AILASA

ASSOCIATION OF IBERIAN AND
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES OF AUSTRALASIA

CONFERENCE PROGRAM



PROGRAM AND CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Holme Building (Sutherland and Cullen rooms, Physics Rd)

Old Teachers College and Woolley Buildings

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AILASA 2026 Conference acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the University of Sydney stands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the continuing cultures, knowledge systems, sovereignty and custodial responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded, and recognise the enduring connections between Country, community, language, knowledge and collective life. As a conference engaging with questions of colonialism, resistance, knowledge production and re-existencia, we recognise the importance of listening to and learning from First Nations peoples, their knowledges and their ongoing struggles for justice, recognition and self-determination.

CONFERENCE REMIT

Collective Life and Re-existencia in the New War Order

We live in a moment shaped by what might be called a New War Order, in which multiple, intersecting forms of violence and governance structure everyday life. These include the continued expansion of the War on Drugs, militarised border regimes and deportation infrastructures, environmental crisis and extractivism, gendered and racialised forms of harm, attacks on knowledge and academic freedom, and increasingly algorithmic and digital forms of control.

In this context, "war" is not limited to armed conflict. It operates as a distributed condition: a set of overlapping political, economic, epistemic, and technological logics that shape how life is lived, governed, and imagined. Yet alongside these formations, communities, movements, and cultural practices continue to generate forms of collective life, solidarity, and re-existencia—a term widely used in Latin American critical thought to describe survival as active transformation and refusal, not mere endurance.

This conference invites reflection on how such practices emerge and persist under these conditions. We are particularly interested in how scholars, artists, educators, and activists theorise and enact collective life in contexts marked by political crisis and structural violence, as well as how these dynamics are experienced across Latin America, Iberia, and diasporic formations, including the Latinx and wider transnational Americas.

We also welcome work that engages critically with key geopolitical formations shaping the contemporary Americas and beyond, including Puerto Rico's colonial condition, Venezuela, Cuba, U.S. hemispheric strategies (including the American Shield), Spain's role in European and global politics, and broader South–South, North–South, and transregional configurations of power.

The conference foregrounds transformative cultural, linguistic, pedagogical, and environmental practices through which people imagine, enact, and sustain collective life in conditions of crisis. It highlights scholarship emerging from peripheralised locations within the global academy and knowledge economy, and welcomes work that centres Indigenous and Afro-descendant epistemologies, subversive cultural practices, and emergent forms of pan-Latin Americanism in the shadow of contemporary right-wing political formations.

We are particularly interested in contributions that explore critical pedagogies and resistant vocabularies, including multilingual classroom practices, co-created curricula, and pedagogical tools that engage subaltern knowledges and challenge dominant epistemic regimes.

We welcome papers that critically address, among other topics:

- Migration politics and deportation networks, including U.S. immigration enforcement and transnational border regimes.
- The war on knowledge, including academic freedom under pressure in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe.
- U.S. hemispheric strategies, including the War on Drugs and the "American Shield," and their geopolitical and economic implications.
- Geopolitical flashpoints, including Puerto Rico's colonial condition, Venezuela, Cuba, sanctions, blockades, and contested sovereignties.
- Global far-right politics, digital mobilisation, algorithmic governance, and electoral influence across the Americas and Europe.
- War, genocide, and anti-war/solidarity movements in comparative and transregional perspective.
- Cultural, literary, and media practices that depict, interrogate, or generate re-existencia under conditions of violence.
- Gendered, racialised, and sexualised forms of oppression and collective life-making practices.
- Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and decolonial epistemologies of resistance, survival, and futurity.
- Comparative and transregional approaches to alliance, solidarity, and collective life under crisis.
- Pedagogic practices that interrogate and cultivate agency in the New War Order.
- Critical pedagogies that challenge epistemic violence and institutional constraint.
- Linguistic, discursive, and semiotic analyses of how the New War Order is constructed and contested.
- Multilingualism, translation, and resistant vocabularies in contexts of crisis.
- Social, cultural, and aesthetic analyses of the discourses shaping contemporary war and governance.

By bringing together these strands, the conference highlights the creative, agential, and transformative dimensions of collective life, showing how people across the Americas, Iberia, and diasporic contexts contest, rework, and sustain social and political worlds under conditions of structural and epistemic violence.

CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Vek Lewis — Convenor

Macarena Ortiz Jiménez

Luis F. Angosto Ferrández

Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Sydney

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Convenor and Organising Committee warmly thank the School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Sydney, for its funding and logistical support, and the Vere Gordon Childe Centre for its commitment to the conference and its financial contribution.

We extend our sincere thanks to Fernanda Peñaloza for her generous assistance to the Convenor in connecting the conference with relevant scholarly and professional networks, and in fostering connections around the conference themes and the participation of our keynote speakers.

We are grateful to Fabricio Tocco and Thomas Nulley-Valdés at AILASA for their support of the conference and their financial contributions, which have helped make this gathering possible.

Our special thanks go to our keynote speakers, Yásnaya Elena A. Gil and Sara C. Motta, for joining us and sharing their work and insights. We also thank all delegates and participants for their contributions to the conference and for the conversations, collaborations and intellectual exchanges they make possible.

Finally, we acknowledge and thank our volunteers for their time, generosity and practical assistance in bringing the conference together.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil

Milpa sociopolítica: futuros y resistencia desde los pueblos indígenas
Sociopolitical Milpa: Futures and Resistance from Indigenous Peoples

Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil is from Ayutla Mixe, Oaxaca. She is a linguist and writer, and a member of COLMIX, a collective dedicated to researching and promoting the Mixe language, history, and culture. She writes opinion columns and essays for publications including the newspaper *El País* and Gatopardo magazine. Her principal areas of interest are linguistic and poetic diversity, the rights of Indigenous peoples, and the imagination as a tool for responding to the climate emergency. She is the author of A We Without a State (Ona Ediciones) and *Ää: Manifestos for Linguistic Diversity* (Editorial Almadía), translated into English as *This Mouth Is Mine* by Charco Press.

KEYNOTE ABSTRACT

Una milpa, ese sistema agrícola tan característico de Mesoamérica, es decididamente mucho más que un campo de maíz. En esta presentación se utilizará la milpa como una metáfora de la diversidad política como una respuesta a la crisis del modelo estado-nación. Si consideramos que, a través del tiempo y las geografías, ha existido una gran diversidad de sistemas para organizar y coordinar la vida en común de las sociedades humanas, el modelo del estado-nación se ha constituido en un monocultivo sociopolítico funcional al capitalismo que ha combatido la existencia de una gran gama de opciones. Una de las alternativas más conocidas al modelo del estado nación la constituyen las estructuras comunales de muchos pueblos indígenas; por esta razón, se ha dado en hacer una oposición binaria entre estado-nación y comunidad como opciones antagónicas. Sin embargo, al estado-nación se opone no solo una opción sino una milpa de estructuras de organización sociopolítica. Antes de la consolidación del estado, en el mundo existieron, y aún existen, diversas maneras de organizar y coordinar la vida en común. A pesar de la depredación y el combate por parte del monocultivo estatal, hallamos alternativas múltiples y concretas: la comunalidad serrana en Oaxaca, la propuesta de confederación kurda, los caracoles zapatistas, las estructuras clánicas y nómadas que siguen recorriendo distintos territorios, las estructuras de autogestión punk que florecieron y aún florecen en los ambientes urbanos, el anarquismo colectivista o las estructuras tribales de diversos pueblos indígenas, solo por mencionar algunos ejemplos. La existencia de esta milpa sociopolítica permite imaginar futuros diversos en los que la reproducción de la vida se ponga en el centro de la lucha para combatir la crisis de los distintos sistemas de opresión.

A milpa, that agricultural system so characteristic of Mesoamerica, is decidedly much more than a cornfield. In this presentation, the milpa will serve as a metaphor for political diversity as a response to the crisis of the nation-state model. If we consider that, across time and geographical contexts, a great diversity of systems has existed for organising and coordinating the shared life of human societies, the nation-state model has become a sociopolitical monoculture that serves capitalism and has sought to suppress the existence of a wide range of alternatives. One of the best-known alternatives to the nation-state model is the communal structures of many Indigenous peoples. For this reason, a binary opposition has often been established between the nation-state and the community, as though they were antagonistic alternatives. Yet the nation-state is opposed not by a single alternative, but by a whole milpa of sociopolitical organisational structures. Before the consolidation of the state, diverse ways of organising and coordinating collective life existed throughout the world, and many continue to exist today. Despite the destruction and suppression inflicted by the state monoculture, we find multiple, concrete alternatives: the communal practices of Oaxaca's mountain communities; the Kurdish proposal for confederation; the Zapatista caracoles; clan-based and nomadic structures that continue to traverse different territories; punk self-management structures that flourished, and continue to flourish, in urban environments; collectivist anarchism; and the tribal structures of various Indigenous peoples, to name just a few examples. The existence of this sociopolitical milpa makes it possible to imagine diverse futures in which the reproduction of life is placed at the centre of the struggle to confront the crisis generated by different systems of oppression.

Sara C. Motta

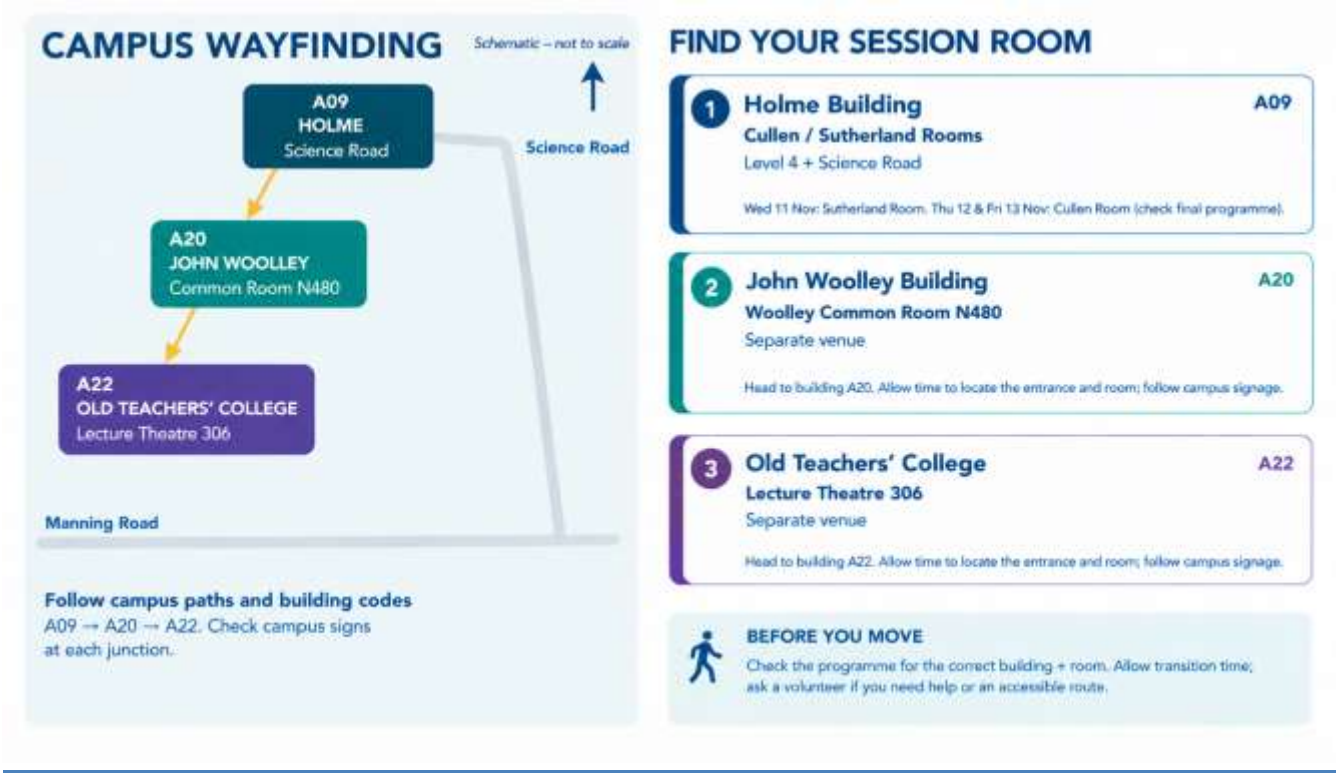


A Queer diasporic racialised mother (w)rites back:
F*ing on, with and beyond borders**

