Caritharsis: Healing and Regeneration in Caribbean Literature and Culture

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2021 | A VIRTUAL EVENT
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International Conference on Caribbean Literature

HISTORY
The International Conference on Caribbean Literature (ICCL) was founded in July 1997 by Dr. Melvin Rahming, former Hugh M. Gloster Chair and current Professor of English at Morehouse College, and Dr. Jorge Roman-Lagunas, former Director of the Center for International Studies at Purdue University Calumet. Its chief purpose is the promotion of a global understanding of Caribbean cultures. ICCL is always sponsored by Morehouse College and usually takes place at an institution of higher learning in the Caribbean. The conference averages approximately 125 participants annually.

To date, ICCL has convened in Nassau, Bahamas (1998); Paget, Bermuda (1999); Ponce, Puerto Rico (2000); Trois-Illet, Martinique (2001); Freeport, Bahamas (2003); St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands (2004); Cartagena, Colombia (2005); Port-au-Prince, Haiti (2006); Castries, St. Lucia (2007); Buea, Cameroon (2008); Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (2010); Havana, Cuba (2011); Panama City, Panama (2013); Willemstad, Curacao (2014); Salvador, Brazil (2015); St. Martin (2016); Nassau, The Bahamas (2017); San Jose, Costa Rica (2018); and Bridgetown, Barbados (2019).

NATURE
ICCL is unique. It may well be the only Caribbean literary forum that aims to unite, on an annual basis and in a Caribbean setting, writers and scholars for concurrent presentations in the three most prominent languages of the region: English, French, and Spanish. Likewise, ICCL is the only conference on Caribbean literature that involves the host country in the planning of each event. It also seeks to expose scholars to the cultural preeminence of the Caribbean through supplemental cultural events and optional post-conference tours, among other activities.

Although each conference spotlights at least one internationally acclaimed writer or scholar from the host country, ICCL endeavors to expose lesser-known writers of the Caribbean in order to provide them an international platform. Past keynote speakers include Rex Nettleford, Derek Walcott,
Finally—and arguably most importantly—ICCL provides a forum for each country to showcase its visual and performative cultural arts before an international audience of acclaimed scholars and writers.

**GOALS**

ICCL has the following goals:

- To promote a global understanding of Caribbean cultures;
- To serve as the preeminent forum for the global discussion of Caribbean literature by writers and scholars from academic institutions in the Caribbean, Europe, North, Central, and South Americas, Asia, and Africa;
- To contribute meaningfully to the existing body of criticism that interrogates Caribbean literature;
- To involve Caribbean states in the discussion and promotion of their own and the region’s literatures and cultures;
- To involve Caribbean institutions of higher learning as hosts and planners for each conference; and
- To establish and develop relationships between American and Caribbean post-secondary institutions.
Who would have thought it? ICCL is 20 years old — well, actually, twenty-three, if you count the three years when circumstances did not allow our convening. On this auspicious occasion, my only regret is that ICCL’s Co-Founder and Co-Director, Dr. Jorge Raman Lagunas, did not live long enough to enjoy this celebratory moment with us. It is a moment of profound joy — and equally profound thanks to all of those Caribbean, North American, Central American, South American, African, and Asian institutions that have helped to ensure our vigorous survival for more than two decades. We are especially thankful to Morehouse College for its enduring sponsorship of this internationally acclaimed organization, the only one of its kind that is dedicated solely to the global exposure and exploration of Caribbean literature.

You will note that our theme for this year — “Carithasis: Regeneration and Healing in Caribbean Literature and Culture” — is an appropriate, even urgent one, responding, as it does, to the on-going effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by attempting to spark conversations about forms, processes, and strategies vital to the to the health and well being of the Caribbean and, for that matter, the world.

It gives me great pleasure, then, to welcome you to this 20th ICCL, which we hope will be an emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually satisfying experience for all who participate or listen. May the ancestors rejoice with us.

