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CHIMO

The Newsjournal of the Canadian
Association of Postcolonial Studies

Chimo (Chee'mo)
greetings [Inuktitut]



Three Birds, 2003, ink on paper, by Damon Badger Heit

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***“[I]t is an exciting time to
be a part of the newly
renamed CAPS.”***

President's Report

Jesse Arsenault

Associate Professor, Department of English
Concordia University
jesse.arseneault@concordia.ca

Greetings to my fellow members of the Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (CAPS), and happy new year! I write to you from Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe territory, protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Agreement, what many now call the Niagara Region.

It is a pleasure to contribute to our first issue of Chimo in nearly a decade, and I offer my thanks to Stephanie Oliver, our newly elected Chimo Editor, for reviving this newsletter. Thanks to Stephanie's dedicated labours, our members will now have regular updates on the happenings in our association and information on our members' activities. This resurgence is a testament to the equally dedicated work of our executive to ensure the flourishing of our association, no mean feat as we emerge from the tumult of the last three years.

With the above in mind, it is an exciting time to be a part of the newly renamed CAPS. I am delighted to come aboard as our association's latest President, taking the reins from my predecessor, Asma Sayed, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude for steering the association through three turbulent years. Her leadership has seen us successfully navigate a global pandemic, two years of independent virtual conferences, and a long-overdue change in our association's name to better reflect the array of work that our members contribute. She has also guided us through a politically uncertain time, with a resurgence in awareness of racist policing, renewed calls for decolonization within Canada's settler state and elsewhere on the globe, runaway climate change, and institutional austerity, items that make the scholarship and activism practiced by our members ever more important. I look forward to collaborating with the current executive to maintain the spirit and energy we have worked so hard to maintain during these last three years.

With our annual conference just over four months away, I look forward to seeing many of your faces in person for the first time since 2019. The 2023 CAPS conference, to be held at York University in Tkaronto/Toronto at Congress, promises to be a momentous return to face-to-face gathering. Our CFP follows the Congress theme of “Reckonings and Re-imaginings” and will see the return of our Indigenous Roundtable, as well as a conversational keynote between Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Robyn Maynard. We have a few other events up our sleeves that we hope to announce in the coming weeks.

I reiterate my strong encouragement to members to submit proposals before our deadline of January 15. Please circulate our CFP widely to colleagues and students who have work to share. The CFP can be found on our website at <http://caclals.ca/cfps-conferences/>. As an association that has long been a support to many graduate students over the years (with several, including me, still being a part of the association later in their careers) we encourage you to spread the news far and wide that we welcome contributions from students. These contributions often prove to be highlights of our conference, introducing us all to cutting edge analyses within our field. We also look forward to celebrating student work in our annual plenary, the Graduate Student Prize Panel.

While this is an exciting time, with our return to Congress comes challenges that need our attention. Our association is in a better financial position following our hiatus from Congress, but the current and future executives will need to be ever mindful of our budget as rising cost of events hosted by the Canadian Federation for the Social Sciences and Humanities (CFHSS) places constraints on the kind of conference we can offer amid dwindling funding sources. Perhaps most importantly, especially given the political and ethical scholarship that guides our association, we need to ensure that both our association

“[M]y thanks to all our members for making this association the wonderful community it continues to be.”

and CFHSS respond to the demands of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID) outlined in CFHSS's *Igniting Change* report, but also within the nuanced scholarship of members of our association and the communities and lifeworlds in which we live and work. Our executive continues to be in dialogue with CFHSS to ensure that these commitments remain paramount to our relationship with Congress. Returning to Congress is worthy of celebration, but caution as well. Virtual conferences offered much that will be difficult but important to implement in Congress-based events, including accommodations to members with disabilities who may still face barriers because of the ongoing risks of the pandemic. Independent conferences also made implementing affordable or free attendance to underfunded members and those from underrepresented communities easier. These latter items are central to ensuring that all of our members can embrace the joy of meeting and collaborating with each other and our partner associations, whether online or in person.

I have every confidence that our current executive will be cognizant of the above and as dedicated to the flourishing of our association as the previous one. And so, in closing, I want to offer my thanks to the newly elected executive, all of whom deserve recognition for the labour they have already contributed to make this year's events possible. In addition to Asma Sayed, now occupying the role of Past President, I thank our Executive Officer, Coplen Rose; our Early Career Representative, Anindo Hazra; our Contract Academic Representative, Jason Sandhar; our Chimo Editor, Stephanie Oliver; and our Graduate Student Representatives, Alexander Sarra-Davis and Susan Rajendran. I also offer my thanks to Prabhjot Parmar, who has graciously offered to serve as acting Treasurer.

