

This conference aims at bringing together scholars who wish to engage in a discussion of **Canadian liminal spaces and places**, of fragmented and contradictory social, cultural and political practices, of real and imagined borders, contact zones, thresholds, and transitions in Anglo-Canadian literature and culture. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Geographical and imagined borders
- Spatial and temporal liminalities
- Canadian 'frontiers'
- The relationship between anglophone and francophone Canada
- The Canadian North
- Cultural theory and the limits of postmodernism (e.g. Derrida's 'limitrophy')
- The aesthetics and poetics of liminality
- The liminal and the subliminal
- Genre, media, and intertextuality
- Cultural encounters and First Nations
- Queer cultural spaces
- Transgender and intersex identities
- Embodiments and dis/abilities
- Hybridity, multiculturalism, and transnationalism
- The figure of the trickster
- Aspects of intersectionality, transgression, and normativity
- Old age as a liminal stage
- Liminality and the end of life

Proposals of no more than 300 words, together with the name, institutional affiliation and a bio blurb (max. 150 words) should be sent to in_between2016@uni-graz.at. The closing date for submissions is **Monday, 01 February 2016**.

Registration: please register for the conference between **15 February** and **25 April 2016**. The deadline for **accommodation** will be on **4 May 2016**. We strongly recommend that you make hotel reservations well in advance, as the University of Technology will hold a large conference at the very same weekend.



International Conference in **Graz** /
June 2 – 4, 2016


Call for Papers!

***In-Between:
Liminal Spaces in
Canadian Literature
and Culture***

Conveners:

Stefan Brandt. Susanne Hamscha.
Ulla Kriebner. Simon Daniel Whybrew.

University of Graz, Austria



In Canadian Studies, the complex concept of 'liminality' has been used in a variety of ways. There is an abundance of scholarship and research dealing with the stage 'betwixt and between,' as Victor Turner most famously defined it (1964). This conference aims at re-mapping the field, focusing on liminality and **the liminal within Canada**.

The terms 'liminal' and 'liminality' refer to multiple levels of meaning. Originally developed by cultural anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his seminal studies on rites of passage in 1909, and re-discovered by Victor Turner in the 1960s, the spatial metaphor of 'liminality' has particularly since the 'Spatial Turn' become a keyword in contemporary cultural theory to refer to processes of **identity negotiation** connected to experiences of transition. It has been used in connection with terms such as **'border,' 'frontier,'** and **'threshold,'** and in opposition to the equally metaphorical concept of 'marginality.' While marginality connotes 'periphery,' and thus mainly focuses on exclusion from and by dominant discourses, liminality is concerned with the space of the borderline itself, with feelings of ambiguity and ambivalence.

Liminality can be experienced as challenging, uncomfortable, threatening, and disruptive, but also as subversive and powerful, as a stage facilitating creativity and change. In the context of (Anglo-) Canadian Studies, liminality has been employed to discuss **geographical frontiers** such as the Niagara Falls, the St. Lawrence River, the Rocky Mountains, the Canadian Prairies, British Columbia, Quebec, and the Arctic, as well as symbolic frontiers including migration, French-English relations, encounters between First Nations and settlers and Northrop Frye's 'garrison mentality.' Liminality has also been examined as an aesthetic concept in its relation to the sublime and the uncanny.

As a theoretical concept, liminality can be of help for an analysis of the constructedness of **Canada's collective identity/identities** as well as of individual processes of identification and change. These observations lead us to the following questions: How has the **Canadian cultural imaginary** fashioned itself with regard to the **'boundariness'** of its social and identificatory practices? Which role do symbolic 'frontiers' play in Canadian discourses of self-representation (with respect to inner-Canadian border areas, but also in comparison to the U.S. American frontier)? How do **ethnic, sexual, and other minorities** position themselves in this nexus of liminal identities?

