

LHC Newsletter

Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Tuesday, September 4, 2012

Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

September 2012

In this newsletter:

- 1. Upcoming Events:** Nikky Finney; Jesse B. Semple Brownbag; Race, Space, and Gender; Benjamin Elijah Mays; Eddie Glaude
- 2. In the News:** African American Literary Blog; Fear of a Black President; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Richard Aoki; Racial Divide on Sneakers; Natasha Trethewey; Women, Gender, and Families of Color; Black August; Roy S. Bryce-Laporte
- 3. General Information:** W. E. B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta – Call for Papers

Sincerely,

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

Upcoming Events

Nikky Finney

What: *"Making Poetry in Our Anthropocene Age"* – Nikky Finney, National Book Award-winning poet, University of Kentucky

When: September 6 @ 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Where: Woodruff Auditorium, Kansas Union (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Hall Center for the Humanities

About:

National Book Award-winning poet and Professor of Creative Writing Nikky Finney seeks to explore the act of "Making Poetry in our Anthropocene Age." The Anthropocene is a term coined to suggest that humans now act as a geophysical force changing the climate of the planet, and ushering in a

new geological period. What is the damage done to the earth's ecosystems that might concern a contemporary poet? How does the Anthropocene ultimately matter to our human intersections with each other, the natural world, art, and culture? Finney, a child of activists, came of age during the civil rights and Black Arts movement, and through her childhood and education, became fascinated by the powerful synergy between creativity and history.

Nikky Finney

What: "A Conversation with Nikky Finney" – Nikky Finney, National Book Award-winning poet, University of Kentucky

When: September 7 @ 10:00 – 11:30 am

Where: Hall Center Conference Hall (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Sponsors of this Event: Hall Center for the Humanities

Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series

What: "Mad Men and the Northern Civil Rights Front of the 1960s" – Clarence Lang, University of Kansas

When: Monday, September 10 @ 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.

Race, Space, and Gender

What: Race, Space, and Gender: A Conversation with KU Faculty in African & African American Studies and American Studies - Shawn Leigh Alexander, Ben Chappell, Jennifer F. Hamer, and Randal Maurice Jelks

When: September 12 @ 7:00 – 9:00pm

Where: Raven Bookstore | 8 East 7th Street | Lawrence, KS

Cost per person: FREE and open to the public

Sponsors of this Event: Raven Bookstore, Langston Hughes Center, African & African American Studies, and American Studies

Benjamin Elijah Mays

What: "Benjamin Elijah Mays, Schoolmaster of the Movement: A Biography" - Randal Maurice Jelks, University of Kansas

When: September 13, 2012 @ 4:00 pm

Where: Jayhawk Ink, Kansas Union

Cost per person: FREE and Open to the Public

Sponsors of this Event: Jayhawk Ink, Hall Center for the Humanities, and American Studies

Eddie Glaude, Jr.

What: "The Crisis of Black Leadership" – Eddie Glaude, Jr., Princeton University

When: September 20 @ 7:30 pm

Where: Big Twelve Room, Kansas Union (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Langston Hughes Center, Hall Center for the Humanities, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Departments of African & African American Studies, American Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, and Religious Studies, Ecumenical Campus Ministries, Kansas African Studies Center, and the Theologian in Residence Committee Programing Committee of Lawrence

Eddie Glaude, Jr.

What: "The Role of the Black Church in the Age of Obama" – Eddie Glaude, Jr., Princeton University

When: September 22 @ 7:00 pm

Where: 9th Street Missionary Baptist Church | 847 Ohio Street | Lawrence, KS

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event:

Langston Hughes Center, Hall Center for the Humanities, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Departments of African & African American Studies, American Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, and Religious Studies, Ecumenical Campus Ministries, Kansas African Studies Center, and the Theologian in Residence Committee Programing Committee of Lawrence

In The News

African American Literary Blog

See entries from various authors at the following link: <http://projecthbw.blogspot.com/>

Fear of a Black President

Ta-Nehisi Coates | September 2012 | *The Atlantic*

The Irony of President Barack Obama is best captured in his comments on the death of Trayvon Martin, and the ensuing fray. Obama has pitched his presidency as a monument to moderation. He peppers his speeches with nods to ideas originally held by conservatives. He routinely cites Ronald Reagan. He effusively praises the enduring wisdom of the American people, and believes that the height of insight lies in the town square. Despite his sloganeering for change and progress, Obama is a conservative revolutionary, and nowhere is his conservative character revealed more than in the very sphere where he holds singular gravity—race.

