



The Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars

Issue 6. August 2024



**Tribute to
Maryse Condé**

MaComère
St. Lucia Launch

**And the Winners Are...
Graduate Student Essay Competitions**



The Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars

This is Who we are ...

The Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS) was established in 1994 to build on the energy generated by the 1988 Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars Conference, which was organized by Prof. Selwyn Cudjoe (formerly of Wellesley College). The aim was to promote creative writing and scholarly work by and about Caribbean women.

Today, ACWWS continues to celebrate and share the literature, orature, and literary scholarship of Caribbean women, while also broadening its scope to include multidisciplinary research on Caribbean women, gender, and sexuality. The organization is committed to providing a platform for critical exploration of this extensive body of work, raising awareness of the Caribbean diaspora, and encouraging collaboration among the Caribbean's diverse linguistic and cultural communities.

You can visit our website at www.acwws.org

Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS)

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President's Report



The 2023-2024 year at ACWWS began with much enthusiasm and optimism following our successful conference in Costa Rica in June, 2023. This culmination to the year increased our visibility, grew our membership, and established promising collaborations which heralded a steady growth in all areas of the organization.

We made it to the point described above because of the commitment and hard work of some long-serving members of our executive who either ended their term on the executive or transitioned to other roles: Dr. Giselle Anatol who served ACWWS as vice president and president, ended her term as immediate past president. We are truly grateful to Giselle for anchoring the organization for so many years, especially in those seasons when the survival of ACWWS was uncertain. The leadership of Dr. Aza Weir-Soley, who shifted to the role of immediate past president, after serving ACWWS for over six years has also been invaluable, in not only ensuring the survival of the organization but also by infusing it with energy, imagination and guidance. I want to personally thank her for the support she offered

me in carrying out the primary VP role of planning the 2023 conference. One of Dr. Weir-Soley's primary goals was to revive ACWWS's signature publication, *MaComère*. This mention leads me to offer our heartfelt gratitude to another of our departing executive members, Dr. Alex Cornelius whose term expired this year. As publications editor, it was Dr. Cornelius who assumed and successfully completed the mammoth task of editing the revived *MaComère*. ACWWS was also the beneficiary of funding that Dr. Cornelius made possible through the Center for Women's and Gender Studies at Florida International University. We are truly grateful for her investment and support.

After a competitive election that attracted many excellent candidates, we welcomed Dr. Simone Alexander as Vice President. The election of Dr. Alexander was especially gratifying since, as we continue to rebuild the organization, it was a joy to welcome one of ACWWS's long-time and life-long members to the executive board. At a time when the ongoing work on reviving *MaComère* was at a pivotal point, Dr. Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper joined the board as publications editor. Her collaborative work with Dr. Cornelius in the final stages of preparing the journal for publication is commendable. Their joint efforts were an excellent demonstration of the cooperative and collegial values that ACWWS values and seeks to enact in all spheres. As we continue to look for ways to continue to grow our membership and increase visibility, we were delighted to welcome Dr. ChenziRa Davis-Kahina as social media publicist and Ms. Andrene Bonner as development coordinator. Both members have brought a wealth of experience and much enthusiasm and commitment to our leadership team.

We are grateful for the continued support of executive board members, Dr. Daniele Bobb, our meticulous secretary, Ms. Jheanell Haynes as our engaged and watchful treasurer. Dr. Michael Grafals continues his careful archiving work with the consistent and efficient supportive work of Ms. Anaridia Molina.

We started the year with a rousing creative writing event where executive member Andrene Bonner, and new member Philippa C. Jabouin, shared their work with a very well attended zoom audience. We ended the academic year on a high note, with our CSA luncheon and *MaComère* journal launch attracting over fifty attendees, including some of our founding and early members and young scholars just learning about the organization.

We are truly grateful to all our members for their continued support and for the engagement and guidance of long-time members such as Professor Carole Boyce-Davies and Dr. Antonia McDonald.

We look forward to another season of continued growth and learning.

Dr Carol Bailey
President of ACWWS

"THE WILL TO WIN,
THE DESIRE TO SUCCEED,
THE URGE TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL...
THESE ARE THE KEYS THAT WILL UNLOCK THE
DOOR TO PERSONAL EXCELLENCE."
– CONFUCIUS

Remarks from the Immediate Past President of ACWWS 2021-2023



Greetings fellow members of ACWWS,

I take the greatest pleasure in writing for our ACWWS 2024 Newsletter with the surety that the organization we love is in good hands. The current board, led by Dr. Carol Bailey and her Vice President, Dr. Simone Alexander, is moving the organization forward in a principled and ethical fashion without sacrificing academic rigor, scholarly excellence, and collegiality. When I took the reigns of this organization in 2021, my primary goal was to create partnerships with like-minded individuals and organizations in order to create much-needed visibility for the ACWWS and access to essential resources to reinvigorate the organization and realign it with the mission and progressive aspirations of its founding members. The two most foundational goals that we discussed as a board were as follows: (1) to resume our international face-to-face biennial conference and (2) to relaunch our scholarly journal, *MaComére*. I am proud to report that

we have been successful in accomplishing both of these goals, and more.

