

Disruption and Surveillance

Sept 2022 Issue 1

# IYARIC



**cerlac**

centre for research  
on latin america and  
the caribbean



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Disruption and Surveillance  
September 2022

The IYARIC journal is a partnership between the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean and the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community & Diaspora and RBC Securing Black Futures Program.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the Provost, the Jean Augustine Chair and the Special Antiracist Initiative at LAPS for their continued support

## The IYARIC Initiative

The name Iyaric, which is also referred to as Dread Talk, is the Rastafari language that was created in opposition of the colonial language English that was imposed on enslaved Afro-Caribbeans, thus resulting in the loss of traditional African languages. Rasta culture utilizes Iyaric to cultivate cultural, spiritual, and linguistic liberation from their histories and contemporary oppressions.

This publication is intended to platform Black, Caribbean, and Indigenous voices as they contextualize their experiences and perspectives on what it means to disrupt systems of harm and how it feels to be surveilled. We have paired the anti-colonial framework of the Iyaric language with the work of Black, Caribbean, and Indigenous students at York University. The publication features original scholarship and research creation pieces that reflect the theme in the individual perspectives of the students at various stages in their academic careers.

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## Note on cover

How does the colonial gaze of academic spaces alter when we prioritize our ancestors and community? As four people gather around a table, they notice they are not alone. Indeed, to disrupt and surveil takes a different form when reminders of community and home surround us.

Art by Pardis Pahlavanlu

*Pardis Pahlavanlu is an artist and illustrator living as a guest between Tkaronto (Toronto) and unceded Coast Salish territories (Vancouver). While her academic studies have revolved around systems of power in contemporary colonial states, her artistic work has centred on the healing that is necessary in these contexts.*

*Using textured and bold imagery with a mixed media approach, she digs into the topics of mental health, exclusion/difference, and diaspora in hopes of finding new ways to imagine and reflect on her surroundings and experiences.*

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## Land Acknowledgment

The IYARIC Initiative is based out of Tkaronto, an area that has been traditionally cared for by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. Today it continues to be the home and gathering place of many Indigenous communities. We are mindful that the area's current treaty holders are the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and that this territory is subject to the unhonoured Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant.

In making this acknowledgement, we understand that such statements are merely symbolic steps toward decolonization and that the ultimate dissolution of settler projects across this hemisphere is imperative.

## **Together and apart: Defending old gains, fighting for new ones.**

Iyaric emerged from the actions of CERLAC's Black students who were brave enough to protest the treatment of Black and racialized folks by the campus security and police, demand democratic access to space at York and draw attention to their particular conditions and demands. This publication is a response to their call to action.

It is often students who see injustices most clearly, voice them and fight for them right across the world. Think of Idle No More, the Black Lives Matter sit in outside Police Headquarters in Toronto in 2016 or the Mexican student protests calling for democracy in 1968, the Frank Pais Movement of students that helped bring down the Baptista dictatorship in Cuba and the Sir George Williams Protest in Montreal, 1969 which called out Canadian Racism.

Without struggles like these most of us could not enjoy the privileges and possibilities that we take for granted - the weekend, access to university education, free health care, the right to abortion to name a few. Creating change means constantly reflecting on our practices, our contexts and the differences between them. That's why it is important to create and nurture caring spaces of reflection like Iyaric, if we are to continue defend old gains, and fight for new ones.

For us at CERLAC, this means acknowledging that world doesn't always look the same for everyone in this hemisphere. Finding justice means naming and honouring the needs of each particular group within our community, while prioritizing those who are most at risk from violence, exclusion and dispossession. Only when each sector studies and speaks from where they stand, is it possible to really work together in dialogue across different social locations. This publication is a small space for Black and Indigenous students here at CERLAC to speak from the ground on which they stand and to write about what they know, feel and live. What is exciting is that the voices in Iyaric speak with the support and solidarity offered by non-Black and Non Indigenous students within CERLAC. This is a joyful indication of a shift away fragmented and isolated attempts at change and from homogenous universals that can mask inequality and serve only the privileged.

Congrats to everyone who has worked so hard to make this first issue happen. Congrats to Collin Xia and Jellisa Ricketts and their team, Thanks to the Provost and the Jean Augustine Chair for support and to the special antiracist initiative at LAPS. Here's to you and to the challenges ahead as this issue enters the world only to be followed by another and another.

