

# THE ANGLE

Spring 2025



# ACCUTE

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### JASON CAMLOT

We can't wait to see you in Toronto for the [2025 ACCUTE conference!](#)

I'll use this space for a brief reminder of what we've been up to this year, things we'll have to think about for next year's conference, and as a space to thank the many people who have supported our work this past academic year.

It has been a busy and rewarding first year for me as the President of ACCUTE. The ACCUTE Board and our Caucuses have been active and involved, and the Executive Team has been very busy and engaged throughout the year. The [BIPOC/ACCUTE First Person series](#) has offered an inspiring set of interviews through the initiative of caucus representative and interviewer Chinelo Ezenwa. And the [#Presenting ACCUTE](#) interviews conducted by Gladwell Pamba with conference participants about the work they will be presenting at conference have provided an exciting preview of the work that we will soon hear.

We hope you have enjoyed the two issues of The Angle we've released so far (and will enjoy this new one), and that you have benefited from the two ACCUTE Webinar Panels we've organized, one on Teaching With or Against AI, and another on Decolonizing Pedagogies and Curriculum. The webinars have been very well attended, and we are grateful to the many experts who have generously offered their time and expertise to make them possible. If you have ideas for future virtual webinar topics, please send them to us.

The organization of this year's conference began with communications to all members who had been on the 2024 program of the cancelled Montreal conference to determine if they wished to present those papers and panels in 2025. Working from there, we had a great response to our call for new papers, member-organized panels, and joint-sponsored panels. With the call out, we proceeded to introduce a new option for workshop proposals to add to the program, and we had a great response to that call, as well. This year's conference will offer seven member-led workshops on a wide range of scholarly and professional topics, and registration for the workshops is looking good. If you haven't signed up a workshop yet, feel free to do so via the [ACCUTE 2025 Workshops](#) page. I issued a message about Accessibility Services and Practices for the 2025 ACCUTE conference at George Brown College (GBC), which included [considerations for preparing accessible conference presentations](#), prepared and generously offered for our use by Dr. Ann Gagne, Senior Educational Developer, Accessibility and Inclusion (Brock University). We issued a call for panel chairs (thanks to all who answered that call!) and I prepared and shared some [Guidelines for Panel Chairs at ACCUTE](#), to help demystify the panel chair role for those who will be doing it for the first time, and as a reminder of some useful approaches for those who have played this role before.

With a rich program of panels and workshops covering a broad range of literary themes, periods and methods, and with three exciting plenary talks on the bill (by Erin Moure, Urvashy Chakravarty, and

Deanna Reder), we have also organized a series of activities and events that will allow us to celebrate each others' professional accomplishments, and enjoy each others' company doing fun, non-work things. The Day 1 Opening Ceremony will feature awards presentations (including prizes for the brand new BIPOC Caucus' Research and Community Engagement Prize), a performance by the Muttertongue Trio featuring Toronto's Poet Laureate, Lillian Allen, followed by our own ACCUTE Rapid Poetry Reading. We'll learn about and admire new books by ACCUTE members at the Book Lunch Celebration, belt out songs at our Karaoke night, we'll enjoy a delicious meal together and solve historical menu riddles at the ACCUTE banquet, and we will gather for association reports and planning at the ACCUTE AGM that will close the conference.

We hope as many members as possible will be able to attend the AGM as we wish to hold a discussion about our approach to planning the 2026 ACCUTE conference, following the [Federation's announcement](#) that there will not be an in-person Congress next year. If you have not already filled out the short survey on this matter that we have sent by email to all members, please do take a moment to do so. I will report on the responses to this survey at the AGM. I have also invited the President and CEO of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Karine Morin, to attend our AGM. This will allow her to update us on the current and future situation of Congress planning, explain the "Reimagining Congress" initiative they plan to roll out this summer, and offer responses to any other questions we have. I have also organized meetings with the presidents of over fifteen of our cognate associations to hear and discuss their own plans for next year, with the aim of maintaining possibilities of collaboration between our associations, no matter how they chose to proceed with their own conferences.

So, we've done a lot, will be doing lots more together in Toronto very soon, and have much to plan for next year. All this work has gone forward with great support from the ACCUTE Executive, the Board, and from many members who have answered my emails when I've had questions or requests for information.

I would like to personally thank my Vice-President, Dr. Cynthia Quarrie, the amazing ACCUTE coordinator, Ghislaine Comeau, and our Coordination and Communications Assistants, Gladwell Pamba and Josie Teed, for their outstanding commitment, intense work, and great humour throughout the year. They have made all that we have accomplished so far possible and fun. And I would like to thank the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Department of English at Concordia University for the support they are offering me and the Executive team, including time, space, and resources.

I am also grateful for the frank and collegial advice and support that the members of the ACCUTE Board have provided this year. So, I say thank you to Megan Arnott, Rajarshi Banerjee, Adam Dickinson, Chinelo Ezenwa, Jessi MacEachern, Neta Gordon, Lorraine York, Douglas Ivison, and Allan Pero. Your commitment to ACCUTE is inspiring.

We will be seeking to fill a few positions on the board for the coming year. Feel free to get in touch with me if you are interested in getting involved in ACCUTE governance and want to learn more about what this entails.

I look forward to seeing you very soon!

Jason Camlot,  
President, ACCUTE



## VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### CYNTHIA QUARRIE

I've always enjoyed springtime in Toronto—it's where I did my PhD, where my son was born, and where I first experienced the joys of scholarly community and possibility. I'm excited to return to Toronto for our upcoming conference, to reconnect with old friends, meet new ones, and especially to hear from a new generation of graduate students about the futures they imagine for our field.

After we weren't able to meet in person last year, we have put a lot of effort into making this year's gathering as inclusive and as convivial as possible. I'm particularly looking forward to our workshops, to Nathalie Cooke's menu puzzles at the Banquet, and to our first ever Karaoke Night! (Literary-inspired songs, anyone? Who will join me in an earnest rendition of *Wuthering Heights*?).

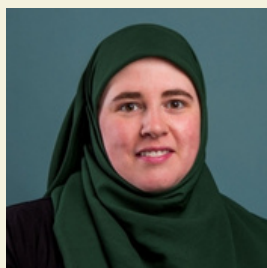
Our days will be packed, but I urge you not to miss our final session: the Annual General Meeting on June 2. These are uncertain times for higher education in Canada as elsewhere, and ACCUTE plays a vital role in advocating for our profession. The more voices we represent, the stronger we are. I'll be delivering the Financial report at the meeting, and we'll be hosting Karine Moran to discuss future directions for Congress and for the Federation in general. We really hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Lastly, my deepest thanks to the ACCUTE team. When Jason invited me to join the executive, I was inspired by his vision of an expanded ACCUTE that could bring together researchers from all our various (sometimes splintered) sub-disciplines, attend to the growing and diverse needs of graduate students, college teachers, and contract faculty, and advocate for the importance of the work we collectively do. As preparations for the conference have ramped up, Jason has been unfailingly generous with his time and good humour, and Ghislaine, Josie, and Gladwell—who, as a friend once said of my mother-in-law, "ooze with competence"—have been an absolute pleasure to work with. I can't wait to share the fruits of our collective efforts with all of you!

Cynthia Quarrie

Vice President, ACCUTE

## A Message from the ACCUTE Team



Dear ACCUTE Members,

We (Ghislaine Comeau, Gladwell Pamba, and Josie Teed) have been working to finalize our upcoming 2025 Conference, which is shaping up to be an incredible weekend of scholarship, celebration and camaraderie.

We have been busy finalizing evening events, assigning chairs, and pinning down room numbers and catering orders. We are especially excited to see ACCUTE members at the Banquet on Sunday, June 1st at HotHouse restaurant.

