

THE ANGLE

FALL 2025

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JASON CAMLOT



With summer now officially over (despite the lingering summery weather) and Fall semester in full swing, the ACCUTE Executive and Board are hard at work planning a range of exciting webinars and roundtables for our membership to enjoy, and, of course, the 2026 annual ACCUTE conference that will happen at Concordia University in Tiohtià:ke/ Montréal, June 4th to 7th. I am very excited about all that lies ahead. I'm pleased that this year's webinars will emerge through the organizational efforts of several of our many active ACCUTE caucuses. An association with active caucus groups is, in my opinion, a healthy and thriving association in which the members feel empowered to contribute significantly to the association's directions and activities. Such member-driven initiatives are a gift to the Executive and President as it allows us to support, facilitate, and assist in making stimulating, and often pressing events and conversations happen. More details on the topics and participants of the upcoming webinars will be released in the coming months. We will continue to publish dossiers documenting these inter-conference events in forthcoming issues of *The Angle*, as we did last year. If you have a great idea for an online event or webinar you would like to help organize between now and the summer, please reach out to us. We are always open to developing more ways for us to gather, connect, and share knowledge.

If I'm excited about this year's inter-conference activities, I am ecstatic about the progress of our planning for the 2026 ACCUTE conference. The response we had to our call for panel proposals was fantastic, and we currently have over sixty (!) member-organized, Creative Writing and Joint-Association panel paper calls up on our website. This bodes very well for a conference program that will be rich and diverse in research across periods, fields, and methodologies. And the general call for papers is up, as well, inviting members to share the work that they are currently engaged in with our great scholarly community. We have signed a lease to hold a four-day conference at Concordia University's downtown campus. We'll have quality space and support there, and the location is central and convenient for enjoyment of all that Tiohtià:ke/ Montréal has to offer at the start of the summer. We expect to build on the successes of last year's conference, repeating some of the new events and features we introduced, like the Book La(u)nch, Member-Organized Workshops, ACCUTE Karaoke (among others things), and to adjust some elements on which we received feedback, such as ensuring that caucuses can linger in their rooms even if their scheduled meetings go over time, and holding the AGM at a time when more members can attend. Please share and answer the calls for papers, and stay tuned for the Call for Workshops, and a new section of the ACCUTE website that will provide information about accommodations and a wide range of things to do while in Tiohtià:ke/ Montréal.

The ACCUTE board is fully populated and engaged. I would like to thank our returning board members, Megan Arnot (Contract Academic Faculty Caucus Rep), Rajarshi Banerjee (President, Graduate Caucus), Jessi MacEachern (Colleges), Neta Gordon (CPC Committee), Allan Pero (Editor of ESC), our amazing executive and Concordia team members, Cynthia Quarrie (Vice-President), Ghislaine Comeau (ACCUTE Coordinator extraordinaire!), Josie Teed and Gladwell Pamba (Coordination and Communications Assistants), and to welcome our new members, Glenn Clifton (CWC Collective), Richard Douglas-Chin (BIPOC Caucus). Thank you all for your commitment to keeping ACCUTE relevant to its membership, and sustainable, during a challenging period in the history of higher education in general, and humanities education in particular. And, of course, thanks again to our departed board members, Doug Ivison, Adam Dickinson, Anna Guttman, Cheryl Lousley, and Chinelo Ezenwa, for all they contributed. I hope to be able to share news about the future executive leadership of ACCUTE soon, which will be something else to look forward too!

I have been following, and attending when I can, the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences online meetings and events, and will soon discuss with the ACCUTE Board if and how we may wish to participate in the "Big Thinking Summit: Inflection Point" that they are planning for June 9-11, 2026, at the University of Alberta. You can learn more about the call for that Summit program by visiting the Federation website.

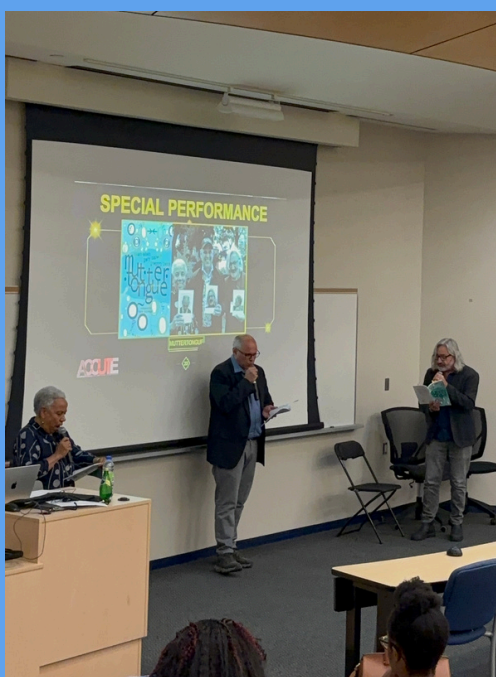
In the meanwhile, please accept my best wishes for a creative, productive, and fulfilling academic year ahead. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming ACCUTE events and gatherings.

Sincerely,

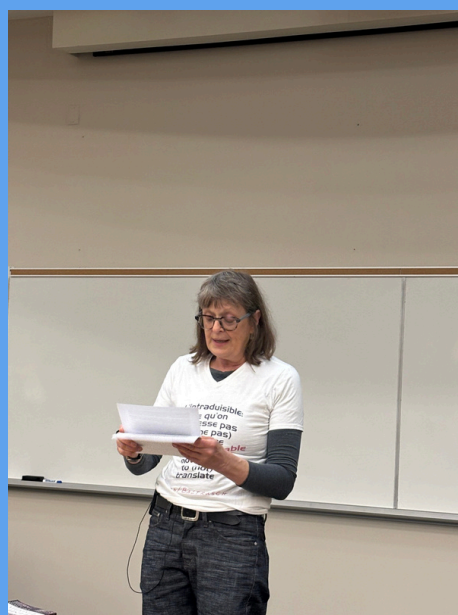
Jason Camlot, President



ACCUTE 2025 went off without a hitch this May! Here are some highlights



A special performance by spoken word group Muttertongue (left) following Erín Moure's plenary lecture (below)



The ACCUTE executive's own Gladwell Pamba (left) participating in the Rapid Reading event



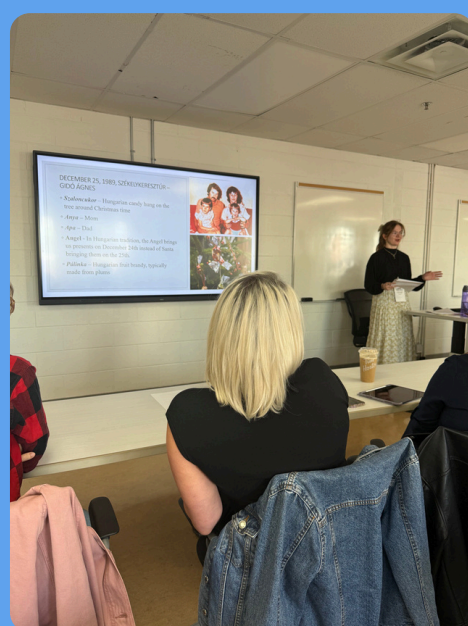
The ACCUTE executive team serenades at karaoke!

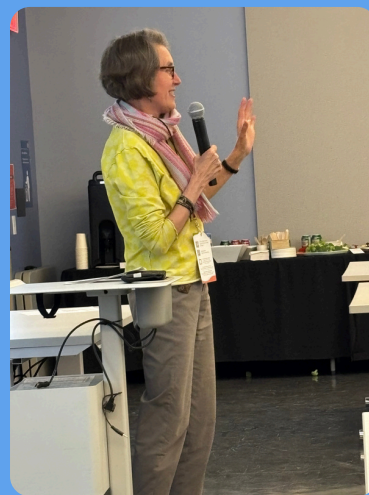
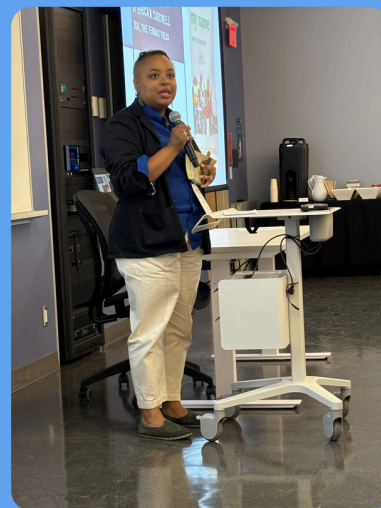


Prof. Nathalie Cooke presents Menu Matters: Conundrums for Convivial Conversation at the ACCUTE Banquet



The main event: ACCUTE panelists deliver their presentations, covering everything from *Anne of Green Gables* to Yoko Ono





ACCUTE members introduce
their new publications at our
Book L(a)unch

INTRODUCING OUR INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS

ACCUTE is thrilled to welcome three new members to our board of directors! You can read about our complete board of directors [here](#).

Glenn Clifton

*Coordinator, Creative Writing Collective
2024-2026*



Glenn Clifton is a writer of fiction, plays, and academic articles. His fiction has appeared in *The Ex-Puritan*, *The New Quarterly*, *On Spec*, *Prairie Fire*, and *The Fiddlehead*, amongst other places, and his research into creative writing pedagogy has appeared in *University of Toronto Quarterly*. He is a professor in Sheridan College's CW&P program.

Richard Douglass-Chin

Member-at-large, BIPOC Caucus 2025-2026

RICHARD DOUGLASS-CHIN, B.A. (McMaster), M.A. (Western), Ph.D. (McMaster), specializes in Postcolonial, Asian African, African American and African Diasporic literature. He has published articles in *MELUS*, *FUSE*, and *Revista la Torre*. His critical text, *Preacher Woman Sings the Blues*, investigates the literary connections between contemporary African American female authors and their eighteenth and nineteenth-century predecessors. He has also published poems and short stories in *Rampike* and several anthologies.



His examination of the influence of Asian and African literary and philosophical traditions on American transcendentalism, modernism and postmodernism have taken him to South Africa, the Caribbean, and the Yale-China Institute of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has been a featured speaker at Isaac Royall House and Slave quarters in Medford, Massachusetts, where he presented his ongoing and ground-breaking research on one of the first extant records of African American women's experience in writing-- the 1783 petition of Belinda Sutton to the Massachusetts Legislature. His short story "Blood Guitar," about the integral influence of West African art on Picasso's cubism and modernism in general, was published in *The African American Review*, and his article "Madness and Translation of the Bones in NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!*" in the essay collection *Madness in Black Women's Diasporic Fictions: Aesthetics of Resistance* (Palgrave Macmillan, eds. Caroline Brown and Johanna Garvey). Another article "Exit the King: The Theatres of War, Cruelty, and West African Ceremonial Egungun Masquerade in NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!*" is forthcoming in the *Edinburgh Critical Studies in Avant-Garde Writing* series. He is presently a reviewer for the *International Mad Studies Journal*.

Joel Baetz

President, Canadian Association of Chairs of English (Ex-officio) 2025-2026

I'm heading into my fifth year as Chair in my department – and my first as President of CACE. I've held various administrative positions, but the most rewarding so far was the Director for the Centre of Teaching and Learning at Trent. I've written a book on Canadian First World War poetry (*Battle Lines* [2018]), and published essays on Robert Service's war journalism, Rohinton Mistry's formulation of cricket, and Ann-Marie MacDonald's rendition of trauma. I teach at a small campus, which means I get to lead a good range of courses, including ones on graphic novels, poetry, and Canadian literature. At present, I'm building a research interest in Toronto literatures and the value of an English degree (and its cognate skills and knowledge).



A message from Joel:

Here at CACE Headquarters, we're getting ready for a new year. Last year was a great success! Led by Anna Guttman, we organized two panels throughout the year, and then gathered at George Brown for our hybrid conference and a panel at ACCUTE. It was great to see everyone; even better to share ideas and challenges – about financial austerity, relationships with grad programs, experiential learning, and department well-being – from our vantage points.

At the moment, our executive is looking for ways to support Chairs of English departments. We have some ideas – but if you, dear reader, have some suggestions (especially if you're a Chair), let us know.

Also please let us know if you missed an email very much like this note from a couple of weeks ago. It could be that you're not on our membership list, and we're happy to add you.

You can reach me at joelbaetz@trentu.ca.
Happy new year, everyone!

GRADUATE STUDENT CAUCUS - A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT RAJ BANERJEE

Hello All:

The past one year has been immensely productive for the Graduate Student Caucus, and we are gearing up towards an even more successful year ahead. Right at the beginning of this academic year, I want to thank YOU, graduate students, whose multifaceted roles – as researchers, as teachers, as writers – keep inspiring one another. I am delighted to introduce our GSC Team for 2025-2026, and, with utmost gratitude, I have the pleasure of sharing with you what we have been working on throughout the summer.



Melanie Fishbane is our **Vice President**. Among several important pieces of work, she has taken the initiative to wrap up the *leviathan task* of systematically and sustainably updating our **data/contact management** system that we began a year and a half ago. If you want to represent your own department and be a part of the GSC, or if you are already a Grad Student Rep for ACCUTE at your institution, remain in touch with **Melanie**.

Bailey Schaan is our **Social Media Lead**. She has resuscitated our [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, that has been dormant for a few years now, and she is already working on how to make information, updates, and inquiries more readily accessible through such platforms. She will also work closely with the ACCUTE Social Media Team to be – and keep all of us grad students – in sync. Keep an eye out for **Bailey's** posts for GSC events, webinars, and many more exciting things coming up in the next few months.





Marisa Bordonaro is our **Secretary**. Not only has she been administering and recording our meetings over the past few months but also has been working closely with the team to finalise **GSC's Panel** for the conference in Montreal next year: ***Beyond Interdisciplinarity***. Please keep an eye out for the CFP if you want to submit an abstract. To know more about this grad student exclusive panel, please get in touch with **Marisa**.

Craig Jacobs is our **Honorary Advisor** this year. Having served as the vice president for a year, working closely with the president to structure, restructure, archive, and **optimise communication** across reps, he has generously accepted the GSC's request and has agreed to remain on the team as an advisor helping with every decision-making and maintaining best practices. **Craig** is also in charge of the ***Annual Graduate Student Survey***, a document that has proven to be of importance not only to the grad student community but also to other ACCUTE Caucuses.



I, **Raj Banerjee**, have the pleasure and honour of serving as the President for one more term, and I am delighted to work with such a brilliant team this year. I want to thank Craig Jacobs and Marc Lynch for their constant hard work last year that allowed me to create a space for such an organised team this year. I also thank each of the **Grad Reps** for being regularly engaged; without you, there is no GSC! In the following few months, look out for more opportunities to get involved in events that the GSC is organising this year: **talks, webinars, and discussion groups**, all to ensure academic/career success for grad students. *A very exciting year is ahead of us!!!*

For any query you have, please contact us through GSC's freshly revamped webpage [here](#). *Keep Smiling!*

Raj Banerjee
President, Graduate Student Caucus, ACCUTE



BIPOC/ACCUTE INTERVIEWS: FIRST PERSON WITH ERICA CARDWELL

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 or 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, BIPOC Caucus

In particular, we would like to invite BIPOC members of ACCUTE who reside and teach outside of Ontario to participate in this series!

Chinelo Ezenwa: Hi Erica! My name is Chinelo, and I am an Assistant Professor at Memorial University. I was really excited when we got your e-mail saying you wanted to join our conversation. Thank you for that. Please could you tell us about yourself.

Erica Cardwell: Thank you very much Chinelo, and congratulations on your appointment at Memorial. My name is Erica Cardwell. I teach in the Arts, Culture and Media department at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). I previously taught in the English department at UTSC and have recently transitioned into this new position. I specialize in feminist labor practices, collective leadership, experimental and hybrid prose, art criticism, queer literature, and more.

