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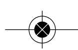

Objectification and Standardization

On the Limits and Effects of Ritually Fixing and Measuring Life

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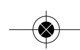


Chapter 11

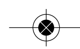
Archives and Cultural Legibility: Objects and Subjects of Neoliberal Heritage Technologies

Rosemary J. Coombe & Eugenia Kisin

I. Introduction

In this theoretical paper, we seek to explore relations between objectification, subjectification, and standardization in emerging practices of indigenous heritage governance.[1] Resisting a persistent scholarly tendency to equate objecti-

1. We have not capitalized the term indigenous, even when used to describe peoples as collective actors which is the standard usage. This is not because we lack of respect for organized Indigenous Peoples who identify as such in international arenas. This choice instead indexes our acknowledgment that many peoples who seek recognition and self-determination do not currently identify as Indigenous Peoples for geopolitical reasons specific to their location and positioning in relationship to prevailing patterns of statecraft but may have similar needs to project a legible culture as a means of marking relations to territory and/or seeking collective political legitimation. Thus we will capitalize Indigenous Peoples when the actors we discuss do so themselves. This usage accords with the international human rights principle that Indigenous Peoples self-identify and our general arguments about the forces shaping collective self-identification.



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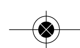
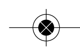


fication with cultural alienation and reification, and moving beyond cynical appraisals of strategic cultural essentialism as purely instrumental behavior, we re-frame questions about the nature of objects and subjects within the political economies and political ecologies in which culture is made legible by peoples seeking legitimacy as political subjects. Moving from the politics of modern state-based forms of liberal recognition into neoliberal conditions of governmentality, we show how new 'technologies' of objectification are providing means for communities to inscribe and legitimate distinctive forms of self-government. We focus on means for managing heritage as biocultural properties, illustrated by recent ethnographic case studies that show how these function as technologies of legibility—in political endeavors that counter modern liberal frames of recognition to assert and assume unique forms of grounded accountability and territorial responsibility.

The political and economic work of possessing cultural heritage is becoming ever more significant as grounds for political recognition and new forms of capital accumulation. Simultaneously, this work transforms cultural heritage into a resource for communicating collective values and aspirations to new publics. Cultural heritage is increasingly the subject of new forms of governance (or, in Foucaultian terms, governmentality) carried out under the auspices of national and international law and policy regimes, multilateral institutions, and developmental and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It grounds newly recognized international rights achieved by a globally networked Indigenous Peoples' movement (and other communities affiliated with new social movements).

Indigenous peoples were historically compelled to assert rights claims on cultural grounds in international fora structured by the hegemonies of modern nation states and liberal political principles. As non-state parties who under-stood themselves as "peoples" or sovereign nations rather than as minorities—whose very standing was based on refusing the stigmatized status that made their assimilation a modern state priority—they could claim the protection of international human rights laws only through the cultural rights provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Cutler, 2011: 41). Although such protections historically applied only to individuals, indigenous leaders were allowed to submit early cases against state violations of their obligations to protect minority cultural rights on behalf of larger collectives (Ibid). Deprived of rights to assert self-determination in 'national' terms, claims to autonomy were progressively framed as rights to protect ways of life rooted in traditions or cultural attachments to territory. These were eventually recognized in international law as the first human rights held by collectivities.



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New forms of collective property are legitimated in diverse legal and policy regimes in which people are compelled to represent their histories as objectified 'traditions' within modern liberal political frameworks and those newly afforded by neoliberal governmental restructurings. Having 'a culture' increasingly serves as the basis for asserting political rights at the same time that culture, in both the aesthetic and anthropological sense, is harnessed as a development resource, embraced as a form of social capital, and deployed as the basis for enterprises in which difference and distinction are assets for developing goods and services (e.g.: Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009; Coombe, 2009, 2016, 2017; Radcliffe, 2006; Yudice, 2003).

As social difference and maintaining and capitalizing upon diversity have assumed new value (Busch 2011), means for locating, gauging, measuring, displaying, and mobilizing cultural objects have become ever more standardized. Standardization is an increasingly significant means through which diverse authorities govern from a distance (Latour, 1987; Busch, 2011; Gibbon & Henriksen 2012), while providing a platform for new forms of com-munity self-presentation and audit (Higgens & Hallstrom, 2007: 685; Higgins & Larner eds., 2010) in which culture is made legible and amenable to new forms of investment and intervention under the decentralized and distributed forms of government characteristic of neoliberalism.

Possessing culture has always involved activities of objectification; so too has possessing a recognizable identity. These are interdependent processes. This exploratory theoretical essay takes up the work of objectification and subjectification as it relates to what we deem heritage technologies, and the problem (in a Foucauldian sense) of stabilizing indigenous culture as heritage: how to render culture legible as objects that may be politically projected as indicators of identity. We propose a re-orientation of scholarly inquiry towards the performative and socially generative relationship between objects and subjects in heritage management. Such a re-orientation would proceed through an exploration of their performativity and the technologies that make them legible in contemporary political economies and emergent political ecologies.

In this essay, we focus on archives as both sites for and modes of standardizing and stabilizing cultural objects and practices in order to make them commensurable across multiple scales and networks of authority and legitimation. As repositories of documents and objects, the critical study of archives has generally been associated with issues pertaining to the history of polities, the politics of evidence, and the inclusions and exclusions of official cultural memory. By addressing archives as heritage technologies— mediating, stabilizing tools bound up with the demands made of and for collective political subjectivity—we open up questions about objectification and

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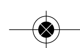


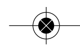
standardization that integrate theories of neoliberal governmentality and contemporary anthropological approaches to materiality, vitality, and ontology. Using ethnographic case studies, we show how contemporary biocultural archives function as technologies of legibility. We define this concept in relation to neoliberal governmentality and quests for indigenous autonomy that assert distinctive forms of stewardship, responsibility, and self-determination.

II. From the Promise and Perils of Liberal Recognition to Neoliberal Affordances

Influenced by the pioneering work of Charles Taylor (1994), anthropologists have long explored modern liberal state recognition and the promise and perils it poses for indigenous peoples and minorities seeking to have their collective differences acknowledged.[2] For many indigenous peoples, the modern liberal framing of indigenous identity— particularly settler states' bundling of legibility, recognition, and the morality of modern development— fails to express aspirations for collective political subjectivity or produce socially advantageous outcomes. As Elizabeth Povinelli argued, the kinds of recognition that modern liberal states confer are always "cunning" (2002), in that the continuity of traditions they require are incommensurable with indigenous peoples' lived experiences and/ or impossible to perform, precisely because of their histories of cultural dispossession (Clifford, 1988).

