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Caribbean Studies, Today
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IYARIC is a graduate student-run journal at the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean. This publication is intended to platform Black, Caribbean, and Indigenous voices and scholarship. We would like to extend a special thanks to the Provost and the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community & Diaspora for their continued support.

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WELCOME NOTE

With immense pride and admiration, I introduce the second Edition of the IYARIC journal, a beacon of our graduate students' intellectual exploration and scholarly dialogue at the Centre for Research on the Caribbean and Latin America (CERLAC). This Edition is a testament to our graduate students' tireless dedication, innovative thinking, and deep-rooted passion, whose contributions have intricately woven a tapestry of themes ranging from evocative poetic reflections on the diasporic experience to the rigorous analyses central to Caribbean Studies.

In academia, where the pursuit of knowledge is both a journey and a destination, our students have embarked on this path with commendable zeal. They have navigated the complexities of public space-making, unravelling the nuances of community interaction and identity manifestation within these shared realms. Their submissions are a remarkable example of how diasporic communities continue to foster significant impact, bridging geographical divides through enduring bonds of solidarity and shared heritage. These submissions are not merely academic exercises but vibrant narratives that breathe life into our journal pages, inviting us to ponder, debate, and grow. They underscore the dynamic and multifaceted nature of Caribbean experiences, challenging us to broaden our perspectives and deepen our understanding of the region and its diaspora.

As we delve into the rich content of this Edition, I urge our readers, scholars, and stakeholders to engage with these works as observers and active participants in a continuing dialogue. The path of Caribbean Studies beckons us forward with the promise of untold stories, unanswered questions, and unexplored territories. This path requires our collective efforts, curiosity, and creativity. Looking ahead, the journey of academic inquiry into the Caribbean is boundless in its potential. It calls for a multidisciplinary approach, integrating insights from history, sociology, anthropology, environmental science, and beyond. Our task is to build upon the foundations laid by those before us, pushing the boundaries of our understanding and contributing to a body of knowledge that illuminates the past and present and shapes the future.

In closing, I would like to thank the Provost, the Jean Augustine Chair and the editors, Tka Pinnock and Collin Xia, for their gifts of time and financial support. I also extend my heartfelt congratulations to our graduate students for their exemplary work and dedication. Your contributions are not only a source of academic enrichment but also a source of inspiration for future scholars. Let us all move forward with a renewed commitment to exploring the depths of Caribbean Studies, driven by the spirit of discovery, collaboration, and a profound respect for the rich mosaic of cultures that define this vibrant region.

With warmest regards,

Tameka Samuels-Jones, Ph.D.
Associate Director, Centre for Research on the Caribbean and Latin America (CERLAC)

The academic institutional response to the global movement against anti-Black racism in 2020 led to the re-emergence of Black (Canadian) Studies, or more appropriately, put squarely in the spotlight the ongoing critical work done by cohorts of Black Canadian faculty and students to have Black Canadian Studies recognized and respected as a discipline. However, as Black Canadian Studies went (and continues to go) through a necessary period of growth and maturation, some scholars argued that Caribbean Studies (and African Studies) diminished in the academic landscape. For years before the historic moment of 2020, Caribbean Studies faced an uncertain future, particularly at York University. Once a thriving bastion of the field, the Caribbean Studies program at our institution saw its numbers decline over the years. Other Canadian institutions may point out that their programs never reached the zenith of a York University or University of Toronto. Nonetheless, the juncture of the “Year 2020” presented a moment to ask productive questions about the state and future of Caribbean Studies in the Canadian academy. This second issue of the IYARIC student journal is a small fruit of those explorations.

The IYARIC Initiative began from a need to address incidents of anti-Black surveillance and policing on campus, with a mandate to renew CERLAC as a safe community space for Black students. Staying the course, this issue continues to interrogate the limits of blackness, indigeneity, and Caribbean scholarship in the academy.

The main objective of this edition is to contribute to current thinking about the state and space of Caribbean Studies in the Canadian academy. We are most appreciative to hear from Drs. Audra Diptée and Tameka-Samuels-Jones, whose respective interviews highlight the promises and challenges of Canadian Caribbean Studies programs in the neoliberal higher education landscape. Our contributors – all emerging scholars – offer insights into the new and ongoing questions and practices that the field take up: public space making and development; surveillance; diaspora and diasporic identities; Indigenous solidarity. We invite readers to read the issue as an archive of the present. It marks the ‘big ideas’ our contributors are grappling with in their present reading and writing of the Caribbean and her Diasporas.

Putting together this special issue was both joyful and worrisome for curating a journal issue about Caribbean Studies mirrors some of the very challenges faced by the field, more broadly. It is regretful, for instance, that the issue only engages the Anglophone Caribbean. As the IYARIC journal forges ahead, we recognize that much work needs to be done to ensure that it represents and deeply engages with the complexity and diversity of Black, Indigenous and Caribbean communities.

We end with a word of gratitude to our contributors and collaborators, who breathed life into this issue, and to our readers, who will make it live.

Walk good,
Tka + Collin

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.



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“Indigenous, Black, and Women’s Voices”

A sample of documents that represent “**Indigenous, Black, and Women’s Voices**” (in Spanish and English) is now available in digitized format from the Resource Centre collections of York’s Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean. The digitized materials form part of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion project supported by the President’s Office, and they come from large and unique collections of original historical documents on these and other topics.

Founded in 1978, CERLAC and its Resource Centre (currently located on the sixth floor of the Kaneff Tower) were inspired by the exiled students and scholars who arrived in Canada from the military dictatorships of the time in Latin America. It incorporates the collections of the Latin American Working Group (LAWG) that functioned as an independent civic organization that engaged in research, publication, and activism from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s.

The sample of “**Indigenous Voices**” documents incorporates materials from many Latin American countries and a few from the Caribbean. They document the indigenous rights violations of governments and corporations intent on prioritizing resource extraction and agro-business exports. The items included also illustrate how indigenous communities mobilize to fight for and protect their territories.

The digitized “**Black Voices**” items reflect the persistence of racism in well-known events in Caribbean history, such as the banning of Black Power literature in Jamaica in 1968, the triumph of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada in 1979, the assassination of the Marxist historian Walter Rodney in Guyana in 1980, and the Haitian refugee exodus of 1980-81. Collectively, the documents presented at the digital site are relevant to scholars from a broad range of disciplines.

The “**Women’s Voices**” (mostly in Spanish) come from the first feminist organizations that were founded in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s and 1990s. The materials are historic although many of the organizations that were established during those decades continue to function today.

The “**Women’s Voices**” also deal with issues of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and directly address diverse and controversial topics such as abortion rights, domestic violence, and homosexuality, to name a few.

The “Indigenous, Black, and Women’s Voices” can be accessed here: (<https://vitacollections.ca/cerlacresourcecentre/search>).

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