“A Language to Dwell In”: James Baldwin, Paris, and International Visions

The American University of Paris
May 26–28, 2016

Co-Directors: Alice Mikal Craven and William E. Dow

“In this endeavor to wed the vision of the Old World with that of the New, it is the writer, not the statesman, who is our strongest arm. Though we do not wholly believe it yet, the interior life is a real life, and the intangible dreams of people have a tangible effect on the world.”

James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*

The American University of Paris announces the International James Baldwin Conference. The Conference will represent broad international and interdisciplinary explorations of Baldwin’s life and writing. Conference papers place a special emphasis on the Paris Baldwin inhabited, both what it was and what it is today as a result of the marks he left behind. His experiences in Europe, Africa, and Turkey are also of central concern. Stressing the importance of James Baldwin, the conference hopes to be an international point of intersection for all those interested in Baldwin’s writing from literary and cultural critics, to political activists, poets, musicians, publishers and historians. We seek the widest range of academic and public intellectual discussion around Baldwin’s work which has influenced so many and so much.

**Conference Program**

**COMBES**: 6, rue du Colonel Combes  
**ST. DOM**: 102, rue St. Dominique (entrance 16, Passage Landrieu)  
**PASSAGE LANDRIEU**: 2 bis, Passage Landrieu
Thursday, May 26

Registration: 14:00–16:00
Lobby of the Combes Building.

Opening Remarks: 17:00–18:30

Official AUP Welcome
The American Church. The Sanctuary.

Provost of the American University of Paris, Scott Sprenger

Alice Craven
William Dow

Plenary 1 Round Table: “Presence and Legacies: The State of Baldwin Studies.”
Rich Blint, Michele Elam, Doug Field, Justin A. Joyce, D. Quentin Miller, Claudine Raynaud
Magdalena J. Zaborowska.

Reception: 18:30–19:15
The American Church. The Sanctuary.

“Collectif Baldwin” Performance, Samuel Légitimus Director: 19:30–20:15

Friday, May 27

Concurrent Sessions: 10:00–12:00

Panel 1: “These are all my children”: Baldwin and Kinship beyond Blood.
Panel Chairs: Harry L. Elam, Michele Elam.
Respondent: Brian Norman. COMBES 102


Nigel Hatton. University of California, Merced. “‘As though I were one of their possessions, as, indeed, I am’: James Baldwin as Literary Ancestor.”

Rich Blint. Columbia University. “‘These are my brothers; not my siblings, motherfucker!’: James Baldwin’s Beloved Community.”

Panel 2: “James Baldwin, in Collaboration, and Perspectives on Baldwin’s *Little Man.*”
**Panel Chair: Nicholas Boggs. ST. DOM 1**

“James Baldwin, in Collaboration.”

Nicholas Boggs. New York University.


Panel 3: “If we would listen”: Teaching through Baldwin’s Aesthetics of Difficult Empathy.
**Panel Chair: Shari Evans. ST. DOM 2**

Shari Evans. University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. “‘If we would listen’: Teaching through Baldwin’s Aesthetics of Difficult Empathy.”


Panel 4: *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light.*
**Screening and Discussion. COMBES 103**


Joanne Burke. Film and Video Director/Producer/Editor. Paris.
Panel Chair: James Smalls. COMBES 101

Anna Everett. University of California, Santa Barbara. “James Baldwin, Media and the Francophone Imaginary: Baldwin at the Movies and on TV.”

Panel 6: Art, Race, and Black Power in Baldwin.
Panel Chair: Natalie Graham. ST.DOM 3


Panel 7: Baldwin’s Rage and Ethics.
Panel Chair: Jon-Marc McDonald. ST.DOM 4

Bill Schwarz, University of London. “Alain Mabanckou’s Jimmy.”

**Panel 8: Teaching Baldwin Today (Part 1).**
**Panel Chair: Jacqueline M. Jones. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 1**

Chelda Smith. Georgia Southern University. “Gate Crashing with Baldwin in Teacher Education.”

