

Endnote Episode Five – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Literary Affairs w/ Dania Kassim and Emily Hurmizi

Alexander: Introduction: Hello and welcome back to Endnote, a literary affairs podcast from the Hart House Literary and Library Committee at the University of Toronto. I'm Alexander Lynch. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge the land on which Hart House and the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. I want to begin with a passage from the Hart House Literary and Library Committee's Equity and Diversity Mandate. 'Storytelling is a powerful tool, but when it gets in the hand of oppressors, it can reinforce discriminatory and unjust practices. We must reclaim and rebuild our notion of literature. We must use literature and libraries to promote social justice and equality. . . . The Hart House Literary and Library Committee must help to contribute to long-lasting change in our social institutions and practices, [especially with regard to] literature and libraries.' As this passage indicates, literature has the power to shape the stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. It's therefore important that those stories include and respect everyone, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or citizenship. I spoke with Dania Kassim and Emily Hurmizi, our equity and diversity officer and co-chair, respectively, about equity, diversity and inclusion in literary affairs and what Lit and Lib is doing to support these principles in our programming this year.

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Alexander: Guest profile: I'm joined now by Dania Kassim and Emily Hurmizi. Dania is a second year student studying Contemporary Asia, Diaspora, and Middle East studies. As the equity and diversity officer for HHL&L, she's trying to understand and find ways to address inequalities within and decolonize. In her spare time you'll find her working on 1000+ puzzles. Fun fact about Dania: she's gone skydiving! Emily, HHL&LC co-chair and our first repeat guest on Endnote, is a third-year student majoring in Philosophy and Art History and minoring in Environmental Ethics. She is excited to be co-chair of the HHL&LC and to help provide a platform for sharing stories and experiences. Emily believes that literature can bring diverse experiences closer together and is Co-Editor-in-Chief of Goose Fiction and an editor at Noesis. What broadly do 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'inclusion' signify, do you think?

Dania: So this is going to sound very millennial, but I saw a Tweet once, and it was like, 'Diversity, inclusion, and equity aren't just about making sure that everyone has a seat at the table. It's also about making sure that everyone can speak and everyone is heard. So I think if I were to think about it, that's the best way to conceptualize it.'

Alexander: Emily, is that, broadly, something that you'd agree with? Is there any way in which we can expand on that?

Emily: I think that that's a good way to frame it in a broad sense. It's clear that the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, have all taken upon connotations as they've been used in general society, many of which are performative rather than authentic, many of which draw upon the negative dimensions of identity politics. But I would agree that fundamentally, when we're using the words 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'inclusivity,' there's both a negative and positive action associated with each of the terms. It's not only about removing barriers and discrimination which prevent individuals from actualizing their equality and freedom, but it's about affirming the existence of those individuals. And I think in that way, it's about creating spaces and opportunities where those barriers have previously been in place. And in some ways that would be counter to the notion of basic equality, but in other ways, it's a more expanded and complex and rich definition of equality, because it takes into consideration the historical and current systems of oppression that are in place.

Dania: Just to practically put it in perspective: so if you really think about, you know, a group of people, and you've got less than one BIPOC, everyone else was white, right? It can feel intimidating to speak, to make sure that you're being heard. So that's when you, just practically speaking, that's when you've got the role of diversity and equity, just making sure that 'Hey, look, everyone else is speaking, this may be intimidating, but you do have a voice in this.' Right? If you think about it very, very practically, if you're singled out in your background, it might just be a little bit intimidating. So it doesn't even require these very complicated words and concepts to understand; it is just, practically, if you see someone who stands out, and who isn't speaking, you approach them be like, 'Hey, what are your ideas on this?' Because I think sometimes the misconception is that you've got all these big fancy words, and you don't understand what they mean. And to some people, it's just, 'Oh, if you identify with this, you get special privileges,' but if you think about it practically, it's a very simple concept. And a lot of people, I think, would do it just on the basis of making sure you're being nice and inclusive. It doesn't take a big, fancy degree or something to recognize that.

