CALLALOO

Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas
United States of America

&

The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH)
Oxford University
United Kingdom

present

“The Transatlantic, Africa & Its Diaspora”
THE 2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE

November 27-30, 2013
Pembroke College, Oxford University
A Letter from the Editor of Callaloo

Dear Colleagues & Friends,

Welcome to the 2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE, our sixth annual gathering, which focuses on “The Transatlantic, Africa & Its Diaspora” and the implications of this topic for the developing discourse called Transatlantic studies.

For the 2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE, we have invited distinguished intellectuals and artists, whose backgrounds, along with their artistic and academic interests, signal our investments in the evolving discourse which will inform not only our presence in our respective institutions but also our lives and the work we perform as artists and academics. We are inviting you to visit the panel presentations and join in the discussions, which are offered for your benefit as well as ours. The conference program that follows indicates that we have also organized evenings of poetry and fiction readings at both our Oxford and London venues. In fact, the poetry readings at Goldsmiths, University of London, are the conference finale, which we also invite you to attend. Each CALLALOO CONFERENCE offers a mixture of the creative and the critical.

By bringing together the creative and the critical, we are following a long-standing principle of the literary and cultural quarterly Callaloo, which, during its thirty-six years of existence, has published the work of creative writers alongside that of academics and other intellectuals. Our aim has been to encourage, however indirectly, literary critics and creative writers to stay abreast of and to read—and study and critique—each other’s productions. However, in 2007, it became markedly clear at the Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration of Callaloo at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore that our publication strategy had only made a minimal impact, if any; the divide between the two groups of cultural workers—the creative and the critical—was continuing to widen, thus causing the one not to understand the important productions of the other. This startling discovery is the origin of what is now simply called the CALLALOO CONFERENCE.

To address the widening gap between creative writers and literary and cultural critics, a select group of about twenty-five poets, novelists, and professors of literature and culture met in New Orleans (March 2008) for a retreat under the general theme of “Literature, Culture & Critique.” Our first engagements were heated, closed-door discussions that focused on the specific topic “What We Do, and How and Why We Do It.” We later engaged the public in discussions on the problem, and we also offered literary readings at Tulane University (New Orleans) and other sites, including jazz and blues clubs, in the Crescent City. In March 2009, when we met at Washington University in St. Louis, we approached the problem of the divide from the angle of “The Intellectual’s Dilemma: Production and Praxis in the Twenty-First Century.” In July 2010, at the invitation of the Director of the Institute for Ethiopian Studies, we met at Addis...
Ababa University. With mutual exchange and cooperation among intellectuals and artists from Africa and North America on the theme of “(Black) Movement(s): Poetics and Praxis,” the 2010 three-day gathering in Ethiopia was both national and international in scope and purpose. We held our fourth annual gathering in October 2011, at Texas A&M University (College Station), the home site of Callaloo, where we focused on “Translations” as it relates to critical and creative writing and to visual culture. In October 2012, we met at Princeton University to offer “Love,” another encompassing subject, through which artists and academics engaged each other in public discussions and performances of various kinds. In other words, the previous conferences, and this year’s gathering, are a continuum: we are mindful of our original gathering in New Orleans, where creative writers demonstrated what they do, and literary and cultural critics explained in full measure how and why they do what they do.

As you join in the discussions of the 2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE here at Oxford University and Goldsmiths, University of London, we sincerely hope that the different activities of the conference will provide you a variety of glimpses into each artist’s and academic’s thoughts on “The Transatlantic, Africa & Its Diaspora.” We also hope that each speaker and performer will add other dimensions to your understanding of the arts and the critical discourse attending them, and that your participation in this conference will help illuminate for you what we do as artists and intellectuals, and why we do it.

Please join the Callaloo staff and me in expressing our deep gratitude to Professor Stephen Tuck, Clare Oxenbury, and Heather Earwicker of the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, Oxford University, and to Professor Joan Anim-Addo and Marlène Edwin of the Centre for Caribbean Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, for graciously hosting the 2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE.

Sincerely,

Charles Henry Rowell
Editor of Callaloo
Professor of English
Texas A&M University
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2013

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

The Transatlantic, Africa & Its Diaspora
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Welcome
Stephen Tuck
Director, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities
Oxford University

The Conference: History & Purpose
Charles Henry Rowell
Editor of Callaloo & Professor of English
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

Significance of the Occasion
Salamishah Tillet
Associate Professor of English & Africana Studies
University of Pennsylvania

Introduction to Keynote Speaker
Mukoma Wa Ngugi
Assistant Professor of English
Cornell University

Keynote Address
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o
Distinguished Professor, Comparative Literature & English
University of California, Irvine

Moderator
Vievee Francis
Visiting Professor of Creative Writing
Warren Wilson College
Rethinking “Transatlantic” & Its Discourse
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Speakers

Marlon B. Ross
Professor of English & Africana Studies
University of Virginia

Hortense Spillers
Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor
Vanderbilt University

Corey D. B. Walker
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
John W. & Anna Hodgin Hanes Professor of the Humanities
Winston-Salem State University

