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Isabel Santana de Rose, Emilia Sanabria

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Open Panel

Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S) and ECOSITE Conference, Cholula Mexico, Dec. 2022

HOLDING COMPLEX ENCOUNTERS: RELATING IN DIFFERENCE

Organized by Dr Isabel De Rose & Dr Emilia Sanabria

This panel invites empirically-based presentations that explore otherwise ways of making knowledge together, examining how care, good relations and transformative justice can be cultivated within interdisciplinary, transnational or intercultural knowledge encounters. It recognizes that Western technoscience plays a key role in epistemicides and the deepening of global inequalities whilst simultaneously refusing to give practices of knowing in common up. It asks: how can space be held for renewed ways of relating in difference? What strategies, modes of collective attention, spatial or interpersonal arrangements productively disrupt racist, sexist, and otherwise hierarchical knowledge production assemblages and settings? What are the costs or risks of entering into encounter for the different parties involved? How can these be better redistributed? We aim to learn together by gathering experiments in encountering that begin by recognizing legacies of erasure and oppression as they seek to reconfigure modes of knowing in common. We are interested in learning from “failures”, dead-ends or changes of direction that collaborative ventures were allowed to take in the ever intensifying neoliberalization of University knowledge production, as well as learning about who was (or not) allowed to fail. We particularly welcome contributions that critically engage with scientific practices that purport to “validate” Indigenous or traditional knowledges, contributions that explore spaces of encounter between art and science, or ones that actively recognize and engage more-than-human presences. Submissions in Spanish, Portuguese & English are welcome, as are those that trouble and experiment with the format of the conference paper.

Keywords knowledge encounters; speculative and experimental research; open-endedness; otherwise, para-ethnographic

Session I - (Friday, Dec 09, 2-4pm, Building H H011):

I.1 Sonic Encounters and Settler Colonial Perception in Urban Spaces

Angus Tarnawsky, angustarnawsky@gmail.com; Concordia University (Montreal, CANADA) (in person)

"Nothing to Hear, So to Speak" is a site-specific audio installation and research-creation project developed for OCAD University in Tkaronto (Toronto), Canada. As a participatory exploration of shared space, it combines loudspeakers, microphones, and radio transmitters to investigate co-produced experiences of sounding and listening in unexpected locations. While the work was conceived to encourage social interaction within urban transitional spaces (i.e. foyers, stairwells), through the aim to enact new formations of listening, the

project inadvertently drew attention to the fixity of settler colonial modalities of perception, and in particular, towards the ignorance of listening subjects toward elements of settler colonialism that shape contemporary Canadian spaces. To this end, I take note of Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson's framework of "critical listening positionality" (2020). His analysis and critique of settler colonial listening practices provide several ways to understand the value of "Nothing to Hear, So to Speak," and in my own case, as a settler living and working on unceded Indigenous land, suggests useful way of moving forward in alternative ways. Through analyzing the project with this in mind, as well incorporating Gascia Ouzounian's notion of "critical sonic spatial practices" (2021), I ask: How might researchers from various scholarly disciplines unite to transgressively unsettle the fixity of settler colonial perception and, in part, disseminate research outcomes in ways that can nudge everyday audiences toward pursuing a decolonial sensibility in their awareness and actions? Could these insights nurture the development of different political and affective spaces, as well as audiences?

1.2 The Temporal Sensorium: Or How to Conduct a Life History Interview with an Oak Tree

Kristin Ann Peterson, kris@uci.edu; UC Irvine (in person)

This paper draws on a larger project about cancer in the context of ecological, colonial, and genocidal histories of a small valley located in California, USA. In particular, it explores methods that can help understand how a place is sensorially experienced across the centuries. Some questions include: What does it take to collectively forget a genocide? What do ongoing settler colonial aspirations reveal about the terraforming of land into agriculture? What can precolonial ecologies tell us about contemporary cancer epidemics? The paper focuses on sensorial processes as method, and what possibilities may present themselves in listening to and dialoguing with ecosystems and histories of violence. The purpose is to unearth otherwise ways of inhabiting research and its worldly contexts.

