

## Considering an Embodied Ethic of Care Framework to Counter Colonial Violence in International Education

Myrtle Sodhi and Sonia Martin\*

*York University, Canada*

\*Corresponding author (Myrtle Sodhi): Email: <mailto:info@myrtlehenrysodhi.ca>  
Address: York University, Ontario, Canada

---

### Abstract

*This collaborative theoretical essay considers how an Embodied Ethic of Care Framework (Sodhi, 2022), which is informed by Black feminist thought and Indigenous African thought, offers a different way of being in international education. We describe international education in Canada, which focuses on the economy and leads to “conditional hospitality” (Ahmed, 2012) and the commodification of international students (Guo & Guo, 2017). We juxtapose the five elements of the framework to instances of international education in Canada. We demonstrate how current connections with international students are transactional—which replicates harmful historical relationships between people of colour, capitalism, and colonialism. The Embodied Ethic of Care Framework is an antidote for this colonial violence because it places relationship building at the center. We invite readers to consider how an ethic of care might inspire a different way of being that could redress coloniality and systemic racism in their own internationalized contexts.*

**Keywords:** anti-colonial, ethics of care, international education, translanguaging, Black feminist thought

### Resumen

*Este ensayo teórico colaborativo considera cómo un Marco de Ética del Cuidado Encarnado (Sodhi, 2022) podría ofrecer una manera diferente de ser en contextos educativos internacionalizados en Canadá. Comenzamos describiendo la educación internacional en el contexto canadiense. Explicamos cómo una estrategia federal de educación internacional que se centra en impulsar la economía conduce a una "hospitalidad condicional" (Ahmed, 2012) y la mercantilización de los estudiantes internacionales (Guo & Guo, 2017). Luego, presentamos el Marco de Ética del Cuidado Encarnado, que está informado por el pensamiento feminista negro e indígena*

---

Received 4/30/23; revised 6/12/23; accepted 9/1/23

*africano (Sodhi, 2022). El marco reconoce la energía colectiva de la comunidad (Sodhi, 2022). Se entretienen los cinco elementos de nuestro “marco” a instancias de educación internacional en Canadá. Dado que la discriminación basada en el lenguaje sigue siendo una práctica comúnmente aceptada en las instituciones postsecundarias canadienses (Martin, 2022), nuestras descripciones de contextos internacionalizados en Canadá atienden al lenguaje y al diálogo. Demostramos cómo las conexiones actuales con los estudiantes internacionales son transaccionales, lo que replica las dañinas relaciones históricas entre personas de color, el capitalismo y el colonialismo. El Marco de Ética del Cuidado Encarnado es un antídoto contra esta forma de violencia colonial porque coloca la construcción de relaciones al centro de la experiencia de internacionalización. A través de la ecolocalización (Gumbs, 2020), invitamos a los lectores a considerar cómo un marco de ética del cuidado podría inspirar una manera diferente de ser que podría corregir la colonialidad y el racismo sistémico en contextos internacionalizados en Canadá y también en sus propios contextos.*

**Palabras Claves:** anti-colonial, ética del cuidado, educación internacional, translenguaje, pensamiento feminista negro

### **Resumo**

*Este ensaio teórico colaborativo considera como uma *Ética do Cuidado Corporificado* (Sodhi, 2022) pode oferecer uma maneira diferente de ser em contextos educacionais internacionalizados no Canadá. Começamos descrevendo a educação internacional no contexto canadense. Explicamos como uma estratégia federal de educação internacional focada na economia e não na educação leva à “hospitalidade condicional” (Ahmed, 2012) e à mercantilização de estudantes internacionais (Guo & Guo, 2017). Em seguida, apresentamos a *Ética do Cuidado Corporificado*, que é informado pelo pensamento feminista negro e pelo pensamento indígena africano (Sodhi, 2022). Este reconhece a energia coletiva da comunidade (Sodhi, 2022). Contrastamos os cinco elementos do referido quadro com exemplos de educação internacional no Canadá. Como a discriminação com base na língua ainda é uma prática comumente aceita nas instituições de ensino superior canadenses (Martin, 2022), nossas descrições de contextos internacionalizados no Canadá levam em consideração a linguagem e o diálogo. Demonstramos como as conexões atuais com estudantes internacionais são transacionais – o que reproduz relações históricas violentas entre pessoas de cor, capitalismo e colonialismo. A *Ética do Cuidado Corporificado* coloca-se como um antídoto para essa forma de violência colonial, porque coloca a construção de relacionamentos no centro. Por meio da ecolocalização (Gumbs, 2020), convidamos os leitores a considerar como um quadro de referência de uma ética de cuidado pode inspirar uma maneira diferente de ser que possa reparar a colonialidade e o racismo sistêmico em contextos internacionalizados no Canadá e/ou em seus contextos específicos.*

**Palavras-chave:** anticolonial, ética do cuidado, educação internacional, translíngua, pensamento feminista negro

---

### **Introduction**

In January 2023, we presented many of the ideas in this paper at the IAFOR International Conference on Education. At the end of our presentation, we received questions about praxis. *What can practitioners do? How do we inform policy makers?* Such questions are common during any discussion that critiques the status quo, but there is no such thing as a prescriptive solution. Prescriptivism is a colonial tool. Stein (2021) states that "to

address the coloniality of internationalization will require that we stay with the uncomfortable feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and equivocal authority, and it will require that we not only *do* things differently, or even just *think* about them differently, but that we actually learn to *be* differently” (p. 1777). Rather than offering methodological or epistemological solutions, in this article, we respond to the relatively few conversations on ethics in international education (e.g. Stein et al., 2019; Brunner, 2022). Discussions on ethics provide openings for ontological shifts. Ontology requires multiplicity; that is, any way of being cannot be understood in isolation without the perspective of other ways of being. Thus, our discussion here relies on echolocation, described by Gumbs (2020) as being about receptive language and presencing. The term presencing relates to a sonic practice that involves continually offering our presence to others as a way to signal our ongoing participation in community. We use Gumbs’s questions as a way of guiding our examination differently, keeping Black feminist values of reciprocity and interconnectedness close. In her own words, “What could it mean to be present with each other across time and space and difference? Presence is interpersonal” (p. 67). Echolocation is about the way we use our collective voice in ways that speak to self and community integration. Each voice is heard in its unique expression and met with the unique expression of each community member. Therefore, there is recognition and respect for the “individual expression” (Collins, 2022) of each community member; it is about a way of speaking and being heard in our own voices. In honoring the practice of echolocation and presencing, we want to emphasize that we are not presenting our ideas *to* you but rather hope that our ideas resonate with you and invite your own.