**Panel 9: Baldwin’s Short Stories and Late Texts.**
**Panel Chair: Laila Amine. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 3**

Laila Amine. University of North Texas. “The Paris Paradox: Colonialism and Colorblindness in James Baldwin’s ‘This Morning, This Evening, so Soon’.”

**Lunch: 12:00–13:15**
At area cafes, restaurants.

**Concurrent Sessions: 13:15–15:15**

**Panel 10: James Baldwin Then and Now: Politics, Erotics, and Postcolonial Possibilities.**
**Panel Chair: Leah Mirakhor. COMBES 102**
Douglas Field. Manchester University. “James Baldwin and Archive Fever.”
Leah Mirakhor. College of Wooster. “Baldwin’s Transnational Intimacies: Arabness, Blackness and the Figure of Terror.”

**Panel 11: Baldwin and Paris (Part 1).**
**Panel Chair: Kamila Louadj. ST.DOM 1**

Kamila Louadj. Université Paris-Est (UPEM). “‘I ain’t no stranger now’: Baldwin’s Return from Paris to America.”
Karla McKanders. University of Tennessee, College of Law. “Seeking Refuge in Paris: Haven or Hell for Migrants?”

**Panel 12: James Baldwin, Black Lives Matter, Bearing Witness.**
**Panel Chair: Marcus Bruce ST.DOM 2**

Joseph Tolbert. Union Theological Seminary, New York. “Shaking the Dungeons: Black Lives Matter, the Embodied Imago Dei, and the Threat to White Supremacy.”
Ahmad Greene-Hayes. Williams College. “Baldwin, #BlackChurchSex, and #BlackLivesMatter: Trauma, Touch, and Desire.”

**Panel 13: Baldwin and Love.**
**Panel Chair: Sevonna M. Brown. ST.DOM 3**


Panel 14: Baldwin, Religion, and Black Liberation Theologies.
Panel Chair: Rebekah Lynn Pierce. COMBES 101


Panel 15: James Baldwin as Playwright and Literary Journalist.
Panel Chair: William E. Dow. COMBES 103

Frank Leon Roberts. New York University/Yale University. “Keeping the Casket Open: James Baldwin and the Theatre of Black Life.”
Pekka Kilpeläinen. University of Eastern Finland. “At the Welcome Table: James Baldwin’s Transcultural Communion.”
Todd Steven Burroughs. Independent Scholar. “James Baldwin’s Literary Journalism.”
Isabelle Meuret. Université Libre de Bruxelles. “The Documentary Tradition in Baldwin’s écriture vérité.”

Panel Chair: TBC. ST.DOM 4

Cheryl Johnson, Miami University. “‘If Black English Isn’t a Language’: James Baldwin on Authenticity in Language and Identity.”

Justin Allen. Author. “Stagger.”


Panel 17: Teaching Baldwin Today (Part 2).
Panel Chair: Koritha Mitchell, Ohio State University. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 1

Mark A. Williams. Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington, DC. “Baldwin as Prophet; On why he is so desperately needed in the global classroom, and why he is so feared. Still.”

Casey Philip Wong. Stanford University. “You’re the n*gger baby, it isn’t me”: Transforming Schooling for the 21st Century.”

Elisabeth Bayley. Loyola University, Chicago. “Teaching James Baldwin’s ‘Going to Meet the Man’: Avoidance of Vulnerability and Grief.”


Panel 18: Baldwin’s Transatlanticisms (Part 1).
Panel Chair: Bryan Santin. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 3


Dawn S. Booker. Bennett College. “You’ve got to learn to leave the table when love’s no longer being served: James Baldwin and Nina Simone: Celebrity and Activism on a Global Stage.”
16:00–19:30 The American Embassy in Paris, Hôtel Tallyrand (GMC)

Reading: Jake Lamar. *Brothers in Exile.*

Plenary 2: Robert Reid-Pharr, Graduate Center, City University of New York. “Baldwin and the Tortured City.”

Reception at Hôtel Tallyrand (GMC).

20:00 Dinner at Le Bistrot de la Porte Dorée/Le Swann.