Respondents

Nicole Brittingham Furlonge
English Department Chair
Princeton Day School, NJ

Scott Heath
Assistant Professor of English
Georgia State University

Hermine Pinson
Associate Professor of English
The College of William & Mary

Ivy Wilson
Associate Professor of English &
Director of American Studies
Northwestern University

Moderator

Lloyd Pratt
University Lecturer in American Literature
Oxford University
Europe & the UK on Transatlantic Studies
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Speakers

Amzat Boukari-Yabara
Associate Doctor
Center of African Studies
École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

Jean-Paul Rocchi
Professor of Literature & American Culture Studies
Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée

Respondents

Ifa Bayeza
Distinguished Artist in Residence & Senior Visiting Artist Lecturer
Brown University

Elleke Boehmer
Professor of World Literature in English
Oxford University

Pat Noxolo
Lecturer in Human Geography
The University of Sheffield

Elizabeth Williams
Historian/Librarian
Goldsmiths, University of London

Moderator

Gregory Pardlo
Instructor of Creative Writing
City University of New York
7:00 PM, Thursday, November 28

Readings
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Authors Reading

Fred D’Aguiar
Gloria D. Smith Professor of Africana Studies
Virginia Tech University

Nuruddin Farah
Independent Writer
Cape Town, South Africa

Ben Okri
Independent Writer
London, UK

Respondents

Ifa Bayeza
Distinguished Artist in Residence & Senior Visiting Artist Lecturer
Brown University

Thierno I. Dia
Film Lecturer
PhD Candidate in Arts
Université de Bordeaux 3, France

Maaza Mengiste
Writer/Professor
Queens College
City University of New York

Moderator

Vievee Francis
Visiting Professor of Creative Writing
Warren Wilson College
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2013

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Caribbean Studies, African American Studies & Transatlantic Studies
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Speakers

Joan Anim-Addo  Professor of Caribbean Literature & Culture, Director of Centre for Caribbean Studies
Goldsmiths, University of London

Anthony Bogues  Lyn Crost Professor of Social Sciences & Critical Theory
Brown University
Honorary Professor, Centre for African Studies
University of Cape Town

Carole Boyce Davies  Professor of English & Africana Studies
Cornell University

Respondents

Brett Gadsden  Associate Professor of African American Studies
Emory University

Edwin C. Hill  Assistant Professor of French & Italian
University of Southern California

Bénédicte Ledent  Professor of English
University of Liège, Belgium
Justine McConnell  
Leverhulme Postdoctoral Researcher in Classics  
Oxford University

Pascale Ratovonony  
Professor of Art History  
Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne

Moderator

Claudrena N. Harold  
Associate Professor of History  
University of Virginia

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, Friday, November 29

Africa in African Diaspora Studies & Transatlantic Studies
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Speakers

Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis  
Director of the Institute for Ethiopian Studies  
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Dagmawi Woubshet  
Associate Professor of English  
Cornell University

Respondents

Zerihun Birchanu  
Graduate Student  
University of Amsterdam

Julius B. Fleming Jr.  
Graduate Student  
University of Pennsylvania
Yussuf Hamad  
Senior Lecturer in Swahili  
SOAS, University of London

Carter Mathes  
Assistant Professor of English  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Koritha Mitchell  
Associate Professor of English  
Ohio State University

Mukoma Wa Ngugi  
Assistant Professor of English  
Cornell University

Moderator

Z’étoile Imma  
Assistant Professor of English  
University of Notre Dame

7:00 PM, Friday, November 29

Readings
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Authors Reading

Yusef Komunyakaa  
Global Distinguished Professor of English  
New York University

Ed Roberson  
Distinguished Artist in Residence  
Northwestern University

Natasha Trethewey  
United States Poet Laureate  
Consultant in Poetry, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of English & Creative Writing  
Director of Creative Writing Program  
Emory University
Respondents

Margo Crawford  
*Associate Professor of English*  
*Cornell University*

Tyehimba Jess  
*Assistant Professor of English*  
*City University of New York*

Maaza Mengiste  
*Writer/Professor*  
*Queens College* 
*City University of New York*

Clarissa Pabi  
*Independent Writer*  
*London, UK*

Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon  
*Associate Professor of English*  
*Cornell University*

Moderator

Gregory Pardlo  
*Instructor of Creative Writing*  
*City University of New York*
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2013

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

African Diaspora Studies and the Concept of Transatlantic Studies
The Pichette Auditorium, The Henderson Building
Pembroke College

Speakers

Sarah Lewis
Critic, School of Art Faculty
Doctoral Candidate
History of Art Department
Yale University

Robert F. Reid-Pharr
Distinguished Professor of English & American Studies, Graduate Center
City University of New York

Denise Ferreira da Silva
Professor of Ethics & Director of Centre for Ethics & Politics
Queen Mary, University of London

Hortense Spillers
Gertrude Conaway
Vanderbilt Professor
Vanderbilt University

Respondents

Lamonte Aidoo
Assistant Professor of Romance Studies and African & African American Studies
Duke University

Margo Crawford
Associate Professor of English
Cornell University

Keguro Macharia
Associate Professor of English
Cornell University
Jarvis C. McInnis  
Graduate Student  
Department of English & Comparative Literature  
Cornell University

Salamishah Tillet  
Associate Professor of English & Africana Studies  
University of Pennsylvania

