

## Editor's Note

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Volume 11, numéro 2, 2024

Fall/Winter 2024: From the Ground Up

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1115775ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.24908/jcri.v11i2.18488>

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Éditeur(s)

Queen's University

ISSN

1925-3850 (numérique)

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Citer ce document

Kirby, J. (2024). Editor's Note. *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry*, 11(2), i–ii.  
<https://doi.org/10.24908/jcri.v11i2.18488>

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## Editor's Note

**Jane Kirby**

We are three issues and over 14 months into Israel's continued assault on the Palestinian people, with, as of December 3 of this year, over 44 500 Palestinians dead. Meanwhile, much of the Western world remains silent or complicit. We're also collectively experiencing an eerie case of *déjà vu*—simultaneously shocking and entirely predictable—at recent election results that indicate a similar predilection towards racial violence in North America. If one believed in progress or the triumph of humanitarianism at the end of the twentieth century, we can confidently say that those lofty ideals have been crushed.

The articles in this issue—focusing on critical race theory in schools, on anti-trafficking legislation that criminalizes racialized workers, and on the experiences of racialized adolescents with cancer care—point to many of the ways that racism and racialization manifest, and they also don't obviously strike a hopeful tone. But the complexities presented by the authors in this issue also point to the ways oppressions develop unevenly, such that space for agency and change are opened up: A local school board develops critical race curriculum that far surpasses provincial standards; workers create, and fight for recognition for, their own credentialing system to circumvent criminalizing legislation; racialized adolescents work with researchers to use interdisciplinary and art-based methodologies to better connect and make sense of their experiences.

This complex sense of hope is reflected in the generosity of spirit that undergirds this issue's cover art, created by Métis visual artist Carleigh Candice Mignonne Milburn. *Heart Berry* takes the humble and sweet strawberry as inspiration for considering the love, healing, and connection to land necessary for decolonization and reconciliation among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For the artist, it is not only the shape of the berry we can learn from, but also its role in nourishing us, and in "nurturing strong relationships within families and communities."

Regan Tyndall and Dr. Kashif Raza take media controversy over CRT in schools as a departure point for considering how anti-racist and critical race approaches are being taken up in legislation and curriculum in Ontario. Considering both the now dormant *Racial Equity in the Education System Act* and Hamilton-Wentworth district's "Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild." module, they conclude that while provincial-level policy might be limited in its ability to enact CRT, more potential for transformative curricula and content exist at the local level. Local educators, parents, and school boards have considerable agency in disrupting racism within school systems.

Elene Lam et al.'s consideration of Newmarket, Ontario's recent bylaw regulating body rub establishments makes a similar case for tackling racism from the ground up. Laying bare the contradictions and racist history of anti-trafficking campaigns, the authors demonstrate how racialized communities—rather than external non-governmental organizations or municipalities—are best positioned to meet their own needs and rally together to protect themselves. In the face of harsh and discriminatory regulatory practices, the migrant workers described in this research have rallied together to speak out against the bylaw, resulting in increased public recognition of their struggles, the recognition of foreign credentials, and a seminar series that leads to municipally recognized accreditation.

The need to centre the experiences of racialized peoples is also reflected in Tiffany Hill et al.'s moving accounts from racialized adolescents undergoing cancer care. Co-authored with some of the youth, this research offers insight into how both health research and cancer care spaces might be transformed by arts-based and participatory approaches, particularly for those from communities for whom research has traditionally been extractive and reductive in nature.

Adesoji Babalola's review of Daniel Meister's *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* reflects on the by now familiar (at least to readers of JCRI!) critique of Canadian multiculturalism in relation to the public intellectuals who popularized the idea. Through consideration of the work of media personalities Watson Kirkconnell, Robert England, and John Murray Gibbon, Meister shows how, in Babalola's words, "European whiteness was the only culture considered valuable enough to be included and embraced in Canada." Babalola suggests that while Meister's work offers a valuable genealogy through which to consider the racist roots of multiculturalism, it is limited by being centred on "white people racializing other white people" rather than a more expansive genealogy that also considered the relationship of these ideas to Black and Indigenous populations.

Finally, the conversation between Paul Akpomuje and his colleagues—all Black faculty and students at Queen's University—reflecting on the Poetics of Migration event hosted in Kingston, Ontario, in January 2024, offers insight into how transformative Black geographies can be lived through Black thinking, organizing, and conversation. Considering the limits of categories like "international student" and the myriad ways Black thought is surveilled and policed both on and off campus, the conversation points beyond the boundaries imposed by borders and towards—to quote Katherine McKittrick's contribution to the conversation—"anti-colonial and diasporic placemaking activity."

In the best-case scenario, this is also the hoped-for role of JCRI: to disrupt the imperatives of thought rooted in austerity, exclusion, and racism, and instead offer a space for works that are challenging how these forces manifest both within academia and beyond. The contributors to this issue take up this challenge, and we are pleased to provide a home for this work.

I will be signing off from JCRI for the next while for maternity leave, and leaving the Managing Editor role to Kate Cairns, an outgoing faculty member from Rutgers University. Future contributors—you are in capable hands (!). I look forward to seeing how the work of the journal continues to evolve with Kate's support.