Emily: I think that's so true. We take this in the context of an educational setting. Many of us have been in classes where we're told that we need to speak and add to the conversation. But as you said, practically, it's very difficult when you're marginalized in the conversation to actually speak and feel not intimidated by the presence of a larger group that is different from you. And I like the fact that when you do take it on that practical individual level, it brings in the idea of compassion and empathy towards another person. I think that when you look at the terms 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'inclusion,' they're empty, unless you are considering them in the context of compassion and empathy towards every individual, no matter their background. I don't think that putting them into logical terms actually

gives us a grasp of the depth and the importance of and the emotional aspect of these terms.

Alexander: Maybe just to stick with that—because I think you're absolutely right—there's a certain level of abstraction, I think, that we engage, as you point out, when we're thinking about these terms purely as words or as concepts, so maybe to expand upon that a little bit. Broadly, how can or should these principles be implemented within the classroom, within the university, within literary affairs more broadly?

Dania: Well, that's the million dollar question, isn't it? I'm not going to act like I know all the answers to this. But I think it definitely starts with being conscious of your role and your place. I think that sometimes it happens even naturally—to go along with Emily's example of the classroom, right? Sometimes it just happens naturally, where someone takes up a lot of speaking time when everyone else was waiting. and sometimes they don't do that consciously, they're just doing that out of the excitement of, 'Oh, I want to speak in class and I have all these amazing ideas,' but then they don't realize that as a result, there are a lot of people who have amazing ideas as well who aren't able to speak. And so it's a matter of, for some people, for a lot of people, just realizing your role and the privilege that you have in your space. And then as a result, then you can see the ripple effects in society and address that. And it's as simple as—in class, for instance, one time I raised my hand, a male beside me raised his hand as well. And the professor paid attention to him first, even though I raised my hand before and he was like, 'No, actually, Dania had her hand raised before me, she should go first.' It's really small things like that. We don't have to understand critical race theory to know this. If someone else raised their hand first, and you were called on instead, it's only right, if you're like, 'Okay, actually, she raised her hand, first, she should go.' Whereas there are a lot of other situations where people would just take advantage of that and go ahead, speak, and use that time for themselves. So, again, it's a matter of understanding your place and the effects that happen as a result, and then just addressing them. I think a lot of it happens on a micro level—you are the change that you want to make in society. And then after that, that's when everyone can recognize their place, and can address it, that's when you can have, hopefully, a greater effect in society. Emily, what do you think?

Emily: Yeah, I think that there certainly is that interactional element to implementing these principles, the idea that like we occupy space, and that within space, there are relations, relations to other people and to systems, social structures, that is, to me, a very interesting dimension to the principles of equity and diversity; understanding the micro-relational elements to privilege and to how people take up space in relationship to others. I think that that's a very important element to addressing many of the issues that occur on the individual level. And hopefully, as we address the individual level, we're allowing that to expand the circle of one to many and seeing a wider social change. And I also think that in recognizing one's place, in relation to others, in relation to their privilege, and the terms 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'inclusion,' you're going to start to recognize what you can be doing

to promote the growth of all people around you. You start to think about yourself, not so much in this individualistic sense, but in a more collective, community-based sense. And you're going to try to create goals and initiatives that will affect the community as a whole, because you understand that you're not isolated from others. And so I think that that's an important aspect to implementing these very abstract terms in society. And I think that there's an aspect to that, at least within literary affairs, that means, for example, providing greater representation, so that when an individual is in the same space as you, they recognize that they're allowed in that space, that this is somewhere where they can be. And so yeah, I agree in the sense that this is little adjustments, and the micro-interactions which can make a big difference on the day-to-day level.

Dania: Yeah. And that's not to downplay the academic side of things. That's not to downplay critical race theory at all. It's just a matter of, 'How do we implement the abstract concepts into our everyday lives?' And even in the context of the university setting—University of Toronto is not perfect, whatsoever, right? And when we're talking every day, there are a lot of issues within academia, professors. Toronto is a very diverse city, but there's also a disparity within the hiring process that you see. Who do we see as profs, right? I'm in Middle East studies, and one of my courses is taught by a white professor, and she's pointed it out, she was like, 'The irony in this is that this class has one white person, the rest were BIPOC, yet she was the white prof. She pointed it out. She's still an amazing professor, and I love her but it's definitely something to notice when we're talking about everyday lives, even within the ivory tower it's not perfect at all.'