Moderator

Scott Heath  
Assistant Professor of English  
Georgia State University

Comments

Stephen Tuck  
Director, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities  
Oxford University

Closing Remarks

Charles Henry Rowell  
Editor of Callaloo & Professor of English  
Texas A&M University

Return to London at 12:00 Noon for the Finale
2013 CALLALOO CONFERENCE FINALE

Goldsmiths, University of London
Ian Gulland Lecture Theatre
New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, UK

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM, Saturday, November 30, 2013

Readings by British & U.S. American Poets

Welcome
Joan Anim-Addo
Professor of Caribbean Literature & Culture, Director of Centre for Caribbean Studies
Goldsmiths, University of London

The Occasion
Charles Henry Rowell
Editor of Callaloo & Professor of English
Texas A&M University

American Poets Reading
Tyehimba Jess
Assistant Professor of English
City University of New York

Yusef Komunyakaa
Global Distinguished Professor of English
New York University

Natasha Trethewey
United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry
Robert W. Woodruff Professor of English & Creative Writing
Director of Creative Writing Program
Emory University

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Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon  
*Associate Professor of English*  
*Cornell University*  

**Moderator**  
Vievee Francis  
*Visiting Professor of Creative Writing*  
*Warren Wilson College*  

**Intermission / 10 Minutes**  

**British Poets Reading**  

Anthony Joseph  
*Lecturer in Creative Writing, Birkbeck College*  
*PhD Candidate, Goldsmiths, University of London*  

Jackie Kay  
*Professor of Creative Writing*  
*Newcastle University*  

Clarissa Pabi  
*Independent Writer*  
*London, UK*  

Jacob Sam-La Rose  
*Independent Writer*  
*London, UK*  

**Moderator**  
Ellah Wakatama Allfrey  
*Independent Editor and Critic*  
*London, UK*  

**Closing Comments**  
Charles Henry Rowell  
*Editor of Callaloo & Professor of English*  
*Texas A&M University*  

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JOAN ANIM-ADDO, who was born in Grenada in the Caribbean, is a professor of Caribbean literature and culture and Director of the Centre for Caribbean Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she also teaches courses in other African Diaspora literatures and cultures. She is founding editor of Mango Season, the journal of Caribbean women’s writing. Her recent publications include Touching the Body: History, Language, & African Caribbean Women’s Writing, Framing the Word: Gender and Genre, and other critical books in the field, as well as volumes of her creative writing, Imoinda, Haunted by History, and Janie Cricketing Lady. She is co-editor of I Am Black, White, Yellow: An Introduction to the Black Body in Europe, Interculturality and Gender, and “Affects and Creolisation,” a special issue of The Feminist Review 104:1-4.

ANTHONY BOGUES is the Lyn Crost Professor of Social Sciences and Critical Theory at Brown University, where he is also a professor of Africana studies and the Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. He is a curator and a founding associate director of the Center for Caribbean Thought at the University of the West Indies, Mona, and the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including The George Lamming Reader: The Aesthetics of Decolonization, Caliban’s Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James, After Man Towards the Human: Critical Essays on the Thought of Sylvia Wynter, Black Heretics and Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals, and Empire of Liberty: Power, Freedom, and Desire. He is currently a Mellon Visiting Professor at the University of Cape Town, SA. As a curator, he sits on the scientific committee of the Grand Palais in Paris, where he is working on the planned exhibition Haiti.

AMZAT BOUKARI-YABARA received the PhD degree in African history and civilizations from Ecole des Hautes Études in 2010 and, in 2011, a Diploma in Latin American studies from the Sorbonne, University of Paris. He is currently a lecturer at the Africa Center at Ben-Gurion University of Negev in Israel. After he served as a junior official executive in the ranks of the French Conseil d’État from 2006 to 2011, he did postdoctoral research at the University of Montreal, Canada.
FRED D’AGUIAR, a native of London who grew up in Guyana, is a novelist, poet, playwright, and essayist. His recent books include The Longest Memory, Dear Future, British Subjects, Bill of Rights, English Sampler: New and Selected Poems, Bethany Bettany, and Continental Shelf (shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize 2009, and a U.K. Poetry Book Society Choice). A Jamaican Airman Foresees His Death, a play, was produced at Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in 1991. In June 2013, his new collection of poems, The Rose of Toulouse, was published, and his sixth novel, Children of Paradise, inspired by the tragedy of Jonestown, Guyana, is scheduled for publication in 2014 by Granta (UK) and HarperCollins (USA). He has published nonfiction prose in such periodicals as Harper’s Magazine, Wasafiri, Callaloo, and Best American Essays. He teaches courses in creative writing at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, where he is Professor of English.

CAROLE BOYCE DAVIES is Professor of Africana studies and English at Cornell University. Her publications include Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones and Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migrations of the Subject. She is also editor of Moving Beyond Boundaries: Black Women, Decolonizing the Academy, Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora, African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities, and Claudia Jones’s Beyond Containment: Autobiography, Essays, Poetry.