In May of 2023, we added to the growth and prominence of the ACWWS by collaborating with the University of Costa Rica (UCR) to host our biennial conference in Latin America for the first time. Our conference, “Caribbean Feminisms: Genealogies and Geographies of Resistance,” co-chaired by Dr. Carol Bailey and Dr. Guillermo Navarro Alvarado, was attended by international Caribbean scholars from the circum-Caribbean region, Latin America, and various Caribbean diasporic spaces. This conference satisfied the long-held wish of some of my board members to host our first Post-pandemic conference in Costa Rica, the site of Caribbean migrations since 1872 and home to a large and vibrant Afro-Costa Rican community of Caribbean descent (mainly in the city of Limón on the Caribbean coast). Further, it allowed us the opportunity to celebrate the life and works of a long-standing member of our organization and our Caribbean writers’ community at large, the late Dr. Eulalia Bernard, who was born in Costa Rica of Caribbean parents. According to one founding member of the ACWWS, Dr. Carole Boyce-Davies, Eulalia had long wished to host the ACWWS conference in Costa Rica. We were happy to fulfill her wish (albeit post-mortem) not only by partnering with the UCR to host the conference but by putting together a brilliant panel on Eulalia’s life and work at the Limón campus on the final day of our conference.

Feedback from our conference goes confirmed our suspicion that our conference had been well received and that the decision to host it both in San Jose and Limón was the right one. However, none of it would have been possible without the partnership forged with Dr. Guillermo, Dr. Marva Spence, and other esteemed colleagues from the University of Costa Rica. Dr. Carol Bailey, Dr. Michael Grafals, and I cemented that partnership by visiting UCR in person in 2022 and presenting scholarly papers to an audience of interested stakeholders at the UCR in order to secure their commitment and support. That visit,

along with the combined efforts of both conference co-chairs, the labor of love from the conference planning committees (which included several of our board members) and our brilliant and resourceful treasurer, Ms. Jheanell de Nijs Haynes, as well as monetary and in-kind assistance from various partner organizations and invested individuals, were foundational to the success of the ACWWS conference in San Jose, Costa Rica in 2023. I say this to affirm and to remind all of us that it takes a community to rebuild and develop this beloved organization to its full potential. Consistent with the spirit of pride and commitment to Caribbean womanhood and empowerment that inaugurated the ACWWS, in every season and with every new board, sacrifices have to be made in order to keep faith with the mission of the ACWWS.

In June of 2024, we launched the online version of *MaComère* on our website and in person at the Caribbean Studies Association conference in St. Lucia. I leave it to our President, and other board members who were at CSA, to fill in the details of our successful in-person launch, but my fulsome gratitude to CSA for its collegiality in fostering this important and long-standing affiliation and partnership with the ACWWS. We remain deeply grateful to Editors, Dr. Alex Cornelius, who began the work on the journal in 2021, managing to secure funding and other crucial support for its resurrection, and Dr. Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper, who seized the baton of Editorship in Fall of 2023 and successfully partnered with Dr Cornelius to see us to the finish line.

Other stated goals for the board during my presidency included: (a) Enticing younger scholars to contribute to building the legacy of ACWWS by continuing initiatives begun under the former board (led by Dr. Giselle Anatol) such as the ACWWS Graduate Essay Contest, expanding our social media platforms and affirming our practice of inclusivity across ethnicity, class, culture, race, gender, religion, and sexuality; (b) honoring the 'writers' part of our title by creating more forums at ACWWS for creative writers; (c) Instituting a virtual platform for the year we do not have a face-to-

face conference and/or adopting a model that democratizes the conference-going experience for the majority by alternating face-to-face and virtual presentation modalities. I am happy to report that we have accomplished, in full or in part, most of these goals. We have hosted several creative writers in our virtual space from 2021 to present, successfully executed two graduate student essay contests, extended our membership and governance board, and hosted several virtual events during our off-conference years including readings, workshops and other professional forums that were co-sponsored by new partner organizations and affiliates. In keeping with the ACWWS' time-honored tradition of building upon the work of those who came before us, I have every confidence that this new board, of which I remain an active member, will continue the goals and aspirations that were outlined in 2021. I leave it to our President, Dr. Carol Bailey, to share other important developmental goals with you in her statement.

Thanks again for entrusting me with the honor of serving this esteemed organization from 2018 to the present (as VP, President, and Immediate Past President, respectively). I look forward to the continued development of the ACWWS in service to Caribbean women writers and scholars, globally. In keeping with another time-honored tradition of those who came before us to accept no limits to our vision for the future, I also anticipate the rise of *MaComère* to the status of one of the preeminent scholarly journals in our field under the leadership of our esteemed colleague, Dr. Fullerton-Cooper, her successor (s) and current and future hard-working editorial boards. Finally, my sincere thanks to you all for your continued support and commitment to ACWWS. Wishing you and your loved ones good health, justice, peace and prosperity.

In solidarity,

Dr Aza Weir-Soley

Immediate Past President of ACWWS



Meet the ACWWS Executive Team



Carol Bailey - President

Dr Carol Bailey is a professor of Black Studies at Amherst College, where she teaches African American, African diasporic, and Caribbean literatures, as well as in interdisciplinary Black Studies courses. She is the author of *Writing the Black Diasporic City in the Age of Globalization* (Rutgers University Press, 2023) *A Poetics of Performance: The Oral-Scribal Aesthetic in Anglophone Caribbean Fiction* (UWI Press 2014), and co-editor (with Stephanie McKenzie) of Pamela Mordecai's *A Fierce Green Place* (New Directions, 2022). Carol has been a member of the ACWWS executive board since 2021.