Saturday, May 28

Concurrent Sessions: 9:30–11:30

Panel Chair: Margo Natalie Crawford. ST.DOM 1

Tyler T. Schmidt. Lehman College, City University of New York. “Lessons in Light: Beauford Delaney’s and James Baldwin’s ‘Unnameable Objects’.”


Dagmawi Woubshet, Cornell University. “‘Another Time, Another Space’: James Baldwin and Late Encounters with Africa.”

Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins. Freelance Curator/Writer/Art Historian. “James Baldwin, Beauford Delaney, and Light.”

Panel Chair: Rich Blint. COMBES 102


Maxine Gordon. Co-Founder and President of the The Dexter Gordon Society.
Diedra Harris-Kelley. Co-Director of the Romare Bearden Foundation.

Robert O’Meally. Director of Jazz Studies and Zora Neale Hurston Professor at Columbia University.

**Panel 21: New Comparisons: Baldwin and Literary Relations.**
**Panel Chair: Loretta Stec. ST.DOM 2**


Kathleen Gyssels. Antwerp University. “Damas and Baldwin, Two Queer Voices Struggling for the Vertical Tower in Paris.”

Loretta Stec. San Francisco State University. “Baldwin, Modisane and Exile.”

**Panel 22: James Baldwin: Literary Traditions, Receptions and Influences.**
**Panel Chair: DJ Lynnée Denise. ST.DOM 3**


**Panel 23: James Baldwin, Racial Activism, Social Injustice, and Subjugation.**
**Panel Chair: Jonathan Gill. ST.DOM 4**

Jonathan Gill. University of Amsterdam. “Strangers and Villages: James Baldwin’s Concept of Race.”

Vincent Tolliver. Author. “James Baldwin: Striking a Match in America.”
Panel 24: Baldwin, Ethics, and International Literary Connections.
Panel Chair: Timothy McGinnis. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 1


Gianna Zocco. University of Vienna/Columbia University. “James Baldwin and His Longtime Friend, Editor, and Reviewer Fritz Raddatz: ‘An anti-Nazi German, who has the scars to prove it.’”


Panel Chair: Catherine Taylor. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 3


Panel 26: New Approaches to Baldwin’s Go Tell It on the Mountain.
Panel Chair: Sharde’ N. Chapman. COMBES 103


Janelle Morris. Clark Atlanta University. “Queerness at the Intersection of Womanism and Theology: A Rereading of Baldwin’s Go Tell it on the Mountain.”

Sharde’ N. Chapman. Rice University. “It’s Hard to be Black and Gay in the Ghetto: Religious Experience and the Erotic in the Writings of James Baldwin.”

Panel 27: Baldwin’s Transatlanticisms (Part 2).
Panel Chair: James Miller. COMBES 104


James Miller. Kingston University. “‘No Name in the Street,’ Franz Fanon and the Third World.”

Lunch: 11:30–12:30
At area cafés, restaurants.

12:30–13:30 The American Church. The Sanctuary.

Plenary 3: James Campbell, James Baldwin Biographer.
“Problems in the Writing of Biography, with Particular Respect to James Baldwin.”

Concurrent Sessions: 13:45–15:45

Panel 28

“Three Days with New York’s Native Son, James Baldwin – A Retrospective with Photographs and Personal Memories.” COMBES 102

13:15–14:15
Joseph G. Flynn. Alfred State College, SUNY.
Karen E. Markoe. Maritime College, SUNY.

“Teaching Baldwin Today: The James Baldwin Project/Conversations with Jimmy.”
COMBES 102

14:15–15:15
Karen Thorsen. Baldwin Project Co-Director.
Douglas Dempsey. Baldwin Project Co-Director.

Panel 29: Featured Lecture and Les Amis de Beauford Delaney. COMBES 103

13:15–14:15
Featured Lecture: Ed Pavlić. University of Georgia.
“Who Can Afford to Improvise?: Black Music as Heard Listening Over Jimmy Baldwin’s Shoulder.”

14:15–15:15 COMBES 103

Les Amis de Beauford Delaney.

