# BCSA

**BLACK CANADIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

The 2022 virtual conference of the Black Canadian Studies Association (BCSA) will take place May 14-15, 2022 as part of the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (May 12-20, 2022)

**BLACK SOLIDARITIES, THOUGHT, AND THE QUEST FOR BLACK FREEDOM**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## DAY 1 – SATURDAY MAY 14, 2022 (EASTERN TIME ZONE)

### Room 1

### 11:00 am to 12:30 – Keynote Address – Canisia Lubrin – After-End: Black Freedoms and the Live Moment

- **Opening remarks:** Melanie Knight, President BCSA
- **Moderator:** Nataleah Hunter-Young

**Keynote: After-End: Black Freedoms and the Live Moment**

Our dynamic refusals exist in the honest wastelands of European coloniality and simultaneously beyond them. Drawing from recent happenings, this keynote wonders toward some of our present entanglements: what they reveal about the ruins of colonialism's rational forms, and what we can learn from the live moments that hold the potential to transform these wastelands. Can we avoid the seductive-performative contexts of thought, solidarity, and freedom, if our cumulative knowledges also instruct our distinct desires? What practices cause us to arrive at the greater, shared possibilities of a freedom that envisions us whole, if our ability to anticipate *future* and *present* parallel what is yet to be imagined? With invitation and uncertainty, this keynote will attempt to learn from some evolving practices of Black freedom.

**Who is Canisia Lubrin?**

Canisia Lubrin is an acclaimed poet, editor and writer with work published in eight languages. Her writings include *Code Noir* (Knopf, 2023) a book of short stories based on King Louis XIV's historic Codes Noirs, and the poetry collection *Voodoo Hypothesis (*Wolsak & Wynn, 2017), named a CBC Best Book and listed for the Gerald Lampert award, Pat Lowther, and Raymond Souster awards. *The Dyzgraphᵡst* (M&S, 2020) is Lubrin's book-length poem whose honours include the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the Griffin Poetry Prize, the Derek Walcott Prize and finalist for the Governor General's Award and Trillium Book Award for Poetry. In 2021, Lubrin was awarded the prestigious Windham-Campbell prize for a body of work and Canada Council's Joseph S. Stauffer prize for mid-career literary achievement. Twice longlisted for the Journey Prize, anthologies that include her fiction were finalists for the Toronto Book Award and the Shirley Jackson Award. She is a 2022 Civitella Ranieri Fellow and a 2022 Literature Haus LCB resident. Lubrin has held residencies at the Banff Centre, Queen's University, and an inaugural appointment as 2021 Shaftesbury Writer in Residence at Victoria College, University of Toronto. In 2021, the *Globe & Mail* named Lubrin Poetry Ambassador of the Year. She was a member of the Canadian Guest of Honour delegate to the Frankfurt Bookfair. She completed her MFA at the University of Guelph, where she also teaches in the School of English and Theatre Studies and is the incoming coordinator of the MFA in Creative Writing.

## 1:30 to 3:00 – Plenary session – Black Graduate Students' Roundtable (in collaboration with the National Black Graduate Network)

Marcus Singleton, Festus Adeolu, Cherie Daniel, Crystal Jardine-Garvey, and Jada Joseph – (Un)settled Narratives: A discussion of Racial Capitalism, Policing, Cyberbullying, and Higher Education

We are students in Black Studies working from various sites, such as disability studies, Black geographies, critical pedagogy, communication, business, nursing, social work, and critiques of racial capitalism. For this reason, we are seeking critical conversations from these various positions, perspectives, and intersections. We are informed by Black Studies, grounded in global and anti-nationalist politics in its call for the abolition of the capitalist state. The goal is to create space that will allow us to rethink, reimagine, and re-story from various perspectives. We engage with Black feminist thought, critical race theory, Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy, Cyberbullying of racialized professors, committed to the belief that racial capitalism informs ruling relations. We will discuss dominant ways of knowing the shape and construct of policing, liberal discourses, higher education, and Hip-Hop culture. We intend to speak to discursive cracks within these dominant ways of knowing, compelling us to counter racial capitalism through rethinking, reimagining, and re-storying. In our panel presentation consisting of five members, we will be sharing some of the questions we are taking up in our work. These questions include: How does anti-Black racism operate within the spaces, embodied practices, and relations within higher education institutions? How is deafness made to appear and disappear by police and community relations? Indeed, insofar as narrative, or story, is a constitutive force and has something to do with the meaning of deafness, race, and policing today, how best do we proceed? How do Black teachers navigate negative attacks in cyberspace from their students? What supports are available to Black teachers who find themselves subjected to the violence associated with cyberbullying? How does Black life counter ruling relations in the constant presence of racialization for capital? How have Black critical thinkers understood liberal discourses around freedom? How can exposure to Hip-Hop culture and Black Studies be further used to raise the consciousness of racialized youth and reduce violence?

## 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 1 (Concurrent session) – Black Art and Cultural Productions: Exploring Afropresentism

- **Moderator: Fikile Nxumalo**

Anna Jane McIntyre – Artist & Performer

I am a Black visual artist with a practice combining drawing, installation, printmaking, costume, storytelling, performance and micro-activism. My work investigates how people perceive, create and maintain their notions of self through behaviour and visual cues. Projects may incorporate live-performance, giant emojis, feminist-foosball-tables, community workshops, parade floats, commercial signage, thinking forests, impractical-entrepreneurial-pursuits that-fill-unserviced-societal-loopholes, being present, to-do lists, body work, breathing, exercising-the right-to-Opacity, performing and portraying casual-Blackness, heroic-Blackness & mediocre Blackness, colouring books for those with complex, shifting and fluid identities, urban ecology forest school cahiers

prioritising BIPOC kids, time-travelling-soundscapes-mapping-abstract-narratives, Speaker's corners, love-letter-services, homages-for-the-forgotten, kinetic sculpture, touch, light, sound and smell as I explore the ways in which people decipher experience. I examine concepts of illusion and spectacle, indications of power as ways of understanding how society actively maintains and defines cultural norms. Aesthetically, my work aims to combine diverse cultural influences (Trinidadian, British, Canadian) through the juxtaposition of familiar materials in novel usages and forms. The playful mash-up of materials acknowledges the active nature of negotiating culture, as well as the contradictions that may exist within our self-definitions. My work is layered in meaning and intent, with many visual negotiations of cultural norms. Installations provide environments with uncertain rules. I acknowledge that I am trickster artist even to myself. Viewers must make themselves comfortable on their own terms. Projects explore the spoken, the historical, the contemporary, the imagined, the unexpected, clichés, the mundane and extraordinary realities of modern day living. I seek to create work acknowledging the past and present, as well as imagine a surreal dream of what is to come.

## Room 2

### 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 2 (Concurrent session) – Black Canadian Historical Mappings, Narratives and Identities

- **Moderator: Ornella Nzindukiyimana**

1. Natasha L. Henry – "Let Your Petitions Be Made Known": Enslaved Black People in Canada Engage Petitioning in Pursuit of Freedom

The Black freedom movement in Canada began with enslaved Black people challenging their captivity. Enslaved Black people have always pursued freedom through different means in the French and British colonies that came to be Canada, just as enslaved people did in other places in the Americas. One way that desire for freedom manifested was through petitioning colonial officials. Using archival research, this paper will explore the cases of four enslaved people who sought their freedom through political requests during the late eighteenth century. Through social network analysis, this paper will flesh out the linkages among these enslaved actors and how they may have channeled information to each other to facilitate their actions. I argue that a close examination of these instances of Black agency under subjugation enables a deeper understanding of the relationship between the system enslavement, race, social status, power, and the law. Beyond the legal aspects of these cases, this paper puts forward that the struggle for freedom by the enslaved affords an exceptional rendering of the voices of people who are rarely heard in Canadian history. This paper centres the voices of the enslaved through their recorded testimonies, contributing to an under-researched aspect of Canadian slavery.

