



APPROACHING INDIGENOUS LITERATURES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

How Shall We Teach
These?

SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY
HARBOUR CENTRE

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2014

**REMEMBER HELEN HOY'S
HOW SHALL I READ THESE?
(2001)**

As the first monograph exclusively focused on Canadian Indigenous literature, Hoy articulated the question of its moment: how can a non-Indigenous reader approach and interpret Indigenous literatures ethically and meaningfully? 13 years later, this field has shifted to imagine an Indigenous reading public and is burgeoning with emerging scholars—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—who are creating literary approaches that are responsive and responsible to Indigenous peoples and communities and aware and mindful of Canadians' shared history under colonialism. With this shift has come additional challenges, particularly in the classroom, provoking us to ask: "How Shall We Teach These?"

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES



THE EDITORS OF BOTH ANTHOLOGIES—“*Stories Are All That We Are*”: *Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island*, a textbook of short stories designed for the first-year literature classroom, edited by Sophie McCall, Deanna Reder, Dave Gaertner, and Gabrielle Hill AND *Approaching Indigenous Literatures in the 21st Century*, a collection of critical articles on the field suitable for the upper level classroom edited by Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra—**WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE WORKSHOP FOR THEIR VALUABLE FEEDBACK AND ADVICE. YOUR WORK WILL SHAPE BOTH ANTHOLOGIES.** The second anthology is an official promised outcome of the workshop, with section introductions and responses that are written by members of the workshop and is currently under contract with the Indigenous Studies Series of Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

THE MENTORSHIP OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND JUNIOR SCHOLARS

In the photo to the left, from right to left, sits Canada Research Chair Dr. Warren Cariou from the University of Manitoba with PhD students at the University of Alberta, Tracy Bear and Angela Van Essen, as well as published novelist and Trent University Doctoral student, Lesley Belleau, who is sitting next to Dr. Allison Hargreaves, an Assistant Professor at UBC-Okanagan. This photo is an illustration of how this workshop brought scholars at every level of their career together to share information with and to give support to each other. One key event of this weekend was the Saturday morning mentorship breakfast, specifically sponsored by the SFU Department of English, where established academics in the field were paired up with post-docs, undergraduates and graduate students, to provide career advice and answer student questions. Further mentorship opportunities are appearing with the establishment of ILSA, the Indigenous Literary Studies Association. (see pages 8 & 9 for more information)



BUILDING GOOD RELATIONS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Over the years several people at SFU have worked to support Full Circle Performance as they put on their annual Aboriginal Arts celebration, The Talking Stick Festival. Still, this long running non-profit association, run by veteran actor, writer and Arts administrator Margo Kane, and credited with mentoring generations of Indigenous artists and performers, regularly has to contend with underfunding in an intensely competitive environment. Our workshop worked together with Full Circle Performance to give our delegates a chance to attend shows that feature everything from locals to international acts. As part of this, on the Friday night of our workshop and as part of the Talking Stick Festival, we featured the Raven Comedy Hour from Alaska. This collaboration is continuing as we explore ways that we can have SFU First Nations Studies students volunteer as part of their course work, getting the opportunity to learn how to promote events through traditional means—press releases and posterage—combined with 21st Century methods relying on social media. Deanna Reder is currently re-designing a course to promote *TURTLE ISLAND READS 2015*.



On front page: Tenille Campbell with camera, Lindsey Cornum and Angela Semple in the background; photos by Dale Northey

TURTLE ISLAND READS 2014

PROMOTES OFTEN NEGLECTED TEXTS BY INDIGENOUS AUTHORS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.

THIS YEAR'S SELECTION INCLUDES:

- ***NOBODY CRIES AT BINGO*, A COMIC NOVEL**
- ***AJJIIT*, SHORT STORIES THAT DRAW ON THE AESTHETICS OF FANTASY AND INUIT STORYTELLING**
- ***FLIGHT*, ABOUT AN ANGST FILLED YOUNG MAN ABOUT TO COMMIT AN ACT OF VIOLENCE ONLY TO INADVERTENTLY TIME-TRAVEL**



Metis scholar Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew, Director for the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre at the U of Regina, champions *Nobody Cries at Bingo* by Cree comedian Dawn Dumont.



While Dr. Michelle Coupal (Bonnechere First Nation) currently teaches English at Laurentian University, when she was a doctoral student at Western University she had the chance to discuss *Ajjiit* with its authors—Sean A. Tinsley and Rachel Qitsualik.



Dr. Sam McKegney, English Professor at Queen's University and Team Leader for *Flight*, by Sherman Alexie, listens to SFU Masters Student Ashley Morford read an excerpt.