We, the authors of this article, found each other through echolocation when we were both students in a graduate course about race, culture, and schooling. Within this course, our conversations crossed disciplines and we found in common ways of being that connected our joint interests. Sodhi is an Afro-Caribbean artist and educator with over 20 years of experience working in the education sector and collaborating with community members. Martin is the descendent of White European settlers to Canada. She is an applied linguist with 20 years of experience working in the English language teaching industry in Canada, the Middle East, and Europe. We resonated with each other’s unique expression which we maintain even as we write collectively. This article, then, is the result of interpersonal, intercultural, interdisciplinary collaboration. We begin by detailing the context of Martin’s (2022) research with international students at a Canadian university. We then describe Sodhi’s (2022) Embodied Ethic of Care Framework which is informed by Black feminist and Indigenous African thought. We consider how an ethic of care could offer a different way to *be* in internationalized contexts in Canada. We conclude by inviting you, the reader, to consider how an ethic of care relates to your context and join the conversation about *being*.

## Context

Before we describe the context of international education in Canada, we would like to offer a brief explanation of some of the terminology we employ. As an Afro-Caribbean scholar, Sodhi uses the term *African* to speak to common threads of values and practices that the African diasporic community recognizes and employs without dismissing the numerous nations with distinct thought traditions that are rooted in this continent. Sodhi mainly speaks to West African thought traditions as those are linked directly to her ancestry and area of study and employs the terminology such as African and Afrocentric in the way Eurocentric ways of knowing and being can be named without being contested as a valid way to describe the essence of certain ways of being and knowing. These traditions include but are not limited to Yoruba, Bantu-Kongo and Dagara ways of being and knowing. The terms Afrocentric/African are often asked to be defined while the term Eurocentric is not. Europe is recognized as a continent with numerous distinct practices, nations, and languages without scholars having to name it as such. Yet the term African struggles to be recognized within the same lens of complexity. Similarly, the authors recognize that the term *international students* does not refer to a homogenous group. There is immense

diversity among international students regarding language, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, nationality, gender, age, race, visa status, etc. We invite readers to consider these terms and others in this paper through the lens of complexity. In addition to terminology, as both authors are currently situated in Canada, we provide an overview of international education in Canada, although we recognize that this overview may apply to other contexts outside of Canada. We invite readers to consider their immediate contexts while engaging with this paper.

The federal government of Canada has developed an international education strategy, which is unusual because education falls under the purview of each province and territory. The federal strategy is introduced by the Minister of International Trade Diversification, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labor, and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. The titles of these officials indicate that the goal of international education is more about nation building than about education. Indeed, the strategy documents state that "educational expenditures by international students have a greater impact on Canada's economy than exports of auto parts, lumber or aircraft" (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 2), reducing international students to sources of revenue. In 2022, Canada sourced approximately 80% of international students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), 2022). Consequently, in addition to collecting revenue, post-secondary institutions in Canada benefit from increased diversity, checking off the D box in their equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives (Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). Ahmed (2012) explains that "people of color are welcomed on condition they return that hospitality by integrating into a common organizational culture, or by 'being' diverse, and allowing institutions to celebrate their diversity" (p. 43). This conditional hospitality (Derrida as cited in Ahmed, 2012) is reflected in international students' experiences of marginalization, which is well documented in Canadian-context academic literature (Ge & Durst, 2022; Guo & Guo, 2017; Houshmand et al., 2014; Hutcheson, 2020; Power et al., 2021; Tavares, 2021).