Honor Ford-Smith

Associate Director, CERLAC 2020-2022





## Introducing IYARIC: a Student Journal Celebrating Black Artistry & Scholarship in the Caribbean

As CERLAC's incoming Associate Director, it is my pleasure to celebrate the launch of IYARIC, a new magazine written, produced, and designed entirely by CERLAC's students – Collin & Jellisa. The aim of this journal is to foreground Black student scholarship within CERLAC's new Black, Indigenous, and Caribbean Initiatives Committee (BIC) and the awardees carried out this mandate with distinction. Upon receiving the baton to guide BIC from CERLAC's distinguished Honor-Ford Smith, I had the privilege of overseeing some of the development of the magazine and the student team has done a fantastic job at creating a publication that is informative, while insightful, and perceptive.

It is my hope that this publication will serve as a point of departure for more inclusivity, reflection and celebration of the Black Latin American and Caribbean experience in CERLAC and at York University overall. Students, consider this magazine as a celebration of the region that your ancestors fought for and that your work celebrates. Fellows, consider this magazine as an invitation for you to be a torchbearer for our brilliant new scholars. It is our scholarly responsibility to do so.

I would like to thank the Provost, the Jean Augustine Chair and the Special Antiracist Initiative at LAPS for their financial support. This project would have been very difficult without your kind assistance.

Collin and Jellisa, may this be the beginning of careers rich in knowledge, progress and peace.

Love,

Prof. Tameka Samuels-Jones



## Editor's Letter

The theme of the first issue of IYARIC, Disruption and Surveillance, was developed out of the intersections of the recent series of uprisings in the face of various forms of oppression; as well as the harmful methods used to monitor and police these uprisings. In collecting pieces for the publication, we asked what it means to cause disruption to the systems that have been put in place to oppress and marginalize? In what ways are those who are oppressed and marginalized by these systems surveilled? In some ways, disruption and surveillance exist on a binary end of a scale. Surveillance encourages assimilation, docility, and obedience. Whereas disruption encourages disorder, command and rebellion. In some ways, disruption is the response to surveillance. Rather than hiding from the watchful eye of the oppressor, disruption commands to be seen. Disruption forces the attention of oppressive gaze and says, "WE ARE HERE" and "WE AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE."

The works in this publication unveils the vast nature of resistance in the face of oppressive surveillances. Sometimes it looks like community, convening around a table to imagine and grab hold of the future. Sometimes it looks like donning blue paint and channeling your energy on di road. And sometimes, it looks like survival – or care.

No matter the magnitude or medium, disruption matters. The creation of the publication was intended to reflect this philosophy, both in the sense that it is a publication that was made for the students, by the students; but also due to the community effort that was put into its development. The publication could not be made without the help of our amazing collaborators and contributors. We are deeply grateful for all the support that was given to make Iyaric a reality.

It is our hope that this first issue of the publication will be part of a continued legacy of mobilizing and organizing within York's Black, Caribbean, and Indigenous communities, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for the initiative.

Walk Good,

Collin Xia & Jellisa Ricketts



## **“Indigenous, Black, and Women’s Voices” CERLAC Resource Centre**

The materials in the link form part of a small digitization project on “Indigenous, Black, and Women’s Voices” from Latin America and the Caribbean that was funded by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) program of York University’s President. The original documents are all located in the CERLAC Resource Center and the Latin American Working Group Library (LAWG Library).

CERLAC’s Resource Center was founded by exiled students and scholars who escaped to Canada from Latin America’s military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. They set up a program of publication exchanges with a broad range of institutions across the Americas and Europe. LAWG was originally founded as a response to the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and it functioned until 1995 as an independent civic organization that engaged in research, publication, and activism; it maintained a unique library of documents on Canadian solidarity and cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean churches, labour unions, peasant and Indigenous movements, women’s organizations, and the like.

The relatively rare and historic Black Voices items on the digitized site reflect the persistence of racism in well-known events in Caribbean history, including the banning of Black Power literature in Jamaica (1968), the triumph of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada (1979), the assassination of the Marxist historian Walter Rodney in Guyana (1980), and the Haitian refugee exodus (1980-81). They are presented to provide a sample of the kinds of documents that are available in the CERLAC and LAWG collections. Only documents that are in the “public domain”, that are not encumbered by “copy right restrictions”, are included.

Click here to explore: <https://vitacollections.ca/cerlacresourcecentre/3763149/data?g=d>

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