Clockwise: Dr. Christopher Teuton (Cherokee), Angela Semple (Ktunaxa); Natalie Knight (Yurok); Tenille Campbell (Dene); Caitlin Barter



Emcees and SFU faculty, Dr. Deanna Reder (Cree-Metis) and Dr. Sophie McCall

PUBLIC LECTURES



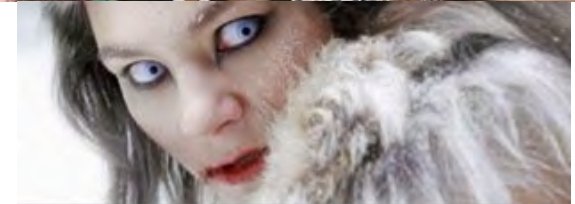
ANYBODY PRESENT AT OUR OPENING NIGHT LECTURE—

“Why Indigenous Literature Matters”—will remember the moments when the esteemed UBC CRC and Cherokee scholar/ novelist Dr. Daniel Heath Justice peppered his lecture with air quotes in a presentation style that challenged and charmed his attentive audience. He made the charge that ignoring the full canon of Indigenous literatures—including works of orature and those recorded in material culture—is an erasure of Indigenous knowledges and he emphasized the damage done by such omissions. *Why Indigenous Literature Matters* is currently under contract with the Indigenous Studies Series of Wilfrid Laurier University Press and scheduled to be released in 2015.



IN HER LECTURE, “ON THE HUNTING AND HARVESTING OF INUIT LITERATURES”

leading scholar Dr. Keavy Martin (U of Alberta), suggests that the protocols of eating and sharing in Inuit cultures—and recorded in Inuit storytelling—offers us a way to approach Inuit Literatures; citing the short film *Tungijjuq*, featuring jazz throat singer Tanya Tagaq (pictured at right in shots from the film), in which eating, death, reincarnation and new life are interconnected and necessary, Martin challenges the squeamishness of eaters and readers in the south who use their lack of familiarity with Inuit culture as an excuse not to partake.





FROM TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE:

- **DR. KRISTINA FAGAN BIDWELL (NUNATUKAVUT)**
- **SAYLESH WESLEY (STO:LO)**
- **DR. RENATE EIGENBROD**
- **TRACY BEAR (CREE)**
- **BLAKE BILMER (CREE)**
- **DR. LAURA MOSS, BRENDAN MCCORMICK & DR. MARC ANDRE FORTIN**
- **SARAH HUNT AND FRANCESCA COURTADE**
- **CURRAN JACOBS (MOHAWK)**
- **RENAE WATCHMAN (DENE)**
- **DAVID GAERTNER & SARAH HENZI**



Sequoyah Guess



CREATING LITERATURE COMMUNALLY: The BACKSTORY OF *CHEROKEE STORIES OF TURTLE ISLAND LIARS' CLUB*

Dr. Christopher Teuton (Cherokee Nation) describes the textual and cultural politics he and the four Cherokee elders who comprise the 'Turtle Island Liars' Club negotiated as they recorded, wrote and edited what Daniel Heath Justice calls the most important contribution to Cherokee cultural knowledge in the past half-century. *Cherokee Stories of the Turtle Island Liars' Club* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012) is the first collection of ethnographically recorded Western Cherokee oral traditional stories published in over forty years and was awarded an American Book Award in 2013 by the Before Columbus Foundation.

While Teuton, as an academic, understands the contribution that volumes of collected stories can make, as a Cherokee person he also understands the fraught history of ethnography among Indigenous people. He emphasized that the elders in his community were bothered by previously published volumes of stories that they felt did not adequately represent their culture; he worked together with them to record stories and the expectations that surround storytelling, to produce a volume—and a repository of recordings—that serve as a corrective to inadequate efforts, proving that literary scholarship can be responsive and responsible to community.

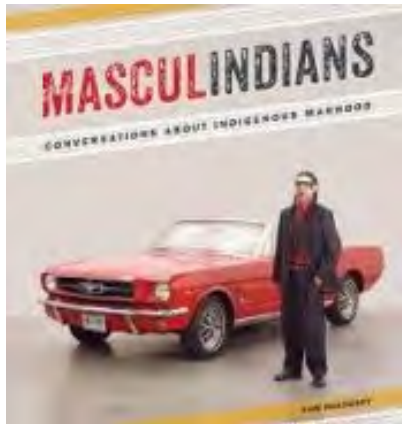


Workshop Co-organizer and Emcee, Dr. Linda Morra (Bishops University) introduces Dr. Teuton

SUPPORTING PUBLISHING; BUILDING THE FIELD



CRC Dr. Warren Cariou has been working for the past several years with the U of Manitoba Press and with a group of scholars in the field—many of whom were in attendance at this workshop—to produce critical editions of classic texts by Indigenous authors that have fallen out of print in a series called First People, First Texts. SFU’s Dr. Sophie McCall introduced the first book in the series to be released in Spring 2014, *Devil in Deerskins: My Life with Grey Owl* by Anahareo, originally published in 1972. This edition is a revised version of her 1940 publication, which was the first book-length autobiography in Canada by an Indigenous woman. McCall discovered in conversation with the author’s daughters that once the first edition was published, Anahareo would regularly go to public libraries in the communities that she visited and rip out the original preface, so unhappy she was with the description of her as a dusky maiden. This edition foregrounds new information on Anahareo’s biography to provide a richer and more complete picture of this incredible Mohawk woman who challenged the social conventions of her time and devoted her life and work to environmental and wildlife protection.



