The Feminist States of Critical Regionalism

Abstract for Keynote

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Where does any of us stand today in the new configurations of meaning, place, and time occasioned by global economic restructurings and new technologies of communication? How do you or I or someone elsewhere make sense of altered relations of the self, the body in place, notions of political life, or of the nation state? Critical regionalism is a way of diagnosing and conceptualizing these transformations -- it is a political/cultural imagination and also a mode of embodiment whose keywords and ethical domains are under construction. For Gayatri Spivak, critical regionalism offers a strategy for democratic address of problems of precarity and it takes the shape of an abstract state. I will be interested in this talk to situate Spivak’s thinking in contexts of other theorizations of critical regionalism and, especially, I develop feminist discussion of the above questions and link them to related ones in the fields of feminist theory and American Studies about security, sovereignty, the contemporary state, and storytelling in the present. What alternative worlding projects does feminist critical regionalism imagine? What can it teach us about decolonizing or remapping the fields of US Southwest study? Select literary and film texts that figure here include: *The Round House, González & Daughter Trucking Company*, *Giant, Woman Hollering Creek, flesh to bone, August: Osage County, Bagdad Café, Johnny Guitar, High Noon.*