2. Wencke Rudi – Mapping Black Heritage in Wellington County: An Exploration of Narrative, Settlement, and Space

How can I use a map to represent an affective experience of a community? Of Black settling, survival, and endurance? My project focuses on mapping and narrativizing the history of the Queen's Bush Settlement. The settlement took place roughly from 1830-1859 in Waterloo and Wellington County, Ontario, and was one of one of the largest Black settlements with over 1,500 free and formerly enslaved Black people. I am currently partnering with the Guelph Black Heritage Society to develop the projects into my doctorate. The information from Linda Brown-Kubisch's book The Queen's Bush Settlement: Black Pioneers, 1839-1865, and the 1845 Peel Land Application document created a further interest in the community and place of the settlement, which I gleaned into through a method of "critical fabulation" (Hartman 11). I used "critical fabulation" to intently read through the two sources that featured male-dominated narratives of survival to engage with the conditions of fear and anxiety that the land document indicates was present, as well as the female-centred narratives of home-making and community building. I will be developing the WebMap from plotting the Black settlers of the Queen's Bush to include treaties, current city designations, and land values, as well as developing a driving map and other publicly-facing materials. By knotting a deeply intimate narrative of community with the complex history of the area, the project folds Black heritage into and asserts the centrality of Black presence into the history of Wellington County, Ontario.

3. Tavleen Purewal – Marie Angélique's Fugitive Kinship and Black-Indigenous Solidarity

Marie Angélique's Fugitive Kinship and Black-Indigenous Solidarity In Lorena Gale's 1998 historical play Angélique, based on the eponymous historical figure executed for alleged arson in 1734 Montreal, Marie Joseph Angélique experiences and conceptualizes freedom in unique ways. In one iteration, the play's experiments with temporality— "The present and the 1730s. Then is now. Now is then."—offer Angélique a circular fugitive movement between 18th-century enslavement and the relative freedom of 1990s Montreal. Her movement produces a space that is not quite enslavement, yet not quite liberation. In another iteration, Angélique conceptualizes freedom as the choice to kinship—kinship, here, understood as a verb (Daniel Heath Justice). Throughout the play, she dreams of being back in her place of birth, Madeira, where though enslaved, she had family and the freedom to gather with relatives and friends. This desire complicates normative movements of fugitivity, like "petit marronage," by which an individual moves away (albeit temporarily) from a "zone of enslavement" to a zone with the capacity for Black freedom (Neil Roberts). Instead, Angélique finds possibility in geographies of slavery insofar as she can experience a spatial, psychological and social allowance to build and enjoy desired kinships. I call this mode of freedom-seeking fugitive kinship. In the play, one of the central kinships she desires and struggles with— which is also heavily disciplined by the White colonials—is with the enslaved Huron-Wendat girl next door, Manon. In this paper, I argue that Angélique's experiences and conceptions of freedom both generate and complicate her relationship with Manon. I will explore how her Black diasporic modes of fugitivity invite and neglect Manon's expressions of Indigenous freedom, which derive from a sense of sovereignty.

4. Alice Mũthoni Mũrage – Diversity of Black Identities in British Columbia

People of African ancestry are often seen as a monolithic group boxed in the category 'Black' in Canadian academic and public discourse. This socially constructed identity often comes with negative connotation that can be traced to historical efforts to create a human hierarchy, designating Africans as inferior and consequently rationalizing enslavement and colonization. While science has debunked the myth that a person's capabilities can be attributed to a person's skin colour, this myth continues to play out in racialized stereotypes. This paper explores this box 'Black' looking at the various ways people of African ancestry in British Columbia identity as, or with, the Black identity. It is based on research conducted through the African Ancestry Project, engaging 162 participants through a survey, interviews, and focus group discussions. Reflexive thematic analysis was adopted with an emphasis on contextualizing meanings where the author used her cultural membership and social positioning in the interpretation. Participants demonstrated that identity, as a set of attributes, beliefs, principles, or aspirations, is not an outcome but a process of reflecting one's relationship with self, others, one's experiences, and ancestry. The paper reveals the diverse ways in which Black people relate to, negotiation with, and wear, the Black identity. This identity was articulated as an imposed identity, as one which erases unique and diverse identities, as one which performed, as one which should be resisted, as one which serves to otherize, as one which inspires pride, and as one whose utility is political. In recognizing how this socially constructed identity manifests for different people, its plurality should be acknowledged– Black identities.

## Room 3

### 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 3 (Concurrent session) – Health Justice and Community and Family Well-being

- **Moderator: Sarah Riley Case**

1. Notisha Massaquoi – Health Equity and the Quest for Black Survival and Wellbeing

While the foundations of public health are rooted in promoting health equity, it is clear that these foundations are not promoting meaningful success for Black communities in Canada. In 2020 the Toronto Board of Health declared that anti-Black racism is a public health crisis, and research has clearly shown that Black community members across Canada experience disproportionate poor health outcomes as demonstrated by almost any measure of health and wellbeing—e.g., life expectancy; chronic disease prevalence; premature birth rates. These outcomes dispel the myth that Canada's health care system is designed for everyone to have equal access to health care, and it is not as 'universal' as has been assumed. The intersections of the social determinants of health and anti-Black racism will be explored as well as an interrogation of the current crisis of disproportionality faced by Black communities within the COVID-19 pandemic. Participatory research findings will be used to highlight the experiences that members of Black communities have when attempting to address health care issues and the barriers to receiving adequate health

care services. The discussion will allow for an opportunity to challenge the racial neutrality we often experience in the Canadian health system and instead offer concrete ways to become intentional in increasing our ability to radically shift how we promote health and wellbeing for Black communities.

2. Janelle Brady, Shawnee Hardware, Paulyn Mandap, Camila Casas Hernandez, and Georgiana Mathurin – Community-Based Responses to Access to Services for Pre-Natal to Age 8 Children: The Systemic Barriers of Black Mothers with Precarious Legal Status

Black mothers with 'precarious legal status' (Bernhard et al, 2007) are disenfranchised from accessing services due to their intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) subject-positions. Particularly, this study looks at the experiences of system navigation faced by Black mothers who are undocumented or who have less than full legal immigration status. Researchers examine the role of mothering pre-natal to age 8 in the early years in the Toronto context. The project is community-engaged, and partners from a Jane-Finch (Toronto-based) community agency are key collaborators in addressing the various issues and experiences to be further explored and resolved. Anchored in a Black studies framework, the study takes furthers theoretical orientations of how Blackness can be operationalized as a political tool (See: Dei, 2018; Mirza, 1997) for social change, community, and resistance strategies rooted in White supremacy and anti-Black racism. The present study examines the impacts of the limited status positions of parents, particularly Black mothers, on children navigating multiple systems. Further, the study engages the legacies of Barrel children (see Lawrence, 2013) and the West Indies Domestic Scheme (see: Lawson, 2007) on said experiences in current contexts. Geo-political forces of migration have impacts on families at the local level; and thus, much of the focus removes Blackness and race, which is what this preliminary study seeks to address at its intersectional juncture. The paper will focus on community-based resistance strategies employed by Black undocumented mothers through the partnership with the Jane-Finch community organization.

3. Anna-Lori Stennett-Thomas – The Stressors and Challenges of Single Motherhood: The Lived Experiences of African Immigrant Women

This study examines the settlement experiences of immigrant women of African heritage and more specifically the challenges and stressors of parenting as a single mother. The work and home dynamic expose issues of parental stress, economic instability, increased effects on mental health, and a strained parent-child relationship. To examine this research problem further, I conducted 3 semi-structured interviews with immigrant African women. This study was guided by three theoretical frameworks: transnational feminist theory, intersectionality, and family stress theory. The results of this study highlight the impact of intersectionality on one's experience of parenting and integration. Additionally, this study brings attention to the lack of focus on single African immigrant women in immigration discourse. The potential benefits of this research include increased visibility of this unseen population, policy implications aimed at improving childcare accessibility, culturally relevant mental health support and reduce the funnelling of racialized immigrant women in precarious work.