To the extent that modern state institutions tend to require a standardized form of cultural difference in order to register it within the scope of the state gaze, peoples find that their culture can only be acknowledged in particular ways that are linked to their recognition as 'properly' political subjects. In modern polities the realm of the political itself is deeply circumscribed (de la Cadena 2010, 2012, 2015), such that indigenous ontologies that center human

2. Recognition is a term with links to both policy and belonging. It can index a formal politics of recognition within the nation-state, in which minority claims are adjudicated and assessed according to liberal values of tolerance and inclusion, institutionalized in policies of multiculturalism (Day, 2000: 18). Ideally, recognition also names more quotidian practices of speaking and listening, in which vernacular expressions of difference are heard as assertions of the right to be different and seek alternative forms of development (Appadurai, 2004; Rosaldo, 1997).



relations and responsibilities to other beings and species do not *politically* matter, despite their centrality to indigenous futures. The necessity and the desirability of being seen and heard, of 'counting' politically is, consequentially, always fraught with peril for peoples who have experienced forms of cultural and territorial dispossession that modern states tend to depoliticize.

Modern institutions of adjudication, moreover, routinely render many significant indigenous knowledges, practices, relationships, and attachments illegible, because modern state forms of political recognition link indigenous identity to models of objectified and authentic culture (Miller, 2003: 67) that routinely misrecognize the nature of indigenous cultural claims. If colonial powers wrested culturally significant goods from indigenous peoples in order to domesticate and assimilate them as subjects, the liberal welfare state viewed them as disadvantaged peoples in need of policies that would 'improve' them. Cultural rights were merely a means to this end. For instance, supports for documenting and revitalizing once colonially-prohibited indigenous languages were later deemed necessary as a means to make capacities for cultural expression equally available to all people as citizens.[3] The possibility that cultural rights claims might exceed the categories of the modern state or express political positions other than its privileged subject (the citizen), could not be countenanced in liberal terms (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2007, 2014). Such possibilities may emerge anew under neoliberal conditions.

Given that many indigenous peoples have historical relations of distrust vis a vis modern state governments which sought primarily to assimilate them and to destroy their cultures, neoliberal knowledge economies with their multiplication of non-state governmental agencies and privileging of cultural resources may yet afford some unique if still perilous prospects for alternative political self-fashionings (Coombe, 2017; Coombe & Weiss, 2015; Huizenga & Coombe, 2019). The anthropological and aesthetic understandings of culture that historically oriented international law (Holder, 2008) protected rights of access to ancestral lands and resources for some peoples, but did not adequately address environmental degradation,

3. To move forward historically, it has been suggested that the postmodern multicultural state maintained a carefully policed zone of tolerance for flowering of expressions of differential identity (Lyotard, 1984), whereas in the neoliberal multicultural state, cultural difference became primarily a means to encourage ethnic entrepreneurialism and legitimate state and social abandonment (eg: Hale, 2002, 2005, 2011; Love, 2013; Wilson, 2003). The assertion that we have moved into a postneoliberal era and/or not-quite neoliberal developments such as the revaluation of collectively held socionatural territories in Latin America, complicates this picture (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015; Goodale & Postero, eds., 2013).

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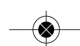

communal provisioning, or the ritual forms of governance significant to indigenous understandings of autonomy (Corntassel, 2008). Thus, when international indigenous human rights were being articulated, organized Indigenous Peoples adopted the culturalised principle of "development with identity" to combine protection for land-based livelihoods and integration of local values in development projects (Coombe, 2017; Rhoades, 2006; Sena, 2010; Tauli-Corpez, 2010). These efforts were supported by a later cultural turn in global environmental and development policy (Andolina, Laurie & Radcliffe, 2009; Buergin, 2015; Pretty et al., 2009; Radcliffe ed., 2006; Turner et al., 2016), and a biocultural or 'ontological' turn' in international heritage policy (Byrne & Ween, 2015; Coombe & Baird, 2016; Rotherham, 2015). Under these conditions, "Indigenous Peoples and local [or traditional] communities" (in international policy parlance) were enabled to project their cultural distinctions and territorial attachments as environmental responsibilities (Rozzi et al., 2015; Rozzi et al., 2013) in ways that more fully embraced issues of community reproduction and resilience (Chapin, Kofinas & Folke, 2013).

Indigenous Peoples are certainly not the only communities and persons encouraged to make their cultural assets technologically legible in knowledge economies. For example, the inscription of distinctive goods in cultural terms as a form of territorial intellectual property are increasingly standardized means to facilitate capital accumulation (Aylwin & Coombe, 2014; Coombe, 2016, 2017; Coombe, Ives & Huizenga, 2014). Such activities fit the agendas of community elites, corporations, and those so-called "non-governmental" organizations who aspire to develop others (Li, 2007) into rational, market-based actors entertaining properly possessive attitudes to their cultural resources. New techniques for making culture legible help to sequester market values. Means of place-branding, marketing bioculturally distinctive goods, and creating "value chains for niche markets" are proliferating (Coombe & Malik, 2017, 2018).

It is, however, politically significant that Indigenous Peoples' cultural heritage (now assertively linked to ancestral territories), has been the object of long histories of colonial and modern state scrutiny (Anderson, 2009) and is widely understood to be the basis of their internationally affirmed rights of self-determination (Engle, 2010). Its protection is a principle of international customary law, incorporated into multiple international, regional, and national legal instruments (Ahmed, Aylwin & Coombe, 2009). To some degree, then, states might be interpreted as fulfilling their legal obligations when they seek to make indigenous culture legible by demanding and facilitating new inscriptions of it. In international law, however, Indigenous Peoples are not

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recognized solely or even primarily by states; rather they self-identify and are legitimated as indigenous by others.

Indigenous Peoples and their heritage rights, moreover, are no longer recognized exclusively by state legislatures or international Conventions, but in transnational networks that involve multilateral institutions, development banks, environmental NGOs, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and transnational networks that link environmental NGOs, Slow Food convivia, and peasant and food sovereignty movements, for just a few examples. This is entirely congruent with understandings of neoliberalism as a reconfiguration of the state through a distribution of its powers in processes of uneven regulatory restructuring (Peck & Theodore, 2012). In these conditions, communities must increasingly make their territorial attachments legible even as they sometimes counter measures that attempt to make it calculable.

