



*Critical Friendships, Poetic Relations:
Weaving Inspired Pathways
Through the Academy*

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Abstract:

In this symposium presentation, we explore how four women scholars are drawn to one another as a sustaining and life-giving practice in the hetero-patriarchal world of academia. Institutional attitudes, power, hierarchy and oppression (Betasamosake Simpson, 2014; Foucault, 2008; Kumashiro, 2002) hold both a visible and an invisible presence in the academy as individuals struggle with increasing workloads, institutional accountability and competition. We base our foundational understandings of these conditions in critical theory (Freire, 2000), and turn to ecology (Abram, 1996; Jardine, 2006; Macy & Brown, 2014) and Indigenous philosophies (Smith, 2012) for a response that is messy, heart-full, multivocal and rooted in good relations. We weave poetry and narrative writing to describe the well-worn pathways in the academy and to critically

reflect on how we might step away from them to create fresh and renewed paths. Walking alongside each other in a courageous sisterhood, we see our criss-crossing footsteps, woven together like a braid, creating strength and new possibilities through relationships. We engage Indigenous and literary métissage (Donald, 2012; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009) as a form of life writing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) and we will invite our audience into a dialogue that explores the deep influence of these relations on our well-being and success on our personal and academic journeys.

Keywords: feminist ecology; Indigenous philosophies; life writing; métissage; poetry

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Biographical Notes

Jodi Latremouille completed her doctorate in educational research at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. She is a university instructor in the Faculty of Education at Thompson Rivers University. Her research interests include the following: hermeneutics; ecological, Indigenous and feminist pedagogy; social and environmental justice; life writing and poetic inquiry.

Stephanie Bartlett is a PhD student in educational research at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, where she is also an instructor. Emerging from her experiences in collaborative creativity and human-centred design, her research focuses on education for reconciliation, Indigenous pedagogies, curriculum studies, poetic inquiry and life writing.

Stacey Hanzel is currently a PhD student in language and literacy and a sessional instructor at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. Her research interests are in literacy, affect, play and embodiment.

Lesley Tait is a PhD student at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. She is passionate about story and its connection to how we relate to each other and the land. Lesley is a member of Michel First Nation and mother to two delightful daughters.