



Protocols and Pedagogies: Indigenous Ethics in the Classroom

A Roundtable Discussion Co-Sponsored by ILSA, ACCUTE, and CACLALS
(Co-Organized by Sam McKegney and Michelle Coupal)

- Chair: - **Sam McKegney**, Queen's University
- Panellists:
 - **Kim Anderson**, University of Guelph
 - **Louis Bird**, Omushkego (Swampy Cree) storyteller elder
 - **Warren Cariou**, University of Manitoba
 - **Michelle Coupal**, Laurentian University
 - **Sarah Henzi**, Simon Fraser University
 - **Dovie Thomason**, Lakota and Kiowa Apache storyteller
- Respondent: - **Deanna Reder**, Simon Fraser University

This collaborative panel engages with questions of protocol as they pertain to Indigenous literature and its study. We set out to think together about how culturally specific Indigenous protocols around storytelling can inform pedagogical practices pertaining to the study of Indigenous literatures. We consider how such protocols illuminate the ethical parameters of both story-sharing and pedagogy as means of calling us into relationship. This panel brings together established, mid-career, and upcoming scholars of Indigenous literary studies who have experience working with artists (and artistic protocols), Indigenous communities (and community-based protocols), and/or diverse/alternative pedagogical environments (and pedagogical protocols). Rather than scripted papers, these panellists will share dynamic, informal presentations that weave together experiential evidence, personal reflections, and critical commentary in efforts to flesh out the ethical boundaries of, and to think in very practical ways about, engaging with Indigenous protocols in a variety of pedagogical settings. Each panellist will take between 10 and 15 minutes to present preliminary thoughts, leaving considerable time for dialogue and discussion.

In "Visiting as Protocol," Métis scholar and author Warren Cariou will consider the ways that apparently non-formal kinds of interactions prove crucial to establishing the relationships that are often required for stories to be told; Professor Cariou will present collaboratively with one of the oral storytellers with whom he works at the University of Manitoba's Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture. Louis Bird, a renowned Omushkego Cree storyteller, writer and Elder, will share advice gained from his decades of experience working with Elders and knowledge-keepers in Omushkego Cree territory. In his life-long activities as an oral historian and teller of Omushkego stories, Mr. Bird has learned a great deal about the challenges and ethical imperatives involved in translating Indigenous traditional knowledge into other contexts, including pedagogical settings. His contributions on the panel will provide an important link to community values as they are embodied in ceremony, story and Indigenous languages. Algonquin scholar Michelle Coupal will elaborate strategies for incorporating positioning exercises



holistically into the Indigenous literature classroom as a means to foster a healthy entry point into and dialogical relationship with the stories Indigenous writers tell; Professor Coupal will ultimately consider how positioning protocols can be mobilized to encourage activism and advocacy that extends beyond the classroom setting. Cree-Métis scholar of Indigenous feminisms and Indigenous masculinity theory Kim Anderson will reflect on the possibilities and perils of protocols in the classroom as they take on gendered dimensions (at times conditioned by the patriarchy embedded in settler colonial thought). Settler scholar Sarah Henzi will ask, what does a “pedagogy of unsettling” (Regan) entail? What challenges does it put forth, in relation to how a work is received, perceived, and taught? And how do contemporary works, such as those of Mi'gmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, complicate their very use as pedagogical tools due to their raw, relentless depiction of sites of violence and loss? Dovie Thomason, a Lakota and Kiowa Apache storyteller, will share personal stories, anecdotes, memories and questions related to her experiences, sharing traditional and original stories as an “Artist-in-Education” and “Cultural Artist” throughout the U.S., Canada and overseas. Her life and work is committed to the essential place of oral telling as an imagining of new outcomes for coming generations and an honoring of this traditional affirmation of the kinship at the heart of our communities. She is grateful for the invitation to enter into relationship with a new community.

This panel anticipates discussions that will animate the third annual gathering of the Indigenous Literary Studies Association, entitled *Ethics of Belonging: Protocols, Pedagogies, Land and Stories*, which will take place on the unceded, traditional territories of the Stó:lō peoples in Chilliwack, B.C. from June 18th to the 20th, 2017.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Kim Anderson (Metis) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph. Her single-authored books include *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* (2nd Edition, 2016) and *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings and Story Medicine* (2011).

Louis Bird, Omushkego (Swampy Cree) is a renowned storyteller and elder who lives in Peawanuck, Ontario, near the mouth of the Winisk River on Hudson Bay. Mr. Bird has been invited to storytelling gatherings across Canada as well as to the United States and the Netherlands. He was born 60 miles northwest of the former village of Winisk, Ontario. Aside from four years spent at Ste. Anne’s Residential School, Fort Albany, Ontario, Mr. Bird during the first 20 years of his life received a traditional education from his parents and elders. (source: ourvoices.ca)

Warren Cariou is a writer, critic and multimedia artist from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. Much of his work engages with the Indigenous oral cultures and the environmental politics of his homeland, with a particular focus on his Métis roots. He holds a Canada Research Chair at the University of Manitoba.



Michelle Coupal is Assistant Professor of English at Laurentian University and a member of the Bonnechere Algonquin First Nation. Michelle holds a SSHRC Insight Development Grant (2016-2018) for her book project entitled, *Teaching Trauma and Indian Residential School Literatures in Canada*. With Deanna Reder and Joanne Arnott, Michelle is working on an edited collection of the works of Vera Manuel. Michelle has also published articles in *Studies in Canadian Literature* and *Learn Teach Challenge: Approaches to Indigenous Literatures* (2016).

Sarah Henzi is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of First Nations Studies at Simon Fraser University, and Co-Organizer of and Lecturer for the International Graduate Summer School on Indigenous Literature and Film at Université de Montréal. Her research focuses on Indigenous alternative genres and new media, and Francophone Indigenous writing.

Sam McKegey is a settler scholar of Indigenous literatures and Acting Head of the English Department at Queen's University. He lives with his partner and their two daughters in the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Peoples in Kingston, Ontario, and is the author of *Magic Weapons: Aboriginal Writers Remaking Community after Residential School* (2007) and the editor of *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood* (2014).

Deanna Reder (Cree-Metis) is Associate Professor in the Departments of First Nations Studies and English at Simon Fraser University. She leads a SSHRC funded project "The People and the Text: Indigenous Writing in Northern North America up to 1992" and is President of the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA).

Dovie Thomason's (Lakota and Kiowa Apache) life-in-stories began with the Animal People of her Kiowa Apache grandmother's stories and the Star People of her father's. It began with relationships...and patterns of values for choices ahead, gently and privately shared. Formerly a high school American Lit teacher and an adjunct professor of Native Lit and Oral Tradition, she's carried those stories for the past thirty-plus years, taking her to public, private and home-school communities, tribal schools and colleges, and the "professional storytelling" world of festivals and "performance". After over thirty years of sharing those old stories and the stories of her maternal Lakota culture, she now weaves them with original stories of identity and resilience, loss and restoration, relationships and communities.