The longstanding need to articulate indigenous rights within a cultural frame under what Latour (1993) would call the Modern Constitution, served to decenter and depoliticize them because cultural rights were relegated to the margins of modern liberal politics. Arguably, however, new indigenous struggles have succeeded in politicizing the cultural frame, as concepts of culture and heritage have been internationally revitalized in a rights-based, rather than purely proprietary framework (Coombe, 2017: 380; Ensor, 2005). After languishing for decades as the most neglected of the rights categories (Stamatopoulou, 2012), cultural rights have achieved new prominence (Farheed, 2011), spurred to a significant degree by the widespread ratification of the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Given the number of international institutions, organizations, and governing bodies who are now required to show respect for rights-based norms, and the imposition of rights-based performance indicators on NGO activities, the range of authorities and interlocutors now obliged to demonstrate their cognizance of what are now articulated as biocultural rights (Bavikatte, 2016) has grown exponentially.

III. Objectification and Identity: Cultural Heritage and Political Subjectivity

The relationship between objectification and identity needs to be reexamined under neoliberal conditions in which authorities have multiplied and culture is a significant political and economic resource for collective

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community subjects. Under what has been called 'variegated neoliberalism' (Brenner, Peck & Theodore, 2010), regulatory bodies new technologies of certification and audit in which "effective governance is measured with reference to asset management" (Comaroff, 2011: 45). Communities are made accountable, or 'responsibilized,' through forms of technological intervention such as auditing and monitoring, which render their cultural and traditional assets legible for new forms of investment, animation, and intervention (Bennett 1998, 2000, 2003; Coffey, 2003; Coombe & Weiss, 2015; Wilson, 2008).

From debates about managing intangible heritage to new modes of environmental governance, and hybrid zones such as 'cultural landscapes' and 'biocultural heritage territories', community has emerged both as new site for administration and as a political and economic actor (Coombe, 2011; Dorrow, 2016; Guevera & Lavorde, 2008). Climate change mitigation strategies such as REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) programs evoke communities as agents for implementation and as potential beneficiaries (Skutsch & Turnhout, 2018). In deference to international policy norms on biodiversity, program guidelines insist that traditional knowledge be taken into account in all interventions, a requirement which encourages collective identification of heritage practices. Communities, however, only become collective subjects and figures of political agency as fulcrums of identity. Governmentality scholars note that community is made to appear to be something that already exists and claims us but requires the work of interlocutors to animate (Bennett, 2000). It must be achieved and is continually in need of reproduction (Miller & Rose, 2008: 92). New forms of objectification are emerging to make these collective forms of political subjectivity tangible and their traditional knowledges and resources legible.

To conceptually explore this intensification of the conditions in which objectification and subjectification are intertwined and imbricated, we find it useful to return to Hegel's account of the mutually constitutive and dynamic subject-object duality in which the anthropological study of material culture has a particular stake. In *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (1987), for example, Daniel Miller defines objectification as "processes consisting of externalization (self-alienation) and sublation (reabsorption) through which the subject of such a process is created and developed" (12). Like other scholars (e.g.: Brown, 2005), Miller views things as actively shaping as well as being shaped by human action. He proposes a theory that sees objects as materializing social relations— in which individual or collective subjects are forged through performative acts of externalization and re-appropriation.

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Such an approach has much to recommend it, not least its refusal to treat social construction as a process reducible to representation, which tends to privilege modern polities and modern ontologies, rather than historically situate these and question their hegemony (Horton & Berlo, 2013). Here, Sara Shneiderman's (2015) work on the persistence of ethnic identities across national borders in Nepal, India, and Tibet provides an illuminating case of how categories of identity and belonging work in relation to ritual and political action. Ethnic categories and cultural forms are temporal products of social construction, thus we need to attend to the contemporary political contexts in which multiethnic nations entertain debates about ethnicity and indigeneity in terms of rights. Her informants (divided as to whether they should identify as Indigenous Thangmi Peoples) clearly valued the ability to make claims in ethnic terms. They sought to be recognized as possessing objects of culture, not only in "the tangible sense but also in the intangible sense in which such concepts as identity, origins, territory, and indigeneity can be constituted as sacred objects through ritualized action" (5). Such action may take forms as diverse as deity propitiations and participation in political conferences. Adopting Edmund Leach's insight that ethnicity is "not only a political process but an affective domain in which cultural difference … is expressed to both selves and others through ritual action" (7), she advises us to shift our focus on objectification from representational construction to "the expressive pro-duction of ethnicity in action" (7). Such affective object-oriented often engage community cultural producers and institutions in new projects of archival creation, curation, repatriation, and revitalization.

Although processes of ethnogenesis may cross borders, and are shaped by global market forces, international policy norms, and multilateral institutions, state-specific-forms of recognition continue to shape, if they do not fully determine, ethnic configurations and the ritual processes through which identity is produced. Like many Asian 'minorities', Shneiderman's informants and research collaborators had shifted their strategies in the late twentieth century from evading the radar of state recognition to intentional, direct engagement (13), as these states became subject to international human rights norms. Thangmi peoples went from avoiding public forms of cultural objectification to embracing them, motivated by Nepal's 2007 ratification of the International Labor Organization Convention No. 169, which built upon NGO efforts to identify and encourage "the Development of Indigenous Nationalities".

If, in Nepal, people who identified as Thangmi sought to come within state recognition to secure the autonomy that self-government offered, those residing in India sought the educational and state benefits that Scheduled

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Tribe status conferred. Both aspirant groups understood that ethnographic forms of objectification would serve their desires for greater autonomy. Ethnography "is complicit in shaping people's political futures" (17); many anthropologists now seek to transform their disciplines colonial legacy and advance decolonial agendas by collaborating in performative community ethnographic projects (e.g.: Anderson & Geismar eds., 2017; Christen, 2015; Ferguson, Kuwanwisiwma & Colwell, eds., 2018). Indeed, the performative might be considered "the dominant relational mode through which the object — of domination, oppression, investigation, observation, fascination— might hope to strike back" (Townsend-Gault, 2011: 552).

Whatever the criteria for recognition, "the substantive content of ethnic consciousness develops in large part through the process of mobilizing specific cultural and ethnographic content" (8). Agreeing with the Comaroffs (2009) that the political life of ethnicity is not its only one, Shneiderman finds a wholly economic alternative less than compelling; both political and market contexts provide opportunities for ritualized performances through which cultural identities assume social purchase. Acknowledging the diversity of activities through which 'a culture' is produced, practiced, and performed enables us to move beyond the idea that the objectification of cultural forms is somehow beyond the realm of social authenticity, distant from the everyday life of a romanticized grassroots, or 'merely' strategic behavior.