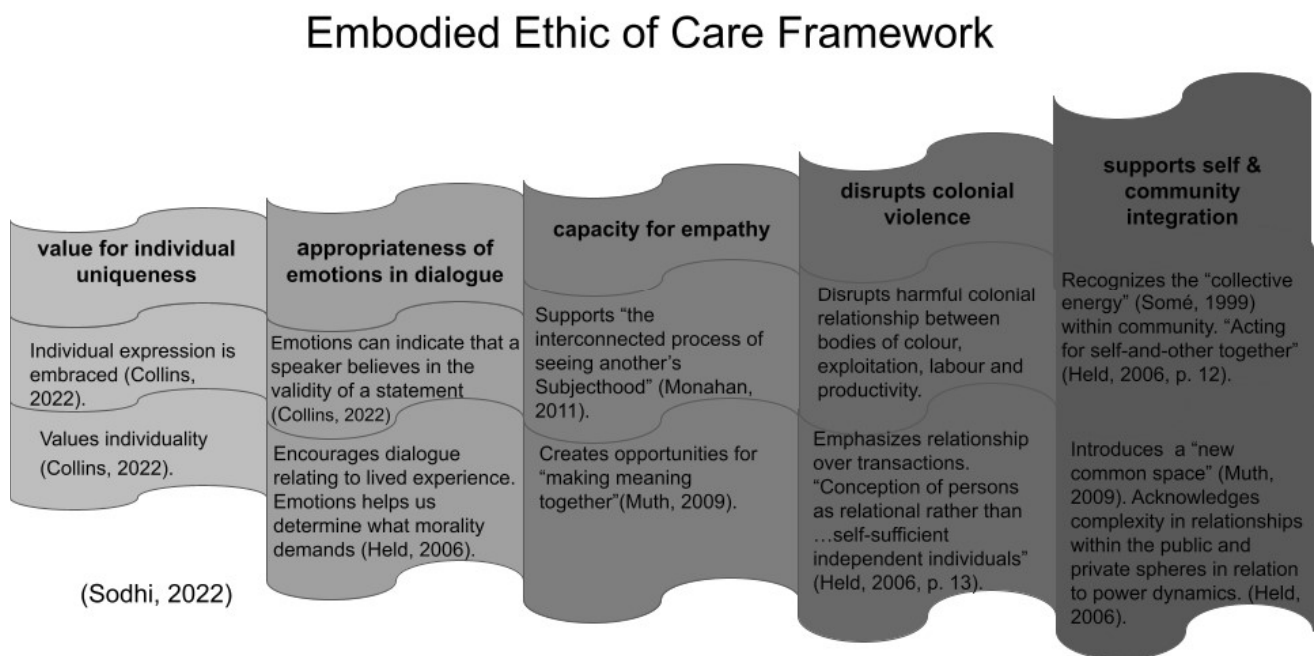
A ubiquitous result of conditional hospitality is language-based discrimination (Martin, 2022). (While Canada has two official languages, English and French, we focus on English contexts because our experience and research is in English-dominant institutions. However, we invite readers to consider language power dynamics in their own contexts.) Canadian educational institutions insist on linguistic homogenization, which has little to do with effective communication. Even though international students must demonstrate advanced English proficiency to be admitted to post-secondary institutions, and despite equity and inclusion initiatives, universities and colleges nation-wide offer remedial programs and resources to "improve" international students' language skills. International students report being othered, humiliated, derided, and excluded when they speak and write (Martin, 2022). The idea that everyone should speak and write to a particular standard is a legacy of Canada's European colonial history whereby "white settler ways of speaking English remain elevated over other(ed) Englishes, particularly those Englishes connected to non-white bodies" (Sterzuk, 2015, p. 56). Devaluing international students' Englishes reinforces the colonial racial hierarchy (Sterzuk, 2015). Martin (2022) interviewed international students about their experiences with language-based discrimination. One interviewee asked, "If you are in a class and trying to talk, and people look at you weird, would you have the courage to talk?" Ultimately, international students pay exorbitant tuition for the privilege of joining Canadian institutions, (Universities Canada, n.d.) on the condition that they attempt to assimilate, risking their unique expression and ability to fully participate in echolocation.

### **Embodied Ethic of Care Framework for International Education**

Sodhi's (2022) Embodied Ethic of Care Framework (Figure 1) supports re-envisioning work that can address the wide range of harm international students experience while providing all community members with another way to *be* with the issue of international education. The framework is not fixed. Rather it continues to

evolve and adapt to the areas that require a reorientation towards care. It is not meant to provide a hard and fast approach with rules regarding international education programs. The Embodied Ethic of Care Framework is based on Black feminist work on ethics of care. The framework relies heavily on the work of Collins (2022), a Black feminist scholar. Collins (2022) explains that Black feminist thought is born out of a response to the intersection of racial and gendered oppression that was not addressed by the women’s movement of the 1960s and 70s. Sodhi’s (2022) framework also draws on Indigenous African thought (Adefarakan, 2018; Somé, 1999). The proceeding sections explain the five components of the Embodied Ethic of Care Framework, which are built on Black feminist values of interconnectedness and relationship and therefore weave in and out of each other.

Collins (2022) herself identifies three components of “ethics of caring”. They include individual uniqueness, appropriateness of emotions in dialogue, and development of the capacity for empathy. In describing these components, Collins (2022) explores the theme of dialogue as a discourse mode found in Black churches and rooted in African ways of knowing. “In such services both the minister and the congregation routinely use voice rhythm and vocal inflection to convey meaning. The sound of what is being said is just as important as the words themselves in what is, in a sense, a dialogue of reason and emotion” (Collins, 2022, p. 264). Dialogue as discourse, emotions and empathy are representative of the practices of echolocation and presencing. The exchange between the leader and the congregation, for instance, not only validates emotions but it underscores the belief that emotions are a form of knowledge (Collins, 2022). Thus, emotions play a central role in African (and diasporic African) knowledge systems (Collins, 2022). Employing an African world view requires that we rely on non-Euro/Western ways of knowing and being. Therefore, in the same way that Collins (2022) brings knowing and care together, we seek to bring care and international education together.



**Figure 1** *Embodied Ethic of Care Framework*

**Five Components of the Embodied Ethic of Care Framework**  
*Value for Individual Uniqueness*

Within Sodhi's (2022) Embodied Ethic of Care Framework, the individual is valued as a unique member of a collective. Following Collins (2022), "each individual is thought to be a unique expression of a common spirit, power, or energy inherent in all life" (p. 334). Jazz, a specifically Black sound and musical approach, demonstrates this worldview beautifully. In each composition listeners bear witness to the values of the individual and the collective simultaneously. Each player is featured for the unique voice they bring to the piece. The musician must find a way to connect their true "voice" to the overall sound and rhythm of the rest of the group. This type of improvisation with sound is so closely mirrored to the way of *being* in the practice of echolocation and presencing. In relation to international education, the focus on Standard English diminishes the value of each international student's unique form of expression that they bring to the larger educational community.

Value for Individual Uniqueness can be seen in the act of translanguaging, a naturally occurring, jazz-like linguistic practice and way of being. Wei (2018) explains:

Human beings have a natural Translanguaging Instinct, an innate capacity to draw on as many different cognitive and semiotic resources as available to them to interpret meaning intentions and to design actions accordingly. This innate capacity drives humans to go beyond narrowly defined linguistic cues and transcend the culturally defined language boundaries to achieve effective communication. (p. 24)

Because no two humans have the same linguistic/semiotic repertoire, translanguaging always results in unique individualized expression. Within community, translanguaging refuses the socially-constructed borders between languages and the idea that any one language is superior to another. Internationally, researchers have documented successful translanguaging in primary (e.g. Prasad & Lory, 2019; Yilmaz, 2021), secondary (e.g. Lin & He, 2017; Seltzer et al., 2016), and post-secondary educational institutions (e.g. Burton & Rajendram, 2018; Galante, 2020; Kimball, 2015; Rafi & Morgan, 2022). While translanguaging is a natural occurrence, it is not considered an appropriate form of communication in academia, particularly for racialized students (García et al., 2021; Flores & Rosa, 2019). Standard English is upheld as the best way to communicate and transmit knowledge.