4. Theresa Shuma – Racial Disparities in Maternal Health: Analyzing Outcomes for Black Women

An increasing body of research indicates substantial racial health disparities in maternal health outcomes of Black women in the United States (US). Currently, the US has the highest maternal mortality rates (MMR) of all developed countries and the MMR and morbidity rates continue to rise at alarming rates. Research indicates that Black American women are more than three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White American women. Evidence suggests that Black Canadian women experience similar racial disparities in MMR as Black American women. Social and health studies recognize racism and historical oppression as contributors to the health inequities that exist in Black maternal health outcomes. Experiences of anti-Black racism for Black women are further compounded by gender and class, and this amalgamation of experiences of oppression is known as intersectionality. Intersectionality is an approach that aims to understand how intersecting identities shape experiences of oppression among Black women and other marginalized communities. An analysis of racial health disparities that does not regard intersectionality is limited. The deleterious consequences of these compounded systems of oppression – including but not limited to, racism, sexism and classism – and disparities in maternal health outcomes underscore the importance of research in this area. The lack of race-based data and lack of research that centers the perinatal experiences of Black women in a Canadian context reveal a gap in the literature. The perinatal experiences of Black Canadian women need to be analyzed through an intersectional lens and disseminated to improve Black maternal health outcomes.

## Room 4

### 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel Session 4 (Concurrent session) – Black Student Experiences and Pathways

- **Moderator: Melanie Knight**

1. Alicia F. Noreiga – Black Spaces: Using Cellphilms to Explore Black University Students' Experiences in Atlantic Canada

This presentation employs an autoethnographic approach to exploring using cellphilms (cellphone + filmmaking) to raise awareness of racial disparities and promote advocacy toward Black inclusion and equity. Using autoethnography as a research methodology, I place myself as the site of inquiry whereby I consider my beliefs and experiences to gain a greater understanding of Black university students' experiences. This presentation describes the circumstances that motivated me to create a cellphilm as I facilitated two cellphilm workshops with Black students attending two Atlantic Canada universities. I created a cellphilm entitled Black Spaces and purposefully included part of Bob Marley's (1980) "Redemption Song" as its musical accompaniment.  I began my cellphilm by highlighting the various exacerbated challenges I face as a Black international student, such as the absence of family and friends, lack of cultural connection, and feelings of isolation. In the second part of my cellphilm, I tried to articulate my beliefs that ignorance—due to the erasure of Black Histories and contributions in my university and its province's education practices—hinders

any considerations for Black inclusion. Finally, my cellphilm ended with a display of two pictures—the first presented the word "Black" while the second presented the word "Spaces"—displayed chronologically against a snowy backdrop. In this final strong significant message, I intended to signify Black's resilience. This study promotes the importance of safe spaces (hooks, 1994) for Black students to voice their experiences; thus, assisting them in becoming active participants in changing practices and policies that often exclude Black experiences.

2.  Daniel Ohaegbu – How Black African Men Thrive

This Qualitative study examines how Black African men thrive as international students despite anti-Black racism (ABR). Twelve Black African men who attended the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) as international students participated in one-on-one research conversations exploring their lived experiences as scholars and university community members. Data was analyzed through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, to first generate themes within each transcript and then across the group of participants. Final emergent themes included identity, coping, conscientization, solidarity and pride. These five themes interact and intersect to create a dynamic understanding of how Black African men thrive as international students—findings suggest that Black African men engage with an iterative process of discovering and navigating the violence and harms of ABR and racialization while striving to succeed. Thriving reflects a conscientization (critical consciousness) process illustrated in a model to reflect how African men perceive, understand, interpret, or make sense of their lived experiences.

3.  Annette Henry, Bathseba Opini, Stella Namae, and Kimani Karangu – "I saw How the Academy Is Really Worse for Black People": An inquiry of Academic Success and Well-Being of Black Graduate Students in a Faculty of Education (2010-2020)

Minimal literature exists that examines the Black graduate experience in Canada, and to our knowledge, none addresses British Columbia. Often, researchers are obliged to rely on studies from the U.K. or the U.S. to frame and understand Canadian Black graduate issues. This paper begins to address this paucity by investigating the experiences of Black graduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia from 2010-2020. Between August 2020 and February 2021, semi-structured interviews were conducted online due to COVID-19 using Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp, FaceTime or Skype. The study was informed by a Black studies framework which underscores an anti-colonialist perspective and draws attention to Black embodied knowledges as valued sites of resistance, agency, and humanity (McKittrick, 2020; King, 2017). We also drew on certain Critical Race Theory (CRT) principle of intersectionality as a useful analytic tool to articulate the ways in which race and racialization are operationalized in the interactions and experiences of the students in the Faculty of Education. The students experienced social and academic isolation, anti-black racism, linguicism, lack of access to resources, including funding, lack of mentoring, and low academic expectations by professors and classmates. They inhabited an environment in which they had to continually try to prove themselves as worthy since their legitimacy was constantly questioned. These findings are key to a) understanding educational experiences and challenges from Black students themselves, b) rethinking policies and practices

aimed at equitable, meaningful and culturally-appropriate learning environments for Black students.

4. Jada Joseph – Situating Afro-Indigenous Worldviews and Practices in Black Activism: Afroqueering and Counter-Archiving Black Activism in North America

In this presentation, the author seeks to situate Afro-Indigenous worldviews and practices in Black women, trans, and queer people's interventions and concepts for social justice organizing and theorizing across time. The author employs three common themes found across Afro-Indigenous worldviews and Scott Momaday (1968) and Linda Hogan (2001)'s concept of blood memory to explain the intergenerational transfer of Black resistance and an intersectional approach to social justice organizing. Although Black people were stolen from Africa, Black women, trans, and queer people continue to use Afro-Indigenous worldviews and practices of mutual care, social justice, and respect for diversity to combat oppression. The perpetual use of Afro-Indigenous worldviews and practices is demonstrated through a case study presentation of the contribution of Black women, trans, and queer people involved the civil rights era to the those in the era of Black Lives Matter, Furthermore, this presentation will show how Black women, trans, and queer people within different movements created opportunities for coalitions across and within different identity groups and geographical locations through an application of intersectionality at the movement-building level. In examining the interventions of Black women, trans, and queer people employed in the civil rights era to those in the era of Black Lives Matter, the author demonstrates that the Black resistance and unity are not chained to colonial temporalities or geographical boarders. The author suggests that Black historiographies contextualize Black resistance within Afro-Indigenous values that have survived in the bodies and mind of Black people across time and space.

**DAY 2 - SUNDAY MAY 15, 2022 (EASTERN TIME ZONE)**

**Room 1**

**9:00 to 10:30 – Panel session 1 (Concurrent session) – Being Counted: The Politics of Data within Ontario's State Anti-Racism Approach**

- **Moderator: Christopher J. Williams**

In 2018, the Ontario government passed new regulation under the Anti-Racism Act establishing Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism. These data standards come after decades of advocacy, and recommendations (including from the UN Human Rights Council, 2017), for the collection of race-based data which could inform "prevention, intervention and treatment strategies" to disrupt the racial disparities and disproportionalities which shape the lives of Black, Indigenous and other racialized people. This interdisciplinary panel, comprised of academics who have also had the experience of working for Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate, considers the challenges and potentials of employing race-based data within the context of institutional responses to anti-Black racism. Panelists draw on both their experience as policy advisors, as well as their research on racism in the Canadian state, to explore the possibilities and restraints of seeking institutional accountability from the state through data. These contributions grapple with Stefano Harney's (1996) observation – at the fall of the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat – that "anti-racism organizational change became a marketing tool, helping ministries reach and please minority customers." Panelists will explore how policy efforts can be improved through race-based data that accounts for Black experience, while simultaneously critiquing the cooption of Black scholarship and representation for the purposes of creating merely the semblance of anti-racist organizational change.

1. Nicole Bernhardt – What are We Counting? Racial Disparities vs. Representational Diversity

This paper traces the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) institutional approach to race and racism – particularly within the policing sector. I contrast race data collection aimed at the promotion of representational diversity and data collection for the purposes of tracking racial disparities and disproportionalities. Within the context of Ontario policing, this contrast plays out as a willingness to collect employment census data and an unwillingness to collect race-based data in service provision. Drawing on documentary research and interview data with three Ontario police institutions, and the OHRC, I explore the OHRC's partnership arrangements with police and attempts to promote race-based data collection. I argue that the OHRC's recurrent attempts to render anti-racism strategies as compatible with "good business" imperatives are incongruent with a structural understanding of racism. These attempts to couch demographic data collection within the logic of diversity management undercut the transformative potential race-based data and serve to maintain an inequitable social order. I scrutinize how the OHRC's – and more

recently the Anti-Racism Directorate's – efforts to be seen as good institutional partners working within a whole-of-government approach constrain their capacity to affect anti-racism change and explore institutional efforts to contest these constraints.

