

Islanding the Pacific: Syaman Rapongan's Oceanic Poetics and Indigenous Relationality

Thursday, May 14, 2026 @ 5:00 pm

Pusan National University
Humanities Hall, Room 501



Hsinya Huang
(National Sun Yat-sen University)

Talk Description

This lecture proposes “islanding” as a decolonial method for transpacific environmental humanities, one that reimagines the ocean as archive, relation, and fragile planetary commons. In conversation with Epeli Hau’ofa’s vision of the Pacific as well as the work of Teresia Teaiwa, Craig Santos Perez, and Robert Sullivan, it centers Syaman Rapongan’s oceanic poetics from *Pongso no Tao*, or Orchid Island, within a wider Austronesian and Pacific framework. Rapongan’s writings reconceive islands as living, mobile, and interconnected formations shaped by currents, ancestral memory, multispecies kinship, and Indigenous knowledge. Through his depictions of flying fish, whales, the Kuroshio/Black Current, and the Tao *tatala*, the lecture foregrounds Indigenous ecological knowledge as embodied practice, intergenerational teaching, and oceanic wayfinding.

Hsinya Huang is Distinguished Professor of American and Comparative Literature at National Sun Yat-sen University (NSYSU), Taiwan. She is the author or editor of books and articles on transnational and transpacific studies, Native American and Pacific Islander literatures, and humanities for the environment. Her work includes *Diaspora, Memory and Resurgence: Trans-Pacific Indigenous Writing and Practice* (2021), *Pacific Literatures as World Literature* (2023), and *Radiation Ecologies in Trans-Pacific Indigenous Literature: After Hiroshima* (forthcoming).

The Oceanic Imaginary and the Microbial Abyss

Friday, May 15, 2026 @ 10:00 am

Pusan National University
Humanities Hall, Room 501



Elizabeth DeLoughrey
(UCLA)

Talk Description

This lecture dives deeply in time and space to the microbial origins of life on the planet as they are imagined in the work of Chilean artist Cecilia Vicuña. Bringing Chile into this important conversation about Transpacific environments, the lecture engages her immersive 3-D film installation, *La Noche de La Especies*, or The Night of Species (2009). We engage the methods of critical ocean studies and how it brings forward ontologies of embodiment, submersion, relation, engagement with our more-than-human others, and a way to *deepen* other ways of knowing, of sounding, engaging the haptic, the abyssal, the sacred, and even the alien. Building upon the work of Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan, *La Noche de La Especies* represents an abyssal imaginary at multiple scales, at once micro (bacterial) as well as macro (planetary). In her critique of extractive regimes, Vicuña brings forward forms of life that challenge the relegation of the seabed and its minerals as a species of nonlife, or dead matter (as the mining companies claim), rather than a regenerative and oxygen-producing origin for all life on the planet.

Elizabeth DeLoughrey is a professor in the English Department and the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA. She teaches postcolonial and Indigenous literature courses on the environment, globalization, critical ocean studies, and the Anthropocene and climate change, with a focus on the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. She is the author of *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (2019), which examines climate change and empire in the literary and visual arts.

BRIDGING Futures:
**Indigenous Visionary
Fiction, Cosmos Thinking,
and Planetary Care for
Multispecies Communities**

Friday, May 15, 2026 @ 5:10 pm

Pusan National University
Humanities Hall, Room 501



Joni Adamson
(Arizona State University)

Talk Description

This lecture connects my experience as a delegate to the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future with the “turn to futures literacy” in the environmental humanities and my work on Indigenous cosmovisionary fiction. Focusing on Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* (1994) and *People of the Whale* (2008), I examine how Hogan links Indigenous ecological knowledge with climate science. I argue that Hogan connects Arctic ice melt and changing ocean systems to ecological crises in the Pacific Northwest, including whale disappearance and drought linked to El Niño. Through figures such as transformational bears and a bioluminescent octopus, her novels offer a relational view of planetary systems that moves beyond conventional “futures thinking.” I will discuss the Indigenous understanding of Earth’s system in terms of “cosmos thinking,” or the ability to perceive a multiscale cosmos of relations across space, time, and species. By bringing together literary analysis, Indigenous scientific literacies, and climate research, I show how Hogan’s fiction deepens our understanding of planetary tipping points and highlights the importance of Indigenous knowledge for shaping environmental futures.

Joni Adamson is President’s Professor of Environmental Humanities at Arizona State University. She writes on environmental justice, Indigenous literatures and scientific literacies, the rights of nature movement, and the food justice movement. She is Founding Director of the Flagship Hub of UNESCO BRIDGES Sustainability Science Coalition, the first humanities-led science platform in the world, and Director of Humanities for the Environment North America (HFE).