Understanding the mechanisms of recognition, moreover, requires an exploration of the full range of "recognizing agents" with whom peoples engage. For her Tangmi subjects, these have included the divine world, the Nepali and Indian states, social scientists, NGOs, members of other communities, and other members of the Thangmi diaspora. Achieving recognition on cultural grounds requires that subjects make their identity materially legible, a process that has always been tied up with various projects of state and, increasingly, nonstate government.

We borrow the term legibility, of course, from James Scott who focused on techniques of legibility as characteristic of modern states (1998) and from Latour (1987) for whom "governing at a distance" is implemented by technologies that first emerge under conditions of Western colonialism (Bennett, 2005; Cohn, 1987; Pels, 1997; Stocking, 1991; Stoler, 2009). Significantly, Scott never limited means of "Seeing Like a State" to any particular kind of 'modern' state and he clearly believed that actual states'

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capacities to see in this fashion were limited, resisted, and subverted.[4] Indeed, in *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009) he suggests that incorporation within a functioning, fully governmental state is a relatively recent (and possibly a short-lived) experience for many peoples, particularly in Southeast Asia. Not surprisingly, those who have been most successful in eluding full incorporation into modern states are those who now identify or are identified as Indigenous, a category that might be defined as synonymous with a struggle against cultural assimilation into state-defined forms of subjectivity.

Significantly, peoples have different histories of seeking recognition and avoiding or evading it, depending upon the powers with which they have had to contend, the nature of government at issue, the alliances they seek, and the kinds of futures they seek to forge. Although we have pointed to certain dominant forms of governmentality and the characteristic means of objectification they require to bestow recognition, no universal teleology should be assumed. If Thangmi peoples have shifted from a strategy of seeking to evade recognition to an anxious desire to find means to ensure that the state takes their cultural measure, others, subjected to settler colonialism, have histories of being crudely objectified by occupying forces, and having objects of cultural significance seized and exploited in capitalist markets. They must find distinct means of using governmental technologies for their own ends.

The Nuxalk (formerly called the Bella Coola) are amongst many Indigenous people in the Pacific Northwest coastal area of the Americas whose struggle to reclaim land and resources from the Canadian settler colonial state— while expressing collective as-pirations— requires that they take possession of their heritage (Kramer, 2006). They do so in performances that demand the recognition of non-state others, while engaging in practices of cultural protectionism which often involve controlling the circulation of

4. It may be helpful to better appreciate the dynamic relationship between neoliberalism and legibility. There is little doubt that neoliberal privileging of market mechanisms for val-uation, investment, and inducing competition put enhanced emphasis on relations of prop-erty, which must be rendered legible. Legibility as a concept derives from the etymology of law, which involve inscription, practices of naming and marking, and reading determinations of meaning (Blomley, 2008: 1826). If property requires a categorical logic of boundary drawing which is always a simplification, it is never fully successful, entailing slippages, ambiguity, and absurdities, particularly when it attempts to demonstrate mastery by imposing order on the chaos of unruly natures. Creating property, Blomley suggests, involves "much more than the simple imposition of a pregiven grid upon nature" (1827), because practices of property have "a networked quality, allowing for action at a distance" (1828) which produce new geographies and communications in which different ways of seeing, and indeed, distinctive ontologies may come into tension and conflict.

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cultural properties in museum contexts. Like other Indigenous Peoples, they attempt to achieve recognition while keeping some cultural secrets, to sustain traditions while making a living in a modern capitalist economy, and to revive language, ritual, and ceremonies in conditions where many of their heritage resources are trapped in modern institutions controlled by others. Terms of cultural circulation and exchange have become important arenas for negotiation, recognition, and identity assertion, as many museum and repatriation initiatives illustrate (e.g.: Bell, Christen & Turin, eds., 2011; Christen, 2011; Clifford, 2008; Douglas, 2016; Fox, 2017; Jacknis, 1996, 2002). Access within communities may also be renegotiated: the Nuxulk, for instance, also enact their sovereignty over cultural heritage by circulating dance forms traditionally restricted to particular families in a wider network of schools so that these forms of heritage will not be lost (Kramer, 2006).

Rather than make all of their cultural forms legible as objects open to the gaze of governmental authorities and/or available for expropriation, however, communities may choose, instead, to restrict access to their cultural forms and thereby signal to others both the nature of their cultural capital and their intent to govern it. In short, they may seek to make their management of cultural goods legible to others as a means of asserting themselves as political and economic subjects to a new range of neoliberal interlocutors. Whether this development should be viewed as a product of a particular history of governmentality, a strategy of taking advantage of neoliberal opportunities, or an indicator of the political maturity of a self-governing indigenous subject (or some combination of these), are questions we might pose but leave open for others to address.

Indigenous Peoples (and people) maneuver in perilous political territory in which they seek forms of recognition that do not restrict their agency according to modern categories they reject. They may refuse to occupy the spaces of modern liberal legibility that demand divisions between economics and politics (eg: Wilson, 2003), music and law (eg: Coleman & Coombe, 2008), culture and politics (eg: Ybarra, 2013), or recognitions of cultural property that are divorced from histories of struggle against dispossession (eg: Evers & Seagle, 2012). Practices of 'refusal' have been elaborated in

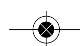
indigenous decolonial theory in apprehension of historical forms of recognition; they assert a "generative opting out" that transforms structures of governance as well as permissible political subject positions (McGranahan, 2018; Simpson, 2016). Although this concept of refusal seems focused upon modern settler colonial states, the practices we explore here have a similar orientation.

Generative forms of refusal include the assertion of other forms of cultural legibility that stress peoples' traditional responsibilities in ontologies of territorial caretaking (e.g.: Jackson, 2009; Soloman, 2005; Wright, 2008a, b). Often these claims take advantage of state and other interlocutor's accountability to global norms of sustainability, participatory development, and human rights (e.g.: de Castro, 2015; Richard, 2015; Tockman, 2015). Governmental heritage policy also seems to educe rights-based practices—assertions of alternative politics that address new publics precisely because the policy matrix encourages people to objectify their values and voice a possessive relation-ship to the places and things they come to consider their own, while articulating strategies for sustaining such relationships in decolonial futures.