Emily: That's interesting because I am in a very white, male program, in the sense that the history of philosophy is white men speaking to other white men, and we haven't necessarily diverged from that history yet. If you go onto the University of Toronto Philosophy Department website and look at the staff, look at the tenured staff, not just the assistant professors, or the sessional lecturers, there's maybe three or four BIPOCs. It's absolutely dismal. And so you have courses like Indian philosophy, or Islamic philosophy—it raises to me a theoretical question of, 'Can an individual who was not raised within a culture or within that linguistic tradition, properly grasp the entirety of that tradition and be able to teach it properly?' And this is not to say that the professors aren't immensely intelligent people, and that you won't take something from the class anyways, but it is a matter of how authentic and how complete is the knowledge that they are providing us. And I think when it comes to things like critical race theory, that that definitely provides us a very interesting way of looking at the world around us in a way that allows us to subvert general or commonly accepted notions of society and how it's structured, and how history is structured. But even in that, you see so much resistance to the acceptance of critical race theory, and it's been that way since it was first created, and that discussion has been reignited recently. And I think that that also affects our everyday life, the academic discussions certainly permeate into our non-academic world, because it changes the way, first of all, that we teach certain things, not even at the academic level—to elementary

school kids, to high school kids. And if they're not getting a complete understanding of the history of our land, of Canada, Ontario, North America, they're not going to be able to properly recognize why they need to identify their privileges within any given space, and be compassionate to other individuals who are different within any given space. So it really is all connected in a very integrated way.

Dania: I am so glad you brought up philosophy. I can't tell you how many times I've gone into conversations with friends about the problems within philosophy. A lot of philosophers who are BIPOC, their names have been Latinized, and that has been normalized. Right? And so an example off the top of my head is Averroes. Right? His actual name is Ibn Rushd, and you wouldn't know that if the only thing you're accustomed to is Averroes. He was a very prominent philosopher, and he wrote not just actually about philosophy, but theology, medicine, Islamic jurisprudence. There are so many impressive philosophers from around the world—and I'm giving the example of Ibn Rushd because full disclosure, I'm ethnically Arab, and I'm Muslim so that's going to be more of my area of expertise. But I definitely should be looking to expand my knowledge base into other areas of the world. But just to give that example, Averroes, and the list goes on, there are so many Latinized names, and the Latinized names are the ones that are taught within the classroom, right? And back to Emily's point, when you're taught that every great philosopher has an English or a Latinized, that definitely shapes your worldview. On top of that: a lot of the so a lot of times we're taught that the Greeks had very influential texts, and then Europe went from a dark age all of the sudden, boom, boom, boom, Renaissance, right? Who do you think translated those texts? Translated and preserved those texts. My professor for one of my NMC courses was telling me how, in grad school, a professor was teaching them that it was just Dark Ages in Europe, boom, boom, boom, boom, and we've got the Renaissance. He was like, 'So, who translated the texts? It didn't just happen like that.' And a lot of times, that's what happens in history where it's a much more collaborative effort, if you will. But then we're taught that it was just thanks to one civilization, when that's so far from the truth.

Emily: Yes. I think that it's important to say that a lot of the time it was deliberately ignored, the contributions of Muslim and Jewish philosophers and Christian philosophers from the Middle East, right? Because it doesn't necessarily fit in to the notion of philosophy as the European wants to understand it. And I think—full disclosure, I'm also of Middle Eastern descent, so I can speak to the fact that when you do learn about the contributions that the Middle East made to philosophy, it is, as a person from that origin, really beautiful and affirming. It shows you that it's not so simple and that your place in this tradition is likewise not so simple. You're not necessarily an outsider, even if they try to erase that history. I'll add that I do think, in academia, but also in so many different aspects of the world, there are real homogenizing factors that are trying to erase the history and the contributions and the diversity and beauty of cultures all around the world and trying to impose the one neoliberal worldview. And to me that's something that is

so scary, but also highlights the importance of really advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and making sure that when we approach topics like literature, we're understanding that we are in effect helping with the preservation of these cultures, not only by revisiting those which were overlooked and by providing providing new dimension to those, but by creating structures by which those traditions can be continued by those who are within the tradition themselves, and not from an outward, primitivist perspective, like Picasso or something.