We are also very excited that we will be able to offer members an array of mementos from the conference. When you arrive, come meet us at the welcome table to check in and check it out! We are looking forward to meeting all of you.

We recently released the third draft of our schedule on our website and via email to our members. We encourage you to have a look and see when you are scheduled. You can also read descriptions of the workshops that are on offer. Pre-registration is required for all workshops, and we encourage you to reserve your place as soon as possible.

Finally, we have organized lunch meetings for the various subgroups and committees within ACCUTE, including the BIPOC Caucus, Contract Academic Faculty Caucus, the Creative Writing Collective, English Studies in Canada, ACCUTE representatives, and the Graduate Student Caucus. If you are a member of any of these groups, be sure to check the schedule to see when your lunch will take place.

Planning the 2025 conference has been a rewarding challenge for our team, and we can't wait to see our hard work pay off when we get to listen to so many of your presentations at the end of the month.

See you on May 30th!

**Ghislaine Comeau, Gladwell Pamba, and Josie Teed**

## A Message from the GSC President - Raj Banerjee

Dear Grad Students,

It is almost time either to meet each other for the first time during Congress 2025, or, perhaps, to reconvene after a long-er than usual hiatus over the past couple of years. The GSC is excited to see you all! Did you know that ~40% of all ACCUTE Presenters and Chairs this time are Grad Students?

Therefore, here are a few things to keep marked on your calendar:

(A). **May 30 (Friday), 7:00 PM -- Grad Evening at 'C'est What'**: this will be a grad student exclusive space. This will be our way to begin the conference with a bang. There is a pool table, and the GSC will provide snacks, so ALL grad students are welcome!!!

(B). **June 1 (Sunday), 3:30 PM -- GSC Roundtable**: the first time, in a long time, the GSC is organising a Roundtable rather than a regular panel so that a couple of grad students and exceptional speakers, Jennifer McDougall and Zixuan Liao, can not only share their papers but also invite you to share your thoughts on the topic Beyond the State: Humanity and Futurities in the Anthropocene.

(C). **June 2 (Monday), 12:00 PM -- GSC Lunch Meeting**: ALL grad students are welcome to join and discuss what the GSC has been doing over the last one year (and it has been a very busy year indeed), how your Grad Reps have been working hard in ensuring the best grad experience, how you can get involved with the GSC, what we have planned as a roadmap for the coming year, and what you want the GSC to do further.

All the best for all your work during the conference; let us also have some fun too. See you all soon !

# ACCUTE 2025



Join us in Toronto, Ontario for a weekend of exceptional scholarship, academic collaboration, and lively events of all kinds!

[View the program HERE](#)



## MAY 30 – JUNE 2 2025

George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario

George Brown College is located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and other Indigenous peoples who have lived here over time. We are grateful to share this land as treaty people who learn, work and live in the community with each other.

# OPENING CEREMONY

Friday  
30<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Featuring:**  
**Award Announcements!**

We will announce and celebrate the winners of the F.E.L. Priestley Prize, the ACCUTE BIPOC Caucus' Research and Community Engagement Award, and the CWC Graduate Student Writing Contest Winners

**Rapid Reading Series!**

Listen to your friends and colleagues read from their new and forthcoming works in our Rapid Reading series, an ACCUTE tradition!

**Performance by MUTTERTONGUE!**



Muttertongue will perform poems and tracks from their new book Muttertongue: what is a word in utter space and forthcoming album. Combining the intensity of Dub Poetry with the intricacies of experimental poetics, this collective presents a sonorous soundscape echoing with the question of where (and why) is here (hear).

7 P.M. SJC-406  
George Brown College, St. James  
Campus



ACCUTE 2025

# GRAD EVENING

C'est What : 67 Front St E, Toronto



## When + Where

We are meeting at **C'est What** - walking distance from George Brown College St. James Campus -  
**May 30 at 7:00 PM**

This will be a Grad Student exclusive space. Through our meet-n-greet, this will be Our way of opening the conference!

## Who's Attending

**ALL Grad Students** attending the ACCUTE Conference are welcome. Whether you are presenting, organising, chairing, and/or chilling, you are a part of the GSC. Come join us for the evening!



## What to Expect

Fun! **Fun!** Fun! Expect nothing less. There'll be a **Pool Table** and many **Grad Students** like you from several Univs. Come meet your fellows!

**The GSC will provide snacks/appetizers**  
(Drinks+Dinner are not included)



# KARAOKE NIGHT

8 P.M.

MAY 31, 2025



## ON THE ROCKS

RESTAURANT AND BAR

169 FRONT STREET E

TORONTO, ON



A RELAXED AND LIVELY EVENING OF  
FOOD, DRINKS, AND SONG! LET'S MAKE  
MEMORIES - OFF THE PAGE AND ON THE  
STAGE! DIVAS, CROONERS, BACKUP  
SINGERS, AND SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE  
MEMBERS ARE ALL WELCOME!

Sunday, June 1, 2025  
12 P.M.

George Brown College  
Waterfront Building  
Room WF-205

**ACCUTE  
BOOK  
L(A)UNCH**

**Come celebrate and hear readings from your friends and colleagues' recently published books! Some books will be available for purchase across the hall at the Congress BOOK EXPO.**

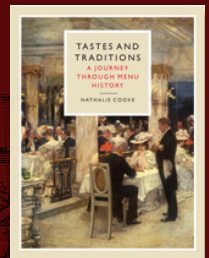


**8 p.m. Sunday, June 1**  
**HOTHOUSE**  
**35 Church Street,**  
**Toronto, ON**

# ACCUTE Banquet

Join us for an evening of good food and celebration

**Featuring Menu  
Matters: Conundrums  
for Convivial  
Conversations with  
Professor Nathalie  
Cooke**



During the delicious meal, Nathalie Cooke (author of *Tastes and Traditions: A Journey Through Menu History*), will guide us in deciphering our cryptic menu and exploring ways puzzling menus make mealtimes memorable.

# ACCUTE 2025 SPONSORS

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## DECOLONIZING PEDAGOGIES AND CURRICULUM

*In April, ACCUTE hosted its second webinar of the 2024-2025 academic year, entitled “Decolonizing Pedagogies and Curriculum”. We invited five distinguished colleagues from field of education and literary studies in conversation about the important work of decentering colonial models of learning in higher education. In this dossier, Angle editor Josie Teeds presents the panelists who generously contributed their time and expertise to the panel, and provides a short summary of some of the key questions, topics, and strategies discussed. At the end of the dossier is a short bibliography of useful further readings and resources suggested by the panelists.*

### OUR PANELISTS



**Dr. Erin Akerman** is a member of the Georgian Bay Métis Community. She works as an assistant professor at Brock University where she teaches Indigenous, Canadian, and nineteenth-century British literatures.



**Dr. Gaurav Desai** is Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of English and Chair of the department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-fashioning and the Colonial Library* (Duke University Press, 2001) and editor of a number of books and special issues of journals. His monograph on narratives of Indian Ocean connections between Africa and India, *Commerce with the Universe: Africa, India and the Afrasian Imagination* (Columbia University Press, 2013) received the 2014 Rene Wellek Prize from the American Comparative Literature Association.



**Dr. Chinelo Ezenwa** is of Igbo, Nigerian origin. Her work centres on decolonial and postcolonial studies, language teaching, and community engagement. Her conviction in the importance of intersecting academia and community is reflected in her present role as Assistant Professor in Black Atlantic Decolonial Literatures at Memorial University.



**MODERATOR: Dr. Susan Spearey** (Department of English; Affiliated Faculty, MA in Social Justice and Equity Studies and PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities, Brock University) works at the intersection of anticolonial studies, trauma studies, social justice and equity studies, literary and cultural studies, and critical pedagogy.



