

What Does Indigenous Repatriation Sound Like?

Friday
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In 1990, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) established a process by which federally-recognized Tribes in the United States could reclaim materials, ancestors, and belongings held in museums and other repositories. Despite concerns from museum and preservation specialists that NAGPRA would sever relationships, Indigenous communities and museums have in fact become ever more entangled through the repatriation process. These actors that are drawn together, however, often have competing understandings of knowledge and property. This presentation considers how understandings of these concepts – as well as notions of belonging and relationality – are reconfigured through repatriation encounters. In particular, I pay attention to how a Hopi cultural advisory board talks about reclamation. I ask: What does repatriation sound like and what can we learn about repatriation by listening to how it is voiced?



Biography

Dr. McElgunn received a MA in Communication Studies from McGill University and a joint Ph.D. in Anthropology and Linguistics from the University of Chicago. Following a SSHRC postdoc in the Department of Anthropology at UBC, she joined the Dept of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Queens University. She is a linguistic anthropologist interested in the dynamic relationship between Hopi language and culture; ideologies and techniques of information circulation; and the politics of Indigenous linguistic and ecological reclamation. Since 2014, she has been exploring the often competing frameworks of knowledge production and exchange that underlie Indigenous linguistic and cultural revitalization efforts.



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