Alexander: Maybe just to jump in here, and to shift ever so slightly, or maybe put at least one of the names to it. The canon is the thing that functions to do this, right? I think that the maintenance of the capital T, capital C canon is problematic in a million different ways. And so one of the things that I'd like to centre and hear from you both on are the ways in which—on the one hand, maybe to develop, Emily, what you brought out a little bit more, in terms of the ways in which, in fact, the canon functions to exclude authors, because that's something that people don't always tend to buy that it does, which is really strange. And then maybe the second part of the question is, given that it does this, where now? Is it possible to reclaim it in a certain sense? Is it this bizarre thing that we've all just kind of bought without thinking critically about it, something that we can just do away with entirely? What are you both thinking in terms of that?

Emily: There's this Wallace Stevens poem about—I think it's just called 'The Jar,' but it's just about placing a jar in nature and seeing how that jar comes to organize and order the nature around it. And you can understand the term 'canon' as being that artificial, arbitrary organizing factor on the world of literature. And so, it comes to the question of, 'Can we remove the jar from nature?' Or do we have to, I don't know, smash the jar, and see what happens from there? Or do we have to build upon it? There are lots of different approaches that one might take to reinterpreting or deconstructing the canon. But it's not necessarily clear in the end whether that is possible. And I think that what we've learned, at least recently, based on the state of society, is that sometimes revision isn't enough. You need revolution. So I think that from the perspective of the Literary and Library Committee, when we talk about things like Deconstruct the Library, there is that fundamental contradiction in the term, and the fact that so long as we actually do keep the term 'canon,' we're keeping the historical meanings of the word and limitations of the word. So I think that there's no clear path forward, but that we can perhaps, at least, understand that at the very most basic level, the canon needs to be expanded and reinterpreted. And so that's some of what we're trying to do, I think, this year, at least as a committee, and I think that's one aspect. I think another aspect of what we're trying to do is also still being critical of the term.

Dania: I think, practically, what we're trying to do is present diverse voices, and not even just in books, but also in other literary forms. And it goes back to our point before, in that it definitely matters how the library is 'constructed' and what is presented to you. When you're a kid walking into a library, and you see the names of white authors, what are you led to believe? And it's not that there aren't authors of other

ethnicities, it isn't that there aren't professors of other ethnicities, but it's that there are obstacles for these people to be presented, and even if you have books by BIPOC authors, are those the ones that were paying attention to or are their names too complicated for us to learn? There are a lot of names where some will say, 'Oh, I just don't know how to under how to memorize that, I don't know how to pronounce it,' but like, we say Timothée Chalamet. Much ease, if you know what I mean. If you want to learn it, you would. So you've got things like that. And it goes back to like the philosophers and issues like that. It's not that they don't exist, it's that we're not really looking at them. And we're not being taught their names. And so for us, it's a matter of shedding light on areas that were previously neglected. Even with the library, and how a lot of times we have to categorize—this is a myth, this is a poem. I'm learning right now, in one of my courses, about—what is a novel, and is it something that emerged in the 20th century out of Europe, or was it something that actually existed in other cultures before? So it's a matter of questioning, even to that extent, like, 'What are the categories that we're organizing upon, and who are they following?' For a long time, we've been taught that the world is trying to follow Europe and try to catch up to Europe, and this also applies to literature. For instance, in the Middle East—'Oh, there was the emergence of the Arabic novel after the English novel.' But now there's a revisionist theory that's saying, 'Actually, they were formed before that, the Arabic novel existed before that.' Now they're just trying to follow or to label 'progress' according to the European way. And if we're doing this, if we're constantly trying to categorize like the 'progress' of other cultures based off of the 'West,' then, by definition, you're always going to be left behind.