Welcome to ICCL,

DR. MELVIN B. RAHMING
Co-Founder and Director, ICCL
A Message from Dr. Leah Creque
ICCL CO-DIRECTOR

I am overjoyed to celebrate the 20th annual International Conference on Caribbean Literature (ICCL). Though I miss the ambiance of our annual exchange in the island nations throughout the Caribbean, I am pleased to produce this milestone virtual conference on the campus of Morehouse College where our visionary founding director, Dr. Melvin B. Rahming established this legacy of Caribbean literary scholarship.

I am most appreciative of the leadership of Morehouse College for their support in making this conference truly celebratory. We could not have accomplished this without the support of Dr. Eddie Glaude ’89, Member of the Morehouse College Board of Trustees; Dr. Clarissa Myrick-Harris, Division Chair of Humanities; Dr. David Wall Rice, Professor of Psychology and Curator of the Morehouse College Crown Forum, and the staff in the Morehouse College Office of Communications.

I am grateful for the unfailing support of staff, colleagues, and students who serve on the ICCL organizing committee: Mr. Keith Asberry, Dr. Consuella Bennett, Dr. Alison Ligón, and Alexander Taylor ’24. Finally, I offer a heartfelt thank you to the entire ICCL family of scholars for participating in this annual convening of scholars to engage in critical trans-disciplinary conversations about the literature and culture of the Caribbean.

DR. LEAH CREQUE
Co-Director, ICCL

DR. ALISON LIGON
DR. CONSUELLA BENNETT
MR. KEITH ASBERRY ’17
MR. ALEXANDER TAYLOR ’23
DR. MELVIN RAHMING was born in Fox Hill, Nassau, Bahamas. He received his PhD in English from the University of Oklahoma in 1978. He is a former Hugh M. Gloster Chair of the English Department at Morehouse College, where he has been teaching for more than forty years. In 1997 he was inducted into the African American Multicultural Educators Hall of Fame. He is the author, editor, and co-editor of several books, including Critical Essays on Barack Obama: Re-affirming the Hope: Re-vitalizing the Dream (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012) and Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism (Africa World Press, 2006). He is the Executive Editor of Zoe International Journal of Social Transformation and Co-Founder and Director of the International Conference on Caribbean Literature (ICCL), based here at Morehouse. His essays appear in numerous professional publications. Most recently these essays have focused on the relationship between literary theory and spirit.
EDWIDGE DANTICAT is the author of numerous books, including *Claire of the Sea Light*, a *New York Times* notable book; *Brother, I’m Dying*, a National Book Critics Circle Award winner and National Book Award finalist; *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, an Oprah Book Club selection; *Krik? Krak!*, a National Book Award finalist; *The Farming of Bones*, an American Book Award winner; *The Dew Breaker*, a PEN/Faulkner Award finalist and winner of the inaugural Story Prize; and *Everything Inside*, a Reese’s Book Club pick and winner of the Story Prize. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, she has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and elsewhere. She lives in Miami.
CHERYL BOWLES is a Biochemist, Founder, Managing Director, and a Caribbean success with her brand, Cher-Mère, meaning “Dear Mother” in French.

Ms. Bowles grew up in Woodbrook, Trinidad and has always loved the sciences, particularly Chemistry. This passion for the discipline was instrumental to the birth of her company.

In 1985, she gave up her top executive job at Nestlé, where she was the company’s first woman Executive, Chief Chemist, Head of Quality Control, and Head of Research and Development in Trinidad & Tobago, to pursue the development of the brand that became Cher-Mère. Her health and beauty products and chain of day spas utilize the natural healing properties of Caribbean herbs and the wisdom of indigenous Caribbean healing practices.
BEN VALDEZ OLGUÍN is the Robert and Lisa Erickson Presidential Chair in English at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. in 1996, and M.A. in 1992 from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Stanford University. His B.A., with Honors, is from the Department of Hispanic and Classical Languages, and Honors College, at the University of Houston. Olguín is a recipient of a Ford Post doctoral Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Research Award, and numerous other awards and distinctions.

