

## STATEMENT FROM THE CARIBBEAN STUDIES STUDENT UNION

Student experiences in academia are often closely linked to the many systemic barriers including issues of Eurocentrism and a lack of an interdisciplinary, intersectional, inclusive lens amongst mainstream subject matter. In efforts to combat issues like these, *Caribbean Quilt* aims to provide an interdisciplinary medium for expression and critical thought on Caribbean studies. The *Caribbean Quilt* is published by the Caribbean Studies Students' Union (CARSSU) which is the academic student group representing all full-time, undergraduate students at the University of Toronto, enrolled in a Caribbean Studies course or program, and caters more broadly to those from the diaspora and other marginalized groups in the Greater Toronto Area.

The aim of *Caribbean Quilt* – and of the Caribbean Studies Students Union (CARSSU) – is to organize with students to create spaces that facilitate opportunities for students to advocate for the betterment of the Caribbean while acknowledging the pertinent issues facing the region and its diaspora.

In keeping with this aim, the fifth volume of the University of Toronto's Undergraduate Journal of Caribbean Studies seeks to provide a platform for student work produced about the Caribbean and its diaspora. Addressing the region's complex history of resilience in the face of marginalization, this volume features work focusing on themes ranging from regional integration, racialized polarization, and citizenship; to neocolonialism, racial capitalism and discrimination. This edition of the journal also features work that aims to highlight the importance of retelling forgotten stories and a linguistic analysis of language unique to the region.

We hope that as the reader, these pieces will provide you with an opportunity for meaningful reflection and you join us in thanking Malek Abdel-Shehid, Wendy Adeliyi, David Allens, Octavia Andrade-Dixon, Prilly Bicknell-Hersco, Kahlia Brown, Julie-Ann McCausland, Mollie Sheptenko, Sabrina Uwase, and Adriana Williams for their insights. As you read and reflect on these pieces, we would also like for you to be mindful that Indigenous nations have lived in the Caribbean since time immemorial. A fact that is often lost in the region's modern histories of oppression -- many of which will be highlighted in this volume.

The region was, and in some cases still is, home to groups such as the Guanahatabey, the Lukku-Cairi and the Ciboney (Western Taino), the Classic Taino, the Eastern Taino, and the Kalinago (Island Caribs). Colonization and intermarriages led to the creation of new groups such as the Garinagu (Garifuna) and the Pardo. However, this list does not encapsulate the vast diversity of Indigenous groups in the Caribbean; there are many indigenous peoples, past and present, who go unnamed. The Indigenous

people of the Caribbean have faced erasure, dispossession, and violence since the dawn of the European colonial era. In subsequent eras, people from across Africa, Asia, and Europe have entered the region and now call it home. While the region's white, European, land-owning elite can largely be held responsible for the plight of marginalized groups in the region, it is necessary for those groups to be mindful of their own positionality. African enslaved peoples, South Asian indentured workers, and all other non-Indigenous groups have played a role in the European colonial project, whether to their betterment or detriment. Additionally, further intricacies emerge as there are cases of Indigenous people who owned enslaved peoples.

As a result, it is important for those from the Caribbean and its diaspora to recognize our shared experience of colonization with Indigenous communities while also recognizing how we too have taken part in the systematic exclusion of indigenous voices. In this vein, we would like to thank contributors who have taken up the task of addressing this issue in their own ways and challenge you to also acknowledge any privileges that you may have that correspond with the systemic oppression of Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples.

This year, our Black executive team has done so by making a concerted effort to challenge what it means to have settler, academic or class privilege by focusing on Black and Indigenous solidarity and the security and sovereignty of these marginalized groups. This is in line with our team's commitment to promote collaborative programming that seeks to address the far-reaching effects of colonization through an internationalist perspective.

Of course then, as a Canadian publication produced at the University of Toronto, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the true stewards of this land; indigenous communities from across Turtle Island. The University of Toronto is physically located on the traditional sovereign territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been under the care of the Anishinabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and many other Nations, recorded and unrecorded. It is still the home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee that binds them to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region. The absence of a knife within this Treaty describes the need to maintain peace for the benefit of all. As settlers we come to this land by Treaty 13, also known as the Toronto "Purchase" between the Crown and Mississaugas. This is a reminder that we are all treaty people and we seek to uphold the Two Row Wampum Belt and Covenant Chain agreements.

This meeting place of often Eurocentric academic thought in many ways still fulfills long standing oppressive orders that removed these communities from this land centuries ago. As Paulo Freire writes in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* it is important that those of us who function within these academic systems to not only work to eliminate the immediate objective constraints of oppression within education and the wider community but to cultivate environments like *Caribbean Quilt* that

highlight work that expel the “myths created and developed in the old [oppressive] order.” Through this we can work together to achieve deep structural changes to society.

We would also like to thank the many individuals and organizations who have been supportive in helping us to facilitate this goal through the successful publication of the fifth edition of our academic journal. We would first like to thank the Caribbean Studies Program and Program Director Néstor Rodríguez for supporting our vision and providing funding for the initiative. A heartfelt thank you also goes out to the rest of our 2019-2020 CARSSU Executive Team: Caleb Yohannes (Event Coordinator), Malek Abdel-Shehid (External Affairs Coordinator), Adriana Williams (Communications Director) and Alyssa Nurse (First Year Representative).

Additional thanks also goes out to Caleb Yohannes and Yohanna Mehary who have been working tirelessly as Co-Creative Directors for the journal. Most importantly, we would like to thank our Caribbean Studies Faculty Advisor Kevin Edmonds for giving feedback on submissions, coordinating and managing our copy-editing team and providing much-needed guidance throughout this process.

Lastly, we would like to thank you, the reader, for supporting the journal and hope you enjoy the culmination of our work.

David Allens and Yohanna Mehary  
(Co-Presidents CARSSU 2019-2020)