Sara C. Motta is a proud Indigenous-Mestiza of Colombia Muysca, Eastern European Jewish and Celtic lineages living, loving, resisting and re-existiendo on the unceded lands of the Worimi peoples, NSW, so called Australia. She is a mother, grandmother, curandera/medicine woman, popular educator and international award-winning poet and political philosopher who is currently A/Professor in Politics at the University of Newcastle. She is a prolific writer of texts as breath and survivance and has co-created numerous projects of decolonising/indigenist feminist queering education as healing sovereignties in Abya Yala, UK and so-called Australia. In all her praxis she is committed to amplifying, nurturing and honouring the pluriverse voices, epistemologies, methodologies, analytics and cosmologies of subjects, communities and territories who have been relegated to the flesh in theory and practise and to centre their/our world-making magic and philosophical-strategic brilliance.

KEYNOTE ABSTRACT

I speak as a queer diasporic racialised mother and enflesh emergent futurities beyond captivity. I bring the racialised mother to the centre of the politics of queer diasporic (political) belonging and refuse our ongoing erasure. I do this through my wild tongue as a queer erotic poetics 'working to expand [webs] of queer kinship, feeling, friendship, love, and desire.' (Holland, 2021, 2). I invoke and honour my ancestrxs whose love-making and loving relations were always-already fucking with borders and cultivating kinship that refused nation-states and survived and fought against Empire. I dialogue with foremothers and sister-kin of Abya-Yala and her diasporas, with racialized women philosopher lesbian poets, Audre Lorde (1984; 1982) and Gloria Anzaldúa (1981, 1987) and their anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist texts of survival, refusal and healing, and Black feminist Hortense Spillers and her analytics of the racialised mother as a kernel for futurities (m)otherwise as foremothers of this work of survival and liberation. I draw on the sister work of Alexis Gumbs that brings together the analytics of the racialised mother with/as queer inter-generationality. This constellation helps me to root a queer erotic poetics of the (en)fleshed as the analytics that enable me to fuck on, with and beyond borders firstly with renditions of queer studies of political belonging and subjectivity bound to Whiteness that re-produce the absence of the queer racialised (m)other as central to a queer analytics of (political) worldmaking and leave her captive, and secondly as enfleshment of her/our ontological presence, epistemological wisdom and political subjectivity (m)otherwise. This queer erotic-poetic enfleshed constellation is my offering to our communal cultivating of a diasporic southern politics of freedom-making dedicated to life, our lives well-lived.


CAMPUS WAYFINDING
Schematic – not to scale
A09
HOLME
Science Road
Science Road
A20
JOHN WOOLLEY
Common Room N480
A22
OLD TEACHERS' COLLEGE
Lecture Theatre 306
Manning Road
Follow campus paths and building codes
A09 → A20 → A22. Check campus signs at each junction.
FIND YOUR SESSION ROOM
1
Holme Building
A09
Cullen / Sutherland Rooms
Level 4 + Science Road
Wed 11 Nov: Sutherland Room. Thu 12 & Fri 13 Nov: Cullen Room (check final programme).
2
John Woolley Building
A20
Woolley Common Room N480
Separate venue
Head to building A20. Allow time to locate the entrance and room; follow campus signage.
3
Old Teachers' College
A22
Lecture Theatre 306
Separate venue
Head to building A22. Allow time to locate the entrance and room; follow campus signage.
BEFORE YOU MOVE
Check the programme for the correct building + room. Allow transition time; ask a volunteer if you need help or an accessible route.

PROGRAM

All times are local to Sydney. Room assignments and chairs are identified where applicable.

WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

TIME	ROOM	SESSION / EVENT
8:00–8:30	Main venue: Sutherland Room	Registration confirmation
8:30–9:00	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**Opening, Welcome to Country and Official Welcome** *Welcome to Country- Metropolitan Local Land Council; AILASA / SLAS and SLC welcome and conference introduction — Prof Avril Alba*
9:00–10:30	Main venue: Sutherland Room	KEYNOTE — **Yásnaya Aguilar Milpa sociopolítica: futuros y resistencia desde los pueblos indígenas** *Sociopolitical Milpa: Futures and Resistance from Indigenous Peoples* *Introduced by Vek Lewis*
10:30–11:00	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**MORNING TEA**
11:00–12:30	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**Re-existencia / Indigenous / Afro-diasporic Collective Life — Session 1** *Chair: Fernanda Peñaloza* **Three Centuries of Resistance: The Río Yurumanguí and its People** Juanita Arango Vallejo and Emma Christopher **Beyond Inclusion: Re-existencia, Diaspora and Antiracist Praxis in the Arts** Carolina Triana Cuéllar **Aquilombamento as Method: Samba, Decolonial Epistemology, and Collectivity in the Australian Afro-Brazilian Samba Practitioner Diaspora** Susan (Sooz) Smith
11:00–12:30	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Interactive Conversation Circle** *Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés* **An Interactive Conversation Circle Inspired by Letters to Paulo Freire: Radical Dialogues on Democratic Education and Courage** Jorge Knijnik

11:00–12:30	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**Knowledge, Language and Pedagogy — Session 1** *Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo* **Reimagining International Education through Re-existencia** Macarena Gordillo de Paz and Nicholas Manganas **Who Gets to Appear: Racialised Visibility in Spanish Language Teaching** Macarena Ortiz Jiménez (University of Sydney)
12:30–1:30	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**LUNCH**
1:30–3:00	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**Gender, Care, Feminisms and Resistance — Session 1** *Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés* **Gendered Labour, Collective Life and the Limits of Legal Equality in Paraguay** Tanya Lucía Bettoni Fabio **Sentipensar for Alternative Futures: Thinking from Abya Yala-Latin America in the Context of Business Research** Natalia García-Fuentes **Contemporary Feminist Utopias from Argentina** Lucía Feuillet
1:30–3:00	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Popular Culture and Artistic Creations as Resistance — Session 1** *Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo* **Echoes of Exile: Musical Memories in Chilean Exile Literature** Julio Uribe Ugalde **Resistance and Hypernormalization in Asturian Surdimientu Literature** Alfredo Martínez-Expósito
1:30–3:00	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**Beyond Self-Containment: Frontiers, Power, and Historical Change in Latin America and the Caribbean — Session 1** *Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa*

		The Contest for Indigenous-Missionary Borderlands of Early Modern Western Amazonia Roberto Chauca Tapia **Interethnic Systems and Indigenous Territorialities in the Colonial Frontiers of Northeastern Venezuela (1650–1800)** Francisco Tiapa **Missional Baits and Capitalist Hooks: Cattle, Property, and Egalitarianism in Gran Sabana, Southern Venezuela** Luis Angosto-Ferrández
3:00–3:30	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**AFTERNOON TEA**
3:30–5:00	Main venue: Sutherland Room	**Re-existencia / Indigenous / Afro-diasporic Collective Life — Session 2** *Chair: Lilit Thwaites* **Affirmative Action Initiatives within Australian Reconciliation Policy: Lessons for Brazil in Building a Reconciliation Policy for Its Black Population** Thaís de Oliveira Queiroz **Toward or Away From Collective Life? Reflections from Australia, Cuba, and Brazil** Adrian Hearn **Spanish Formosa and Indigenous Encounters** Brett Todd
3:30–5:00	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**BOOK LAUNCH — *Agency in Poverty and War: Consciousness in Rural Human Development*** Vivianna Rodriguez Carreon
3:30–5:00	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**Beyond Self-Containment — Session 2 (Part 2)** *Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa* **Emancipation Day Celebrations, Sovereignty, and Tourism in the Island of San Andrés, Colombia** Callie Evans

		Huemul's Appropriation Throughout Chilean History: From Colonialism to Green Capitalism Lucaz González

THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER

TIME	ROOM	SESSION / EVENT
8:00–8:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	Registration confirmation
9:00–10:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	**Gender, Care, Feminisms and Resistance — Session 2** *Chair: Adrian Hearn* **From Violence to Flight: LGBTQ+/Trans Migration, Asylum, and the Production of "Credible" Life** Vek Lewis **From the Clinic to the Classroom: Biomedicine, Folk Healing, and Chicano Re-existencia on the Border and Abroad** Edward Jonah Fricovsky **A Hybrid Myth of Neoliberal Womanhood: How the Balanced Woman Became the Most Powerful (Women)** Alejandra Lizbeth Gutiérrez Hernández
9:00–10:30	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Geopolitics / Capitalism / Politics / New War Order — Session 1** *Chair: Lilit Thwaites* **Old War/New War: Capitalists v. Workers in Argentina and Australia, c.1900 to the Present** Peter Ross **Cuba: Cycling Your Way Through the Blockade** Carlos Uxó **Memes at War: Generative AI and Right-Wing Populisms in Latin America** Gabriel Bayarri
9:00–10:30	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**Popular Culture and Artistic Creations as Resistance — Session 2**

		Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo **Sur-Real Scientists: The Figure of the Scientist in Latin American Literature** Thomas Nulley-Valdés **Parallel Crises, Translated Alliances: Latin American Literary Reception in Bangla as Re-existencia under a New War Order** Ranita Chakraborty Dasgupta **Who Owns Cumbia? Sonideros, Opacity and Creative Agency in the Barrio** Moses Iten
10:30–11:00	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**MORNING TEA**
11:00–12:30	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**Humour, Medusa and the New Weird — Session 1** *Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés* **Speculative Humour and Symbolic Revenge in *Medusa* (2021)** Diego Hoefel **Discourses of Re-existencia: Speech Acts, Events and Characters in *Medusa*** Beatriz Carbajal Carrera **Dark Charge Across the Americas: Stratified Laughter in *Medusa* and Jordan Peele** Rodney Taveira **Viral Ruptures and the "New Weird": The Socio-Technological Aesthetics of Humour in *Medusa*** Benjamin Nickl
11:00–12:30	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Memory, Opinion, Expression and Repression — Session 1** *Chair: Vek Lewis* **Three Witnesses, One Recurrence: Forensic Re-existencia and the Criminalisation of Bearing Witness in the New War Order** Natalia Maystorovich Chulio **The Law as an Instrument of Repression and Censorship in Australia: Criminalising Legitimate**