Part of that conservatism about race has been reflected in his reticence: for most of his term in office, Obama has declined to talk about the ways in which race complicates the American present and, in particular, his own presidency. But then, last February, George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old insurance underwriter, shot and killed a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in Sanford, Florida. Zimmerman, armed with a 9 mm handgun, believed himself to be tracking the movements of a possible intruder. The possible intruder turned out to be a boy in a hoodie, bearing nothing but candy and iced tea. The local authorities at first declined to make an arrest, citing Zimmerman's claim of self-defense. Protests exploded nationally. Skittles and Arizona Iced Tea assumed totemic power. Celebrities—the actor Jamie Foxx, the former Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm, members of the Miami Heat—were photographed wearing hoodies. When Representative Bobby Rush of Chicago took to the House floor to denounce racial profiling, he was removed from the chamber after donning a hoodie mid-speech.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/fear-of-a-black-president/309064/>

Unknown Martin Luther King Audio Found in Attic

| August 21, 2012 | AP

Stephon Tull was looking through dusty old boxes in his father's attic in Chattanooga a few months ago when he stumbled onto something startling: an audio reel labeled, "Dr. King interview, Dec. 21, 1960."

He wasn't sure what he had until he borrowed a friend's reel-to-reel player and listened to the recording of his father interviewing Martin Luther King Jr. for a book project that never came to fruition. In clear audio, King discusses the importance of the civil rights movement, his definition of nonviolence and how a recent trip of his to Africa informed his views. Tull said the recording had been in the attic for years, and he wasn't sure who other than his father may have heard it.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/21/unheard-mlk-audio_n_1820005.html?1345586913&utm_hp_ref=black-voices

Former Black Panther Richard Aoki Named an FBI Informant

Jorge Rivas | August 20, 2012 | *ColorLines*

The man who armed the Black Panthers turns out to have been an FBI informant.

FBI files, uncovered by journalist Seth Rosenfeld, reveal that Richard Aoki, a prominent activist in the 1960s who was the first to supply the Black Panthers with guns and weapons training, was also an undercover FBI source.

Read the full article at the following link: http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/08/former_black_panther_richard_aoki_named_an_fbi_informant.html

Listen to a two-hour talk show with Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar and Fred Ho on the Aoki Controversy from

TRGGR Media Collective at the following link: <http://trggradio.org/2012/08/25/trggr-radio-the-aoki-controversy/>

Racial Divide on ... Sneakers

Emily Chertoff | August 20, 2012 | *The Atlantic*

Everybody wears them sometimes: to run, to bum around the house, to move furniture. Some people wear them as a fashion statement. Others have been killed for them.

There have been murders over Air Jordans in black communities for years -- yes, Air Jordans in particular. Sneaker-related violence is so infamous among African Americans that in December 2011, when Nike introduced an update to that model, a widespread hoax on the Internet had it that an 18-year-old named Tyreek Amir Jacobs was murdered while shopping for a pair.

Meanwhile, mostly white hipsters, rockers, and other subculture types perennially buy new Converse every fall. It's comparatively rare to see them in Jordans or Dunks, and it's virtually unheard of that they're subject to sneaker-related violence. What accounts for the contrast?

Jordans and Chucks come from the same originary sneaker, a canvas plimsoll from the mid-19th century. Both are named after basketball stars (one black, one white, we might note). So why is the former Jay-Z and the latter Dylan? How did the first become associated with black street culture and the second with white-dominated hipsterism? And what happens when said mostly-white hipsters decide they want to wear dunks too -- as they did in the mid-2000s, for about 10 minutes?

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/08/the-racial-divide-on-sneakers/261256/>

How Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey Wrote Her Father's 'Elegy'

Alex Hoyt | August 14, 2012 | *The Atlantic*

Natasha Trethewey was named the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States in June, becoming the first Southerner to receive the honor since Robert Penn Warren, in 1986, and the first African-American since Rita Dove, in 1993. A professor of English and Creative Writing at Emory University, in Atlanta, Trethewey is the author of three books of poetry. *Domestic Work* (2000), which won the Cave Canem Prize for a debut work by an African-American, is a meditation on working-class life in the American South partially based on her grandmother's life. *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002), winner of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize, envisions the life of one of the mixed-race prostitutes photographed by E.J. Bellocq in early-20th-century New Orleans. *Native Guard* (2006), which won the the Pulitzer Prize, centers on a black regiment of Union soldiers assigned to guard Confederate prisoners of war, yet also veers into more intimate reflections, including on the death of her mother, who was murdered while Trethewey was in college. Her next collection of poetry, *Thrall*, will be published this fall. Here, she shares several drafts of "Elegy," a poem from that collection. Dedicated to her father, a fellow poet, it recounts a fly-fishing trip the two took in his native Canada, and the various ways their lines have become tangled over the years.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/08/how-poet-laureate-natasha-trethewey-wrote-her-fathers-elegy/261126/>

New Journal: Women, Gender, and Families of Color

| August 10, 2012 | *KU News*

A ground-breaking scholarly journal has been launched by the University of Illinois Press in cooperation with the University of Kansas. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* expands the mission of the now defunct *Black Women, Gender, and Families*. The new title explicitly includes black, Latina, indigenous and Asian-American women, gender and families. It will maintain an

emphasis on examinations of U.S. policies and will encourage transnational comparative analyses. It will more fully integrate gender as an analytic category while strengthening interdisciplinary paradigms for the study of women of color, families and communities.

Women, Gender, and Families of Color is edited by Professor Jennifer Hamer of the University of Kansas Department of American Studies.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.news.ku.edu/2012/august/10/wgfc.shtml>

Revision and Origin of Black August

Kiliu Nyasha | August 8 , 2012 | *Black Agenda Report*

2012 marks the 33rd anniversary of Black August, first organized to honor our fallen freedom fighters, George and Jonathan Jackson, James McClain, William Christmas, Khatari Gauden, and sole survivor of the August 7, 1970 Courthouse Slave Rebellion, Ruchell Cinque Magee. During these three decades, we've witnessed a steady revision of the meaning of Black August and its inherent ideology, the undisputed leader of which was our martyred Comrade, George Lester Jackson.

Sadly, lots of individuals – many of whom are straight-up Black capitalists and Black nationalists – have seized upon Black August as a means of profiteering and lime-lighting, self-aggrandizement, and promotion of their own agendas. For those reasons, I want to make very clear the ideology espoused by George and Jonathan Jackson and their comrades.

First of all, George was unequivocally an internationalist and a socialist. He despised racism and, along with his brother, Jonathan, eschewed cultural nationalism.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://blackagendareport.com/content/revision-and-origin-black-august>

Roy S. Bryce-Laporte

Douglas Martin | August 8 , 2012 | *New York Times*

Roy S. Bryce-Laporte, a sociologist who led one of the nation's first African-American studies departments, at [Yale University](#), and did research that advanced understanding of blacks who came to the United States voluntarily rather than as slaves, died on July 31 in Sykesville, Md. He was 78.

His brother, Herrington J. Bryce, said that the cause was undetermined, but that he had had a series of small strokes.

Professor Bryce-Laporte was named director of Yale's new department of African-American studies in 1969, when colleges and universities were recruiting black students and searching for ways to include their culture, history and other concerns in the curriculum.

Students participated in the selection of Professor Bryce-Laporte. One of them, Donald H. Ogilvie, praised him as "not all academician and not all activist," adding that Professor Bryce-Laporte was "still angry."

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/nyregion/roy-bryce-laporte-who-led-black-studies-program-at-yale-dies-at-78.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

General Information

Call for Papers, Panels & Posters

W. E. B. Du Bois 50th Anniversary Commemorative Conference

W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta: A Commemorative Conference at Clark Atlanta University

The year 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of the passing of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. On his birthday in February of that year, it is fitting that Clark Atlanta University (CAU) celebrate his life and scholarship: Dr. Du Bois wrote his most influential works in the 23 years he spent as a professor at Atlanta University. Serving as faculty of the Departments of History and Economics, he taught at Atlanta University from 1897 to 1910, and then returned from 1934 to 1944 as chair of the Department of Sociology. Dr. Du Bois also had impact in the area of social work and as a novelist, poet and short story writer. The *W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta Conference* will serve as a meeting at the crossroads of various paths of Du Bois's work. Conference participants will engage in an interdisciplinary and international introspection of the life, scholarship and activism of one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century.

In a four-day conference, beginning on February 20, 2013 and concluding on Du Bois's birthday of February 23, Clark Atlanta University will host panels that highlight his countless contributions, especially those produced in the 23 years of his tenure. Central works to be discussed include the *Phylon* journal (founded in 1940) and the Atlanta University Publications (which he directed 1898-1914), where he covered topics including African Americans in higher education, art, the Black church, urbanization, health, business, economics, and race relations in Georgia. Books published while in Atlanta are also central to the CAU discussion: *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), *Black Reconstruction* (1935) and *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, the second of his three autobiographies (1940).

The *Wings of Atlanta* conference seeks to bring together local, national and international scholars to explore themes in Dr. Du Bois's publications and collected papers in order to illuminate his experiences at Fisk University, Harvard University, University of Berlin, Atlanta University, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, New York, Chicago, Ghana and other areas where Du Bois lived and worked. Especially welcome are panels addressing the multitude of Du Boisian intellectual legacies and implications of his myriad research agendas.

This conference will be held as a conclusion to the year-long W. E. B. Du Bois Major Works Seminar Series hosted by the Clark Atlanta University Office of the President, Office of the Provost, School of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of History. The *W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta Conference*, held on CAU's campus, offers a uniquely significant locale from which to commemorate, interrogate, and celebrate the life and work of this exquisitely educated and distinctly complex man.

As interest is wide but space limited, individual conference papers will be considered, but panels of 4-6 papers will be given preference. Panel proposals should be no more than 4 pages long and individual paper proposals no more than 2 pages. Panel submissions must identify the panel chair, names, phone numbers, email addresses, and institutional affiliation information for the chair and all panelists.

One-page proposals for undergraduate and graduate student posters are also encouraged.

Send proposals to Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans at sevans@cau.edu.

For questions or additional information, call Dr. Evans at 404-880-6352.

Conference proposal deadline October 15, 2012.

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[< previous](#)

[next >](#)

