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The *Hos(ti)pitality* of Affects: Threshold Suspension in Vancouver

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This keynote lecture will look at the representation and production of hospitality through affect in contemporary Vancouver literature and film. Theories of hospitality have often emphasized the notion's ambivalence and its uncanny reliance on physical and symbolic borders, with their lines of exclusion and inclusion. For hospitality to be *true*, it must be *unconditional*, which requires the suspension of the very threshold between the host and the guest that defines it. It is to this paradoxical functioning that Jacques Derrida (2020) alluded to when he coined the term *hos(ti)pitality* to invoke the inextricability of friendly and hostile practices in the very act of being hospitable.

I propose to examine how much of what happens on that border space involves the subjects' affective responses to the situation. What is the role of affects in this conundrum? How can affective discourses produce or foreclose hospitable practices? Setting hospitality and affect theories in conversation, I will explore how contradictory or utopian forms of hospitality are produced through affectivity in a selection of recent Vancouver narratives. My focus will be on the potential productivity of affects to put forward fresh modes of imagining three of the most complex and paradigmatic sites of *hos(ti)pitality* in contemporary Canada: Indigeneity, migrancy and white settler colonialism. I will place a special emphasis on the role of what Seanne Ngai calls "ugly feelings" (2007), such as shame, pity, embarrassment, disgust or guilt in creating momentary threshold suspensions. If negative affects have proven crucial to the recognition and deconstruction of gender, racial and colonial forms of violence, so does affective language often challenge the current social and political atmosphere of inhospitality through the rethinking of the meaning of dwelling, belonging and home.

Works Cited

Derrida, Jacques. 2000. "Hostipitality," *Angelaki* 5:3. 3-18.

Ngai, Seanne. 2007. *Ugly Feelings*. Harvard UP.