

American Literary Geographies

Organizer: Jesyka Traynor, Queen's University

This panel seeks proposals related to representations of American geographies in 20th and 21st century American literature. In many texts, the function of American spaces, places, and landscapes often goes beyond the purposes of setting. Indeed, renderings of landscapes in American literature are political and offer a reflection of American society. Landscapes also stand in as character, influencing plot, tone, and theme. Proposals may consider how American literature of the 20th and 21st centuries represent, examine, and interact with American spaces and places. What do textual renderings of American geographies say about the United States as a place?

Relevant topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Ecocritical readings of American fiction/non-fiction
- Regionalist literature
- Representations of disaster
- Cartographies/cartographical processes
- Urban environments vs. rural environments
- Human interaction with nature
- Neighbourhoods
- Readings of memoirs/non-fiction that deal with region, space, and place
- Monuments and their creations/representations in American literature
- National parks
- Borderlands
- The policing of landscape
- The racialization of landscape
- "Back to nature" memoirs

Imagining Home in Canada: Migration, Diaspora, and Globalization.

Organizers: Kevin Hutchings (University of Northern British Columbia),
Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike (University of Alberta)

Home can be mythical, metaphorical, and material. It can take abstract or concrete forms. Home is a place of intimacy and connections, but it can also function as a site of violence and alienation. How do literary and cultural productions represent or reproduce the idea of home in Canada? How do non-Indigenous Canadian writers, artists, and filmmakers construct, challenge, or even broaden understandings of home, especially within the context of Indigenous sovereignty?

The proposed panel will examine such questions and articulations of home in literature, film, and visual arts while highlighting the processes and factors that shape the “invention” of home, namely, (settler) colonialism, (forced) migration, war, and globalization. We, therefore, invite papers that approach the idea of home from historical, or contemporary, or interdisciplinary perspectives and offer a culturally diverse understanding of home and its complexities in Canada.

The papers should be particularly related (but are not limited) to the following topics:

- Indigeneity and Indigenous lands
- Exile, diasporic and transnational connections
- Homing, homecoming, homemaking, homesteading, and homelessness
- Alienation, displacement, and relocation
- Settler colonialism and belonging
- Roots, rootlessness, uprooting, and relocation
- Migration, mobility, and border-crossing

Listening in on Literature: A Soundtable on Power and Surveillance

Organizers: Mike O'Driscoll (University of Alberta), Chelsea Miya (University of Alberta)

Recent studies at the intersection of sound and literature have begun to redirect scholarly attention away from the written word as the dominant medium of the literary and towards the recorded spoken word as a provocative mode of inscription and circulation. Scholarship such as Shuangyi Li's 2020 special issue of CRCL on "Sound in Literature" and Jason Camlot's 2019 *Phonopoetics* counter more than a century's emphasis on the printed text in favour of attending to the sounds of literature, and the ways in which the audiotext (the born or versioned acoustic text of a verbal creation) affords (and forecloses) certain forms of meaning and value.

This panel invites researchers to consider what happens to literary studies when we attune ourselves to the audible, recorded word (in readings, recitations, podcasts, audiobooks, audiodata, and related acousmatic events) and what insights this might afford regarding relations of power, mass surveillance, and systems of oppression. Outstanding contributions to the field of Sound Studies, such as Jennifer Lynn Stoever's *The Sonic Color Line* and Dylan Robinson's *Hungry Listening*, have foregrounded the politics of sound: what might it mean to bring such insights to the study of the audiotextual? How do our listening practices attune us to the dynamic between what Robinson calls "the listener and the listened to"? How, as Stoever asks, have visually-driven epistemologies rendered unhearable "sound . . . as a repository of apprehension, oppression, and confrontation"?

We propose what we hope is an engaging format for exchange: "The Soundtable." Panelists will share, in advance of the conference, a ten minute audio recording detailing what they are hearing at the intersection of sound, literature, and power. To ensure accessibility, accompanying written transcripts will also be made available. Panelists and audience members will have an opportunity to listen to (or read) the submissions in advance of The Soundtable, at which we'll build further on those contributions through dialogue and exchange, questions and answers.