Finally, my thanks to all our members for making this association the wonderful community it continues to be.

Sincerely,

Jesse Arseneault

CAPS President



Interested in
Getting Involved
in CAPS?

- We're looking to fill the following positions:
 - **Vice President**
 - **Communications Officer**
 - **EDID Representative**
- For more information about these positions, email CAPS President Jesse Arseneault at jesse.arseneault@concordia.ca

Meet Your Executive Committee (2022-2024)

President **Jesse Arsenault**

Associate Professor, Department of English
Concordia University

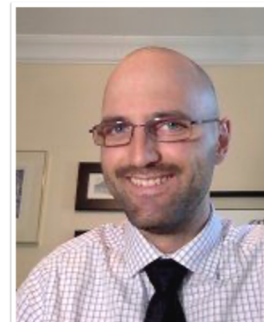
Research areas: African literature, animal studies, posthumanism, postcolonial studies, queer theory, and cultural studies



Executive Officer **Coplen Rose**

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Acadia University

Research Areas: African drama and literature, geography and digital mapping, trauma studies, popular culture, and is currently working on a book chapter about postcolonial science fiction and South African drama



Early Career Representative **Anindo Hazra**

Sessional Faculty,
Department of English | Department of Humanities
York University

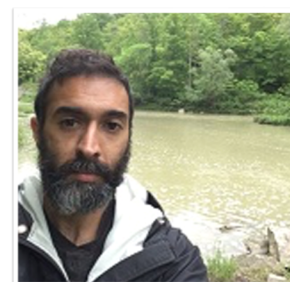
Research areas: India; South Asia; South Asian diaspora; queer literature; queer theory; postcolonial theory and literature; deconstruction; Human Rights and the Arts



Contract Academic Representative **Jason Sandhar**

Department of English and Writing Studies
University of Western Ontario

Research areas: Indian literature; postcolonial studies; postcolonial ecocriticism; critical animal studies



Chimo Editor **Stephanie Oliver**

Assistant Professor, Augustana Campus, University of Alberta

Research areas: Canadian diasporic women's writing, postcolonial literature, settler colonial studies, smell, sensory encounters with oil, settler atmospherics, pedagogy



Past President **Asma Sayed**

Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies, Department of English, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Research areas: South Asian Canadian literature; Postcolonial and diaspora literature; Indian Ocean Studies; Indian cinema; feminist cultural studies.



Graduate Student Representative **Alexander Sarra-Davis**

PhD Candidate & Course Instructor, Department of English
University of Toronto

Research areas: postcolonial theory; narratology; ethics of representation; Canadian literature; American literature; Australian literature; African literature; cultural studies; poetry.



Graduate Student Representative **Susan Rajendran**

PhD Candidate, Department of Humanities
York University

Research areas: Sri-Lankan modernist fiction and Buddhist humanism in the construction of Sri-Lankan postcolonial identity, the relationship between aesthetics and identity as alternatives to nationalist discourse



... and welcome to our newest member of the executive committee, **Prabhjot Parmar**, as acting Treasurer!



“As Local Area Coordinator for our Association during Congress, I eagerly look forward to welcoming CAPS members to our Conference”

Early Career Representative / Local Area Coordinator Report

Anindo Hazra

Sessional Faculty,
Department of English | Department of Humanities
York University

This year sees the newly named Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (CAPS) carry forward the Association’s longstanding mandate to generate and foster critical thinking and decolonizing methodologies on existing and emerging post/colonial texts, histories, geographies and ecologies. In 2023, the principal yearly event of the Association – its Annual Conference – will be held during Congress 2023, hosted by York University in Toronto, my own institution. As Local Area Coordinator for our Association during Congress, I eagerly look forward to welcoming CAPS members to our Conference (held between 28-31 May 2023). This will be the first time in multiple years that both the CAPS Conference as well as Congress have convened in-person. York University has long been well-placed to host large gatherings of scholars, students, and the public. Since 2006, when York last hosted Congress, the main campus at Keele has seen dramatic expansions as the University continues to serve one of the most diverse academic communities in Canada. Visitors during the CAPS Conference will also find the University fully linked to the TTC Subway, which has radically improved transit to the downtown core. So, come on over!