2. Rashelle Litchmore – What We Value Is What We See: Race Based Data and Black-Canadian Girls' Experiences

Research on the academic achievement gap and systemic exclusion of Black students in Ontario schools has been ongoing for several decades. The existence of these statistics in the Toronto District School Board has been impactful in prompting the province of Ontario to "destream" grade 9 to promote equitable outcomes for Black and other marginalized students. Efforts are also being made to address disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsions for Black students. This paper will argue for the continued value of race-based statistics in naming and quantifying inequities in a manner that directs educators' and policy makers' reform efforts. However, these statistics have also been constructed in a manner that define, and consequently address social issues that are hypervisibilized on Black male bodies, that is, academic "underachievement" and exclusionary discipline. One consequence of constructing Black student schooling experiences primarily through achievement and discipline statistics, is the rendering of the unique issues faced by Black girls invisible. Drawing on data from an ethnographic research project, this paper describes one such issue – gender-based violence – as a crisis for Black girls that is currently missing quantification, and which is non-the-less impacting girls in a manner that can in turn lead to their disengagement and exclusion from educational and long term success. The paper will argue for multi-method, intersectional approaches to considering Black student experiences in Ontario schools in order to ensure that no student is left behind.

3. Christopher Stuart Taylor – Challenging the Diachronic Realities of Institutionalized Anti-Black Racism

This paper will investigate the historical and diachronic effects of state-sanctioned anti-Black racism within the settler colonial state. Conceived in the haze and malaise of what the author has termed the 'Negro-Apocalypse' (post-summer of 2020), the paper interrogates the 'myth' of institutional progress as it relates to confronting anti-Black racism using flawed eurocentric paradigms of equity, diversity, and inclusion. It will highlight how Sankofa – looking back to a positive and unadulterated understanding of the Black 'Self' beyond the confines of the institution of enslavement and Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome – can mitigate the present-day effects of nihilism and anti-Black racism within white supremacist institutions.

## 11:00 to 12:30 – Panel session 2 (Concurrent session) – Visioning Black Studies in Canada: Toward Radical Humanism

- **Moderator: Carl E. James**

From the philosophical formulation of the human in late Western modernity to ideas about biological and cultural racism, to the criminalization of Blackness in the social sciences, Black people have historically been afforded no real place in the academy except as subjects to be studied or discarded / as problems to be solved. This panel contributes to the conference theme of visioning Black Studies in Canada by offering different models for engaging Blackness as a set of intellectual ideas and questions that exceed a simple anti-racism lens and positivist methodologies. By centering Black experiences, histories and art as critical to a reformulation of the racist logic of western thought, the panel suggests that Black Studies in Canada has a critical role to play both in transforming the core character of the university and the society in which we live.

1. Kamari Maxine Clarke – Unfinished Displacements: Writing Black Studies into Ever-Evolving Landscapes

This paper examines the relegation of Black lives into objects of positivist methodologies. It explores the impact of those exclusions on the formation of a particular type of social science whose goal became the "objective" documentation of other humans for the purposes of humanist knowledge formation. Simultaneously, it also finds in these exclusions resources for thinking otherwise: tools and practices that provide alternatives to the detached and distanced epistemologies of positivism. It locates these resources in the print media engagement of social commentators whose lives were foundational to the emergence of a Black Caribbean ethos in the streets of Montreal and Toronto. Through this inquiry it shows how thinking through Blackness in 1970s and 1980s urban landscapes requires that we take seriously through the method of critical abduction the fragmented and unfinished knowledges that emerged. It argues for what Kellie Gillespie described as a new form of "curriculating." This form of curriculating demands a rethinking of the constitution of Canadian canons through their exclusions and proposes a model for a renewed radical humanism through which to envision new directions for Black Studies in Canada.

2. Darcy Ballantyne – Across the Threshold: Stepping into Black Canadian Studies

As I develop content for Black Arts, Black Power, the core English literature course in X University's new Black Studies minor program, I have spent a lot of time thinking about how the global COVID-19 pandemic has changed what freedom means for Black people living in Canada. I marvel at how eruptions of anti-Black violence and killings here and south of the border united Black people who stepped out of their homes and took to the streets, despite the risk of contracting a deadly virus, to demand equality, freedom, and justice and, in Katherine McKittrick's words, to "shar[e] ideas about how to struggle against oppression." In her urgent remonstrance published in the Toronto Star in the weeks after the police-involved deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto, Dionne Brand suggests that many Black people have "been living a pandemic all ... [our] li[ves]." Unlike the indiscriminate viral pandemic, she argues, the

"global state of emergency of antiblackness" is a "structural" epidemic that persists unabated in the afterlife of slavery. In this paper, I argue that, when we fully emerge from the viral pandemic and step cross the threshold of the university, Black Canadian Studies must be the space and place where we can not only "theorize black liberation" and "black humanity" (McKittrick), but engender meaningful and lasting change that addresses the structural pandemic of anti-Blackness and articulates a capacious vision of Black livingness.

3. Andrea A. Davis – "Toward a Model of Intellectual Emancipation: Black Canadian Studies in the Humanities"

Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois's image of a poor black boy poring over a French grammar book as he sits in the middle of weeds, dirt and neglect in The Souls of Black Folk (1903), I revisit the debate between Du Bois and Washington to think through what might be produced when we center Black Studies in the humanities. If as Sylvia Wynter (2003, 2006) argues, the western bourgeois generic mode of the human subject has been made to stand in for humanity itself, imposing onto the enslaved and her descendants "an unbearable wrongness of being," what might it mean to rethink this logic deeply rooted in western thought, philosophy, literature and religion by rearticulating the fields of the humanities as a radical project toward, and not against, Black life? I suggest that positioning Black Studies in the humanities has the greatest potential to radically transform the academy by exposing its white supremacist ideological framework, or what Wynter calls its "Liberal universalism," thus offering a different set of theoretical paradigms for thinking about human relationships and human possibilities. This recentering of Black ideas, histories and embodied art in scholarly discourse is essential if Black diasporic peoples are "to complete intellectually [their] emancipation" (Wynter 2006, 113).

## 1:30 to 3:00 – BCSA Annual General Meeting (for members only)

### 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 3 (Concurrent session) – Black Performance in Canada as Artistry and Activism

- **Moderator: Cheryl Thompson**

This panel asks the question: How are histories of activism and artistry part of Black Canadian history? Bringing together professional dancers and academics, this panel aims to engage in conversations about Black spaces, music, and dance, and the ways in which we can locate Black performative histories in newspapers, archives, pedagogy, and memory.

1. Emilie Jabouin – Hitting the Sweet Spot: "The Bradford House," Ice Cream and Stage Performance in Early Twentieth Century Ontario

The early twentieth century marked an age of sanitation/industrialization, widespread racism, and the rise of entertainment circuits led by Black artists and business makers. The Canadian Observer,

an African Canadian newspaper run by Joseph R. B. Whitney (1914-1919) highlights their stories. "The Bradford House" of Chatham, Ontario is advertised weekly, from the first issue on December 12, 1914, to January 9,1915. Mrs. J.W. Bradford ran an ice-cream parlour, overnight quarters for Black travelers (and lovers?)—with dining, ""food at all times" "and newly furnished rooms "with baths and electric lights"" (Canadian Observer, December 19, 1914. In the "Black Mecca" of Ontario, Mrs. Bradford provided Black people modern comfort and shelter indicated by electricity, a part of western sanitation projects implemented in the previous decades (Crook, 1995; Valverde, 2000). Known as Mrs. Bradford in the Observer and as "Mme Bohee" in the Black-Haligonian newspaper, The Atlantic Advocate (1915 & 1917), this businesswoman upheld a double persona. She may have provided Black people (especially men) at "The Bradford House" entertainment free from mainstream segregated vaudeville theatres (Kibler, 2004). What was her story? Was she an activist by virtue of offering Black people access to services? Her ice cream parlour and performance practice opened radical spaces for Black-shared liberating moments of pleasure. How then did the Bradford/Bohee persona bend the contours of the "respectable" New Negro Woman? Or was business merged with entertainment part of Black women's experiences that have historically been ignored and concealed?