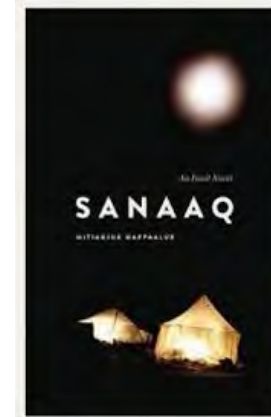
Between October 2010 and May 2013, Sam McKegney (Queen’s) conducted interviews with leading Indigenous artists, critics, activists, and elders on the subject of Indigenous manhood and subsequently wrote a book that captured these conversations; *Masculindians*, just released by University of Manitoba Press (2014) had its inaugural booklaunch at the workshop.



Lesley Belleau read from her work on the first evening of the conference; her latest novel, *Sweat*, will be released in May 2014 by Scrivenor Press.



One of the most popular workshops of the weekend was the panel on publishing with Acquisitions Editor for Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Lisa Quinn (far left), Talon Books Editor Kevin Williams (not pictured) and Theytus Press former editor and now Board Member Gregory Younging (left). Besides getting the chance to query experts in the fields, several junior scholars were able to seek advice for their own work.



Sanaaq, written by Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk, was first published in syllabic Inuttitut in 1987 and translated into French in 2002. The English translation was released in January 2014 by the University of Manitoba Press, was introduced at our Friday evening event, “Northern Lights”, and was available at the workshop.

INTRODUCING THE INDIGENOUS LITERARY STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Adopted 19 October 2013, in the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam people, Vancouver, BC, by the ILSA Inaugural Council: Kristina Bidwell, Renate Eigenbrod, Jo-Ann Episkenew, Daniel Heath Justice, Keavy Martin, Sam McKegney, Rick Monture, Deanna Reder, and Armand Ruffo.



I L S A

OUR GUIDING PURPOSE

To honour the history and promote the ongoing production of Indigenous literatures in all forms; to advance the ethical and vigorous study and teaching of those literatures; to reaffirm the value of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies within literary expression and study; to foster respectful relationships within and between academic and non-academic communities; to facilitate mentorship and professional development; and to advocate for responsible institutional transformation.

OUR CONTEXT

The Indigenous Literary Studies Association was created in 2013 to address the need for a scholarly body based in lands claimed by Canada that focuses specifically on the study and teaching of Indigenous peoples' literatures. We gratefully acknowledge that this has been made possible by the work of many other individuals and associations who have created space for the growth of this discipline.

"Indigenous Literary Studies" is an expansive term that includes the study of literatures by Indigenous people and the use of Indigenous literary critical methods.

While the root of the word "literature" refers etymologically to letters--or to alphabetic written language--we use the term to refer much more broadly to 'arts in the medium of language.' Although Indigenous literary studies sometimes focuses on written texts, it remains inclusive of and connected to the study of a wide range of textual and rhetorical productions, including oral traditions, film, music, graphic novels, and many other forms of creative expression. Likewise, we welcome and encourage engagement with Indigenous literatures composed not only in English and French, but also in Indigenous languages.

While much of our work is grounded in the territories of Indigenous nations within the boundaries of the Canadian state, we honour our connections to the broader network of global Indigenous literary studies.

OUR VALUES

ILSA acknowledges the continued existence of Indigenous nations within the territorial boundaries of lands claimed by Canada and the inherent and inalienable rights of those nations to self-determination;

ILSA affirms the specificity of and diversity among Indigenous intellectual, spiritual, linguistic, and governance traditions and practices;

ILSA values and seeks to support the survival and flourishing of Indigenous languages;

ILSA respects the integrity of various communities, Indigenous and otherwise, and seeks to foster positive and accountable community building within and beyond the discipline of Indigenous literary studies;

ILSA honours the creative work of Indigenous writers, storytellers, and literary artists of the past, present, and future on whose creative work the field of Indigenous literary studies depends;

ILSA understands Indigenous literatures in a rich and open-ended manner that includes but is not limited to novels, short stories, poetry, orality, drama, film, music, screenwriting, and other forms of expressive art by Indigenous creative artists;

ILSA values the sophistication and complexity of Indigenous literary expression and endeavours to foster strong, ethical scholarship thereof (while pursuing the continued re-evaluation of the standards by which we understand effective scholarship);