Olguín’s interdisciplinary areas of expertise include Chicano and Latinx Literary and Cultural Studies, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, American and Latin American Studies, Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies, Speculative literature and film, Human Rights theory and praxis, the Medical Humanities, and Creative Writing. Olguín is the author of two academic books: *La Pinta: Chicana/o History, Culture, and Politics* (University of Texas Press, 2010), and *Violentologies: Violence and Ontology in Latinx Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2021). He is a co-editor with Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez of the anthology, *Latina/os and WWII: Mobility, Agency, and Ideology* (University of Texas Press, 2014), and also a co-editor with Cathryn Josefina Merla-Watson of the anthology, *Altermundos: Latin@ Speculative Literature, Film, and Popular Culture* (University of Washington Press, 2017), which won a 2018 American Book Award.

Olguín’s research and teaching are integrated into community service and civic engagement activities across a range of initiatives. These include service-learning projects in community centers and schools in underserved communities, as well as in prisons, juvenile jails, and immigrant detention centers. Founder and director of the Global Latinidades Project, Olguín has received over $2.1 million in grants, which help support multiple educational and community-based initiatives. He has joined in partnership with Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Texas Southern University through the Afro Latinidades Institute, which focuses on the recovery, analysis, and reclamation of the African roots of Latinx culture, history and politics. The goal of this four-campus partnership is to increase the number of Black students in graduate programs throughout the University of California System’s ten campuses.
History of Morehouse

THE MOREHOUSE LEGACY

In 1867, two years after the Civil War ended, Augusta Theological Institute was established in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia. Founded in 1787, Springfield Baptist is the oldest independent African American church in the United States. The school’s primary purpose was to prepare black men for ministry and teaching.

Today, Augusta Theological Institute is Morehouse College, which is located on a 66-acre campus in Atlanta and enjoys an international reputation for producing leaders who have influenced national and world history. Having celebrated its sesquicentennial anniversary, Morehouse continues its long and unique history of delivering an exceptional educational experience that meets the intellectual, moral, and social needs of students representing more than 40 states and 14 countries — a distinguished institution dedicated to producing outstanding men and extraordinary leaders to serve humanity as moral cosmopolitans.
Caritharsis: Healing and Regeneration in Caribbean Literature and Culture

In an era characterized by seismic shifts in global consciousness and unfathomable levels of human trauma; a time when techno-biological [t]errors and environmental nightmares combine to explode even the most cherished myths; when societies everywhere are forced to engineer new compasses for navigating yet another new world – the creative imagination of the Caribbean continues to function as a space that equally and simultaneously accommodates exploration of and release from the dictates of circumstance. Caribbean artists over the last century have been shaping a uniquely organic aesthetic: an interrelated sequence of cultural imperatives and prerogatives that mirror and expand the regions’ on-going attempt to figure its landscape. As a tribute to the manner in which such an aesthetic has informed, and been informed by, Caribbean artistic products – even during periods of communal tragedy – and in recognition of the on-going global pandemic, the 20th International Conference on Caribbean Literature (ICCL) seeks to spark conversations about forms, processes and strategies of healing and regeneration as demonstrated or anticipated in Caribbean literature and culture. For this virtual event, individual and panel proposals are invited on topics related, but not limited, to:

• Artistic Mediation as a Form of Meditation
• Relationship Between Mythic and Cultural Regeneration for Individuals and Society
• Current Relevance of Ancestral Rites of Healing
• Literature as Medicine
• Healing Possibilities of Folklore (or Other Genres)
• Healing Approaches and Responses to Death
• Carnival as Cultural Regeneration
• Style as Metaphorical Process of Healing (or Regeneration)
• Healing Beyond Science
• Ritual as Healing and/or Regeneration
• Relationship Between Healing and Literary Theory
• Cross-disciplinary Approaches to Healing
• Cultural Catharsis for Individuals and Society

NOTE
"Caritharsis": a new term (coined from "Caribbean catharsis") to denote the healing potential within a specifically Caribbean ambience; a decidedly Caribbean manner of seeking or obtaining emotional release, relief, or deliverance from crises of stress.
## Schedule of Events

**WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2021**

### SESSION A
**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

**Healing Across Genres and Generations**
**MODERATOR:** Dr. Craig Smith, UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS

- Dr. Patricia Montilla, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
  "Marisel Vera’s *The Taste Of Sugar* (2020) and the Healing Power of Historical Fiction"

- Dr. Stephanie Fullerton-Cooper, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
  "Caytharsis: Diagnosis, Treatment and Healing in Cayman Poetry"

- Dr. Geraldine Skeete, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
  "‘Caritharsis’ in Selected Oral and Written Literatures of Storyteller Paul Keens-Douglas"

### SESSION B
**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

**Along the Way to Healing: Oral, Elemental and Creative Convergences**
**MODERATOR:** Dr. Consuella Bennett, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

- Prof. Mikki Harris, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE
  "Oral Tradition on Barbuda: The Connection to Freedom, Faith and the Future"

- Dr. Joyce White, WINTHROP UNIVERSITY
  "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work"

- Dr. Alison Ligon, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE
  "‘Timeless Waters, Endless Seas’: Framing Images of Spiritual and Physical Loss and Restoration in Edwidge Danticat’s *Claire of the Sea Light*"

### OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY
**7:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

**Introduction:** Dr. Consuella Bennett and Dr. Alison Ligon, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

**Invocation:** Dr. Lawrence E. Carter, PROFESSOR; DEAN OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CHAPEL, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

**Introduction of Morehouse Administrators:** Dr. Bennett

- Dr. David A. Thomas, President, Morehouse College
- Dr. Kendrick Brown, Provost, Morehouse College
- Dr. Clarissa Myrick-Harris, Chair, Division of Humanities, Morehouse College

**Introduction of Former Host Committee Chairs and Keynote Speakers:** Dr. Ligon

- Prof. Esther Phillips, Columnist, Poet, and Educator (Barbados)
- Dr. Nicola Hunte, Professor, UWI/Cave Hill (Barbados)
- Prof. Quince Duncan, Author and Poet, Costa Rica
- Dr. Décio Torres Cruz, Professor, Federal University of Bahia (Brazil)
- Dr. Paulette Ramsay, Professor, UWI, Mona (Jamaica)
- Dr. Javier Escudero, Professor, Federal University of Bahia (Brazil)
- Dr. Brenda Flanagan, Professor, Davidson College

**Introduction of Opening Ceremony Speaker:** Dr. Leah Creque, PROFESSOR, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

**Opening Ceremony Address:**
Dr. Melvin Rahming, PROFESSOR, MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

**Remarks:** Dr. Bennett and Dr. Ligon
### Schedule of Events

**THURSDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2021**

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<th>Session D</th>
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<th>ICONOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, AND COMMUNITY: THE CULTURAL ART OF HEALING</th>
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<td>Rhoda Arrindell, UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS &quot;Disaster Response, Recovery, and Healing in a Colony&quot;</td>
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<td>Marie Sairsingh, UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS &quot;Writing Death: Literature as a Conduit for Catharsis and Healing&quot;</td>
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<td>Craig Smith, UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS &quot;Catharsis and Healing in the Ruins of Columbus&quot;</td>
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<td>Shauna Morgan, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY &quot;Healing Pleasures: Sensuality and the Divine in Caribbean Poetry&quot;</td>
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<th>Session E</th>
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<td>Ms. Shirley Toland-Dix, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT MONTGOMERY &quot;Generational Healing in Elizabeth Nunez’s Not for Everyday Use”</td>
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### THURSDAY KEYNOTE LECTURE

**7:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**The Caribbean Secret of Self-Care**

**SPEAKER:** Cheryl Bowles, BioChemist, Founder and CEO of The Herbarium LTD., Cher Mère Health and Beauty Products and Day Spas
## Schedule of Events

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2021**

### SESSION F
**12:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**In Search of Healing and Regenerative Modalities**

**MODERATOR:** Dr. Georgene Bess Montgomery, CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

Ms. Helen Klonaris, CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

"Writing the Wound: The Necessity of Healing Between the Words"

Dr. Renu Juneja, VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

"Naipaul and India: Revolution?"