		Speech and Protest and the Social Cost of Defending Human Rights Adriana Ester Navarro
11:00–12:30	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**Special Session — Tejedora Sentipensante Agency** *Chair: Self-chaired by participants* **Tejedora Sentipensante Agency: Weaving Ourselves Within, Against, and Beyond Institutionalised Knowledges** Victoria Bonilla-Báez; Paula Do Prado; Natalia García; Fernanda Peñaloza
12:30–1:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	**LUNCH** **AILASA BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING** (BGM) — 12:30–1:30 pm; partitioned area of Cullen Room. Lunch will be provided. All members welcome.
1:30–3:00	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**En inglés, in Spanish, en Spanglish Australiano: Reflections on writing and reading literature from Abya Yala in so-called Australia** Rosario Lázaro Igoa, Natalia Figueroa Barroso and Fernanda Peñaloza
1:30–3:00	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Weaving Conocimientos of Change** *Chair: Vek Lewis* **Weaving Conocimientos of Change; Approaching Wayuu Re-Existencia in La Guajira, Colombia** Kynzha Eleonora Montejo Lyall, Veronika Berman and Megan Battaglia / One Thread Collective
1:30–3:00	OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22)	**BOOK LAUNCH — The Politics of Gendered Life Stories in Spain: From Private Lives to Public Revolution** Macarena Gordillo de Paz and Nicholas Manganas
3:00–3:30	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**AFTERNOON TEA**
3:30–5:00	Main venue: Cullen Room	**Geopolitics / Capitalism / Politics / New War Order — Session 2** *Chair: Lilit Thwaites*

		Limited Warfare, Long Term Occupation: The United States in Venezuela Rodrigo Acuña **The Trump Administration, and Their Attempt to Reassert the Monroe Doctrine: The Significance of BRICS** Richard Stone **Land and Power in the Histories of Argentina and Australia** James Levy
7:00pm onward	**Jambo Jambo Ethiopian Restaurant** 89 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037	**EVENING / CONFERENCE DINNER** *off-site*

FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER

TIME	ROOM	SESSION / EVENT
8:00–8:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	Registration confirmation
9:00–10:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	**Popular Culture and Artistic Creations as Resistance — Session 3** *Chair: Vek Lewis* **Queer Performance and the Transformation of Musical Traditions in Mexico: La Bruja de Texcoco and Miss Velvetine** Steve Hooper **Tracing Cuir Diasporas: Latin American Queer Literature in Australia** Mariana Rodríguez Castañeda **Carla Cavina's *Water Strike* (2024) as an Affective Archive of Communal Care during Hurricane Maria's Governmental Failures** Consuelo Martínez Reyes
10:30–11:00	Main venue: Cullen Room	**MORNING TEA**
11:00–12:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	**KEYNOTE 2 — Sara C. Motta** **A Queer diasporic racialised mother (w)rites back:** **F***ing on, with and beyond borders**

		Introduced by Vek Lewis
12:30–1:30	Main venue: Cullen Room	**LUNCH**
1:30–3:00	Main venue: Cullen Room	**Popular Culture and Artistic Creations as Resistance — Session 4** *Chair: Lilit Thwaites* **The Cinema in the Cell: Re-Reading Manuel Puig's Cinematic Narration in Kiss of the Spider Woman** Yaoyun Zhang and Thomas Nulley-Valdés **Childhood and the Workings of Narco Spectacle in Rita Indiana's Papi** Jéssica Andrade Tolentino **Where the Wild Things Are: Monsters as Horror and Resistance in the U.S.–Mexico Border** Alejandro Soifer
3:00–3:30	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**AFTERNOON TEA**
3:30–5:00	Woolley Common Room N480 (A20)	**Knowledge, Language and Pedagogy — Session 2** *Chair: Beatriz Carbajal Carrera* **How Is Knowledge Shaped? Happy Objects and Cultural Representations in Spanish Language Textbooks** Beatriz Carbajal Carrera and Carmen Saucedo Segami **Literature in Spanish within a Monolingual Literary Landscape: Multilingualism, Translation, and Civic Participation at Lost In Books** Rosario Lázaro Igoa and Jane Stratton **Cultural Studies and the Canon: An Account of the Latin American Studies Schism** Fernando Bayer
5:00	Main Venue: Cullen Room	**FORMAL CONFERENCE CLOSE**

ABSTRACTS BY PARTICIPANT SURNAME

Abstracts are listed alphabetically by the surname of the first-named participant. Session and chair details are included for reference. Abstracts or event descriptions not supplied in the source materials are identified accordingly.

A

Limited Warfare, Long Term Occupation: The United States in Venezuela

Rodrigo Acuña

Thursday 12 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

On 3 January 2026 the Trump administration sent 150 military aircraft into Venezuela with the stated objective to seize President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, first lady Cilia Flores, who were accused of running the Cartel of the Suns. Although the operation saw the deaths of over 100 Venezuelans and Cubans, some destruction to Venezuela's surface-to-air defences, and the seizure of Maduro and Flores, Venezuela's state institutions remained intact while the chavistas have continued in office. In contrast to the two previous chavista presidents, the new interim president Delcy Rodríguez has been working closely with Washington and U.S. oil companies. On January 9, Trump signed Executive Order 14373, Safeguarding Venezuelan Oil Revenue for the Good of the American and Venezuelan People, where all foreign payments destined for the Venezuelan state have instead been channelled into the Foreign Government Deposit Funds created by the U.S. government. This paper will discuss the current relationship between Washington and Caracas and argue that the state of Venezuela can no longer be considered sovereign. Exploring previous U.S. hemispheric strategies, it will argue that the current Donroe Doctrine will have huge geopolitical and economic implications for Latin America and the Caribbean in the coming years.

Missional Baits and Capitalist Hooks: Cattle, Property, and Egalitarianism in Gran Sabana, Southern Venezuela

Luis Angosto-Ferrández | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa

This presentation examines the recent consolidation of cattle raising in Pemon communities of Southern Venezuela where this practice was marginal or fully absent. Such previous marginality became normalised by commentators through references to cultural, ecological, or infrastructural factors, yet it nevertheless remained striking when considered in the context of the circum-regional political economy: cattle raising had a long-standing presence in missional enclaves within the region, as well as in neighbouring Macushi communities of Northern Brazil where similar ecological conditions and indigenous social structures prevailed. Drawing on missionary chronicles, ethnohistorical literature and contemporary ethnographic work, I argue that the delayed consolidation of cattle raising in Pemon communities requires recognition of their sustained reluctance to integrate market-oriented practices that stimulate enclosures and economically determined forms of social inequality. Additionally, I identify perceptions of increasing encroachment and renewed threats of territorial dispossession as factors that have weakened such opposition in recent years, in a geopolitical context marked by economic sanctions on Venezuela and neo-colonial dynamics across the hemisphere.

Childhood and the Workings of Narco Spectacle in Rita Indiana's *Papi*

Jéssica Andrade Tolentino | Australian National University

Friday 13 November | 1:30–3:00 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

This paper reads Rita Indiana's *Papi* (2005) through the lens of childhood as a metafictional device, extending a chapter of my thesis on childhood in contemporary Latin American fiction. I argue that *Papi* responds to the formal problem Rafael Lemus identifies in his essay "Balas de Salva" (2005) -- narconovelas' tendency to domesticate the figure of "El Narco" into tidy, coherent plots -- by turning the failure of realist knowledge into a metafictional resource. The child narrator performs three simultaneous operations. First, lacking factual knowledge of her narco-trafficker father's world, she destabilizes narconarrative's realist conventions, which depend on a narrator positioned as a credible source. Second, she nonetheless

produces the narco fantasy itself: unable to know her father, she converts him into spectacle, elaborating him through fabulation. Third, and most significantly, the novel renders this elaboration visible as invention. The reader watches the child fabulate in real time, witnessing fantasy's manufacture rather than simply experiencing its finished effect. Where realist narconarrative conceals its own devices to produce a truth-effect, *Papi* does the opposite, dramatizing the formal mechanisms through which narco-cultural fascination is produced.

Three Centuries of Resistance: The Río Yurumanguí and its People

Juanita Arango Vallejo and Emma Christopher | The University of New South Wales

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Fernanda Peñaloza

In the Yurumanguí River Basin, on Colombia's Pacific coast, the Afro-descendant community has been resisting since the early eighteenth century when a group of their ancestors escaped enslavement and settled on the upper reaches of the river. Since then, they have worked to preserve their identity and their own way of existing in their surroundings, grounded in the understanding that their territory is life itself. In recent decades their existence has been threatened by armed conflict and illegal mining. In response, the people of Yurumanguí—who refer to themselves as "renacientes"—have developed forms of resistance based in culture, traditional music, festivals, and collective action, with the aim of safeguarding their world, territory, and unique identity. This paper examines continuities of resistance among the people of the Yurumanguí, from marronage during the colonial period to the strategies for territorial defense developed in past decades. It seeks to show how the community has resisted, and will continue to do so for as long as necessary, determined to preserving a way of life and a worldview that stretch back into the past.

B

Memes at War: Generative AI and Right-Wing Populisms in Latin America

Gabriel Bayarri Toscano | Rey Juan Carlos University

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

Digital humour has become a central language through which contemporary right-wing populisms construct identities, normalise exclusion and mobilise participation. Drawing on multi-sited digital ethnographic research conducted in Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, Uruguay and El Salvador, this paper examines how memes and AI-generated images are reshaping the communicative ecology of right-wing populisms across Latin America. Rather than treating memes as isolated artefacts, the paper approaches them as social practices circulating across online and offline environments, where ambiguity, irony and visual participation produce shared political meanings. Particular attention is given to generative AI, which blurs distinctions between authenticity and fabrication while creating new regimes of credibility and participation. The paper argues that these developments extend beyond misinformation and should instead be understood through platformisation, digital sovereignty and cultural struggle. Methodologically, it reflects on the challenges of conducting digital ethnography in environments increasingly populated by AI-generated content. Instead of asking whether digital artefacts are human or artificial, it focuses on how they circulate, acquire meaning and become embedded within communities of interpretation, contributing to debates on digital anthropology, political communication and the methodological implications of generative AI for studying contemporary right-wing populisms.

Cultural Studies and the Canon: An Account of the Latin American Studies Schism

Fernando Bayer | Independent Scholar

Friday 13 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

Over the past forty years, the field of Latin American studies has found itself increasingly impacted and transformed by a range of epistemological and institutional changes brought about by the third wave of globalisation and the rise of neoliberalism. In particular, rising social and economic inequality between the English-speaking world and Latin America has resulted in the majority of tertiary research into the region being conducted from abroad, in effect forming a parallel field with its own set of critical priorities. This circumstance I argue can most clearly be witnessed in the treatment of literary studies and particularly the authors and works from the Latin American Boom, with English-language criticism prioritising

the implementation of a more Europeanised form of cultural studies that has devalued questions of aesthetic quality. As a consequence, the canon of Latin American literature has become increasingly prone to stereotyping within the English-language, with the valorisation of a limited number of telluric texts that are often analysed using reductive frameworks that contribute to the imagination of Latin America as a region of incomplete modernity. The consequences of which I suggest has been a decline in academic freedom in both the English and Spanish-language institutions through the entrenchment of a critical orthodoxy of subalternity that has paradoxically exhausted its own potential to contest hegemony and contributed to a deficit discourse that has been exploited by conservative governments to justify greater interventions in the region.

