

Imani D. Owens

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2019- Assistant Professor of English, Rutgers University-New Brunswick
2014- 2019 Assistant Professor of English, University of Pittsburgh
2013-14 Postdoctoral Research Associate, Center for African American Studies, Princeton
University
2012-13 Riley Scholar-in-Residence, Colorado College

EDUCATION

2013 Ph.D., Department of English and Comparative Literature (Certificate in Comparative
Literature and Society), Columbia University
2009 M. Phil., Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia
University
2007 M.A., Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia
University
2006 B.A., English. Rutgers University, Phi Beta Kappa (2005); Departmental Honors;
summa cum laude

BOOK IN PROGRESS

Turn the World Upside Down: Folk Culture, Imperialism, and U.S.-Caribbean Literature.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

“Toward a ‘Truly Indigenous Theatre’: Sylvia Wynter Adapts Federico García Lorca.”
Postcolonial Reading Publics, special issue of *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary
Inquiry*. 4.1 (2017): 49-67.

“Hard Reading: U.S. Empire and Black Modernist Aesthetics in Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death*.”
MELUS 41.4 (2016): 96-115.

“Beyond Authenticity: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti and the Politics of Folk Culture.” *Journal of
Haitian Studies* 21.2 (2015): 350-370.

BOOK CHAPTER

“New Empires: The Caribbean and the United States.” *Caribbean Literature in Transition,
1920–1970*, edited by Raphael Dalleo and Curdella Forbes, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press,
Cambridge, 2021, pp. 225–240.

ONLINE PUBLICATION

“The Transnational Labor of Black Resistance: Caribbean Intellectuals Protest the East St. Louis Riots.” *small axe salon* 26, Oct 2017. <http://smallaxe.net/sxsalon/discussions/transnational-labor-black-resistance>

BOOK REVIEWS

Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance by Mark Whitaker. *Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine*, Sept 2018.

“The Most Talked About Voice in America.” *Queen of Bebop: The Musical Lives of Sarah Vaughan* by Elaine Hayes. *Women’s Review of Books*, May/June 2018

FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

2021-2022	Faculty Fellow, Institute for Global Racial Justice
2021-2022	Faculty Fellow, Center for Cultural Analysis
2018	Scholar-in-Residence, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (NEH)
2017	Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship
2012	Marion E. Ponsford Award, Columbia University
2011	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Summer Research Award
2010	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Summer Teaching Scholar Award
2008-11	Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
2006-12	Marjorie Hope Nicolson Fellowship, Columbia University

SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

2020	Respondent and Organizer: “Sound Disruptions,” Postcolonial Forum Session, MLA Convention, Seattle, Washington, January 9-12.
2019	Chair: “At Home and Abroad: Black Transnational Connections and Critique,” American Studies Association Convention, November 7-10.
2019	“Sylvia Wynter’s Politics of Embodiment,” Caribbean Studies Association Convention, Santa Marta, Colombia, June 3-7.
2019	“Poetics, Embodiment, Translation.” Black Sound and the Archive Symposium, Yale University, Feb 7-8.
2018	“C.L.R. James and the Postcolonial,” Roundtable, MLA Convention, New York City, January 4-7.
2018	“From Cuban Evening to <i>Cuba Libre</i> : Poetry and The Performance of Translation in the work of Eusebia Cosme, Nicolás Guillén, and Langston Hughes,” Caribbean Studies Association Convention, Havana, Cuba, June 4-8.
2017	“Spain and Jamaica in Translation: Sylvia Wynter and the Anticolonial Politics of Performance,” Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora Convention, Seville, Spain, Nov 7-11.

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- 2017 “Avoiding the ‘Drama of Propaganda:’ Eulalie Spence and the Politics of Black Performance,” MLA Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 5-8.
- 2016 In the Shadows of Empire: Diasporic Homecoming and the Politics of Folk Culture,” American Studies Association, Denver, Colorado, November 17-20.
- 2016 “Reconfiguring Revolution: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti and the Politics of Folk Culture,” West Indian Literature Conference, Montego Bay, Jamaica, October 6-8.
- 2016 “Literary Crossings: U.S. Empire and Scenes of Diasporic Movement,” Caribbean Studies Association, Port au Prince, Haiti, June 6-11.
- 2016 “Innovations and Impediments,” Pedagogy Panel, Department of English, University of Pittsburgh, April 4.
- 2016 “Sound,” Media and Material Practices Focal Area Roundtable, Department of English University of Pittsburgh, March 16.
- 2016 “Sylvia Wynter and the Ethics of Translation,” Postcolonial Reading Publics Roundtable, MLA Convention, Austin, Texas, January 7-10.
- 2015 “Tropic Death: U.S. Empire and the Perils of Migration,” Postcolonial Studies Convention, Leicester, UK, September 7-9.
- 2015 “Reflections on the Centennial of the U.S. Occupation of Haiti: Literature, Ethnography, Self-Determination,” Caribbean Studies Association Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, May 25-29.
- 2015 Respondent: Humanities Center Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh, February 26.
- 2015 “The Stuart Hall Project,” Roundtable, Carnegie Mellon University, February 11.
- 2014 Chair: “Sonics of Black Excess: 1940s to 1980s,” American Studies Association Convention, Los Angeles, November 2014.
- 2014 “A Veritable Scandal: The *son* poetry of Nicolás Guillén,” Caribbean Studies Association Conference, Mérida, Mexico, May 26-30.
- 2014 “Literature, Empire, and Panama Canal Migration,” Department of African American Studies, Princeton University, April 28.
- 2014 “Tropic Death: Geographies of Empire.” American Comparative Literature Association Convention, New York University, NYC, March 20-23.
- 2013 “It was not Sepia, Georgia, but a Backwoods Village in Barbados: The Folk, Empire and Modernity in Jean Toomer’s *Cane* and Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death*,” 20th Century Colloquium, English Department, Princeton University, December 9.