Dr. Katsunori Kajihara, AICHI PREFECTURAL UNIVERSITY

"Body and Affect in the Writings of C. L. R. James"

Ms. Karisa Bridgedelal, UWI, ST AUGUSTINE

"Interrogating the Creation and Evolution of Selected Caribbean Archetypes through Channels of Caribbean Consciousness"

### SESSION G
**2:15 PM - 4:15 PM**

**Hip Hop Youth Culture: A Form of Individual Catharsis Through Societal Participation**

**MODERATOR:** Dr. Jon Yasin, BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dr. Hameed el Amin, CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (PROFESSOR EMERITUS)

"Culture as a Common Vision"

Dr. Jon Yasin, BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"The Necessity of Group Healing"

Dr. Lou Ethel Roliston, BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Healing in the Educational Classroom"

Professor Joseph Clinton, SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY

"Clubbing: A Social Healing Event versus a Performance Event"

Mr. Michael Brim, (aka DJ Mic B), CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SACRAMENTO

"Youths Using Hip Hop Music to Heal and Empower Themselves"

### SESSION H
**4:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

**Round Table Discussion of Edwidge Danticat’s Everything Inside**

George Pratt ’23, Alexander Taylor ’23, Christian Terry-Taylor ’22

HOWARD THURMAN HONORS PROGRAM SCHOLARS

### CLOSING CEREMONY
**7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

**Dr. Eddie S. Glaude Jr. ’89 Distinguished Lecture**

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Ben Olguín, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA BARBARA

Entertainment will follow.

Raza World Visions Radio Show Feature: Caribeño Rhythms and Revolutionary Cadences in AfroLatinx Music and Spoken Word.
Participants

Karisa K. Bridgelal, MA University of The West Indies, St. Augustine  
Mr. Michael J. Brim, California State University at Sacramento  
Professor Joseph B. Clinton, Southern New Hampshire University  
Dr. Leah J. Creque, Morehouse College  
Dr. Hameed E. El Amin, (retired) Calhoun College  
Professor Mikki K. Harris, Morehouse College  
Dr. Renu S. Juneja, Valparaiso University  
Dr. Katsunori K. Kajihara, Aichi Prefectural University  
Helen L. Klonaris, California College of the Arts  
Dr. Alison D. Ligon, Morehouse College  
Dr. Georgerne B. Montgomery, Clark Atlanta University  
Dr. Patricia M. Montilla, Western Michigan University  
Dr. Shauna M. Morgan, University of Kentucky  
Dr. Kathleen E. Phillips-Lewis, Spelman College  
Mr. George Anthony Pratt ’23, Morehouse College  
Dr. Marie A. Sairsingh, University of The Bahamas  
Dr. Geraldine E. Skeete, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine  
Dr. Roslyn N. Smith, Spelman College  
Dr. Craig A. Smith, University of The Bahamas  
Mr. Alexander Taylor ‘23, Morehouse College  
Mr. Christian Terry-Taylor ‘22, Morehouse College  
Dr. Shirley D. Toland-Dix, Auburn University Montgomery  
Dr. Joyce D. White, Winthrop University  
Dr. Jon A. Yasin, Bergen Community College

Participating Institutions

Aichi Prefectural University  
Auburn University Montgomery  
Calhoun College  
California College of the Arts  
California State University at Sacramento, CA  
Clark Atlanta University  
Morehouse College  
Southern New Hampshire University  
Spelman College  
The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine  
University of Kentucky  
University of The Bahamas  
Valparaiso University  
Winthrop University

Sponsorship

This conference is sponsored in part by a grant from Morehouse College Trustee Dr. Eddie S. Glaude, C’89. We appreciate the generous support of Dr. David Wall Rice C’95, Professor of Psychology and Curator of the Morehouse College Crown Forum. Special thanks to the Morehouse College Office of Communications.