For those who identify as Indigenous, colonialism is an ongoing situation, not a historical memory of a time prior to the 'normal' powers of the modern social welfare state, whose government is now redistributed through neoliberal restructuring. The modern nation state is not the sole legitimate polity from a contemporary indigenist worldview: its boundaries and jurisdiction are not final, its subjects can still be multiplied, and the meaning of citizenship is not preordained. We don't have space to traverse this territory here. The point is simply that for many contemporary indigenous communities, traditional, colo-nial, liberal, modern social-welfarist, and neoliberal forms of government co-exist within living memory. They have been subject to and continue to bear witness to numerous ways of being rendered 'legible' by multiple regimes of power. They understand, uniquely, the 'perils of recognition' that lie in the "double binds of indigenous need-based sovereignty" (Cattelino, 2010; Ludlow, et al., 2016: 13–16, 30–1), in struggles to maintain dignity and political agency without being reduced to subjection and victimhood. These struggles are il-lustrated in contemporary archival politics.

V. Decolonial Archival Practices

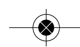
Historically a tool of colonial governance, and increasingly a technology of heritage management, an archive is a repository of information, documents, or objects used for collecting and containing both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Riles, 2006; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2005; Taylor, 2003). Systems of archiving generate and transform practices into "objects" to be organized; their curation is also bound up with cultural memory, and how a people or community perceives its own history.



Modern archives may be generally conceived of as means of generating ethical and epis-temological credibility (Osborne, 1999) to a public, or publics by way of or-ganizing objects in a fashion that attempts to naturalize (or politically neutralize) the archive's organizing structure. Following a model of network theory, an archive may also be understood as a "centre of calculation" (Latour, 1991), where knowledge is assembled from elsewhere and black-boxed through organizational practices to become the property of a state, scientific regime, or colonial power for future research. In its orientation toward the future, archiving is also a form of governance: it conceals its mechanisms of knowledge accumulation by authorizing its particular forms and contents.

The term archive is now used in critical theory as "an overarching category to include a diversity of technologies used to inventory objects and knowledge" (Waterton, 2010: 645), encompassing forms like spreadsheets, species inventories, computerized databases, and institutions like museums as sociotechnical assemblages (Stoler, 2002; Povinelli, 2011). Archives, like other forms of ethnographic collection and objectification, are subject-making projects, inflected by power relations. In deeming them "technologies of legibility," we draw on both critical and practical understandings of archives as locations imbued with the power to make culture legible, stable, and governable. We are particularly interested in how contemporary archival power works in practices and interventions that explicitly resist or interrupt modern distinctions between culture and nature, or between a dead archive and a living cultural repertoire as biocultural framings reorient attitudes toward heritage goods to em-phasize place-based livelihoods and conviviality.

Decolonial archival practices are increasingly understood to be collaborative, emergent, performative, and socially generative (Waterton, 2010: 650). Some pioneering work in this vein is illustrated by Australian archival initiatives the turn of this century, involving anthropologists, scholars of social informatics, and public records offices, working in partnership with aboriginal communities and their Knowledge Centres to digitally map indigenous knowledge while respecting and supporting indigenous ontologies (e.g.: Barwick, Green, and Vaarzon-Morel, 2020; Christie, 2005, 2008; Verran & Christie, 2014, 2007). Indigenous partners in



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these initiatives seek to resist and subvert a colonizing ontological separation of people and place (Christie & Verran, 2013). Although such projects originated in aboriginal community needs to promote intergenerational learning and prevent cultural loss, and worked to fulfill national legal obligations to protect biodiversity, they evolved to help support indigenous places and promote sustainable liveli-hoods for aboriginal people 'on country' (Verran & Christie, 2007), recognizing indigenous cultural rights while reconnecting aboriginal Australians with their kin and cultures of grounded responsibility. Such collaborations are pushing biocultural understandings into the mainstream, particularly when consensus is built between scientists and indigenous knowledge holders as partners in developing an ethics of care for biocultural goods understood to have their own vitalities (Verran, 2002; Christie, 2007, 2008).

Crucially, such archival interventions tend to disrupt the hierarchies and relations of power embedded in colonial collections. For instance, when an indigenous community places controls on archival access under the category of "secret, sacred, or sensitive" information, or demands that particular records, photographs, or regalia be repatriated to particular caregivers, archival power is both challenged and affirmed, because control of cultural materials is repositioned beyond the repository to reactivate traditional responsibilities and stimulate new social relations. Many ethnographic accounts show that when colonial archives are reopened to the activities of descendant communities, decontextualised heritage goods recontextualised to animate new communications, spark enterprise, spur new cultural industries, reconnect kin, and help peoples better understand their ancestral histories (Coombe & Coleman, 2008; Fox, 2017; Verran & Christie, 2007, 2014; Waterton, 2010).

In most of these projects community protocols of appropriate access and valuation come to structure both archives and the kinds of social relations they make possible, while contesting archival practices that have been complicit in colonial power relations. The well-known collaborative digital projects of anthropologists Kim Christen and Jane Anderson both describe and contribute to these shifts in archival practice. Their first iteration of a decolonial archive was a content-management software project for storing heritage objects devel-oped by the Warumungu Aboriginal community in Central Australia. It was named Mukurtu, which means "dilly bag," a container for safekeeping, in the Warumungu language (Christen 2006, 2011). As developed in Christen's community collaborations, Mukurtu is specifically designed to control who can see what based on community knowledge protocols that reflect and reinforce Aboriginal customary rights and responsibilities. In this way, it moves beyond digital repatriation processes that merely re-inscribe authorship and permissions embedded in modern legal categories of personhood (Anderson, 2013), while rejecting

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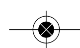
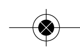


the propriety of modern assumptions that indigenous stakeholders and communities of origin are subjects of the archive rather than its makers and custodians (Anderson & Christen, 2013:106).

This decolonial ethic also led Anderson to develop a series of traditional licenses and labels that communities could use and modify to demarcate appropriate forms of circulation. This iteration of the project, Local Contexts, has been most visibly adopted by the Sq'éwlets People, a Coast Salish First Nation. It is used on their website to signal their "belongings"— their preferred term for biocultural heritage— meant to signal obligation and reciprocity as well as property (see Wilson, 2016). Mukurtu and Local Contexts are decolonial archival interventions that make both communities and their heritage man-agement practices politically legible while the technology itself circulates as a standardized means for other indigenous communities and institutions to construct their own social interfaces, enabling "granular access controls based on the cultural protocols of different communities" (McKemmish, Faulkhead & Russell, 2011). Users now include the National Museum of the American Indian, Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand, and the Musqueam First Nation in British Columbia. This is evidence of an indigenous technology of legibility 'scaling up' beyond its grassroots origins, destabilizing assumptions that ob-jectification necessarily leads to cultural loss or merely a localized cultural gain for a narrow set of cultural producers.