Chinelo: Nice to meet you, Erica! Your chosen first question is what does it mean to be BIPOC ACCUTE? So, we will start with that.

Erica: The acronym BIPOC often feels a bit recent to me, “recent” as in the past four or five years. I think it became more politicized after the uprisings of 2020 – the acronym wasn’t being used the way that it is used now. I am also American, and a lot of my teaching experience is based in the US, in New York. In my experience, BIPOC is not something used most of the time there. People reference each other as people of color or Black people. I still find myself adjusting to it mainly because there is a way that BIPOC can frankly oversimplify experiences. Honestly, I find the word “racialized” to amplify the context that these distinctions place us in. For instance, in affinity settings, like the ACCUTE BIPOC faculty association, it is helpful for all of us to share and discuss micro and macro aggressions, our actual experiences in the classroom, decolonial, antiracist pedagogy work, and ways to activate our allies and be more visible. I was thrilled to see that there is an affinity group within ACCUTE and don’t see why a group like this shouldn’t exist.

Chinelo: Other colleagues have discussed the lack of specificity with the term BIPOC in previous conversations. And I can suggest it again be put on the agenda for our next year's conference, whether it's something we want to continue using or prefer to have a different way of addressing ourselves. I've been in groups that use terms like "racialized," "equity deserving," "equity seeking," etc. But none of these come without any questions or problems, I think. If you are at the conference, we hope you are able to join us for the meeting. At this point, we can move to a more "fun" part of our discussion. What's the most fun or most critically relevant BIPOC book or movie you've read or seen recently? Or if you were to write a book or direct a movie, what would be the title? You can pick one of the questions.

Erica: My most fun and critically relevant recommendation is called *The Fire Inside* and it's about the young Detroit-based boxer Claressa Shields. The film shows her progression from becoming a boxer to winning national and international competitions. The film also depicts how the media rarely focused on Shields' success and the difficulties she faced being underrecognized despite being so talented.

And I did write a book that came out in March. It's called *Wrong is not my Name: Notes on (Black) Art*. It's a hybrid book, a collection of critical art, writing, and memoir. And it talks about the experience of losing my mother when I was 20, how my grief process inspired my writing, and my relationship to visual art and culture. The book is framed as a rhetorical strategy – taking a question and writing around it. And the question was, "was my mother an artist?" The early process of writing the book was challenging because it felt like a brand-new way of approaching memoir. I had to become a "critic of my own life" in many ways; I had to find a way to let my early grieving process be a source of self-study and research.

Chinelo: First of all, I'm really sorry to hear about your mother and I am glad that the writing of this book helped you through the grieving process. I also now recall seeing your book title in your email and thinking it quite intriguing. It reminded me of Lawrence Hill's *Book of Negroes* with the alternate title *Someone Knows My Name*. If you don't mind my asking, how did you arrive at your title and what does it mean within the context of your book and to you?

Erica: The title is from June Jordan, the poet and activist, and it is taken from her poem called "Poem about my Rights." There is a phrase in the poem where Jordan states, "I am not wrong. Wrong is not my name." She is speaking from the position of being a Black woman who has been completely rejected and neglected by society. In this moment, Jordan is speaking to herself, talking to herself. When I first encountered that poem many, many years ago, I found it to be incredibly empowering. I would write it in the margins of my books. And I think it was kind of echoing in my head as I was finishing my book. And so that's why I chose it for the title. I also really wanted people to say those words. I wanted the words to be said almost like an incantation to really speak Jordan's words, to honour her.

Chinelo: Because you put it like that, I really have to read this poem and those words. Are they connected to your mother; you also mentioned that you were considering your mother as an artist.

Erica: So I referenced this question as rhetorical because in a very literal sense, I knew my mother was not an artist. She didn't have a secret artistic practice or paintings hidden under her bed or anything like this. I was more so wanting to believe in her greatness and in her power and her magnificence and in her brilliant mind. My mother died almost 23 years ago.

I am 43 years old. I was so young when I lost her. A lot of my processing, my mourning, required curiosity, and I needed to really look at her life with this distance. Thinking of her as an artist elevated that understanding for me. I think it also serves as a way of examining the archetype of Black womanhood. It is similar to how Jordan says “wrong is not my name” as a way of ripping the archetype away from a white supremacist viewpoint. Thinking of my mother as an artist is my attempt to honor her as well.

Chinelo: That’s such a beautiful way to think about your mother. Thank for sharing that with us. I have one last question. I don’t want to put you on the spot, but are you working on something new now?

Erica: I am, yeah. It is in the early stages. I continue to be quite fascinated with inheritance. And as a writer, I enjoy looking at the way inheritance shows up in my creative work. I’ve also become really interested in textile, fabric, and quilting in particular, and the way that our ancestors, our grandmothers passed on love and tradition through quilting. I’m also looking at the ways inheritance is present beyond biology; instead queering familial connections and focusing more on kingship and chosen networks of care.

Chinelo: It sounds fascinating. I’ll look forward to the book or books that come out. I admire creative writers particularly because I am not sure it’s something I can do. I think I have been taught to be too self-criticizing and if asked to write something creative might never get to the point where I actually give it to an editor to say yes or no.

Erica: That is a such a common and very relatable feeling!

Chinelo: So, the last thing I have on here is the open question. Would you like to share any words of wisdom for present and potential BIPOC ACCUTE identifying members?

Erica: Find your people. When I first signed up for ACCUTE, I immediately started looking for affinity groups. This is not a small thing. If we don’t, we begin to internalize difficult experiences or microaggression without a sounding board of like minded and supportive friends and mentors. We need peers who will listen and offer support, and vice versa, of course. At orientation, I met colleagues, who became friends. And that’s been very helpful for me.

Chinelo: I appreciate your joining us in this conversation, Erica, and for your words of encouragement! It’s great that you have that friend from your orientation. That’s also the type of community that we are trying to build within ACCUTE, so that people don’t feel so alone. Hopefully, we can carry on some of these discussions during our BIPOC ACCUTE meeting at the 2026 ACCUTE conference in Montreal.

***Fangs* by Gladwell Khavayie Pamba**

The ACCUTE executive's very own Gladwell Pamba was the winner of the 2025 Creative Writing Collective's Graduate Student Writing Contest in the fiction category. Congratulations Gladwell! The Angle is pleased to share her story Fangs.

My father vanished for days, sometimes weeks, and often returned with an impenetrable look, and said nothing even when my mother asked him with whom and where he'd been. She served him boiled pumpkin and black tea for supper while the rest of us ate coconut fish and ugali and still he didn't ask why she served him such a pathetic meal. Sometimes I was afraid that the fish would choke me, so I ate slowly while avoiding his eyes.

"We didn't know you are coming back," my mother said. "So we didn't count you in for supper."

My father bent over his plate as if about to disappear in it.

After supper, my aunt said to my mother that a man's memory was like a river. It meandered but never forgot its course.

"Do you not remember that river that dried completely back then in Baaba's land?" my mother said. "Rivers dry up so don't tell me that. I am not talking about seasonal rivers. If he wants to go, let him stay gone. Let him forget the course."

Then one night, towards the end of January, our river flowed away once again. My mother was watching the ten p.m. telenovela, *El Cuerpo del Deseo* like she did every Tuesday. My father asked for his evening tea. But her heart, ears and eyes belonged to Salvador, the white man on the screen, with intense eyes, a hairy chest and a mane of curly hair like that of the Ethiopians. He always wore half-buttoned shirts. In contrast, my father was a small man with a small head. Sometimes it was impossible to believe he was my mother's husband because she was taller than him. In the telenovela, Salvador was a reincarnation of a rich old man called Pedro so that when his woman Isabel, looked at him, she saw Pedro and sometimes she saw Salvador. The oscillations between the old and the new Pedro's countenances made my mother stand next to the TV with her hands akimbo.

"How can this be? That someone who died comes back younger in a new body?" she asked her Salvador. "I didn't know white people have witchcraft too."

"They call it magic, not witchcraft," my aunt said when Salvador didn't respond.

"Whatever," my mother said before turning to my father. "Imagine if you went away and returned a handsome man like Salvador. Oh, how great that would be!"

Her laughter was a whirlwind first starting like a gentle breeze before gaining momentum and things on its way. My father smiled and when the two women resumed watching the telenovela, he stood, watched my mother then soundlessly exited like smoke through a grass-thatched roof.

That was the last time she watched the telenovela and the last time she also took tea.

But my aunt, whose face was neither beautiful nor ugly, continued with her routine of cooking tea because she said tea defined her. I didn't understand what she meant by that. She often said such things ever since she left her marriage and her job. She used to work in the ministry of tourism in the exports department as a tea connoisseur, an occupation that made her meet Nelson Mandela and Pépé Kallé – but one that my mother said made her lose her marriage because she was sleeping with the minister.

"Caffeine is a drug. Why do you think the Adventists don't take it?" my mother said. "I will not allow my child and myself to be addicts. John was suffering from tea addiction. Which man leaves at night in search of tea?"

"I would absolutely do that too," my aunt said.

My mother replaced tea with whisky. She said it made her warmer, calmer and gave her less nightmares.

"Nightmares about what," I asked.

"Your father comes to me with fangs dripping with venom, ready to bite me. His head grows triangular and I see he has become a cobra but with your father's face. It is these my legs that save me, my dear. Every time, he swears he will get me. If I don't wake up one of these days, just know he killed me."

I said that was bullshit and she said I had a big head and no brains, a head that tore her vagina when giving birth to me. My aunt, putting away the monthly Wasafiri Magazine, said I didn't tear her vagina. She herself ate plates of bhajia when pregnant and she enlarged like a roto tank.

"If you had walked more to the grocery stores, carried some jerricans of water, this girl would have slid out in seconds," my aunt said, "But when your demons decide on something, we can never change your mind."

"Six kilograms is a monster child."

I thought my mother's head was bigger especially when she wrapped the headgear when going to church. She seemed to carry the entire world on her head. Later, my aunt told me that just after giving birth to me, my mother begged my father for liquor. When he declined, she threatened to strangle me.

"Some women do that. And they eat their babies," my aunt whispered. "Some pregnancies are brutal like that."

I begged her to let me sleep on the couch with her lest my mother carried out her threat now. But the couch had a depression because it was old and my aunt would squash me in there so I slept on the furthest end of the bed, listening to my mother's snores. Outside our house, the crickets screeched and lamented about my father's absence.

February arrived with its brutal heat that split our lips and cracked the soles of our feet. Soon it faded with the arrival of the short rains in March. The townsfolk started preparing land ready for planting maize and beans. We waited for my father to plough with the oxen and farrow the land. None of us could plough with the oxen because they refused to stay still and wear the yoke and they ignored our commands. Slowly, the countryside transformed into thick greenery towards April and my mother stood at the gate all afternoons, waiting for my father. The termites in their translucent skirts came out of their anthills to play and we picked them and fried them at night. Then the mushrooms sprouted all over the countryside but my father was nowhere. He had never been gone for that long. We didn't plant anything during that season.

Since his disappearance, his side of the wardrobe remained untouched and his shoes neatly arranged behind the door. Sometimes I caught my mother staring at his trench coat behind the door and running her fingers through it. She sighed deeply, sniffed them at night. Not long after that, she stopped wearing his jackets and gumboots, which they used to share all the time.

I mostly thought of my father's two incisors, protruding like those of a badger. Once when Smile Train set up a free cleft lip and pallet medical camp in our district, my mother insisted to him to go.

"He sure needs the surgery, doctor," my mother insisted when the doctor turned him away. "Does it look normal to you, that a man has a tooth like that? You said in your ad that you would give people back their smiles. Give him his smile."

My father held my hand tighter. That was always how he was. He was a man who seemed to tiptoe around the house like one creeping towards a fowl to capture and slaughter it. But I wished he banged the table to get my mother's attention on that last night. That was what my aunt's husband used to do before she ran away and came to live with us. He'd bang the table, bang her head, and tear her dress. But my father did none of those. Even when he left, I thought that, for once, he was going to fetch a bamboo cane to beat my mother's deafness and thirst for Salvador that blocked her sense of place and time.

I asked my aunt where she thought my father was.

"The only women who know for sure where their husbands are are the widows," she said. "Maybe he is dead then we can safely assume he is in the ground. Or maybe he is staying with a Buganda woman just across the border."

"No, he isn't in Uganda," my mother said. "He likes them fair and stubborn. But the Buganda are docile."

"You and your stubbornness couldn't keep him," my aunt said.

That speculation of whether or not he was alive and where and with whom ended with my mother gulping her whisky and saying, "This is a vacation!" with her hands trembling. My aunt asked her if she wanted some tea perhaps to cool her anger, and my mother said, "I am not angry!" But her eyes were red and her brows twitched incessantly.

"You are going to die of a HBP, Miriam."

"Why would I die?"

"Because of that anger eating your heart, making you look older than me." She exhaled. "Have some green tea. It will calm your nerves and fix your skin."

"My nerves are calm," she said, gulping some more and shutting her eyes tight as she swallowed the whisky.

I was beginning to think that perhaps it was true as my mother alleged that tea was a drug because my aunt was always taking tea. She stocked all flavours of tea as if to punish us. Every morning, the aroma of her ginger or cinnamon tea woke me up, making my stomach growl with need.

"For God's sake, don't you have anything else to do in this life?" my mother muttered, walking into the kitchen. The hair on her head pointed in all directions like accusing fingers.

"What's better than a cup of tea? Waiting for a ghost?" my aunt asked. She always found a way of bringing my father into any discussion – even if my mother said the rain was too heavy, my aunt said, "I bet you think it is a waste that he is not here."

"I wish he was actually a ghost," said my mother.

"Is he dead?" I asked.

My aunt continued cooking all kinds of tea, first letting it boil in water for long, tormenting us, letting the scent reach every crevice of the house, making the windowpanes turned misty and only then did she pour milk into the boiling black tea and watch it turn golden brown and swell in the sufuria before straining it. Her teas had occasions. She took chamomile tea for her period pain.

That tea smelt like poisonous leaves. She took green tea before bed and said it calmed her nerves, and suggested to my mother quite routinely, to try it to cure her lovesickness. She took hibiscus tea when she was in a good mood like when she received money through her m-pesa. Anytime she smiled down at her phone, we knew it was an m-pesa message. Money gave her a distinct smile. She took cinnamon tea in the afternoons on the days it didn't rain. The smells of tea tormented my mother and she said they gave her migraines and made her nauseous.

"No, it is alcohol that is pounding your head and shredding your tummy," my aunt said.

Packets of teas and bottles of whiskies vied for space in the kitchen cabinets while I took cerelac melee for breakfast.

My aunt used to say, "You are making this girl soft, giving her such things for breakfast as if she is a white child. She needs to harden."

My mother was hospitalized in St. Luke's hospital in Bungoma town, about ten kilometers from our village. The hospital stood out of nowhere the way anthills did. It was painted white and blue, standing on the side of the highway to Uganda, and if a truck driver dozed off for a second, he would crash into the wards. My mother's finger was amputated because it couldn't heal months after she had a small cut and it kept widening and rotting. The old doctor, with a nametag, Dr. Sifuna, said that finger would eat the rest of her body if she didn't stop drinking alcohol. When he left the room, she called him an idiot.

"You tell me where the alcohol comes in," she said to us, pointing that bandaged protrusion, stiff like a finger and I wanted to ask her if the doctor had given her the finger and could we see it? She did not look like one who had just had surgery. Her face was bright like August skies, her eyes alert. We didn't worry like other people who came to visit their patients and who prayed in loud voices, calling on God to heal them.