Panel Chair: Rashida K. Braggs. ST.DOM 1


Panel Chair: Charles I. Nero. ST.DOM 2


Panel 32: The Myriad Connections of James Baldwin.
Panel Chair: Stephan Kuhl. ST.DOM 3


Janell Hobson. University of Albany, SUNY. “James Baldwin’s The Devil Finds Work: A Blueprint for Black Criticism.”

Panel 33: Baldwin and Music.
Panel Chair: Natalie Cook. ST.DOM 4


Steven Tracy. University of Massachusetts. “Mister Crump Don’t Like It: James Baldwin on Beale Street.”

Panel 34: Baldwin, Whiteness, and White Ethnicity.
Panel Chair: Angelyn Mitchell. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 1
Satoru Nagao. Kumamoto University, Japan. “Southern Whiteness in the Transatlantic Imagination: James Baldwin’s *Another Country.*”
Matthew Calihan. Missouri State University. “James Baldwin, Black America, and the White Ethnic Revival.”
Jenny M. James. Pacific Lutheran University. “‘Alone on the Rim of the Circle’: Mary S. Painter, *Another Country* and Baldwin’s White Woman Readership.”

**Panel 35: Revisiting Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room.***
**Panel Chair: Laura K. Wallace. COMBES 104**

Laura K. Wallace. University of Texas, Austin. “Queer Novelty: *Giovanni’s Room* and Its Publics.”

**Panel 36: Baldwin’s Racial and Aesthetic Connections.**
**Panel Chair: Bryan Brentus Carter. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 3**

Nicholas L. Baham III. California State University, East Bay. “James Baldwin, Bayard Rustin, Manning Marable and the Queering of Malcom X.”
Concurrent Sessions: 15:45–17:45

Panel 37: Baldwin’s Transatlanticisms (Part 3).
Panel Chair: Che Gossett. COMBES 103


Kleaver Cruz. Writer. “Jimmy and the Children.”


Panel 38: “What Would Baldwin Do?—Exploring the Responsibility of the Artist in Contemporary Society.” Combes 104
Panel Chair: Abby Dobson.

Abby Dobson. Artist/Scholar.

Kendra Ross. Artist/Scholar.

jessica Care moore. Poet/Author/ Publisher (Moore Black Press).

Imani Uzuri. Vocalist/Scholar.

Panel Chair: Paul Cato. ST.DOM 1


Claudine Raynaud. Université de Montpellier III. “French Baldwin.”

Panel 40: Baldwin’s Legacies, Prophecies, and a Post-Racial Imaginary.
Panel Chair: Herb Boyd. ST.DOM 4
Brandon Archambault. European Graduate School. “Get Naked: A Sketch of Baldwin’s Promised Land.”

Panel 41: Other Times, Other Countries: Baldwin’s Major Works.
Panel Chair: Gordon Emmanuel Thompson. ST.DOM 2

Gordon Emmanuel Thompson. City College of New York. “Semiotics of Disengagement or of the Pastoral in Baldwin’s Another Country.”
Daylanne K. English. Macalester College. “Another Country, Another Time: James Baldwin’s Social Science Fiction.”
Victoria Merriweather. Clark Atlanta University. “Seeking Asylum in Giovanni’s Room.”

Panel 42: Creative, Political, Polemical Baldwin.
Panel Chair: Jay Garcia. ST.DOM 3

Zachary Manditch-Prottas. University of California, Berkeley. “His Goat, Our Lamb: No Name in the Street and the Language of Black (in)Authenticity.”

Panel 43: Special Performance: Baldwin’s Nigger Reloaded. COMBES 102

Imani Robinson.
Barbara Asante.
Panel 44: James Baldwin’s Poetics.
Panel Chair: James B. Haile. PASSAGE LANDRIEU 3

Meta Jones. Howard University. “Baldwin’s Politics as Poetic Exploration.”

18:00–19:00. The American University. Combes 103-104


19:00–20:00. The American University. Combes 103-104

Concluding Remarks: Robert Reid-Pharr, James Campbell, Bill Mullen, Alice Mikal Craven, William E. Dow.

Closing Reception.