement is Jacques Rancière's framework that views politics as collective action out of the presupposition of equality. What the Zapatista movement displays is a substitution of the idea of equality for that of identity. While utilizing symbols and embracing aspects of indigenous culture, the Zapatistas do not allow this utilization and embrace to stand in the way of seeing politics as a matter of equality. This is particularly clear in the case of women. For many indigenous cultures of southern Mexico, women are seen as less than equal to men. The Zapatistas emphasize the equality of women, and in fact call the struggle for equality "the revolution within the revolution." The bulk of this presentation will consist in a detailed reading of the movement itself, and show how it offers a pathway from identity politics to a politics of equality, without losing its moorings in the particular conditions in which it arose.

“Against the Law: Indigenous Feminism and the Nation-State” – Andrea Smith, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (soon to be University of California, Riverside)

Writings on Native women and feminism often rely on essentializing claims that Native women cannot be feminists, thus erasing the diversity of thought that exists within both scholarly and activist circles. To the extent that Native women’s writings on feminisms are cited, their use is often limited to demonstrating the racism of “white” feminism. Such rhetorical strategies limit Native women to a politics of inclusion – let us include Native women in feminist theory (or if we do not think that they can be included, let us reject feminist theory completely). This politics of inclusion inevitably presumes that feminism is in fact defined by white women to which indigenous women should or should not respond. However, if we were to presume Native women at the center of feminist theory, how would feminist theory itself change? Such a project moves beyond a narrowly-defined identity politic that presumes essential characteristics to indigenous womanhood to a revolutionary politic emerging from the nexus of the praxis of indigenous communities (both past and present) as well as the material conditions of heteropatriarchy, colonialism, and white supremacy under which indigenous women live. Indigenous feminist theory, contrary to what even some Native scholars argue, is not simply a multicultural add-on to “white” feminist theory (which itself is varied and complex). Rather, the theorizing produced by Native women scholars and activists make critical and transformative interventions into not only feminist theory, but into a wide variety of theoretical formations. In this essay, I will not provide an exhaustive account of these interventions because these interventions are the work of collective thought and organizing. Instead, I will focus on Native feminist theorizing about nationalism, the nation-state, and sovereignty in order to demonstrate the significance of Native feminist theory for anyone who engages in political theorizing. In particular, I will look at how indigenous feminist analyses demonstrate the extent to which even many feminist and/or leftist scholars situate the U.S. constitution as origin story demarcating the U.S.’s democratic ideals “before the fall” of Bush’s current war on terror.

“Kū’oko’a: Hawaiian Independence and Affinity” – Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, UH-M

This paper provides a beginning for exploring how aspects of contemporary Kanaka Māoli (Native Hawaiian) social movement organizing may contribute the development of an anarchy-indigenist project. I look for articulations, absences, provisional affinities, and outright rejections of indigenism, anarchism and feminism within current Kanaka Māoli political discourse, particularly among independence activists, and I suggest how elements of an emerging anarchy-indigenist frame might open new possibilities for Hawaiian liberatory praxis. The specific political issues discussed include independence advocates’ responses to a proposed land settlement between the State of Hawai’i and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, mobilizations to protect kalo (taro) from genetic engineering and patenting, visions of localized governance based on traditional ‘aha moku (land council) and ahupua’a (land division) forms, and new organizing for direct action to support aloha ‘āina (independence and love for the land). Throughout, I track relays between Hawaiian activist and academic sites of discourse, discussing connections and constitutive tensions across these two interdependent fronts and considering the usage of digital communication networks.