Please note: proposals may be submitted as either written or sounded texts.

Mad Responses to the Avant-Garde (Roundtable)

Organizer: Andrew McEwan (Brock University)

This panel invites participants to consider contemporary and historical avant-garde theory, art, literature, and performance in relation to theoretical perspectives based in the lived experience of stigmatized mental difference. This might include critical disability theory, mad studies, trauma studies, or other critical frameworks that aid in addressing the construction of madness in avant-gardism.

Surrealist André Breton once described the experience of observing psychiatric hospital patients as “the beginning at the heart of surrealism.” The historical avant-garde drew upon observations of experiences of madness, psychological photographic documents, and the art and writings produced by those experiencing psychiatric incarceration. As much avant-garde work, both in historical and contemporary iterations, seeks an aesthetic outside of contemporary logics and structures for the purpose of revolution, experiences of psychiatrized madness and mental disability have been seen to provide an escape from social norms.

This panel invites responses that consider avant-gardism in conversation with theorizations that centre lived experience and critiques of social constructions of sanity and mental ability. Along with critical perspectives, this panel asks participants to consider those aspects of avant-gardism that highlight emancipatory possibilities for mad, psychiatrized, neurodivergent, or mentally ill artists and writers.

The Form of Truth: The Modern Short Story and Political Possibility (Roundtable)

Organizer: Heather Joyce (Grande Prairie Regional College)

“Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale,” insists Edgar Allan Poe (“Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*”). In a profoundly skeptical context, when cries for authenticity and veracity from right and left abound, to what extent is the modern short story form a repository of capital T truth? And if Truth can be found in the emotional sincerity or essential knowledge about human connection that practitioners and theorists insist the form contains, can it be leveraged into concrete political or cultural change?

This roundtable asks presenters to consider these and the following related questions:

What do claims about its capacity for the expression of Truth mean for the form in terms of periodized relevance and/or historical transcendence? How is the short story’s relationship to Truth complicated by how Truth itself is mobilized and determined?

Does the recent turn to affect theory invite reconsideration of writers’ claims that the form is akin to the lyric in its emotional reach? Do short stories lend themselves to a humane politics?

What does the short story form expose about the relationship between Truth and contemporary reality? Does it house a distinct brand of realism that offers different political possibilities?

New Directions in Canadian Indigenous Media Studies

Organizers: Brian Gillis (Dalhousie University), Brad Congdon (Dalhousie University)

The recently published *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (Hokowhitu, Moreton-Robinson, Tuhiwai-Smith, Chris Andersen, and Larkin) “signifies the maturing and fortification of Critical ‘Indigenous Studies’ as an international discipline.” In other words, the *Handbook* points to a new visibility and prominence of Indigenous voices in academia, and an increased focus on Indigenous cultural practices and ways of knowing.

Considering this recent landmark, we seek to survey the state of the field of Indigenous Media Studies in Canada. We hope to explore a wide-ranging list of Indigenous genres, including: graphic novels, comic books, television, periodicals, newspapers, movies, chapbooks, magazines, music, museum exhibitions, podcasts, physical and digital visual arts, and ephemera.

Topics could include (but would not be limited to)

- Colonial violence and resistance
- Representations of gender and sexuality
- Sovereignty and community
- Traditional knowledge and hegemonic ideology

Shelter in Text

Organizers: Kasia van Schaik (McGill), Myra Bloom (Glendon College, York)

"The sentence is a terrain along which experience and thinking occur [...] Ellipses are windows. Each word is an architecture." — Renee Gladman

Against the horizon of the pandemic, but also looking beyond it, this panel examines the now familiar idea of "shelter in place" by investigating the relationship between shelter and narrative. We invite academic and creative papers from all disciplines that probe the relationship between literature and shelter — interpreted as a noun or verb, as material or metaphor, from the micro (domestic) to the macro (environmental catastrophe).