"Well, see now you have no finger Miriam, whether it is you who ate it or the alcohol. The fact is you don't have it. What happens when you want to wear a ring?"

"Why the hell would I wear that ring?"

When she came out of hospital with her four fingers and her bandage still fresh, we woke up the following day to a pile of my father's clothes, shoes, his documents all spread out in the front yard like an open-air market sale. My mother stood with a jerrican of paraffin and a matchbox, watching the pile like one viewing a body in a coffin. She announced that if we wanted anything from

his belongings, we should take now or forever keep our peace. My aunt who was sipping vanilla tea – that she said made one’s skin glow – rose from the lounge chair in the veranda and picked my father’s hat, his wrist watch and his fountain pen.

“Are you angry at him?” she asked me.

“Why would I be?” I asked.

“Because you aren’t picking anything and you participate in the nonsense protest of no tea, as though it will bring him back. Your father tried his best, you know. It is not easy to live with Miriam.”

I fondled the postcard from Mombasa. There was a shirtless man on a dhow, pulling ropes against what looked like strong winds. The giant waves rose high and I’d thought the Indian Ocean to be a beast, opening its mouth to swallow the man and his dhow. My mother watching me, said, “Nonsense things your father gathered.” But I still kept it anyway. My father said Mombasa was an island, and that once, it almost sank, and that the sun there rose at five a.m. The post card was dated 1985. That was when he used to work in Mombasa Port, delivering goods on his truck to Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan and DRC. The fire that ate all my father’s belonging that morning in our front yard burnt with my mother’s rage, hissing, clucking, puffing, almost jumping across to the sugarcane farms and it was why everyone around the sugarcane scheme needed a license to light a fire outside their houses but my mother, with her four fingers and stubborn head didn’t care for none of that. My father’s life was reduced to a heap of ash and my aunt asked if we should put it in an urn to signify his death. My mother only wiped her face with her four fingers.

That night, all of us in the bedroom with the yellow lamps on, dull like badly cooked rice, my aunt said we should have sold those clothes on market day and made extra money. My mother said no, my father would have turned up and demanded the money and her body.

“Mwana, I suffered under that man’s weight,” she said. They laughed at this.

“Do you remember that green towel you hated?” my aunt asked her.

Her face was white because of the night cream she applied on her face to arrest wrinkles. My aunt repeated the story, barely opening her mouth because of the tight mask. She said that when my mother was pregnant, my father was saving up to buy a huge pink towel that had flamingos printed on it but when he was ready with his savings, all the pink towels in the little baby shop in the village were gone and he turned up in the maternity ward, green with pain, and with a green towel. Here, in her shrill voice, my aunt laughed, and it sounded like little hundred mice squeaking.

"You asked if he didn't think the baby was neither a girl nor a boy or why would he bring such an ugly towel? Then you started crying."

"I was crying because the birth wound was stinging so hard," said my mother. "And his sorry wasn't helping with the pain, neither was his voice, so uneven in the morning. Like John is quiet but when he talks, he doesn't say the right there. I kept thinking to myself, I am never ever getting pregnant again."

"Yet you did again after that," my aunt said. "And you never forgave him from then onwards." She touched my mother's arm. They sighed. "It wasn't anyone's fault. There is a reason you lost it."

The two women then reached for their drinks. I drank fragments of his memory and I thought of his dead smile and vacant eyes, his quietness that he could simply never have demanded so much from my mother. I wondered too why tea was so fundamental on the night he left, as if without it, he would have died. It was also the first time I questioned why he could not have just gone into the kitchen and made the cup of tea.

"Anyway," my aunt said when enough silence had sat in the room with us, "What will happen now to this piece of land now that your crazy ass burnt all his documents including the title deed?"

My mother chuckled.

"I might be angry yes. Angry because am I a widow or am I not? Angry because he gets to choose when to be a husband and father and when not to be. I am angry, yaya. But I am not crazy enough to make nonsense decisions," my mother said and my aunt smiled stiffly through the facemask. "When everyone got something for themselves, I got the title deed."

My father was stubbornly absent a year on, and two years on. His memory was fading like a second rainbow and I felt horrible when weeks passed and I had not thought of him. There was also no woman showing up on our doorstep with a protruding belly, fondling it and saying, "I am looking for John. I was told he lives in this plot." The evening I remembered him and asked my aunt if he would ever come back, she said:

"Baby, he chose himself and I don't think he's ever coming back."

"What about me?" I said.

"What about you?"

"Why did he not choose me?"

"The sad bit about life is that the world doesn't revolve around you, baby."

"But mama said-"

"Your mama says a lot of nonsense. People are free to go back on their

decisions, revise promises, and keep them. Your father revised his decisions. And you too, always feel free to revise your decisions. Free yourself from the shadows."

"I am not mama's shadow," I said.

That very evening, I took the lemongrass tea when my aunt offered it to me – she said it was good for the womb. I felt it settle into a warm puddle in my stomach, displacing the empty spaces reserved for my father.

"Just because I kept his title deed, doesn't mean I forgave him," said my mother, watching me taking tea.

"Who said he wants forgiveness?" asked my aunt.

My mother stared at her, her mouth opening and then closing quickly like the touch-me-not plant, her eyes fierce, then dropping the ferocity perhaps thinking it wasn't worth it.

"My child, pass me that tea but don't put sugar. Your aunt speaks ovyoovyo," she said at last.

In place of the amputated finger, there remained a stub like a fossilized tree stump on her hand. My mother stared at it, with a strange longing that evening and we all decided to watch the new telenovela called She-Wolf, where the lead actress, Lyka fell in love with Noah. Both of them were unaware that they came from a line of competing were-wolves and would experience a transformation soon. Upon learning this, Lyka bit Noah, as she had a stronger immunity and passed it to him for the transformation was more often than not, fatal.

"I would call it the bite of love," my aunt said when She-wolf took a break. "In your case, Miriam, fangs of love." Her laughter was uproarious, a posho mill being powered and now she was hurtling, creaking.

"Love? Ha. Nobody is biting me," my mother said, shaking her head. "I am staying alive by all means because will you look at that Noah? My God. He has such perfect teeth." She sipped the tea, upped the volume, her eyes dreamy, and her heart finding her new object of affection when She-Wolf resumed.

My father never returned as Salvador nor as himself.

Some rivers dried, my mother had said, and it was as if they never existed in the first place.

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ACCUTE Membership

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

ACCUTE'S MISSION

To create the conditions for a diverse and strong association of teachers and scholars of literatures in English in Canadian colleges and universities so that we can share, support, and learn from each other. To promote the interests of our members by facilitating the dissemination and exchange of research and the exploration of professional issues, by organizing scholarly and professional meetings, by seeking to improve working conditions, by representing and promoting the scholarly and research interests of members before such bodies as provincial and federal granting agencies, and by supporting the interests and aspirations of members entering the profession, and seeking careers outside the profession.

As an ACCUTE member, you gain:

- o Four issues annually of cutting-edge scholarship from ESC: English Studies in Canada, the nation's leading generalist journal in the discipline and a global force in multidisciplinary humanities scholarship (ESC is downloaded more than 80,000 times per year in over 80 countries);
- o A direct political voice in one of the largest and most recognized humanities associations in Canada;
- o Membership in the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), which lobbies on our behalf to SSHRC and the Federal government;
- o Our annual conference, where scholars from around Canada and the world discuss research, teaching, and professional concerns, and where experts from across all areas and methodologies of English studies can offer you new insights and areas of inquiry;
- o Eligibility for students, contract faculty and underwaged scholars for travel funds to present at our annual conference.
- o The right to propose conference panels (all papers are anonymously peer-reviewed);
- o Access and the right to submit to the quarterly ACCUTE Newsletter - THE ANGLE, with articles about scholarly and professional concerns, as well as advocacy documents and surveys and data on the profession;
- o Access and the right to submit to posts, links and images to ACCUTE's recently expanded social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Contract Academic Faculty Caucus Facebook, Twitter @ACCUTEEnglish and @ACCUTE_CAF) and its blog English Matters, which builds on our advocacy voice and opens space for discussion, promotes your Calls for Papers, and provides our well known jobs list of academic and other pertinent employment opportunities.

WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER THROUGH OUR MEMBERSHIP, AND TOGETHER WE SUPPORT THE FIELD OF LITERARY STUDIES IN CANADA:

- o ACCUTE advocates for improvements to working conditions in the Canadian academy, including issues related to Contract Academic Faculty;
- o We developed a best practices document regarding contract faculty employment, which was unanimously supported by the Canadian Association of Chairs of English and sent to English departments across Canada;
- o Working with CFHSS, we are lobbying SSHRC regarding our members' research needs;
- o ACCUTE is regularly consulted by CFHSS, SSHRC, and other agencies regarding professional and scholarly policy matters, including, recently, open-access policies, metrics, and other issues;
- o ACCUTE's presidents and board members address universities, colleges, government, government agencies, and national forums on pressing scholarly and professional issues.



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CALL FOR PAPERS

ACCUTE 2026

Concordia University, Tiohtià:ke (Montreal)
4 – 7 June 2026

DEADLINE: 21 November 2025

The 2026 Conference CFP for the [Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English](#) (ACCUTE) is now OPEN. We are accepting proposals of 250 words to our General Call for Papers, Member-Organized Panels, Creative Writing Panels, and Joint-Sponsored Panels. Please use the [Online Submission Form](#) to submit your paper proposal.

You do not need to be an ACCUTE member to propose a paper, but if your paper is accepted, you will need to be a member to register for and attend the conference.

Graduate Students and Contract Faculty who are members of ACCUTE will be eligible for a partial travel reimbursement as funds allow.

GENERAL CALL FOR PAPERS

ACCUTE's General Call welcomes papers in all fields of English studies. Submit ***no more than one*** 250-word proposal, including a 50-word abstract and a brief biographical note using our [Online Submission Form](#) by **Friday, 21 November**

2025. NOTE: Members may submit **one** proposal to the General Call for Papers and **one** additional proposal to **one** organized panel call of their choice.

Please contact info.accute@gmail.com if you have any questions about the submission process.

MEMBER-ORGANIZED PANELS

ACCUTE members have developed calls for panels on a broad range of topics. You will find the list of Member-Organized Panels to which you can apply directly in the pages below. Submit your 250-word proposal, including a 50-word abstract and a brief biographical note using our [Online Submission Form](#) by **Friday, 21 November 2025**. Please ensure you include the title of the panel to which you are directing your submission. Proposals that are not accepted for inclusion on a Member-Organized Panel will still be considered as part of our General Call for Papers.

CREATIVE WRITING PANELS

Creative Writing Panels are presented in collaboration with the Creative Writing Collective (CWC). Submit your 250-word proposal, including a 50-word abstract and a brief biographical note using our [Online Submission Form](#) by **Friday, 21 November 2025**. Please ensure you include the title of the panel to which you are directing your submission. Proposals that are not accepted for inclusion on a Creative Writing Panel will still be considered as part of our General Call for Papers.

JOINT-SPONSORED PANELS

Joint-Sponsored Panels are intended to foster links between ACCUTE and other scholarly associations. Panelists are not required to be ACCUTE members so long as they are members of good standing in the co-sponsoring association, but only ACCUTE members will be eligible for travel funding. Submit your 250-word proposal, including a 50-word abstract and a brief biographical note using our [Online Submission Form](#) by **Friday, 21 November 2025**. Please ensure you include the title of the panel to which you are directing your submission. Proposals that are not accepted for inclusion on a Joint-Sponsored Panel will still be considered as part of our General Call for Papers.

Organized Panel Overview

Panel Title	Organizer(s)	Panel Type
Literature in the Digital Age: Reading, Writing and Reviewing Across Platforms	Aman Grewal	Member-Organized
The Long Poem and the Nation-Discourse	Geoffrey Nilson	Member-Organized
Beyond Interdisciplinarity	Marisa Bordonaro, Bailey Schaan	Member-Organized
Mary Shelley's "The Last Man" in 2026	Raj Banerjee	Joint-Association (with NASSR)
Rethinking Romantic Science	Raj Banerjee	Joint-Association (with NASSR)
Transparency and its others in 18th century literature	Marcie Frank	Member-Organized
New Writing in a Time of Disorientation	Anna Veprinska, Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike	Member-Organized Creative Writing Panel
Indigenous Horror: Generic Disruptions	Krista Collier-Jarvis, Naomi Simone Borwein	Member-Organized
How Should a Person Be Bored?	Myra Bloom, Erin Wunker	Member-Organized
Precarious New Narratives for Contract and College Faculty	Jessi MacEachern, Megan Arnott	Member-Organized Roundtable
Urgent Academic Conversations: College and CÉGEP Concerns	Jessi MacEachern	Member-Organized Roundtable
Opacity, Agency, and the Subject in Creative Forms	Kendra Guidolin, Ritu Kurien	Member-Organized Creative Writing Roundtable
Speculative Renaissance	Kevin Pask	Member-Organized
The Literary Critic of Humour, Round Two	Danielle Bobker	Member-Organized
Wave Upon Wave: A Poetry Reading & Discussion	Gillian Sze	Member-Organized Creative Writing Panel

Poetry of Infrastructure / Poetic Infrastructures	Robert Stacey	Member-Organized
AMA and FAQ: Submitting your research to a journal	Mary Chapman, Allan Pero	Member-Organized
Nineteenth-Century Activism and Social Justice	Jo Devereux, Taylor Tomko	Joint-Association (with VSAO)
Roundtable on Victorian Incubators	Heather Marcovitch, Susan Johnston	Joint-Association Roundtable (with VSAWC)
Humour Me: Retelling Stories and Histories	Mohammad (Mo) Sharifi, Kristine Dizon	Member-Organized Roundtable
Irrepressibility: Women's Writing Throughout History	Charlotte Esme Frank, Emily McConkey	Member-Organized
R. Murray Schafer: Reassessing His Work and Legacy	Eric Schmaltz, Shannon Brown	Member-Organized
Imagining Spatiality in End of the World Narratives	Kirsten Bussière, Marisa Emmanouela Lewis	Member-Organized
Montreal in the Cultural Imagination: Mapping a City Through Story and Symbol	Nathalie Cooke, Lorraine York	Member-Organized
Narratives of the Unspoken: Trauma, Memory, and Identity	Nafiseh Shajani	Member-Organized
The World Remade: Deconstruction and Reconstruction through Language	Kate Sheckler	Member-Organized
Teaching, Researching, and Writing Literature in Genocidal Times: Gaza in the Classroom	Aaron Kreuter, Zishad Lak	Joint-Association (with CAPS)
Audience Reactions to Shakespeare Then and Now	Alexandra Lukawski, Alice Hinchliffe	Member-Organized
Reimagining Canada	Gregory Betts	Member-Organized
Worldbuilding as a Political Practice	Brent Ryan Bellamy	Member-Organized
Alienation and Identity in Western Canadian Poetry	Solomon Goudswaard	Member-Organized
Systems Thinking and/in Literature	Jay Ritchie	Member-Organized
Literature and the geo-logics of conquest	Brennan McCracken	Member-Organized
Forbidden Fiction: Intellectual Freedom, Fear, and Control on the Battleground of Banned Books	Zara Diab	Member-Organized