**Alia Wazzan** (she/her) is a PhD candidate in her fourth year of the Interdisciplinary Humanities program at Brock University. She holds a BA in English and an MA in Cultural Studies, both from Syria. Her research focuses on racialized-gendered discourses that construct Arab/Muslim women from a postcolonial feminist perspective with a focus on colonial feminism. Alia has worked as a Teaching Assistant in Women's and Gender Studies and English departments.

## SUMMARIES

*In advance of the panel discussion, we invited each panelist to send us a question or two that they would be interested in asking and addressing in discussion as a group. Below we have organized summaries of the panel discussion according to some of the questions that were selected by the moderator, Susan Spearey, to help frame the conversation.*

**Are there training programs informed by educational laws/policies that equip humanities and social sciences educators (at both course design and classroom levels)—especially those with little or no background in decolonial or postcolonial pedagogies—to recognize and disrupt internalized colonialist, racist/white supremacist narratives shaped by mainstream media and the dominance of digital knowledge as “realities”?**

*Our Panelists discussed the lack of of institutional training programs, and how instructors can, in spite of such absences, engage with the resources at their disposal.*

**A lack of adequate training at an institutional level** A lack of adequate exposure to evolving and context-specific decolonial practices and techniques can result in educators unknowingly reproducing Eurocentric knowledges and logics, reinforcing patriarchal and white supremacist ideas. Alternately, instructors may be eager to learn and teach, but worry about being offensive or insensitive in their approach without guidance.

**The importance of mentorship** Mentorships, one-on-one encounters and relationships can act as the best source of decolonial education. Mentors, friends, colleagues, community leaders and elders, and often students themselves are also generally more accessible than institutional training, which can be minimal or non-existent, depending on the institution. The work of decolonizing one's work often happens in intimate, personal contexts, inside and outside of the classroom.

**Down-up knowledge** Academia enforces top-down hierarchies, placing instructors above students, but inviting students, particularly those that have been historically silenced, to share their own experiences and knowledge can be an excellent tool for educators. Integrating the knowledge students bring from their own context can inform how instructors approach teaching can lead them to new texts and perspectives. All instructors, no matter how experienced, have gaps in their knowledge, and all students, no matter how inexperienced, have their own wisdom and lived experience to bring to the table.

**A call to action** Our webinar highlighted the need for further training and resource sharing, at an institutional level and beyond. Associations (like ACCUTE) should consider what they can offer their memberships. For instance, our panelists discussed creating an online library on ACCUTE's website for members to visit.

## What is the role of an instructor or an institution in decolonizing pedagogy and curriculum?

*Our panelists discussed how instructors can play an enormous role in decolonizing pedagogy and curricula, but noted that methods and scope can largely depend on the context an instructor is teaching within.*

**Restructuring Pedagogy and Curriculum on an Institutional Level** Instructors can be limited in how and what they teach students, depending on institutional policies and determinations of how a program, degree, or classes are structured. English degrees often have a disproportionate focus on the 'classics', and will only have a few offerings outside of the western canon. So-called world literatures may only be offered as a 'side salad' to the 'main course' of Eurocentric literature. These categories are difficult to work within, as professors of world or postcolonial literature can be tasked with collapsing multiple areas of the world into one or a few courses, conflating multiple movements, areas, and genres and being forced to treat them as the same, and are unable to give adequate time to each. This is both reductive and limiting for educators and students alike, giving them limited options and exposure to the diverse non-western canon.

**Changing Degree Structures and Curricula** Teachers and administration must cooperate with one another to ensure the curriculum and degrees are student-friendly, and allow students to explore what they are curious about (and structure the curricula and syllabi on more knowledges coming from the geographies where different forms of (neo) colonialisms take place). In an institutional context, educators can become territorial about their 'areas' of instruction, and may feel threatened by changes to curricula, especially if the current status quo affords them the choice of many courses and offers them a monopoly on a specific area. Moments of upheaval, such as the COVID-19

lockdown, can offer some institutions an opportunity to review and revise existing curricula and degree pathways, and to explore other possible models. Instructors should consider the needs of the students, ensuring that the degree reflects their desires. Some instructors may need to sacrifice their current position in order to restructure.

**In The Classroom** Instructors may have more power to effect curricular and pedagogical change in the classroom. However, this also depends on the context. Some instructors are not permitted to deviate from an assigned curriculum, or else are teaching with others and must compromise.

**Institutional Barriers within the Classroom** A major challenge within the classroom is class size. Institutions, which are invested in squeezing as much profit from as little as possible, may be creating classes with 200 or more students, which makes creating a more personal, intimate classroom experience difficult. Within this context, it is difficult to engage in other forms of learning outside of the academic and the cognitive like affective learning, sensory learning, and spiritual learning. In these environments, learning remains abstract, which can create distance between the student and the material.

Another limiting aspect is time. Within an institutional context, most courses and classes are pushed into a 12 or 15 week period. However, our panelists note that self-paced education, which is very hard to implement in university settings is best, removing the student from a capitalist context where time is commodified, and certain “standards” have to be met within standardized time frames. This allows students to develop their own relationship to material without constraints.

**Approaches Decolonial Teaching and Learning** Our panelists stressed the importance of offering creative assignments to students, giving them opportunities to choose how they want to approach the materials assigned. These alternatives allow students to step outside of the constraints of typical academic frameworks and to engage with the texts in a new way. Encouraging students to “visit” with a text, to spend time with it and to engage with it in a non-judgemental, non-academic way can be beneficial. Academic work so often requires students and scholars to “deconstruct” a text, to find what is wrong or faulty with a text, which isn’t always the best approach. For instance, when reading early texts written by Indigenous women, it may not serve the text to determine how ‘progressive’ it is, or to compare it to ‘western’ canonical texts. Instead, it can be best to engage with the text on its own terms.

**Assignment Idea** One such assignment might be an “archive” project, in which students are sent out to visit their local archives, to see what literature is actually there in their own region. This will allow students to develop a personal relationship with the texts they discover, to learn about the colonial context of their own pasts, and to develop empathy for lived experiences that are different from their own.

## What are some concrete ways to engage in curricular change that works towards decolonizing the curriculum, and what literature has inspired you and whose work would you recommend to others?

*Our panelists considered dilemmas that present themselves when decolonizing curriculum, and offered reminders about the importance of considering students first and foremost, and keeping historical context in mind.*

**Teaching canonical texts: yes or no?** Our panelists discussed the challenges and opportunities presented by teaching canonical texts that are now considered by some to be outdated and problematic such as *Heart of Darkness*. Some instructors may not feel comfortable assigning such texts, depending on their positionality, as it risks centring texts by white male European authors in educational spaces meant to centre non-white, non-western authors and texts. However, they can also be illuminating, depending on how the instructor chooses to engage with the text. Ultimately, each instructor and classroom is different, and each educator must decide whether they will integrate such texts into their curriculum, and how they will choose to discuss them in class for themselves.

**The Importance of Context** Another salient point of discussion was the idea of returning to foundational texts, such as Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask*, and to delve into historical context. In an academic setting, where many texts are abstract, it is easy to gloss over the reality that colonialism is an embodied practice, involving mass murder and land theft. Students must understand this.