Aza Weir Soley – Immediate Past President

Dr. Donna Aza Weir-Soley is the Immediate Past President and current board member of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars. Born in St. Catherine, Jamaica, she immigrated to the United States at the age of 17. Weir-Soley graduated summa cum laude from Hunter College and subsequently earned an MA in English (with a special emphasis in Creative Writing) and a PhD in English Literary Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently an Associate Professor of English at Florida International University, she was the Coordinator for the Hispanic Serving Institution Pathways to the Professoriate (Mellon) Fellowship at FIU from 2019-2020. Dr. Weir-Soley held the position of Vice-President of the ACWWS from 2018-2021 and co-organized (with Co-Chair, Opal Palmer

Adisa) the first ACWWS-IGDS International Virtual Conference in January 2021. Winner of several Andrew W. Mellon, Woodrow Wilson and Social Science Research Council Fellowships, Dr. Weir-Soley's publications include *Eroticism, Spirituality and Resistance in Black Women's Writings*, *Caribbean Erotic*, and two books of poetry *First Rain* and *The Woman Who Knew*. Her latest release "8 Minutes and 46 Seconds" can be found on the Poetry Foundation website. Weir-Soley's work centers themes of social justice, intersectional praxis and poetics, spiritual empowerment and female agency with her most recent lectures hosted in national and international venues including The Creative-Theoretical Symposium at Cornell University (2021/virtual), Feminist and Pan-Africanist Literature at the University of Ghana (2021, virtual), The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute at Rutgers University (2022/virtual), The African and Caribbean Studies Program at the University of Costa Rica (2022, in person) and The Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana (2023, in-person). Weir-Soley has also hosted poetry workshops and participated in poetry readings at various national and

international forums including the Library of Africa and the African Diaspora in Ghana (2023, in person), The World Creole Literature Gathering sponsored by the International Writing Program of Iowa (2022 & 23/virtual), the Caribbean Literary Festival (CARICON) in Los Angeles (2019, 20 & 22, in person and virtual), The Poetry Foundation Reading and Interview (2021, virtual), the ACWWS-University of Costa Rica Collaborative Conference in San Jose & Limon (2023/in person), The Caribbean Women Writers Symposium at Amherst College (2023/in person), The Jamaica Brew Festival sponsored by the Jamaican Consulate in Miami (2024/in person) and the Jamaican Diaspora Education Summit sponsored by the Jamaican Diaspora Taskforce Action Network (2024/in person).



Simone A. James Alexander – Vice President

Dr. Simone A. James Alexander is Professor of English and Director of African Studies at Lehigh University. Her primary fields of research include women, gender, and sexuality studies, postcolonial literature, transnational feminist theory, Caribbean studies, migration and diaspora studies. She is the author of the award-winning monograph, *African Diasporic Women's Narratives: Politics of Resistance, Survival and Citizenship* (University Press of Florida, 2014; reprinted May 2016), which also received Honorable Mention by the African Literature Association Book of the Year Scholarship Award. Alexander is also the author of *Mother Imagery in the Novels of Afro-Caribbean Women* (University of Missouri Press, 2001) and coeditor of *Feminist and Critical Perspectives on Caribbean Mothering* (Africa World Press, 2013). Her work has been published in *Journal of West Indian Literature*, *L'Esprit Créateur*, *African American Review*, *MLA Approaches to Teaching Gaines: The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman and Other Work* (Modern Language Association), *Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies*, *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies*, *African Literature Today*, *Anglistica: An Interdisciplinary Journal* and edited collections. Her current book projects include *Bodies of (In)Difference: Intimacy, Desirability and the Politics and Poetics of Relation* and *Black Freedom in (Communist) Russia: Great Expectations, Utopian Visions*, and the edited collection, *The Cambridge Companion to Colson Whitehead* (Cambridge University Press).



Daniele Bobb - Secretary

Dr. Daniele Bobb is an Afro-Caribbean scholar whose work and interest include gender and development, government and social policies, mothering and motherhood, and women and work. Among her literary work is a Ph.D. thesis which centered on how women negotiate and navigate motherhood and work within the context of neo-liberalism. Dr. Bobb's teaching portfolio at the undergraduate and graduate levels includes courses such as *Women, Leadership and Change in Developing Countries*, *Gender and Sexuality*, *Theoretical Concepts and Sources of Knowledge in Women's Studies*, *Issues in Caribbean Feminism and Gender Relations*, *Men and Masculinities*, among others. In addition to publishing in gender and education, mothering, gender and sexuality, and gendered impacts of COVID19, she co-authored the book *Marginalized Groups in the Caribbean: Gender, Policy, and Society*. She is involved in many outreach and research projects focusing on a myriad of areas including youth empowerment, the marginalization of vulnerable groups, gender and climate change, and gender and work. Dr. Bobb sits on several committees and faculty boards. She is steadfast in her devotion to the work for gender equity and enhancing the quality of life for all.



Jheanell Haynes - Treasurer

Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, Jheanell Haynes attended Florida International University and received a B.A. in International Relations and Political Science. She later received her MA in African and African Diaspora Studies from FIU. Her research examined the reincorporation of members of the Jamaican diaspora into social, political and economic areas of the Jamaican nation-state to ascertain why some returnees, as well as members of the Jamaican diaspora, appear as catalysts for change in specific social and institutional circumstances at home, whereas others do not.

Prior to joining the ACWWS Executive board, Jheanell was the Administration Manager at the nonprofit organization Executive Service Corp of Florida. Jheanell currently lives in Florida with her husband, three children and her dog.



Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper - Publications Editor

Dr. Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper is Associate Professor of Language and Literature in the Arts and Humanities department at the University College of the Cayman Islands. She graduated from UWI, Mona, where she obtained BA (Hons), MPhil, and PhD in Literatures in English; she later completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and recently, a Master of Laws in Law and Legal Studies (LLM) from BPP University, UK. A member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of the University College of the Cayman Islands, Lapidus International, the Committee for the Promotion of Research and Cayman Scholarship, College Language Association, and co-founder of the Cayman Literary Society, Dr Fullerton-Cooper has also co-edited two books,

The Caribbean in a Changing World: Surveying the Past, Mapping the Future, Volumes 1 and 2 (2016), and *The Cayman Islands: History, Politics and Society – Essays in Honour of JA Roy Bodden* (2022). She has published academic papers and presented at academic conferences, focusing on Caribbean and Cayman literature.



