

Strangers and Kin

Organizer: Rusaba Alam (University of British Columbia)

“Stretching the metaphor, we might say that one goes in search of a ‘homeland’ that is as sufficient for the needs of strangers as of kin.”

—Hortense Spillers, “All the Things You Could Be by Now if Sigmund Freud’s Wife Was Your Mother’: Psychoanalysis and Race”

Critique is back once more. Awash in the essentialist politics of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the neoliberal university, many of us turn with renewed interest to critical methods like deconstruction, psychoanalysis, and the discursive analysis of power. These methods produced foundational queer, feminist, and anti-colonial interventions by undermining textual authority and the grounds of identity. In one such foundational text, Hortense Spillers writes of resisting racialized forms of methodological enclosure to prevent Black feminist insight about language, subjectivity, and psychic life from being siloed away under the sign of racial difference by the institutional demarcation of fields of knowledge and literary and critical canons.

Thinking along these lines, this panel invites papers on comparative and transnational approaches to reading, writing, and/ or teaching critical theory in Canadian English departments today. In our era of diversity statements, institutional apologies, and the sedimentation of neoliberal politics within fields of literary study, thinking through difference beyond tokenization remains more than possible. Strangers and kin alike are invited to meet, commiserate, and strategize about the critical encounter with difference as practice of freedom.

To submit a proposal for this panel, please use the [**Online Submission Form**](#). The deadline for submissions is **Wednesday, 22 December 2021**.