Gendered Labour, Collective Life and the Limits of Legal Equality in Paraguay

Tanya Lucía Bettoni Fabio | The University of Melbourne

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

Domestic work occupies a paradoxical position within development: it is fundamental to sustaining social and economic systems yet remains one of the most feminised, informal, and institutionally devalued forms of labour. In Paraguay, this devaluation was historically institutionalised through differentiated labour protections that placed domestic workers in an unequal position within the country's labour regulatory framework. Following sustained mobilisation by domestic workers' organisations and engagement with transnational labour movements, Law No. 6.338 2019 established full minimum wage parity, bringing Paraguay's domestic labour legislation into alignment with ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) and eliminating a longstanding form of formal wage discrimination. Yet formal legal equality has not necessarily translated into substantive labour protection: more than 90% of women employed in domestic work remain without access to health insurance (EPHC, 2025), while informality and barriers to basic labour rights persist. Drawing on Feminist Political Economy, state capacity, and policy implementation, this paper examines how gendered labour hierarchies and institutional constraints shape the implementation of wage parity. It explores the limits of legal equality in transforming the conditions of workers whose undervalued labour sustains collective life.

Tejedora Sentipensante Agency: Weaving Ourselves Within, Against, and Beyond Institutionalised Knowledges

Victoria Bonilla-Báez; Paula Do Prado; Natalia García; Fernanda Peñaloza | The University of Sydney and Studio Do Prado

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Self-chaired by participants

We are four women from Abya Yala who work, play, study, care and love on the unceded Indigenous lands of so-called Australia. We bring into our conversation weaving as both a reflection of our situacción* (acción situada), and a metaphor for a feminist anticolonial praxis. Grounded in our encuerpada stories, drawing on our relational solidarity, and our expiertise (experience expertise),** we name coloniality, patriarchy, and institutional power as nudos. These nudos seem to decide when the tejido begins, how tight or loose it might be, but cannot in themselves direct how many threads will join later in or prevent them to keep on expanding. That is the source of our tejedora sentipensante agency. Today, as our territorios and people are being threatened by geopolitical aggressions and our nations' sovereignties are treated as negotiable, while the institutions of knowledge we work in barely acknowledge our stories and resistance, we bring forth our tejido. Through our stories we address the effects of invisibilisation, extractivism, and performative decolonial inclusion, as well as pressures to translate embodied knowledges into institutional languages that often attempt to neutralise, appropriate, or commodify them. Our circle asks what it means to "weave ourselves in" without losing the threads connecting us to our communities, histories, struggles, and futures. As tejedoras sentipensantes, we approach the tejido as a practice of listening, making, unmaking, and remaking. We explore the possibilities of being together by foregrounding positionality and accountability, and joyfully imagining para-institutional weaving rooted in reciprocity, complementarity, gratitude and justice. We ask, how collective weaving might thrive, transform, and become possible within, against, and beyond institutionalised knowledges.
*Peñaloza (2026) **Peñaloza (2026)

C

Discourses of Re-existencia: Speech Acts, Events and Characters in *Medusa*

Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

What if we lived in a neo-Pentecostal reality custodied by aggressive Tai Chi vigilantes and perfect Christian-selfie influencers? Humorous speculative fiction uses the "what if" premise to construct new worlds while simultaneously exploring and mocking existing issues of the world we live in. Language plays a central role in constructing these new worlds and the identities inhabiting it by creating scenarios that are at once believable and yet different from the audience's reference point. This paper examines how the Brazilian film *Medusa* (2021) by Anita Rocha da Silveira shapes a neo-Pentecostal reality and the social identities that populate it through the discourse of its characters. Drawing on sociolinguistic and critical discourse analysis approaches, the study analyses how linguistic choices-including rhetorical devices, lexical syntactic units and speech acts-reflect and parody religious and gender ideologies. Among the range of semiotic resources used to build Medusa's world, particular attention is given to passages featuring religious expressions, which are shown to achieve a comic effect through humorous mechanisms. The study contributes to the broader discussions around the language-identity nexus by showing how fiction mediates the construction of new worlds through language and humour mechanisms. By adopting a sociolinguistic perspective, the linguistic analysis of *Medusa* offers insights into speculative fiction that purely literary or media readings may overlook.

How Is Knowledge Shaped? Happy Objects and Cultural Representations in Spanish Language Textbooks

Beatriz Carbajal Carrera and Carmen Saucedo Segami | The University of Sydney

Friday 13 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

The war on knowledge includes forms of epistemic control that shape how social realities are imagined, represented, and understood. Language textbooks are ideological and often hegemonic instruments that influence which forms of language, culture, and identity become visible, legitimate, and teachable. Certain representations of target cultures may become normalised among language learners, contributing to forms of epistemic violence. This paper examines a set of Spanish-language textbooks used in Australian higher education contexts in the last decade from the perspective of critical discourse analysis and critical pedagogies. Contributing to existing research on textbook analysis, the present study addresses the representation of humour and joy through the lens of feminist affect theory. In particular, it draws on the notion of happy objects and their role in shaping learners' perceptions of language and culture. Our analysis focuses on the use of happy objects and how these contribute to the construction of idealised and simplified representations of Spanish-speaking contexts. These representations not only domesticate cultural difference within dominant ideological frameworks but also constrain learners' agency. As educators, the authors advocate for critical pedagogy approaches that continually reflect on teaching practices to identify and challenge these forms of epistemic violence.

The Contest for Indigenous-Missionary Borderlands of Early Modern Western Amazonia

Roberto Chauca Tapia | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa

In early modern Amazonia, Portuguese and Spanish expansion imposed new legal regimes that displaced Indigenous understandings of land and riverine occupation. By excluding Indigenous peoples from the legal frameworks used to define imperial dominion, these systems left them without the documentary evidence that modern governments now often require to substantiate ancestral territorial claims. This raises an important question: how can Indigenous societies demonstrate historical rights to lands and waterways when they were long denied access to the legal institutions Europeans introduced? This presentation addresses that question by examining lawsuits between rival Christian missionary orders during the late seventeenth century. While these disputes focused on evangelisation and jurisdiction, they also created opportunities for Indigenous communities to assert their own understandings of territorial boundaries and settlement patterns. Focusing on three conflicts—Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits clashing over Omagua lands in the middle Amazon, Jesuits and

Franciscans fighting over Asháninka and Shipibo-Konibo lands in the Ucayali River, and Dominicans and Jesuits arguing over Kichwa and Sáparo lands in the Pastaza River—I maintain that missionary litigation provides a unique window into Indigenous territorial practices. This presentation seeks to reveal how customary notions of possession and borders emerged within moments of jurisdictional uncertainty.

D

Parallel Crises, Translated Alliances: Latin American Literary Reception in Bangla as Re-existencia under a New War Order

Ranita Chakraborty Dasgupta | Jadavpur University, India

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

This paper explores how the reception of Latin American literatures in Bangla between 1980 and 2010 articulates a South–South politics of collective life and re-existencia within what can be called a New War Order. It first situates Bangla interest in Latin American texts against the socio-political upheavals of post-Partition Bengal—from refugee influx, Naxalbari and Marxist–Naxalite movements, Left Front governance, and economic stagnation to avantgarde literary experiments and little magazine cultures—reading these alongside Latin American experiences of dictatorship, revolution, state terror, and Cold War intervention. Latin American narratives of crisis were thus received as parallel lived realities that offered Bengali writers and readers alternative imaginaries of resistance and solidarity beyond Euro-American frames. The paper then examines translation and reception practices—Tagore–Ocampo exchanges, engagements with Neruda, Paz, and Mistral, the focus on Boom fiction, and the proliferation of Bangla translations, paratexts, essays, and book fair themes—as collective, pedagogical acts that reconfigure horizons of expectation in the Bangla literary public sphere. Combining reception theory and translation studies, the paper argues that these transregional circuits generate resistant vocabularies and alliances from peripheralised locations, contributing to contemporary debates on the New War Order, critical pedagogy, and emergent South–South and pan-Latin American imaginaries.

E

Emancipation Day Celebrations, Sovereignty, and Tourism in the Island of San Andrés, Colombia

Callie Evans | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa

I examine the Emancipation Day celebrations of the Raizal community in the Island of San Andrés, Colombia. The majority-Baptist descendants of formerly enslaved Africans, Northern European colonists, and Miskito indigenous people, Baptist Raizal activists contest Colombian sovereignty over the Archipelago. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, archival research, and digital content analysis, I consider how Baptist Raizals enact divine sovereignty through commemorations of the emancipation of slaves in 1830, defining such sovereignty as dependence on God and freedom from external interference. The celebrations centre the Church as the core of Raizal society, linking together land ownership, religious beliefs, and transnational ethnic identity. Emancipation Day celebrations reproduce the historical ties of the Raizal community across the English and English-based Creole speaking Caribbean. Yet, recent Emancipation Day celebrations have been co-opted by the Colombian state as a tourism attraction. State tourism policy reframes Raizal claims to autonomy as an object of consumption for tourists from continental Colombia. I suggest that the competing representations of autonomy in the Emancipation Day celebrations reveal struggles over the political and ideological marginalisation of the Archipelago of San Andrés.

F

Contemporary Feminist Utopias from Argentina

Lucía Feuillet | Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

Much has been written about the continued prominence of dystopia in recent Argentine fiction. This would also reinforce the hypothesis of a capitalism whose effectiveness lies in foreclosing the imagination of alternative futures (Jameson, Fisher). Representative examples of this tendency include the works of Agustina Bazterrica (*Tender Is the Flesh, The Unworthy*) and Claudia Aboaf (*The Water Trilogy*). The influence of dystopian imaginaries has also been recognised in works by Mariana Enriquez ("Edificio Mayor, piso 10", "The Things We Lost in the Fire", *El año de la rata*) and Samanta Schweblin (*Fever Dream*, Kentukis). In an attempt to interpret the critical representations offered by the genre in terms of resistance, scholars have identified intermittent, fleeting and subtle utopian impulses (Bloch, Jameson) within these works. Nevertheless, beyond the mainstream, a utopian imaginary persists, contesting its place within the repertoire of themes and transformations associated with these literary genres. This radically *eutopian*, feminist, ecocritical and decolonial imaginary is the focus of this paper. We explore the utopian form in short fiction by Argentine women writers published in 2026 in the Próxima anthology *Futuros Feministas* (Feminist Futures), edited by Laura Ponce and Paula I. Salmoiraghi. Our aim is to revisit the fictional work of women writers whose writing sustains a living, alternative and mutable collective entelechy.

From the Clinic to the Classroom: Biomedicine, Folk Healing, and Chicano Re-existencia on the Border and Abroad

Edward Jonah Fricovsky | The University of Sydney

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Adrian Hearn

Aboriginal Australians and Chicano and Latino border communities carry distinct colonial histories, medical systems, and traditions of healing, yet both have been marginalized by biomedical structures that treat non-Western healing knowledge as illegitimate rather than complementary, often as a legacy of missionary and settler-era medicine that positioned Western pharmacology as the only legitimate authority over the body. I examine this tension from two vantage points: my ongoing pharmacy work in Redfern, where I have noticed patients on extensive poly pharmacy regimens express marked skepticism toward the medical system prescribing them, and my prior volunteer experience with health outreach efforts toward the Latino community in the U.S. border region. Using sincretismo, a framework for cultural and religious blending I studied under Dr. Fernanda Peñaloza at the University of Sydney, I read this skepticism not as noncompliance but as a rational response to a system that has rarely made space for the healing knowledge patients already carry. I ask what pharmacy practice loses by treating this skepticism as a barrier to manage rather than clinical information worth understanding. Hispanic and Latino populations remain disproportionately susceptible to diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, a disparity that shares a structural root, though not a history, with Aboriginal health outcomes in Australia: both stem from healthcare systems built without the communities they now serve. I position patient centered, community grounded healthcare education as re-existencia survival and knowledge making practiced from within, rather than against, the clinic a model increasingly relevant for Australia's growing Latin American diaspora.