The CAPS Conference in 2023 promises to be as vital and thought-provoking as ever. The strengths of our annual meetings – from the superlative quality of keynote speakers, to the remarkable individual panel presentations and the acuity of Graduate Student papers and panels – have long been known to most Chimo readers. Our CFP this year engages expansively with the theme for Congress 2023, and will undoubtedly make a signal contribution to the larger conversations and transformations that Congress 2023 aims for. Please check <https://caclals.ca/cfps-conferences/> for more information. See you all very soon!



congress 2023 **congrès 2023**

OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Reckonings & Re-Imagings

DES SCIENCES HUMAINES
Confronter le passé, réimaginer l'avenir

May 27 to June 2, 2023 | Toronto





Alex Sarra-Davis joins CAPS this year as a Graduate Student Representative. He is a 7th-year PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto's Department of English, where he has also worked as a course instructor and a lecturer for the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication. His dissertation explores postcolonial self-representations of the author in contemporary fiction, especially as they relate to questions of narratology and ethics.



Susan Rajendran is honoured to be a Graduate Student Representative with CAPS starting this year. She is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Humanities at York University. Susan enjoys working as a Teaching Assistant in Foundations Courses where she engages with undergraduate students from various disciplines. As well, Susan's own research is interdisciplinary, with a focus on Sri-Lankan modernist fiction and Buddhist humanism in the construction of Sri-Lankan postcolonial identity. Other themes in Susan's doctoral research highlight the relationship between aesthetics and identity, in their range and potential, as alternatives to nationalist discourse.

Graduate Student Representatives Report

Alexander Sarra-Davis

PhD Candidate & Course Instructor, Department of English
University of Toronto

Susan Rajendran

PhD Candidate, Department of Humanities
York University

After more than two and a half years of a devastating pandemic, the ability for students to make the most of graduate school and meaningfully connect with one another seems at last to be returning. More and more, institutions are shifting their classes and events back to in-person, meaning that we are finally getting much needed breaks from our apartments and home offices. The same is true for us here at CAPS, where the wildly successful 2021 online meeting of what was then CACLALS and the five-day, in-person ACLALS conference have demonstrated that we can return to the more present format of in-person sessions for this year's conference.

As your new Graduate Student Representatives, we want to encourage you to apply for and attend the CAPS conference at Congress this year. The conference's theme of "Reckonings and Re-Imaginations" is one of perennial importance but, especially given our organisation's change of name and executive committee, now feels like a tremendous opportunity for careful scrutiny and much-needed change. Paper topics ranging from Black futurities to desire-based criticism, and from decolonial solidarities to environmental racisms will all be considered for this year's event, and we especially encourage those of you who are uncertain about your papers to apply. It is crucial that as many graduate students join these conversations as possible, and we look forward to reading your proposals and meeting you at the conference.

Speaking of which, we would like to take this opportunity to announce a roundtable discussion section for graduate students at this year's conference. Titled "The Struggle of Remaining Productive During the Pandemic", this session will serve as a vital opportunity for building connections with and between graduate students, expanding our support networks and discussing strategies that we have found to be restorative in otherwise draining circumstances. More information can be found below, and on the conference programme once it is released. All CAPS members are invited to participate, but special effort will be made to prioritise new and graduate voices. We hope to see you there!

"The Struggle of Remaining Productive During the Pandemic" (Format: Roundtable)

Organizers: Alexander Sarra-Davis (Toronto); Susan Rajendran (York)

Given the pandemic, the past three years have been particularly chaotic in innumerable ways. Social and economic hardships, along with crises in issues related to mental health, have severely impacted all corners of the globe. Graduate students are caught in the bind of having to fend for their financial needs while at the same time struggling to fulfill their academic goals and obligations. For PhD students, in their stage of dissertation writing, life can be an especially isolating and overwhelming experience. The demands of producing meaningful scholarly work in a timely manner requires a great deal of concentration and a sense of security about the future.

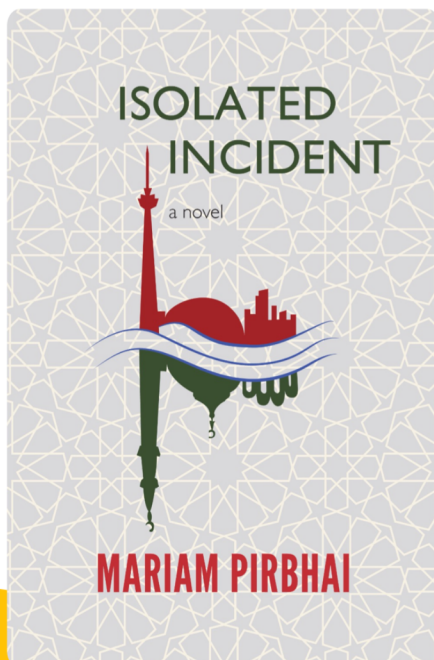
This roundtable encourages participants to discuss their challenges and also any strategies they may have discovered to aid in the struggle to remain productive during the pandemic. How can graduate students create networks outside their academic institutions in order to facilitate a sense of community and mutual support? What can graduate faculties do to help build this support system and to alleviate isolation?

