



Department of Teacher Education

In collaboration with the Canadian Literature Centre/Centre de littérature canadienne
University of Alberta, Canada



The Poetics and Ethics of “Learning With”:

Indigenous, Canadian, and Québécois Feminist Productions Today

PART II Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
Department of Teacher Education, English Section, Trondheim (Norway)
August 24-25, 2020

I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions—a
movement against and beyond boundaries
—bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

let’s start by talking to each other about ourselves...
—Lee Maracle, *I am Woman: Native Perspective of Sociology and Feminism*

Feminism without borders is not the same as ‘border-less’ feminism. It acknowledges
the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears, and containment that borders represent. It
acknowledges that there is no one sense of a border, that the lines between and
through nations, race, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities, are real.
—Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*

Keynote Speakers

- Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez
(Canada Research Chair, Comparative Indigenous Feminist Studies, U. of Alberta, Canada)
- Sherry Farrell-Racette
(Artist and Associate Professor, Visual Arts Department, U. of Regina, Canada)

Guest Artist and Writers

- Sissel M. Bergh (Artist, Trondheim)
- Lucas Crawford (Poet and Associate Professor, U. of New Brunswick, Canada)
- Alicia Elliott (Mohawk Writer)

In October 2018, we held an international conference on “The Poetics and Ethics of ‘Living With’: Indigenous, Canadian, and Québécois Feminist Production Today”, which gathered over 30 speakers in Banff, Canada. For four intense days, we discussed different representations of “living with” as a radical form of encounter, engagement, and care. In this second iteration, we seek to continue thinking together about these topics, while placing an emphasis on the notion of “learning with,” which we envision as a methodological, pedagogical, as well as aesthetic position with transformative ethical consequences. Canada is a settler-invader state, with an ongoing colonial history over Indigenous Peoples. This conference will be held in Norway, which in turn is a country with an ongoing history of colonialism over the Indigenous, Sámi Peoples. We thus want to engage critically with the following questions from a situated politics of location: What does an ethics of “learning with” look like in the work of contemporary feminist, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQQA writers and artists? How do their scholarship, art, or discourse differ and (re)connect? How might points of alliance between women of colour, Indigenous, and settler feminisms be possible, wanted, or necessary? What does it mean to learn with the stories of Indigenous women and two-spirited people in particular? How can we think of the phrase “learning with” as a way toward anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-sexist knowledge?

Knowledge is power and acknowledging this means relating knowledge production and transmission to accountability, sustainability, and ethical research practices. In this culture of indifference and disposability (Thom 2016), the modes of knowledge production of so-called non-normative subjects—for e.g. precarious migrants, people with disabilities, trans children, and queer youth—are rendered debilitated (Puar 2017) and thus remain outside normative scripts. Following the efforts of material feminist theorists and artists such as angela rawlings who enacts “a praxis of ecoethics” (2012), we are interested in non-anthropocentric pedagogies at the crossroads of the ethical and the poetic. In related ways, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson contends that “[i]ntelligence flows through relationships between living entities” (2014: 10), thus proposing ethical ways to learn with others in anti-colonial and non-anthropocentric ways. In an Indigenous context, telling stories is also a key part of learning; learning with the storyteller and the listeners. In the words of Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkanen, “Sami knowledge, as any Indigenous knowledge, is reflected in language and disseminated through storytelling and ongoing dialogue” (2000). Is storytelling then a pedagogy that may lead to autonomy? As Cree/Métis scholar Amanda Fayant claims, “sewing together the stories of Indigenous women creates the fabric of resilience” (2019); reclaiming space for Indigenous women and two-spirited people to learn with their communities is part of “rematriating” Indigenous communities and identities (*Rematriate* 2018). Utilizing traditions of storytelling emphasizes not only the importance of stories, but also demonstrates how colonial perspectives on history have left out Indigenous women as well as trans, other 2SLGBTQQA peoples, and women of colour.

This conference seeks to investigate literary texts and artistic production as well as reading, critical, and pedagogical practices that propose *sustain-able* ethics (García Zarranz 2019) and response-able pedagogies (Bozalek and Zembylas 2017) as counter-discourses to (often unsustainable) normative knowledges. In other words, we seek to look more deeply into ethics and pedagogies that enable the sustenance and sustainability of subjugated knowledges, together with learning and creative practices. In a time of growing racism, feminist backlash, and increasing transphobia, it is crucial to learn to act with accountability at the sight of difference—a project that many feminist, Indigenous, women of colour, and 2SLGBTQQIA writers and artists are firmly committed to. With this urgency in mind, we seek panels and individual papers on the following topics, particularly, though not exclusively, through Indigenous, Canadian and Québécois perspectives on literary and artistic production.

“Learning with”

- feminist, Indigenous, women of colour, and 2SLGBTQQIA literary and artistic production
- feminist, Indigenous, women of colour, and 2SLGBTQQIA epistemologies
- radical pedagogies
- anti-colonial methodologies
- intersectional methodologies
- response-able pedagogies
- climate change
- anthropocene theory and feminism
- sustainability studies and feminism
- ecoethics
- representations of queer and trans natures
- feminist ecologies in art, theory and literature
- posthumanist and environmental ethics
- new materialisms in education
- feminist and queer posthumanisms
- feminist materialisms
- feminist care ethics

We encourage comparative, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary perspectives and methodologies. Please send your 300-word proposal, along with a short biographical note (100 words), to clconf@ualberta.ca by **March 1, 2020**. Panel proposals (of 3 papers) should include a short introduction to the panel’s topic followed by a 300-word abstract for each paper.

We are planning an ensuing publication project, which will solicit articles in both English and French. However, this conference will be conducted in English.

Organizers

- Libe García Zarranz, Associate Professor of English, Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway.
- Amanda Fayant, Artist and Research Assistant, Department of Teacher Education, NTNU, Norway.
- Marie Carrière, Professor of English and Director, Canadian Literature Centre, University of Alberta, Canada.
- Dominique Héту, Postdoctoral Fellow, Canadian Literature Centre, University of Alberta, Canada.