**Colonialism is Ongoing and Happening Here** Institutions in Canada promote racist and supremacist ideas about non-western countries. For instance, students may assume that there are no feminist movements outside of North America and Europe, and that feminism is no longer needed in Canada and the west. White students (and racialized students who have internalized codes of Eurocentric thinking in white-majority classes) may see other countries and cultures as oppressive to women, failing to truly engage with them on their own terms, and also failing to see Canada's own colonial positionality and the ongoing western colonial project. This can create harmful hierarchies within the classroom, where white students see themselves as needing to 'save' their racialized classmates. There should be more attention paid to local movements, histories, and knowledges being erased under the hegemony of white discourses. Decolonizing pedagogy and curriculum is an ongoing exercise, rather than an action or set of tools that can ever be done and finished.

**Students must see themselves in the literature** When assigning texts, our panelists noted that it's very important to offer perspectives outside of the western perspective to reflect the needs of students. For instance, if a course on feminist theory or literature only offers western texts, ignoring perspectives from the global south, why would a student who isn't from the west come to class? Ignoring non-western perspectives risks alienating racialized students and further enforcing already existing hierarchies within a classroom. It also enforces already held beliefs of western supremacy.

**Assignment Idea** One possible assignment might involve inviting students to reflect on their own beliefs, writing down assumptions they have and working with the class to rephrase or recontextualize these statements.

**Another Assignment Idea** In *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux* (2017; Basic Books) Cathy Davidson urges instructors to try to shift students' motivation away from earning a certain grade, and away from writing for an audience of one (the marker). To this end, she suggests that instructors offer students, in addition to the option of standard assignments such as essays, the possibility of demonstrating what they have learned in the course using the following criteria as guidelines:

- Do the work in a medium that is meaningful to you (“you” being the student)
- Orient the work towards an audience that matters to you
- Show what you have learned in a way that potentially has impact in the world beyond the duration and parameters of the course, and/or beyond the context of the university

In this assignment, students bring not only their own interests and skill sets, but also their own cultural understandings, interpretative frameworks, and technical and expressive skills to their close engagements with course texts, and they generate work that has significant afterlives beyond the duration and location of the course.

Here, the instructor does not have to be an “expert” in any of the media in which they work; they only need to be able to click on a link that they send (or view/ listen to/ read submissions that are not in virtual formats and are handed in directly). Artistic pieces can be accompanied by artist’s statements that explain process, choice of materials, and other pertinent details, and that outline how the course reading(s) have guided their work.

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

Educators face many challenges when attempting to decolonize pedagogy and curricula. However, There are many steps they can take to further their educational practice. Instructors must work together to ensure that curriculums decentre the western canon and offer courses and concentrations that reflect the needs of students. Institutions present barriers to this work, but it is always possible to take the work of decolonizing the classroom one step further. In the classroom, centring student experience and alternate forms of knowledge can be key. Instructors can invite students to reconsider their assumptions, consider their positionalities when assigning texts, and to develop personal relationships to texts outside of an academic framework.

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*Our panelists shared some texts that may be useful to educators and students alike in their decolonial practices throughout the discussion. This list is by no means exhaustive or meant to constitute a new canon.*

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## Websites and Other Resources

[400 Years of Inequality, Reparations 4 Slavery](#)

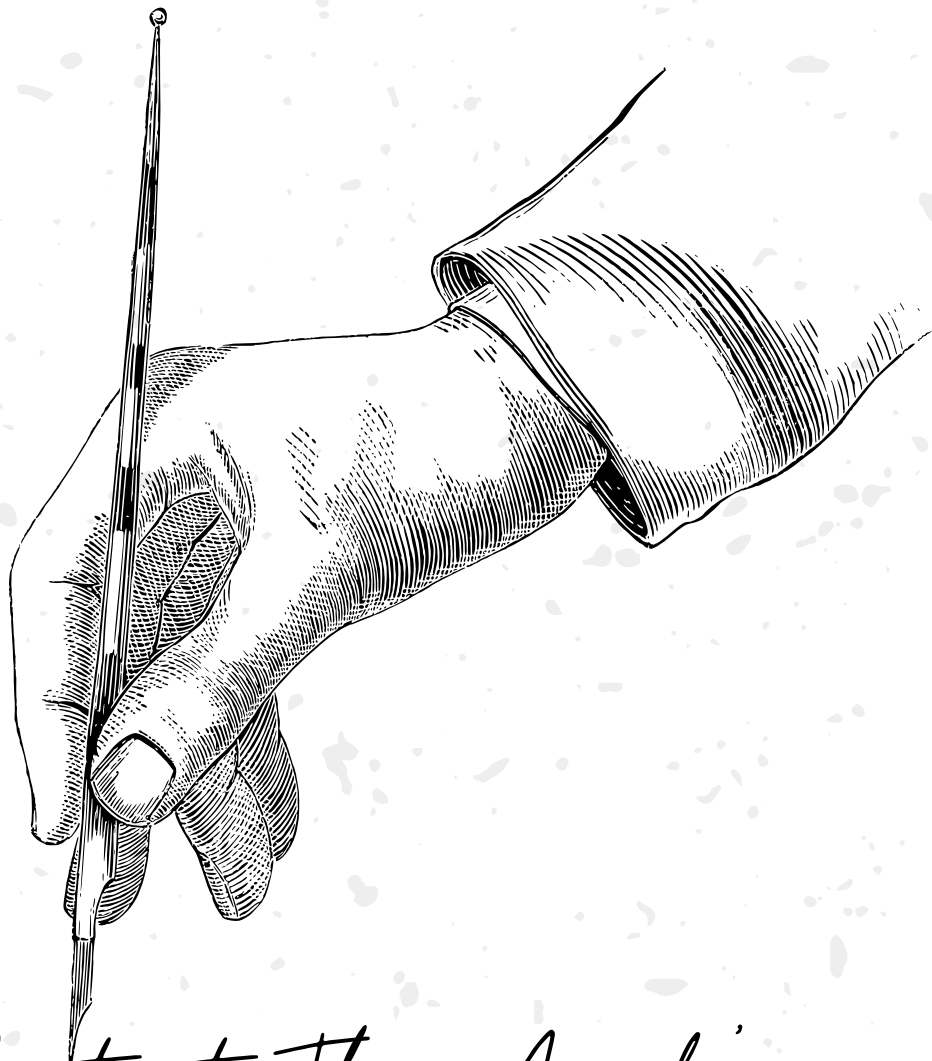
[Characteristics, White Supremacy Culture](#)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, [TEDTalk: The Danger of a Single Story](#).

Lila Abu-Lughod, ["Writing Against Culture"](#)

# HOW DO **YOU** DECOLONIZE PEDAGOGY?

We want to hear from you! Share your thoughts, experiences and strategies surrounding decolonizing pedagogies and curriculum in the classroom for inclusion in our next issue of *The Angle*.



Contact *The Angle's*  
managing editor at  
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*In our winter 2025 newsletter, we invited responses from our members on the topic of “Teaching with or Against AI” in the classroom and beyond, the topic of our first Webinar. Kris Singh has shared one such response in which he discusses interrogating the very term ‘AI’ in the classroom.*

## **Pinning down AI**

In “The Uncontroversial ‘Thingness’ of AI” (2023), Lucy Suchman asserts, “If AI is cited as if its referent were self-evident, asking what work that rhetorical stance is doing is a priority” (2). This is the point from which I generate discussion with students about AI: what do we mean by AI, and what are we obscuring or assuming in acquiescing to the very term AI? Firm answers are difficult to come by, and this condition is what allows AI as a referent to endure. Suchman argues that the “strategic vagueness” of the term AI “maximize[s] its suggestive power” (3). Even speculation about the ills of AI inadvertently works to reiterate the thingness of AI. Thus, in broaching the topic of AI in the classroom, I demonstrate the necessity of considering the means by which products and algorithmic practices branded as AI have been popularized. I suggest to students that considerations of real technological change have to be paired with the capacity to parse acts of linguistic subterfuge.

