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# THE BUTLER CENTER

## NEWSLETTER

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## MORE THAN JUST A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By Alisha Bloom

Each November we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, a time to reflect on and celebrate the multitude of Native traditions and cultures that have existed long before the U.S. and that continue today. I have been very privileged to engage with the Native community on campus as an ally, and it was great to see other allies show out to celebrate and learn more. This past November, the Butler Center held a discussion "Beyond A Land Acknowledgement," facilitated by Dr. Christina Leza and CC's knowledgeable librarian, Carlos Duarte. Students, faculty, and staff gathered in the Rochelle T. Dickey lounge over Indian tacos to discuss. [cont next page]

Photo: 2021 Butler Center Student, Judsom Thomas, performs smuggling ceremony alongside other NASU members Photo Credit: Lonnie Timmons III.



## MORE THAN JUST A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CONT.



"Colorado College is located within the unceded territory of the Ute Peoples. The earliest documented peoples also include the Apache, Arapaho, Comanche, and Cheyenne." By this point, I am sure we have all heard this land acknowledgment. But what does the land acknowledgment really do? Who does it serve? How can we move beyond just an acknowledgement, towards action? These were all questions we grappled with. Although it can seem overwhelming and hopeless at times, we came to the conclusion that knowledge is the first step towards change. With knowledge we are able to educate each other, and speak up for what we know is right. With knowledge we can remember tactics of erasure and violence that were used before, and see them happening in real-time (Free Palestine). Overall, the discussion ended on a hopeful note, with concrete ways we can move past a land acknowledgment (including donating land rights to First Nation upon death, setting up recurring donations to Native folks...just to name a few) as well as giving us room to imagine a future where anything is possible.

Photo: 2018 NASU Pow Wow. Photo Credit: Lonnie Timmons III.



## EDUCATION STATION

### FROM ROCOCO TO CUZCO: RELIGIOUS AND ARTISTIC SYNCRETISM IN COLONIAL PERU



Whether you use the term transculturalism, syncretism, or “the Columbian Exchange.” scholars agree that the horrific Spanish conquest of Peru and the Incan empire resulted in a period of time in which European and Indigenous ideas, foods, customs, and artistic styles were shared, mixed, and adapted. One of the most blatant examples of this syncretism is the image of the Andean Madonna.

The Andean Madonna is an artistic and religious archetype that demonstrates the syncretic relationship between the Christian Virgin Mary and the Andean (pre-Incan) goddess of fertility, earth, regeneration, and agriculture known as *Pachamama*. The Andean Madonna was often depicted in a style that emulated aspects of both the Rococo era and a unique Indigenous style that emerged from the Cuzco School of Art.

The Spanish Inquisition brutally enforced Christianity as the official religion of Peru - forcing Andean people to give up their traditional deities and *huacas*. Embracing *Pachamama* through the image of the Virgin Mary was a survival mechanism of pre-colonial indigenous beliefs. In pre-Incan and pre-colonial Andean religion women held a particularly important role in spiritual practice. They were keepers of *huacas* for fertility and their unique connection to Pachamama gave them integral roles in rituals to promote a successful harvest and the continuation of the Andean people.

Colonial forces attempted to force Andean women into traditional Catholic to ensure that they would raise their children to be culturally Spanish or culturally colonized, but the cults of the Madonna that mixed a belief in the Virgin Mary with esoteric and mystical powers and depicted her as a miracle worker fought to reestablish women’s spiritual authority. [cont next page]

## EDUCATION STATION

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The Andean Madonna likewise tied women to the powerful goddess Pachamama. Contextually, during this time, women also asserted themselves as leaders in the Taki Onqoy resistance movement and fought to defeat the "Christian *huacas*" that were plaguing them. The Women of *Puna* (the holy highlands) was also established as a pseudo-monastic order of women who practiced celibacy and established communities in the isolated highlands to protect women who had been accused of heresy, witchcraft, or devil worship by Spanish inquisitors.



With this significance in mind, what does the Andean Modanna look like?

One of the most famous examples of an Andean Madonna is *Our Lady of Victory of Malaga* by Luis Nino, housed at the Denver Art Museum. It showcases a fairly traditional gilded Rococo style, but the triangle shape of the Virgin's dress is symbolic of *Pachamama's* domain in the *Puna*. The pigments are also distinctly Indigenous. In Catholic tradition, the Virgin was nearly always depicted in blue, but Andean artists chose to depict her in red, white, or gold. the incorporation of flowers marks the Andean Madonna's connection to the natural world and is reminiscent of ceremonial offerings presented to *Pachamama*, while the moon at the base of her dress serves a traditional symbol of feminine power and fertility that was used in Andean religions and gained prominence later in the Incan empire.

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*The Virgin Mary of the Cerro Rico of Potosi* [left] by an unknown artist is an even more overtly syncretic image. In this image, the Virgin Mary had become and embodied the mountain. It shares some of the symbolism mentioned above, but also distinctly places the individuals in traditional Andean dress within the shelter and protection of the Madonna while placing those in Spanish dress outside the mountain.