ChenzirRa Davis Kahina – Social Media Publicist

Griot, Educator, Cultural Creative Artist, Communication Specialist, Priestess, Holistic Developer, Researcher | Bibliophile, Author, Heritage Curator, QM Dr ChenziRa Davis Kahina respectfully known as “Dr. Chen” is the creatrix of ANUPerAnkh© and a co-founding director of the former Per Ankh (House of Life)© instituting Culture, Healing, Arts, Technology and Spirituality for Life, Inspiration, Freedom, and Education (CHATS4LIFE©). Davis Kahina is the founding creatrix of AST Speaks©, NUWOMANRISING©, and Heritage Education Arts Legacy© (HEAL); inaugural founding director of the Virgin Islands Caribbean Cultural Center (VICCC); and Assistant Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI). Davis Kahina’s academic credentials and intellectual research journeys include Rutgers University (NCAS), Pepperdine

University (CA), University of California -San Diego, International University of Natural Sciences, and other global institutions. Davis Kahina’s communitarian arts consultancy work collaborates with Contemporary African Diaspora Arts (CADA) - Miami/Global; Cisco the Artist™ Enterprises (US/DR); Creative Justice Initiative©, Corredor Afro©, Girl Child Art Foundation - African Female Artist Mentorship Program (Nigeria/Global); Afrakan Caribbean Cultural Artists International, and other global entities. Davis Kahina has researched, choreographed, produced, taught, and published on creative cultural heritage arts and sciences for more than 35 years inclusive of “Restoration of the St. Croix Bamboula”; “Three Queens: A VI Chautauqua”; and “Bamboula Sacred Cultural Traditions”.

Davis Kahina has served as author, contributing editor, creative visionary, artist, and producer for multi-media and creative scholarly publications and productions inclusive of *Hell Under God's Orders: HUGO* by Dr. Gloria I. Joseph, Audre Lorde and Hortense Rowe (1991); *Cognitive Trends of Education for African Caribbean Americans* (1998); *Listening to Ancestral Wisdom: Sacred Conch Shell Inspirations* (2004); *Three Queens of the Virgin Islands* (Chautauqua/Play: 2005); *Heritage Education Arts Legacy-HEAL©* (2013); *The Wind Is Spirit: The Life, Love and Legacy of Audre Lorde* by Dr. Gloria I. Joseph (2015); *Caribbean Cultural Studies: 21st Century Paradigms for University-Level Heritage Education and Arts Legacy Programs* (2014+); *Queens of the Virgins* (Film Screening at CARIFESTA 2017 Barbados); *Fireburn: The Documentary* (Produced by Angela Golden Bryan 2020); *AfRaKan Women Lead* (Arts and Sciences Research/Building Legacy Media: 2023); *Miami Art Basel/CADA* (2019-2023), *Bamboula Journeys: Retrospective Indigenous Caribbean AfRaKan Arts Exhibition* at Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts (July/August 2024); and other collaborative partnerships and provisions of creative productions, authorship, media documentation, broadcasting, transcultural digital media, and creative arts publications annually. Davis Kahina works collaboratively with interdisciplinary, socioeconomic, Caribbean-centered organizations, and global alliances inclusive of yet not limited to: Caribbean Studies Association (Past President); Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (Social Publicist)' Caribbean Pan African Network (CPAN); CARICOM Caribbean Reparations Commission (CRC); African Union ECOSOC (AU); VI Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts (VIAC); Society of Virgin Islands Historians; St. Croix Foundation for Community Development-Non Profit Consortium; VI Youth Advocacy Coalition (VIYAC); Music In Motion School of Higher Dance Education (MIMSHDE); and other global academic, sustainable, humanitarian, and civil society networks, institutions, and organizations.



Andrene Bonner - Development Coordinator

Andrene Bonner was named a Motivational Teacher of the Year by the Westchester Black Scholars of New York. She is a US-based Jamaican educator, playwright, praise poet and award-winning author of a literacy fiction series, four non-fiction books about student resilience, full-length cultural dramas on African American and Caribbean history, and a book of poetry. Bonner has lectured on Race, Class, Culture and Resistance and the Parent-Student-Teacher Partnership and Linguistic Variations among Caribbean Students and How to Teach Them English. She has presented at the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) the New York State Association of Bilingual Education Conference (NYSABE), and moderated discussion at the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies (AFUWI). She

is the founder of the Literacy Gateway Institute, an educational solutions business that develops curricula, wellness tools, and teaches parents to become co-teachers. She served as Project Director with expertise in the following areas: leadership and management of a combined workforce of 20 faculty members and professionals in residents; curriculum design and implementation for the After-school Alliance: 21st Community Learning Center Program, and prepared Annual Performance Report (APR) for 21st Community Learning Center grant. Bonner has served on the board of the Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival (LAWTF), Asian Pacific Development and Educational Corporation, Los Angeles, and Caribbean American Repertory Theatre West (CART). She is an alumna of the Lincoln Center Education Learning Labs for Artists and Educators. Bonner holds a Master of Science in Education, Master of Arts in Language and Literacy, and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts and Dance. She is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Phi Delta Kappa International Association for Professional Educators (PDK), National Council of Negro Women, National Parenting Education Network, International Women's Writing Guild (IWWG), and the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS). To relax, she draws, paints, writes poetry, plays Nyabinghi and Djembe drums, and is learning to play the guitar.

**Michael Grafals - Archivist**

Michael Grafals is associate teaching professor in the Department of English at Florida International University. He regularly teaches courses on Caribbean, African and US Latinx literatures and received a 2020 FIU Top Scholar award for his globally-engaged and culturally responsive teaching. Michael is interested in phenomenology, narratology and representations of the African diaspora in Caribbean literature. He has published a chapter on the shamanic poetics of Wilson Harris and Gloria Anzaldúa and a chapter on Latinx natality in the work of Cuban-American writer Jennine Capó Cruzet.