2.   Karen Cyrus – We, Too, Sing O Canada: Black Spaces in Ivory Towers

In his famous poem on Black life in 1920s America, Langston Hughes alludes to a situation that is true for many racialized minorities in Canada today: a lack of representation in Canadian curricula, as well as the outsider position of Canadian students and faculty of African descent who are routinely silenced, ignored, and denied opportunities for advancement in white institutions. Many scholars (Solomon & Levine-Rasky 2003; Cohen & Garcia 2008; Walton & Cohen 2011; Yeager & Walton 2011) have attested to the significance of cultural representation and other self-affirmative activities on learning and mental health of students, the absence of which is a "psychological threat that undermines learning and performance" (Cohen & Sherman, 2014). What can we learn from history about the ways that persons of African descent thrived in a hostile environment? A survey of primary documents in Black archives and collections reveals one strategy that Black Canadians have used for self-affirmation and resilience: they created their own spaces. The narratives and commentary of participants in these spaces also provide unique insight into the relevance of these spaces to their wellbeing. In this paper, I use Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia to describe three Black spaces in Canada: a baseball team, a gospel choir, and a Black music workshop. First, I explain the concept of heterotopia; second, I describe the context of the three images; then I explain how the images capture a world within a world to illustrate the importance of participation and performance in positive Black spaces in the past and today.

3.   Collette Murray – Africanist Dance in Canada: Presence, Dance Criticism and
      Anthropological Archive

As the Canadian dance identity in the 1970s was rooted in European and American roots, this pivotal decade ignited progress of Canadian dance with contributors who galvanized emerging spaces for independent choreographers beyond ballet. With ballet, contemporary and modern dance centered in the dance hierarchy, a glaring absence remains of the dance trajectory from African and Caribbean migrants in dance anthropology. The counter-hegemonic stance that artist

migrants took to actualize African and Caribbean dance presence in Canadian spaces is a form of Black dance activism. Whether overtly in a choreographed performance or by creating their own spaces to maintain cultural practices and explore critical questions that influenced a new work, the meaning-making in their performances were subject to dance criticism in the anthropological archive. The author takes a protagonist role as a member of the Black dance sector to pose the research question of how African and Caribbean dance performance aesthetics from 1970 to 2010 were documented and described. An environmental scan of archived reports, dance reviews, magazine features and scholarly articles identified dance aesthetics as described from writers between 1975 to 2010. Analyzing this using Dena Davida's (2011) 'dance anthropology at home' which offers diverse methods within one's subjectivity, it is an example of an author that is native to the culture and community in question. This paper argues that the Canadian Euro-centered dance archive constructed a devalued narrative with a neo-colonial gaze against Black diasporic dance contributions in Canada to establish a dance criticism era that fragmented the sector's presence, parallel to the evolutionary approach of dance anthropologists.

## Room 2

### 9:00 to 10:30 – Panel session 4 (Concurrent session) – Negotiating Anti-Blackness through Decolonizing and Africentricism

- **Moderator: Delores V. Mullings**

1. Karine Coen-Sanchez – The embodiment of Blackness in Academia

The recent resurgence of the 'Black Lives Matter movement' ignited a debate on oppressive educational structures. Such as the homogeneous faculties and curriculum that do not reflect the diversity of the student body. The lack of race consciousness- the color line-denies and accords opportunities and privileges, thus creating the invisible social and structural barriers for students to advance academically. (Du Bois 1903-2014). More recently, the use of the n-word in the classroom, for pedagogical purposes, and professors advocating for their academic freedom to use racially derogatory terms for educational reasons. This brings forward the question: how do racial disparities influence knowledge distribution in the classroom? Decolonization in academia is needed to provide Black post-graduate students the space to reach their full academic potentials. By recognizing the discursive space, racism occupies within academia – we can define how knowledge is produced locally and internationally and the link it has to Black scholars today (Escobar, 2014). By synchronously examining the effects of Whiteness and the space it occupies we can better assess the production and reproduction of knowledge in post-secondary institutions (Moten & Harney, 2013). The ingrained racist structures are embedded in the educational systems preventing accessibility to the Black and racialized student to progress academically. The barriers are as invisible as visible, thematically contributing to Black Scholars' debacle in academia.

2. Amma Gyamfowa, Delores V. Mullings, and Lori Chambers – Connecting Africentric Social Work and Decolonization

The United Nations International Decade for people of African descent is grounded in the urgency of recognition, justice and development to support the human rights and histories of African lives across the globe. This reckoning is in alignment with the impact of centuries long anti-Black racism, colonialism and discrimination that has impeded, harmed and enslaved people of African descent through the middle passage and beyond.

Suppressing the human rights of African peoples meant marginalizing and devaluing African knowledge systems. Therefore, in order to honour Black lives, the declaration requires diverse practices and education to dismantle white supremacy across systems and institutions through decolonization. In decolonizing knowledge, we make space to uncover and embrace Africentric ways of knowing and being that can embed transformative change, center African peoples and overturn harmful social systems engrained with anti-Black racism.

Entitled, *Connecting Africentric Social Work and Decolonization* our panel will draw from Canada's first Africentric Social Work text to explore:

- Decolonizing social work practice, education and research
- Addressing the intersectional and intergenerational impacts anti-Black racism in African, Caribbean and Black identified communities
- The holistic impact of Africentric care on Canada on education, immigration and healthcare

3. Funke Oba – Leading While Black

The events of 2020 illuminated entrenched anti-Black racism in the ways Black bodies are produced, taken up and consumed in the Canadian context. Institutions discipline Black bodies in embedded ways, expecting them to acquiesce/ self- censure. A university was specifically, petitioned about the impact of police presence on campus on the safety, belonging, and learning of Black students. This paper discusses the Leading While Black (LWB) initiative undertaken in response to calls for meaningful action to address anti-Black racism on campus. LWB sought to build Black student leadership skills, affirm healthy identity and galvanize leadership action at school, the community, and the society with the aim of enhancing equitable outcomes in retention, achievement, and graduation rates. Most University's Academic Plans routinely feature performative declarations about inclusion and equity but disrupting the status quo eludes Black students. Universities sustain self adulation while Black bodies await concrete action that will address the insidious Anti- Black Racism they face daily. The Leading While Black Workshops brought together 22 Black future helping professionals to debrief the year 2020, raise consciousness and be equipped with their own uniquely customized 31-page leadership personality report, tools, and resources.

**11:00 to 12:30 – Panel session 5 (Concurrent session) – The Roots and Routes of Black Social Movements**

- **Moderator: Melanie Knight**

1. Titilola Aiyegbusi – Burnley "Rocky" Jones, Malcolm X, and Africadian Consciousness

To speak of an Africadian consciousness without mentioning Burnley "Rocky" Jones and his contributions to the development of Black nationalism in Canada would be a travesty of history. And to speak of "Rocky" Jones's organic intellectualism without mention of the American Civil Rights Movement, and Malcolm X, would be to commit a similar offense. As such, in this paper, I seek to achieve two things: 1), to examine the development of a collective Black consciousness in Nova Scotia as chronicled in Jones's autobiography, and 2), to analyze this consciousness within the framework of the American Civil Rights Movement, one that is greatly influenced by X's ideology. Therefore, I compare the life narratives of both Jones and X, arguing that Jones's autobiography reads like a sequel to X's life narrative, one in which Malcolm survives the assassination, relocates to Canada, sensitizes Black Canadians to the need to develop a unified identity, and eventually becomes a lawyer. I focus on teasing out ways in which their stance on Black identity, self defence, and integration revolutionized the Africadian psyche. I examine this psyche from the purview of what Althea Prince calls the "Great Canadian Multicultural Myth" (2009). I extend my analysis by arguing that Jones's contributions to Black consciousness in Nova Scotia and Canada, as a whole, and his achievements as an international political activist reflect the need to understand the plurality of Black existence in Canada.