In dialogue with feminist scholarship on the affective, spatial, and political dimensions of the everyday and the intimate (Lauren Berlant; Sianne Ngai; Sara Ahmed; Rita Felski, Kathleen Stewart; Susan Fraiman), we are animated by the following questions: How has the experience of radical domesticity challenged or (re)shaped our interiorities, imaginations and reading habits? How has immersion within the home or within a vastly altered public sphere, changed the way we think of plot and genre? How do spatial metaphors and spatial plots reconfigure ideas of literal space, inscribing the abstractions of power and racial and gender inequality onto the hard structures of the city? What are the ways in which we find we are sheltered — or unsheltered — by narrative in the context of the housing emergency, encampments, mass dislocation, and other late Capitalist crises of domesticity?

Possible topics include:

- Literature of/in the pandemic & dystopian writing
- Domestic spaces/ domesticity/ writing the ordinary or everyday
- Gothic legacies: Inhospitable houses in literature
- Writing about/from within encampments, shelters, and other marginalized spaces
- Depictions of forced or voluntary migration
- Indigenous approaches to land and space
- Ecocriticism, eco-poetics, and other land-based approaches to writing
- Surveillance and policing of space
- Writing from the bunker
- The aesthetics and politics of architecture
- Literature/teaching as "safe" (or unsafe) space

Situation as a Narrative Concept

Organizer: Marcie Frank (Concordia University)

Here is the situation in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery:" once a year, a New England town stones one of its residents to death. The story's victim, and how the ritual sacrifice unfolds, are overwhelmed by this state of affairs. In Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, the situation is that birds have started attacking humans. Various explanations arise, but the film itself does not confirm a cause. In Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," Gregor Samsa wakes up as a bug. The rest is details. In these examples, situation dominates character, plot, and setting, but it needn't do so in all narratives.

Situation is a version of the old dramatic dilemma, but it is less centered on a single character. Situation may also express itself as a repeated assemblage (of characters, for example) that solicits pattern recognition, as it does in situation comedy.

This panel invites papers to test the usefulness of situation as a narrative concept by exploring in a single narrative text in any medium its capacity to generate new readings while bringing out its connections to extant critical approaches.

SpokenWeb Literary Listening Practice(s)

Organizers: Jason Camlot (Concordia), Katherine McLeod (Concordia)

This call is designed to create a forum for the exploration, practice, and discussion of listening in different disciplinary and cultural contexts, and especially in the context of literary studies. Working within the “Listening Practice” framework as pursued in a variety of ways over the past several years by members of the SpokenWeb research network, these sessions will encourage in situ listening, reflection, discussion, and collaborative critical definition of ways to describe and define what listening means within the context of “the literary,” and to describe and define our methods of listening.

To this end, we invite proposals for participation as “listening practice guides” within a Literary Listening Practice. Each Literary Listening Practice will engage between three and four listening practice guides, who will be responsible for presenting a selection of 1-2 literary audio clips (from 30 seconds to 5 mins in length) with the goal of using the audio to lead participants in discussion and exploration of aspects of the audio according to a line of thinking, argument, or exegesis-in-progress developed by the guide(s), for a period of approximately 15-20 minutes. These are NOT formal papers to be read. It is an opportunity to share, listen, and discuss literature through audio — as literary audio — and, ideally, your selected audio is one that has caught your attention at some point, whether in the course of your research, or simply in accidental encounter. We hope that the audio you bring forward will generate new research questions for you and for others.

Possible approaches to guiding the listening may include:

1. Situating sound by framing it with context about a) what we’re listening to and/or b) info about the artist, work and/or scene of the audio production and/or c) the archive from which you have selected this audio clip and/or d) the position from which you listen.
2. Conceptualize and articulate some pre-listening questions and possibly suggestions for notation or other activities during the listening (i.e. what techniques of listening we might want to try).
3. Guide our discussion following the collective listening, which may entail responding to questions and comments, foregrounding the methods of listening at work, and bringing to the discussion a critical framework or frameworks for listening, drawing upon critics such as Eidsheim, Furlonge, LaBelle, Sterne, Stoeber, Robinson, etc..

Depending on the number of responses to this call for listening practice guides we propose to offer one to three listening practice sessions during the period of the ACCUTE conference. Each Literary Listening Practice will be introduced and moderated by the organizers.