**Anaridia R. Molina – Digital Archivist**

Anaridia R. Molina (She/her) is a writer, scholar, and educator born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Santo Domingo, D.R., and Brooklyn, New York. She is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English Language and Literature and a Rackham Merit Fellow at the University of Michigan. Her research interests are Caribbean literature, U.S. Latina/o/x literature, cultural and postcolonial studies, and digital humanities. Anaridia is currently working on a dissertation that examines how new digital, archival, and literary modes are restructuring Caribbean literary histories and conventions. She serves as the digital archivist for the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS) and is the Principal Investigator and curator of the [ACWWS' Digital Archive](#).

"SUCCESS IS THE SUM OF
SMALL EFFORTS,
REPEATED DAY IN AND DAY OUT."
– ROBERT COLLIER

Tribute to Maryse Condé

A Stalwart and Literary Giant has Passed On

by Simone A. James Alexander



Feminist writer, novelist, critic, playwright, professor, Maryse Condé passed away in Apt, France on April 2, 2024. Born in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe on February 11, 1934, Condé enjoyed a successful career that spanned several decades.



A global citizen, Condé has lived in Guadeloupe, France, (West) Africa, and the United States, and has equally navigated or crisscrossed several disciplines as a teacher (in Ghana, Senegal and Guinea), a playwright, au-

thor, theorist, and professor. She held several visiting professorships, namely at the University of Virginia, UC Berkeley, University of Maryland, and Harvard, before she became the Founding Chair of the Center for French and Francophone Studies at Columbia University where she remained until she retired in 2005. She was subsequently named Professor Emerita.

A prolific author, Condé has published more than twenty books, including *Heremakhonon* (1976), *A Season in Rihata* (1981), *Segu* (1984) and its sequel, *The Children of Segu* (1985), *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (1986), *The Story of the Cannibal Woman* (2008), *The Wondrous and Tragic Life of Ivan and Ivana* (2020), and her last novel, *The Gospel According to the New World* (2023). *Segu*, in which she explored the 19th century Bambara Empire of Mali and the violent impact of the slave trade, colonization and religion, brought Condé world prominence. Condé's novels have been translated into many languages, including English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch, just to name a few.

Her global, transnational impact has changed the landscape of French and Francophone literatures, and world literature as a whole. Her exploration of multiple wide-ranging topics such as identity, race, gender, feminism, colonialism, and self-governance has resulted in her being awarded numerous awards and prizes, including Le Grand Prix Littéraire de la Femme (1986), Prix de l'Académie française (1988), Prix Carbet de la Caraïbe (1997), Trophée des Arts Afro-Caribéens for Lifetime Achievement (2009), Chevalier in the Legion of Honor in 2014 and a Grand Croix in the National Order of Merit in 2019. She was shortlisted for the Booker Prize twice, in 2015 for her oeuvre and again in 2023 for her final novel, *The Gospel According to the New World*. She received the New Academy Prize, the (alternative Nobel Prize in 2018), the international literary award, the Prix Mondial Cino Del Duca in May 2021, and the Royal Society of Literature: International Writer award in 2022.



Condé's contribution to postcolonial literature, to feminist theories, to French and Franco-phone studies and to migration and diaspora studies as a whole, is unparalleled, and though she has transitioned to the ancestral world, inhabited by her female characters, Mama Yaya, Abena and Tituba of *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, her story, and the stories of the ravages of slavery, colonialism, and their afterlives are forever etched in our memory, in our imagination (as Condé dreamed and dared others to do likewise); in short, they are not stories to "pass on."

Condé was masterful in igniting controversy, in challenging the status quo, was a consummate and unapologetic nonconformist, a fact she reiterated in a 1989 interview with Vèvè A. Clark and Cecile Daheny: "I am drawn to people ready to disobey the law and who refuse to accept orders from anybody . . . people who are always on the wrong side of society", and yet she was a true humanist: "I feel at ease among people . . . who, like me, don't believe in material wealth, for whom money is nothing, owning a home is nothing, a car is nothing. Those kinds of people tend to be my friend" (*I Have Made Peace with My Island: An Interview with Maryse Condé*, 107-8).¹

A mentor, advisor, and teacher-turned-friend (this past May, I had the good fortune of being invited to deliver the keynote at the "Maryse Condé and Caribbean Crossings" conference hosted by the Centers for Comparative Literature and Caribbean and Diaspora Studies and Institut français du Royaume-Uni. at Goldsmiths, University of London, and was even more fortunate to share the good news with Maryse before she passed), Condé was always patient and generous with her time, was readily available and always responded to emails. Condé's life's work and her invaluable contribution to the fields of French and franco-phone literature, to postcolonial studies, to literatures of the global south, to feminist theory and literature, and to countless other fields, will enrich our lives and thinking for decades to come; hers is "not a story to pass on." She will be missed but will be remembered for the indelible mark, the footprints she has left behind, the rich tapestry of human experiences she has left us! Farewell my mentor, my teacher, my female ancestor!