G

Sentipensar for Alternative Futures: Thinking from Abya Yala-Latin America in the Context of Business Research

Natalia García-Fuentes | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

"To create different forms of organization requires us, firstly, to recognize the material limits of the modes of organization that are dominant today." E. Dussel & E. Ibarra-Colado, Globalization, Organization and the Ethics of Liberation, p. 503 Sentipensar for alternative futures follows two main threads. First, the notion of research as pathmaking, haciendo camino al andar, and the centring of 'desde adónde y con quién pensamos' as a methodological and epistemological imperative. Second, the possibilities that arise when we problematise and theorise from a non-Western locus of enunciation, specifically in the context of business research. Moving away from hegemonic views of entrepreneurship as a predominantly market-based, profit-driven phenomenon, what can be learned and enacted (in business and beyond) when relationality, solidarity, care, and dignity are at the core of our endeavours. As an early-career researcher, I focus on the questions and decision-making processes of doing research in the Global North while locating myself in the Global South. Additionally, I explore the transformative dimensions of collective life and meaning-making, the emancipatory possibilities in entrepreneurship, and the ways in which we create pockets of resistance to structures of domination and oppression.

Huemul's Appropriation Throughout Chilean History: From Colonialism to Green Capitalism

Lucaz González | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa

The huemul, or South Andean deer, has been a national symbol of Chile since the country's independence in the eighteenth century. Over the past fifty years, it has been recognized as an endangered species due to the fragmentation of its habitat resulting from human settlement. During an initial period, Spanish colonialism displaced Indigenous populations into areas inhabited by the huemul, contributing to the decline of its population alongside the export of its hide to European markets. In a second period, during the early decades of the Chilean Republic, the country's southern regions were colonized by foreign settlers whose agricultural practices further degraded the deer's habitat. Today, following the huemul's designation as an endangered species by international organizations, large areas of land have been purchased by, or placed under concession to, major environmental NGOs for conservation purposes. In this context, concepts such as green colonialism, green capitalism, and philanthro-environmentalism have been introduced to analyse these contexts. I examine the relevance of these concepts for understanding conservation policies in Chile, highlighting the paradox of how this national symbol has been appropriated by both local communities and international actors to either challenge or legitimize the model of development promoted by the Chilean state.

Reimagining International Education through Re-existencia

Macarena Gordillo de Paz and Nicholas Manganas University of Technology, Sydney | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

Australian international education is being reshaped by changing enrolment patterns, financial pressures, geopolitical uncertainty and evolving expectations of graduate capability. These conditions are especially consequential for universities outside the Group of Eight, where sustaining established models of language education, area studies and international mobility can require different curricular responses. Drawing on ongoing curriculum design work in International Studies at the University of Technology Sydney, this paper considers how such pressures might open space to reimagine what constitutes an international education. We explore a model in which linguistic difference, translation and multilingual practice remain central, while intercultural learning is not dependent upon proficiency in a single additional language or physical mobility alone. International experience can encompass engagement with local, diasporic, Indigenous and transnational communities, alongside overseas learning. Beginning from the proposition that international education in Australia must also attend to Country, the paper asks how language, place and mobility might form a more relational conception of global learning. Thinking with the Latin American decolonial concept of re-existencia, we ask not how to preserve the forms of international education we have inherited, but how they might be remapped and reimagined to create more relational, inclusive and future-facing ways of encountering the international.

The Politics of Gendered Life Stories in Spain: From Private Lives to Public Revolution

Macarena Gordillo de Paz and Nicholas Manganas | University of Technology, Sydney | The University of Sydney

Thursday 12 November | 1:30–3:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Self-chaired

This book launch presents *The Politics of Gendered Life Stories in Spain: From Private Lives to Public Revolution* (2025), a study of how gendered life stories move from private experience into public debate and collective mobilisation. Through contemporary Spanish cases, including testimonies of gender and vicarious violence, the “kiss-gate” scandal in women’s football and Shakira’s globally mediated response to her breakup, the book examines how intimate experience enters public culture and acquires political force through processes of mediation, circulation and collective interpretation. The book traces how experiences of violence, consent, intimacy, desire and female authorship become entangled with wider struggles over gender, power, national identity and public legitimacy. Central to its argument are questions of voice and recognition: who is heard, who is believed, how personal narratives are mediated, and under what conditions individual experiences become collective claims. Across these cases, gendered life stories emerge as sites through which established cultural and political boundaries are challenged and renegotiated. Presented within the conference theme of re-existencia,

the launch offers an opportunity to place the book's arguments in conversation with questions of resistance, survival and the creation of alternative ways of living within conditions shaped by gendered violence and unequal power.

A Hybrid Myth of Neoliberal Womanhood: How the Balanced Woman Became the Most Powerful (Women)

Alejandra Lizbeth Gutiérrez Hernández | Macquarie University

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Adrian Hearn

The term balanced woman, introduced by Catherine Rottenberg (2014, 2017, 2018) in the U.S., defines a feminist-neoliberal role model that emphasises ambition, innovation, instrumental rationality, self-responsibility, and gender equality, all in highly individualised terms. Key features include being 'feminist'—not only female—and reimagining the 'superwoman' (career-focused) as 'balanced' (combining both work and family life). While influential for critiquing neoliberal co-optation of gender equality, Rottenberg's concept neglects issues of power, women's relationships to it (such as empowerment), and identity politics. I contend that the 'balanced woman' is limited— primarily Western, white-centric, and one-dimensional— for analysing neoliberal role models of womanhood. My main argument is that the balanced woman has converted into the most powerful (women): a contemporary hybrid myth of womankind, in which ideas of authenticity, diversity, tradition, and modernity amalgamate. Taking 'The Most Powerful Women in Business' ranking by magazine Expansión México (2006–2023) as a case, I explore the myth's foundations, purpose, evolution, and how similar or different it is from the 'balanced woman'. Representations of figures like technology executive Sheryl Sandberg and businesswoman María Asunción Aramburuzabala Larregui are examined through feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2005, 2007) and semiotics (Barthes, 1973; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

H

Toward or Away From Collective Life? Reflections from Australia, Cuba, and Brazil

Adrian Hearn | The University of Melbourne

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

My presentation reflects on a three-phase partnership with African, Indigenous, and African-descended communities in Australia, Cuba, and Brazil that I have dedicated myself to since 2018. Working with the Yoruba Association of Victoria, the Iranlowo Afro-Cuban Association (Havana), and the Manguinhos Farmers Collective (Rio de Janeiro) has furnished insights into the challenges and potentials of "collective life." Phase one's Yoruba Heritage Virtual Tour was co-created with African Australians to link cultural pride with pathways into higher education. Phase two's collaboration in Havana, funded by the Australian embassy's Direct Aid Program (DAP), was proposed by the Iranlowo Association to promote pride in historically oppressed horticulture traditions and Yoruba spiritual practices. Phase three's production of medicinal plants in the Northern Rio zone of Manguinhos, also funded by DAP, was led by Indigenous and Afro-Brazilians to address a shortage of healing herbs while transforming the local urban environment. Each of these phases tested understandings—mine and others'—of mutual benefit and collective life amid crises of inequality. This, in turn, prompts me to reflect on my mixed Brazilian and Celtic ancestry, opening otherwise elusive avenues of self-discovery and shared purpose.

Speculative Humour and Symbolic Revenge in *Medusa* (2021)

Diego Hoefel | Federal University of Ceará (Brazil)

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

In Brazilian cinema, *Medusa* (2021) stands out for its fusion of humour and speculative fiction, drawing on horror and science fiction to critique patriarchy, ultraconservatism, and regimes of moral policing. The film's satirical mode is central to this project: it targets the performative rituals of respectability, the aesthetic codes of 'purity', and the everyday absurdities of moral regulation, using a dystopian mise-en-scène to show how conservative authority is produced and sustained. Rather than treating humour as necessarily emancipatory, the film mobilises satire to expose contradictions, heighten the absurd, and unsettle ideological common sense. This presentation places Medusa within a broader set of Brazilian films that deploy speculative humour to confront the rise of ultraconservative ideologies in the country, while identifying a distinctive feature: its use of symbolic revenge. Unlike other recent works that combine humour and speculative genres through direct allegorical violence, Medusa stages its retaliation primarily through the manipulation of horror iconography. Its decisive

inversion centres on a widespread neo-Pentecostal anxiety: demonic possession. By re-inscribing possession as an embodied force that exceeds moral regulation, the film turns a source of moral panic into an instrument of liberation. I will discuss the role of humour in constituting this symbolic revenge, how it reorganises and confronts collective anxieties in contemporary Brazilian society, and the extent to which it suggests alternatives or, instead, delineates a conflict that remains unresolved.

Queer Performance and the Transformation of Musical Traditions in Mexico: La Bruja de Texcoco and Miss Velvetine

Steve Hooper | The University of Melbourne

Friday 13 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Vek Lewis

This paper examines how contemporary queer artists in Mexican popular music challenge and transform musical traditions from within. Drawing on popular music studies, queer theory, performance studies, and Latin American cultural studies, it explores how these performers use music, performance, visual aesthetics, collaboration, and digital media to negotiate the conventions and expectations associated with established genres. The paper focuses on two artists who engage with Mexican musical traditions in distinct ways: La Bruja de Texcoco reinterprets these traditions through a transfeminine aesthetic that engages with Indigenous and regional practices, while Miss Velvetine incorporates drag performance into regional music traditions. Together, they challenge assumptions about gender, authenticity, and cultural belonging. These musical traditions are closely connected to ideas of national identity, regional belonging, and cultural representation. More than simply forms of entertainment, these practices function as cultural spaces where social expectations are produced and negotiated. These case studies reveal how popular culture can become a space for reimagining cultural traditions, expanding possibilities for participation, and creating alternative futures.

I

Who Owns Cumbia? Sonideros, Opacity and Creative Agency in the Barrio

Moses Iten | Deakin University

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

This paper examines how Mexican sonidero sound system operators have collectively transformed cumbia into a fluid, barrio-based musical practice through techniques of renaming, recirculation, recontextualisation and sonic manipulation. Drawing on Édouard Glissant's concepts of opacity, rhizomatic origins and the poetics of relation, I argue that these practices demonstrate how creative agency in the barrio generates new cultural meanings from inherited materials without requiring fixed origins or stable definitions. By obscuring the origins of Colombian and other cumbia recordings, sonideros have challenged dominant understandings of authenticity, ownership and cultural identity, while creating forms of knowledge rooted in barrio experience. Practices such as scratching labels from records, renaming recordings, slowing their tempo and attributing tracks to particular sound systems do more than conceal provenance: they transform recordings into carriers of local histories, memories and social relationships. The case of 'Cumbia Sampuesana', renamed 'La Derrota de Damasco', illustrates how a Colombian recording could become intertwined with memories of state repression of Mexican street dances. Similarly, the construction of Peñon de los Baños as "Little Colombia" demonstrates how communities actively remake cultural geography through musical practice. I propose cumbia sonidera as an ongoing process of creolization in which collective creativity, agency and transformation continually produce new forms of belonging.

