



A REVIEW: WRITING ACADEMIC FICTION

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ABSTRACT: A poetic accolade to three academic fiction writers: Patricia Leavy, Toni Bruce, and Christine Sleeter.

KEYWORDS: Art/Research reviews; Academic fiction

This is an accolade to Patricia Leavy and her academic “social fiction series,” published by Sense. Focussing on books authored by Patricia Leavy (2015), Toni Bruce (2016), and Christine Sleeter (2015): *Blue*, *Terra Ludus*, and *White Bread*, respectively. Each of these writers has enabled me to be brave and to think beyond traditional academic writing. I am inspired and encouraged by these researchers, who, with many years of research knowledge, skills, and publishing, have applied them to a new genre. As I was reminded by Paula Morris (New Zealand novelist) last week in a creative non-fiction workshop, “writing good fiction is difficult.”

“Each of these writers has enabled me to be brave and to think beyond traditional academic writing.”

There’s a thin line that separates
Fact from fiction,
The tale that is more true,
More real, more telling.
The slippage of memory,
Imagining more or less,
Where the essence of the story
Resonates with our lives
Helps us make sense of our wanderings

Blue is as unreal for me as *Terra Ludus*.
Lives lived in apartments in New York City,
Or futuristic worlds of space crafts.
White Bread is closer to home;
A white school teacher learning what
Culturally responsive means.
Yet it is geographically far away.

Laurel Richardson, and others,
Give us permission to write

As a method of inquiry.
Academic fiction offers us a way
To make academic voices
Accessible.
To say the sometimes unsayable.

As I read
I live in New York for a day.
Then fly space crafts to netball games and
Have my teaching challenged.
The characters resonate
With people in my life.
The choices we make and tensions that stretch us in all ways.
The lives we have lived and are living and will live.

And so I laugh and cry.
I fall in love again.
I face fear and failure.
I behold the vulnerability of our lives
And I hope on.

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