“Indigenous Transversality in Global Politics” – Nevzat Soguk, UH-M

This article examines historical transversal politics in indigenous movements in the Americas and beyond. It argues that contemporary indigenous activism, enacted in multiple political forms, ranging from international governmental organizations to extra-statist indigenous networks, are energized in and through resurgent transversality as a historical spatial condition and a mode of being. In the new global exhilarations a transversal political universe is emerging. This universe works syncretically within the ambit of the traditional statist diplomatic

regime but is neither subsumed within nor eclipsed by it. Following Michel Foucault on heterotopias, the article argues that indigenous universe exists and works side by side, under and above, in and through the prevailing statist regime yet it preserves a certain transformative, even transgressive, autonomy. In the process, this universe introduces indigeneity as an agent of the political, productive of novel communicative horizons. The article looks into indigenous experiences in modernity as experiences of not simply massive political and economic devastation and cultural displacement, but also centuries-long refusal to be "absorbed" by modernity's nationalizing and territorializing relations and intuitions anchored in the modern state. Among these institutions are traditional ontologies as political regimes that communicate statist form while excommunicating indigeneity, among others, from the field of political praxis. With this dynamic in mind, a la Armand Mattelart, the article begins to examine indigenous practices that are mobilized (a) to circumvent their excommunication from the political and (b) to communicate indigeneity into global politics as a different ontology of political being and becoming. The article argues that indigenous activism can be read as critical constructive "engagements" with modernity's promises and results, in which it is possible to learn limits of the politics, present and future, and offer new insights into how local and global politics, including state-centricity, can be critically and constructively re-envisioned in policy and conduct.

Following the presentation of papers in two different sessions (morning and afternoon), lively discussions and interesting questions ensued. Rather than finalizing any answers per se, an appreciation was gained for the complexity of and openings for sustained engagement. There was insufficient time to adequately address all of the important issues raised at the workshop, nevertheless conversations continued throughout the ISA Annual Convention in various panels and roundtables. Moreover, the emerging dialogues will surely expand in both breadth and depth in coming years and ever-widening venues.

- How do we reinvigorate different modalities of thought and being (or becoming) *without* essentializing these differences in contradistinction to each other?
 - This is the challenge of working *with* and *through* differences.
 - Radical fairness can only be achieved through *interaction*.
 - Need to be careful not to *fetishize* "anarcha-indigenism."
 - There are elements of a common discourse within anarchism, indigenism and feminism, *but* each discourse has a specificity that cannot be collapsed into one another.
 - Framework for engagement that is *not a totality*, but rather a site of *empowering multiplicities*, of *dynamic relationality*, of a *vanishing center*, of *contingent encounters* – based upon *respect and equality*.
 - Need to stress *movement* rather than finality; shared processes and constant (re)invention at 'pivot points' that enable movements to re-energize and multiple.

- How do we *relate to each other* without going through the state form?
 - Need to shift how people view the *sources* of their *liberation*.
 - Need build an *ability to withdraw* from 'apparatuses of capture.'
 - Need to redefine *winning*.
 - Focus on the proliferation of autonomous zones *without* letting the *radical context* of such zones disappear.
 - Some aspects of the state – such as aspects of the rule of law – should be maintained in the face of rogue governments', such as the Bush Administration's, utter disregard for laws that materially *endanger* people's lives and livelihoods.

- On contrary, perhaps, Bush is *fulfillment* of the law, and not an aberrant to it, when law is understood as incipient of and justification for imperial violences against Native peoples – this should not be willfully ignored.
 - Focus on transversal dynamics that are always already at play.
- How do we *create cultures* that *create individuals* who know *how to be free*?
- Need understand culture *as* the sustaining of radical politics.
 - Activism cannot be separated from *living*, for example, if the ‘work’ of living is collectivized and shared, then more people will be ‘free’ to participate in activism.
 - Organizing around concrete human needs, such as food in the anti-GMO movement, is proving successful.
 - Radical struggles and leftist movements need to be more *fun* – like the effective mobilization of the right where they party and pray together (rather than bemoan and self-criticize, which is the tendency of the left)
 - Need to have *sex* on our side – like in the 1960s when there was an *eros of rebellion* (and as a counter to present eroticism of militarism).

Publication Plans

All workshop papers are currently undergoing peer-review for a special edition of *Affinities Journal* entitled “Working Across Difference for Post-Imperial Futures: Intersections Between Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism.” The expected publication date is this coming Fall or Winter (2008). Glen Coulthard and I will be guest editors of this special edition. In addition, we will also pursue the subsequent publication of an edited book.