Emily: And I think that that's interesting, just in the fact that the way that I was taught, art was formed was exactly that—in the 17th century, the notion of artist itself and that art could contain these divisions, such as writing, such as the visual arts, such as music, that's when that whole system of divisions was formed. And to know really, that that might not necessarily be true everywhere else in the world, is a very interesting point. And I'd like to expand upon the idea of the space of the library because we know that not only does it prioritize certain names and people of certain ethnicities, but it can also in itself be a barrier to understanding if you are, for example, a person with a disability. The library is not the most inclusive space. For example, Hart House itself is not the most inclusive space, it's not even constructed such that if you are in a wheelchair, or if you have difficulty walking, you can easily access it. And then the way that the structure of the library is laid out, it's not laid out in a way that it is easily understandable, where there are supports that for it to be understood by individuals with learning disabilities, for example. And so there are so many little barriers that are already contained within the canonical system of looking at literature. And I think that it's interesting, furthermore, to look at the different aspects of the way that we organize literature in respect to simply just the term 'canonical,' because it's not only about choosing which books are more worthy, but it's about organizing those books all together and distinguishing those books. And then that translates into the way that the library space is curated and the way that it's shown to us, it's translated into that—

that all of these books are written rather than oral, or that all of these books are distinguished from musical and visual artistic traditions, when in reality, there's no reason why they cannot be more integrated, except for the fact that we've accepted a certain way of looking at literature that prioritizes the works of certain people who thought that that novel was only this enclosed piece of writing that touched upon certain subjects and represented certain voices.

Alexander: I'm wondering what you both think in terms of the role that literature or literary discourse ought to take going forward now, in social justice conversations and movements. I think there's a certain stance that's sometimes taken, not necessarily within literary affairs, but by people with regard to literary affairs, that literature is just this thing that you read, and it's like, 'Oh, that's sort of neat,' or whatever, and it's not meaningfully impactful in any other way. Can literature have a role in movements for meaningful social change? Ought it to take a role? What do you both think?

Dania: I think it definitely has a role. When we're talking about literature, that also reminded me of another initiative that we're trying to bring about, which is, basically, poetry in modern North America, a lot of people think it's dead, poetry is just for people who are into Shakespeare, any of those types of cliches. But when you actually think about it, rap, it's a form of poetry, hip hop has a lot of poetry in it. And in fact, contrary to the notion that poetry is a very elitist form, hip hop and rap, on the other hand, are very much in tune with the ordinary regular mess of us—very accessible, understandable. So, our understanding of literature, of poetry—once we sort of contextualize it in the everyday and understand, rap is a form of poetry, and it deserves recognition, it deserves further study, and it should be taken seriously as well. What I'm trying to say is that we should, first, be looking at literature from a much more inclusive point of view, right? Literature is not just when someone named Steve Johnson writes it—Tupac is very accomplished, but it's a matter of changing our mindset—what is literature, what should we take seriously? And, for example, rap is poetry. And then you've also got, within that, trying to broaden our scope. For instance, for me, I know more of the North American, maybe Arabic context, I know that I'm trying to work on knowing more Black authors than, say, Toni Morrison, right? If you can only name one Black author, that's a problem. You're trying to get from Latin America, from Asia, and you don't have to have this specific agenda of, 'Oh, I need to be more diverse.' It's honestly common sense. It gets boring if you're just reading from one perspective, or from one type of writing, one type of author. So in the broad sense, we're trying to see more types of literature and be more inclusive. And then also, personally, just trying to expand where we're looking—for me, as a young Arab girl who's light-skinned, trying to read a book about the struggles of a Black Muslim girl, for instance. We have similar struggles, but they're different, and when I read about that, I can be more understanding, and that expands my worldview, even if it's in the smallest sense. And then you can understand other people's struggle struggles more. And honestly, it's also just interesting, right? But yeah, Emily, what do you think?