Take an instance of equivocation that is all too common. In debating the application of products like ChatGPT in the classroom and elsewhere, the vagueness of the term AI allows for arguments about generative AI to produce the sense that advancements in predictive AI have been sufficient for it to be a viable option in governance infrastructures. We can turn to Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor’s *AI Snake Oil* (2024) for clarification here. They explain that generative AI refers to text and image generators while predictive AI refers to technologies that make “predictions about the future in order to guide decision-making in the present” (2). Their argument is clear and convincing: “predictive AI not only does not work today but will likely never work, because of the inherent difficulties in predicting human behavior” (3). Scholars like Narayanan and Kapoor have demonstrated the shortcomings of products that promise to use AI to automate consequential decisions, whether in the healthcare or criminal justice systems. Yet the developers of these products continue to gain traction, partly due to our reliance on rhetoric that obfuscates technical realities. Given this dynamic, I ask students to consider how using the term AI manufactures legitimacy for a host of data driven practices. How might we generate the language needed to “challeng[e] prevailing assumptions regarding [AI’s] singular and autonomous nature” (Suchman 4)? Though we do not always find answers, I try to instill in my students a willingness to search for the language that satisfactorily articulates what is afoot.

The risks of leaving these assumptions undisturbed are manifold. I tend to zero in on the threat to knowledge production. I explain to students that on the one hand the proliferation of research on AI is overwhelming. Narayanan and Kapoor estimate that “Roughly a hundred AI papers are uploaded to arXiv every *day*” (162; italics in original). On the other hand, these research efforts are artificially constrained. Meredith Whittaker explains this dynamic in “The Steep Cost of Capture” (2021): “tech firms are startlingly well positioned to shape what we do—and do not—know about AI and the business behind it, at the same time that their AI products are working to shape our lives and institutions” (51). Whittaker describes the extent to which academic research agendas are swayed by the influence of tech companies. Juxtaposing Big Tech’s influence in our current moment with the U.S. military’s influence on scientific research during the Cold War, Whittaker advises that “we confront the steep cost of capture—whether military or industrial—and its perilous implications for academic freedom and knowledge production capable of holding power to account” (53-54). To take AI as a given is to lessen our capacity to perceive and contest this form of overreach.

I ask students to consider the obligations that befall us as critical thinkers. We might chase after every instance of rebranding, dissecting the subtle and not-so-subtle attempts at manipulation of the public. We might seek to communicate the dangers that manifest when tech companies hoard capital and data. We might, as Whittaker advises, realize the need for organized workers, tech and academic alike, to strategize in the face of Big Tech’s cupidity. At the very least, I try to impart to students the value in conceptualizing conversations about AI as conversations about power in which our word choice matters. I suggest that they seek out the histories that inform what we now call AI, and I show how the expertise of scholars can sharpen their intuitions. In this regard, AI in my classroom has not led to pedagogical innovation on my part so much as it has made me double down on what was already necessary. I argue to students that they are well served by connecting themselves to intellectual traditions that demystify the power dynamics defining their lives.

#### Works Cited

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## Theorizing Blake's Fungal Suspension: An Interview with Rajarshi Banerjee

With the upcoming 2025 ACCUTE Conference at George Brown College from 30th May-June 2nd, we have been having an interview series of #PresentingACCUTE which focuses on some of the presenters in conversation with Gladwell Pamba, ACCUTE's Coordination and Communications Assistant.

Next up in the series is Rajarshi Banerjee, who is a PhD candidate, working primarily on Romanticism and the History of Sciences. While his work is invested in Deconstruction, History of Ideas, and Posthumanism, he is also interested in Animal Studies, Biopolitics, as well as Reading and Readership. He loves exploring what it means to be or become 'human', what constitutes 'humanity', and, by extension, what the modality of 'humanities' is. He is the President of the Graduate Student Caucus of ACCUTE and looks forward to meeting all of you during the conference.



### **Tell us a little bit about what you'll be focusing on in your presentation.**

My paper is titled "Contrary to Contraries: Theorising Blake's Fungal Suspension". Mapping the Romantic Blake along a Posthumanist axis, my paper re-reads and recalibrates what Blakean good and evil may look like when we study his contraries through the lens of a suspended 'fungus'. Today – in the Genetic/Genomic and Digital/Digitised era – we are fond of category-defying Mycelial modalities that challenge

straightforward binaries of good/evil, inside/outside, human/nonhuman, life/death, science/art, and so on. I am keen, however, on pondering how disruptive a fungus could be to Blakean thought. Curiously, perhaps, (and I need a bit more time to confirm this with conviction), the only ever utterance of a 'fungus' in the entire gamut of canonical English Romantic literary texts occurs in Blake. Therefore, the archaeology of this Romantic fungal suspension is what my paper aims to unpack in the age of Posthumanism and the Anthropocene.

### **How did you come to work on this or where did this work come from?**

I love Blake; all my passwords revolve around his quotes (please don't try to guess any: haha). It is not a surprise, then, that he creeps, seeps, and leaps into my work often. Not only the literary world, but also other arts have gained so much from his legacy. If Jim Morrison can set up a rock band under the 'influence' of Blake, then, I can, at least, write a paper today, right?

## Theorizing Blake's Fungal Suspension: An Interview with Rajarshi Banerjee

Frivolity aside, though, this paper's inception is owed to the panel organisers – Adam Mohamed & Liam Rockall – whose captivating pitch on Romanticism allowed me to make several different strands of my weirdly wired brain finally converge. Firstly, given my thrill in parsing the thresholds between the humanities and the hard sciences, and that between the humanities and the posthumanities, I have been thinking of a fungal hermeneutics for some time now. Secondly, in the globally polarised socio-political milieu, what I call a fungal imperative is paramount. Thirdly, debunking conventional and conservative notions associated with both Romanticism and deconstruction, my interest in upholding what Blake - even if he is a dead white male thinker - has to offer us today is what led me to this paper.

### **What have you been reading or watching lately that you can recommend to your ACCUTE colleagues?**

Oh; *Tár*, of course!!! The timely questions of gender, art/istry, parenting, and the ever so slippery public/private spheres are impeccably addressed in the work indeed.

Cinematography and editing, alongside sound design, are right on the mark too; but what makes this piece so starkly and remarkably stand out for me are its narrative supremacy and its commentary on the nature, relevance, and pitfalls of Pedagogy.

What do you love to do when you're not researching, teaching, or studying?

I love connecting with other scholars and learning from their work and experiences. The GSC allows me not only to remain in touch with grad students across institutions but also to keep learning from the ACCUTE board members who are established scholars across fields/generations. I also keep trying and widening my vision by organising panels at conferences: for instance, I am keenly looking forward to chairing the "Beyond the State" as well as "Speculative Bodies" panels during this Congress. Some of my dearest friends are avid readers of philosophy, grad students, and/or recent graduates too; bouncing off ideas, regardless of research per se, is sheer fun.

## Redefining Empathy in Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun: An Interview with Professor Facundo

With the upcoming 2025 ACCUTE Conference at George Brown College from 30th May-June 2nd, we have been having an interview series of #PresentingACCUTE which focuses on some of the presenters in conversation with Gladwell Pamba, ACCUTE's Coordination and Communications Assistant. Next up on the series is Professor Facundo from Queen's University.



### **Tell us about what you'll be focusing on in your presentation**

I'm trying to revisit the concept of Empathy. Everyone assumes that we know what empathy is. That is, putting yourself in the other person's shoes. That's the assumption. That's the premise. I want to use my readings of literature to say it's a little bit more complicated than that because that's called projective identification and a more generative form of empathy integrates difference into it. Part of my argument is for a kind of empathy that maintains a productive and irreconcilable tension between sameness and difference. I approach my reading practice to elaborate that kind of empathy and so for the presentation, I'm reading Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun. The reader's empathy for the characters shift over time, which is something that I'm interested in.