Follow-up at ISA Annual Convention

A proposal was submitted for a roundtable panel (or possibly two back-to-back panels) at the 2009 ISA Annual Convention in New York to include myself, Richard Day, Andrea Smith, Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, Jason Adams, Glen Coulthard, Jeff Corntassel and Taiaiake Alfred. As a follow-up to the venture research grant workshop and subsequent publication of workshop papers, this roundtable will move beyond ‘talking’ and ‘writing’ to focus on the ‘doing’ by addressing the following questions:

- In which ways are groups and communities organizing and actively pre-figuring alternative, preferred futures that are anti-colonial, non-hierarchical, ‘unsettling’ of state authority, and free of heteropatriarchy?
- In which ways are ‘boundaries’ of International Relations being transversed and/or dissolved by indigenist—anarchist—feminist groups and communities?
- Is the ‘discipline’ of IR even applicable?
- Can IR be indigenized, feminized and infused with anarchism?
- *How are these innovative political practices informing political theory?*
- *What can we do, as academics and activists, to utilize these theories in furthering these practices?*

In addition to this proposed roundtable panel, there are plans to have a two-week long intensive seminar at the Indigenous Politics Program at the University of Hawai’i in the Spring or Summer of 2010. This seminar will be in conjunction with the Indigenous Governance Program of the University of Victoria and open to individuals and academic programs who wish to participate. Moreover, a service-learning (praxis) component will be integrated into the seminar to take the classroom into the community.

Detailed Accounting of Budget

The final budget (\$7,906.80) was substantially less than the proposed budget (\$12,641.00) due to the withdrawal of several participants and forgoing transcription services (and other allocated expenditures) for the workshop. With one exception (*approved* additional airfare cost for myself), each expenditure was at or below the budgeted amount.

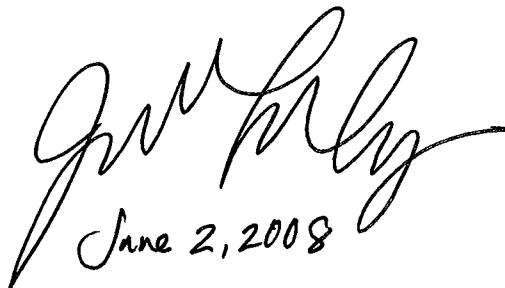
Conference Room Rental	\$ 100.00
Folders, nametags, etc.	\$ 28.01
Photocopies	\$ 17.50
Videotape	\$ 13.09
Lodging (8 participants)	\$1,464.00
Per diems (8 participants)	\$1,200.00
Honoraria (8 participants)	\$4,000.00
Travel (2 participants)	<u>\$1,084.20</u>
TOTAL:	\$7,906.80

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to convene a most unique workshop venturing into the research of anarchism, indigenism and feminism within (and against) International Relations theory and praxis. Noting the considerable gaps that exist in these research areas, all of the participants and observers expressed gratitude for being able to come together to share work, explore ideas, and excite imaginations. Moreover, everyone looks forward to producing quality scholarship through these initial dialogues that will expand upon much needed areas of engagement.

I personally learned a great deal from this first experience at organizing a scholarly workshop that will surely benefit similar projects in the future. In addition to gaining valuable organizational skills, there are several lessons that I would apply to future endeavors. First, more time would be dedicated at the beginning of the day for participants and observers to get to know each other in productive ways, including more conducive spatial arrangements. This would facilitate relational interactions and more open discussions. Second, instead of organizing the workshop around paper presentations, papers would be due beforehand and distributed among the participants to read in advance of the workshop. The workshop would then be organized around thematic questions or issue areas with each participant contributing to answering the questions or addressing the issues. Third, time would be dedicated at the end of the day for break-out or brain-storming sessions. This would help bring coherence or closure to the workshop with an eye towards further developments and future directions.

Again, thank you for funding this venture research workshop grant on *Post-Imperial Futures: Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism in Critical International Relations Theory and Praxis*, and for investing in scholars whose scholarship strives to contribute to a more just and peaceful world.



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