NURUDDIN FARAH, a novelist born in Baidia, Somalia, lives in Cape Town, South Africa. He is author of more than twelve books, most recently Territories and a trilogy: Links, Knots, and Crossbones. Maps, Gifts, and Secrets—his earlier “Blood in the Sun” trilogy—also garnered for him world-wide attention. A Stone Thrown at the Guilty is his most recent play, which was first performed at Raring Center’s Stoll Thrust Theatre at the University of Minnesota, where each autumn he teaches as the Winton Professor in the College of Liberal Arts. For his work, he has received a number of international awards, including Premio Cavour (Italy), the St. Malo Literature Festival prize (France), the Kurt Tucholsky Prize (Germany), English-Speaking Union Literary Prize (UK), Neustadt International Prize for Literature (USA), and Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage (Germany). He has frequently been nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature.
ELIZABETH WOLDE GIORGIS is the former Dean of the Skunder Boghossian College of Performing and Visual Arts and the former Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University, where she teaches courses in art theory criticism. She is author of *Charting Ethiopian Modernity and Modernism*, co-editor of the special issue of *Callaloo* devoted to Ethiopian art and literature, and editor of the only catalogue to date of contemporary art published in Ethiopia, *Gebre Kristos Desta: The Painter Poet*. She is currently the Director of the Modern Art Museum: Gebre Kristos Desta Center of Addis Ababa University.

TYEHIMBA JESS, a Detroit native who is both a poet and fiction writer, is author of *leadbelly*, which won for him the 2004 National Poetry Series. He is an assistant professor of English at the College of Staten Island in New York. His poetry has appeared in such anthologies and periodicals as *Angles of Ascent*, *Beyond the Frontier*, *Roll Call*, *Bum Rush the Page*, *Complex Slam*, *American Poetry Review*, *Mosaic*, *Indiana Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Callaloo*. He has received a number of honors for his work—e.g., a Winter Fellow (2004-2005) at the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center, a 2004 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a 2006 Whiting Fellowship. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he received his MFA from New York University.

ANTHONY JOSEPH, who was born in Trinidad, lectures in creative and life writing at Birkbeck, University of London. He is author of a novel, *The African Origins of UFOs*, and four collections of poems: *Desafinado*, *Teragaton*, *Bird Head Son*, and *Rubber Orchestras*. In his music group, The Spasm Band, he performs internationally as the leader and vocalist—with three critically acclaimed albums to date: *Leggo de Lion*, *Bird Head Son*, and *Rubber Orchestras*. He is completing the PhD in creative writing at Goldsmiths, University of London.
JACKIE KAY, a poet and novelist, was born Jacqueline Margaret Kay in Edinburgh, Scotland, to a Nigerian father and a Scottish mother. In 1991, she published her first book of poems, *Adoption Paper*, which won for her the Saltire Society Scottish First Book Award. She is also author of fifteen other books of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction prose, including *Reality, Reality, Darling: New and Selected Poems*, *Red Dust Road: An Autobiographical Journey* (memoir), *Fiere* and *Trumpet* (novels), *The Lamplighter* (drama), *Other Lovers*, *Why Don’t You Stop Talking* (short stories), and *Off Color* and *Maw Broon Monologues* (poetry). The Somerset Maugham Award, the *Guardian* First Book Award Fiction Prize, British Book Award, International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and Scottish First Book of the Year are but a few of the awards and prizes she has received for her art. In 2006, she was elected Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). This Manchester resident teaches creative writing at Newcastle University.

YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA, a native of Bogalusa, Louisiana, is Distinguished Senior Poet and Global Professor at New York University. After he served as a USA Army correspondent in Vietnam 1969 to 1970, he studied at the University of Colorado and later received his MFA degree in creative writing from the University of California in Irvine. He is author of nineteen books, some of which are *Dien Cai Dau*, *Neon Vernacular*, *Thieves of Paradise*, *Talking Dirty to the Gods*, *Taboo*, *Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems*, *Warhorses*, *Scandalize My Name: Selected Poems*, *Gilgamesh (A Verse Play)*, *The Chameleon Couch*, and *Testimony: A Tribute to Charlie Parker*. For his poetry he has been awarded the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, the Wallace Stevens Award, and the Pulitzer Prize.

SARAH LEWIS received her BA from Harvard University and an M.Phil from Oxford University. She is a candidate for the PhD at Yale University, where she teaches in the MFA program of Photography and Painting Departments of the School of Art. She serves on many boards, including The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the CUNY Graduate Center, and the Brearley School. Her critical commentaries on contemporary art have been published widely in journals, such as *Callaloo, Ariforum*, and *Art in America*, and in other publications, such as those issued by Rizzoli, the Smithsonian, the Mu-
CLARISSA PABI, a north Londoner, recently received the BA degree in English at Oxford University. While there, she was resident poet for the Oxford COMMA club and she was elected President of the Oxford Poetry Society, which was founded in 1946 and serves as “the centre of poetic life within the University.” Her interest in the arts also extends to Hip-Hop music, which she has also written about. She is currently employed as an editor at the London office of Random House.

