



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE LORRAINE**

**I?EA**  
Interdisciplinarité  
Dans les Etudes Anglophones

# SÉMINAIRE INTERDISCIPLINAIRE

**CONSTRUCTION DES  
IDÉOLOGIES, SÉANCE 5 :  
"THINKING AND ACHIEVING  
FREEDOM IN  
POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXTS"**

**MARILYNE BRUN  
(UNIVERSITÉ DE LORRAINE)**

**TIM GIBBS  
(UNIVERSITÉ PARIS NANTERRE)**

31 mars 2023, 17h – 19h

Campus LSH (Nancy), salle A311 et *via* [Teams](#)

# PRÉSENTATION

Marilyne Brun (Université de Lorraine)

## **Indigenous Australians as ‘Ecological Agents’? Indigenous Epistemologies and Environmental Discourse**

This paper discusses the representation of Indigenous traditional knowledge in contemporary Australia, in particular the recurrent depiction of Indigenous Australians as “ecological agents”. Starting with a discussion of the complex interactions between environmental discourse and Indigenous knowledge in Australian history, this paper considers how formulations taken from environmental discourse legitimate Indigenous knowledge while failing to represent Aboriginal epistemologies in all their complexity.

Tim Gibbs (Université Paris Nanterre)

## **Odyssey to Freedom? The Making of Democratic South Africa's lauded Liberal Constitution**

After 1994, innumerable books celebrated Nelson Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom and South Africa's leadership of the human rights revolution. More recently, historians have taken a clearer-eyed view of the ANC's late conversion to the language of rights in the mid-1980s. This paper looks at three key rival groups of anti-apartheid lawyers who embraced rights-talk at this time. If a small coterie of liberal lawyers committed to Rawlsian ideas of social justice then took centre stage, in recent years other groupings have become more important. We will explore the key role played by exile lawyers, who, having once embraced the socialist dialectics of 'liberated law', reinvented themselves as proponents of 'participative justice' and 'positive freedoms' after the Berlin Wall fell. Even more important today, the legacies of the Black Lawyers Association, which worked closely with US African-American lawyers to press for 'third generation' questions about representation and recognition in a society where segregation and inequality remains deep.



# INTERVENANTS

**Marilyne Brun** is a lecturer in Australian and postcolonial studies at the University of Lorraine in France. Her research interests include Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian literature, processes of racialisation in Australia and postcolonial Anglophone contexts, and the history of academic fields and disciplines. She has published articles on critical race theory and Australian literature and culture.

**Timothy Gibbs** is a historian of African History and MCF at Paris-Nanterre, based in the CREA (Centre de Recherches Anglophones). He sits on the editorial board of the *South African Historical Journal* and *Politique Africaine*. Tim's first book, *Mandela's Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid's first Bantustan* (2014), looked at ethnic identities and elite nationalism in an era of mass insurrection and insurgency in southern Africa. A new strand of Tim's research focuses on the lawyers who formed the core of South Africa's black intelligentsia for much of the 20th century. He is currently writing articles on professional and elite formation in a segregated society; legal activism and land rights debates; and human rights debates in the late Cold War.

[www.idea.univ-lorraine.fr](http://www.idea.univ-lorraine.fr)