Digital Futures is an online project co-conceived by anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli and her Aboriginal informants in Western Australia and executed by web designer Peter Cho. Povinelli describes Digital Futures as a "postcolonial digital archive," designed to "re-story" traditional territories for three quite dif-ferent audiences: tourists, land developers, and Aboriginal families (2012:148). Using a cartographic interface, users are able to view media files that are attached to particular places; like the controls for Mukurtu, the permissions of the interface shift according to the user's social position, and according to their geographic location, effectively shaping their experience of narrativised 'country' according to their subject position. Media files also work through geotagging, so that participants can use their phones to view available stories in a particular location, literally mapped onto the landscape. Crucially, what one sees (and from where) is determined by the communities whose traditional lands — which we might see as a geomorphic archive — are being digitally 'mined' for their cultural histories, not coincidentally while they are simultaneously mined for other resources.

The project challenges European values of preservation and access by linking knowledge and rights to know to place and lineage-based forms of responsibility. But whereas Povinelli insists on the incommensurability of Western concepts of self, land, and future with



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indigenous ontologies she refers to as a 'social otherwise,' this archive's particular mode of objectification suggests something more than mere incommensurability. For instance, it deliberately 'scales up' by identifying 'land management' as a possible category of user interface (although we are not provided with any detail on how that subject position is made significant or how such interpellations might be accomplished). Developments in international climate change policy that emphasize traditional environmental knowledge as well as indigenous political interest in archiving it and revitalizing the social relations and rituals that historically sustained it have spurred the creation of customizable digital technologies for mapping and managing what has become known as biocultural territorial knowledge. To the extent that such a technology might communicate particular ancestral responsibilities and obligations to kin as well as histories of care in country, other forms of intercultural translation now seem possible.

Like Mukurtu's transformation into its more distributed version via Local Contexts, Povinelli's Digital Futures has also had a complex archival afterlife. Her Aboriginal interlocutors in the Karrabing Indigenous Corporation (Karrabing) make decolonial archives of art, film, and cartographic representation to expose the crises of climate change and extractive capitalism in Australia. A networked community of voluntary association, Karrabing specifically intervenes in what Povinelli in Geontologies (2016) deems "geontopower"—a revision of Foucault's concept of biopower that focuses on the governance of the ontological distinction between Life and Nonlife, or the "difference between the lively and the inert" (5)— regulated through extractivist interventions in Aboriginal territories. Karrabing maps this field of ontological power through an augmented reality project using GIS technologies to render the collective's "analytics of existence" (2016: 166), in new cartographies which include (for example) fish Dreamings associated with rock weirs and other forms of Aboriginally recognized vitalities denied and decimated in modern industrial re-source development. Geontopower is made visible, moreover, in ways that acknowledge that the technological means of mapping Aboriginal country are only available due to the interests and assets of the very extractive industries that are transforming it; Karrabing reminds its publics that we all inevitably share complicity in creating the conditions that make it necessary to archive and safeguard sources and expressions of biocultural diversity

Both of these transmedia archival projects are decolonial in their refusal to accept that there is a singular public with rights of access to knowledge of all aspects of Indigenous biocultural heritage or features of Aboriginal significance in country, and in their questioning the logic on which conventional digital protocols depend. In a 2012 discussion of relationships between digital subjects and cultural objects, Anne Salmond noted that many

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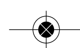
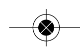


networked digital projects seek "to rewrite, in different ways, the ontological charter of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)", and to "create digital resources with and for specific 'communities' ," not simply to design and possess the architecture and content of custom-built digital repositories, but also to "transcend or subvert the binary logic and philosophy of code itself, the basic building blocks from which computer software is made," thereby "transforming a single hege-monic system … into multiple systems or ontologies inflected with certain kinds of [(bio)cultural] difference" (211–2).

These developing archival interventions are also significant in showing how settler government acknowledgment of the biocultural is unsettled through an Aboriginal amodern (Latour, 1993) management of objects that assert collective subjectivity and responsibility. Neoliberal technologies of legibility do not attempt to fully 'represent' social worlds nor make them transparent. Rather, what they make legible are claims made and responsibilities assumed by distinctive collective subjects seeking to act as political interlocutors. Cultural archives, especially, need to be organized so as to do different kinds of work internally for community reproduction, serve community needs for new forms of partnership with various interlocutors, and, when desired, provide content to wider publics. To the extent that archives are increasingly digitized for more distant authorities and anonymous publics, however, means must still be found to communicate forms of cultural management that mark local attachments and serve place-based forms of social responsibility and reproduction.

VI. Neoliberal Technologies and Their Transfiguration

Neoliberalism is increasingly explored through its characteristic forms of power and the governmental technologies through which these powers are ma-terialised (Gibbon & Henriksen, 2012; Ong, 2007). If government is the domain of strategies, techniques, and procedures by means of which connections are established between "the aspirations of authorities and the ac-tivities of individuals and groups" (Rose & Miller, 2010: 281), the mechanisms of cultural governance invert this relationship to illustrate how government establishes connections between the aspirations of groups and the activities of authorities (Coombe & Weiss, 2015). A whole host of technologies have emerged to make community cultural resources discernable and calculable for the needs and investments of others while advancing the objectives of newly recognized collective subjects. What, exactly, an enlarged field of transnational actors newly attentive to biocultural



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resources are acting upon, or intervening in, needs to be made 'available' for deliberation through shared referents and visible through joint optics, precisely because of linked agencies between parties with different norms, structures, constituencies, and realms of accountability. Relationships between park managers and community conservation authorities, World Bank officials and local development NGOs, archeologists and First Na-tions communities, international seed banks and indigenous farmers, for examples, may create shared responsibilities for heritage management. International environmental, heritage, and intellectual property policy, multilateral institutions, state development donors, aid agencies, NGOs, and alternative social movements all afford specific technologies for making cultures legible and peoples holding cultural goods into distinctive political subjects.