Member News

Artful (Un)belonging

ArtfulUnbelonging.ca

Veronica Austen (St. Jerome's University) launched the project website artfulunbelonging.ca. "Artful (Un)belonging" is a SSHRC-funded (IDG) project that explores intersections between the visual and the literary arts and which, specifically, contemplates how these intersections function within the context of questions of belonging. The website is a work-in-progress that will collect interviews with Canadian writers whose work and/or practice is relevant to the project. The website too is designed to collect various resources and reflections. An interview with author and fellow CAPS member [Dr. Mariam Pirbhai](#) is the site's inaugural posting. Ph.D. candidate Lara El Mekkwawi, also a CAPS member, is serving as the project's research assistant and has been integral to conducting and transcribing the interviews



Isolated Incident

Mariam Pirbhai's debut novel, *Isolated Incident*, was released this fall 2022!

Recommended by CBC Books, *Quill and Quire*, *Hamilton Review of Books* and FOLD (Festival of Literary Diversity), *Isolated Incident* depicts the disturbing rise in hate-crimes directed at Canadian Muslims living in Ontario and Quebec, while also calling into question issues of land and belonging for both immigrant and settler.

As *Quill and Quire* reviewer Zeahaa Rehman notes, "reading *Isolated Incident* is not unlike receiving a series of pinpricks that ultimately form a bruise in the reader's heart, reminding them of their relationship to the deeply rooted Islamophobia in Canada." *Isolated Incident* is available at all major retailers, or direct from the publisher.

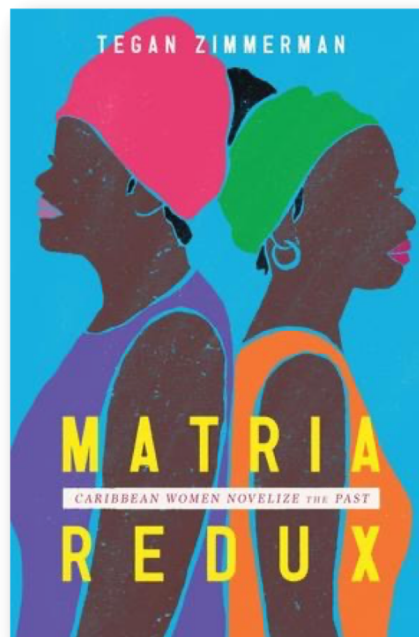
<https://www.mawenzihouse.com/product/isolated-incident/>

Member News cont'd

Matria Redux: Caribbean Women Novelize the Past

Tegan Zimmerman has a forthcoming book on Caribbean women's historical fiction titled *Matria Redux: Caribbean Women Novelize the Past*. The book is on pre-order now from the University Press of Mississippi and will be published in July 2023.

<https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Books/M/Matria-Redux>



Send us your news!

- Are you finishing a research project?
- Have you published new creative work?
- Are you part of an exciting collaboration?
- Did you receive a notable award?
- Do you have other news that you would like to share with members?
- Please send a short description and any other information (links, images) to CHIMO Editor Stephanie Oliver at ssoliver@ualberta.ca



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CAPS (formerly CACLALS) Conference at Congress 2023

May 28 to 31, 2023

Proposals due January 15, 2023

Keynote Speakers: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Robyn Maynard in conversation

Conference Theme:

Reckonings and Re-Imaginings

In conjunction with the annual Congress of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (CAPS/formerly CACLALS) will host its annual conference from May 28 to 30, 2023, at York University's Keele and Glendon Campuses in Toronto.

This year's CAPS conference will investigate how the Congress theme, "reckonings and re-imaginings," resonates with postcolonial and decolonial thought. In addition to papers that respond to Congress 2023's emphasis on the "lessons of Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," we invite submissions that explore reckonings and re-imaginings in a global context. For instance, how might global literatures urge us to "re-imagine" border zones and/or sovereignty amidst contemporary geopolitical conflicts and displacements in Sri Lanka, Syria, Latin America, and Myanmar (to name but a few recent examples)? In what ways do post- and decolonial literary and cultural producers re-imagine power in the context of "people's power" and social justice? How do those who have been historically excluded from knowledge production shape their own narratives through literary and cultural re-imaginings? Alternatively, how do we both reckon with and re-imagine "the public" amidst ongoing pandemics, including (but not limited to) COVID, Ebola, polio, and monkeypox? What of climate disasters in the global South, particularly in the case of small countries who must reckon with the consequences of the world's biggest polluters?