“That sh*t hurted”: Beyond the Limits of Language	Theo Fox, Tamara Frooman	Member-Organized
Mental Health in the Creative Writing Classroom	Samantha Annie Bernstein	Member-Organized Creative Writing Panel
Self in the Age of Autofiction	Concetta Principe	Member-Organized
Decolonizing the Language of AI	Chinelo Ezenwa, Basmah Rahman	Member-Organized Roundtable
Writing a Life from the Margins	Titi Aiyegbusi	Member-Organized
What is African Feminism?	Chinelo Ezenwa, Deborah Egbekpalu	Joint-Association (with CAAS)
Salvage Inventory &/or Inventory Salvage?	Mark McCutcheon, Titi Aiyegbusi	Member-Organized
“Special Issues” of Cultural and Critical Production in Canada	Bart Vautour, Marissa Carroll	Member-Organized
The Role of Publishing Houses in Shaping Literary Discourse	Tom Halford	Member-Organized
How Much Do I Need to Learn About Elves? -- Genre in the Creative Writing Workshop	Glenn Clifton	Member-Organized Creative Writing Panel
Tuning In to Literary Radio	Michael O’Driscoll, Sean Luyk	Member-Organized
The Future of EDI	Mohammad (Mo) Sharifi, Richard Douglas-Chin	Member-Organized Roundtable
Marxism vs. Poetry	Paisley Conrad, M.A. King	Member-Organized Roundtable
Sound Pedagogy: Listening to Literary Audio in Classrooms and Beyond	Karis Shearer, Klara du Plessis	Member-Organized
Gail Scott: Fiction+/Theory	Sarah Burgoyne, Dr. Jeff Noh	Member-Organized Joint-Association
Medieval Magic	Kathryn Walton, Megan Arnott	(with CSM) Joint-Association
Medieval Masculinities	Megan Arnott, Kathryn Walton	(with CSM) Member-Organized
Disability and Illness Narratives as Re-worlding	Jorge Vallejos	Member-Organized

Pedagogical Powder Kegs: Academic Freedom in an Era of Book Bans	Tina Trigg, Matthew Zantingh	Joint-Association Roundtable (with CLSG) Joint-
Voices Across Time: Using Student-Led Podcasts to Rediscover Medieval & Early Modern Texts	Lindsay Pereira, Ella Jando-Saul	Association Roundtable (with TEAMS)
Podcasting for Public Medievalism: Between Academic Research, Outreach, and Sound	Lindsay Pereira, Ella Jando-Saul	Joint-Association Roundtable (with TEAMS)
Teachers As Investigators in the Age of AI	Rahul Gautham Veliyil Edwin	Member-Organized
Speculative Fictions of Sleep and Wellness	Amala Poli, Suvendu Ghatak	Member-Organized
Redistributing Presence: Performance, Protest, and Displacement	Waed Hasan, Alice Hinchliffe, Sarah Rewega	Member-Organized
Climate Change and the Maximalist Novel	Anjalee Nadarajan	Member-Organized
Beyond Binaries: Victorian Literature in Transnational Contexts	Reza Taher-Kermani	Joint-Association (with NAVSA)
Ramones at Fifty	Peter Robert Brown	Joint-Association (with CAAS)

Member-Organized Panels

Literature in the Digital Age: Reading, Writing and Reviewing Across Platforms

Aman Grewal, McGill University, aman.grewal@mail.mcgill.ca

In the digital contemporary era, reading is no longer a solitary or private act. It is increasingly shaped by interactive, algorithmic and participatory cultures. From the viral success of #BookTok to the rise of Goodreads reviews, digital platforms are transforming how literature is discovered, interpreted and shared. These spaces blur the lines between reader, writer and critic to create new forms of literary engagement.

This panel explores how digital platforms reshape reading culture and the broader literary ecosystem. Questions to explore include, but are not limited to, how technologies influence what we read and how we talk about books. What aesthetic trends or forms of community

emerge in spaces where literature circulates via likes, comments and recommendation algorithms? How do digital reading audiences navigate questions of taste, value and visibility in an era of overwhelming content?

Papers that draw upon literature's entanglement with platform culture across a range of perspectives are welcome. Topics might include: social media-driven reading communities and amateur criticism; the aesthetics and genres emerging from online writing and publishing spaces; algorithmic influence on book discovery; the role of digital paratexts (reviews, tags, engagement metrics) in meaning-making; and the new forms of community forged through online literary discourse.

By gathering research across the fields of publishing, rhetoric studies, digital humanities and cultural studies, this panel aims to spark conversation about how reading culture is being reimagined and what that means for literary studies today.

The Long Poem and the Nation-Discourse

Geoffrey Nilson, Simon Fraser University, geoffrey_nilson@sfu.ca

What is the value, or lack thereof, of "Canada" and "Canadian" to understandings of the contemporary long poem? How are questions of nation, nationality, and national culture posed, theorized, and answered in the composition and criticism of long poems in Canada? Is the long poem a distinctly "Canadian genre" as argued by Dorothy Livesay (and many others), or is the long poem a tradition impossible to contain in any single national literature and, like the nation of Canada itself, a product of the transnational circulation of people, ideas, and capital?

This panel will include 3-4 panelists each with approximately 10-12 minutes to present their papers, followed by time for questions and discussion. This panel encourages submissions from BIPOC and 2S-LGBTQ+ critics/scholars and hopes to discuss the long poem and literature more broadly as forms of resistance, while recognizing the deep role they have played in colonialism, nation-building, and the Canadian imagination. Overall, the papers in this panel suggest that as a mode of writing history, the long poem is an ideal site of reading national culture, and will make a case for the importance of continued attention to the literary dimensions of the nation-discourse at this moment of heightened nationalism and jingoism.

Beyond Interdisciplinarity

Marisa Bordonaro, University of Western Ontario, mbordona@uwo.ca

Bailey Schann, University of Alberta, bschaan@ualberta.ca

Both literary and creative writing disciplines draw upon interdisciplinary approaches, which offer writers and scholars a diverse set of skills. While this appears beneficial at first, many scholars criticize the applicability of these skill sets in today's labour market and in their perpetuation of traditional institutional norms of the university (Donnelly; Rein). The question of the so-called disciplinary frontiers, therefore, persistently accompanies the need to define what interdisciplinarity entails. Is it inherently transformative in its reconceptualization of two - or more - disciplines (Moran)? Has it really shifted from its historical tendency to simply merge artistic knowledge (Augsburg)? Why, then, does interdisciplinarity often reinstate the very boundaries that it sets out to debunk? We invite graduate students to present papers or creative writing invested in, but not necessarily limited to:

- history/theory of disciplines
 - philosophy and disciplinarity
 - interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity
 - pedagogy and education
 - critical thought and education
 - the social vs. the hard sciences
 - the academic and the socio-cultural
 - arts and the world
 - politics of disciplining
 - academia and activism
 - creation, thought, and writing
-

Mary Shelley's "The Last Man" in 2026 (NASSR/ACCUTE)

Raj Banerjee, University of Western Ontario, rbanerj5@uwo.ca

Despite fielding staunch criticism and being labelled as a 'sickening' piece of work burdened with 'stupid cruelties' in 1826 Mary Shelley's 'The Last Man' not only survives resiliently but also, in fact, thrives on the critical awareness of our contemporary circumstances that testify the novel's relevance two centuries after its publication. Much like many other narratives revolving around plagues and pandemics, Shelley's marvellous novel has obviously found a new perspective in the midst of our own post-pandemic world while lending a frame to encapsulate this world. Are we re-thinking extinction and the posthuman condition now? Is our perception of the earth, and therefore, our environmental consciousness progressing or regressing today? Has disease - whether in the physiological body or in the socio-cultural body politic - been exposed as something other than its pre-pandemic rendition? Do frame-narratives remain as popular in our contemporary story-telling as they were in the Romantic era? Moreover, is the question of libraries and archives being reconceptualized in 2026? All these questions were as relevant to Shelley as they are to us in the twenty-first century. Celebrating the bicentennial of the novel's publication, therefore, this panel seeks papers that offer readings of Mary Shelley's 'The Last Man' to rediscover it in today's context.

Rethinking Romantic Science (NASSR/ACCUTE)

Raj Banerjee, University of Western Ontario, rbanerj5@uwo.ca

"[T]ranquility and order" constituted a "friend[-ship]" for Humphry Davy, in response to William Wordsworth's Preface to 'Lyrical Ballads'. In turn, Wordsworth reciprocates by maintaining that "the knowledge both of the poet and of the man of science is pleasure". While canonisation generally acknowledges distinctions that keep scientific and technological tracts segregated from literary and artistic endeavours, Romanticism - just like our current scholarship on the Romantic era - keeps blurring those distinctions consistently and exponentially. In the wake of Medical/Digital Humanities and AI, Romanticism offers us a way of reconceptualizing what 'science' meant, and what its position (or negation) was, both during the period and afterwards. After all, what Kant called 'Wissenschaft' had the human sciences within its purview too. Do we recognise such a purview in our poststructuralist, postmodernist, posthumanist milieu today? Has the perception of 'science' undergone a shift since 'Frankenstein' or 'Prometheus Unbound'? Can we rethink today's science through 'The Prelude', 'Christabel', or other pieces of literature? What constitutes the pleasure in/of science? This panel seeks papers examining how

Romantic literature stands alongside speculative or empirical sciences, alongside historical or philosophical debates within scientific disciplines, or alongside artistic pursuits indulging in scientific dialogue during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Transparency and its others in 18th century literature

Marcie Frank, Concordia University, marcie.frank@concordia.ca

The widespread fantasy of having a glass body or body part in the seventeenth-century has been associated with scholar's melancholy (Gill Speak, 1990). Meanwhile, historian of psychiatry, Edward Shorter has linked the "glass delusion" to the novelty of technologies for using glass in the period (<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-32625632>). The fantasy, however, has persisted beyond the novelty. Most recently, Caroline Crampton, has exploited its powerful materiality in *A Body of Glass* (2024), her history of health anxiety in the age of Google. This panel invites us to consider the various forms the fantasy took in eighteenth-century literature, including ruminations on transparency or its others, invisibility and opacity. What understanding of the relations of the body to disease and/or technology is to be gained by considering the literary examples? What makes literature a good vehicle for these fantasies? Some examples to think with include but are not limited to: Alexander Pope's description of the cave of spleen in *Rape of the Lock*; Mr. Spectator's invisibility; Eliza Haywood's *Invisible Spy*; Rousseau's treatment of the Ring of Gyges.

New Writing in a Time of Disorientation

Anna Veprinska, University of Calgary, anna.veprinska@ucalgary.ca

Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike, University of Calgary, ucheckukwu.umezurike@ucalgary.ca

With ongoing wars, climate change, and violent displacements, we live in a time of crisis. In its wake, crisis often creates disorientation, if not despair. What might a crisis reveal about our community—our sense of self or belonging? What is there to salvage or recover in the aftermath? Why turn to writing as a tool in times of crisis? In what ways does crisis both find itself in a writer's work and shape that work? This panel will feature readings and discussions of

new work from authors responding to these questions. Panelists will share their writing and creative practices in response to different forms of disorientation caused by crises, whether personal, social, national, or global. They will offer the audience varied perspectives on the connection between creativity and crisis, as well as the conditions, dynamics, and influences shaping their latest works. Inspired by Gwendolyn Brooks, who in her poem, “Speech to the Young,” encourages poets to learn to “Live in the along,” despite crisis and disorientation, the panelists will also highlight glimpses of hope and possibility that writers can offer during times of crisis.

Indigenous Horror: Generic Disruptions

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In the Epilogue to *Global Indigenous Horror*, contributor Katrin Althans notes how “‘Indigenous’ as a qualifier for this kind of traditional Horror then still puts Western ideas, concepts, and traditions about how Horror has to look and which stock elements need to be present center stage,” and so Althans, building partly on narratological relationalities, proposes that “we should talk about Indigenous Horror in terms of a network of intertextualities, anchored in both Western traditions and Indigenous onto-epistemologies” (266). Taking up Althans’ advice, this panel invites papers that explore Indigenous-created texts that we might call “Horror” with a focus on placing Western and Indigenous epistemologies in conversation. We do not wish to simply explore whether an Indigenous-created text constitutes “Horror” but rather, highlight the larger generic and epistemological interactions that take place in the creation and communication of Indigenous Horror across various media forms and platforms. This includes discussion of networks of meaning and explorations of the intricate dynamics of narrative space(s) that can be inherently cross-, pan-, and trans-culturally coded as part of Indigenous h/Horror “genre.” We welcome both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars into this conversation. Acknowledging the ways in which traditional papers can sometimes feel restrictive, we also welcome both traditional conference papers and culturally rooted explorations of the topic.

Topics can include (but are not limited to):

- Globalizing Indigenous Horror
- Indigenous Horror/horror

Precarious New Narratives for Contract and College Faculty

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As contract faculty at colleges and universities, we find ourselves navigating a new “normal” of increased precarity. We recognize that a return to old norms is not desirable, for any normal is, as Dionne Brand writes, “predicated on dis-ease,” a lack of ease that presents as something to be solved in the future. This call asks: What new narratives can we write for contract and college faculty in the twenty-first century?

This roundtable is an opportunity for conversation between contract faculty at colleges or universities, college professors who also hold contract positions at universities, university professors committed to supporting their contract and college colleagues, and graduate students whose career paths are just beginning.

- If we are experiencing a new “normal,” what are the defining features of this “dis-ease”?
Can we name key strategies for deconstructing old norms and refashioning new paths toward job stability and professional fulfillment?
- To what degree are BIPOC faculty overrepresented in contract and college positions?
How should we address the oversized instances of precarity for already marginalized individuals?
- What lessons can we learn from our contract colleagues who hold positions at both colleges and universities?
- What do graduate students need to know about contract and college teaching?

This roundtable invites speakers to prepare a five-minute talk on the topic of the new “normal” experienced by contract and college faculty. The talks will be followed by a collaborative discussion about our shared areas of concern and practical strategies for improving our working lives.

Urgent Academic Conversations: College and CÉGEP Concerns

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College members provide acutely valuable insights into the academic and professional concerns shared by our association members. As we face increasing closures of programs across the country, the vital contributions of college and CÉGEP professors to education and culture must be recognized.

This roundtable is an invitation to further highlight the special skills and unique contributions of college and CÉGEP professors to pedagogy and research. All college and CÉGEP professors (in contract, full-time, or administrative positions) are invited to discuss the issues that affect our teaching, scholarship, and professionalization. University professors and graduate students are encouraged to join the conversation as well, for the issues under discussion cross institutional divides.

Speakers are invited to prepare a five-minute talk to be followed by a collaborative discussion. The goal is to highlight our mutual concerns and share strategies for success. Questions that may be addressed include:

- How is ACCUTE serving its college and CÉGEP members? Why are many college professors reticent to join a professional association like ACCUTE?
- What are the pressing issues faced by colleges in the present landscape? How have crises in the humanities or advancements in generative AI been uniquely affecting our campuses and departments?
- Why are university professors and graduate students missing from conversations with and about colleges?
- What are the barriers to conversation among our members created by institutional differences nationwide?
- How can we amplify the knowledge and contributions of our college and CÉGEP members?

College teaching is often undervalued in academic conversation. Let's change that now!

Opacity, Agency, and the Subject in Creative Forms

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Ritu Kurien (they/she), University of Ottawa, rritu009@uottawa.ca

In *Poetics of Relation* (1990), Edouard Glissant discusses the concept of “opacity” as a way for the writer to retain/reclaim agency through narrative (among other forms). By employing opacity, the marginalized writer controls the way information is processed by the reader in an attempt to resist the flattening of their protagonists’ experiences under the dominant gaze. *James* (2024) by Percival Everett, *Lying* (2000) by Lauren Slater, and *Fleabag* (2016) by Phoebe Waller-Bridge all use opacity to preserve the interiority of marginalized characters to reveal the power exerted by oppressive systems.