ILSA honours the foundational critical work of foremothers and forefathers in the field of Indigenous literary studies;

ILSA values new ideas, the production of new knowledge, and the development of new theories, methodologies, and practices;

ILSA endeavours to mentor and support undergraduate and graduate students working in the field of Indigenous literary studies, with particular commitment to promoting the success of Indigenous students;

ILSA endeavours to mentor and support undergraduate and graduate students working in the field of Indigenous literary studies, with particular commitment to promoting the success of Indigenous students;

ILSA seeks to foster an atmosphere of respect, sensitivity, and safety among its members, and ILSA expects its members' interactions with cultural productions, communities, and other members to be characterized by a high standard of integrity;

ILSA seeks to promote a climate of generosity and collaboration over one of possessiveness and competitiveness within the field of Indigenous literary studies;

ILSA seeks to foster the healthy and well-rounded lives of its members and others, recognizing that various forms of balance are integral to strong scholarly and creative work;

ILSA is inclusive of and welcomes participation from persons of all races, gender identities, abilities, cultures, religions, spiritualities, sexual orientations, and economic strata;

ILSA supports the responsible transformation of the academy to better reflect the values described in this document.

For more information about ways you can help to develop ILSA into the vibrant intellectual community envisioned in this document, please contact Sam McKegney (sam.mckegney@queensu.ca) or Daniel Heath Justice (daniel.justice@ubc.ca). We will soon have a website and other resources, so like our Facebook page to keep up with the latest ILSA news (<https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousLiteraryStudiesAssociation/>)!

**ANNOUNCING:
CACLALS Aboriginal Roundtable & the Birth of ILSA:
A New Organization, New Beginnings, New Ways of Relating**

For over a decade CACLALS (the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies) has been a comfortable home for the study of Indigenous literatures. There was an understanding between the Third and Fourth Worlds, both having experienced the ravages of colonialism and their literatures having been shaped by them. Yet, despite the commonalities between Postcolonial and Indigenous Literatures, there are significant differences. While the Third, now the Developing, World has said good-bye to its European colonizers, Fourth World people continue to live as minorities within their own territorial borders. And, ironically, many authors and scholars from the Developing World have immigrated to Canada where they, too, occupy Indigenous lands. Although CACLALS has provided a home for Indigenous literatures, it has not always been a perfect fit.

CACLALS provided a safe place to explore issues relating to the study of Indigenous literatures that have troubled the Canadian literary community: Are they “real” literary works or merely ethnographic narratives? How do we review them? How do we teach them? As scholars examined these questions, they have taken them up in their classrooms and, eventually, began to produce cohorts of graduate students who specialize in the new emerging field. Today there are over 100 scholars teaching Indigenous literatures in their classrooms, and CACLALS can take pride in its contribution to this new field. That said, it became clear to scholars of Indigenous literatures that there was a need for a new scholarly organization dedicated to the study of Indigenous literatures. As a result, the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) was born in October 2013.

This birth of ILSA calls upon us to reexamine our old relationships, not with a goal of abandoning them but rather to determine how we will relate in the future. How will we continue as both friends and equal partners? How can we collaborate? How can we ensure that the birth of ILSA does not damage CACLALS, which has been such a good friend to our field? These will be the questions that we will discuss at this year's Aboriginal roundtable. CACLALS will be meeting at Congress, at Brock University, St. Catharines, ON from May 24-26, 2014. The Roundtable will be on Monday, May 26th, 2:30-4:00 in the Mackenzie Chown A Sankey Chambers. Anyone wishing to contribute to the Roundtable with brief comments is encouraged to contact Dr. Renate Eigenbrod (Renate.Eigenbrod@umanitoba.ca) or Deanna Reder (dhr@sfu.ca).

**CO-ORGANIZERS DEANNA REDER (SFU) AND
LINDA M. MORRA (BISHOPS)
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THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT:**

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Connections Program
SFU's Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, John Craig
SFU's Vice President Academic and Provost, Jonathan Driver
SFU's Department of First Nations Studies and Department of English
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University of Manitoba's Canada Research Chair Dr. Warren Cariou and the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture; Also Dr. Renate Eigenbrod
University of British Columbia's Canada Research Chair, Dr. Daniel Heath Justice and the First Nations Studies Program and graduate student June Scudeler
Margo Kane and Tanja Dixon-Warren from Full Circle Performance
And in particular the SFU community including Lorraine Yam, Brett Romans, Maureen Curtin, Bev Neufeld, Costa Dedegikas, Andrea Creamer, Am Johal and the Vancity Office for Community Engagement, William Lindsey and the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, Dr. Sophie McCall and her two classes of graduate students in the Department of English including the MATE program, and students Ashley Morford, Natalie Knight, Blake Bilmer, and Karen Johnson. Special thanks to photographer Dale Northey.