The rejection of any type of languaging that breaks down barriers is related to European imperialism. In what is now called Canada, White settler colonizers employed, and continue to employ, White supremacist ideologies to build a nation. This racial hierarchy is reproduced by "the powerfully assimilatory practices of institutions such as schools, courts, law enforcement and universities" (Sterzuk, 2015, p. 53; see also Henry & Tator, 2009). Standard English is a tool for maintaining the White supremacist racial order. White native-English speakers are considered the "legitimate owner[s] of English" (Sterzuk, 2015, p. 61). Thus, according to Flores and Rosa (2015), the linguistic practices of racialized people can be stigmatized even when they are indiscernible from so-called Standard English norms. Furthermore, within these institutions of "higher knowledge," language and knowledge become conflated, so any varieties of English that are not representative of Whiteness are seen as indicators of lack of knowledge. According to Sterzuk (2015), the internationalization of education "must also 'internationalise' communication through deliberate planning and policy. This challenge to the authority of the white settler native speaker must include policies and practices that incorporate an understanding of the historical and colonial link between language, race and education in settler societies." (Sterzuk, 2015, pp. 63-64). Interlocutors who inhabit and express institutionalized power "through structures of white supremacy [and] through modes of perceiving and apprehending language" (García et al., 2021), like insisting on Standard English norms, can learn to abandon their "white listening subject" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) position. Such abandonment requires an acceptance of each community member as an equal contributor to the community's languaging practices, just as each jazz musician is an equal contributor to the band.

### *Appropriateness of Emotions in Dialogue*

Black feminist thought holds that emotion in dialogue is a valid process for knowledge construction once emotions speak to the validity of what is expressed in dialogue (Collins, 2022). The fragmentation of emotion from knowledge construction and validation has roots in the Enlightenment in the 1600s. During this period, reason was valued above all else because it was believed to be sufficient for meaning making and knowledge construction (Sodhi in conversation with Dr. Sarah Barrett, 2022). Emotions were considered illegitimate sources of knowledge and reason was seen as the only valid source of truth. Consequently, emotion was deemed an invalid way of knowing and a hierarchical system of knowledge was developed that led to the separation of emotion from knowing (Sodhi in conversation with Dr. Sarah Barret, 2022). Fragmentation is a key feature of colonial practice because it allows for the transactional rather than the relational. It is no coincidence that colonization and the transatlantic slave trade thrived during this era. Black feminist thought holds that emotions validate experience because emotions can be a type of barometer of truth (Collins, 2022). Reestablishing the connection between reason and emotion speaks to processes of knowing that displace objectivists notions of truth.

Black feminist thought counters these colonial practices and values by returning emotion to its rightful place within knowledge construction and meaning making. An ethics of care rooted in Black feminist thought and Black life sees this separation as violence (Collins, 2022) and more importantly sees its return as restorative. From the blues to religious practices, Collins (2022) asserts that “personal expressiveness heals this binary that separates emotion from intellect” (p. 334). It is this “personal expressiveness” that is lacking in dialogue relating to and with international students. The restoration of reason and emotion as partners in knowledge building and meaning making is important in the discussion of international education and the impact the current system has on students. The transactional design of international education replicates the fragmentation of reason and emotion. The program is designed in a way to place greater emphasis on the ability to extract from students with little consideration for the toll this takes on their mental health and wellbeing. The emotions of the students are of little importance and represent a disruption in the ability to engage in mutual meaning and knowledge building that could inform practices that validate international students’ experiences.

A lack of attention to emotion in dialogue leads to undue hardship. In Canada, international students pay up to six times the tuition as domestic students (Universities Canada, n.d.), but, until recently, they have only been allowed to work 20 hours per week. This situation leads to a range of issues such as employment, housing, and food precarity (Calder, et al., 2016; Hune-Brown, 2021; Power et al., 2021). In Ontario where Sodhi and Martin work, there is a disproportionate suicide rate among international students (Bascaramurty et al., 2021; Clark, 2022). Sometimes, students would write about their hardships in their assignments in Martin’s English language classes, but in the academic culture of the institutions, Martin was not adequately positioned to support the emotions of the students. Martin’s supervisors advised her to refer students to the institutions’ counselling services. Although counselling is an important service to provide necessary tools for managing stress, it cannot fix the commodification of international students. Referring students to counselling can be beneficial, but it also risks pathologizing the students rather than the nation builders and institutions that created situations of undue hardship. As of November 2022 until December 2023, the Canadian government is allowing international students to work more than 20 hours per week “to assist in temporarily filling Canada’s labor market needs and help sustain Canada’s economic growth” (Government of Canada, 2022, para. 4). It remains to be seen how this temporary policy change will impact international students. However, given that policy shift is still driven by the economy and nation building rather than by a dialogue that centers students’ emotions/experiences, it is unlikely to positively affect international students’ well-being.

