

LHC Newsletter

Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Friday, November 1, 2013

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November 2013

Hello Everyone,

This is the e-newsletter for the Langston Hughes Center (LHC). The Langston Hughes Center (formerly the Langston Hughes Resource Center, founded in 1998) is an academic research and educational center that is building upon the legacy and creative and intellectual insight of African American author, poet, playwright, folklorist and social critic, Langston Hughes. The Center coordinates, strengthens and develops teaching, research and outreach activities in African American Studies, and the study of race and culture in American society at the University of Kansas and throughout the region. Each month the LHC sends out an e-newsletter to inform you about upcoming events at KU and throughout the region, as well as provide you with any recent news of general interest to those concerned with the work of the Center.

See below for the latest LHC e-newsletter. More information about our events and programs can be found on our website at <http://www2.ku.edu/~lhcaas> . Please feel free to pass this information along to friends and colleagues.

In this newsletter:

- 1. Upcoming Events:** Case for a Pardon, Jesse B. Semple Brownbag; Writing War
- 2. In the News:** LHC Blog; African American Literary Blog; Old Stand Your Ground Case; Yes, The South Really is Different; The Role of Women in 12 Years a Slave; America's Top Colleges & Universities; We must remember the story of 12 Years a Slave; Shackles and Ivy; How Slavery Feeds Today's Racism
- 3. General Information:** Call For Papers NCBS; *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*; *MELUS & Ralph Ellison Centennial*;

Sincerely,

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

Upcoming Events

Case for a Pardon

What: "Case for a Pardon" – Steve Penn, Kansas City Star and Congressman Emanuel

When: November 4 @ 7:00 pm

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

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Black Student Union, Departments of American Studies, African American Studies, and The Langston Hughes Center

Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series

What: "The Heartland as Home: Blending Place, Race, and Personal History in Dramatic Writing" – Darren Canady, University of Kansas

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

Where: Langston Hughes Center, Room 1, Bailey Hall (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.

Writing War

What: "Writing War: Civil Conflict and Memory" – Aminatta Forna, Sterling Brown Visiting Professor, Williams College

When: November 14 @ 5:00 pm

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

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Hall Center for the Humanities

For More Information see: <http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu/~hallcenter/cgi-bin/index.php/calendar/event/aminatta-forna-writing-war-civil-conflict-and-memory>

In The News

Langston Hughes Center Blog

See news entries related to African American Studies at the following link: <http://afs.ku.edu/~lhcaas/The%20LHC%20Blog/The%20LHC%20Blog.html>

African American Literary Blog

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

Old Stand Your Ground Case Gets New Trial

| October 1, 2013 | NPR Tell Me More

A New trial could start soon for a Florida woman who was sentenced to 20 years in prison for aggravated assault. She says she was merely standing her ground, and firing a warning shot at her abusive husband. Host Michel Martin speaks with Florida Times-Union reporter Larry Hannan about the case, and the issues it's bringing up.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=228482599>

Yes, The South Really Is Different

Zach Beauchamp | October 18, 2013 | *Think Progress*

The debt ceiling crisis may be over (at least until February), but the crisis created by the Republican Party's sharp reactionary turn emphatically is not. I've argued that the Tea Party, is [the legacy of structural racism in the South dating back to the 1930s](#), and will remain a powerful force in the Republican Party absent tectonic shocks to the political landscape on the level of the civil rights movement.

This analysis can and should be pushed further. The South is best understood as an exceptional region inside the United States, with a unique political and cultural milieu birthed by the intersection of slavery and deep religiosity. Southern influence on the rest of the United States has been immense, but the South nonetheless has always been different, marked by the racial caste system that defined its existence until the Civil War. It remains different today.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2013/10/18/2786841/yes-south-different-race/>

The Surprisingly Central Role of Slave Women in "12 Years a Slave"

Brenda E. Stevenson | October 18, 2013 | *HNN*

The ordeal of Solomon Northup, a free man of color from New York who was kidnapped in Washington, D.C. and sold as a slave in Louisiana, is the focus of the new film *12 Years a Slave*, directed by British filmmaker Steve McQueen and based on Northup's 1853 published autobiographical account. The film has received much early critical acclaim, and rightfully so. It is, without a doubt, one of the best depictions of antebellum slave life put to film and, along with, Haile Gerima's 1993 masterwork *Sankofa*, Stan Lathan's 1987 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the indomitable classic *Roots* of 1977, and Gabriel Ranger's 2010 *I Am Slave*, the story of the contemporary enslavement of Mende Nazer, *12 Years a Slave* presents some of the most compelling, and soon to be iconic, images of slave women on celluloid.

Read more at the following link: <http://hnn.us/article/153647>

12 Years a Slave: The Perfect answer to Tarantino

Elena Sheppard | October 20, 2013 | *Salon*

Throughout our lives, our generation has been shown violence as entertainment. In video games we get points for killing; on television we watch graphic crimes and see detectives sift through bloody clues; in movies we sympathize with killers and wait for city-crushing explosions.

Even with our country's most grotesque and grim histories we are accustomed to Tarantino-style cannonball explosions of blood — history gorified, and also glorified. With his new film *12 Years a Slave*, director Steve McQueen seizes the hyperbolic trends of cinema violence and shapes them into something far more real. McQueen shatters our generation's archetypes of

trigger-happy Djangos, or previous generations' stereotypes of smiling Mammys, and replaces them with a version of slavery that strips down the Hollywood lie of a cheerful antebellum South, and presents slavery — and the day-in-day-out routine and visceral violence — as barbarity. It's enough to somber our gore-ready generation into real feeling.