BEN OKRI—novelist, short story writer, poet, playwright, and essayist—was born in Minna, Nigeria, but spent his early years in London, while his father studied law. Ben Okri later returned to the UK to study at the University of Essex. He is author of more than twelve books, including *The Famished Road* (winner of the Booker Prize), *Incidents at the Shrine, An African Elegy, Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural and Political, In Exilus, Tales of Freedom*, and *In Arcadia*. He has received such literary prizes and awards as the Commonwealth Writers Prize, Premio Grinzane Cavour, Booker Prize for Fiction, Chianti Ruffino-Antico Fattore International Literary Prize, Premio Palmi, and Paris Review/Aga Khan Prize for Fiction. From 1991 to 1993, he was Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, Cambridge University, in 1987 he became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and he was, in 2001, awarded an OBE (Order of the British Empire). In addition to being a member of the board of the Royal National Theatre, he is also a Vice President of the English Centre of International PEN. He lives in London.

CLARISSA PABI, a north Londoner, recently received the BA degree in English at Oxford University. While there, she was resident poet for the Oxford COMMA club and she was elected President of the Oxford Poetry Society, which was founded in 1946 and serves as “the centre of poetic life within the University.” Her interest in the arts also extends to Hip-Hop music, which she has also written about. She is currently employed as an editor at the London office of Random House.

ROBERT F. REID-PHARR is Distinguished and Presidential Professor of English and American studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. This Brooklyn resident has also taught at a number of other institutions, including the University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins University, American University of Beirut, and Oxford University. He is author of *Conjugal Union: The*

JEAN-PAUL ROCCHI is a professor at the Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée and a member of several research groups including IMAGER (Paris-Est), the Caribbean Philosophical Association, and the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR). He teaches courses in American studies, African American literature, and queer studies. A DuBois Institute Fellow (Harvard University, 2007), he is editor of L’objet identité: épistémologie et transversalité, Dissidence et identities, and The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman de Ernest Gaines: perspectives récentes de la recherche afro-américainiste.

DENISE FERREIRA DA SILVA is Director of the Centre for Ethics & Politics at Queen Mary, University of London, where she is also a professor in the School of Business and Management. She is author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* and *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime*. Atlantic Quarterly, Theory, Culture & Society, Revista Estudos Feministas, Social Identites, The Realization of Living: Sylvia Winter and Being Human, Critical Legal Theory, Fragments of Bone: Neo-African Religions in the Americas, and Black Brazil, Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization are some of the publications in which her work has also appeared.

HORTENSE SPILLERS is the author of *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2003) and editor of *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text* (Routledge, 1991) and, with Marjorie Pryse, *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition* (Indiana University Press, 1985). Her recent essays have appeared in such journals as das argument, boundary 2, and The New Centennial Review. Grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation, and fellowships at the National Humanities Center (Research Triangle, NC) and the Center for the Study of the Behavioral Sciences (Palo Alto, CA) are but a few honors she has received for her sterling contributions to literary and cultural studies. Spillers has taught at a number of institutions, including Wellesley College, Emory University, and

JACOB SAM-LA ROSE is author of *Communion* (2006, a Poetry Book Society Pamphlet Choice) and his collection *Breaking Silence* (2012, shortlisted for a Forward Foundation Felix Dennis Award and a Fenton Aldeburgh Award). His work has also been published in a number of journals and anthologies, including *Out of Bounds: British Black and Asian Poets*, *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets*, *Penguin's Poems for Love*, and Michael Rosen’s *A-Z: The Best Children's Poetry from Agard to Zephaniah*. As a leader in the UK youth slam poetry movement, he serves as the Artistic Director for such initiatives as the London Teenage Poetry SLAM, Apples & Snakes Word Cup, and Shake the Dust—the UK’s largest national youth slam.
NGŨGĨ WA THIONG’O, a native of Kenya, is Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California in Irvine. This novelist, essayist, playwright, journalist, editor, and academic and social activist is author of numerous books—*Weep Not Child*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *The River Between*, *Petals of Blood*, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir*, *In the House of the Interpreter*, *Decolonizing the Mind*, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, *Writers in Politics*, and *Globalactics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*. This recipient of the 2001 Nonino International Prize for Literature has given such distinguished lectures as the MacMillan Stewart Lectures at Harvard, the Ashby Lecture at Cambridge, the Robb Lectures at Auckland University in New Zealand, and the Clarendon Lectures in English at Oxford University.

NATASHA TRETHEWEY, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of English and Creative Writing at Emory University in Atlanta, is Poet Laureate of the United States of America (2012-2014). She is author of a book of prose, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (2010, winner of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize) and four volumes of poetry—*Thrall* (2012), *Native Guard* (2006, winner of the Pulitzer Prize), *Bellocq’s Opheïa* (2003, ALA Notable Book Award, The American Library Association), and *Domestic Work* (2000, Lillian Smith Book Award, Southern Regional Council). She has also received numerous other awards and honors for her poetry, including the Mississippi State Poet Laureate (2012-2016), Induction to the Georgia Writers’ Hall of Fame (University of Georgia Libraries), Induction to Membership in the Fellowship of Southern Writers, Bellagio Fellowship (The Rockefeller Foundation), and Guggenheim Fellowship (The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation).
LYRAE VAN CLIEF-STEFANON, an associate professor at Cornell University, is author of two books of poems, *Black Swan* (winner of 2001 Cave Canem Prize) and *Open Interval* (a finalist for the 2009 National Book Award); and co-author, with Elizabeth Alexander, of *Poems in Conversation and a Conversation*. Her poems have also appeared in a number of periodicals and anthologies, including *African American Review, Callaloo, Crab Orchard Review*, *Ploughshares, Rattapallax, Shenandoah, Roll Call, Gathering Ground, The Ringing Ear*, and *Angles of Ascent*.