2. Elaine Brown Spencer – The Black Church in Canada: History, Social Activism & Loss

Afro-Caribbean migration and experiences of transnationalism reveal that the sociological role of Canadian Black churches is clearly established. Historically, the Black Church has shown much resilience marked by its strength of community, offering spiritual and social support, especially for its seniors, and fostering a philosophy of hope during periods of enslavement, immigration and most recently through the pandemic. Despite its historical role in building Black communities in Canada, today, the Black Church is situated in a post-racial world, amid rising poor mental health in a global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on the Black Church in Canada. Though the institution of the Black Church community remains strong, its vibrance of physical gatherings has been replaced with new protocols of church gathering and move to an online model. This forced readaptation has had both positive and negative outcomes. As statistics reveal, blacks have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 representing the largest numbers of death and infections. One of the strengths of Black Churches are its ability to organize and help members cope with grief and loss. For example, the "homegoing" service known as funerals that have been the beacon of Black churches are no more. Homegoing services are known to mobilize thousands of black members who gather to give their "goodbyes". These gatherings have served to unify the community to show empathy, love and financial support, to the bereaved. The singing, dancing, drum beats, organ slaying, hugs and affection displayed at the homegoing services have helped those experiencing loss to cope and feel supported during difficult times. Under COVID protocols,

cultural expressions of grief are now limited to 10 persons in funeral home chapels with a sole camera video stream. Ultimately the process of grieving has been radically changed overnight and black members have been disallowed from processing their grief and loss in ways that integrate their cultural expressions. This type of funerals can be perceived as a lack of respect for the life of black leaders, elders and our seniors who have departed this life and who have not received a proper public recognition for their life and contributions in Canada.

While the pandemic has revealed the strength of churches to quickly pivot to new ways of doing things the prolonged lockdowns reveal much more. The radio silence of Black church leaders can no longer be tolerated in context of a global health and racial pandemic. The way Black Churches position themselves in a post-pandemic world is critical to keeping relevant for this generation. No longer can exclusionary attitudes that served to protect or nurture new immigrants as it did in the sixties remain in effect. Black youth are dealing with anti-Black racism, over-representation in the criminal justice systems and mental health breakdowns. Physical gatherings are needed to give more mentoring, social justice involvement and mental health supports. It is important to address what are the nuances of the modern Black churches emerging due to the pandemic. We can only ponder and ask whether the Black Church, which once served as a buffer to social inequities, has lost its relevance to our Black community.

3. Alleson Mason – Yes You Can! Black Communities' Organizing for Black Students' Educational Development in Edmonton, Alberta

Black Canadians have created supplementary education programs to fulfil the needs of Black students that are unsatisfied by the K-12 mainstream school system. This study addresses the need for research on students' experiences in these Black-led supplementary programs in Canada, focusing on an African-Canadian/ African-Caribbean community organization in Alberta that offers out of school tutoring and organizes an annual Jeopardy! style competition aimed at increasing awareness of Black history. I examine the experiences of 25 students, alumni, parents, volunteers and workers within the organization using semi-structured interviews and participant observation of tutoring sessions. Drawing on Tara Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth to explore the rich forms of unrecognized social and cultural capital existent in Black communities, this presentation argues that the organization's supplementary education program model, which is built on mentorship from tutors, builds students' confidence in themselves and their academic abilities, instills pride in themselves as African descended peoples, and improves students' educational performance. This suggests that Black-led supplementary education programs cultivate forms of knowledge about Black history and how to navigate schooling that better prepare - students to succeed in mainstream K-12 while at the same time cultivating a stronger sense of identity and critical knowledge of Black heritages.

4. Philip S. S. Howard, TJ Kidd, and Thais Cattani Perroni – Naming What's Wrong, Making it Right: A preliminary inventory of Black Community Supplementary Education Initiatives in Montreal

Research has long demonstrated that Black people's experiences with state-run education in Canada are deeply racist experiences (e.g., Lewis 1992; Black Learners Advisory Committee 1994; Williams 1997; Codjoe, 2001). Public schools underserve and profile Black students, resulting in their under-achievement, under-representation in curriculum, over-disciplining, and over-representation in special education streams and among early school-leavers (e.g., Dei et al. 1997; Bhattacharjee 2003; Poole 2012; James et al. 2017). In Québec, and in the Greater Montréal Area where Black students are concentrated and comprise 10% of the overall student population, Black students' schooling experiences follow this pattern: they have significantly lower graduation rates than their peers, are over-assigned to special education, and are disproportionately the targets of school discipline and expulsion and many age-out" of the public system and finish their secondary education in the adult education system, if at all (McAndrew et al. 2015; Eid et al. 2011). In response, Black community groups in Montreal have a long history of implementing community educational programs, what I refer to here as Black community supplementary education initiatives (BCSEs), to address these disturbing conditions.

This presentation is part of a body of ongoing research that seeks to provide an account of the emergence and work of Montreal BCSEs between the 1900s and the present. Specifically, it will present a preliminary and partial inventory of BCSE programs and initiatives (francophone and anglophone) in Montreal as gleaned through interviews, research in BCSE archives, academic literature, and information publicly available on the Internet. The inventory will include 1) how Black communities in Montréal since 1900 have articulated what they find to be amiss in state-run primary and secondary schooling; 2) the expressions of agency represented by these BCSEs and their missions; and 3) the specific steps the BCSEs have taken to address these issues. Working with this data, the paper will critically analyze the multiple, often competing, political visions within and among these organizations and the implications they have had and continue to have for what Black educational freedom in Montreal might mean.

## 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 6 (Concurrent session) – Barriers to Labour Markets and Social Integration

- **Moderator: Gemechu Abeshu**

1. Chelsa States – Black Nurses in the Nursing Profession in Canada: A Scoping Review

Background: With migration occurring over a series of centuries, dating back to the 1600's, the circumstance of Black folks in Canada is layered with challenge and triumph. A surplus of social issues has resulted in knowledge gaps, particularly for groups such as Black nurses in Canada. Historical records indicate a legacy of racism and discrimination in nursing that continues to impact Black nurses. Recently, the nursing profession began to reckon with anti-Black racism in Canada, and the residual effects. This scoping review charts the existing evidence on Black nurses

in the nursing profession in Canada. The guiding question for this review was 'what evidence exists regarding Black nurses in the nursing profession in Canada?"

Methods: This scoping review was conducted in accordance with JBI methodology, involving a search of peer-reviewed evidence as well as unpublished and gray literature. Sources were considered for inclusion if they met the eligibility criteria outlined in the a priori protocol including: 1) focus on Canada, 2) Black nurses in Canada and 3) focus on nursing practice. No restrictions were placed on date of publication. Language was limited to English and French. All screening and extractions were completed in Covidence by two independent reviewers.

Results: The database search yielded 688 records. Seven sources were identified through gray literature search and 338 from citation search. After removing duplicates, 600 titles and abstracts were screened for eligibility and 127 advanced to full-text screening. Eighty-two full-text articles were excluded, for a total of 44 sources meeting the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, 31 sources underwent data extraction. Of the 31 sources, 18 are classified as research (n=18), six are commentaries (n=6); one report (n=1) and five are classified as announcements, memorandums or policy statements (n=5). Research designs included qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The review findings are classified in five categories: racism (n=12); history (n=2); leadership and career advancement (n=7); immigration (n=4); and diversity (n=4).

Conclusions: This review charts the current available evidence pertaining to Black nurses in the nursing profession in Canada. This review offers suggestions for future research as well as insight regarding anti-Black racism and discrimination in nursing.


2. Jilefack Amin Ngami – Being Black African in the Quebec Labour Market

This paper focuses on how skilled Black African immigrant workers are considered "intellectually inferior" by employers, good for manual labour. Black African immigrants are channeled to low wage, low skilled and unskilled labour to serve as labour for undesirable economies of White Quebeckers. This research is a multiple case study exploring the trajectories of those who migrated under the Quebec Skilled Worker Program. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with those who have integrated into their pre-migration profession or other skilled or unskilled employment. An anti-Black racism theoretical lens is utilized to observe how race and the history of Black people's enslavement in Canada affects the labour        market integration of African immigrants who self-identify as Black. Many participants shared experiences of anti-Black racism, inhumane treatment and invisibility in the labour market.