1.3 Failures in Knowing: Feeling Out a Radicle Empirical Plant Science

Kristin K Onzik, kkonzik@gmail.com; UC Davis Anthropology (in person)

Scientists are oft trained to think that "feeling" is not simply irrelevant but antithetical to their methodologies. That scientists are not simply objectively trained minds but also bodies that feel has been an important feminist contribution towards reimagining scientific knowledge—not as the product of self-directed teleological discovery, but as situated in time, place, and transformed through relations that exceed the binary logics of scientific representation; those founded upon rationalist distinctions between feeling/knowing, body/mind, object/subject. Through a collaborative methodological lens we (ethnographer + scientist) are calling radicle empiricism, we ask how a scientist comes to make sense of feeling and knowing—and the relations "between"—throughout shifting configurations of a pea plant decision-making apparatus. By focusing this study at the level of the apparatus (Barad, 2007), we provide an empirically based description of some of the material-discursive relations through which the concepts of "feeling" and "knowing" are (re)configured through a scientist's unexpected encounters with pea plant root tips or radicles. As such, we offer a perspective that does not assume "feeling" or "knowing" as distinct categories of a scientist's knowledge making.

1.4 No One Is Obligated To See: Unfolding Speculations About Menstrual Blood As Complex Encounters

Clarissa Reche, clari.reche@gmail.com; State University of Campinas - UNICAMP (In person)

This paper is an excerpt from my ongoing doctoral research, where the goal is centered in analyzing expressions of menstrual experiences during fieldwork performed by ethnologists. I use ethnography of science and technology as methodology, in an interdisciplinary and monstrous approach that transits through anthropology, philosophy, art and design. Through the analysis of interviews carried out with ethnologists and autoethnography experiments, I seek to work with visualization instruments that allow menstruation to unfold in complexity. When leaking from the silences, menstrual blood carries in its fluid questions about the multiplicity of bodies and about a production of knowledge that is capable of facing the sensual/aesthetic dimensions of lived experiences. I argue that the researchers' menstrual experiences were systematically suppressed from ethnological writing as a way of containing bodies and purifying the senses in favor of knowledge based on rationality and productivity. I present two experiments with my own menstrual blood, created after coming into contact with amerindian's menstrual cosmopolitics, such as the control of flow through the vaginal muscles. In the first experiment I created a beaded necklace made of menstrual blood clots. In the second, I developed a kaleidoscope that serves as a bloody trap. As a contribution to the STS, I propose malice as a possible form of decolonial relationship within the university, the remains and failures as raw material for a unsubmissive research, as well as speculation as a political force capable of keeping us enjoying the scientific work.

Session 02 (Friday, Dec 09, 4:30-6:30pm, Building H H01 I)

2.1 Future Ayahuasca Care Spaces: An Experimental Speculative Exercise

Emilia Sanabria, emilia.sanabria@cnrs.fr; CNRS - CERMES3; Piera Talin, pieratalin@gmail.com; CNRS - CERMES3 ; Isabel De Rose, belderose@gmail.com; CNRS ; Camila de Pieri Benedito, pietro.benedito89@gmail.com; CNRS (in person & virtual)

With the rapid advancement of psychedelic-assisted therapy (PAT) trials, psychedelic-therapy clinics are set to become a tangible reality in the near-future. Questions abound concerning the therapeutic modalities that will be adopted, the human and material infrastructures that will enable the delivery of this novel form of healthcare and their funding model – which will have direct implications for who can access PATs. In this paper, we reflect on the process of designing, organizing and holding a collaborative speculative space to imagine possible future ayahuasca care spaces. Ayahuasca healing practices are (still) mostly indissociable from their ritual settings, placing them in complex and ambivalent relation to “psychedelics” and PATs. The objective of thinking speculatively about the futures of ayahuasca care spaces is to enable us to collaboratively address questions of appropriation, commodification, standardization and pharmaceuticalization of plant medicines, to examine how competing approaches to evidence are negotiated, and to explore the more-than-human contours of care. The goal of this exercise is also to shift the parameters of our interactions with key interlocutors in “the field” in ways that enable collaboration and co-re-definition. A central parameter for our speculation is centering transformative social justice principles in the futures of mental health, as psychedelic care practices become increasingly financialized. Rather than presenting results, our aim is to

discuss the process of creating this speculative space of encounter, of defining its parameters and designing the framework within which such a conversation is even possible.