Emily: To go back to the hip hop/rap point—just because, as context, we are going to be working with the Hip Hop Education Program at Hart House—when you think about the way that hip hop and rap are treated, even within the music industry—they're not considered to be equal, they have to have separate categories for Black artists because they simply just don't know what to do with them because they don't recognize them as equal. That's where the whole Grammy 'Urban Music' category came from. And yet, it's absolutely true that when you actually listen to rap and hip hop, you understand just how poetic and lyrical and observant and powerful, in many ways, it can be, and how it actually fits into this idea of the tradition of poetry much more than any other style of music, I think, that exists right now. Bob Dylan has the Nobel Prize in Literature, but Kendrick Lamar is way more significant to poetry. And I think that this kind of signals, in many ways, the importance of literature in social change. I think I even put it in the description of myself, I do believe very strongly that literature has the power to initiate meaningful social change. And if I didn't believe that I would be very pessimistic and depressed about the state of the world, because in some ways the ability to write something down or to pick up a book and be transported anywhere, that seems like the most accessible way of expanding beyond one's own horizons into another person's horizons in order to understand them, to appreciate them. And I think if literature didn't have that, didn't have the feature of being a drive for social change, I would generally just not know how to reach it in any way. I pulled out this quote from Kierkegaard, it's a quote that I really love. And it says, 'Only in love is the different made equal, and only in equality or in unity is there understanding.' To me, what this teaches me, is that within literature, we have possibility of equalizing situations, perceptions, experiences, and we have the possibility of building understanding between people—and that way, it works that we can build more love between people. And I know that, in a lot of ways, that seems so naive and almost impossible—there's just so much going on in the world that leaves one feeling utterly hopeless in a lot of ways, but, like I said, if I didn't believe that we could effect social change through literature, I wouldn't know how to do it, and I would be utterly hopeless to a greater degree.

Dania: And on the flip-side, if literature and writing was not so influential, you wouldn't have so many exiled writers. To circle back, I wanted to make clear that when we're saying that we're bringing more attention to BIPOC authors, that's not to say that white authors need to take a back seat, or something like that. It's about, like what Emily said, being more inclusive, and, as cliché as it sounds, sharing the love with all, and fostering that appreciation for all types of people of different backgrounds and ways of life. In that way, it's not just that you're being more diverse and you can feel good about it. It's a way of being able to appreciate more forms of literature and being able to see more of the world.

Emily: I saw this post on Instagram yesterday, and somebody was recounting an experience they had with a writer, I believe it was, and that writer was saying, 'It's really sad that these literary contests and publications are focusing only on writers

of marginalized backgrounds now, because that, in itself, is undermining equality—it's racism against white people.' I think that's the fundamental misinterpretation of the term 'equality,' and what we're trying to actually do with these initiatives. The initiatives recognize a deficiency within society. They recognize that equality has not been reached, and that, most importantly, when equality is reached, our whole society will be better off. There's this notion in identity politics that by promoting the equality of one group, you're demoting the equality of another group, but that's not true: no person in society experiences equality fully until every other person in society experiences it fully. And so, making initiatives that promote the literatures of marginalized and underrepresented voices and traditions of storytelling—this is the goal: equality, finally. That's the goal. It's just equality.

Alexander: You've both gestured towards this, but maybe to centre it a little bit more: could you speak about some of the initiatives that we're doing as part of Lit and Lib this year to centre diversity, equity, and inclusion as things to think about in a literary context?

Dania: Something that I'm really excited about is the Social Justice Reading List that are going to be coming, so watch out for those. We're trying to get voice of BIPOC, marginalized authors—not just in written form; we're trying to diversify, so we're including fiction, non-fiction, hip hop, poetry, so it can be oral or written. It's an effort to appreciate more forms of literature by more authors of different backgrounds. Each reading list has a specific theme—the upcoming one is related to 'future.' It's purposefully broad to be inclusive to a lot more different books and so, hopefully, that will be coming out soon.

Emily: I think that the Social Justice Reading List is part of what we're calling 'Deconstruct the Library,' as you, Alex, spoke about before. It's centred within a lot of the discussions we've had here, right now, about how we can be critical towards the status quo of libraries and literature. And so, the Social Justice Reading Lists will be accompanied, for example, by music, by rap and hip hop albums and songs and artists. It will be accompanied by collaborations with organizations in the Greater Toronto community that are doing a lot of work to support what we're doing. So that's one way that we've sought to make ourselves more inclusive and diverse. Another initiative that we will be doing in the winter semester is understanding the relationship between oral storytelling and pictorial storytelling. That will most likely be a collaboration with the Hart House Art Committee and the Art Museum—understanding two traditions of storytelling which don't necessarily involve the written word and which are so interesting and very culturally significant for a lot of different groups and histories in the world.