Speculative Renaissance

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We inhabit an age of “speculative fiction,” and one might claim that it’s an age that begins in the Renaissance, with More’s *Utopia*. The term “Renaissance,” however, is itself associated with the re-birth of the classical past, looking back to models of classical greatness. Does the Renaissance still speak to our own speculations? What kinds of temporalities and fantasies do Renaissance texts inhabit? Papers might consider the anachronic Renaissance, multiple chronotopes, imagined communities, and other forms of early speculation, with some attention to why such forms can still speak to modern readers.

The Literary Critic of Humour, Round Two

Danielle Bobker, Concordia University, danielle.bobker@concordia.ca

This panel continues the conversation at the intersections of literary criticism and critical humour studies that began at ACCUTE 2025. Presentations on this panel will perform close readings of humorous texts—in any medium and genre and from any historical period—and then also closely reading the close reading, explaining the concepts, methods, and habits of attention driving the analysis. Presentations taking the form of stand-up criticism, a killjoy rant,

or a new theory of humour from the margins are especially welcome. Following the individual talks, we'll ask about how literary criticism can best serve critical humour studies, and vice versa.

Wave Upon Wave: A Poetry Reading & Discussion

Gillian Sze, Concordia University, gillian.sze@concordia.ca

This creative writing panel will bring together poets who are inspired by and write about the waters around them. Canada's landscape is one defined by its water—from its coastlines and rivers to its lakes and falls. The diversity of this land's waters invites a diversity of poetic approaches. How does water play a role in poetic production? How does it affect or determine the shape of the poem? What are some anxieties poets bring into their processes given the current ecological changes? What memories and histories run deep? Ultimately, how does water "leak" into the text?

This panel welcomes poets who write about water in any number of ways (e.g. ecopoetics, Indigenous perspectives, sound, "living" ekphrasis, etc.) and is designed to showcase a variety of techniques and writing. The session will combine short readings and a round table discussion about the creative process, concerns, and challenges.

Poetry of Infrastructure / Poetic Infrastructures

Robert Stacey, University of Ottawa, rstacey@uottawa.ca

Infrastructure has become a bit of a buzzword in literary and critical study. But very often, it is used in ways that do not necessarily bring our attention back to the actual tangible, material, physical constructions that impose themselves on our environments, bodies, and social interactions. We are therefore seeking papers that are fairly literal in their approach to infrastructure, even as they reflect an awareness that, as Deb Chachra writes, "Our infrastructural systems tell a story of who we are as a society or even a civilization, one that's about the relationship we have with one another and the planet that's our home" (How Infrastructure Works 13).

This panel therefore seeks papers addressing the relationship between poetry and what is referred to as ‘hard infrastructure,’ i.e. the material structures that support the physical, economic and social well-being of a population. By ‘hard infrastructure’ we mean things like bridges, airports, canals, seaports, railways, roads, transit systems, communication networks, electrical grids, sewage systems, pipelines, carceral facilities, etc. With some reservations, we might still refer to such technologies and structures within our built environments as ‘public works,’ if only to emphasize the potential connections between poetry—also a public work—and infrastructure.

Furthermore, because “infrastructure promises much more than basic care. It relays meaning. It sustains attachments. It forms the basis of imaginative worlds [...] it encompasses desire (Starosielski 363), we anticipate that papers will want to deal with the ways that infrastructure enables—but also frustrates—desire at varying scales, from the personal to the global. Papers on poetry from any period and nationality will be considered.

Nineteenth-Century Activism and Social Justice (VSAO/ACCUTE)

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Taylor Tomko, University of Western Ontario, ttomko@uwo.ca

As Oscar Wilde wrote in “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” (1891), “disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man’s original virtue.” The nineteenth century saw the emergence of many of the social justice fights that continue to this day: the struggle for women’s and workers’ rights; the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884; and environmentalism and animal rights. Historic events like the Matchgirls’ Strike of 1888 inspired the creation of the largest union of female workers in England, highlighting the power of collective action. The social novel, a genre commonly associated with Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens, emerged as writers reflected on these social movements through fiction. At ACCUTE 2026, the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario (VSAO) hopes to host a panel focussing on Victorian activism; in this time of political upheaval, we feel that it is timely to revisit the courage and resilience with which the Victorians fought for justice for themselves and others.

We are open to submissions on a variety of topics (as listed below), and proposals are welcome to engage with modern social justice movements if they wish.

Topics include (but are not limited to!):

- Victorian era poetry, fiction, essays, journalism or non-fiction on the following topics
 - Women's Rights
 - Women's Education
 - Voting, Labour, and Property Acts
 - Abolitionism
 - Anti-Imperialism/anti-monarchial sentiments
 - Animal rights (vegetarianism, anti-vivisection)
 - Environmentalism
 - Socialisms
 - Rights for people with disabilities
 - Class and labour rights
 - Chartism
 - Communism
 - Socialisms
 - Utopianisms
 - Protests or strikes
 - Revolution(s)
 - Union formations
 - Charity and altruism
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Roundtable on Victorian Incubators (VSAWC/ACCUTE)

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Susan Johnston, University of Regina, susan.johnston@uregina.ca

“Incubator” is a term that has been co-opted by Silicon Valley to describe a group of people living and working together in order to come up with the next big disruption. But for the 19th century, it was a breeder, an author, a source; it was “one who sits, brooding” as well as a machine for hatching (OED). The concept of the incubator has a history that includes some of the most exciting innovations in Victorian literature. Many of the periodicals that were published in the 1890s, such as *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, and *The Century Guild Hobby-Horse*, were produced out of close networks of publishers, editors and writers who socialized as well as worked together. The Rhymers’ Club was the first publication of some notable poets of the era. Dickens’ magazines were incubators for some of Victorian literature’s most prolific and bestselling authors, such as Wilkie Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell. Incubators are also a metaphor for some of the work that emerges from Victorian associations today, where conferences, websites, and collaborations are the results of these groups of scholars.

We propose a roundtable discussion where participants present 5-10 minutes on either a moment of Victorian incubation or on their experiences as part of a productive Victorian association. We are interested in the products of these incubators and in the relationships that led to this mode of production as well as proposals for new incubators of 19th century and Victorian studies.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Victorian magazines and their contributors
 - Publishing houses and their contributors
 - Social and literary groups
 - Education and social work associations
 - Religious associations
 - Communities of Care
 - Women’s associations
 - Contemporary Victorian scholarly associations
 - Victorian-focused magazine editorial boards
 - Websites and collaborations emerging from Victorian associations
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Humour Me: Retelling Stories and Histories

Mohammad (Mo) Sharifi, Fanshawe College, msharifi@fanshawec.ca
Kristine Dizon, Concordia University

Storytelling is one of the oldest ways for humans to relate to the world and to each other—hence we are also called homo fabulans (Currie 2). Stories shape our reality and identity, and there is much at stake when they are silenced or told from a single point of view. In "The Danger of a Single Story," Chimamanda Ngozi warns that this can come at a high cost: "people's dignity." Yet stories can be retold, as she demonstrates.

One powerful tool for such retelling, even of traumatic or "untellable" histories, is humour. From Bakhtin's carnivalesque to Hutcheon's theory of parody, critics have shown how humour opens a space to revise or rewrite histories, rework genres and traditions, process and express pain, and invite audiences to bear witness -sometimes even to become co-authors of- our often "inarticulate" stories. A thoughtful, uneasy, or even troubled laugh can signal self-reflection and an opening toward multiple voices, readings, and perspectives.

This roundtable will explore humour's capacity to retell stories and histories through questions such as:

- How does humour create space for retelling (and hearing) difficult stories?
 - How does parody revise genres and promote self-reflexivity in literature?
 - Do humour and laughter build community, and what complexities do they expose about storytellers?
 - As sociopolitical critique, how does humour succeed—or fail? Does it open dialogue, or reinforce the "single story"?
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Irrepressibility: Women's Writing Throughout History

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Emily McConkey, McGill University, emily.mcconkey@mail.mcgill.ca

"There's not enough female irrepressibility written down. [...] I think the sheer fact of women talking, being paradoxical, inexplicable, flip, self-destructive but above all else public is the most revolutionary thing in the world" (Chris Kraus, *I Love Dick*, 1997).

From the innovative *Tale of Genji* to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spasmodic epic poem *Aurora Leigh*; from Nella Larsen's absorbing Harlem Renaissance masterpieces to Hélène Cixous' ravenous "The Laugh of the Medusa"; from the circuitous contemporary female autofiction of Rachel Cusk and Zinzi Clemmons to the unabashed trans and genderqueer novels of Imogen Binnie and Olivia Laing: the irrepressibility Chris Kraus describes in her classic *I Love Dick* has featured in female and genderqueer writing throughout time and space. These examples furthermore reveal that irrepressibility manifests differently within different forms.

Our proposed panel invites papers on female irrepressibility in writing from any historical period or global context. We welcome papers written in both traditional and experimental forms. Papers may comment on how women and genderqueer writers have articulated themselves and refused to be contained by traditional forms; how female and genderqueer writers innovate new forms or navigate the literary field; how female and genderqueer voices are portrayed, conveyed, and characterized, etc. Papers may also examine how female irrepressibility is represented in literature not written by women, and how irrepressibility manifests in different forms and genres. By examining this range of historical and geographical contexts, we hope to generate conversation about the position of female and genderqueer writing in today's world.

R. Murray Schafer: Reassessing His Work and Legacy

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Shannon Brown, Dalhousie University, slbrown@dal.ca

R. Murray Schafer's impact in the fields of sound studies, musical composition, theatre and performance, musical education, and literature is widely recognized, both for his contributions to these areas and the controversy surrounding some of his ideas. He drew influence from the avant-garde, including composer John Cage, artist Paul Klee, and poet Ezra Pound, among others. Since his passing in 2021, admiring critics hail Schafer's unique and imaginative contributions, emphasizing his creative boldness and interdisciplinary reach. He was a formally innovative composer, a reformer of musical education practices, founder of the World Soundscape Project, and a theorist who popularized the term "acoustic ecology." Critical voices question key theoretical ideas and probe the biases and contradictions in his cultural stances, notably those by poets Wayne Compton and Lisa Robertson, and sound studies scholars such as Dylan Robinson, Marie Thompson, and Mitchell Akiyama, among others. Thompson, for example, has identified the "moralism" and reductive limits of Schafer's binary thinking, whereby he organizes sounds into music and noise or natural and unnatural, thus representing a nostalgia for pre-modern societies that risks leaning on the fallacy of historical inversion. Robinson, on the other hand, criticizes Schafer for his "appropriation of Indigenous thinking and culture as Canadian, an appropriation that reduces Indigenous thought and culture to resources for the project of defining a national aesthetic" (13). We invite scholarly and creative engagements with the complexity of Schafer's legacy and corpus, taking a range of approaches to his work. We also welcome explorations of other sound studies scholars in the field of contemporary acoustic ecology and Canadian soundscapes that critically engage with, contrast, or complicate Schafer's foundational frameworks.

Imagining Spatiality in End of the World Narratives

Kirsten Bussière, University of Ottawa, kirstenbussiere@gmail.com Marisa Emmanouela Lewis, Heritage College, mariaemmanouela.lewis@gmail.com

This panel invites papers that consider the dynamic figuration of geographies in (post)apocalyptic genres. Like other modes of literary production, end of the world narratives continue to respond to the spatial turn by imagining “alternative spatialities”(Pordzik 18-19). These texts offer meditations on spaces defined by “fragmentation, discontinuity, and ambiguity,” which allow readers to imagine the physical destruction of familiar landscapes through either sudden catastrophe or slow erosion after mass extinction (18-19). Through diverse representations of familiar and unfamiliar geographies, narratives of apocalypse reframe the reader’s present as the recent past, complicating understandings of both the local and global and calling for a revaluation of our relationship to space and place. Consider, for instance, what happens when the world is rendered into a museum, filled with non-functional objects serving as reminders of the past. The world remains familiar while being simultaneously transformed into something entirely unfamiliar, allowing readers to reconsider their relationship with the spaces they currently inhabit.

We invite papers that consider spatial tropes and the growing importance of space in literary studies to investigate new analytical possibilities through (post)apocalyptic geographies.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Aesthetics of space
- Ideas of homeliness and homespaces
- Local and global dynamics
- The formation of memory sites
- Meditations on physical destruction
- Apocalyptic travel narratives
- Frontier spaces and borders
- Spaces of resistance
- Decolonizing potential of apocalypse
- Sites of social reproduction, refuge, memory, nostalgia
- Spaces of coexistence and relation

Montreal in the Cultural Imagination: Mapping a City Through Story and Symbol

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Lorraine York, McMaster University, yorkl@mcmaster.ca

Montreal/Tiohtià:ke, Canada's leading bilingual city, has long inspired artists, writers, and filmmakers as a lens for exploring and contesting? Canadian identity. This panel invites papers that examine creative ways of mapping Montreal: its multilingualism, histories of migration, vibrant neighbourhoods, and evolving senses of home and belonging. For example, writers such as Leonard Cohen, David Montrose, Brian Moore, Mordecai Richler, and Michel Tremblay have mapped the city's neighbourhoods and cultural tensions in ways that continue to resonate.

We welcome analyses of Montreal in literature, theatre, film, and visual culture, as well as its place in popular imagination. Topics could include historical and contemporary narratives, stories of Indigenous presence?, migration and diaspora, portrayals of urban realities, or imaginative reworkings.

Montreal's reputation as a cultural crossroads, from its Prohibition-era notoriety to its celebrated food scene and international festivals, makes it a compelling site for rethinking urban storytelling. Interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged.

Narratives of the Unspoken: Trauma, Memory, and Identity

Nasifeh Shajani, University of Western Ontario, nshajani@uwo.ca

This panel explores the cultural and artistic dimensions of trauma. We invite papers that examine how traumatic experience is encoded, recalled, and represented through embodied and sensory experience across various artistic and cultural forms. How do artists engage with the body and the sensorium to convey post-traumatic memory? How do affect, memory, and mental illness intersect in post-traumatic artistic production? The panel seeks to bring trauma studies into dialogue with other fields, such as affect theory, phenomenology, mad studies, disability studies, or Indigenous studies, to explore how extreme experiences shape perception, memory, and identity. We are particularly interested in how artists and writers navigate the challenges of representing events that resist conventional narrative, and in the ways that such representations can both shape our understanding of trauma and influence individual and collective memory.

Relevant topics might include (but are not limited to):

- The depiction of trauma in literature, film, visual arts, performance, or other cultural forms.
 - The role of the body and sensory experience in encoding, recalling, and transforming traumatic memory.
 - The impact of trauma on personal and collective life narratives and the construction of identity.
 - The relationship between traumatic experience and mental illnesses like PTSD, anxiety, or depression.
 - The role of power, marginalization, and collective trauma in shaping memory and representation (e.g., in post-colonial, queer, or Indigenous contexts).
 - The formal or aesthetic innovations that artists use to represent experiences that defy traditional storytelling.
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The World Remade: Deconstruction and Reconstruction through Language

Kate Sheckler, Marianapolis College, kate.sheckler@videotron.ca

In a world in which words seem to have become disconnected from definition and facts while being employed to deconstruct rights and reinstate oppressive and antiquated norms, the question of just how language functions has become a critical discussion. Questions as to how performative language – language that constructs – enacts changes and reconstructions are crucial especially as that language becomes detached from the agreed upon codes: how exactly does language that is clearly inaccurate have such a profound effect? With both real world and literary examples to work from, this panel will be a discussion of the ways in which language is used to performatively create new “realities” whether those “realities” be determinative of gender, identity, nationality, or human rights. As well, as in many cases the language itself is being reconstructed as it is used to deconstruct/reconstruct our societies and relationships, this panel is open to the consideration of the methodologies by which language is undermined or devolved. As such, special focus will be placed on alternative language use including language use that is not based in definition and semiotics. This topic is relevant in all genres and eras, so all are welcome.