Many African immigrants come from francophone African countries, with French language skills being a determining factor for their choice of Quebec. How French knowledge skills are erased for requirements of bilingualism in the Quebec labour market and accent discrimination among other discriminatory practices are also examined. I argue that the Quebec government should carry out programs to sensitize employers and encourage them to employ African immigrants. This study contributes to provincial policy recommendations, by offering an engagement on the ways the Quebec government can address anti-Black racism, discrimination, and other systemic barriers to employment people of African descent experience, in the everyday.

3. Beverly-Jean Daniel, Cherie A. Daniel, and Camille Nurse – Mentorship, Black Postsecondary Educational Students and Career Mobility

Black students are entering institutions of higher learning at increasing numbers, which places them at a crossroad both in the Black community and Canadian society at large. The history of Black students' experiences in Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), has signified the ongoing challenges they have in relation to retention and degree completion, which is in part related to the failure to see themselves represented in those spaces, and the absence of role models and mentors. This presentation will examine the differing conceptions of mentorship adopted by Black post-secondary students while highlighting the importance of mentorship in their degree completion. Preliminary research suggests that current mentoring programs are largely ineffective for Black students because there is limited racial and cultural representation, lack of consistency in the programs being offered and the failure to clearly articulate the ways in which race and racism inform their experiences. Currently, responsibility for mentorship lies on family and community members who are expected to find opportunities. However, there needs to be a consistent and intentional approach on the part of the institutions to provide mentorship that is relevant for Black students to ensure that they can become fully contributing members of society. Even more relevant to the discourse, is the link between mentorship, career possibilities and the economic potential of Black students. Implementing effective mentorship programs can provide Black students the supports they need to access viable, comprehensive, career and economic possibilities.

## Room 3

### 9:00 to 10:30 – Panel session 7 (Concurrent session) – The Othering of Blackness on the Field of Play

- **Moderator: Ornella Nzindukiyimana**

1. Ornella Nzindukiyimana – Scoring Waves in Northern Tides: Towards an Exploratory History of Surfing on Canadian Coasts

Surfing's global expansion from the United States is tied to colonial forces, obscuring its Polynesian origins and spiritual roots. As a result, modern surfing has long been portrayed as a 'white sport'. Its progress into Canada remains unmapped. Popular media suggests that the once curious and odd practice of surfing was no longer obscure to Canadians by the 1970s. According to a Maclean's Magazine writer, in 2001, contemporary cultures of surfing had some estimated 3000 avid regulars in British Columbia, and some 70 in Nova Scotia. In 2006, the same writer qualified Nova Scotia as an "international surfing hot spot", while Canadian surfing afficionados described the contemporary surf scene as a throwback to early (circa 1960s) Californian surf culture, characterized by sparse beaches and commercial-free practice. This illustration of Canadian surfing (notably winter surfing) evoked an insular, niche culture, which raises questions about its development in Canada especially with regards to the underrepresentation of racialized peoples,

including historical Black communities off the coast of Nova Scotia. Asking how much the Canadian context reflected and perpetuated White capitalist takeover/monopoly of the sport from Hawai'i in the early twentieth century, this paper is an exploratory history of the early development of surfing on Canadian coasts. Accounting for colonial, racial, ethnic, and class-based forces which have underscored the sport's global expansion, this history draws on surfing culture discourse in popular media to interrogate Canada's adoption of the practice and situate the White middle-class male youth's influence found in other European dominated settings.

2.  Janelle Joseph and Shalom Brown – "You can't be showing up all dusty!": Black Athletes' Hair, (De)Coloniality, Respectability and Resistance in Sport

Hair is an important part of identity and community within the Black diaspora. Black hair, much like Black skin and Black bodies, has been racialized and constructed as the antithesis of Whiteness and colonial beauty standards. Within sports studies, Black athletes' hair is rarely discussed outside of barriers to exercise and physical activity. Limited research on Black women exercising to reduce comorbidities of obesity or partaking in swimming has focused on Black hair, neglecting Black men, and more so the politics of hair stylization. Many sports organizations continually reproduce colonial hierarchies of power. Mainly White head coaches and athletic directors remain positioned to dictate what is acceptable behaviour, dress, and style often coded as 'professional' but experienced as 'othering'. With this othering originating from colonial projects of racialization, also come embodied forms of decolonial respectability and resistance. Within sports contexts, our analysis of Black hair and hair stylization works to unveil and contest Whiteness and its goal of erasing Blackness from existence. Using former National Basketball Association (NBA) player Allen Iverson as a historical case study, alongside contemporary data from Ontario University Athletics (OUA), embodied respectability and resistance of Black hair and Black hair stylization is demonstrated. We approach several experiences of Black football and basketball players through a lens of epistemic disobedience, that is, delinking Black hairstyles from negative representations of Black men's identities, creating a narratability of Black beauty outside of Whiteness' erasure, and exposing the relationality and collective resistance generated within Black communities during protracted stylization processes.

3.  Carl E. James – 'Is De Grasse Black?' The Positioning of Black Athletes in the Canadian Landscape

On August 4, Canadians reacted with exuberance to sprinter Andre De Grasse's gold medal win in the 200-metre race at the 2020 Summer Olympics – the first Canadian to do so since 1928. In response to the reactions, B.U. tweeted: "I hope you'll love that young black boy next door just as you love Andre De Grasse today!" B.S. responded by tweeting: "What young black boy next door/Is De Grasse black? I just thought that he was a magnificent runner. No more. No less." Using tweets, this paper examines how naming the racial and Canadian identities of the 2020 Black Olympic athletes on Canada's team – particularly in recognition of their "exceptional" performance – represents, on one hand, the current and historical narratives of Black people's presence in Canada, and on the other, the counter-narratives of their contributions and 'delivered honour.' Black Studies provides a lens for how we might understand beyond a white empirical framework, the ways in

which race has been used as a marker of individuals' status as Canadians, and hence accounts for what we observe in the exchanges of twitter users.

## 11:00 to 12:30 – Panel session 8 (Concurrent session) – Navigating Anti-Black Racism in Educational Systems

- **Moderator: Fikile Nxumalo**

1. Tya Collins – A DisCrit Composite Counter-Story of Black Student Placement in Special Education

In Quebec, while systemic and structural racism continue to be denied in dominant political discourse, racialized citizens and immigrants are the targets of oppressive treatment in various institutions across the province, including schools (Pierre & Bosset, 2020). In particular, Black students continue to report manifestations of anti-Black racism through all phases of their educational pathways (CDPDJ, 2011; Collins & Magnan, 2018; Louis, 2020). Specifically in light of their overrepresentation in special education (Mc Andrew & Ledent, 2008), this presentation intends to discuss how blackness and anti-blackness intersect with the institutional process of placing students in special education. Grounded in disabilities critical race studies (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2016) and informed by antiblackness theory (Dumas & ross, 2016; Hartman, 2007), this study documented Black student experiences and analyzed them in interaction with systemic and structural barriers. A composite counter-story method was used (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) to analyze interviews with 21 school board members and 20 Black high school students, as well as their student files. This presentation will discuss the perceptual contrasts between these two groups: while school board personnel perceived most of their practices as "inclusive", benevolent, and beneficial to students, the majority of the reported student experiences did not coincide. The analysis of the results suggests that special education placement processes are steeped in anti-Black and ableist policies and practices that adultify, medicalized, and criminalize the behaviors of Black children, while failing to fully uphold their educational rights.

2. Courtney Chambers – "Acting White, Acting Right": Performance Politics and Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian Education System

Canada is often categorized as a diverse, multicultural, and post-racial country. Even though Canada is home to a vast number of people from different backgrounds and cultures, there are racist and oppressive systems in place that specifically target Black folks in this country. Black folks are often expected to 'perform' their race and act 'respectively' in a number of social environments, like in a school or classroom, where forms of whiteness tend to be praised and celebrated. Performing race burdens Black folks with the obstacle of presenting themselves as respectable citizens in a white dominated society. As a result, Black folks may struggle with constructing their own racial identities. This presentation will focus on Black youth specifically, examining the ways in which Black youth are expected to internalize notions of whiteness, and 'perform' their Blackness in ways that are socially acceptable by the Canadian education system. The expectation that Black youth must perform their race within their classrooms may lead to decreased self-esteem, and a

lack of confidence in their own racial identities. Pulling from personal experience as a Black woman and from the works of other Black scholars, the presenter will interrogate notions of safe spaces in schools, highlight the shortcomings of current anti-Black racist policies, and address the need for restorative justice practices that will benefit Black students in the Canadian education system.