Alexander: And maybe, just to close it off: author or book, or books plural if you'd prefer, from an underrepresented or marginalized group that you think more people should be reading, because I think that we have a platform here. When this is released, it'll be released very close to when the reading lists are released, but is

there a particular recent favourite that you think more people should be looking at?

Dania: Recently, I've really gotten into Edward Said. He's pretty well-known in the study of orientalism, because of his book, *Orientalism*, but he also has some really cool short essays and, I think, poems as well. But he's very, very insightful and I highly, highly recommend him.

Alexander: What about you, Emily?

Emily: I might be a little mysterious about this, because I think that you're going to be getting a lot of very interesting titles with our Social Justice Reading List, which I believe is being released the same day. Don't take my word for it, take the Social Justice Reading List's word for it.

Dania: I might plug in someone else as well because he's too good to pass up. Anis Chouchene—he's a Black Tunisian poet. He is so phenomenal. His poetry is very, very moving, and he talks about a lot of issues—from racism to colonization to having an identity crisis. He's incredibly moving. I definitely suggest people search him up on Youtube. His poems are in Arabic, but there are subtitles. Super duper recommend. That's not to say he's not going to be on any future reading lists, though, because he has multiple poems, so watch out.

Alexander: Terrific. Thanks so much for speaking for speaking with me this morning/afternoon. It was really, really insightful.

Dania: No problem!

Emily: Thank you for having us.

[pause for music.]

Alexander: Many thanks to Dania and Emily for joining me. Before we end the episode, I have a few announcements from the Literary and Library Committee and from around UofT. If you haven't heard already, Lit and Lib is hosting a Worldbuilding Workshop Series - Join Avi Silver and Sienna Tristen, creators of the multimedia storytelling platform The Shale Project, as they help you navigate the complexities of creating a fictional world from the ground-up. They'll help you: make your setting a character, draft your society's blueprints, and finally, show you how to define individual characters within your story world. (Two workshops remain—they take place on October 8th, and 15th). Another workshop series from The Shale Project: "Lingua Fantastica: How to Construct a Fictional Language" - In a two-part series, Sienna Tristen and Avi Silver will discuss the benefits and pitfalls of building a language from scratch and how to effectively use a fictional tongue in your science fiction and fantasy stories. Whether you speak Klingon or Elvish, everyone will understand their excellent instruction. (Two workshops held

on October 22nd and 29th.) On October 13th, learn about the genre of comedy writing from those who know best — comedians. In this revised panel series, the Annual Genre Panel, we will have the opportunity to learn about different genres first-hand. This year, we'll be speaking with comedians Daniel Woodrow, Leonard Chan, Sophie Kohn, and Rebecca Kohler—be sure to tune in! In October, the Hart House Literary and Library Committee will begin to explore how the institution of libraries and the literature contained within it can be de-constructed into a space that is more inclusive, equitable, and diverse. This programming, which we're titling 'Deconstruct the Library,' begins with the Social Justice Reading List, a monthly set of titles from underrepresented voices created in collaboration with the Hart House Social Justice Committee. This list will be released today, October 2nd—you can find it at hhlitandlib.ca. This list will also be featured in the Hart House Social Justice Committee and English Students' Union Book Club. Stay tuned in the coming months, as there will be a great deal more from the Literary and Library Committee on this issue—social change requires commitment. Finally, The Hart House Hip Hop Education program is holding an event called Spark your Well-being on October 7th. This is a curated conversation bringing together Hip Hop artists and practitioners to discuss the challenges and triumphs of their individual mental health and wellness journeys. The Hip Hop Education Program invites students and community to join them online for this deep and intentional conversation around mental health and wellbeing. You can find more information regarding this event at the link in the show notes. And that's all for this episode! As always, you can find the full list of works discussed on this episode, and all episodes of Endnote, on our website, hhlitandlib.ca, along with literary events, opportunities, and news from the rest of the Lit and Lib Committee. Endnote is a podcast of the Hart House Literary and Library Committee, and I'd like to thank the committee for their ongoing support for Endnote. Our theme music is by Cameron Lee. Our next episode will be released on October 16th. If you enjoyed this episode and want to hear more, you can subscribe to Endnote wherever you get your podcasts, or visit our website at hhlitandlib.ca/endnote! I've been Alexander Lynch. Thank you for listening, and bye for now!