Teaching, Researching, and Writing Literature in Genocidal Times: Gaza in the Classroom (CAPS/ACCUTE)

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Zishad Lak, Trent University, zishadlak@gmail.com

Since October 7th, the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people has been in its most acute phase since 1948. As educators and scholars, it is impossible to not feel the weight of this. For a brief, shining moment, university encampments offered students and professors alike a space of decolonizing and transformative pedagogy and solidarity. Despite these efforts, however, the dominant ambiance of the academy was silence and indifference. Meanwhile, all of Gaza's twelve universities and 95.4% of its schools have been fully or partially destroyed by the Israeli army. According to University of Chicago's "Scholasticide in Palestine," the destruction of Gaza's education system is a "central component of [Israel's] exterminatory campaign," testifying to Israel's recognition of the importance of education in Palestinian resilience. The scholasticide being perpetrated in Gaza is a shocking reminder of the vulnerability of academic work, as well as its emancipatory potential. For this ACCUTE-CAPS joint panel, therefore, we invite educators, researchers, and writers to reflect on what it means to be literature teachers and scholars during a televised genocide and how their work has changed/responded in light of it.

Possible topics include:

- Productivity in times of genocide
 - Ethics of witnessing as educators and researchers
 - New approaches to teaching and writing Palestinian literature
 - Encampments as the new classrooms
 - Addressing the genocide in first year courses
 - The university as sites of decolonial struggle and pedagogy
 - The Israeli genocide as neoliberal horror
 - Genocide and state-building
 - The use and abuse of antisemitism
 - Jewish literature, Zionism, and anti-Zionism
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Audience Reactions to Shakespeare Then and Now

Alexandra Lukawski, University of Western Ontario, alukawsk@uwo.ca

Alice Hinchliffe, University of Guelph, ahinchli@uoguelph.ca

We invite ACCUTE members to submit abstracts on “Audience Reactions to Shakespeare Then and Now” for general consideration. Following up on our panel at last year’s ACCUTE conference that looked at Shakespeare Adaptations, we encourage scholars to turn towards the audience: how does an audience react to Shakespeare? As Wilmar Sauter's 2002 paper asks, "Who Reacts When, How and upon What"? We encourage a variety of papers on Shakespearean audiences, including ones that may engage with the following:

- Audience Research (both historical and contemporary)
- Non-conventional performances and their audiences
- Historical reactions to Shakespeare and his contemporaries
- Audience expectations, performance intentions (and what happens when those do or do not line up)
- Audience receptions of film Shakespeare
 - Professional spectators versus non-professional spectators
 - Personal experience and reception essays

Please submit abstracts to the online Proposal Submission Form on the ACCUTE website.

Worldbuilding as a Political Practice

Brent Ryan Bellamo, Trent University, brent.ryan.bellamy@gmail.com

This panel posits that imagining the storyworlds present in narrative texts is an intensely collaborative act—though not one that always feels like collaboration. From escapist activities such as binge-watching and doomscrolling to more effortful engagements like cosplay, role-playing games, or even reading narrative fiction, the act of entering and extending a storyworld is a cognitive process so familiar that many may not fully notice when it occurs.

Following narratology scholar Marie-Laure Ryan, scholars of storyworlds argue that audiences and creators work together—across space and time—to produce mental maps of fictional worlds. This panel seeks to explore the political possibilities that emerge when the cognitive

labor of worldbuilding becomes legible. What happens when activists and scholars transcode the imaginative work of fictional worldbuilding into our own contested present?

We invite papers that use the worldbuilding practices of fictional texts to articulate political visions for the present. We welcome critiques of fascist and white supremacist reading and worldbuilding practices; explorations of gender-affirming worldbuilding; and inquiries into decolonial approaches to narrative construction. This panel holds space for scholarship that treats worldbuilding not only as a narrative technique, but as a political tool for imagining—and enacting—transformative futures.

Alienation and Identity in Western Canadian Poetry

Solomon Goudsward, York University, goudswardsolomon@gmail.com

According to Statistics Canada, over 67% of Canadians live east of the Manitoba/Ontario border. Of these 28 million residing in Eastern Canada, over 25 million live in Ontario and Quebec alone. Western Canadians have long felt a sense of alienation from the (perceived or actual) hegemony of the east, and frustrations over cultural and economic inequality have abounded for years - from apathy over national election results being called before BC votes are counted, to secessionist movements like Wexit, based in Calgary. This panel seeks papers that analyze poetry by Western Canadian authors to explore how residents of Canada living west of Ontario form and articulate senses of identity in the context of western alienation. These identities may be rooted in a particular province or territory, in an understanding of Western Canada as a whole, or in a sense of being "not-from-out-east."

The panel is open to both historical and contemporary reflections and papers may focus more on literary criticism or societal commentary, or may strike a balance between the two. Papers exploring work by Indigenous and non-white poets, as well as work by poets from outside of major urban centres is particularly encouraged.

Sub-topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The relationship between national and provincial/regional identity
- Urban vs. rural identities within Western Canada
- Ethnic identity in the context of Western Alienation
- Political partisanship in the context of Western Canada
- The intersection of ecopoetry and the concerns of the Province/Territory and the State

Systems Thinking and/in Literature

Jay Ritchie, Bishop's University, jaywritchie@gmail.com

"Systems thinking" describes a mode of inquiry that acknowledges and renders visible the aesthetic, social, technological, ecological, and other systems that animate artwork and in which art circulates. In a literary context, this means prefiguring literature as well as the discourses that make meaning of literature as multiscalar phenomena with implications and influence across ostensibly discrete disciplinary fields. As praxis, systems thinking often applies its transdisciplinarity as sociopolitical critique, emphasizing literature's latent interconnectivity to name and thus strengthen the networks that might support circular economies, degrowth, mutual aid, as well as other sustainable practices necessary to the futures it seeks to materialize. Systems thinking in literature and literary theory could be used to describe Sylvia Wynter's "sociogenic principle," Jackson Mac Low's early computer-generated "PFR-3 Poems," or sound historian Alexandra Hui's theory of phenomenological-epistemological feedback loops that show how we hear shapes what we hear. In the words of systems theorist Jack Burnham, "change emanates, not from things, but from the way things are done" (31). This round table panel invites papers on systems thinking and/in literature, as well as collaborative presentations and demonstrations.

Literature and the geo-logics of conquest

Brennan McCracken, Concordia University, mccracken.brennan@gmail.com

Geology and its figures are surfacing across the humanities: fields including political ecology, Black studies, critical Anthropocene studies, and the energy humanities have recently incorporated or interrogated geologic language and methods. Such breadth of engagement with this branch of earth science evinces a recognition of what Kathryn Yusoff names the “grammars of geology”—the figurative and formal techniques that subtend geology’s reproduction of racial capitalism. Meanwhile, geology also circulates through a popular rhetoric that calls upon textuality to make its objects meaningful: Colin N. Waters, chair of the Anthropocene Working Group, notably appealed to literary technique in his invitation to engage sites of geologic significance by “[reading] the stories that they tell you.”

What is at stake in this figuration of geology as textual? How can literary studies contribute to a critical unearthing of geology’s grammars? And how might an attention to geology in literature reroute what Tiffany Lethabo King calls the “grammar of conquest” that grids modern relation to dispossession and death? This panel invites papers that address geology’s literary and theoretical figurations with particular attention to their imbrication with histories of racialization and conquest. Possible topics may include: the geologic grammars of postcolonial studies and Black studies; the poetics of ground, earth, or extraction; literature and the metabolic rift; literatures of geology and empire; or geology and deconstruction.

Forbidden Fiction: Intellectual Freedom, Fear, and Control on the Battleground of Banned Books

Zara Diab, University of Western Ontario, zdiab@uwo.ca

Recently, North America has seen a significant uptick in book bans. There are currently debates in the Albertan education system regarding book bans for works containing sexually explicit material. According to PEN America, over ten-thousand books were banned across hundreds of public-school districts in nearly thirty states during the 2023-24 school year. These statistical trends are supported by the American Library Association (ALA), which recorded an increase in book challenges from an average of 273 books annually between 1990 and 2021, to a whopping 2,452 book challenges in 2024. Notable titles included *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, and *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe.

Surprisingly, the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) unveiled that the majority of calls for book bans originated from organized movements with ties to elected officials. They also revealed that the most common justifications for censorship were "false claims of illegal obscenity for minors; inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters or themes; and covering topics of race, racism, equity, and social justice." As political tensions run high in North America, literature remains a common weapon and target.

Ever since Puritan censors banned Thomas Morton's *New England Canaan* (1637), groups on both sides of the political spectrum have advocated for literary restrictions. This panel seeks traditional conference papers of approximately 15 minutes in length that explore North America's controversial history and contemporary practices of book banning, with particular interest in what banned books tell us about our collective society and why literature is often at the center of cultural conflict.

Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

- o Banned books and issues of sexual violence
 - o Banned books and issues of race
 - o Banned books and issues of gender
 - o Banned children's books
 - o Banned nonfiction
 - o Politically or religiously motivated book bans
 - o Historical perspectives and the impacts of book bans
 - o The paradox of banned books (i.e., a countermovement that increases the visibility and desirability of censored material)
 - o Book burnings, bombings, and the violence of censorship
 - o The threat of literature in culture wars
-

“That sh*t hurted”: Beyond the Limits of Language

Theo Fox, York University, theodorefox4@gmail.com

Tamara Frooman, York University, froomant@yorku.ca

This panel calls for papers that explore creative approaches to portraying the bodymind in pain, especially those informed by crip theory, Mad studies, and/or critical disability studies. In *Illness as Narrative*, Ann Jurecic outlines a longstanding question within life writing and disability scholarship about the paradoxical nature of narrativizing pain: “Although [it] resists expression, many writers have composed volumes about pain in a wide range of genres ... [W]hy, if there is a significant body of writing about pain, have critics been so convinced that it is beyond language?” How do we translate into language a subjective bodily experience often framed as the antithesis of creation, the destruction of the human impulse toward expression? Pain is universally experienced, but individually felt; attempts to communicate the specifics of pain emphasize the gaps not only between bodily sensation and linguistic articulation, but also between one’s expression and another’s interpretation. Grappling with a similar epistemological gap between languages, translation studies reframes the goal of translation as dynamic equivalence rather than perfect formal equivalence, encouraging translators to find alternative and creative ways to preserve meaning in all its multiplicity. In that spirit, we are interested in dynamic literary approaches to narrating pain, be they theories about experimental modes of expressing pain (e.g. defamiliarization in speculative fiction), analyses of existing works that exhibit creative entanglements around pain, or original creative works that demonstrate attempts to reach beyond the apparent limits of language.

Mental Health in the Creative Writing Classroom

Samantha Annie Bernstein, York University, sbernst@yorku.ca

The expansion of post-secondary creative writing programs and courses, taking place within an era of institutional contraction, indicates the widespread and growing interest in this field. While many students come to these courses interested in learning literary craft and techniques, many also come in search of self-healing and personal growth through creative expression. The appeal of writing creatively for managing or overcoming psychological distress is evident in the proliferation of Ted Talks and videos on social media promulgating this practice, and its efficacy has been the subject of recent studies published in the *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* (Ruini and Mortara 2021), *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research* (Deveney and Lawson, 2021), and elsewhere.

This panel will look at the ways in which post-secondary creative writing courses are implicated in the therapeutic aspects of writing. Can or should we approach creative writing as both craft and therapeutic tool? What strategies and safeguards can we employ to ensure that creative writing courses adhere to institutional standards both of academic achievement and of student and teacher safety, while also making space for writing as a therapeutic model? This panel welcomes papers on topics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Creative writing pedagogies that include therapeutic practices
 - Interdisciplinary approaches that create connections between English/Creative Writing courses and courses in psychology/psychotherapy/social work
 - Encountering mental health crises in the classroom or student work
 - Reading or assessing creative work about psychological distress or trauma
 - Establishing compassionate and safe boundaries between creative writing students and instructors
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Self in the Age of Autofiction

Concetta Principe, Trent University, cprincipe@trentu.ca

When Myra Bloom introduced autofiction to readers of English Studies in Canada six years ago with the topic “Autofiction in the age of the Selfie” she wanted to show us how we might witness the limits of the genre. The term had been circulating in English since the 1970s but, as Bloom observes, more had been done in French letters to define the genre than had been in English literary circles. With the recent publication by Anna Kornbluh’s *Immediacy*, we have what is a short but astute summary of the genre today with reference to the writers doing radical work, such as Tao Lin, Ocean Vuong, and Megan Boyle, and to the theorists trying to define the genre. Christine Angot claims it brings “the real into existence” (73); Annabel Kim observes that autobiography “gives autofiction claims to a certain reality that plain fiction, without the auto, cannot accede to and that plain autobiography cannot adequately capture” (74). What can we, as literary scholars and critics alike, make of autofiction as a genre? What of the hybrid inventions such as Heti’s *Alphabetical Diaries*, Catherine Lacey’s *The Möbius Book*, or Vuong’s poetic documentary, *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*?

How does autofiction bring “the real into existence”? If it does what autobiography can’t, does it also replace other life writing genres such as memoir? What is reflected back to us in this explosion of the definition of the form? And mostly, what can be said about the self in the age of autofiction?

Decolonizing the Language of AI

Chinelo Ezenwa, Memorial University, cezenwa@mun.ca

Basmah Rahman, Queen’s University, basmah.rahman@queensu.ca

“We asked ChatGPT whether or not AI could replicate colonial, racist or sexist language and this is what it answered: ‘As an artificial intelligence language model, I am not capable of holding or expressing personal beliefs, values, or biases. However, I acknowledge that the data used to train me may contain biases and I strive to provide information that is accurate, unbiased, and inclusive. It is important to note that it is people who program and use AI, and they can unintentionally embed their own biases in the development and use of AI systems. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of these potential biases and strive to create and use AI systems in an ethical, inclusive, and responsible manner.’” Forus. “Using AI to ‘decolonise’ language.” *Global Voices*, 7 March 2023.

In continuation of ACCUTE's series on AI, the BIPOC Caucus within ACCUTE invites you submit your ideas for participation in a roundtable discussion on "Decolonizing the language of AI." The panel aims to provide an opportunity for faculty and students in English and other studies to share how the design, production, and use of AI in different formats can be done to limit human biases in written and audio language, and to facilitate more diverse, accessible, and inclusive language. The panelists selected for the Roundtable will be expected to present a brief (500 words / 4-5 minute) statement that presents an argument, anecdote, experience, theory, or extended set of questions about the decolonizing of AI, and to engage in discussion with each others' ideas as well as with the audience.

Writing a Life from the Margins

Titi Aiyegbusi, University of Toronto, titi.aiyegbusi@mail.utoronto.ca

In *Memoir: An Introduction*, Thomas Couser observes that the recent memoir boom has also given rise to the "some body" memoir, allowing marginalized voices to enter mainstream discourse. These accounts, he notes, often possess a performative dimension, one that enacts the clear message: "I'm here, and I can speak for myself." As such, life narratives by women, racial minorities, LGBTQ writers, and individuals living with disabilities or illness extend beyond the detailing of events; they undertake the critical work of interrogating social and cultural concerns.

This panel invites scholars to consider the ways in which life narratives from marginalized communities negotiate questions of belonging, representation, and collective identity. Researchers are encouraged to investigate how writing about oppression, silencing, or illness from a personal perspective can challenge dominant cultural narratives while also modeling new forms of civic and cultural participation.

Questions of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- What are the aesthetics, ethics, and politics involved in inscribing lives lived at the margins?
- In what ways can memoir function as a practice of "citizenship" or collective identity formation (see Julie Rak's *Boom!*)?
- How do illness narratives and disability life writing operate as counter-narratives?
- How do intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class shape contemporary memoir?