Stewardship of biological diversity, which is gradually (if far from consistently), becoming understood as the cultural work of local communities, has afforded many of them new forms of recognition. Conservation management authorities have developed new systems of designation to recognize the role of culturally distinctive communities in biodiversity conservation efforts (e.g.: UNESCO's cultural landscapes, FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, the IUCN's Indigenous Community Conserved Areas, Aotearoa/ New Zealand's maitaitai fishery reserves, and Japanese Satoyama landscapes) (Apgar et al., 2011). Indigenist movements, however, insist that such certifications cannot safeguard biodiversity unless they address the endogenous processes through which peoples and their landscapes coevolve. This requires support for local cultural values and understandings of interspecies relationships, grounded not only in territory, but in distinctive ontologies in which people and other beings are interrelated in networks of interspecies obligation. While some indigenous peoples see these as their responsibilities to their Creator and/or bestowed upon them through their creation stories, other communities may recognize different forms of earth-beings (De la Cadena, 2015) and non-human kinship that oblige them in distinctive ways.

Under these new conditions, attempting to nurture resilient social and eco-logical systems for sustainability involves customising such technologies in tactics of transnational translation between legal, scientific, policy, and advocacy discourses while maintaining community trust and engagement. Community leaders or knowledge-brokers must seek means to render agricultural, pastoral, fishing, hunting, or other forms of biocultural management legible to diverse interlocutors while protecting the autonomy of their resource self-governance, ideally making these practices mutually supportive. They may thereby mobilize governmental technologies to inscribe new forms of territoriality (Painter, 2010). Whether we contemplate new protocols controlling biological research on ancestral territories (Pimbert,

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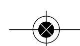
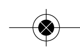


2012), emerging standards for indigenist data management with respect to traditional environmental knowledge (eg: Pulsifer et al., 2011), proposals for biocultural heritage certification marks and their management (Argumedo, 2013), or adaptation of traditional knowledge licenses and labels (Anderson & Christen, 2013), communities as calculating subjects of government are standardizing and customizing archival technologies across transnational scales of governance.

While a conventional critique of neoliberal multiculturalism might see such governmental activities merely as orienting peoples in economic dispositions toward their cultural resources, this perspective overlooks the strategic reflexivity through which biocultural heritage traditions are rendered politically meaningful in rights-based frameworks. It also tends to foreclose inquiries into how such activities may become indicators of customary law, markers of jurisdiction, and evidence of "grounded authority" (Pasternak, 2017) in policy contexts oriented more towards ensuring the conditions of sustainability for marginalized peoples than their assimilation. Assertions of indigeneity and other community cultural identities may be ritually performed as subject positions defined by unique, globally significant, but locally understood environmental obligations (e.g.: Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015; Baldwin & Metzer, 2012; Cepek, 2013; de Castro, 2012; Escobar, 2008; Gonzales, 2015; Nazarea, Rhoades & Sullivan, 2013; Richard, 2012; Sarmiento & Hitchner, eds., 2017; Ulloa, 2005; Zimmerer, 2012).

Certainly, this tendency is apparent in the transnational regimes and practices through which biodiversity is now widely, if far from uniformly, governed. Seeking political recognition as stewards of biocultural territories, communities design and use plant inventories, species audits, maps, atlases, and ecological knowledge databases— archival projects in which cultural resources are rendered legible in what have become transnational forms of governmental power. To demonstrate their historical linkages to territories and resources they steward they must represent their occupation, possession, and cultivation in ways that communicate the cultural significance of landscape features, but they do so in contexts where their traditional knowledges of these territories must also deliver 'ecosystem services'.

If modern cartographic methods were forms of geographic representation which erased indigenous presence and agency, new forms of participatory research and counter-mapping have emerged to make distinctive community practices and indigenous ontologies politically legible in movements for greater autonomy under neoliberal conditions (Norris, 2014; Veland, et al., 2014). Critically, GIS technologies provide standardized means of stabilization to mediate between social groups in the construction of new forms of local governance; indigenous knowledge with respect to climate change, for instance, is being mapped using participatory GIS systems



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ever more customized to recognize culturally significant sites and to connect traditional knowledge to wider fields of social relations (e.g.: Hunt & Stevenson, 2017).

One particularly successful biocultural heritage territory is the Parque de la Papa (the Potato Park) near Pisaq, Peru, where six Quechua-speaking villages merged 10,000 hectares of land in 2004 to create a collective agricultural enterprise based upon Andean cultural principles. This was accomplished by a negotiated research agreement with a modern potato seedbank recognizing Convention on Biodiversity norms in which Indigenous Peoples traditional environmental knowledge, innovations, and practices should be respected. Historically, Peruvian ideologies of development were conventional, modern ones that delegitimated indigenous peoples and Andean cultures as backward and primitive obstacles to progress (Shepherd, 2010; Graddy, 2013). In the 1990s, however, Peruvian agricultural governmental institutions and agroecology movements took advantage of global climate change concerns with preserving biodiversity, revitalizing plant genetic resources, promoting more sustainable development, and protecting traditional environmental knowledge to extoll in situ modes of conservation (Shepherd, 2005). They did so by showing that attempts to assimilate indigenous/campesino peoples into the national market economy had adverse ecological effects including landscape degradation, a decline in food supplies, a diminution of food security, and a general erosion of ecosystem resilience. The Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES, the Spanish acronym) was instrumental in articulating "a vision of biodiversity conservation [that was] inextricable from the indigenous bicultural heritage that engenders it" (Graddy, 2013). Working closely with the Potato Park they promoted Andean cultural models of communal landholding and ecosystem governance based in an indigenous cosmovision to publicise the value of Andean agricultural traditions for conservation ends.

Like Indigenous Peoples elsewhere, Andean communities seek both recognition and greater autonomy. In a context of state decentralization and global concern with climate change, food security, and environmental degradation, the Andean region has received increased attention from UN bodies and environmental NGOs which play increasingly significant governmental roles (Coombe, 2017). In less than two decades, the Potato Park communities used global conservation protected area guidelines, norms of community-driven ethnobotany conservation, and strategic alliances with international environmental NGOs to represent their collective enterprise as an indigenous biocultural heritage territory (a form of collective indigenous government that is now promoted transnationally), while

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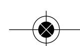
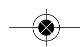


developing and distributing standardized but customizable means of territorial government to other community-driven conservation initiatives. This is a collective archival project that collects, collates, publicizes, and redistributes Andean traditional agricultural technologies while enumerating and demonstrating tradition-based biocultural innovations (Asociacion ANDES, 2015; ANDES and Potato Park, 2016).

