

Panel Proposal: Transatlantic Kinship and Subalternity

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This panel proposes a critique of patterns of kinship practices established upon the Atlantic Ocean as a contact zone and a conveyor belt between two ends of the Earth. It appreciates the materiality of the Ocean as a timeless physical archive; and abstracts its flow as the constant shifts in power and temporalities; the movement of ideas, and identities that are ever in flux. Against the established biopolitical violence woven into the earliest practices of kinship across this liquid geography in the constellation of the American colony, the panel specifically seeks to interrogate the emancipatory capacity of kinship for minoritized subjects, communities, and Spivak's subalterns. From the Abolitionist crusades of the nineteenth century in England by the ilk of Frederick Douglass, through the relentless exhaustion of Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) laboratories in the US and the UK by radical environmental groups, to the recent anti-Trump protest in the UK, the Atlantic has remained a heuristic conduit for counter-hegemonic kinship practices. These affective entanglements, and the expression they found in literature and culture, traveled as much as the bodies they inhabited, as amplified in Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*. Moreover, the Black Atlantic is a living cultural system that continuously flows into and informs new diasporic experiences, multiplying into contemporary afterlives. In this logic, the losses, solitudes, and resentments of those who experienced the Middle Passage powerfully resonate in the losses, solitudes, and resentments of today's diasporic selves and their cultural productions. It, thus, becomes imperative to ponder:

1. How has the enduring cultural circulation between the coordinates of the triangular trade reshaped the Black subject in America and opened novel kinship practices beyond racial and economic lines? How do mobility, diaspora, and maritime travel affect Atlantic kinship?
2. Towards what models of historical kinship practices does the transatlantic overflow of discontent, resentment, and historical reckoning, which came in the aftermath of George Floyd's public execution, point us in American studies?
3. How does kinship function as a method for understanding historical continuities, where could it serve as a technology for time-travel into the past, and how could it mobilize cultural productions that challenge epistemic violence?

We encourage speakers to think of kinship as a method and a practice that foregrounds ambitious comparative perspectives and unexpected connections. Within the Black Atlantic's circuitries of knowledge and contiguous literary spheres, concepts, tropes, and stories travel from one language system to another and across the centuries. Therefore, we welcome papers that bridge multiple cultural systems and look forward to conversations between representations of kinship in the American antiquities and contemporary cultures.

Papers may cover the following areas, among others:

- Comparative slavery and emancipatory systems
- Circulation and reception of cultural productions from the nineteenth century
- Entangled ecological plunders and planetary futures
- Kinship in the Black Atlantic as a means of survival and resistance
- Magical kinships and speculative fiction in the Black Atlantic

Confirmed Speaker: PD. Dr. Elena Furlanetto

“An Epic that Repeats Itself”: The Black Atlantic and the Black Mediterranean as Literary Kin”