



**Storying Solidarities:  
Sites of Autonomy and Alliance in Indigenous Literary Arts**

A Gathering of the *Indigenous Literary Studies Association*

May 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Academic Congress, The University of Calgary, Treaty 7 Territory

In the Traditional Lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

For its second annual gathering, and the first time at Academic Congress, the Indigenous Literary Studies Association seeks to think together about the sometimes conflicted relationship between *alliance* and *autonomy* in decolonial struggles as imagined, illustrated, and interrogated through Indigenous literary arts. While terms like “solidarity” and “alliance” tend to be valued as inherently positive, their often vague and uncritical application risks masking and thereby sustaining settler colonial power in ways that might threaten Indigenous autonomy and self-determination.

We invite scholars, knowledge-keepers, artists, and community members to explore the tensions that persist between the generative possibilities of consensual alliance and the ongoing urgency for what Métis artist and scholar David Garneau calls “irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality”: “gatherings, ceremony, Cree-only discussions, kitchen-table conversations, email exchanges, etc. in which Blackfootness, Métisness, Indianness, Aboriginality, and/or Indigeneity is performed apart from a Settler audience” (33). In particular, we invite participants to consider the ways in which Indigenous literary arts provide tools for imagining and enacting solidarities with genuinely decolonizing potential, while laying bare the ethical dimensions such solidarities demand.

We welcome participants to consider alliance in its multiple and expansive dimensions — among Indigenous nations, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, between Indigenous scholars and the communities with which they identify, between Indigenous decolonization movements and other social justice movements, and between Indigenous literary studies and Indigenous Studies more broadly. We also welcome participants to conceive of literary arts expansively; we welcome discussions of literature, film, theatre, storytelling, song, hip-hop, and other forms of narrative expression.

Prospective participants are invited to propose conference papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, performances, and other formats for special sessions. Sessions will be 90 minutes in duration, including at least 15 minutes for collaborative dialogue. While open to all proposals dealing with Indigenous literary arts, ILSA encourages proposals for sessions and individual presentations that engage with any of the following topics:

- Autonomy and Alliance in Treaty 7 Territory
- Confederacy, Intertribal Alliance, and the Literary Arts
- The Terrain of “Solidarity” in Community-Based Participatory Research
- What David Garneau calls “Irreconcilable Spaces of Aboriginality”
- What Leanne Simpson calls “Sovereign Sites of Intimacy”
- Activist Alliances among Indigenous and Diasporic Artists
- Kinship and Alliance with the Other-than-Human
- Art, Autonomy, and Idlenomore
- Literary Methods and Narrative Arts as Praxis
- Orality and Solidarity Building
- Collaborative Creation and Multi-Media
- Artistic Expressions of Sovereignty and Self-Determination
- Land-based Solidarities and the Literary Arts
- Intimacy and Erotics as Expressions of Alliance

*Storying Solidarities* features keynote speakers Eldon Yellowhorn (confirmed) & Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (unconfirmed). The gathering also features the Renate Eigenbrod Memorial Mentorship Lunch, which will connect emerging artists and scholars with established mentors; both mentors and mentees can register for the event by contacting Deanna Reder at [dlr@sfu.ca](mailto:dlr@sfu.ca). In collaboration with the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Languages Studies, this year’s “Aboriginal Roundtable” will bring together artists, activists, and academics who will engage the theme: “Decolonial Solidarities: Ecology, Gender, and Ethical Calls to Action.” Those interested in participating in the roundtable as featured speakers, please contact Sophie McCall at [smccall@sfu.ca](mailto:smccall@sfu.ca).

Proposals for individual presentations should include the presenter’s name, institutional and/or tribal affiliation, email address, and telephone number; the presentation’s title; and a 250-word abstract that should identify the presenter’s desired format. Proposals for special sessions should include the session organizer’s name, institutional and/or tribal affiliation, email address, and telephone number; a list of confirmed participants’ names and affiliations; the session’s title; a 250-word description of the session’s goals, format, and significance, and 100-word descriptions of each participant’s contribution to the session.

**The deadline for all proposals is February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. All proposals should be sent to [ilsaconference@gmail.com](mailto:ilsaconference@gmail.com).**