

**Mikinaakominis / TransCanadas**

**Literature, Justice, Relation**

**SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS**

An Interdisciplinary Canadian Literatures in English Conference University of Toronto

May 25-27, 2017

Co-chairs:

Smaro Kamboureli, University of Toronto

Larissa Lai, University of Calgary

Canada's Sesquicentennial anniversary of Confederation is an occasion that invites both celebration and the need to take critical stock of how we have arrived at our particular juncture. We currently inhabit a historical moment in which the colonial power of English literary studies, though still present, is giving way to an English that circulates in newly complex ways, especially in relation to global economic shifts, intensifications in voluntary and involuntary human migration, and the rise of new or newly imagined spiritualities and fundamentalisms. Literary study in English on that part of Mikinaakominis (Turtle Island) that we call Canada has shifted from a colonial project meant to build a white settler nation to a project that was supposed to include marginalized others, to, more recently, a project that wants to reckon with Indigeneity and the politics of land while retaining acute attention to the cultural and social race politics that engage Black, Asian, Muslim and white subjectivities, bodies, legalities and cultures (as they are produced by hegemonic forces and as they emerge through social struggle) in nonparallel, intersectional and unresolved ways. These and other related shifts take place within a cultural field that is also changing as historical and geopolitical circumstances change: from the time immemorial of Indigenous presence through colonialism that includes land expropriation, disease, genocide, slavery, exclusion, indentureship, residential schools, resource extraction, the banning of cultural practices (e.g., potlatch), and the turning away of arrivals with the wrong skin colour, but also (for both better and worse) democracy, the rule of law, the ideal of multiculturalism, human rights, peace keeping and compassion towards immigrants and refugees. Social movements seeking justice, such as Idle No More, Black Lives Matter, the Chinese Canadian Head Tax Movement, the Komagata Maru Redress Movement, and the Japanese Canadian Redress Movement, belong both within and beyond the bounds of the state and dialogue with it in profound and transformational ways. In this ever-shifting matrix that implicates both human and non-human bodies of experience, public culture and the idea of the public have transformed through mutations in national space, economics, climate, lands, waters, and even the air itself. Alongside the changes in public space and conceptions of them, literature and writing in academic institutions are also

transforming in response to institutional and governmental politics. Further, within academia the humanities are undermined in favour of knowledge mobilization designed to serve international capital in (seemingly) pragmatic ways. This set of issues rises beside powerful and liberatory Indigenous cultural and political resurgences that place divergent pressures on differently racialized, gendered and otherwise embodied thinkers and cultural producers to consider from their own specific locations, strategies, methods and possibilities of engagement that might include solidarity, responsibility, and respect, as well as specific contemporary and historical relationships to Indigeneity, land and movement.

What can literature and criticism be and do under these historical, racial, and spatial circumstances? What can decolonization mean in its cultural and socio-political valences now? What constitutes creativity, the imagination, experimentation, community, and embodiment at the present moment? What kinds of activist and cultural labour can criticism and creative writing perform? What forms might such criticism and creative writing take? This iteration of the serial TransCanada conferences invites storytellers, poets, novelists, creative non-fiction writers, critics, interdisciplinary practitioners and activists to enter into newly imagined and innovatively structured forms of presentation in order to re-build a vibrant, generative, re-productive, critical and creative community, to ask the hard questions that need to be asked now, to attempt some provisional answers, and to make story, poem and experiment together and apart.

**Keywords to be addressed:**

Affect • Activism & Activism as Performance • Asianness • Avant-Garde • Balance • Blackness • Body • Coalition • Creative & Critical Practices • Cultural Economies • Decolonization • Diaspora • Earth/ Water/ Air/ Fire/ Metal • Embodiment/Experience • Experimentation & Experimental Writing • Forms (Literary, Cultural) • Forms & Politics / Forms in Relation to Social Practices • History/Memory/Temporality • The Humanities in Canada • Imagination • Indigeneity • Inheritance / Heritage • Institution • Justice • Kinships • Land • Literature & Activism • Migration • Nation/ Nationalisms • New Materialisms • Neo-liberalism • Post-Humanism • The Present • The Public • Reconciliation • Redress • Refugeeness • Relation • Sovereignty • Transatlantic • Transnationalism • Treaties • White Settler Nationalisms • Writing as Practice

**Submission Guidelines**

Please submit proposals of up to 300 words for 20-minute-long papers that address any of the above issues. Collaborative proposals for panel sessions that break the conference mold in interesting and generative ways, as well as proposals for stand-alone presentations (performances, films, videos, poster presentations, and other forms of “demonstration”) will be most welcome.

**We wish to extend a special invitation to Canadian Ph.D. students for the Plenary Session** especially designed for the presentation of doctoral research projects in the field of Canadian literary studies. Doctoral students whose dissertation projects are nearing completion of their program and who would like to be considered for this plenary session

should submit a proposal based on their dissertation project, along with a one-page (single-spaced) dissertation abstract. **Three to five** such projects will be featured in this plenary session, while other projects will be vetted for inclusion in the concurrent panel sessions.

**Deadline for all submissions:** July 14, 2016

**Notification of acceptance:** by September 2016

**Submission address:** <http://tinyurl.com/Mininaak-Trans>

**Guidelines for submission:** Please submit your abstract via email as a Word document attachment; ensure that your name and institutional affiliation don't appear on the abstract document; and use TC4-2017-abstract submission as the subject heading.

Proposals for panels should include the name/s of the panel convener/s, a brief rationale, and abstracts by no more than three presenters.

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**Organizing Committee:**

Co-chairs:

Smaro Kamboureli, Avie Bennett Chair in Canadian Literature, University of Toronto  
Larissa Lai, Canada Research Chair, University of Calgary

Kit Dobson, Department of English, Mount Royal University • Petra Dolata, Canada Research Chair, University of Calgary • James Ellis, Director, Calgary Institute of the Humanities, University of Calgary • Emily Gilbert, Canadian Studies and Department of Geography, University of Toronto • Kyle Kinaschuk, PhD Student, Department of English, University of Toronto • Neil Surkan, PhD Student, Department of English, University of Calgary • Cheryl Suzack, Department of English, University of Toronto • Christina Turner, PhD Student, Department of English, University of Toronto • Christl Verduyn, Director, Canadian Studies and Department of English, Mount Allison University • Joshua Whitehead, PhD Student, Department of English, University of Calgary • Robert Zacharias, Department of English, York University

For background information about the TransCanada conferences, please visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/Mininaak-Trans>

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