COREY D. B. WALKER is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and John W. and Anna Hodgin Hanes Professor of the Social Sciences at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina. He is author of *A Noble Fight: African American Freemasonry and the Struggle for Democracy in America* and a number of articles in such periodicals as *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Political Theology*, and *boundary 2*. He is also editor of a special issue of *Political Theology*, devoted to “Theology and Democratic Futures,” associate editor of *SAGE Encyclopedia of Identity*, and associate editor of *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

DAGMAWI WOUBSHET, a native of Ethiopia, is Associate Professor of English at Cornell University. He is author of *The Calendar of Loss: Race, Sexuality, and Mourning in the Early Era of AIDS* (forthcoming from the Johns Hopkins University Press), and co-editor (with Salamishah Tillet and Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis) *Ethiopia: Literature, Art, and Culture*, a special issue of *Callaloo* 33.1 (2010). His work has also appeared in *Transition, Nka, Art South Africa, African Lives: An Anthology of Memoirs and Autobiographies*, and *Callaloo*. He divides his time among three cities, Ithaca, New York City, and Addis Ababa.
“The Callaloo retreat [first meeting of the conference] in New Orleans forced me to examine my own history as a scholar, to address what one younger scholar persistently noted as a weakness in my presentations and responses at the intellectually enjoyable death chamber.”

*****

“The CALLALOO CONFERENCE group is a motley crew, more diverse than Chaucer’s Canterbury pilgrims. The retreat continually searches for universities that will host our activities. The two previous sites—Tulane University and Washington University [at St. Louis]—feted participants, inspired us, and provided faculty to participate on panels. One of the more important aspects of the retreat is that we scholars and writers enjoy visiting universities and spending quality time with faculty we may not meet otherwise. Rather than seeing the CALLALOO CONFERENCES as disruptions to my overwhelming number of commitments, they are a vortex that extends what I see as my creative possibilities. At the center of this vortex are colleagues from Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, and, of course, the United States, who riff and wail as we attempt to re-create ourselves at the same time that the Western academy questions the very notion of what it means to be human.”

Joyce Ann Joyce

“One issue that, for me, the Callaloo retreat helped clarify was the idea of a necessarily vexed relation between black Canadian and African American scholarship. Some black critics based in Canada have gone so far as to liken African America to an imperial power able to suffocate debates emerging from other parts of the diaspora. There is a small measure of truth to this. . . . When my novel Soucouyant first came out, and well before it began receiving some encouraging attention at home and abroad, it had already been selected to be prominently featured in Callaloo, an elite American-based journal that was willing to profile extensively the work of a new black writer when no Canadian-based literary or scholarly journal at the time would ever have dared of doing likewise. . . . In the midst of a nation that has a reputation for reacting to crises by closing ranks and proclaiming its exceptionalism, Callaloo has opted to move in a different direction and actively sought connections with other lands and spaces—an act of reaching out that was matched by each of the delegates whom I encountered at the retreat [in New Orleans].”

David Chariandy

“For me, the 2010 CALLALOO CONFERENCE [meeting at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia] offered up yet another definition of Black Movement: it is the ability to move between poetics and praxis, between generations, between traditions tenaciously and with seamless virtuosity and without being bound by preconceived conventional boundaries. Black movement is about constant motion—creative and intellectual dynamism that embodies the flow of ideas and knows no bounds.”

Régine Michelle Jean-Charles
“One of the principle aims of the CALLALOO CONFERENCE is to provide opportunities for exchange between scholars and creative writers, and this intention was decidedly met at the 2011 CALLALOO CONFERENCE. I was invited as a creative writer, with an interest in criticism and commentary concerning poetics at large. . . . The things I discovered at the 2011 CALLALOO CONFERENCE have changed the way I look at scholars, creative writers, and the possibilities between us.”

Vievee Francis

“The 2011 Translations Conference [at Texas A&M University, College Station] was a brilliant collaboration [among] writers, poets, and scholars. What further emerged was a kaleidoscope of interpretations, response papers, poetry, and Energy. More importantly, what we learned was, indeed, that we were One and had begun a dialogue that was passionately spun from our singular contributions, but manifested [itself], as a whole, into an incredibly sharp, brilliantly diverse setting that opened doors upon doors of fascinating, enthralling conversation.”

Olympia Vernon

“I for one left the retreat [conference] in New Orleans knowing that each of the colleagues in attendance had given me a tremendous gift by encouraging me to push myself toward greater clarity. As I interact with them in the coming years—whether in person, by phone, or by simply reading their work—I know that my thinking will evolve and sharpen as a result. These critics and creators have positioned themselves in perfect cooperation with me by offering productive opposition. Put another way, our conversations stayed with me precisely because Callaloo once again did what it does best. It put the complexity and diversity of the African Diaspora center stage so that its thinkers could challenge each other to discover and extend our potential. Such rigorous intellectual engagement is possible precisely because we offer each other no easy conflation, no hallucination of unanimity.”