3. Kisha McPherson, Anika Forde, and Annette Henry – "You Mean, We're Making History?": Findings from Year One of a Three-Year Initiative with Black Youth in Five Provinces

For decades, researchers, policymakers and service-providers across Canada have identified structural barriers and poor outcomes for Black youth as an intractable social issue – particularly those of low income and living in marginalized communities. Given that, as Statistics Canada (2020) indicates, Black youth (less than 29 years old) represent a significant proportion (26%) of the Black population, there is a pressing need to investigate youth trajectories and interrelationships between their education, employment and life outcomes. Whatever happens to Black youth will have a substantial effect on the cultural, social, economic and political welfare of Black communities in Canada. In this presentation, we discuss how we are responding to this urgent need through an all-Black-university team creating a data and research hub housed at York University, funded by the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), called Securing Black Futures. Three of the national team members will discuss ongoing projects at the five sites (Vancouver, Calgary, Hamilton, Toronto and Halifax) aimed at supporting students' outcomes whilst collecting much-needed data on the Black student experience that will inform both policy and practice.  The presenters will discuss the varied methodologies, challenges and interventions developed with existing programs, such as the STEMM programs conducted with various educational institutions and age-levels in Halifax, Hamilton and Calgary to the newly-formed initiatives such as UBC's university preparation/ mentorship program with grades 10-12 students.  Furthermore, all sites are collecting survey and qualitative data over the three years with undergraduate Black students to understand the Black student experience from their viewpoints.

4. Vidal Chavannes – Factors Influencing Black Undergraduate Students' Decision to Attend University

The purpose of this study was to explore, with a sample of fifteen (15) Black undergraduate students in Ontario, their considerations of the various factors that influenced their university choice process, including the decision to attend university, and to attend a particular institution. This research employed a qualitative case study methodology to understand the lived experiences of participants. Two data-collection methods were utilized, including a survey questionnaire and individual interviews. A review of the literature was conducted to devise a conceptual framework for the design and analysis of the study. The data from individual interviews, surveys and the researcher's field notes, revealed participants' perceptions and experiences during the university application and enrolment processes, and was reviewed against the literature as well as emergent themes. Having analyzed the findings, it became clear that as Black communities in Canada have historically struggled for physical access to educational spaces, then control over the apparatus of education within those spaces, then for the development of independent Black alternatives; the

lived experiences of the participants in this study, all Black undergraduate students, mirrors this trajectory. Participants, through their interview responses, told a story that would be familiar to students of educational histories pertaining to Black communities and those with the lived experience of interacting with educational spaces as Black people.

## 3:30 to 5:00 – Panel session 9 (Concurrent session) – The Dispossession and Confinement of Black Bodies

- **Moderator: Sarah Riley Case**

1. Beatrice Anane-Bediakoh – Under the Conditions of Removal: Green Dispossession, White Gentrification, and Black Elimination

Mobilizing Ananya Roy's (2017) iteration of racial banishment, this paper seeks to examine various mechanisms of removal that operate within and across Black geographies in Canada. Removal, a form of violence that is chronically operationalized –not only ruptures connections between people and place but is a process of racial violence that is situated in histories of racial exclusion and colonial domination. This paper pays particular attention to the relationship between green dispossession, white gentrification, and Black elimination as key contemporary sites through which techniques of removal are practiced, enacted and narrated to structure geographic domination. As McKittrick contends, traditional geographies organize the world from a stable White patriarchal Eurocentric heterosexual classed vantage point that assumes that we can view, assess, and ethnically organize the world from positivist and imperialist lens that are deeply negotiated through geographic landscapes upheld by legacies of exploitation, surveillance, and conquest. Accordingly, I will be drawing on Black Studies alongside Critical Race Studies to shed light on racial-colonial-state-instituted structures that function to propel processes of removal, while being cognizant of the particular ways that mechanisms of removal operate differently on Black geographies. Put forth by Roy, I contend that the material and discursive work of (re)presenting 'empty' landscapes through varying processes of removal is not merely a practice of capital accumulation or burial, but also that of racial banishment which brings into focus systems of power relations, resistance(s), and histories.

2. Jessica Bundy – African Nova Scotian Realities in Pivotal Social Moments

There have been several events in recent years that have impacted the movement to end systemic racism and racial inequality, in both advancing and delaying the cause. The election of Donald J. Trump and the renewed transparency of blatant discrimination being one, as well as the death of George Floyd and subsequent resurgence of Black Lives Matter in public discourse. While these events are U.S. based, they have had significant implications and have been reflected in Canadian society. The ripple of these events has been felt especially by Black Canadians, with many drawing clear parallels between the countries, of which this presentation will speak to in part. Using interviews with African Nova Scotians collected around the time of both these events, this presentation will examine the evolution of how African Nova Scotians describe their realities with police violence and systemic racism. Utilizing a combined framework based in social movement

theory and the politics of respectability, the way African Nova Scotians perceive police violence is explored and their perceptions of how broader society views the movement to end systemic racism and racial inequality. This presentation examines two pivotal moments in history that to many, indicate(d) a distinct 'before' and 'after'; and how to those experiencing anti-Black racism these moments were understood differently.

3.  Travonne Edwards, Andre Laylor, and Bryn King – When Home Reminds Me of Jail: The Carceral Nature of Out of Home Care for Black Youth in Ontario's Child Welfare System

This paper examines the similarities, intersections, and juxtapositions between the judicial and child welfare system in Canada. Using an anti-carceral theory, this paper weaves together the intersecting threads of anti-Black Racism and carceral logic, to construct Black youth's experiences living in out-of-home care (OOHC) (foster care and group homes). This manuscript is guided by the following research questions; 1). in what ways does the OOHC mirror jail/prison for Black youth? and 2) what are the circumstances in which police become involved in OOHC interventions, and why? The lead author of this study conducted 27 interviews with Black Caribbean youth from the Greater Toronto Area to understand their experiences in OOHC. The data revealed a connection between OOHC and jail, a lack of autonomy, and policing as an intervention for Black youth. Additionally, the findings illustrated how social workers' and child and youth workers' interactions are underpinned by carceral logic, which in their attempts to provide service to Black youth often mirrors policing. Recommendations for policy and practice include reducing police intervention, finding youth a happy home, and discretion and flexibility in applying policy and practice guidelines.

4.  Sylvia Madueke – A Preliminary Survey of Translated Black Canadian Women Writers

This paper seeks to provide preliminary evidence of Black Canadian and Quebecois women writers who are translated into French and English. Studies in Black Canadian literature and publishing have highlighted the marginal place of Black Canadian writers, and especially Black Canadian women writing (Clarke, 2017; Bristow et al., 1994), however, less attention have been given to the field of translation of Black writers. Mainstream narrative in Canadian translation history is even more exclusive to White experiences and achievements as exemplified by journal publications on translation in Canada. More so, Black Canadian women writers are yet to receive the critical and popular attention as their male counterparts in translation. In consequence, this paper studied existing written bibliographies of Black Canadian writing namely bibliographies by Elliot and Batts (1988), Clarke (2017), Francis (2000), Compton (2001), and more recently, Vernon (2020) in order to identify translated Black writers, account for the publishers and special collections targeting the translation and publication of Black writers, and determine the representation of Black women within the domain of transfer of literature through translation. Furthermore, this paper exemplifies the sub-liminal space occupied by Black Canadian women in translation through an example of Marie-Célie Agnant who is yet to enjoy a comparatively maximum visibility in translation as Dany Laferrière. The study of the bibliographies revealed that less than 10 percent of the women writers have seen one or more of their works translated and published in either French or English.