Even if this policy change does relieve some financial stress for international students, it will not address the harmful structure of post-secondary institutions. Canadian universities were born out of colonial power systems that promote Eurocentric knowledge to the exclusion of other epistemologies and ontologies. “The University has nothing whatsoever against diversity, as long as it doesn’t interfere with the white masculine status

quo. Or, to put it another way, the University has nothing against multiculturalism, as long as it remains peripheral to monoculturalism” (Relke as cited in Henry and Tator, 2009, p. 16). International students who are not White, European males (i.e. almost all international students in Canada) are thus alienated from the dominant norm, and this can affect their ability to participate fully. For example, Liu (2017) interviewed Chinese international students in British Columbia. One engineering student explained the challenges he faced when instructors neglected to draw on knowledge systems outside of North America. This exclusive pedagogy was not conducive to his learning. He states that “there is no connection between my life experiences and the reading materials. I had tough times to understand them. Sometimes I won’t understand them at all. This affects my assignments such as writing paper or team presentations”. (Participant cited in Liu, 2017, p. 249)

The hidden curriculum of Eurocentric Whiteness places international students in a deficit position, even though they must demonstrate advanced academic and linguistic proficiency to enter post-secondary institutions. Participating in this system creates negative conditions whereby international students report feeling helpless (Okuda & Anderson, 2018), uncared for (Liu, 2017), unworthy (Kang, 2020), and humiliated (Martin, 2022), for example. Emotions are not part of the dominant discourse around international education, yet, according to a Black feminist framework, these emotions validate lived experience as forms of knowledge.

Sharing experiences, or what Delgado (1989) calls *naming your reality*, is a powerful tool that institutions of education can employ to support students by validating their emotions while also helping them counter the harmful messaging they deal with. Subsequently, naming your reality, a practice employed in critical race theory (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1998), creates a meeting space where, in the case of international education, the student’s experiences are validated, and institutions get an opportunity to recognize their oppressive actions. When international students shared their experiences with Martin in their essays, for example, they were naming their reality. When the institutional response is *only* to refer students to counseling, the onus to solve the problem is placed on the individual. This neoliberal tendency toward individualism relegates the issue to the unseen or invisible, which means that it cannot be addressed on broader scales. Considering an Embodied Ethic of Care might open spaces for discussions of these realities on many scales, for example in classrooms, in student and teacher lounges, in board rooms, at political tables. Sitting together with these problems opens the possibility for collective engagement that validates emotions.

### ***Capacity for Empathy***

Sullivan (2013) proposes that mutual meaning making requires both a value of individuality and respect for people's subjective experience. These values can support practices that create a "new realm" (Sullivan, 2013). It is in this new realm where empathy can be cultivated. Empathy requires an interconnected process of seeing another's "subjecthood" (Monahan, 2011). Seeing the person, their complexities, their experiences, and the way we see our liberation intricately connected to their liberation is truly an empathetic experience. The word empathy in this context is not being applied in a way that speaks to paternalism or Salvationism. Rather we are using it in a way that values liberatory power where people are able to act for themselves in ways that are meaningful and impactful to them. The Embodied Ethic of Care Framework recognizes that empathy is an experience between and *in* between bodies (Gordon as cited in Sullivan, 2013). What this means is that empathy requires both a space that people share and a space that exists *in* between people. The *in* between space, the space between person to person, is just as important as the space that we share. Soja (2008), a post-colonial theorist, uses a similar concept called the third space, this is a space that is founded on the relational dimension that supports capacity for empathy. The third space is the realm where hybridity and fluidity exist within the collective (Soja, 2008). That is why the third space is often characterized by Soja as the space of both the known and the unknown. As a space between subjecthoods it is a generative space for empathy. Thus, this is the space in international education that can



generate empathy. These spaces are fluid, are in movement and overlap with each other. In respect to the application of a third space concept for international education and the importance of this type of space in generating empathy, it is important to understand that international education presents itself as a third space.

However, international education in Canada attempts to homogenize international students and does not maintain space to account for people's subjective experiences. For example, Ramjattan (2019) describes the often-invisible aesthetic labor of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) in Canada. "Evaluations of a foreign accent are dynamic in nature, [and] these evaluations are rarely, if ever, objective" (Ramjattan, 2019, p. 26). Regardless, within the monolingual/standard English culture of post-secondary institutions, the onus is on the people who are deemed to have a foreign accent to ensure effective communication. By "working *on*" and "working *around*" accent, ITAs "carry the extra burden of making sure that their voices do not interfere with knowledge provision to student-customers" (Ramjattan, 2019, p. 258). With regards to the diversity of the effects of aesthetic labor on individuals, Ramjattan (2019) emphasizes that, while some may feel exploited, other ITAs may enjoy doing this accent work. Whether the ITAs dislike or take pride in working on or around their accent, this aesthetic labor is still part of the commodification and homogenization of ITAs as "workers first" (Ramjattan, 2019, p. 258). It also reinforces the notion that those who speak with a "Canadian accent" are not required to participate in mutual meaning making. While post-secondary institutions across Canada offer courses for ITAs and international students to modify their accents or "improve" their English skills, the authors are unaware of any post-secondary programs "that require native speakers of English to achieve proficiency in communicating with people whose English differs from theirs while avoiding discriminatory behavior toward them" (Martin, 2022, p. 30).

It is worth considering, though, whether adding more language requirements would encourage a different way to be. Alternatively, Prasad and Lory (2019) have fostered mutual meaning making through linguistic and cultural collaboration (LCC) with multi-lingual youth in schools. LCC is a pedagogical and research method that cultivates linguistic and cultural equity. All participants, which includes students of diverse language and cultural backgrounds, their family members, their teachers, and other school community members, learn to open to different ways of communicating and learning together. LCC encourages students to become change agents, collaborating in multilingual activities and working to deconstruct the monolingual ideology of the school and surrounding community. For example, grades four and five students collaborated to create multilingual history brochures and successfully advocated for the local history museum to publish and display them (Prasad & Lory, 2019). LCC interventions are deliberate instructional choices that focus on collaboration, restoration, and the notion of *vivre ensemble*, "a dynamic living together" (Prasad & Lory, 2019, p. 800), between dominant and minoritized language users. While this example comes from an elementary school context, readers are invited to consider what mutual meaning making could look like in their contexts.