¹Vèvè A. Clark and Cecile Daheny, "I Have Made Peace with My Island: An Interview with Maryse Condé," *Callaloo* 89. 38 (Winter 1998): 87-133)

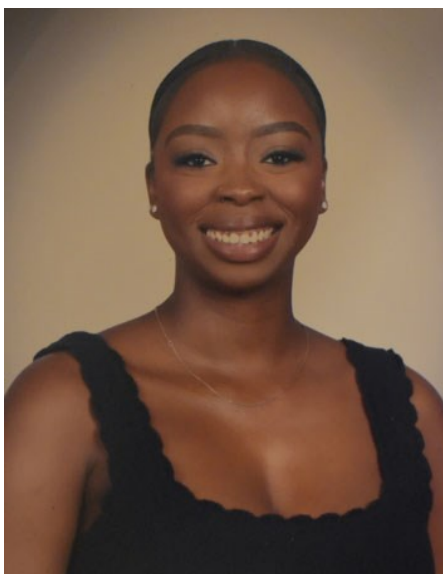


Announcing the 2024 Winner of the Graduate Students Essay Contest

Trailblazers in Caribbean Studies: Announcing the 2024 Winners of the Graduate Essay Contest

by Michael Grafals

A heartfelt thank you for encouraging your graduate students to participate in our annual essay contests. Below are descriptions of the work of five trailblazing scholars of the Caribbean.



For the 2024 essay contest in first place is "Loophole(s) of Retreat: Female (Corruption), Disavowal, and Property (Re)Acquisition in Bahamian Literature" by Elise Barnett from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. "Loophole(s) of Retreat" is a methodologically groundbreaking essay that provides an African Caribbean feminist framework to explicate the rich literary heritage and cultural nuances of Bahamian folktales and oral literary tradi-

tions. Bridging historical materialist and African feminist approaches, the essay foregrounds the understudied Bahamian author Patricia Glinton-Meicholas and her book *An Evening in Guanima: A Treasury of Folktales from The Bahamas* (1993). The methodology uniquely centers Harriet Jacobs' autotheorizing in the chapter "Loophole of Retreat" from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) and articulates Jacobs together with the scholarship of Sylvia Wynter, Judith Butler, and Saidiya Hartman. Methodology and textual analysis merge remarkably in this study of Glinton-Meicholas' folktales.

CONGRATULATIONS, Elise! You are the winner!

In 2nd place we have "The Poetics of Liminal Seas: Creolization and Balkanization" by Sylvie Vidan from the University of California, Los Angeles. The essay creatively deconstructs Édouard Glissant's conceptions of creolization and archipelagic thinking by comparatively analyzing creolization and balkanization as regional relations. The essay recovers Aimé Césaire's relatively unknown connection to the Balkans, including evidence that Césaire began composing *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* as a response to his friendships and travels in the south-eastern European region. The comparative foci on the Caribbean and the Balkans offer new ways of imagining regional identities expressed by writers like Suzanne Césaire, Maryse Condé and Sylvia Wynter.

Announcing the 2023 Winner of the Graduate Students Essay Contest

Below are descriptions of the work of three brilliant Caribbean scholars who earned 1st and 2nd Place and Honorable Mention in the 2023 ACWWS Graduate Essay Contest.



In 1st place we had **"Doux-doux! Listen Good, You Hear?"** by **Nyala Thompson Grunwald** from **University College London**. Set in an imagined future and island in the Caribbean archipelago, the essay blends Caribbean theories with *oraliture* as it follows Doux-doux, a child taking lessons from the women—storytellers, thinkers, elders—in their family. Addressing questions of history-making and recording, diaspora, and community in the Caribbean in the 20th century, this creative hybrid text explores the Caribbean as a site for diasporic and diaspora-making processes. Doux-doux and the women are in conversation with a wealth of relevant scholarship on diasporic consciousness and the text provides detailed footnotes and a bibliography to supplement the dialogue. This creative essay has immense potential as an introduction to Caribbean studies for future generations. "Doux-doux! Listen Good, You Hear?" was published in the latest edition of *MaComère* (Spring 2024).



In 2nd place we had **"The Crowded Wordscape in M. NourbeSe Philip's 'Discourse on the Logic of Language'"** by **Odette de Siena Cortés** from the **Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México**. The essay explored the groundbreaking formal features of NourbeSe Philip's poem, focusing on its use of textual strategies that question and dismantle colonialist discourses, especially through the poem's subversive use of marginalia. The essay interprets the poem as a "crowded wordscape" that moves between silence and noise as a means of disrupting Western colonialist discourses.



As an honorable mention we had the essay **"The Gifts of Godlike Women: African Spiritual Preservations in the novels of Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa"** by **Essah Díaz** from the **University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras**. The essay incorporated decolonial Black feminist and Caribbean theories to read Llanos-Figueroa's novels *Daughters of the Stone* (2009) and *A Woman of Endurance* (2022). Díaz interprets Llanos-Figueroa's novels as transformative narratives that activate the healing of displaced women. The essay foregrounds Llanos-Figueroa's novels as thematically important to a Caribbean and African American canon that centers the importance of healing in African diaspora communal spaces, especially for women.

MaComère Launch – Simply Beautiful

by Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper



St Lucia often described as “simply beautiful”, provided a fitting backdrop for the [MaComère journal](#) launch that took place there on June 5 this year, during CSA Conference 2024. A

lunchtime event, ACWWS invited members and friends of the Association who were attending, to join the event. And join they did! ACWWS President and Vice President, Carol Bailey and Simone Alexander, accompanied by Publications Editor, Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper, expected approximately 25 attendees. More than twice this number attended, transforming the launch into a vibrant celebration that far exceeded expectations.

ACWWS’s trio orchestrated the event with flair. Flyers inviting participation were artfully distributed throughout the conference venue, while personal invitations spread the excitement word-of-mouth. You see, it had been years since a *MaComère* journal had been published, ten to be exact. It had been even longer since a print version of the journal had been made available, and because of this hiatus, anticipation was palpable, and the team was determined to ensure a hearty celebration.

Under the brilliant Caribbean sun, with the sea and the hotel’s pool shimmering in the background, and as guests savored a delectable

buffet spread from the hotel, the ACWWS leadership trio extended heartfelt welcomes and acknowledgments to those in attendance ... even as newbies kept coming!