- 2013 “Articulating Citizenship: Ethnography and the U.S Occupation of Haiti in the work of Jean Price Mars,” Haitian Studies Association Conference, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, November 7-9.
- 2012 “The Politics of Sound: Race, Space, and Cuban Identity in the *son* poetry of Nicolás Guillén,” American Studies Association Convention, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 15-18.
- 2012 “Blues as Poetic Form,” Guest Lecture, Colorado College. April 4.
- 2012 “Vodou, Ethnography, and the U.S. Occupation of Haiti in the work of Jean Price-Mars,” NeMLA Convention. Rochester New York, March 17.
- 2011 “Jean Toomer, Eric Walrond and the Black Southern Gothic,” Comparative Caribbeans Conference, Emory University November 3-5.
- 2011 Moderator: “Producing Race: Technology and the African Diaspora.” Columbia University, October 28.
- 2011 Moderator: “The Idea of a Black Radical Tradition.” Columbia University, April 23.
- 2010 “Spiritual Language: The Echoes of the Spiritual in African American Literature,” The Current Relevance of Negro Spirituals: A Symposium. Bethany Baptist Church, Newark NJ, June 5.
- 2010 “Compelling Insinuation: Zora Neale Hurston’s Blues Narrative,” Zora Neale Hurston Festival for Arts and Humanities, January 28.
- 2009 “Migration and Modernity in Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death*,” Ford Foundation Conference of Fellows, University of California, Irvine, October 16-17.
- 2009 “Race and Imperialism in the Work of Eric Walrond,” African Americanist Colloquium, Columbia University, February 2.

COURSES TAUGHT

Rutgers University, Department of English

Graduate

350:653 Race, Writing, Sound: Black Music and Literary Culture

Undergraduate

358:376 Harlem Renaissance, Fall 2019

359:201 Principles of Literary Study: Spring 2020, Fall 2020

University of Pittsburgh, Department of English

Graduate

ENGLIT 2241: Race and Transnational Performance, Spring 2019

ENGLIT 2241 Race, Writing, Sound: Black Music and Literary Culture, Spring 2016

Undergraduate

ENGLIT 1230: 20th Century African American Literature, Spring 2016

ENGLIT 0621: Intro to African American Literature: Methods and Practices, Fall 2015

ENGLIT 1910: Senior Seminar: City Narratives: African American Literature and Postmodern City, Spring 2015

ENGLIT 0523: Literature of the Americas, Fall 2014, Fall 2015

Princeton University, Center for African American Studies

African American Literature and the Postmodern City, Spring 2014

Colorado College, Department of English

Blues Poetics, Fall 2012

African American Literature and the Urban Landscape, Spring 2013

Columbia University, Department of English

Instructor, City Narratives: Contemporary African American Literature, Summer 2010

Seminar Leader: Literary Texts, Critical Methods, Fall 2010

Teaching Assistant:

African American Literature; Farah Jasmine Griffin, Spring 2008

Post-1945 American Literature; Rachel Adams, Fall 2008

GRADUATE ADVISING:

Rutgers University

2019-Ariel Martino, Dissertation Committee

2020-Amari Mitchell, Orals Committee

University of Pittsburgh

2016-2017 Caitlyn Hunter, Faculty Advisor, Hot Metal Bridge Program

2015-16. Tyrica Terry, Project Committee (Chair)

2016- Malcolm Friend, MFA Thesis Committee

2013- Dan Barlow, "Listening to African American Literature: Aural Tradition and the Acoustics of Form," Dissertation Committee.

DEPARTMENT SERVICE

Rutgers University

2020-2021 Graduate Executive Committee

2020-2021 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

University of Pittsburgh

2018-2019 Associate Director of Graduate Studies

2015- 2016 Graduate Procedures Committee

2014-2016 Diversity Committee

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

2019-Present: MLA Delegate Assembly (elected)

2019-Present: MLA Postcolonial Forum Executive Committee

OTHER SERVICE

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Organizer: “The Origins of Jazz and the Ends of Jazz Writing,” Race Poetics, Empire Keynote Lecture with Brent Hayes Edwards, February 5, 2016.

Discussion Leader: “You Should Read This:” Undergraduate Conversation on Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*, University of Pittsburgh, April 13, 2015.

Co-organizer. “Producing Race: Technology and the African Diaspora: A Symposium”
Columbia University, October 28, 2011

Graduate Coordinator, “Toward An Intellectual History of Black Women: An International Conference,” Columbia University, April 28-30 2011.

Graduate Student Speaker, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship Workshop,
Columbia University 2009

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Panelist, “Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Grant Competition,” Heinz Endowments and Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh, March 31st 2016.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Intern: Jazz and Visual Culture Curatorial Team, Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC, 2009-2011

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Comparative Literature Association

American Studies Association

Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora

Caribbean Studies Association

Ford Foundation Fellows

Haitian Studies Association

Modern Language Association

Phi Beta Kappa

PEER REVIEWER

MELUS

Callaloo

LANGUAGES

Spanish, French

REFERENCES: Available upon request.