### ***Potential to Disrupt Colonial Violence***

The Western state invites the international student in as a way of generating revenue without consideration for relation building. Current connections with international students are transactional—which replicates a historical pattern with how Western nations engage with people of color. The transatlantic slave trade, indentured servitude, and migrant labor practices are just some ways we witness this emphasis on transactions. Ethics of care disrupts what Sullivan (2013) calls I-it connection and stresses I-you connection. I-it connections are not concerned with relationships where I-you connections value the relational (Sullivan, 2013). The Embodied Ethic of Care Framework values non-extractive relationships over transactional relationships to disrupt this colonial violence. The emphasis on transaction stresses a relationship that could expose international students to exploitation and practices of extraction. Alternatively, centering relationships sees each person's subjecthood as being interconnected. In this regard, Tronto (1994) states that "care is both a practice and a disposition" (p. 104);

it is both a value we orient towards and an embodied experience. When care is applied to international education, we are oriented towards a practice that disrupts colonial violence in embodied ways.

Colonialism is largely about fragmentation of the self (body, mind, and spirit) and space. This fragmentation is visible in the way the world is bordered, and the way language takes on a colonizing, bordered, and de/legitimizing characteristic. A way to disrupt colonial violence in international education is to disrupt these bordering practices of language, self, and community. Borrowing from Muth's (2011) conceptualization of a "new common space" we want to propose that the Embodied Ethic of Care Framework is about new world or new space building that occurs *in* between bodies. When I and you come together, a new space is created that can support genuine dialogue, joint meaning making, and consequently new world making—new world making that is *unbordering* and decolonizing in nature. International students and Canadian educational institutions have an opportunity to view their coming together in this light, a space where the integrated self enables community/world integration.

Walia (2021), a migrant justice activist, states that “borders are an ordering regime” (p. 2). Borders are not just lines on a map; they result from processes that categorize and divide people. One border governance strategy that Walia (2021) describes is *discursive control*, a form of manipulation by the creation of labels and distinctions. In Canada, the Official Languages Act (1988) proclaims English and French to be “official” languages. The descriptor “official” demarcates French and English as having “approval or authorization” (Oxford Languages, n.d.). Since only French and English can be official by Canadian law, any other language becomes unofficial, thereby lacking approval or authorization. This leads to the creation of a problematic bilingual/monolingual binary. In Canada, a person who speaks French and English is “officially” bilingual and holds superior status over a person who speaks English and Mandarin, who is officially monolingual (Galante, 2021). This legitimizing of two languages conversely delegitimizes all other languages. It is internationally and commonly accepted that Canada is a bilingual country, despite the reality that Canada is a multilingual country. “In addition to the two official languages, 60 Indigenous languages and more than 140 immigrant languages are woven into the Canadian landscape” (Galante, 2021, para. 2). The legitimizing border makes language-based discrimination acceptable. For example, an international student Martin (2022) interviewed described a situation in which English speaking students did not want to partner with him. While it hurt his feelings, he explained that not wanting to partner with someone whose language skills are not the same as the dominant group “makes sense,” and he would do the same in his country, but he would be more polite about it. Whether rude or polite, judging the legitimacy of someone’s language reinforces the I-it connection and forecloses possibilities for relationship building.

### ***Support for Self & Community Integration***

In the West African Indigenous sense, community integration is about supporting the integration of each part of our physical and spiritual worlds with each member of the community (Adefarakan, 2018; Somé, 1999). The individual’s unique expression serves as a vital contributor to an integrated community. The individual’s unique expression is also maintained through a fully integrated self. Embedding a care-ethic requires that the connection between body, mind and spirit is acknowledged. The need to center the physical body while drawing away from spirit is a colonial practice that is reliant on fragmentation of the self. The self is fragmented in colonial systems because the body can be extracted for labor and financial gain. When we move towards spirit as part of the integrated self, this supports general wellbeing that resists exploitative practices. Values based on care and integration create the conditions necessary for people to be regarded in all their humanity. It is in this space that international students can be valued beyond their financial contributions. As contributors in dynamic ways, they are also able to join a space that calls them to "do with" rather than engage in relationships that are bound by an

emphasis to "do for" (Tronto, 1994). They are able to come together in a truly integrated community where they each find their path as equal participants in new world building. This change in positioning places international students as collaborators with their educators and peers.

Community integration requires reciprocity, yet, in Canada, internationalization is uni-directional, not a reciprocal exchange or collaboration between people. As noted in the Context section, the large majority of international students in Canada are from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), 2022). Meanwhile, Canadians continue to prioritize Eurocentric Western knowledge (Deckers, 2020) which places all other epistemologies in an inferior position. This prioritization is evidenced by Canadian students' preferred study abroad locations. When Canadians want to learn from other cultures, they mostly go to Europe. France is the number one destination, the United Kingdom is in second place, and the United States is in third place, followed by Germany. Spain and Australia are tied for fourth, and Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, and China are in fifth place. China hosts only 3% of Canadian international students (CBIE, 2016a). This prioritization of European knowledge sends a message that Canadians do not value the knowledge systems and thus the knowledge building potential that international students offer. Consequently, the value international students present is more connected to their financial contributions rather than to what they offer as integrated beings.