- What is the relationship between private testimony and public discourse in life writing?
- How can theoretical approaches help us understand self-representation and collective representation?
- How do memoir and other life-writing genres (e.g., autofiction, autobiography, graphic memoir) compare, overlap, or diverge?

Please send your proposal to Titi Aiyegbusi titi.aiyegbusi@mail.utoronto.ca

What is African Feminism? (CAAS/ACCUTE)

Chinelo Ezenwa, Memorial University, cezenwa@mun.ca

Deborah Egbekpalu, Memorial University

The idea of African feminism, like the myriads of women that it represents, is shaped and rooted in the reality of being African and a woman. It is also informed by the nuances and intersectionalities that occur within these spaces. We are interested in papers that seek to explore the idea of African Feminism and those on topics around African women and feminism.

Topics of interest may include:

- Understanding empowerment in the African Context
 - Exploring “feminism” in older and/or contemporary African contexts
 - Examining popular terms denoting empowerment/feminism that have emanated from the African context (Motherism , Nego-Feminism , STIWANISM , Womanism , Male Feminism, etc.)
 - Examining why the term “feminism” has been treated with ambivalence in African discourses
 - Examining the intersections between African Feminism and Religion, Politics, Health, Social Media/Online Spaces, Colonization/Decolonization, Diaspora/Globalization, or Theory and Curricula
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Salvage Inventory &/or Inventory Salvage?

Mark McCutcheon, Athabasca University, mccutcheon@athabascau.ca

Titi Aiyegbusi, University of Toronto, titi.aiyegbusi@mail.utoronto.ca

We invite contributions to a member-organized session for discussing research and criticism on the writing of Dionne Brand. As a newspaper review of Brand's 2015 novel *Love Enough* put it, in a better version of Canada, Dionne Brand would occupy the spot at the heart of Can Lit where Atwood instead tends to hog the spotlight. This panel invites contributions to the literature on Brand's oeuvre, in any of its own aspects or in relation to other works, towards centring or perhaps re-centring Brand's role in shaping contemporary literary production and rethinking literary form (in Canada, maybe, but also more planetarily and in relational forms of solidarity).

Which is where the panel's title keywords come in. To ground and frame this session, we offer as prompt these two words, paired and reversed in chiasmus, as noun and/or verb referring, respectively, to the titles of Brand's latest book (*Salvage: Readings from the Wreck*, 2024) and her earlier book (*Inventory*, 2006) – which also names one of Brand's key poetic methods.

For this panel we invite contributions in any format (as illustrated by ACCUTE's "Panel formats" list) and we will organize the resulting panel according to the form(s) dictated by the best submissions we get, vet, and select.

Please send your proposed contribution for this panel, per ACCUTE's submission requirements, to both organizers: Titi Aiyegbusi (U of Toronto) titi.aiyegbusi@mail.utoronto.ca and Mark A. McCutcheon (Athabasca U) mccutcheon@athabascau.ca

“Special Issues” of Cultural and Critical Production in Canada

Bart Vautour, Dalhousie University, bvautour@dal.ca

Marissa Carroll, Dalhousie University, marissa.carroll@dal.ca

We invite proposals for papers on “Special Issues” of periodicals that focus on literary, cultural, and/or critical production in Canada. Often a “Special Issue” marks a shift in a field, seeks to consolidate a new methodology, or brings writers/artists/critics together around an event, location, or topic. While an individual “Special Issue” may loom large in the history of a given field, rarely has the “Special Issue” been considered as a distinct mode of production in a sustained or comparative way. “Special Issues” interrupt the regular publishing program of a periodical but remain legible within the periodical’s scope of influence. They often borrow an anthologizing impulse without fulfilling the function of the anthology. They are often manifesto-like collections that announce and consolidate key voices within an emerging field. By bringing the tools of periodical studies and bibliography together with varied histories of cultural production and critical collaboration, we hope to begin building connections among the myriad “Special Issues” that have been published in the long history of cultural production in Canada. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Event-based special issues
 - Modernist “little” magazines
 - Unique modes of collectivist publication
 - Collaborative editing
 - Aesthetics/Politics
 - Frequent editors of special issues
 - Conference proceedings
 - Commemorative special issues
 - Diverse publication networks
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The Role of Publishing Houses in Shaping Literary Discourse

Tom Halford, Memorial University, halford.thomas@gmail.com

Although scholars have focused extensively on social commentary and stylistic choices in relation to literary discourse, the role of publishers in deciding what types of books get published and what types of books do not has not been as closely considered. For example, a

press such as Breakwater Books, housed in St. John's, Newfoundland, has a distinct regional mandate that has grown and changed overtime. Scholars such as David Creelman in *Setting in the East* have highlighted how Atlantic Canadian authors favoured realism as opposed to more experimental styles. To contribute to Creelman's study, it would also prove useful to consider how publishers through their acceptance and editing processes also shape which types of writing get circulated and which ones do not. Therefore, this panel seeks out careful examinations of Canadian publishing houses that have shaped writing in their way.

Presenters are requested to focus on specific aspects of a single publishing house. Presumably, these will be smaller, trade publishers.

Questions to consider:

- How has the mandate of the publishing house shaped literary discourse and authorship in Canada?
 - How have specific authors, who may not have been published in a larger, more mainstream publication, found a home at this publishing house?
 - How has the focus of the publishing house grown and changed overtime?
 - How is the mandate of the publishing house reflected in specific literary texts?
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How Much Do I Need to Learn About Elves? -- Genre in the Creative Writing Workshop

Glenn Clifton, Sheridan College, glenn.clifton@sheridancollege.ca

Most post-secondary creative writing instructors become instructors by writing and studying conventionally "literary" forms of writing. But due to cultural shifts, this may not be the type of writing that most energizes students—particularly undergraduates. While a few instructors may still bar "genre" from their creative writing classes, many others want to embrace the possibilities of genre writing. Science fiction, fantasy, horror, and romance can all be socially-engaged, political genres, with their own strengths and sources of excitement. But some instructors may feel like they're still searching for the tools, prompts, and assignments that will help their students do the best possible work in those genres, or help them situate their love of a genre in the contexts of broad reading practices and the study of craft.

This seminar seeks papers (10-15 minutes) that discuss any element of the pedagogy of genres in the context of creative writing. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Prompts and assignments that develop genre-specific skills

- Discussions of the use of genre readings in a course
- Techniques for situating genre writing in dialogue literary traditions
- The relevance of other genre-driven forms (like film) to creative writing education
- Spec poetry
- Examples of useful assignments, workshop practices, and delivery methods
- Craft criticism of genre works from a writerly or pedagogical perspective

Questions can be directed to: glenn.clifton@sheridancollege.ca

Tuning In to Literary Radio

Michael O'Driscoll, University of Alberta, mo@ualberta.ca

Sean Luyk, University of Alberta, sean.luyk@ualberta.ca

In a 2014 article titled “Radio Studies and 20th-Century Literature,” Ian Whittington coins the term “literary radio studies” and provides a cogent summary of the scholarly literature focused on radio from a variety of perspectives (including Marxist critique, sociology, and media studies) and the gradual solidification of radio studies as a discipline and its imbrication with literary studies since the mid-1990s. Whittington uses the term “literary radio studies” to “designate research at the intersection of traditional literary studies and radio studies,” and, noting the sub-field’s primary focus on the early twentieth-century British literature, suggests that the term “aims to clear a space for the study of radio and literature beyond the conventional focal point of ‘modernism’ and to extend the reach of literary radio studies into the late twentieth-century and beyond” (645). This panel enters into that cleared space to address questions about the formation of listening publics and audile techniques, the mutual imbrications of print-based and durational media, the material specificity of the broadcast medium, and the activation of literary radio archives. The organizers of this panel invite submissions that consider any of the following: 1) what has been the historic role of radio in the development of cultures of literary performance and listening?; 2) how might the radio archive challenge definitions of “the literary” and diversify mainstream understandings of what constitutes literary studies?; 3) what are the protocols necessary to opening up radio literary archives to researchers, learners, and members of the public?

The Future of EDI

Mohammad (Mo) Sharifi, Fanshawe College, msharifi@fanshawec.ca **Richard Douglas-Chin**, University of Windsor, rdc@uwindsor.ca

After a growing recognition for EDI in academia in the US and Canada, especially in the light of high-profile instances of racial injustice (e.g. George Floyd's murder), the backlash against EDI has recently gained considerable momentum. McGowan et al. deem this an example of "the historical pendulum that swings regarding the acceptance and exclusion of nonwhite participation in American democracy" (2). Faced with a growing anti-EDI sentiment (legal challenges, external pressure, and sociopolitical opposition), higher education institutions in North America have taken various stances –from changing their language and policies and rebranding to defunding EDI offices. Then again, some institutions seek alternative ways of maintaining inclusive practices without becoming targeted. Although most of these actions are out of self-preservation, the evolving political climate in the US has made it clear that sacrificing EDI was not the solution because EDI is not a mere "ideological add-on" (Smith), but rather deeply rooted in the history of equity-deserving communities' fight for "human dignity, substantive equality, and restorative justice" (Blackett 178). McGowan et al. argue that navigating the current shifting sociopolitical landscape calls for reevaluating, strategizing, and reimagining EDI (2). How can we envision the future of EDI as more than merely surviving the backlash? How can EDI initiatives be more effective, adaptable, resilient, and sustainable? How can EDI keep institutions accountable and relevant to their communities as much as to institutional leaders? This roundtable aims to continue the discussions sparked by a panel at ACCUTE 2025 ("EDI and the Excellence Dilemma") and invites advocates and scholars to consider these questions in the North American context.

Marxism vs. Poetry

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"Under these conditions, I ask you to accept my resignation as a member of the French Communist Party." – Aimé Césaire, "Letter to Maurice Thorez"

“The ‘impenetrable’ exists in two aspects: the invisible lives of migrant workers, benefit claimants etc, and the invisible workings of capital itself, only partially expressed in the lives of the very rich. Part of the intellectual struggle is to grasp these two ‘mysteries’ in the mind at the same time, and to force into view their destructive unity, opening out into infernal history, into hidden constellations.”— Sean Bonney, “Notes on Militant Poetics 3/3”

This roundtable begins at a convergence between Marxist and poetic registers of the problem of abstraction and the aesthetic debates it fomented. For Marx in *Capital*, abstraction is a heuristic which mediates social life and subordinates it to capital. Poetic abstraction mediates experience through figures that organize meaning obliquely through indirection and substitution. Whereas the abstractions of capital generate the appearance of equivalence in exchange, poetic abstraction insists on incommensurability.

Sean Bonney believed that “we need new forms. New modes of speech.” Following this, we invite contributions that continue threads of the aesthetic debates indexed in *Aesthetics and Politics* (1977) with particular attention to their relative neglect of poetry; engage recent Marxist approaches to poetics or poetic approaches to Marxism; attend to capital's formulations of race, gender, and sexuality, and poetry's response; account for changes in strategies of poetic resistance across the twentieth century; challenge complacent theorizations of poetic practice and its role in community and revolutionary politics.

This discussion will explore poetry's capacity to reckon with the contradictions of capitalist abstraction, and to invent “new forms” and “new modes of speech” adequate to political resistance and aesthetic difficulty.

Sound Pedagogy: Listening to Literary Audio in Classrooms and Beyond

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Klara du Plessis, University of British Columbia, klara.duplessis@ubc.ca

Literary sound adopts many shapes, including public readings and book launches; spoken word, SLAM, sound poetry, and performance; panel discussions and interviews; oral histories; casual recordings among writers; and more. Increasingly, archives of such literary sound have become easily available through open access digital repositories that might even include searchable metadata to facilitate further study. Such collections can be seen as communal spaces where a wide range of expert labour practices coincide. The implied past, present, and future

collaborative formations of these collections are rendered explicit in their renewed and remediated use within classrooms or other learning spaces.

This panel thus invites scholars to immerse themselves in literary sound, to consider how one might define literary sound within a classroom context, and to reflect on pedagogy's audibility in the archives. After all, the institutional conditions that very frequently made the invitation, dissemination, recording, and archiving of literary sound possible also underscore generic specificity such as the class visit or the university feature reading, interweaving the public presentation of literature with an educational intent.

This panel invites 20-minute papers that expand upon the kinds of pedagogy that we hear in the archives, under the rubric of the humanities and social sciences lecture hall and/or creative-writing seminar room. It also asks:

- How does sound relate to pedagogy in archival terms and how did poets and professors teach with sound in the past?
- What can we learn from audible traces in historical media and how can we remediate them for student audiences today?
- What can literary sound teach us about the institutional conditions of its production?

The co-chairs of this panel are also working towards an edited collection on sound and pedagogy. Call for papers forthcoming.

Gail Scott: Fiction+/Theory

Sarah Burgoyne, Dawson College, sburgoyne@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
Dr. Jeff Noh, University of Toronto, jeff.noh@utoronto.ca

This panel invites scholarly and creative responses to the novels, essays, translations, and memoir of the Montréal-based avant-garde writer Gail Scott. Proposals on any aspect of Scott's work are welcome, though we are especially interested in presentations that address Scott's books published since Lianne Moyse's foundational edited collection, *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works* (2002): *The Obituary* (2010), *Permanent Revolution* (2021), and *Furniture Music* (2023). Presentations might situate these newer works within Scott's oeuvre or consider her formal experimentations in relation to the multiple literary movements to which Scott has contributed, including the New Narrative movement in Bay Area, the Québécoise feminist collective *La théorie, un dimanche* (Theory, a Sunday), St. Mark's Poetry Project in New York, and others. Historicist approaches that take up Scott's claim that "[e]very period requires a different kind of

experimentation” would also be welcome, as well as presentations that blend theory, memoir, criticism, and translation.

Medieval Magic (CSM/ACCUTE)

Kathryn Walton, Lakehead University, kwalton@lakeheadu.ca Megan Arnott, Lakehead University, University of Toronto Mississauga, mmarnott@lakeheadu.ca

Magic and the supernatural were staples of many of the most popular genres of medieval literature; they are also staples of many modern texts set in the medieval world or in a pseudo-medieval world. This session will explore medieval magic in its many and various iterations across literary history, and we invite papers that discuss any manifestations of medieval magic or the supernatural in medieval or modern texts.

Participants are welcome to interpret “magic” in any way they wish and to propose papers on anything from magicians, to giants, to charms, to supernatural transformations. Participants are also welcome to read medieval magic within medieval literature in the genre in which it most commonly appears (romance), or to explore instances of magic and the supernatural outside of that genre: in history, hagiography, or allegory, for example. Papers on contemporary texts that employ or relate to medieval magic are also welcome.

Participants might consider examining how modern texts use, reuse, and remake staples of medieval magic and the supernatural such as fairies, demons, or sorcerers. They might also consider how modern texts adapt medieval magical forms to suit contemporary texts and audiences through new interpretations of magicians and magic.

Medieval Masculinities (CSM/ACCUTE)

Megan Arnott, Lakehead University, University of Toronto Mississauga,

mmarnott@lakeheadu.ca

Kathryn Walton, Lakehead University, kw Walton@lakeheadu.ca

What is “medieval masculinity”? On the one hand, the term may be understood by looking at how men defined themselves within the Global Middle Ages. How did they define what it was to be masculine in different religious traditions, including cloisters, or church hierarchies, in Saints Lives and monastic rules? How is masculinity defined in martial cultures (knights, Vikings, soldiers etc.), particularly in literary texts like romances or sagas?

On the other hand, “medieval masculinity” may also mean looking at the way that medieval is coded masculine in modern texts or societies. How is masculinity codified in a text like Netflix’s Marco Polo, or Vikings: Valhalla? Do we consider masculinity in Game of Thrones an example of “medieval masculinity”?