Stephanie spoke with admiration of the *MaComère* journal’s editor, Marie Alexander Cornelius, praising her dedication to revitalizing this cherished publication. The audience was introduced to the editorial team and given insights into the articles, while Dr. Valerie Patterson’s stunning cover design was highlighted. Plans for a bilingual edition added to the excitement.

Carol reflected on ACWWS’s achievements over the past year, unveiling ambitious plans for the future, including an online reading series, a Graduate Students’ Essay Competition, and an upcoming two-day symposium in the fall.

Simone recapped in detail, ACWWS Conference 2023, which took place in Costa Rica. So rich was her review, that anyone who missed it walked away very informed and inspired to attend the next one.

Invited as special and honorary guests, founding member, Professor Carole Boyce Davies and long-time member, Dr Antonia McDonald, spoke highly of the organization, providing historical context on the Association’s origin and development. A pillar of the organization, Carole spoke with passion about the organization’s history, fondly recalling former and current members, and celebrated the journal’s revival. Holding *MaComère* aloft, she spoke movingly of how happy she was to see its revitalization. Her heartfelt words encouraged attendees to acquire their own copies. Antonia added a personal touch by recounting her own

experiences as an ACWWS member and the mentors who guided her, inviting others to join the Association and gain such benefits.

It was truly wonderful to hear from these 'originals', and ACWWS was happy to present them, as well as journal contributors in attendance, Cathy Thomas and Nyala Thompson Grunwald, complimentary copies of the journal. As the hour drew to a close, Simone delighted the audience with a spirited reading of Andrene Bonner's poem dedicated to Rihan-

na, her rhythmic rendition of "umabrella... Ella... Ella" eliciting laughter and applause from the engaged audience.

As the event concluded, the gathering transitioned into a lively mingle of old friends and new acquaintances, all buoyed by the joyous spirit of the launch. The success of the *MaCôme* journal launch was a testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of the ACWWS team and all who contributed. Here's to the next chapter in this vibrant journey!





Looking Forward – October Symposium



Save the Date!

Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars Symposium

Theme:
Revolutionizing Black Feminisms:
Making space for transformational politics
and the poetics of love

October 3, 2024 - 4 - 6 p.m.
October 4, 2024 - 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Paino Lecture Hall, Beneski Museum
Amherst College**



Dr. Aza Weir-Soley



Dr. Gina Athena Ulysses

Special panel honoring
Maryse Condé



Sponsored by the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS), Amherst College Black Studies & English Departments and the Georges Lurcy Lecture Funds.

Call for Book Chapter proposals:

“Afterlife: Reading Questions of Pluriversality and Spiritualism in Antillean Arts”

Colonialism provides an epistemic framework that has disarticulated colonized beings and separated them from the material and spiritual worlds they long inhabited. In efforts to exhume open these life-worlds, colonized and formally-colonized peoples have moved against colonial logics and toward pluriversal thinking. The pluriverse, as their ideological terrain, has made operative alternative forms of being, sensing, and relating to the past, present, and future - cutting through neatly demarcated notions of time, space, and being. Employing a pluriversal politics, a host of Antillean thinkers and artists like Claude McKay, Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, and Rita Indiana have (re)constructed folk spiritual forms, situating them as critical to overarching decolonial and pluriversal projects. Their efforts foray through the realm of the imaginative and in their works, they use fictive, time-traveling spiritual practitioners to forge a counter-public. These practitioner-figures, who haunt/pervade their works, occupy spaces of indeterminacy and multiplicity - crossing material and symbolic borders, and bending straitjacket notions of being and relationality. Drawing on a broad repertoire of practices, as well as a narrower taxonomy of oral techniques, these figures fuse together Antillean spiritual aesthetics and call into view the interrelations among worlds and the tensions that arise as different worlds (and ontologies contained therein) strive to sustain themselves. While their works offer ethnically and culturally situated perspectives, with each tale, a series of overlapping ties between Antillean worlds and the pluriverse (worlds elsewhere) become evident. The works reach expressly to the Caribbean but point firmly to the larger artistic and spiritual efforts that surface in the after-life(s) of colonialism. This volume draws from these creators,

placing their reformations of spiritualism alongside abiding concerns with the post-colonial future-worlds. The volume seeks to link the spiritual and aesthetic to the political, and place the Antillean subject more squarely into wider post-colonial discourses.

Possible arenas, themes, and topics include, but are not limited to: Environmental studies,

- Afro-futuristic thought, Caribbean political thought, Religious and Spiritual studies,
- Humanism and posthumanist studies, Science fiction and Speculative Fiction, Trans poetics, and Queer of color critique,
- Womanist thought, Ecofeminism, Transnational feminism's, Black literary feminisms, Decolonial, Post-colonial, and Anticolonial thought.

These are all conceptual-theoretical areas that can expand what the pluriverse means and overlap with the work that this volume seeks to do. Projects that attend to the questions of pluriverse and Antillean spiritualism but are rooted in these areas (or adjacent areas) may be accepted. Please, submit proposals of 2 pages (including a summary or abstract and a brief biographical note) to ebar-nett@umass.edu for consideration.

Deadlines:

- **Proposal:** October 1, 2024
- **Notification of Acceptance:** November 1, 2024
- **Chapter submission (15 - 20 pages):** January 1, 2025.