One way this Eurocentrism shows up in the classroom is the practice of giving international students English names. In Martin's experience, it is not uncommon in language classes in Canada, even in university English programs, for adult international students to be assigned or choose English names. Similarly, some international students arrive with English names that they have had since their first experiences in English classrooms as early as kindergarten, and many students identify with and appreciate their English names. This practice is multifaceted with positive and negative layers. Zhang and Noels (2022) surveyed Chinese international students at a university in western Canada. Of the 211 participants, 180 had adopted English names. Zhang and Noels (2022) found that English names support "cross-cultural communication, social recognition and connectedness to the host society. English names may also bear personal significance, especially when the students selected the name themselves" (p. 12). While Zhang and Noels (2022) highlight international students' agency in choosing to use English names, they also indicate that the main reasons English names are helpful in Canada are "communication convenience for English speakers" (p. 8) and "facilitating host adaptation" (p. 8). These two reasons suggest that life with an English name is easier for international students because it reduces difficulties for English speaking Canadians. Participants from the study offer explanations such as "They will remember your name easily than my heritage name" (p. 9) and "When people want to say my [English] name. [It's a] lot ... easier for them. So I think they might [be] more likely to talk with me" (p. 9). Under these circumstances, the onus of communication and learning is placed on the international student. English speaking Canadians do not have to participate in a reciprocal exchange. Martin recalls a time when she had a large class size and had difficulty memorizing the names of her students, all of whom were international. One day after class, a student who did not use an English name approached Martin to share the story of her name. The student offered why her parents chose her name and what it meant to her. This student was deliberately asserting her identity, and in so doing, created space for reciprocity in which Martin engaged. We are not advocating that all international students must stop choosing English names or that it is up to the students to create space for the teachers or that students must share personal information to create such space. Rather, we notice that the exchange between Martin and the student presented an opportunity for shared meaning making. Martin was presented with an opportunity to learn and understand, and the student created an opportunity to locate herself, through her name, to her cultural identity and her current community at the same time. In this case, names have the power to both localize and transport. The student chose to do both, entering into a practice of community integration. Community integration is both about making sure everyone can participate in creating community as well as recognizing the individual within community.

## Conclusion

The Embodied Ethic of Care Framework recognizes that liberation is experienced through the integrated self. The integrated self in the Yoruba world view is centered on recognizing and enacting practices that value all the parts of the self: mind, body, and spirit (Adefarakan, 2018). In this application to international education, the Embodied Ethic of Care Framework calls for a re-orientation of international education policies and practices whereby international students are valued beyond a relationship of transaction—which is very body-focused. Establishing relationships that attend to the whole self means that emotions and the varied lived experiences of international students are included in the discourse of international education. This process creates the conditions for a relationship that is focused on “learning with” international students where common space building and meaningful knowledge creation can occur.

Before ending this text, it is important to remember that Sodhi’s (2022) Embodied Ethic of Care Framework does not prescribe processes. As Stein (2021) cautions:

while decolonial, post-colonial, abolitionist and Indigenous critiques and practices are understood to be useful for recognizing enduring colonial patterns, asking difficult questions, and gesturing toward other possibilities, to seek within these theories a prescriptive (re)solution would be to route them back into the same set of colonial entitlements that they challenge. (p. 1779)

Rather than provide a solution, we invite you, the reader, to consider how the Embodied Ethic of Care Framework could *gesture toward* new world building.

## References

- Adefarakan, T. (2018). Integrating body, mind, and spirit through the Yoruba concept of Ori: Critical contributions to a decolonizing pedagogy. In S. Batacharya & Y.-L. R. Wong (Eds.), *Sharing breath: Embodied learning and decolonization*. Athabasca University Press. <https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771991919.01>
- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.
- Bascaramurty, D., Bhatt, N., & Rana, U. (2021, November 4). In India and Canada’s international student recruiting machine, opportunity turns into grief and exploitation. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-india-canada-international-student-recruitment/>
- Brunner, L. (2022, October 25). The ethical complexities of Canada’s dependence on edugration. *University Affairs, Global Campus*. <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/global-campus/the-ethical-complexities-of-canadas-dependence-on-edugration/>
- Burton, J., & Rajendram, S. (2018). Translanguaging-as-resource: University ESL Instructors’ language orientations and attitudes toward translanguaging. *TESL Canada Journal*, 36(1), 21–48. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v36i1.1301>
- Calder, M. J., Richter, S., Mao, Y., Burns, K. K., Mogale, R. S., & Danko, M. (2016). International students attending canadian universities: Their experiences with housing, finances, and other issues. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(2), 92–110.
- Canadian Bureau for International Education. (2016). *Canadian students abroad*. <https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Infographic-abroad-EN.pdf>
- Canadian Bureau for International Education. (2022). *Where do inbound students come from?* CBIE. <https://cbie.ca/infographic/>
- Clark, C. (2022, July 21). International students in Ontario are fighting wage theft—And winning. *Labor Notes*. <https://www.labornotes.org/2022/07/international-students-ontario-are-fighting-wage-theft-and-winning>
- Collins, P. H. (2022). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. (Thirtieth Anniversary edition.). Routledge.
- Deckers, C. M. (2020). *Studying abroad: An anti-colonial inquiry* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/100929?mode=full>
- Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan law review*, 87(8), 2411-244
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2019). Bringing race into second language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103, 145–151. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12523>
- Galante, A. (2020). Pedagogical translanguaging in a multilingual English program in Canada: Student and teacher perspectives of challenges. *System*, 92(Complete). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102274>