### **Where did this work come from?**

I have a forthcoming article in Modern Fiction Studies on elaborating empathy in Ishiguro's The Buried Giant so I'm kind of testing it on Klara and the Sun. In Ishiguro's novels, there's always a heart wrenching twist at the end of his novels. Part of the reason is that we expect the thing that will hurt us the most. Yet the narrative does a good job of seducing us away from that realistic expectation. This is what I am really interested in. That through phantasy, the twist highlights where we get emotionally invested in the novel. Ishiguro is able to do it in every one of his novels. He evokes that kind of affective reaction, at least in me. I'm also interested in redefining empathy as part of a larger project to reintroduce psychoanalysis into literary studies. It was popular in the early 90s other than Lacanian analysis and its role in literary studies for critique. I want to do the work of introducing what I'm calling a post-critical psychoanalysis into literary studies so

## Redefining Empathy in Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun: An Interview with Professor Facundo

we can think about psychoanalysis in terms of mental health. Like what does it mean to survive in a world that's falling apart and be empathic? Part of my argument is we're empathic and we read literature to elaborate our empathy. Not because we're good people, but because it's the very thing that keeps us sane. Ishiguro always introduces a complexity about our own relationship to empathy so I want to explore that. He does a lot with post-human or the inhuman as opposed to the human. There are always these subjects that have a status of less human. This is where he manipulates our empathic investment. Klara and the Sun is about an android who is a helper to this child, a companion. I wanted to elaborate empathy around this figure but that was before I made an enemy in my mind of chat GPT. So I'm trying to redefine empathy.

### **Recommend to ACCUTE members something that you're listening to, watching or reading**

*Nosferatu*, the film by Robert Eggers. It's sticking in my mind now because it's so rare for me to go to a theater and watch a film. There is that kind of embodied experience of going to a film and be immersed in aesthetic horror, that gothic imagery that draws from a lot of film history, the way that the lighting is, the dynamic between the two characters, and the kind of disrupting of this kind of sexualized Dracula figure replacing it with a rotting corpse. I think it's really haunting and it's really beautiful.

### **What do you love doing besides teaching, researching or writing?**

I like oil painting. I've been oil painting since I was 15. So I try to do it on Sundays. Edges pain representational art is something that I haven't actually integrated into my intellectual life. As a psychotherapist, a lot of all of these activities are integrated into my research. That's why I'm thinking about empathy. But for painting, I haven't been able to think about my art practice within an intellectual framework or an academic framework. And that's probably a nice thing.

## Carceral Futurity: An Interview with Jason Haslam



**Tell us a little bit about what you'll be focusing on in your presentation.**

I'll be presenting a paper called "Carceral Futurity". I am interested in exploring the ways in which science fiction representations of the future deal with the prison. There's been quite a bit of work of late, especially by people like Walidah Imarisha dealing with prison abolition in science fiction and radical science fiction. I'm particularly interested in how mainstream science fiction actually works in some respects to further the carceral project especially in the US. So I'll be looking at

Robert Heinlein's libertarian novel, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* and Thomas Disch's *Camp Concentration*. They are very different novels from around the same period in the early 1960s and they deal with prison in very different ways. But one common thing is that they both cement the concept of the prison as a governing concept for our especially American conceptions of the future itself.

**And where does this work come from?**

It's kind of joining a few different threads of my past work. I started my academic career looking at writings by prisoners and thinking through issues of how prisoners challenge the carceral nature of society and the prisons themselves. I always had a side popular interest in science fiction and that became, as time went on, an increasing focus in my teaching and my research. I'm currently editing the *Broadview Anthology of Science Fiction*. So in this project, I'm still trying to finish up some long-suffering projects on other topics, but I'm looking forward now to this book, which will take up a good chunk of the latter stages of my career. I really wanted to join these two seemingly disparate themes and the work that educator activists like Imarisha are doing on science fiction and abolition was a starting point for that. But being the cynical person I am, I'm also interested in how culture can reinforce certain terrible institutions like the prison.

**To a less serious question now. Do you have anything you've been watching or reading that you would like to recommend to other ACCUTE members?**

I've been reading a lot of university policy and I wouldn't recommend that to anybody. Ha. But one thing I'm watching for fun right now (well, fun is a strong word here) is the TV series *From*, which is filmed here in Nova Scotia. It's a horror show. And it is... literally terrifying. They just finished the third season and it's stellar. It really, really captures the horror of parts of Nova Scotia.

**What do you like doing for fun when you're not writing, researching, or teaching?**

I take pictures of birds for reasons that I can't really explain. I don't know why this happened to me but I go for a lot of walks, my partner and I, and I really enjoy taking pictures of birds. I think it's important for people to have hobbies where they can let their brain do something completely different in its focus.

## FIRST PERSON - Krista Collier-Jarvis

### Chinelo Ezenwa

Hi Krista. Thank you so much for joining us today on the BIPOC ACCUTE First Person Conversation Series. I usually start with an introduction, so I would appreciate if you could tell us about yourself.

### Krista Collier-Jarvis

My name is Krista Collier-Jarvis. I'm a member of the Mi'kmaw First Nation. I am tuning in from Kjiptuk / Halifax, which is part of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw. I'm also an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Mount Saint Vincent University. I'm in my second year there so still really learning the ropes. Luckily, I didn't have to relocate for work because I did my undergrad at Mount Saint Vincent and my grad work at Dalhousie. So, I've never really left Halifax, which is wonderful because I know the institutions, and I really understand the demographic of students we get, their individual needs, and what they're looking for when they come to this city, which is wonderful. Primarily, I work in American and Indigenous literatures and focus on things like horror, Gothic, climate fiction, and pop culture.

### Chinelo

Thanks for sharing your profile with us, Krista. You indicated that you wanted to talk about our second question (your biggest concerns about academia and English studies and as they relate to the term BIPOC), so we'll start from there. But I'm also curious about what you think about the term BIPOC. I designed the conversation with it as a starting point because that's the term we are using within ACCUTE, but I am also aware that it can be a contentious umbrella term for describing various many peoples.

### Krista

I didn't want to get too much into the nitty gritty of the term BIPOC and what that means, mostly because a lot of wonderful things have already been said in ACCUTE from our members, and it's not something I officially identify as because it's such a catch all term for anyone that's not white. That's kind of why it's a contentious term and why it's hard to define. I mean, I don't walk around going, hey, I'm BIPOC. I walk around going, hey, I'm Indigenous or Ma'kmaw. I also didn't want to get too much into the nitty gritty of what that term means to me because it's such a difficult term to pin down. I really want to talk maybe more broadly about my concerns in terms of academia and English studies because academia has always been concerned with identity politics. But when it comes to working in academia, we're asked to simultaneously separate our identity from our work and at the same time to be tokenized. Tokenization is one of the biggest problems I personally have encountered in my experiences, and I think part of that stems from this rush to diversify the institution and, and in doing so, they've committed

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almost more harm than good in a lot of ways. I'm not saying we shouldn't diversify, because we absolutely should. We need more BIPOC faculty and students and staff, but we haven't been doing it well. I'm saying this mostly based on lived experiences, but also from witnessing damage that's been done to friends and colleagues inside the institution as well.