Participants are welcome to submit proposals on any aspect of medieval masculinities, including the way masculinity is presented in a pre-modern text, or how medieval masculinities is interpreted through a modern lens. A few different lenses for proposals for papers on medieval masculinity include providing a definition, examining gender assumptions in medieval or medievalist texts, investigating places where the borders of gender are being tested in medieval or medievalist texts, or considering Jacqueline Murray’s assertion, that “While the ideologies of masculinity might be contested and fraught, depending on variables of time and space, social position and individual experience, they also reinforce social order, could provide a sense of security and a knowledge of one’s place in the world.” Other approaches to the concept of medieval masculinity are also welcome.

Disability and Illness Narratives as Re-worlding

Jorge Vallejos, York University, jorgeenv@yorku.ca

“To re-world is to dare to think and live with different bodies side by side and contemporaneously by decolonizing the compartmentalization of differences imposed by structures of domination.”—(Brena) Yu-Chen Tai

“I do not wish my anger and pain and fear about cancer to fossilize into yet another silence, nor to rob me of whatever strength can lie at the core of this experience, openly acknowledged and examined.”—Audre Lorde “I recommend that readers seek out memoirs by disabled people themselves.”—Jennifer Natalya Fink

Narratives such as *Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir* by Paul Monette and *The View From Down Here: Life As A Young Disabled Woman* by Lucy Webster are interventions. They come in many forms: autofiction, autopathography, autohistoria, memoir, diary, epistolary... Such interventions imagine otherwise; reveal injustices by medical systems; seek alternatives; object normalcy; resist assimilation; embrace difference; break silences; and espouse empathy. They practice re-worlding.

How do different forms of life-writing re-world disability and illness? Participants are encouraged to reflect on, but not limited to:

- Refusal to be silenced
- Embracing difference
- Metaphor use to “challenge the binary between “normal” and “abnormal” (Dolmage)
- Race, gender, class, sexuality and its impacts on disability and illness writing
- The body as storyteller
- Narratives of healing vs narratives of cure
- Decolonizing disability and illness narratives
- Intersections between autopathography (illness narrative) and disability life writing
- Overcoming the overcoming Story
- BIPOC & Feminist & non-linear narratives

Please submit a 250 word abstract.

Pedagogical Powder Kegs: Academic Freedom in an Era of Book Bans (CLSG/ACCUTE)

Tina Trigg, The King's University, tina.trigg@kingsu.ca

Matthew Zantingh, Redeemer University, mhzantingh@redeemer.ca

In July 2025 Alberta made unflattering international headlines with the Provincial Government's announcement of a book ban in K-12 schools. Leaked school board lists of titles slated for removal and extensive public outrage resulted in government modifications and "clarifications" that further muddled the waters while exempting the canon of unspecified "classics of literature." Beyond this particular cultural war in Western Canada, book bans highlight our current climate of intensified ethical concerns for post-secondary instructors and administrators around pedagogy and academic freedom writ large. This panel seeks to make room for dialogue among a diverse range of instructors, at all career stages, including those with administrative roles, and from a wide variety of institutions. We invite 5-10 minute proposals for a roundtable discussion about pedagogy, ethics, and academic freedom including, but not limited to:

- Pedagogical approaches to book bans, censorship, and/or cultural authority
- Career precarity and syllabus experimentation: how much can you risk?
- Fire the canon?: Reading lists and trending authors: scorn, ignore, or amplify?
- Literary hierarchy: what version (implicitly) structures your department?
- Political sway of supporting communities: where and how is it a factor? What ethical issues does it raise?
- The ethics of teaching what may offend: too niche? Too male? Too white? Too dated? Too political? Too religious? Too homogenous? Too fringe? Or just too much reading at all?
- Internal politics: donor influence and/or administrative pressures on pedagogy in a cash-strapped post-secondary era
- Book bans: inadvertent legitimacy through public defense of humanities?
- Quiet censorship: are there books you won't teach (now)?

Voices Across Time: Using Student-Led Podcasts to Rediscover Medieval & Early Modern Texts (ACCUTE/TEAMS)

Lindsay Pereira, Concordia University, John Abbott College, pereira.lindsay@gmail.com
Ella Jando-Saul, McGill University, ellajandosaul@gmail.com

This roundtable explores how podcasting can be used as a tool to help students connect with early English texts. How can students be empowered to interpret, dramatize, translate, and transmit early texts using the podcast as their medium? We invite contributions that propose classroom projects where students produce podcast episodes based on translations, dramatizations, performance, or reinterpretation of texts ranging from Old English poems to early modern drama and beyond. Topics may include creative re-encodings and more documentary formats. This roundtable aims to explore what insights emerge when one listens deeply to acoustic, performative, or narrative dimensions of texts usually studied on the page. We invite contributors to discuss the technical constraints of the medium as well. How do we balance scholarly rigour with accessibility in an audio format? What scaffolding is required to support students? How can instructors guide students through the technical and ethical challenges of working with audio? By linking ACCUTE's mandate for literary study with TEAMS' long-standing investment in pedagogical practice for early periods, this roundtable highlights podcasting as a bridge between classroom experiment and broader scholarly inquiry into historical texts.

Podcasting for Public Medievalism: Between Academic Research, Outreach, and Sound (ACCUTE/TEAMS)

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In an era of increasing interest in public scholarship, podcasts offer medievalists a powerful tool for reaching non-specialist audiences. This roundtable is concerned with podcasting as public medievalism: how can medieval and early modern scholars use podcasting to share their work, engage broader publics, and influence popular understandings of the past. Possible foci include: questions of form (interviews, traditional literary analysis, storytelling, "soundscapes"); ethical and pedagogical challenges in representing medieval cultures to modern listeners; considerations around balancing entertainment, accuracy, and pedagogy; opportunities for for

community engagement and collaboration between universities and local museums, historical societies, or cultural heritage sites; resources for ensuring funding and sustainability for academic podcast projects. Because ACCUTE fosters broad literary conversations and TEAMS is dedicated to strengthening medieval studies in the classroom and beyond, this session is well-positioned to encourage discussion of how scholarly podcasting can simultaneously serve research, teaching, and public outreach. While medieval materials are central to this CFP, early modern projects may enrich the discussion by providing points of similarity or comparison.

Teachers As Investigators in the Age of AI

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The ubiquity of AI use in academics has meant that educators have come to occupy both the role of teacher and investigator. Concerns about originality, plagiarism, and academic integrity compel teachers to examine student submissions more closely. This added attention affects students across the grade spectrum. When a student writes an exemplary work of literature, especially in a way that displays ingenuity and craftsmanship way beyond the student's expected level, it raises doubts as to whether AI was used to enhance their writing. Conversely, when a student presents a work that lacks originality, it leaves you wondering if the work was lazily churned out by a random AI model.

The effect of these suspicions is twofold. Firstly, it adds an additional level of workload to a teacher's job. Given the still-evolving nature of educational guardrails against AI misuse, a lot of the burden of uncovering AI misuse has temporarily fallen on the shoulders of teachers. Secondly, it erodes the trust that teachers have in their students' capabilities. How can you raise suspicions of AI misuse without questioning a student's integrity? To what extent must teachers accept or reject the role of investigator? Has the suspicion of AI use ever caused overburden or eroded your trust in students? This roundtable panel seeks participants to analyze the role of the investigator that teachers have been forced to assume in the age of AI, especially as it relates to increased workload and eroding trust in students.

Please send all questions to: rav383@mail.usask.ca.

Speculative Fictions of Sleep and Wellness

Amala Poli, University of Western Ontario, apoli@uwo.ca

Suvendu Ghatak, Independent Scholar, ghataksuvendu@ufl.edu

We invite proposals for papers that critically examine the cultural, political, and aesthetic dimensions of sleep within speculative and contemporary fictions. In a world increasingly shaped by 24/7 work cultures, wellness industries, and technologies that blur the boundaries between rest and productivity, sleep has become both a contested site and a radical act. From narratives that portray sleep as a scarce resource to speculative imaginings of sleepless futures, the ways in which writers, filmmakers, and artists represent sleep illuminate broader struggles around health, inequality, and resistance to neoliberal rhythms of life.

We welcome contributions that engage with diverse genres—literature, film, television, digital media, and visual arts—that situate sleep as central to questions of wellness discourse, cultural imaginaries, and collective futures. How do speculative fictions of sleep articulate anxieties and possibilities tied to colonial histories, labor precarity, and ecological crises? In what ways do they challenge global hierarchies of health knowledge and reiterate/unsettle Euro-American frameworks of sleep science and wellness culture?

Possible areas of inquiry include (but are not limited to):

- Sleep, insomnia, and fatigue in speculative and dystopian fiction
- Commodification of rest in wellness therapies
- Sleep as resistance to 24/7 capitalism (see Tricia Hersey's *Rest is Resistance*)
- Sleep in relation to environmental and technological futures
- Sleep imaginaries and decolonial aesthetics, especially in the Global South

Please submit an abstract of 250–300 words and a short bio to apoli@uwo.ca.

Redistributing Presence: Performance, Protest, and Displacement

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This panel focuses on how performance redistributes presence: making people and communities visible in moments when their participation is restricted or denied. Building on Diana Taylor's understanding of performance as embodied repertoire, Yana Meerzon's account of exile as a negotiation between belonging and unbelonging, and Athena Athanasiou's discussion of feminist assemblies as political acts, we approach performance as a practice of producing knowledge, making connections, and creating spaces under conditions of precarity.

We invite analyses of performances across stages, streets, and digital platforms, and welcome work that examines how performance creates presence and produces knowledge in diverse forms and media. Examples include adaptations of Shakespeare that unsettle canonical authority, feminist protests (for instance, Poland's 2020 women's strike against abortion bans), refugee cultural productions that preserve memory and build diasporic publics (such as Syrian hip hop in Berlin or Palestinian Dabke collectives in exile), or digital repertoires on social media that assemble publics through circulation (for example, hashtag campaigns like #MeToo or #RefugeesWelcome). These cases suggest a wide range of ways performance contests invisibility and creates spaces for gathering and dissent.

We especially encourage submissions from scholars working through feminist, queer, refugee, and Global South epistemologies. We welcome a variety of formats — including traditional papers, collaborative projects, and creative-critical approaches— recognizing that knowledge can be produced in many ways.

Our aim is not only to analyze performance but to ask what it does: how it redistributes attention, challenges dominant narratives, builds unexpected connections, and offers ways of imagining futures.

Climate Change and the Maximalist Novel

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The maximalist novel (exemplars—Gravity's Rainbow, Ulysses, Infinite Jest) has been theorized in a multitude of ways: as encyclopedic text, as historiographic metafiction, as systems novel, as hysterical realism, as critical commodity of globalization. It allocates as much, if not more, space on narratorial disquisitions about the state of the world, social and economic thought, spectres of politics as they allocate on plot, character, and setting, like the realist novel. It tends to be scriptible. Maximalist novels also tend to highlight environmental concerns, like Moby-Dick, the genre's ur-text. Given that there is literally enough space in which to examine various contextualising factors that undergird the motivation behind characters' actions, writers like Thomas Pynchon and David Foster Wallace highlight both the role of the environment and existential threats it faces due to the flow of capital and ideologies of boundless economic growth. Two formally experimental maximalist novels explicitly foregrounding environmental concerns from their titles onwards are Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) and Stephen Markley's *The Deluge* (2023).

This panel invites critical papers that look at the relationship between fictionalized, literary treatments of the environment and the genre of the maximalist novel, however you theorize it. Some questions to ponder—critical investigations on the overlap between climate fiction and the maximalist novel. How does the form of the maximalist novel, with its extradiegetic remits, lend itself to reading about the environment, itself widely inchoate? What are some historiographies of the maximalist novel's devotion to the environment?

Beyond Binaries: Victorian Literature in Transnational Contexts (NAVSA/ACCUTE)

Reza Taher-Kermani, Concordia University, reza.taherkermani@concordia.ca

The view of Victorian literature as primarily 'national' obscures the depth of its cross-cultural engagements beyond Europe, engagements that were never just one thing—neither purely appropriative nor purely transformative, neither simply imperial nor simply personal, but irreducibly multiple in approach, execution, and impact. This complexity registered across Victorian literary culture: in translation practices that blended scholarly rigour with commercial ambition, in aesthetic movements that drew on non-European forms for genuine

experiment, cultural distinction, or gesture of resistance, and in the careers of writers whose encounters with other traditions served at once personal, artistic, and professional ends. To recognize this complexity is to see that cross-cultural engagement was not supplementary to Victorian literary culture but constitutive of it, to understand that what we now call “Victorian literature” took form in, and depended upon, these multiple encounters with non-European traditions. This panel seeks papers that can hold this complexity in view: work that examines how Victorian writers engaged with non-European traditions across multiple registers, receiving, representing and reproducing them in ways that resist categorization within binary theoretical or analytical models. Submissions that combine literary analysis with approaches from cultural history, translation studies, comparative methodology, or material culture are encouraged, as are those that go beyond familiar interpretive frameworks (e.g. power and agency; authentic and imitative; civilized and primitive) to consider how cross-cultural encounters encompassed contradictory impulses and effects, how they entailed complex processes of aesthetic and cultural mediation (i.e. translation, adaptation, conscious allusion), how they transformed both source traditions and receiving contexts. Possible avenues of inquiry may include:

- Translation practices: What strategies, negotiations, or distortions characterized the translation of non-European works into English, and how did these shape Victorian literary culture?
 - Aesthetic theory and criticism: How did encounters with non-European traditions alter Victorian debates about taste, beauty, or the purpose of art?
 - Comparative analysis of form: How did encounters with non-European literary traditions reshape Victorian narrative techniques, poetic structures, or dramatic conventions?
 - Networks of mobility: How did travel, migration, and exile facilitate literary exchanges across borders?
 - Reception and readership: How did Victorian audiences interpret, adapt, or resist texts shaped by cross-cultural encounters?
 - Identity formation through difference: How did engagement with foreign texts complicate Victorian constructions of selfhood, nationality, or religious belief?
 - Material studies of circulation: How did publishing networks, periodicals, and libraries facilitate cross-cultural literary exchange?
 - Contemporary methodological questions: What can digital humanities, postcolonial theory, or translation studies contribute to our understanding of these historical intersections?
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Ramones at Fifty (ACCUTE/CAAS)

Peter Robert Brown, Mount Allison University, pbrown@mta.ca

2026 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Ramones' first LP, the eponymous *Ramones*. This session calls for papers that explore the possible meanings of the record in 1976 and especially in the years since. It is an artifact of its time, a product of and a response to the history of America in the decades after World War II, particularly the 1960s and early 1970s. How did it comment on the nation in its bicentennial year? What might it say as the United States prepares to celebrate its two hundred and fiftieth birthday? Initially, the album was a commercial disappointment, but it has influenced thousands of punk musicians. It eventually achieved gold record status in the US; moreover, it and other albums from the 1970s New York City punk scene have long been canonical in punk and rock and roll spheres. Is such adulation warranted? Are the album's attitudes, its raw musical minimalism and its lyrical cynicism, nihilism, and humour, at all relevant, given the last fifty years of American history? How might the record participate in contemporary American culture, a culture it played a small part in creating? In his valuable 2009 book on the record, Nicholas Rombes suggests that it "is either the last great modern record, or the first great postmodern one" (3). Is this so? Do such terms even make sense in thinking about the record? More broadly, what does "punk rock" mean in the United States in the present, a period in which rock music is increasingly culturally marginal? The panel invites proposals/abstracts that address these and other questions about the album and its relationship to the cultural and social life of the nation.