- Galante, A. (2021, February 22). Much more than a bilingual country. *Education Canada*, 61(1). <https://www.edcan.ca/articles/much-more-than-a-bilingual-country/>
- García, O., Flores, N., Seltzer, K., Wei, L., Otheguy, R., & Rosa, J. (2021). Rejecting abyssal thinking in the language and education of racialized bilinguals: A manifesto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 18(3), 203–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2021.1935957>
- Ge, L., & Durst, D. (2022). The Auto-ethnographic inquiry of a female Chinese graduate student in Canada: Challenging, accepting, and transforming. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v14i1.3193>
- Government of Canada. (2019). *Building on Success: International education strategy (2019-2024)*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng>
- Government of Canada. (2022, November 22). *Temporary public policy to lift the limitation that eligible study permit holders can work without a work permit no more than 20 hours per week off-campus during regular academic sessions*. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/public-policies/off-campus-work.html>
- Gumbs, A. P. (2020). *Undrowned: Black feminist lessons from marine mammals*. AK Press.
- Guo, Y., & Guo, S. (2017). Internationalization of Canadian higher education: Discrepancies between policies and international student experiences. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(5), 851–868. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293874>
- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2009). Introduction: Racism in the Canadian university. In F. Henry & C. Tator (Eds.), *Racism in the Canadian university: Demanding social justice, inclusion, and equity*. University of Toronto Press.
- Houshmand, S., Spanierman, L. B., & Tafarodi, R. W. (2014). Excluded and avoided: Racial microaggressions targeting Asian international students in Canada. *American Psychological Association*, 20(3), 377–388. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035404>
- Hune-Brown, N. (2021, October 18). *The shadowy business of international education*. <https://thewalrus.ca/the-shadowy-business-of-international-education/>
- Hutcheson, S. (2020). Sexual violence, representation, and racialized identities: Implications for international students. *Education & Law Journal*, 29(2), 191–221.
- Kang, P. (2020). Towards sustainable internationalization in post-COVID higher education in Canada. *Migration and Language Education*, 1(2), 14. <https://doi.org/10.29140/mle.v1n2.383>
- Kimball, E. (2015). Translingual communities: Teaching and learning where you don't know the language. *Community Literacy Journal*, 9(2), 68–82. <https://doi.org/10.1353/clj.2015.0003>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863>
- Li, W. (2018). Linguistic (super)diversity, post-multilingualism and translanguaging moments. In *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Superdiversity*. Routledge.
- Lin, A. M. Y., & He, P. (2017). Translanguaging as dynamic activity flows in CLIL classrooms. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 16(4), 228–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2017.1328283>
- Liu, J. (2017). Beyond the cultural approach: Understanding the experience of Chinese international students in Canada from an intersectionality perspective. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 6(2), 236–258. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22125868-12340082>
- Martin, S. (2022). Beyond the English language program: International students' experiences of language-based discrimination. *CIHE Perspectives*, 21, 29–31. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/lsoc/sites/cihe/Perspectives%20No.%2021.pdf>
- Monahan, M. J. (2011). Emancipatory affect: bell hooks on love and liberation. *The CLR James Journal*, 17(1), 102–111.
- Muth, C. (2009). How to teach intersubjectivity. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 23(2), 201–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650530902923791>
- Official Languages Act / Lois sur les langues officielles, no. c. 38, Parliament of Canada (1988). <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/>
- Okuda, T., & Anderson, T. (2018). Second language graduate students' experiences at the writing center: A language socialization perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 52(2), 391–413. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.406>
- Oxford Languages. (n.d.). *Official*. Retrieved December 4, 2022, from <https://www.ecosia.org/search?q=official%20definition&addon=chrome&addonversion=5.1.2&method=topbar>
- Power, E., Dietrich, J., Walter, Z., & Belyea, S. (2021). “I don't want to say I'm broke”: Student experiences of food insecurity at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des Études Sur l'alimentation*, 8(1), Article 1. <https://canadianfoodstudies.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cfs/article/view/423>
- Prasad, G., & Lory, M.-P. (2019). Linguistic and cultural collaboration in schools: Reconciling majority and minoritized language users. *TESOL Quarterly*, 54(4), 797–822.
- Rafi, A. S. M., & Morgan, A.-M. (2022). Linguistic ecology of Bangladeshi higher education: A translanguaging perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 27(4), 512–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2022.2045579>
- Ramjattan, V. A. (2019). *Working with an accent: The aesthetic labour of international teaching assistants in Ontario universities* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/97591>
- Seltzer, K., Collins, B. A., & Angeles, K. M. (2016). Navigating turbulent waters: Translanguaging to support academic and socioemotional well-being. In *Translanguaging with Multilingual Students*. Routledge.
- Sodhi, M. (2022). *Black women EDI educators & the Second Shifts* [Unpublished master's major research project]. York University.

- Soja, E. W. (2008). Thirdspace: Toward a new consciousness of space and spatiality. In K. Ika & G. Wagner (Eds.), *Communicating in the Third Space*. Routledge.
- Somé, M. P. (1999). *The healing wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through nature, ritual, and community*. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Stein, S. (2021). Critical internationalization studies at an impasse: Making space for complexity, uncertainty, and complicity in a time of global challenges. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(9), 1771–1784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1704722>
- Stein, S., Andreotti, V., & Suša, R. (2019). Pluralizing frameworks for global ethics in the internationalization of higher education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 49(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v49i1.188244>
- Sterzuk, A. (2015). ‘The standard remains the same’: Language standardisation, race and othering in higher education. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.892501>
- Sullivan, E. J. (2013). *Reclaiming subjecthood: Education and the art of quality experience*. Bank Street College of Education. <https://educate.bankstreet.edu/independent-studies/120>
- Tamtik, M., & Guenter, M. (2019). Policy analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion strategies in Canadian universities – How far have we come? *Canadian Journal of Higher Education / Revue Canadienne d’enseignement Supérieur*, 49(3), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1066634ar>
- Tavares, V. (2021). Feeling excluded: International students experience equity, diversity and inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.2008536>
- Tronto, J. (1994). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. Routledge.
- Universities Canada. (n.d.). *Tuition fees by university*. Universities Canada. Retrieved December 6, 2021, from <https://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/tuition-fees-by-university/>
- Walia, H. (2021). *Border and rule: Global migration, capitalism, and the rise of racist nationalism*. Fernwood Publishing.
- Yilmaz, T. (2021). Translanguaging as a pedagogy for equity of language minoritized students. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(3), 435–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1640705>
- Zhang, Y. S. D., & Noels, K. A. (2022). ‘Call me “Katy” instead of “Yueyun”’: English names among Chinese international students in Canada. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Online*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2098304>

---

**Myrtle Sodhi**, PhD student, York University, Canada. My research focuses on ethics of care, Black feminist thought, and Indigenous African thought and their application to re-designing systems of education. Email: [info@myrtlehenrysodhi.ca](mailto:info@myrtlehenrysodhi.ca)

**Sonia Martin**, PhD student, York University, Canada. My research focuses on anti-racist, anti-colonial language practices, particularly in internationalized spaces. Email: [smartin1@yorku.ca](mailto:smartin1@yorku.ca)