



DIPARTIMENTO DI  
SCIENZE UMANE

Call for Papers

## **AISCLI International Symposium**

### **Unruly Epistemologies in the Age of Post-Truth:**

### **Archives, Indigeneity, Authenticity, and the Politics of Knowledge**

Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi, Roma

10-11 December 2026

The last decades have witnessed a growing critique of the epistemological foundations of colonial modernity and of the institutions through which knowledge is produced, preserved, and legitimized. Decolonial, postcolonial, and Indigenous scholars, such as Gayatri C. Spivak (1985), Walter D. Mignolo (2007, 2009), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), and L.T. Smith (2012), have challenged the universalist assumptions that have historically governed archives, museums, universities, and research methodologies, exposing the colonial structures that continue to shape contemporary regimes of truth, authority, and representation. At the same time, the contemporary rise of so-called ‘post-truth’ politics has generated renewed debates about expertise, evidence, authenticity, and the social production of knowledge. While decolonial and Indigenous perspectives have questioned the claim to neutrality traditionally associated with Western epistemologies, contemporary post-truth discourses often blur the distinction between epistemic plurality and epistemic relativism, creating new challenges for scholars concerned with questions of historical accountability, social justice, and knowledge production (Medina 2013; McIntyre 2018).

This Symposium seeks to explore the intersections between decolonial epistemologies, Indigenous methodologies, archival practices, and contemporary debates on truth, authenticity, and authority. It aims to foster an interdisciplinary dialogue on how colonial structures continue to shape what counts as knowledge, whose voices are recognized as legitimate, and which histories become visible or remain excluded in a context in which Western rationalist authority is increasingly questioned even by champions of reactionary politics.

Particular attention will be devoted to the archive as a contested site of power and memory, far from the idea of a neutral repository of information, and increasingly understood as a technology of selection, exclusion, and governance (Foucault 2002 [1969]; Derrida and Prenowitz 1995; Hartman

2021). In this sense, it becomes especially productive to observe how Indigenous and other marginalized communities recuperate forms of knowledge transmission grounded in lived and embodied experience, and reimagine archival practice to actively produce counter-archives and challenge institutional and colonial modes of preservation. (Wilson 2008; Escobar 2018; Azoulay 2019; Palladini 2020; Hartman 2019). In connection to these themes, the Study Day also seeks to investigate the role of Indigeneity and authenticity in contemporary cultural and political debates. Indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, land-based epistemologies, and relational ontologies have generated important critiques of dominant models of knowledge production (Wilson 2008; Simpson 2017; Kovach 2021). Yet notions of authenticity and tradition, deeply rooted in their colonial definitions, remain contested terrains in Indigenous and postcolonial contexts (Stillman 2021), and/or run the risk of being appropriated by anti-scientific or conspiratorial discourses.

We welcome contributions from scholars working in (or at the crossroads among) postcolonial studies, decolonial studies, Indigenous studies, literary and cultural studies, translation studies, anthropology, sociology, history, museum and heritage studies, media studies, visual culture, performance studies, and related fields.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Decolonial epistemologies and epistemic justice
- Indigenous methodologies and research practices
- Archives, counter-archives, and archival silences
- Artistic, literary, and performative engagements with archives
- Translation, mediation, and intercultural knowledge production
- Indigenous languages and linguistic revitalization
- Digital archives and digital decolonial practices
- Authenticity, identity, cultural authority and appropriation
- The coloniality of authenticity
- Expertise and the politics of knowledge
- Environmental, territorial, and land-based epistemologies
- Indigenization of universities, archives, museums and other institutional spaces

We particularly encourage contributions that address the tensions between epistemic plurality and epistemic accountability, and that critically examine how decolonial and Indigenous frameworks can contribute to contemporary debates on truth, evidence, authenticity, and social justice.

Selected papers may be considered for publication in an edited volume or special journal issue.

#### References:

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- de Sousa Santos, Boaventura. 2014. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Paradigm/Routledge
- Escobar, Arturo. 2018. *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Durham-London: Duke University Press.
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- Hartman, Saidiya. 2019. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. W. W. Norton & Company
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- Phillips, Ruth B. "Changing up the Museum: Cultural Translation and Decolonial Politics." *ICOFOM Study Series* vol. 49, no. 2, 2021, pp. 196-212.
- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2017. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, L. T., 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1985. "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives", in *History and Theory*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Oct., 1985), pp. 247-272
- Star, Susan Leigh, and Griesemer, James R. 1989. "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39", in *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), pp. 387-420

- Stillman, A. K., 2021. "Beyond the Coloniality of Authenticity", in *American Quarterly* vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 161-167.
- Wilson, Shawn. 2008. *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.
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### **Submission Guidelines**

We invite proposals for individual papers that address the above-mentioned themes and related topics. Please send an abstract of approximately 250–300 words, together with a short biographical note (100 words), to [unrulyepistemologies.aiscli@gmail.com](mailto:unrulyepistemologies.aiscli@gmail.com) and to [info@aiscli.it](mailto:info@aiscli.it).

Deadline for Abstract Submission: September 30, 2026

Notification of Acceptance: October 18, 2026

Registration: There will be no specific conference fees, but prospective contributors should be paid-up members of AISCLI for 2026 (check the AISCLI website [here](#)).

### **Convenors:**

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