Koritha Mitchell

“If I learned anything at this conference it is that we, as women, should trespass on each other’s lives with more frequency. Trespass into each others homes and lives when we know the other is in need of help, and trespass when we ourselves need more help. This is how a true community can be built.”

Angie Cruz

“It was at the CALLALOO CONFERENCE that I began to understand more clearly the power of stories and ideas to provide us small moments of clarity in a spinning, changing world.”

Maaza Mengiste

“I emerge from New Orleans [site of the first CALLALOO CONFERENCE] happy and quite calm, having reached a brand new conclusion: literary analyst and writer? We’re both bastards, really, both ridiculously human and both sites for inspiration and comic relief. I know we’ve only scratched the surface; Charles [Rowell] won’t be happy until there is a little bit of blood on the dance floor, but for this first engagement we leave still talking, and that is all that is required.”

Michelle Wright

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“… the St. Louis retreat [conference] was my first time being invited and it was actually an absolutely unique experience for me. But I would argue this in two ways: one, both in interacting with and connecting with junior and with senior scholars, as well as interacting with and connecting directly with artists. And I would say that as someone who attends and presents at a fair amount of conferences year in and year out, no other experience has been as successful or as productive along those lines, and I mean that sincerely, and also in these two ways, both socially and academically. So the ability to see senior scholars’ work and junior scholars’ work, to hear poets and to hear artists, but also the ability to break bread with them and connect with them was a fairly unique experience for me personally, and it is part of the reason why I’m even more committed to work on the process of making sure that we can continue to do it.”

James Peterson

“Since Callaloo is a major institution in our field, I am wondering how conferences like these enable us to make broader interventions in literary studies… I know personally this community of scholars and artists has become indispensable to me. These conferences have enabled me to develop relationships and intellectual networks outside of my home institution, so that I am not solely dependent on my university for intellectual sustenance. To put it more plainly, as a junior scholar, I feel more empowered that I have the backing of Callaloo and access to senior scholars and artists in the field on whom I can draw for advice about a range of issues—how, particularly as a black scholar, one navigates white institutions; how one remains politically committed; how one advocates for the work that we do…”

Dagmawi Woubshet

Five Years of CALLALOO CONFERENCES


“Notes from the 2010 CALLALOO CONFERENCE,” Callaloo, 34.3 (Summer 2011): 811-876.


Recent & Forthcoming Book Publications by CALLALOO CONFERENCE Participants


Callaloo: Its History and Projects

Founded in 1976 by its editor, Charles Henry Rowell, Callaloo is a quarterly journal sponsored by Texas A&M University (College Station, TX) and published by the Johns Hopkins University Press (Baltimore, MD). It began as a small journal devoted to the literature of the Black South, but during its thirty-plus years of continuous publication, Callaloo has become the premiere journal focusing on the literature and culture of the African Diaspora. Although the journal publishes poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, visual art, interviews, and literary and cultural criticism, Callaloo is, says its editor, “more than a literary journal. It is a de facto literary and cultural center, organizing and coordinating a variety of activities that serve to exhibit, preserve, critique, and promote African Diaspora literary and visual culture.”

As a literary journal, Callaloo has received positive national attention, including a commendation from Every Writer’s Resource, which recently ranked Callaloo as one of the top fifteen literary magazines published in the United States. The journal has long been—and continues to be referred to as—“the premiere literary and cultural journal of the African Diaspora.” With that commendation and others has come, says its editor, “Callaloo’s continuing responsibility of identifying, recording, and promoting the literature and visual culture of the Diaspora, as well as publishing the engaging and provocative commentaries on its myriad artistic and other cultural forms.”

Although it is a literary and cultural journal, Callaloo has, for a number of years, offered annual creative writing workshops and hosted retreats, readings, symposia, performances, conferences, and other gatherings that bring scholars and creative writers together at various institutions and in the communities where the office of the journal is housed. Callaloo has also sponsored lectures, literary readings, and conferences across the United States and in such countries as Brazil, England, Cuba, Mexico, and Ethiopia.

In 1997, the Editor of Callaloo founded the CALLALOO CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP as an outreach program to historically black colleges and universities—for example, to Morehouse College, Morgan State University, North Carolina Central University, Spelman College, Fisk University, Xavier University of New Orleans, and others. And as the national need for creative writing workshops increased, the editor expanded and opened the CALLALOO CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP to a number of new and emerging writers from across the United States. Offering sessions in poetry writing and in fiction writing, the workshop
now admits, on a competitive basis, participants from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean. A number of distinguished poets and fiction writers have led sessions of the workshop on the craft of poetry and fiction—e. g., John Edgar Wideman, Mat Johnson, Thomas Glave, Tayari Jones, Lucille Clifton, Terrance Hayes, Percival Everett, Toi Derricotte, A. Van Jordan, Yusef Komunyakaa, Edwidge Danticat, Natasha Trethewey, and Tracy K. Smith.