Initially when I went into grad studies, for example, I didn't want to study Indigenous literatures. I love horror and Gothic, so I really wanted to study monsters and talk about zombies. But what happened was that I was told I was essentially more fundable as an Indigenous scholar studying Indigenous works, which I've seen happen to a lot of folks in academia, so it's not unique to me. But, I didn't want to do something just because of my identity. I wanted to do something that interested me, that I could actually contribute to the field. So, what happened was that I did end up blending the two. I study Indigenous horror, and that's really fun, and I love what I'm doing, but it almost came out of a way of surviving academia more so than something I wanted to pursue. That becomes an early form of tokenizing that we place on students when we find out that they are Indigenous. We're like, you have to study this because that's who you are. I've been really lucky to have mentors and a great supervisor who have helped me work through navigating identity politics and my own guilt about not really wanting to study Indigenous stuff, but then ultimately falling in love with it. But initially, it was not by choice.

Now I find as a faculty member, I'm experiencing very similar things. And again, I know I'm not alone; we're all kind of going through that, which means tokenization continues to be a problem. I get asked to do a ton of things in my work that have nothing to do with my merit or my expertise or my interests, right? Specifically, because I'm Indigenous, I'm asked to sit on a committee and people would often be like, "do you know someone in community that does this?" And I'm like, "no, I don't know everybody who's Mi'kmaw in the entire territory?" I don't understand what they're asking me to do. It is emotionally draining in that respect that all of a sudden I'm supposed to know all the Indigenous people that specialize in different things and be able to bring that expertise to the table just because I'm Indigenous. Which is really bizarre because we wouldn't ask anyone else to do this. We only ask this of BIPOC people.

What we need to do is to really think about our colleagues. Firstly, why are you considering that particular person for a committee or a project? Is there something about their work or experience or their interests that speak to it rather than just the fact that we need this particular body on this or that project? And then, also to think meaningfully about each other's health and well-being and whether or not that person has the capacity to do the work that you're asking them to do. Finally, when you go in

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and you're asking your colleagues to do things, you should also be considering what ways you can support them while they do that work. You might be asking them because they're better prepared for that work, but you should also be a support person to them. We have to take care of each other in this process.

When I first started, a lot of my mentors were like, you know, you're going to get asked to do a lot of things because you're Indigenous, and I didn't realise just how true that is. They also told me I'd have to learn to say no, and I thought, I have issues with that advice because why is the onus placed on me to say no. The person asking me also has to take responsibility in this process. One of my elders who also recently addressed this topic in a talk questions, what if she doesn't want to say no. That's another part to it. I think we just need to be more meaningful about what we ask of our of each other.

### **Chinelo**

So much of what you said resonates with me. I have heard a lot about graduate students' struggles with identity and choices, trying to decide what they wanted, having someone help them decide and ending up in spaces where they are not sure they want to be. I've also thought that the type of racialization you spoke about may have to do with the problem of having universal ideas about what it means to be from this or that group. For instance, each of my kids is Black in a different way and in ways that I am not always able to understand. So, I am constantly struggling not to and not always succeeding in not imposing my own ideas of being and racial challenges to them.

The other thing you said that really struck me is about how people can be supported. And I think we can talk some more about it by relating it to our second question about ACCUTE contributions.

### **Krista**

When I think about support from ACCUTE or its contributions, the BIPOC Caucus is one of the first things that comes to mind. I've been a member of ACCUTE for five years now and I've been president, president-elect, and VP of the graduate student caucus, and I've sat on the Board of Directors. I've listened to you speak as well in those capacities in person as well as online. From my experience, what I've witnessed in those few years is that the biggest contribution they've made is listening and making space for us to even talk about issues that concern different groups of people. That's huge because I mean, to allow us to even critique our own organization is a very vulnerable position for both us and the organization and to make space for that conversation to happen is amazing. So, what I love about ACCUTE is that I do feel comfortable sharing. I felt that way as a grad student, and I continue to feel that way as a faculty member. That's why I've stuck with

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ACCUTE. I foresee myself being part of ACCUTE for a very long time. And, just in the few short years that we've had the BIPOC Caucus, I've watched things grow and a shift in different conversations happening. ACCUTE is very strong in that it reflects on itself, and it makes space for us to have these conversations, however hard they might be.

One way in which I think ACCUTE could do better is to explore more decolonial approaches to knowledge sharing. This isn't specific to ACCUTE but to academic organizations more broadly because knowledge sharing is ultimately what we do each year when we get together at Congress. When I think about decolonial, I'm really just thinking about how we challenge the westernized approaches to knowledge sharing. I love traditional panels, and I love keynotes, and I love Q&A's. I'm a big fan of conferences and how they've operated. I also think we should keep all those things, but I think we need to also start including other ways in which we think about knowledge sharing that isn't just that. Whenever I go to a gathering or conference, I'm constantly looking out for ways that folks are challenging or shaking up the way they share their knowledge, the way they engage with knowledge and things like that. I have a couple of examples actually that I could share. I have a few friends in one of the organizations that I'm with who are really good at responding in real time during Q&A. Even though they've prepared their ten-page talk and their PowerPoint, they somehow shift in real time to respond to what happened that morning or what happened during coffee in a conversation, and that to me is a really open, decolonial approach to knowledge sharing because it feels like this person is listening to what's happening around them and to what conversations are being had. Even though they came prepared to present this topic, somehow, they made their work engage with conversations that are happening in real time. I've also listened to a speaker who talked about how our Q&A process is largely a colonial conversation between the person that's sitting in the audience and the person who's presenting a paper. They say the Q&A is colonial because it's not an open conversation for everyone in the room. The very way in which we just talk and ask each other questions needs to be decolonized and turned into a conversation, which becomes a further form of knowledge because then everyone in the room becomes participants and not passive listeners.

Because of these experiences, I have been trying to think a lot about attendees at a conference, not as passive listeners or people that fill a room, but as active participants. If they are active participants, they're not just coming up with a question on the fly so that they look like they're included, but they're part of a larger ongoing conversation. This means that when we spill those conversations into coffee breaks, the hallways, and over snacks, it doesn't feel like a break between things, it feels like there is an ongoing conversation throughout the day and everybody is a participant and so-called expert on the topic. I am hoping we can start to see more of that moving forward. And, I think

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we're really in this crucial moment in English studies where we have the ability to really pick up that tension and make some changes.

### **Chinelo**

I really love that example you gave about how to decolonize Q&A sessions, and I'll come back to it. As you were speaking, I was also thinking about publications because I've found that a lot of what we do, and not just in English studies, boils down to how many things we've published. Every time I think about it, it worries me because it's labour intensive, both for the person writing and the ones reviewing or editing. Sometimes it takes over a year even to get just one article out. In the past, I thought I was just lazy about responding to peer reviewers, but I recently realized that I am not quick to respond because in some cases, the things that I was asked to do would make a significant shift in the objective of the paper and my worldview. Also, I don't even know who is reading and if there are other ways of sharing knowledge that can encourage people to engage with what we have to say. I would really love to know what you think about that mode of knowledge sharing.

### **Krista**

I have an example that is not directly related to publications, but it has to do with the idea of having an overarching literature review at the beginning of an article. This is something that is also really common in our field and in publications more broadly. The idea there is that as a researcher, you have to know all the so-called experts, and what they've said about the topic before you're allowed to have a voice. I have problems with this approach because it feels very colonial and very much like an unequal power dynamic. I remember when I started my research for my doctorate and had to do the lit. review process where I was trying to look up everything in the field; the process made me start to hate my research and topic. In the middle of this struggle, my supervisor totally shifted my way of thinking about myself and my voice in a really wonderful way. He said to me, "you know, Krista, you work better when you don't read other people first. You work better when you look at something and come up with your own opinion and your own ideas. You write everything you can think about on a topic straight from your own brain and your own perspective first and then you go look at the literature. That's how you function, and that's how you need to do this." I thought, he's right because my voice needs to come first; that's how I think about the world. But I have a fellow Indigenous friend, and her supervisor took the opposite approach with her, and I could tell that she was crushed and defeated during her entire doctorate because her supervisor was like, "no, you have to read all these people before you form an opinion." I thought, what a way to crush your voice under all the white men who have already worked on this topic. So, publications do that. When we ask people to do a lit. review at the beginning of an article that encompasses the entire history of the topic, we are asking them to suppress their own voice behind all the other voices that have spoken.