2.2 Justiça epistêmica e enfrentamento aos negacionismos: duas agendas paralelas? Lideranças de comunidades marginalizadas pesquisando seus próprios territórios (NE/Brasil)

Ana Gretel Echazú Böschemeier, gretigre@gmail.com; Breno S. Carvalho, brenosc@uol.com.br; UFRN (virtual)

Propomos compartilhar a experiência de aproveitamento da recentemente implementada categoria ADC2 na mais importante agência brasileira de fomento à pesquisa, o Conselho Nacional de Pesquisas, em projeto de pesquisa-intervenção para o enfrentamento à covid-19. Propomos-nos a analisar etnografias, oficinas e encontros organizados virtualmente durante os anos 2020 a 2022 junto a lideranças pesquisadoras de várias gerações pertencentes a heterogêneas configurações sociais - indígenas, pescadoras, maricultoras, catadoras, do movimento de pessoas em situação de rua e ciganas - do Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba e Ceará, cuja característica comum é uma acentuada vulnerabilidade sócio-cultural passível de ser lida em chave interseccional. Nossa análise focaliza-se na possibilidade de gerenciar coletivamente processos de apropriação e ressignificação de uma ciência cidadã que facilite a comunicação científica enfrentando o avanço dos negacionismos, levantando em paralelo a pauta da importância da produção democratizante e plural de saberes que interpelem à noção ocidental, moderna e colonial de “Ciência”.

We propose to share the experience of using the recently implemented ADC2 category in the most important Brazilian research funding agency, the National Research Council, in a research-intervention project to address Covid-19. We analyze ethnographies, workshops and meetings organized virtually during the years 2020 to 2022 with research leaders of various generations belonging to heterogeneous social configurations - indigenous, fisherwomen, women mariculturists, waste pickers, from the movement of people living on the streets and gypsies - from Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba and Ceará, whose common feature is a marked socio-cultural vulnerability that can be read using the lens of intersectionality. Our analysis focuses on the possibility of collectively managing processes of appropriation and re-signification of a citizen science that facilitates scientific communication facing the advance of negationism, raising in parallel the importance of a democratizing and plural production of knowledge that challenges the Western, modern and colonial notion of "Science".

2.3 Suscitar um encontro: a arte do acontecimento

Edgar Rodrigues Barbosa Neto, edgar.barbosa.neto@gmail.com; Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) (virtual)

A experiência do encontro de saberes nas universidades brasileiras compreende um conjunto heterogêneo de intervenções cujos efeitos podem ser sentidos nos vários meios – tais como universidade, terreiros, quilombos, aldeias etc. – que o próprio encontro põe em conexão. Nesse sentido, o encontro de saberes pode criar situações análogas àquelas que Isabelle Stengers procurou caracterizar por intermédio de sua ideia de uma ecologia das práticas. Trata-se, nos dois casos, de um exercício especulativo que nos obriga a imaginar que não se pode saber do que um encontro é capaz antes do seu acontecimento. Em outras palavras, as condições para que um encontro seja capaz de suscitar atos de criação que possam interessar, de forma simultaneamente recíproca e heterogênea, os diferentes

praticantes que ele conecta dependem dos meios aos quais esses praticantes estão vinculados, mas não estão determinadas por eles. O encontro de saberes como acontecimento não é o resultado de um movimento espontâneo, mas também não pode ser deduzido de um trabalho de organização. Ele é o efeito da criação de uma ecologia que favoreça a emergência de conexões transversais entre os diferentes meios. O poder de fazer pensar, criar ou sentir que um encontro pode dar aos praticantes que ele conecta depende daquilo que esses praticantes sejam capazes de dar a ele. Essa capacidade, por outro lado, não dá aos praticantes qualquer poder sobre o próprio encontro. Eis a vulnerabilidade e a potência implicadas na arte de suscitar um encontro.

The experience of the Knowledge Encounters in Brazilian Universities comprises a heterogeneous set of interventions whose effects can be felt in various environments - such as universities, terreiros, quilombos, villages, etc. - that the encounter itself connects. In this sense, the Knowledge Encounters may create situations analogous to those which Isabelle Stengers sought to characterise through her idea of an ecology of practices. In both cases, it is a speculative exercise which forces us to imagine that we cannot know what an encounter is capable of before it takes place. In other words, the conditions for an encounter to be capable of giving rise to acts of creation that may interest, in a simultaneously reciprocal and heterogeneous way, the different practitioners it connects depend on the ways these practitioners are linked, but are not determined by them. The Brazilian experience of Knowledge Encounters as events are not the result of a spontaneous movement, but neither can they be deduced simply from the work of their organisation. It is the effect of the creation of an ecology that favours the emergence of transversal connections between the different media. The power to invite thought, create or feel what an encounter can give to the practitioners it connects depends on what these practitioners are able to give to it. This capacity does not give practitioners any power over the encounter itself. Herein lies the vulnerability and potency implied in the art of arousing an encounter.