Papers might also trouble the theme of "reckoning and re-imagining" as an institutional imperative complicit in neoliberalism. For those living in precarity, how are reckoning and re-imagining not a "lesson" to be taken from political dissenters, but an everyday fact of survival? Meanwhile, as catastrophic climate change and pandemic life have provoked anxieties about apocalyptic disruptions to business as usual in the Global North, critics point out that the apocalypse long ago befell the Global South. Yet those in precarious conditions continue to resist and flourish. We thus encourage papers that trouble myths about the Global South as a space of ongoing damage and suffering. In other words, what can Europe and North America learn from the Global South about ways of living/seeing/being that

unsettle neoliberal paradigms? What forms of “reckoning and re-imagining” are gaining momentum in the Global South?

CAPS welcomes conference papers or panel proposals that address any aspect of the CFP’s central questions or issues. We also welcome proposals otherwise related to the Association’s broader mandate to examine postcolonial and global literary and cultural studies. The following are suggestions in this vein:

- Post-dystopias/post-ruins
- More than human solidarities
- Postcolonial/decolonial futures
- Speculative fiction and sci-fi
- Troubling “trauma” as a master signifier of precarity
- Borders and sovereignty
- Indigenous resistance
- Black re-imaginings and futurities
- Potential solidarities within, between, and across racialized subject-positions and colonized worlds, including attention to coalitions, community-building, and allyship
- Desire-based (as opposed to damage-based) inquiry
- Migration, mobility, and displacement
- Environmental racism
- Literary activism
- The concept of the “postcolonial”
- Intersectionality in theory and praxis

We welcome any of the following: formal papers designed to be delivered in not more than 20 minutes; workshops; member-organized panels (including, but not limited to, roundtables, storytelling panels, collaborative presentations, or other proposed formats); and member-proposed special events. If the latter have funding implications, we ask that the proposal include ideas about how at least partial funding might be secured.

Submission Instructions

Proposals of not more than **350 words** should be sent by December 15, as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) attachment to CAPSconference2023@gmail.com with the subject heading of “CAPS Proposal at Congress 2023.” Proposals are double blind-vetted. Please ensure your submission includes the following:

1. The proposal of no more than 350 words, and a title. Member-organized panels should include a brief description of the panel and (if applicable) proposals for each presenter.
2. Presenter's affiliation and employment status (for Tenured/Tenure Track, Contract, Sessional, and Postdoc members) or program and university (for graduate students)
3. Contact information (email)
4. A 50-word abstract, and an indication of any special media or other needs.
5. If you are a graduate student, please indicate this, in which case your proposal will be automatically considered for the Graduate Student Presentation Prize Panel.

Membership renewal or new membership must be paid in full by February 1, 2023 for inclusion in the final conference program. Conference fees will be announced via the website and the Congress registration page.

The [automated membership system](#) is available on the CAPS website. Conference queries, including those related to fee payments and membership inquiries, should be sent to CAPS President, Jesse Arseneault, at jesse.arseneault@concordia.ca. Please also see the [CAPS website](#) for more information about the association and for conference updates.

Information about the Graduate Student Conference Presentation Prize can be found [here](#).

CAPS Membership

- Membership is open to any academic, professional, or interested person engaged in the research, teaching, or study of postcolonial literatures and global literatures and oratures. CACLALS meets annually at Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, hosted by different universities across Canada each year. Members become part of the most established research collective in Canada devoted to postcolonial studies, which provides a supportive and collaborative community of scholars, teachers, critics and creative practitioners.
- Visit <http://caclals.ca/membership/> to renew or purchase your membership



Editor: Stephanie Oliver, ssoliver@ualberta.ca

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On the cover: Three Birds, 2003, ink on paper, by Damon Badger Heit. Badger Heit holds a BA in Indian Art and English from the First Nations University of Canada, is a member of the Mistawasis First Nation, and resides in Regina. His art-making is education-based, and he has worked as an art instructor for youth programs in schools through organizations like the MacKenzie Art Gallery and Common Weal Inc., producing a number of public art works with youth at Regina's Connaught and Thompson Community Schools. Damon currently works as the Coordinator of First Nations and Métis Initiatives at SaskCulture Inc., a non-profit volunteer-driven organization that supports cultural activity throughout the province.