The Potato Park maintains grounded biodiversity archives in an effort to mitigate climate change and address food insecurity through the protection of a biocultural heritage territory that fills global conservation needs. People residing in an acknowledged centre of origin for potato genetic resources whose ancestors cultivated an immense archive of biodiverse potato varieties have asserted and assumed a particular responsibility for sustaining global potato biodiversity as part of their heritage. Hundreds of potato varieties were 'repatriated' from the CGIAR International Potato Center into the Park's fields (Graddy, 2013).

Plant genetic resources were thereby literally revitalized in reclamation of Andean patterns of cultivation and seed exchange between regions at different altitudes and the revival of older forms of barter. In the process, new livelihood enterprises were forged around a contemporary articulation of customary law and Andean ayllu values (Swiderska, 2009; Belair et al., 2010). These include walking trails, a restaurant, a medicinal plant collective, gastronomy exhibits, handicraft workshops, a neutraceutical laboratory, and a database of traditional medicinal knowledge, all governed by indigenous traditions and philosophies of sustainability (Argumedo, 2008). Not surprisingly, the agrobiodiversity that the Park stewards must also be represented as providing "key ecosystem services," reducing risks of crop failures, drought and disease, improving landscape resilience and adaptive capacity, while reducing social vulnerability because of the Park's income-generating capacity (Reid, Argumedo & Swiderska, 2018) as Park custodians respond to neoliberal governmental demands.

These Potato Park practices draw upon the technologies and discursive resources offered by neoliberal global biodiversity, food and agriculture, cultural heritage, intellectual property, and indigenous rights regimes (Coombe & Griebel, 2013) to articulate a decolonial community participatory research paradigm (Argumedo, 2012) to govern alternative forms of social enterprise. Through the auspices of international environmental NGOs, UN bodies, and transnational clearing-house mechanisms, such paradigms are shared as means and models for indigenous self-determination, community sustainable development, and climate change mitigation. The Potato Park managers also create new governmental technologies (such as mapping methods, modes of inventory, models of participatory deliberation, community research protocols and monitoring systems, free, prior and informed consent processes for access to genetic



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resources, means of establishing community enterprises and marking these through collective trademarks) which are standardized for dissemination and further customization by others who seek to make their distinctive means of managing biodiversity legible to new interlocutors.

Like other newly acknowledged community conserved areas (such as indigenous tribal parks), the Potato Park seeks means to persuasively represent the sustainability of its practices, the resilience of its territory, and the principles of its governance to various authorities and interlocutors from environmental NGOs, agricultural scientists, transnational institutions governing genetic resources, farmers' rights advocates, world parks congresses, fellow peasant farmers, and other mountain indigenous peoples (e.g.: Swiderska, 2017). In so doing, they communicate, and attempt to consolidate (and certify) their own self-governance in managing landscape resources sustainably by carrying out their ancestral responsibilities. Hence they perform within political ecologies of legibility that enable them to use conditions of neoliberal governmentality to assert distinctive forms of sovereignty. Theirs is an archival project of global import that attempts to provide a model of governance and share governmental technologies with new networks of communities whose political subjectivity is integrally bound up with their management and stewardship of cultural knowledges, objects, and livelihood resources.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored how collective subjects perform rituals of 'responsibilized' community through the management of biocultural heritage. We have argued that this process is one in which indigenous communities make use of technologies of legibility that contribute to their self-determination through forms of transnational political performance. In so doing, objectified forms of biocultural heritage become the subject of collective grounded responsibilities constitutive of new forms of political subjectivity. We have suggested that these object-subject/ subject-object recursive transformations are particularly visible in archival contexts, wherein the ordering of cultural materials may be transformed according to different ontological premises— a dis-ruption of archival standardization that may also provide new standards and technologies for performing cultural distinction.

The long-term consequences of such biocultural articulations in consolidating community subjects and collective rights and responsibilities remain to be seen. Nonetheless, following Ann Stoler, we believe that it is important

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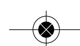
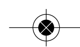


to situate these transformations in the legacies of colonial modernity alongside more conventional narratives of encroaching neoliberal governmentality. In *Imperial Duress* (2016), Stoler surveys her work on modern colonial archives and associated imperial ventures to eliminate or contain alternative ontologies in the carceral archipelagos that continue to dot contemporary landscapes. She coins the term "imperial formations" to register the ongoing processes of decimation, displacement, and reclamation that endure in the durable and protean entailments of empire, long after the repeal of formal legislative exclusions of racialized others. Networked relationships between colonial administration, the production of difference, the illusion of order, and problems of categorization continue to haunt so-called postcolonial societies. Not surprisingly, as we have seen, they also become the targets of decolonial politics and their recursive recalibrations.

The obsessive collections of voluminous information about colonized others characteristic of imperial archives reveal a deep insecurity about colonial authorities fully knowing their subjects as well as the limits of recasting local knowledge through the filter of imperial needs and prejudices. The rubric of the postcolonial, however, glosses "over the creative, critical, and sometimes costly measures people take to become less entangled" (Stoler 2008: 193) in empire's empiricism. If "colonialisms have been predicated on guarding natural and cultural patrimonies for populations assumed to be needy of guidance in how to value and preserve them" (2008: 198), in the counter-archival practices herein explored we have seen divisions between the natural and the cultural refused; local knowledges valorized as having global value; traditions shown to serve modernity's needs; and indigenous modes of heritage management asserted to have superior values of preservation for human futures.

We consider these practices decolonizing strategies of calculated recursion. The concept of recursion indexes neither continuity nor rupture, but, rather, "partial re-inscriptions, modified displacements, and amplified recuperations" (2008: 193). These counter-archives of geontologies, are, moreover, significant forms of political reterritorialization that transform imperial landscapes and their carceral archipelagos. They do so under neoliberal conditions, which, if seldom those of peoples' own choosing, provide new fields of authority, new interlocutors, and new technologies of government to be turned in new directions, to new ends. We have only begun to trace the contours of this political ecology of objectification and standardization, but we believe that this field of inquiry holds great promise for anthropologists working ethnographically at the nexus of neoliberalism and decolonial struggle.



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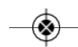

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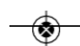

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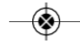

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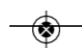

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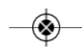

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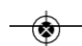

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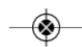

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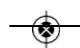

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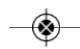

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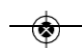

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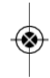

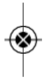

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