Finally, the symbolism of the Andean Madonna can be seen in statues like the *Virgin of Copacabana* [right] which were considered to hold miraculous powers and considered by many to be a syncretism between Christian mysticism and Andean *huacas*. Note in this image the dark loose hair of the Virgin, the flowers embroidered in her dress, and the crescent moon at her feet - all of which are Andean symbols.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

29

### **"We Are Not Dreamers" - Antiracism Book Club Discussion**

Nov. 29th, 3:00 - 5:00 pm. Worner 230 (RTD Lounge)

Join us for discussion and light snacks. We'll be delving into the first chapter of "We Are Not Dreamers" and establishing some foundational themes and perspectives for the rest of the book. Open to staff faculty and students. You do not have to have read the book to participate.

30

### **LGBTQIA+ Community Dinner**

Nov. 30th, 1:00 pm. Flemming House

Calling all LGBT+ faculty, students, and staff to join us for a community-building lunch in partnership with the Pride LLCs. Lunch will be provided - come and celebrate the vibrance of CC's community while meeting and connecting with your queer peers.

6

### **Bisexuality and Bierasure - Out of the Closet Workshop**

Dec 6th, 12:30 pm. WES Room - Worner

Join the marvelous Deka Jordyn Spears for a discussion of the often overlooked bisexual identity and the issues of bierasure. Open to faculty, students, and staff.



# ANTIRACISM BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

## *We Are Not Dreamers*

Open to all staff, faculty and students! We will be introducing the first chapter and what to expect for the rest of the book. Highly encouraged for folks who want to learn more and engage with community!

**November 29 from 3pm-5pm  
Worner 230 - Rochelle T.  
Dickey Multicultural Lounge**

Snacks will be provided!  
**NOTE:** You do not need to have read the book to attend. All are welcome!

# JOIN US!

## WE ARE NOT DREAMERS

Undocumented Scholars  
Theorize Undocumented Life  
in the United States

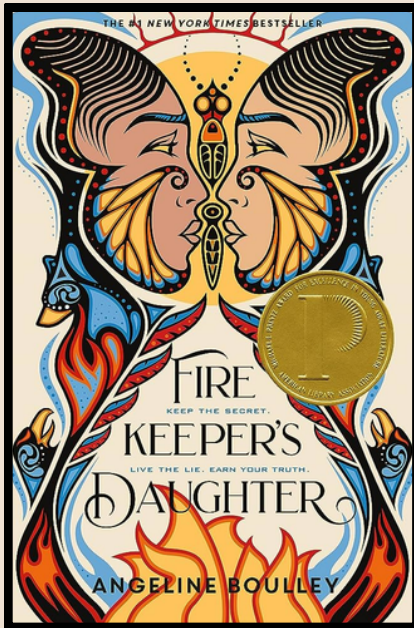


Leisy J. Abrego and Genevieve Negrón-Gonzales, editors



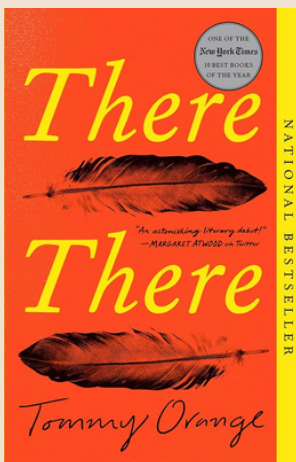
## WEEKLY PAIRINGS - MEDIA RECOMENDATIONS

### Celebrate Indigenous Heritage Month (Fiction)



*Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley is a heavily awarded novel and soon-to-be Netflix show. Daunis has never felt fully at home in her local town or the Ojibwe reservation. She dreams of going away to college. But after a family tragedy, her plans

are dashed. Soon she meets a young man, Jamie, who has witnessed a terrible murder. Daunis must use her knowledge of science, and Ojibwe medicine to unearth dark secrets and protect her community. In the process, she learned what it means to be a strong Ojibwe woman and find comfort in her identity.



*There There* by Tommy Orange is a Pulitzer Prize Finalist. This stunning debut novel centers a variety of Indigenous voices - all traveling toward the Oakland Powwow. This book - full of poetry, rage, urgency, and emotion, includes characters like Jacquie,

a newly sober women returning to her family, Dene who is working at the Powwow to honor his late uncle's memory, and Orvil, and 14-year-old performing a traditional dance for the first time. This is a must-read example of Indigenous representation and a literary masterpiece.

Tim Tingle, author of *House of Purple Cedar*, has dedicated himself to collecting and preserving Choctaw lore and stories. He brings this knowledge to his story of Rose, a young Choctaw girl growing up in pre-statehood Oklahoma. Rose escapes and survives a horrible Indian



boarding school (much like Tingle's own grandmother), but must continue to grapple with the conflict between Indigenous wisdom and the pressures of "bible-thumping bad guys." The story combines realism, myth, and traditional Choctaw humor for a laugh-out-loud example of modern Indigenous folklore.

As a national bestseller with starred reviews from NPR, Kirkus, and Publishers Weekly, *Elasote* by Darcie Little Badger is a modern classic. *Elasote* (aka Ellie) lives in an alternate reality where contemporary America has been shaped by Indigenous ancestral magic. She can raise the spirits of the dead. After a tragic car accident, the



ghost of her cousin tells her - this was no accident. It was murder. With the help of her best friend and ancestors, Ellie strives to unravel dark mysteries. This stunning debut novel features an asexual Apache protagonist and a fantastical noir mystery



## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Azaria Hampton and Rakim Johnson, two peer educators from TBC, lead a workshop with Track and Field.

Photo Credit: Erik Quezada