2023 Conference Overview

by Simone A. James Alexander



The Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS) held its first in-person conference since COVID in Costa Rica in June 2023 under the theme “Caribbean Feminisms: Genealogies and Geographies of Resistance.” The conference was co-chaired by our current president, Carol Bailey and Professor of Sociology and Director of the Africa and Caribbean Studies Program, Guillermo A. Navarro Alvarado of the University of Costa Rica. Notably, the conference took place on both campuses of the University of Costa Rica: San José and Limón. Spending the final day of the conference on the Limon campus was strategic and well-meaning as we paid a well-deserved tribute to the late Eulalia Bernard, Afro-Costa Rican poet, educator, and cultural activist, who was a fixture in the organization and whose birthplace was Limón. Fittingly, the conference opened up with a plenary comprised of both local and international scholars, including Carole Boyce Davies, Diana Senior-Angulo, Dorothy Mosby, and Marianela Muñoz Muñoz, paying tribute to Bernard. The writers/scholars paid homage to Bernard, celebrating her life and work in prose, poetry, and film. The moderator of the panel, Marva Spence, was also a local resident.

The conference’s theme attracted a rich selection of papers, spanning a multitude of wide-ranging but related topics. My co-chair of the Planning and Program Committee, Jennifer Thorington-Springer, and I spent roughly about a week and a half putting together the conference program that consisted of approximately 20 panels that ran concurrently, two plenaries and a keynote, entitled “The Struggle for Paradise,” delivered by Keisha Khan-Perry. In keeping with our mission of promoting multilingualism and emphasizing the importance of engaging local participants, we had bilingual presentations in English and Spanish. The conference had a wonderful mix of creative and literary scholars; blessed with a handful of creative writers, we had two sessions of creatives, the first of which included: Nelly Rosario, Stacey Ann Chin and our past president, Aza Weir-Soley. The second panel of creatives comprised of local Afro-Costa Rican writers: Shirley Campbell Barr and Natasha Gordon-Chipembere, a former university colleague who repatriated to Costa Rica. A stalwart and one of the founding members of the organization, Carole Boyce Davies, launched her most recent book, *Black Women’s Rights: Leadership and the Circularities of Power*. The conference concluded with a historical tour of Puerto Limón, and a reception and chocolate adventure at the Cierre G&E Chocolate Adventure Company where we were entertained by local musicians.

2023 Conference Memories

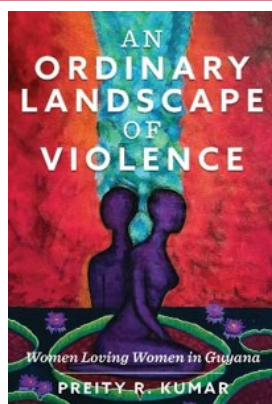




NEW PUBLICATIONS

BY ACWWS MEMBERS

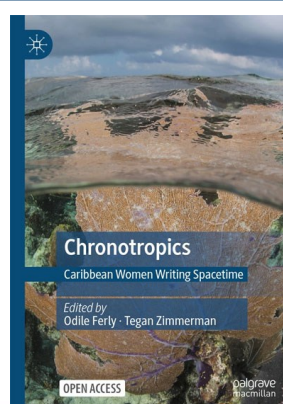
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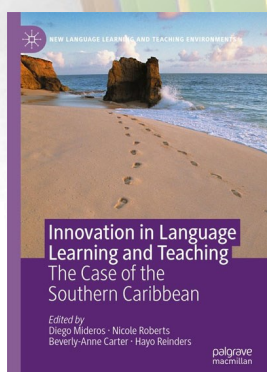


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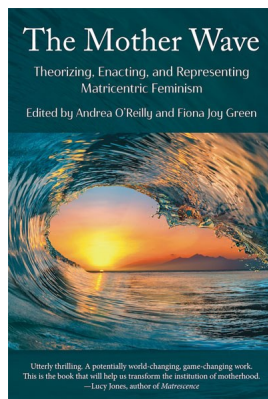
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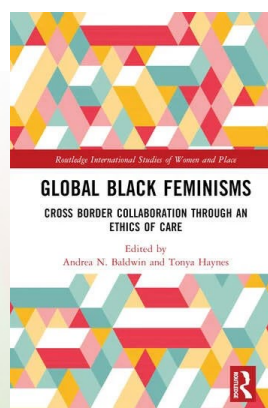
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interested in being part of ACWWS Conference 2025? Keep your eyes glued here over the next few months for the Call for Papers and other details.

ACWWS hopes to have its first bilingual *MaComère* journal in 2025 with focus on writings from the Hispanophone Caribbean. More details will be forthcoming!



JOIN ACWWS TODAY

There are many incentives to becoming a member of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars! These include:

- An exclusive subscription to the ACWWS e-newsletter
- Membership in a premier academic and cultural community related to the study, celebration, and circulation of creative writing and critical works by and about women of the circum-Caribbean and its diaspora. We also welcome other artists, professionals, and scholars from a diverse range of fields (e.g. law, health/medicine, religion, education, history) who wish to engage in a rich dialogue about Caribbean/Caribbean[1]diaspora women, gender, and sexualities
- Graduate student and junior faculty mentorship
- Opportunities to be considered for a graduate student writing award

The ACWWS Membership rates are fixed and must be paid annually. All those who present at ACWWS conferences must be dues-paying members in good standing. The ACWWS no longer offers Lifetime Memberships.

The Annual Dues for ACWWS are as follows:

USA and Europe

- Professional: US\$100.00
- *Full-time Grad. Student: US\$ 50.00 (*Please submit copy of student ID)

Caribbean and Africa

- Professional: US\$ 50.00
- *Full-time Graduate Student: US\$ 25.00 (*Please submit copy of student ID)

Institutional:

- US\$300.00

Methods of Payment:

- Pay online visit: <https://www.acwws.org/membership>

To pay by check (in US dollars): Make check payable to "Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars" and write "Dues" in memo line; mail to:

Carol Y Bailey, PhD
Professor
Black Studies Department
Amherst College
Amherst, MA 01002

Once again, welcome to the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars.