

# LHC Newsletter

## Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Friday, September 2, 2011

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Sincerely,

Shawn Leigh Alexander  
Assistant Professor of African and African-American Studies  
Interim Director, Langston Hughes Center  
University of Kansas

## Upcoming Events

### ***Our Nation's Struggle for Freedom***

What: **Our Nation's Struggle for Freedom**

When: August 1 – September 29, 2011

Where: Brown Foundation for Education Equity, Excellence and Research and *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site, Topeka KS

Cost per person: FREE and Open to the Public

### **About:**

During the months of August and September 2011, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site is pleased to host a special locally produced art exhibition. Members of Topeka's arts community will exhibit new works created especially to commemorate the site's program series themes.

Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, a strong thread in the national narrative has been the story of overcoming racism, prejudice, and discrimination so that all Americans can enjoy "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Over the years, many brave individuals have stood up to change the country for the better.

This exhibition will feature artwork that communicates the struggle for freedom and salutes the people who moved the nation toward the promise of its founding—the promise of equality for everyone.

Make plans to see this new display of local artistic expression.

For more information see <http://brownvboard.org/content/our-nations-struggle-freedom-aug-1-sept-29-2011>

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily

1515 SE Monroe • Topeka, Kansas

### ***Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series***

**What:** *Speaking with a Fire-Tongue: The Soucouyant as a Vocal Subaltern* – Crystal Boson, University of Kansas

**When:** Monday, September 12 @11:30 am - 1:00 pm (11:30 –12:00 social period and brownbag lunch)

**Where:** Kansas Union, Alcove A (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** Langston Hughes Center

**About The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series:** The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag, every second Monday of each academic month, is an informal forum for the African Americanist community and those who are interested in the general study of race, culture, and American society. The forum discusses activities on campus, historical and current issues related to race, and culture and social relations in America. It offers opportunities for visiting scholars, KU faculty, and KU students to present their ongoing research.

Langston Hughes' character Jesse B. Semple, or Simple first appeared in the *Chicago Defender* on February 13, 1943. Semple became a voice, often in comic or satirical fashion, through which Hughes could comment on international relations, current events and the everyday concerns of the African American community.

### ***The Arc of Justice***

**What:** *The Arc of Justice: The Incarceration (and Exoneration) of Darryl Hunt* – Darryl Hunt

**When:** Tuesday, September 13 @ 4:00 – 7:00 pm

**Where:** Ecumenical Campus Ministries, 1204 Oread Avenue

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, KU School of Law, KU School of Social Welfare, Ecumenical Campus Ministries, Department of African and African American Studies, and Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

**About:** Darryl Hunt was twice convicted of a 1984 murder he did not commit. Although DNA testing proved his innocence, he was imprisoned for another decade before he was exonerated. Join us for an in-depth discussion on race, justice and the forces that helped shape Hunt's release with Darryl Hunt, Imam Khalid Griggs (founding member of the Darryl Hunt Defense Fund) and Phoebe Zerwick (Investigative journalist).

## ***Nawal El Saadawi (2011 Marwa Lecture)***

**What:** *Creativity and Dissidence* – Nawal El Saadawi

**When:** September 14, 2011 @ 7:00 – 9:30 pm

**Where:** Woodruff Auditorium, Kansas Student Union, The University of Kansas

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** African & African-American Studies, Langston Hughes Center, Kansas African Studies Center, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Co-Sponsored by: The Hall Center for the Humanities, The Center for Global & International Studies, The Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center, and the departments of American Studies, Anthropology; Communication Studies; Economics; English; Film & Media Studies; French & Italian; Geography; Political Science; Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology; Theatre; Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies

**About: Nawal El Saadawi** is a world renowned writer. She is a novelist, a psychiatrist, and author of more than forty books fiction and nonfiction. She writes in Arabic and lives in Egypt. Her novels and her books on the situation of women have had a deep effect on successive generations of young women and men over the last five decades.

As a result of her literary and scientific writings she has had to face numerous difficulties and even dangers in her life. In 1972, she lost her job in the Egyptian Ministry of Health because of her book "Women and Sex" published in Arabic in Cairo (1969) and banned by the political and religious authorities, because in some chapters of the book she wrote against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and linked sexual problems to political and economic oppression. The magazine Health, which she founded and had edited for more than three years, was closed down in 1973. In September 1981 President Sadat put her in prison. She was released at the end of November 1981, two months after his assassination. She wrote her book "Memoirs" from the Women's Prison on a roll of toilette paper and an eyebrow pencil smuggled to her cell by an imprisoned young woman in the prostitutes ward. From 1988 to 1993 her name figured on death lists issued by fanatical religious political organizations.

On 15 June, 1991, the government issued a decree which closed down the Arab Women's Solidarity Association over which she presides and handed over its funds to the association called Women in Islam. Six months before this decree the government closed down the magazine Noon, published by the Arab Women's Solidarity Association. She was editor-in-chief of the magazine.

During the summer of 2001, three of her books were banned at Cairo International Book Fair. She was accused of apostasy in 2002 by a fundamentalist lawyer who raised a court case against her to be forcibly divorced from her husband, Dr. Sherif Hetata. She won the case due to Egyptian, Arab and international solidarity. On 28 January, 2007, Nawal El Saadawi and her daughter Mona Helmy, a poet and writer, were accused of apostasy and interrogated by the General Prosecutor in Cairo because of their writings to honor the name of the mother.

They won the case in 2008. Their efforts led to a new law of the child in Egypt in 2008, giving children born outside marriage the right to carry the name of the mother. Also FGM is banned in Egypt by this law in 2008. Nawal El Saadawi was writing and fighting against FGM for more than fifty years.

For more information see: <http://www.nawalsaadawi.net/>

**About the Marwa Africana Lecture Series (MALS)** was established in 2003 through a generous donation by Dr. Mohamed Buba Marwa, a Nigerian businessman, politician, and philanthropist, and the current Nigerian ambassador to South Africa. MALS brings in a leader annually to address matters related to Africa and/or the African Diaspora. Previous lecturers have been Amiri Baraka (2009), Martin Bernal (2008), Molefi K. Asante (2005), and Ali Mazrui (2004).

For more information call African and African-American Studies at 785-864-3054 or e-mail us at [afs@ku.edu](mailto:afs@ku.edu)

## ***The Civil War and the African Freedom War***

**What: The Civil War and the African Freedom War** – Alonzo Holland, Joe Mattox, Shawn Leigh Alexander, and Gary Kremer

**When:** September 22 @ 6:30 – 9:00 pm

**Where:** National Archives in Kansas City, Missouri | 400 West Pershing Road | Kansas City, MO 64108

**Sponsors of this Event:** Lorenzo J. Greene Chapter of ASALH, the National Archives (Kansas City Region) and Kansas City Kansas Community College

About: In recognition of the 150th year since the commencement of the Civil War a panel of scholars will examine the question: *If the African Freedom War began on the slave-ships, among captive Africans, during the Middle Passage, and culminated among captive Africans, with the victory by the North in the American Civil War, when did the African Freedom War actually end?*

## **In The News**

### ***The Truth about Nat Turner***

Sharon Ewell Foster | August 23, 2011 | *The Root*

"The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Va.," as told to Thomas Gray, is accepted as the primary historical source document on the slave uprising in the predawn of Aug. 22, 1831, that left more than 50 whites dead. The pamphlet was the basis of novelist William Styron's best-selling, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name. Assumed to be a Baptist preacher, Nat Turner has been referred to as a religious fanatic whose uprising, considered the only successful U.S. slave revolt, still garners regular mention in the news -- particularly as the U.S. commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

In the original "Confessions," Gray asserts that he was Turner's defense attorney. Gray further claims that Turner's confession was read in open court and affirmed by Turner at his trial. As part of a five-year research effort, I located the 1831 Virginia trial transcripts.

I had argued with myself as to whether the trip was necessary. The original document is widely available online. But something inside me would not let me rest: If I could locate the trial transcripts, I must see them. A local newspaper story led me to a county official, who directed me to the court documents.

Read the full article at the following link: [http://www.theroot.com/views/truth-about-nat-turner?page=0,0&wpisrc=root\\_lightbox](http://www.theroot.com/views/truth-about-nat-turner?page=0,0&wpisrc=root_lightbox)

### ***George Jackson: Forty Years Ago, They Shot Him Down***

Norman (Otis) Richmond | August 17, 2011 | *Black Agenda Report*

August 21st will mark the 40th anniversary of the execution of George Jackson.

August 21st will mark the 40th anniversary of the execution of George Lester Jackson (September 23, 1941-August 21, 1971). Many of the strategies and tactics that he and his fellow comrades employed in the late 60s and early 70s were used by prisoners at Pelican Bay, Corcoran, (CSP-COR) and other California prisoners in the recent uprisings. Jackson was an African convict who became an activist, Marxist, author, a member of the Black Panther Party, and co-founder of the Black Guerrilla Family prison organization. He achieved global fame as one of the Soledad Brothers before his execution by prison guards in San Quentin Prison. George and his younger brother Jonathan Jackson and Khatari Gaulden are central to understanding Black August.

Jackson was an African born in America who became a Field Marshal of the Black Panther Party while in prison, where he spent the last 12 years of his life. His book of published letters, *Soledad Brother*, became an instant classic.

On August 7, 1970, George's 17-year-old brother Jonathan burst into a Marin County courtroom with automatic weapons, freed three San Quentin prisoners and took Judge Harold Haley as a hostage to demand freedom for the three "Soledad Brothers." However, Haley, prisoners William Christmas and James McClain, and Jonathan Jackson were killed as they attempted to drive away from the courthouse. The case made international headlines. The state claimed that Judge Haley was hit by fire discharged from a shotgun inside the vehicle during the incident. The weapon was said to have been attached by wiring, tape, and/or a strap of some sort, and/or held beneath his chin. The shotgun was traced back to Angela Davis.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://blackagendareport.com/content/george-jackson-forty-years-ago-they-shot-him-down>

See also a commemoration video at the following link: <http://vimeo.com/27870164>

## ***Race, Class, and Obama***

Clarence Lang | August 28, 2011 | *Chronicle of Higher Education*

In his latest book, *The End of Anger: A New Generation's Take on Race and Rage* (Ecco), published in May, the journalist Ellis Cose argues that middle-class African-Americans are uniquely optimistic about the future. A few months later, however, the Pew Research Center disclosed that from 2005 to 2009, the racial wealth gap had reached a record high, with wealth falling by 53 percent among black households. That news arrived as President Obama and Congress brokered an end to the debt-ceiling standoff, laying the groundwork for deficit cuts that will disproportionately affect black Americans. Meanwhile, prominent voices in the black public sphere have been urging African-Americans to defend Obama against his detractors. How to reconcile Cose's optimism, Pew's findings, and the appeals of African-Americans to circle the wagons, even as Obama appeases Republicans by sacrificing black constituencies and interests? Simply put, you can't.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://chronicle.com/article/Race-ClassObama/128787/>

## ***The Help is fiction disguised as reality***

Jim Downs and Thavolia Glymph | August 28, 2011 | *The Durham News*

"The Help" has stirred up a controversy.

On the one side are the faithful fans of the book-turned-film who have enthusiastically praised its moral lessons, believable characters and insider's view into the lives of black women domestics in the mid-20th century South, an interpretation author Kathryn Stockett leaves room for. "'The Help' is fiction, by and large," she writes, positing an implicit claim about the reality of black and white women's lives during the 1960s.

On the other side stands the mostly black writers, intellectuals and historians who have

challenged the problematic and often inaccurate portrayal of black women in the film and the troubling way that the civil rights movement is treated. As Martha Southgate incisively stated, "within the civil rights movement, white people were the help." Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.thedurhamnews.com/2011/08/28/208316/the-help-is-fiction-disguised.html>

## **Remembering Attica**

Bruce A. Dixon | August 31, 2011 | *Black Agenda Report*

Forty years ago this week, inmates in upstate New York's Attica Prison took their lives and destinies into their own hands. The prison, designed for 1200 inmates at the time housed nearly double that number, and inmates were limited to one shower per week and one roll of toilet paper per month. Arbitrary beatings and religious discrimination against Muslim inmates were common.

"We are men," an inmate spokesperson declared, "and not beasts to be driven as such."

Their demands were the mostly unremarkable stuff every human deserves --- decent and healthful food, and the ability to observe the dietary restrictions of some of their religions. They demanded warm clothing and bedding for the cold upstate winters, and serious efforts to exterminate their vermin-infested quarters.. They wanted books, self-improvement and educational programs to better prepare them to make a difference on the outside. They demanded medical care, transparency and justice in parole and prison administrative decisions, an end to religious and racial discrimination inside the prison, and the replacement of the prison warden.

They requested the presence of Black Panther Party chairman Bobby Seale and the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan. Crack movement attorneys from around the country also flew in to upstate New York. It was 1971, and the whole world was watching. For four days, they negotiated with the office of New York governor Nelson Rockefeller until the governor, eyeing a possible 1972 Republican presidential or vice-presidential nomination, shut the talks down and ordered a murderous assault on the prison.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://blackagenda.com/content/remembering-attica-40-years-later>

## **General Information**

### **Call For Papers – Journal of Africana Religions**

We are proud to announce the establishment of the Journal of Africana Religions and to invite the submission of full-length articles and review essays. This peer-reviewed journal offers critical analysis of the religious traditions of African and African Diasporic peoples as well as religious traditions influenced by the diverse cultural heritage of Africa. An interdisciplinary journal encompassing history, anthropology, Africana studies, gender studies, ethnic studies, religious studies, and other allied disciplines-and covering the religious traditions of people of African descent throughout the world-the Journal of Africana Religions embraces a variety of humanistic and social scientific methodologies for understanding the social, political, and cultural meanings and functions of Africana religions. We invite authors to examine African traditional religions, Islam, Christianity, new religious movements, and other African and African Diasporic religious expressions and experiences.

For more information on submissions, our prestigious 33-member editorial board, and our purpose and goals, please visit our website:

[http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/religious\\_studies/index.php/joar](http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/religious_studies/index.php/joar)

## **American Studies – Special Issue Aaron Douglas and the Harlem Renaissance**

Special Issue of *American Studies*, which developed from the internationally recognized conference and exhibit, Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist <<http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/>>.

The issue includes: William J. Harris, Gerald Early, Robert G. O'Meally, Terry Adkins, Farah Jasmine Griffin, David Krasner, Amy Kirschke, Richard J. Powell, Stephanie Fox Knappe, and Cheryl R. Ragar

For the full TOC see: <https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/amerstud/issue/view/316>

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### **Contact Information:**

Langston Hughes Center  
1440 Jayhawk Boulevard  
Room 9 Bailey Hall  
Lawrence, KS 66045-7574, USA  
Phone: (785)864-5044  
Fax: (785)864-5330

Interim Director:  
Shawn Leigh Alexander  
Assistant Professor of African & African American Studies  
[\*\*lhcaas@ku.edu\*\*](mailto:lhcaas@ku.edu)

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