K

An Interactive Conversation Circle Inspired by Letters to Paulo Freire: Radical Dialogues on Democratic Education and Courage

Jorge Knijnik | Western Sydney University

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

This interactive conversation circle is inspired by Paulo Freire's own letter-writing tradition as a form of dialogue, reflection, and pedagogical engagement, a tradition that later inspired the writing of *Letters to Paulo Freire: Radical Dialogues on Democratic Education and Courage* (Springer, 2026). Throughout his work, Freire used letters not merely as a literary device but as a means of creating conversation, nurturing critical reflection, and connecting personal experience to broader social

and political questions. Building on this tradition, the session offers a participatory space in which conference participants can engage with Freire's legacy through dialogue, collective reflection, and writing. Rather than a conventional book launch or author presentation, the session invites participants to explore the contemporary significance of democratic education, critical pedagogy, courage, hope, and the enduring contribution of Latin American pedagogical traditions to educational thought and practice. The session will begin with a simple but powerful activity: participants will be invited to write a short letter to Paulo Freire, responding to the prompt, "If Paulo Freire were sitting with us today, what would you want to tell him, ask him, thank him for, challenge him about, or discuss with him?" Drawing on their experiences as educators, researchers, students, activists, or community members, participants will use letter writing as a means of entering into dialogue with Freire's ideas and legacy. Small-group and whole-group conversations will then build upon the themes emerging from these letters, creating a collaborative space for reflection on contemporary challenges facing education and democracy. Particular attention will be given to the lessons that Latin American critical and democratic pedagogies offer in a time marked by democratic fragility, growing inequalities, and challenges to public education. The session seeks to demonstrate dialogue as a democratic and knowledge-generating practice rather than simply discussing it as a theoretical concept. The book will serve as one catalyst for conversation rather than the primary focus of the event. The session will conclude with the collaborative drafting of a short Manifesto for Democratic Education, identifying principles, commitments, and aspirations for educators, researchers, students, and communities seeking to strengthen democratic life through education. In this way, participants will contribute not only their reflections but also to a collective statement of hope, solidarity, and democratic commitment.

L

Literature in Spanish within a Monolingual Literary Landscape: Multilingualism, Translation, and Civic Participation at Lost In Books

Rosario Lázaro Igoa and Jane Stratton | Literary Programs Director, Think+DO Tank Foundation Lost In Books / CEO and founder, Think+DO Tank Foundation Lost In Books.

Friday 13 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

In Australia, despite multilingualism being a reality, literature, publishing, and literary institutions continue to be largely organised around English. This paper examines the role of Spanish-language literature within this context, considering the position of Spanish as Australia's tenth most widely spoken community language (Census, 2021). Drawing on demographic, publishing, translation and bookselling data, the presentation explores the gap between Australia's linguistic diversity, and Spanish more precisely, and the limited presence of multilingual and translated literary works. The paper focuses on the role and activism of Lost In Books, a multilingual bookshop and literary production hub in Fairfield, Western Sydney. It examines the role of Spanish in its collection, writing residencies, translation initiatives, public programs, and advocacy work. Through these activities, Lost In Books has sought to support reading, writing, and community participation in several languages other than English. The presentation argues that multilingual literary practice is not only a question of representation but one of civic and cultural participation. By discussing Lost In Books alongside Think+DO Tank Foundation's multilingual community work, including the Hasiras model that has been implemented across art programs, it considers how translation, multilingual programming, and community-led cultural initiatives can contribute to collective forms of engagement and response.

En inglés, in Spanish, en Spanglish Australiano: Reflections on writing and reading literature from Abya Yala in so-called Australia

Rosario Lázaro Igoa, Natalia Figueroa Barroso and Fernanda Peñaloza

Thursday 12 November | 1:30–3:30 | Main venue: Cullen Room

What does it mean to write and read literature from Abya Yala in so-called Australia? This conversation takes up that question through the work and reflections of two Uruguayan-Australian writers whose practices move across languages, cultures and territories. Rosario Lázaro Igoa is a writer, literary translator, and translation studies scholar based on Gadigal land. She is the author of the novel *Mayito* (2006); the short story collections *Peces mudos* (2016), shortlisted for Uruguay's National Literature Prize, and *Cráteres artificiales* (2021), which received second prize in the same award and was shortlisted for the Bartolomé Hidalgo Prize; as well as the essay collection *Hasta el sol y todas las ciudades en el medio*

(2024). Her short stories have appeared in anthologies and literary magazines in various languages. Rosario has edited and translated the Brazilian modernist Mário de Andrade's anthology *Crónicas de melancolía eufórica* (2016), as well as translating many other Portuguese and English books into Spanish. She is the Literary Programs Director at Lost In Books/Think+DO Tank Foundation in Fairfield. Natalia Figueroa Barroso, born on Dharug Ngura and of Charrúa, Yoruba and Iberian bloodlines, writes in English, Spanish and Spanglish. She is a member of the Sweatshop Literacy Movement and holds degrees from the University of Technology Sydney. She currently works as an Alimak driver in the construction industry. Her writing won Red Room Poetry's 30in30 for Poetry Month 2024 and has been shortlisted or longlisted for prizes including KYD's Flash Fiction Prize, the Lane Cove Literary Award, the Newcastle Poetry Prize, the SBS Voices Emerging Writers' Competition and the Palette Emerging Poet Prize. She has also worked in writers' rooms for *Bump*. Her debut novel, *Hailstones Fell Without Rain* (UQP, 2025), has received strong reviews from publications including *The Guardian Australia*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The NZ Herald*. It has also been shortlisted for the 2026 Voss Literary Prize and longlisted for the 2026 ALS Gold Medal. Her forthcoming anthology, *Veins Open, Hands Closed: Australian Stories from the Latinx Diaspora* (Sweatshop, 2026), marks her debut as an editor. Attending to code-switching, untranslatability, silence and the distinct worlds that emerge in their writing, this conversation reflects on the multiple readings these texts call for. We will also reflect on what responsibilities arise for writers from Abya Yala who are—almost inevitably—expected to represent or disrupt national, regional and local narratives. Where do writers like Rosario and Natalia situate language of home, memory and kinship? How do they create in these spaces of in-betweeness? We will also consider the community-led literary spaces that sustain their writing, from the Sweatshop Literacy Movement to Lost In Books in Sydney. These are sites where both of them have developed their advocacy and leadership, and their commitment to visibilising Latin American literature in Australia where the they/them and here/there are not clearly defined, but imaginatively questioned. Excerpts from their work will be read at the end of the session.

Land and Power in the Histories of Argentina and Australia

James Levy | The University of New South Wales

Thursday 12 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

In Argentina a powerful landed oligarchy emerged that has dominated the State. This did not occur in Australia. Why? And what are the outcomes of this difference? The answer is embedded in the contrasting histories of both societies: in the economic, political and social effects of colonial settlement; the transfer of English and Spanish political cultures to their colonies; the effects of pastoralism on the growth of the economies; patterns of land acquisition and their relation to the development of class. In Argentina the consolidation of land ownership began in the 1860s and further coalesced in the 1880s; in Australia the pretense of forming a landed oligarchy was obliterated by the end of the 19th century.

From Violence to Flight: LGBTQ+/Trans Migration, Asylum, and the Production of "Credible" Life

Vek Lewis | The University of Sydney

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Adrian Hearn

Asylum is not simply a legal system for determining who merits protection; it is a knowledge system that establishes which experiences of violence become legible, credible and actionable. Drawing on my own and others' scholarship on LGBTQ+ and trans migration, alongside empirical research on Mexico and Central America, this paper examines the relationship between structural violence, displacement and the production of credible asylum narratives. It traces how migration often unfolds through successive internal displacements shaped by family rejection, policing, labour exclusion and institutional neglect, rather than a single movement across borders. It then considers how violence persists through transit, detention and settlement, and how asylum systems translate complex, situated experiences into normative expectations of identity, vulnerability and narrative coherence. Particular attention is paid to the role of accompaniment infrastructures and expert evidence in mediating between lived experience, country conditions and legal adjudication. Based on my expert witness practice with legal clinics from LA, Chicago to New York, the paper examines how structural patterns of violence are translated into individualised assessments of risk, while recognising the indeterminacy of credibility determinations and protection outcomes. It argues that asylum is a multi-stage process of epistemic translation in which the central question is not only whose lives are endangered, but whose experiences can be made intelligible enough to count as evidence of danger.

M

Carla Cavina's Water Strike (2024) as an Affective Archive of Communal Care during Hurricane Maria's Governmental Failures

Consuelo Martínez Reyes | Macquarie University

Friday 13 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Vek Lewis

Carla Cavina's 2024 documentary Water Strike (*Golpe de Agua*) explores communal and individual experiences in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María (2017), challenging governmental narratives of citizenship care. Centred on testimonies of collective resilience, the film foregrounds memory as both an affective and political practice. Examining Water Strike through the lens of *ethics of care* reveals how it attends to vulnerability, relationality, and dependency, creating a cinematic space that dignifies survivors' emotional and material experiences. Rather than theorizing care abstractly, Cavina cultivates empathy through embodied representations of grief, mutual support, and communal rebuilding. This paper also draws on Beatriz Llenín Figueroa's concept of *the affective archive* (2022) to examine the film's archival practice. Rejecting official narratives, state records, and metrics of destruction, Water Strike assembles embodied memories, everyday acts of resistance, and affective connections as forms of archival knowledge. By weaving together past trauma and present practices of care, the documentary reimagines communal history-making as an ongoing, relational process. Bringing *ethics of care* and the *affective archive* into dialogue demonstrates how *Golpe de Agua* transforms remembrance into an ethical and embodied practice, offering a decolonial intervention into climate justice, collective memory, and reparative modes of care.

Resistance and Hypernormalization in Asturian Surdimientu Literature

Alfredo Martínez-Expósito | The University of Melbourne

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

This presentation examines the trajectory of the Asturian language from its role as a language of resistance during the Surdimientu, or Awakening (1970s and 1980s), to the processes of hypernormalization characteristic of the so-called Espardimientu, or Dissemination, a phase of media and digital expansion beginning in the 2000s. The Surdimientu articulated a poetics of legitimation: writing in Asturian was tantamount to asserting a cultural and political existence. Authors such as Manuel Asur, Xosé Lluis García Arias, and María Josefa Canellada conceived of literature primarily as a tool for symbolic reconstruction. With the Espardimientu, the llingua shifted from the margins to the centre of new editorial, institutional, and technological spaces. Yet this process generated tensions between authenticity, standardization, and market dynamics. The concept of hypernormalization helps describe this paradox: in the still incomplete and transitional process of gradual normalization, the Asturian language gains in homogenization even as it loses some of its dissident potency. Through an analysis of texts by Xuan Bello and Berta Piñán, the presentation explores how contemporary Asturian literature negotiates this dilemma between visibility and difference, between linguistic survival and cultural aestheticization. Ultimately, it proposes understanding hypernormalization as the new symbolic battleground for minoritized languages in the 21st century.

Three Witnesses, One Recurrence: Forensic Re-existencia and the Criminalisation of Bearing Witness in the New War Order

Natalia Maystorovich Chulio | The University of New South Wales

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Vek Lewis

This paper draws on two years of ethnographic fieldwork with the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH) across Castilla y León, Galicia, Asturias and Madrid, and on the transcribed Civil War and post-war diary of a Republican volunteer who survived Teruel and four decades of Francoism, to theorise the recurring criminalisation of bearing witness under the New War Order. Three positions of witness structure the analysis: the diary, written from inside fascist victory and the silence it imposed; the ethnographic interlocutors at the graveside, working to recover what that silence buried; and the contemporary observer of the live-streamed genocide in Gaza, situated in a Western context where public speech about it is being criminalised, prosecuted, and disciplined within the academy. I argue that re-existencia, as

a sustained practice of refusal, operates not only across generations but across mediums of witness, and that what recurs across these three positions is not the violence alone but the structural criminalisation of those who would name it whilst the crime itself is licensed. Drawing on Ferrándiz, Mbembe and the Latin American forensic tradition that shaped ARMH methodology, the paper offers forensic re-existencia as a conceptual contribution to the study of collective life and the war on knowledge.

Weaving Conocimientos of Change; Approaching Wayuu Re-Existencia in La Guajira, Colombia

Kynzha Eleonora Montejo Lyall, Veronika Berman and Megan Battaglia | One Thread Collective

Thursday 12 November | 1:30–3:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Vek Lewis

Centring Wayuu matrilineal conocimientos, One Thread Collective's Mochilla's and other woven works function as living, breathing tributes of knowledge, collective memory, and re-existencia realised through grass-roots cultural exchange. One Thread Collective—and the woven installation that will form the basis of our critical engagement—works to interrogate the limits of grass-roots action. We consider dismantling the systemic limitations of 'conventional' activism through cross-cultural dialogue, challenging transnational approaches to activist networks by centering the fight for women's autonomy in our actions. This is inspired through a focus on the preservation of matrilineal weaving habits and Indigenous conocimientos. We approach the centreing of Wayuu women not as a monolith, but rather as a cultural community of diverse individuals. Women with diverse expressions and experiences of Indigeneity, with varying desires pertaining to the outcomes of the negotiations of power and existencia they engage in within this 'New War Order'. It is an existencia that is fundamentally chosen liberally and determined by independent terms. Our multi-media showcase and critical presentation will, therefore, primarily question; what does it mean to be weavers of change and re-existence in a world that is built on hierarchies of power exchange and pedagogies of subjugation? Above all, how do we negotiate this power while maintaining feminised systems of knowledge and craft? About One Thread Collective: Rooted in the belief that empowering women is the most efficient way to build a better world, One Thread Collective is a non-profit organisation that offers fair trade work, business training, and leadership opportunities to Indigenous Wayuu weavers in La Guajira, Colombia.

N

The Law as an Instrument of Repression and Censorship in Australia: Criminalising Legitimate Speech and Protest and the Social Cost of Defending Human Rights

Adriana Ester Navarro

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Vek Lewis

This paper examines how law can operate as an instrument of repression and censorship in Australia, restricting legitimate speech and protest while imposing significant social costs on those who defend human rights. It explores the relationship between coercive state power, democratic freedoms and the language of governance, considering how fear can be mobilised to justify draconian legislation that erodes fundamental rights. Drawing on Australian, federal, state and international examples, the paper considers how political leaders may use public office to mislead legislatures and constituents in order to secure restrictive laws, and how appeals to "social cohesion" can legitimise the suppression of dissent and encourage self-censorship. The paper also examines the effectiveness of existing democratic checks and balances, including legislative scrutiny, the repeal and testing of laws, and official inquiries into the state's role in restricting free speech. Particular attention is given to lawfare directed against Latino academics and activists in Australia, and to the broader community consequences of defending human rights amid an increasingly restrictive legal environment. Situating these developments within contemporary debates about war, governance and international legal obligations, the paper asks how democratic institutions can resist the normalisation of repression. It concludes by proposing a fund for social justice litigation and the establishment of a specialist legal and advocacy centre to support those challenging unjust laws.

Viral Ruptures and the "New Weird": The Socio-Technological Aesthetics of Humour in *Medusa*

Benjamin Nickl | The University of Sydney

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

This paper examines Anita Rocha da Silveira's *Medusa* (2021) through the lens of digital performance and the "New Weird", exploring how contemporary speculative horror at the nexus of comedy and drama utilises the aesthetics of global online

platforms to register authoritarianism. I argue that the film's efficacy lies in its mimicry of viral humour aesthetics, specifically the polished, "clean"-scrubbed digital aesthetics and manicured facade of neo-Pentecostal influencer culture, to draw sharp moral boundaries. By integrating these digital style registers with the conventions of speculative fiction, *Medusa* creates a terror laughter-hybridity effect that mirrors the internalisation of culture wars and a prominent fear mobilisation in the physical world. I focus on the "monstrous" element of the central girl gang as a socio-technological construct. Their twisted, humorous, and highly choreographed performances of virtue function as a cinematic platform that replicates the logic of Big Tech: an environment where laughter acts as a tool for both in-group policing and social exclusion. By situating *Medusa* within a broader methodological discussion of how speculative genres and digital culture intersect, this paper demonstrates how hybrid humorous narratives stage symbolic interventions against ultra-conservatism, ultimately, using the very tools of digital platforming to expose the absurdities and contradictions of the deeply polarised public sphere.

Sur-Real Scientists: The Figure of the Scientist in Latin American Literature

Thomas Nulley-Valdés | Australian National University

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

This paper considers the figure of the scientist in Latin American Literature. While there is a body of scholarship on the figure of the scientist (or mad scientist) in Latin American science fiction, less critical attention has been paid to the figure of the scientist in canonical as well as contemporary realist texts. This research asks: how is the scientist and scientific labour represented from the sur global (Global South)? What is the relationship established between the discourses of science and the forms of the text? Given both literature and science describe and build the worlds we inhabit, it is pivotal, therefore, to consider how authors are exploring and negotiating the relationship between science and society, truth and history, and how storytelling can capture the anxieties, the stakes, and the significance of science as well as its promises and its risks in our modern world. This paper will consider works by Chilean writer Benjamín Labatut whose narratives have blurred the lines between history and fiction in his narratives on mathematicians, scientists, and geniuses of the 20th Century. His books, *Un verdor terrible* (2020) (*When we cease to understand the world*, 2021) and *The MANIAC* (2023), stare into the heart of darkness of modern history, via scientific and mathematical discoveries from black holes to quantum mechanics, and the technological singularities and repercussions of the invention of Zyklon B, the atomic bomb, and artificial intelligence.

O

Affirmative Action Initiatives within Australian Reconciliation Policy: Lessons for Brazil in Building a Reconciliation Policy for Its Black Population

Thaís de Oliveira Queiroz | Australian National University

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

This research examines the Australian reconciliation policy framework and explores how its affirmative action initiatives may offer lessons for the development of a reconciliation policy for the Black population in Brazil. Despite their distinct historical and social contexts, Australia and Brazil share persistent racial inequalities as a result of processes of colonisation, dispossession, and structural discrimination. Australia has developed a broad architecture for reconciliation involving governments, civil society, Indigenous communities, and private organisations, with mechanisms such as Reconciliation Action Plans fostering institutional commitments, representation, and cultural awareness aimed at reducing inequalities. Brazil, in turn, has made significant progress in implementing affirmative action policies for the Black population, particularly concerning access to higher education and access to public service positions. However, these initiatives remain fragmented and are not currently integrated into a broader national framework for reconciliation. Based on a qualitative and comparative approach, this study analyses the potential contributions and limitations of adapting elements of the Australian model to the Brazilian context. It argues that Brazil's accumulated experience with affirmative action could be articulated within a cross-cutting reconciliation policy aimed at addressing historical injustices, strengthening institutional responsibility, promoting racial equity, and enhancing recognition, dialogue, and social transformation. Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the conference.

Who Gets to Appear: Racialised Visibility in Spanish Language Teaching

Macarena Ortiz Jiménez | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

This paper presents findings from a study examining how racialised identities are visually constructed in contemporary Spanish as an Additional Language (SAL) materials. Drawing on critical perspectives on representation and diversity, the analysis explores how visual and textual representations shape who is recognised as a legitimate participant in the Spanish-speaking world. The study identifies recurrent representational patterns that limit the specificity, agency, and epistemic presence of racialised communities, revealing subtle forms of epistemic marginalisation within certain language-learning environments. Situating these dynamics within the broader logics of the New War Order, the paper argues that such representational practices resonate with regimes that regulate visibility and pedagogical participation. At the same time, the findings open space for re-existencia and critical pedagogies that challenge these constraints, inviting educators to cultivate decolonial and community-rooted practices that expand the possibilities for collective life and resistant world-making in the Spanish-speaking classroom. The paper contributes to ongoing discussions on how language-learning materials shape racialised participation and belonging, offering empirical insights into the pedagogical implications of visual representation in SAL contexts.

R

Agency in Poverty and War: Consciousness in Rural Human Development

Vivianna Rodriguez Carreon | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Self-chaired BOOK LAUNCH

Tracing Cuir Diasporas: Latin American Queer Literature in Australia

Mariana Rodríguez Castañeda | University of Sydney

Friday 13 November | 9:00–10:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Vek Lewis

This paper maps the presence of Latin American subjectivities in Australian scholarship with a critical emphasis on queer diasporic experiences. Specifically, it analyses queer Latinx literature produced within the Australian context through Ecuadorian writer Gianela Manzón Solis's fanzine *Latina Lesbiana*, showcased at Sydney's 2025 LOVERDYKE art exhibition. Through textual and visual analysis, I demonstrate how the author traces the complexities of the queer immigrant experience and the dissonant links between her origins and place of residence—all of which remain in constant conversation with their gender and sexuality. Drawing on queer epistemologies, I argue that this text actively *cuirs* the Australian landscape by exposing and disrupting themes of racialization and belonging. By centring these narratives, this presentation addresses a critical gap in migration literature, attempting to decentre Latin American queer migration from dominant US/Global North frameworks while offering preliminary insights into my research on LGBTQ+ Latin American experiences in Australia's neoliberal multicultural landscape.

Old War/New War: Capitalists v. Workers in Argentina and Australia, c.1900 to the Present

Peter Ross | The University of New South Wales

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

In the early 20th century, Australia was frequently referred to as a "workingman's paradise" because the man's wage was based on the needs of the family, not the individual, disputes between capitalists and workers were resolved via arbitration, a near universal old age pension applied to women and men as individuals, the vast majority of women and men had the vote, and a competitive Australian Labor Party vied for government in the States and the Commonwealth.

The situation in Argentina was markedly different. Governments were not formed on the basis of a universal franchise. Governments showed little interest in social policies to protect working class families. Brutal repression was frequently used against workers who called for higher wages or better conditions. Unions had little political power, and few members as

compared to their fellows in Australia. Currently, however, union density in Argentina is double that of Australia, Argentines have the right to strike, which Australians do not have, and Argentine workers are much more combative than their fellows in Australia. How did this come about?

S

Aquilombamento as Method: Samba, Decolonial Epistemology, and Collectivity in the Australian Afro-Brazilian Samba Practitioner Diaspora

Susan (Sooz) Smith | University of Newcastle, Umbela Brasil, Public Officer

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Fernanda Peñaloza

This paper draws on doctoral research into the Samba community in Australia to argue that Samba functions as a decolonial communal epistemology of resistance and survival, rather than merely an expressive art form transplanted from Brazil. Using a griot methodology and the paradigm of aquilombamento, the ongoing practice of collective refuge and self-determination rooted in Afro-Brazilian quilombo traditions, this research traces a documented genealogy linking Australian practices of Samba to Abdias do Nascimento's Teatro Experimental do Negro (1944) via Katherine Dunham, and founders José Prates and Antonio Rodrigues. It positions Samba as what Brazilian scholarship names re-existência: a practice through which diasporic communities generate identity, healing, and futurity under conditions of displacement. Drawing on qualitative narratives from Australian practitioners, the paper explores Samba as an Embodied Health Ecology, a model of embodied, communal care and knowledge production that resists erasure and enacts belonging outside dominant institutional frameworks, offering a case study of how a diasporic epistemology of survival is carried, transformed, and enacted beyond its originating community.