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That's not what academia should be about. Academia and publication should be about, here's this new person writing on this topic; let's hear what they have to say and then place them in the conversation. So, we're thinking backwards in our publications. Which is why, like you, I don't want to do that work. I want to talk about the topic my way.

### **Chinelo**

That was why I proposed our forthcoming EDI panel - to allow us to actually hear each other about EDI and how it can support academic excellence. Not so long ago, I was in a position to do EDI work, and someone wrote me an otherwise kind email and offered to teach me about EDI. And I remember that it really annoyed me because I felt that they did not only disregard my person, experiences, but also the education that does say that I was qualified to do the job. In short, they just looked at me or heard my name and decided that I couldn't possibly have anything to say about EDI. I think the offer was from a place of kindness, but I also think that it's because of the way that EDI or the work of decolonization is sometimes thought of as a package, a set of things that one learns or does to help them to become decolonized. The purpose of our EDI panel is sort of to move away from that idea of EDI as set of tools and to turn it into a human conversation. Hopefully, people attending can be part of the conversation in the way you mentioned.

Your chosen fourth question, the most fun or most critically relevant BIPOC movie or book you have read or seen recently, has been a popular question and I am always excited to hear what colleagues have to say.

### **Krista**

I love this question because it's so hard for us who study this to have one favourite; you have so many favourites and you're constantly engaging with something new and exciting. Given my work, I'm always on the hunt for Indigenous works that could be considered horror / Gothic. Lucky for me, there's a huge wealth of it coming out this year and the next.

In a recent conversation with a friend of mine, she brought up a 2019 short film that I had never seen called *Zombies and Indians*. I went searching for this film, and it's so good. It's by Indigenous director and writer Keith Lawrence. It's won a couple of local awards in Alberta where it was made. It's about two Indigenous survivors in a post apocalyptic zombie infested world, and they're just standing at the gate to the rez with their guns, defending the gates. While standing there, they have an ongoing banter that is funny when all of a sudden, this unlikely older Indigenous survivor shows up at the gates speaking an Indigenous language. But the "gate keepers" don't understand what he's saying because they don't speak the language anymore. So, there's a lack of communication and he's just banging on the gates. The film is only 12 minutes long, and

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in that time, the gate keepers are debating about whether or not to let him in. And the zombies are getting closer and closer. I don't want to spoil what happens, but it ends up being this really beautiful blending of the comedy that comes with zombie stuff and a commentary on the importance of staying connected to our ancestors and our traditional ways. It's also about how we don't get rid of those things in light of all the contemporary problems we face, so that when you do have zombies banging on the door, you don't forget your teachings.

A lot of our post apocalyptic survivalist stuff really focuses on what we do to survive, right? They focus on hoarding and who kills the other and how you only protect your core family and forget about the rest of the world and things like that. That's really the kinds of things that have driven the Western zombie cannon and post apocalyptic survivalist stuff more broadly. And then, we have these Indigenous storytellers coming in and they're shaking up the cannon and going like, you idiot, hoarding toilet paper is not how you survive the apocalypse. You need to reconnect with your ancestors. You need to tell stories; you need to hold on to the values of community and protect one another rather than killing everybody and locking yourself in the basement in the bunker. They're really shaking up our ideas of what we would do to survive in ways that perpetuate really good values that we need to be holding on to and teaching one another. I think that's why I'm really drawn to these stories. I do recommend *Zombies and Indians*. It is on YouTube for anyone that wants to check it out.

### **Chinelo**

Thanks for sharing that with us, Krista. My favourite type of movie is horror because there's something about them that makes me want to label them as romance. Maybe it's Patrick Wilson in *The Conjuring*. But somehow, I've never been able to do zombie movies. I think the ones I tried to watch when I was younger were probably like those Western styled ones that you mentioned. There was always too much gore and then everyone would perish living one survivor, which was sad. I don't know that they ever made sense to me. But the one you just described has an added layer there, right? But I did want to ask who the zombies are.

### **Krista**

You don't get a close enough image of who the zombies are in *Zombies and Indians*. However, a lot of the ones I've been looking at, like Jeff Barnaby's *Blood Quantum* and Roderick Pocomatchit's *The Dead Can't Dance* position whiteness as the zombie. This one doesn't make an overt commentary on who is the monster, but you can see that there are always residues of those who really uphold colonial ways of consumption and extraction and things like that.

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### Chinelo

I will try to watch with one eye closed just in case.

Before we go, I wonder if you could take one final question. And that's if you have any words of wisdom for grad students or emerging scholars.

### Krista

I think the main thing would be basically trusting your own voice. We're often, especially as grad students and early career researchers, constantly looking to those who have been more established in academia for a long time to see whether or not we're going in the right direction, whether we're thinking the right way, or talking the right way. But, going back to what I was saying earlier about how that literature review process feels almost backwards to me, we need to trust our voices first and really be okay sitting with that, even if it's not in keeping with how academia is teaching us. We should not necessarily think in line with how the institution is telling us we should think because that's the only way that we're going to initiate changes. That's the only way that we're going to unsettle some of these things and that is by first trusting how we're thinking and then feeling okay to reach out and talk to other people in our communities about it.

In ACCUTE, we already have a great group of researchers who are doing this work who are open to have these conversations. So, that's a great place to start. For grad students, I always recommend the graduate student caucus. And then with BIPOC students, I would recommend starting with that Caucus as well. Those are spaces where you can have smaller conversations but then pull them out into the larger ACCUTE body. We're not alone and our voices and our opinions and our ideas are powerful and important, even if they're not the standardized way of doing things.

### Chinelo

Thank you so much for that, Krista. I found that really encouraging. I've been trying to think about ways of increasing our presence within ACCUTE. The thing I struggle with is that I can't impose an identity on anyone. So, I'm always hesitant to write to someone directly and say, do you want to join? Because as soon as I say that it means I'm telling them you're BIPOC. From speaking with friends and colleagues, I know that the present label is problematic, but like you, I think it is still an important way to come together. We can only bring change when we are present, right? I am shamelessly advertising our group at this point, but I would like to say that the last real BIPOC meeting we had at the ACCUTE conference of 2023 was a defining moment for me. And it wasn't even just that feeling of being able to breathe and laugh but it was the people that I met, and the fact that they shared the same types of experiences I'd been having. And it made me think that it was okay to be me.

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Like you said, we have to be there to be able to make those connections. So, thank you again for sharing your wisdom, knowledge, and time with us. I really appreciate your responding to our open call.

### **Krista**

This was a great talk and I'm really excited to finally meet you in person and chat with you at the coming conference. Thank you and take care.

*The BIPOC/ACCUTE First Person Interviews series is adapted from the CBC First Person series. It captures the stories and perspectives of "BIPOC" members of ACCUTE from different parts of Canada at different stages of their teaching, research, or graduate student careers. The interviews are presented in dialogue style to enable us to present participants' stories and experiences in their own voices. We hope to encourage other BIPOC members of ACCUTE and future members to join the conversation. Please reach out to [cezenwa@mun.ca](mailto:cezenwa@mun.ca) or [info.accute@gmail.com](mailto:info.accute@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining the First Person BIPOC/ACCUTE series. We hope you enjoy reading our members' stories and we look forward to hearing from you. — Chinelo Ezenwa, Member-at-large, BIPOC Caucus*

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