When the Editor of Callaloo founded the CALLALOO CONFERENCE in 2007, he stated its purpose as a contemporary necessity: to bring together creative writers and academics to discuss issues about the work they produce and the environs in and concerns under which they work. Since then, the scope of the conference has expanded to consider a variety of issues from Pan-Africanism (at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, in 2010) to “Translations,” the theme of the 2011 CALLALOO CONFERENCE held at Texas A&M University (College Station) and at the Menil Collection in Houston. The 2012 CALLALOO CONFERENCE, which focused on “Love” (sacred, profane, etc.), convened at Princeton University in New Jersey.

The Editor of Callaloo has also initiated two other publication projects with the Johns Hopkins University Press: an annual publication, called Callaloo Art, that will be devoted to African Diaspora visual art and culture; and an academic series of books, The Callaloo African Diaspora Series, which publishes critical commentaries by a variety of scholars rigorously addressing significant facets of the literature and culture of the Diaspora.

The “literary and cultural center” called Callaloo attempts to provide a number of services to marginalized communities—services that include not only identifying and encouraging new writers and scholars, but also nurturing and promoting them. While extending and expanding the scope of African American literary and cultural studies, Callaloo is a recorder, arbiter, and enabler of the literary culture of the African Diaspora.
What They Say About Callaloo

“Over the years Callaloo has remained among the most interesting magazines in the country, publishing established and emerging writers—many for the first time. Founder and editor Charles Rowell has a gift for recognizing writers early in their careers and continuing to publish them as they go on to prominence. I have benefited from the support of Callaloo my entire career—beginning with the first poem I ever published!”

Natasha Trethewey, Poet Laureate (of the USA 2012-2014), Emory University

“Callaloo has been an indispensable force in my life ever since its editor, Charles Rowell, published my first book of fiction in 1985. The embracing vision of Callaloo has encouraged me to stretch my literary muscles, so that I have continued to explore other genres besides poetry in the quest to plumb the ever unfolding complexities of the human soul.”

Rita Dove, Poet Laureate (of the USA 1993-1995), University of Virginia

“Callaloo has created and preserved the finest tradition of intellectual work over a quarter of a century. Rarely has a journal had more integrity in keeping to its profound cultural and political agenda. A generation of humanistic scholars owe Callaloo an unaccountable debt, and, in this time of national struggle, wherever we can find Americans, they owe Callaloo the debts of enlightenment, knowledge, and understanding. We know that Callaloo’s next quarter of a century will be even more important than its first.”

Paul A. Bové, University of Pittsburgh, Editor of boundary 2

“Charles Rowell has made Callaloo into an intellectual and artistic achievement. Devoted primarily to post-colonial and African American literature and the arts, it has added considerably to our knowledge of these fields. Each number of Callaloo is in its own right designed as a work of art. Callaloo deserves our congratulations and our admiration.”

Ralph Cohen, University of Virginia, Founding Editor of New Literary History

“[Callaloo] is where young writers find support and a place to begin and where older writers return for comfort and a serious audience. And Callaloo has actively sought work from the Caribbean, South America, and Africa, seeking voices that have no place to sound, serving writers who might otherwise have been forever silenced by circumstance.”

Percival Everett, fiction writer, University of Southern California

“In an age where literary journals increasingly resemble stables that the same horses never leave, Callaloo makes clear that contemporary African American poetry has as much range as does—and should—poetry of any kind; and that, if there is a single responsibility for a literary journal, it’s surely to showcase, as best it can, all that it can. Rather than a record of what has been done, Callaloo continues to be a gauge of what is being done and—just as inspiring—of what can be done.”

Carl Phillips, poet & essayist, Washington University at St. Louis
Acknowledgments

As Editor of *Callaloo*, I want to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the following individuals and groups who, in one way or another, helped to make possible the 2013 *CALLALOO CONFERENCE*.

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Conference Committee Members: Professor Carole Boyce Davies, Professor Vievee Francis, Professor Scott Heath, Professor Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Professor Marlon Ross, Professor Corey D. B. Walker, Professor Dagmawi Woubshet—whose ideas and work during the initial planning of this project proved invaluable.

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THE CALLALOO AFRICAN DIASPORA SERIES, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, focuses on literary and cultural productions in the contexts of the history and cultural politics of peoples of African descent in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe. This series is, in other words, a forum, a publication outlet by invitation only, for intellectuals producing challenging and seminal texts, critical books that illuminate the African Diaspora as a multi-dimensional site of evolving complexity—a location speaking, in part, through its literary and cultural productions that are informed by a number of traditions and that continue to influence various cultural productions across the globe.

The Johns Hopkins University Press announces the publication dates of and plans for the first three volumes in the series:


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ANNOUNCING

CALLALOO ART

an annual of the journal Callaloo
devoted to
African Diaspora art & Culture

Callaloo Art is an annual publication devoted to African Diaspora visual art and other forms of visual culture, including painting, sculpture, collage, drawing, architecture, design, etc., as well as critical and other academic studies of them. Callaloo Art will serve as a forum for both the creative and the critical—a long-needed publication outlet for visual artists and for specialists in art history, art criticism, and art theory. And as such, the annual is directed to the general reader as well as to the specialist.

The purpose of the annual is two-fold: to locate, critique, chronicle, and promote visual art; and to inform and educate readers around the globe about the visual art people of African descent have been producing from the different periods of enslavement to the present.

Callaloo Art will be published by the Journals Division of the Johns Hopkins University Press.

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