Where the Wild Things Are: Monsters as Horror and Resistance in the U.S.–Mexico Border

Alejandro Soifer | SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, The University of Western Ontario

Friday 13 November | 1:30–3:00 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

The U.S.–Mexico border is, among many other things, a space that is constantly being written about and written off. Reflections on the lives and deaths of the people who pass through it, legally or illegally, and communities that live and sustain themselves in the small towns on either side of the border have been present since the traumatic annexation of the territories that once belonged to Mexico into the U.S. as a result of the Mexican-American War that ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. It is in this context that horror border narratives (including film and literature) have been surging in recent decades. Most of these, written or produced on the U.S. side of the border, portray the neighboring south as a dangerous place, filled with monsters, forms of black magic, and ancient Aztec and Mayan artifacts that bring doom to Western civilization. For its part, narratives from Latinx writers also recur to these same horror tropes but in a slightly different way: proposing these monsters instead as flawed superheroes, pursuers of vengeance against the injustices inflicted on Latinx communities by the march of the American Empire. In this presentation, I will explore the different representations of Border monsters from the perspective of Latinx vengeful Mexican ghosts and vampires in V. Castro's work, as well as the construction of their more sinister counterparts in the form of American paranoid-South invasion monsters in the graphic novel *La Muerta* (Brian Pulido).

The Trump Administration, and Their Attempt to Reassert the Monroe Doctrine: The Significance of BRICS

Richard Stone

Thursday 12 November | 3:30–5:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

In March 2026, the Trump administration launched its 'New Security Initiative', the so-called 'Shield of America'. Focussed upon three countries of geo-strategic significance in the southern part of the Americas; it was based in yet another phony war on drugs. The fact the three countries, Venezuela, Colombia and Cuba are peripheral players in the BRICs trade organisation, is not to be underestimated. Behind the scenes, for example, the Trump administration has proved keen to attempt to reassert the Monroe Doctrine, which has become increasingly irrelevant in recent decades.

The US notion of the 'backyard' of Central and Latin America and the Caribbean, has been subject to a clearly visible changing balance of forces; countries in the region and elsewhere have seized upon opportunities opened to them by the BRICs. This paper is about the non-stated reasons behind the Trump administration's diplomatic hostilities with Venezuela, Colombia and Cuba, which remain based in a credible challenge to traditional US hegemonic positions across the Americas and wider afield with the significance of the oil industry and petro-dollar.

T

Dark Charge Across the Americas: Stratified Laughter in *Medusa* and Jordan Peele

Rodney Taveira | The University of Sydney

Thursday 12 November | 11:00–12:30 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Thomas Nulley-Valdés

This paper examines how Anita Rocha da Silveira's *Medusa* (2021) and Jordan Peele's horror films use humour to short-circuit comfortable viewing positions, forcing audiences into uneven perspectives as social structures are surfaced and critiqued. I argue that three overlapping comedic strategies—insider humour, tonal pivots, and absurdist exposition—stratify audiences along lines of cultural familiarity. Both filmmakers reward culturally specific knowledge: Brazilians recognise *Medusa*'s megachurch aesthetics just as Black audiences identify microaggressions in *Get Out* (2017). Here, insider humour creates in-group solidarity while making various oppressions visible to broader audiences. Crucially, da Silveira and Peele master the tonal pivot, oscillating between horror and comedy within single sequences (*Medusa*'s beauty routines interrupted by violence, *Us*'s beach massacre choreographed to "I Got 5 On It"). These jarring shifts prevent passive consumption, forcing viewers to confront their own and others' laughter at disturbing content. Finally, both employ an "explain game," where characters deliver bizarre premises—theological justifications for acid attacks, neurosurgical body-snatching procedures—with complete sincerity. This deadpan absurdism exposes how oppressive ideologies and sociopolitical relations naturalise violence through rational-seeming frameworks. Together, these strategies reveal how marginalised and minoritarian communities are policed but also police themselves, making dark humour essential to understanding contemporary horror films' political interventions.

Interethnic Systems and Indigenous Territorialities in the Colonial Frontiers of Northeastern Venezuela (1650–1800)

Francisco Tiapa | Universidad de los Andes [Venezuela] and UNSW

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | OTC, Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306 (A22) | Chair: Luis Angosto-Ferrández and Francisco Tiapa

This presentation examines the transformation of the Orinoco Regional Interdependence System (SIRO) through the reconfiguration of Indigenous territorialities in Northeastern Venezuela between 1650 and 1800. While scholarship has generally interpreted missions, encomiendas, and doctrinas as institutions that fragmented Indigenous societies and dismantled pre-colonial regional networks, I argue that these colonial spaces also became arenas where interethnic relations, mobility, and territorial connections were reconfigured under new political conditions. Rather than treating Indigenous territorialities as bounded local worlds, I approach them as historically constituted networks linking settlements, routes, ecological zones, and political alliances across the Orinoco Basin, the Gulf of Paria, the eastern Venezuelan coast, and the southern Caribbean. From this perspective, the SIRO is understood as a dynamic regional configuration whose historical transformations stem from the interaction between Indigenous agencies and colonial institutions. Drawing on unpublished archival sources and other ethnohistorical material, I reconstruct the spatial reorganisation of Indigenous settlements, mobility patterns, political leadership, and exchange networks within and beyond missions, encomiendas, and doctrinas. Foregrounding Indigenous territorialities as regional and relational formations, this presentation contributes to an understanding of colonial frontiers not as peripheral or self-contained spaces, but as constitutive arenas where Indigenous histories and colonial processes mutually shaped one another.

Spanish Formosa and Indigenous Encounters

Brett Todd | The University of Sydney

Wednesday 11 November | 3:30–5:00 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

In mid-2026 the world's attention briefly turned to Ceuta, a small but contentious relic of Spain's once vast empire. This year happens to mark exactly four centuries since Spanish forces augmented that imperial expanse with another small colony – one that was much further from the Iberian peninsula than Ceuta, held for a much shorter duration, on land that is even more contested. Spanish Formosa was an outpost from 1626 to 1642 of the Captaincy General of the Philippines and hence of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. There are only scant remains of the forts and churches of Spanish Formosa, but its history has numerous complexities and resonances: a cast of indios bárbaros, mestizos and misioneros; a role in the globalisation constituted by the galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco; uneasy interactions with nearby Asian empires; showdowns with the Dutch fleets that were wresting territories from Iberian control around the world; and accounts of fierce resistance by the Indigenous peoples, for whom it was the first of multiple colonisations that endure to the present day.

Beyond Inclusion: Re-existencia, Diaspora and Antiracist Praxis in the Arts

Carolina Triana Cuéllar | Independent Scholar

Wednesday 11 November | 11:00–12:30 | Sutherland Room: main venue | Chair: Fernanda Peñaloza

This exploratory paper theorises re-existencia as antiracist praxis in diasporic artistic spaces. I use re-existencia as conceptualised by Albán Achinte (2013), who frames everyday artistic practices as decolonial pedagogies that enable other ways of world-making. Specifically, I focus on artistic practices that position themselves within and for community, rather than asking for a place in arts mainstream spaces. Drawing on Lonja Collective, an Afro-Uruguayan candombe group based in Sydney, I propose reading these practices through the lens of re-existencia in which the antiracist work happens by grounding artistic expression in cultural memory, collective life and solidarities with First Nations peoples on whose lands these practices unfold. This exploration thus considers the implications of understanding antiracism in the Australian creative sector beyond the inclusion framework through which it tends to frame racial and cultural equity, reading it instead as disrupting cultural dominance. Considering the conditions of the New War Order, re-existencia offers a way to recognise these diasporic artistic practices as sites of cultural resistance and transformation.

U

Echoes of Exile: Musical Memories in Chilean Exile Literature

Julio Uribe Ugalde | The University of Melbourne

Wednesday 11 November | 1:30–3:00 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Rubén Pérez-Hidalgo

During the Chilean military dictatorship (1973–1989), thousands of Chileans were forced into exile to escape persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death. This experience became a defining theme in a substantial body of Chilean fiction, much of it written by authors who experienced displacement firsthand. While scholarship on Chilean exile literature is extensive, little attention has been paid to the role of music in shaping literary representations of exile. Addressing this gap, this paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach that brings literary analysis into dialogue with music studies to examine how musical references function as narrative devices in a corpus of exile novels by a group of Chilean authors like José Donoso and Antonio Skármeta, among others. It argues that the musical experience offers a distinctive lens through which to understand the emotional, cultural, and political dimensions of exile, revealing how music mediates memory, identity, and belonging across geographical and temporal boundaries. By foregrounding the relationship between literature and music, this study contributes new perspectives on the cultural memory of forced displacement and demonstrates how artistic practices sustain historical memory and foster dialogue across generations. These insights are particularly relevant in the current global context—including Chile and Australia—where migration, belonging, and social cohesion remain deeply contested.

Cuba: Cycling Your Way Through the Blockade

Carlos Uxó | Monash University

Thursday 12 November | 9:00–10:30 | Woolley Common Room N480 (A20) | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

This paper examines efforts to promote cycling in Havana through community initiatives and local government policies, using the concept of *vélonomie* as an analytical framework. Combining the French terms *vélo* (bicycle) and *autonomie* (autonomy), *vélonomie* refers to the acquisition of autonomy through the technical, social, and cultural skills that facilitate bicycle use. The concept establishes a link between cyclists and the social environment in which they move, emphasising the need to consider both the "hardware" (bicycles, infrastructure, sharing schemes) and the "software" (social norms, perceptions, and everyday interactions). The paper first revisits the role of bicycles during Cuba's Special Period of the

1990s, when severe fuel shortages made cycling a necessity for many Cubans. While bicycles became an essential mobility tool, they also became associated with economic hardship and crisis. As conditions improved in the early 2000s, many cycling initiatives declined. Drawing on research conducted in Havana since 2018, the paper analyses recent attempts to reframe cycling as a desirable and inclusive mode of transport, and the difficulties it encounters as a result of the blockade. It examines policies implemented by Havana's Office of the Historian to promote bicycle-sharing as well as the role played by community organisations such as VéloCuba and Citikleta/Critical Mass, in promoting cycling culture, social inclusion, and women's participation.

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The Cinema in the Cell: Re-Reading Manuel Puig's Cinematic Narration in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*

Yaoyun Zhang and Thomas Nulley-Valdés | Australian National University

Friday 13 November | 1:30–3:00 | Cullen Room: main venue | Chair: Lilit Thwaites

Manuel Puig's lifelong fascination with films, especially commercial Hollywood cinema, profoundly shaped his narrative style. In *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976), this fascination finds one of its most striking expressions in a novel where much of the text is composed of detailed ekphrases of films, both real and fictional. By re-reading the six films retold in the novel, this paper uncovers just how entwined the cinematic and the narrative are in Puig, demonstrating how Puig's cinematic narration traces realities in the text: including the broad socio-political context, its characters' subjective realities as well as prophesying their fate. The films represent, therefore, not merely allusions, but are key to unlocking the text. This leads to an ambivalent reading. On the one hand, Puig ultimately presents a pessimistic view, in which escapist mass culture and Marxist political science both fail as practical solutions to systemic oppression. Yet, on the other hand, through his cinematic narration, Puig is able to transform popular culture into a fertile ground for formal experimentation, passed over by many scholars, and fundamental to a sound appraisal of the Latin American Post Boom's artistic innovation.