

## **Thinking-with {Soils}: {An} {Introduction}**

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### ***ABSTRACT ORIGINAL***

The geneses of this book go back to two parallel encounters. First, the international workshop “Going to Ground,” convened in October 2016 in Sydney by Matthew Kearnes, with Céline Granjou and Juan Francisco Salazar, which was designed as an opportunity to think both creatively and earnestly about the dirt we live on and off. The workshop brought together many of the contributors in this book to discuss how soil conservation and improvement practices are being marshaled in response to concerns over climate change, food security, and rural livelihoods, and how these might be indicative of the deep connections between soil and social processes. Second, the book also has its beginnings in a series of panels at the Knowledge/Culture/Ecologies International Conference held in Santiago, Chile, in November 2017, convened by Juan Francisco Salazar and Céline Granjou, where all five co-editors outlined the initial analytical coordinates for this book. These panels also served as a catalyst to start a broader interdisciplinary discussion that had been brewing, and which we see as having been largely initiated by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa through her pioneering work in recent years. This discussion aimed to engage scholars from not only the humanities and social sciences but also the ecological and soil sciences, as well as soil practitioners, particularly those proponents of integrative science frameworks and social-ecological systems thinking. A premise of these conference panels was that, despite notable contemporary reconceptualizations of soil as a matter of care and concern, it is striking to observe how soil, and its manifold entanglements with plants, fungi, bacteria, and other forms of life, remains largely undertheorized or ignored in contemporary social theory. Despite soil’s vital ecological importance, its significance as a belowground three-dimensional living world remains elusive in social and cultural research. This book is about developing work that is attuned and attentive to generating more ethical relations with nonhumans who both pervade and create livable environments, such as soil biota (Krzywoszynska 2019).