Read more at the following link: http://www.salon.com/2013/10/20/12_years_a_slave_is_aptly_unglamorous_partner/

America's Top Colleges and Universities Have a Hidden Legacy of Slavery

David Austin Walsh | October 23, 2013 | *HNN*

In 2006, Brown University issued an extraordinary report detailing the university's relationship with the slave trade. The authors, drawn from Brown faculty, administration, and alumni, acknowledged the deep, intertwined history of the slave trade and the university -- and the role slave labor played in the very construction of the school. The report made headlines across the country, not least because it was commissioned by Brown president Ruth Simmons, the first African American and the first woman to become president of an Ivy League university.

But Brown is hardly the only venerable university in the United States that is reckoning with its hidden legacy of slavery.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://hnn.us/article/153693>

Historian Says '12 Years is a Story We Must Remember

| October 24, 2013 | *NPR*

"We love being the country that freed the slaves," says historian David Blight. But "we're not so fond of being the country that had the biggest slave system on the planet." That's why Blight was glad to see the new film *12 Years a Slave*, an adaptation of an 1853 memoir by Solomon Northup. Northup was a free black man who was kidnapped into slavery in 1841 and won his freedom 12 years later. "We need to keep telling this story because it, in part, made us who we were," Blight tells *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross.

Blight is the director of the Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition at Yale University. His 2007 book, *A Slave No More*, includes the recently discovered narratives of two former slaves. He's currently writing a biography of Frederick Douglass, who after escaping slavery, wrote perhaps the most famous and important of all slave memoirs and became an influential abolitionist....

Listen to the segment at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/2013/10/24/240491318/historian-says-12-years-is-a-story-the-nation-must-remember>

Shackles and Ivy

| October 30, 2013 | *Democracy Now*

A new book 10 years in the making examines how many major U.S. universities — Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Williams and the University of North Carolina, among others — are drenched in the sweat, and sometimes the blood, of Africans brought to the United States as slaves. In "Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities," Massachusetts Institute of Technology American history professor Craig Steven Wilder reveals how the slave economy and higher education grew up together. "When you think about the colonial world, until the American Revolution, there is only one college in the South, William & Mary ... The other eight colleges were all Northern schools, and they're actually located in key sites, for the most part, of the merchant economy where the slave traders had come to power and rose as the financial and intellectual backers of new culture of the colonies," Wilder says.

Watch the segment at the following link: http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/30/shackles_and_ivy_the_secret_history

How Slavery Feeds Today's Racism

12 Years a Slave, Steve McQueen's critically acclaimed movie opening nationwide on Nov. 8, is the most powerful cinematic depiction of slavery ever seen on-screen. The critical buzz surrounding the film has rightfully focused on the combination of its astonishing performances, nuanced script and unflinching examination of antebellum slavery's impact on a nation founded on declarations of liberty and freedom for all.

But the film's biggest accomplishment is the way in which its artistry is at once an immersive experience that manages the nearly impossible, creating historical characters whose actions speak clearly and fluidly in conversation with the present.

Anyone who wants to understand the latest controversy over racial profiling at Barneys, a Hollywood actress in blackface for Halloween or an athlete spewing the n-word should immediately view 12 Years a Slave.

Read more the following link: <http://www.theroot.com/views/how-slavery-feeds-todays-racism>

General Information

**Call for Papers – NCBS
Annual Conference
March 5-8, 2014
Miami, FL**

NCBS is accepting abstracts for individual paper, poster, panel, session, roundtable discussion, workshop, town hall meeting that explore the Black experience locally, nationally, and/or globally from a variety of perspectives. Of particular interest are presentations that comparatively explore these experiences, as well as those that examine the discipline of Africana/Black Studies using multi-layered frameworks and methodologies. Papers that incorporate various combinations of race/nationality, class, gender, and sexuality, through the lens of but not limited to Afrocentric, cross and multicultural, diasporic, feminist, post-colonial, post-modernist or transnational interpretative schemes are welcomed. Send a 150-400 word abstract for a panel (one for the panel subject and one for each panelist), and/or individual paper and poster presentations. For roundtable discussions submit a 500 word abstract that explores the discussion topic.

Conference proposal deadline January 11, 2014.

http://www.ncbsonline.org/conference_call_for_papers

**Call for Papers – Women, Gender, and Families of Color
US Immigration: Women's Rights and Realities
Manuscripts Due: 12/15/13**

Women and families across racial and ethnic groups have historically moved to the US in search of better living conditions, safety, and opportunities. These women disproportionately suffer from poverty, assault, unfair labor practices, poor health, a lack of health services, and ambiguous protections and educational access for themselves and their children.

This special issue is devoted to scholarship that explores the historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of living as documented/undocumented women of color emigrants. Possible topics include but not limited to:

- *separation from children, partners, and kin
- *emotional challenges

- *abuse and violence
- *reproductive rights and health care
- *labor issues
- *managing families and households
- *living conditions
- *documented and undocumented women
- *legal rights and protections
- *education

Contact: Editor, Jennifer Hamer, JHamer@KU.edu Guest-Editor, Jacqueline McLeod, Metropolitan State University of Denver

**Call for Papers – MELUS Conference & The Ralph Ellison Centennial Symposium
March 6-9, 2014
Oklahoma City, OK**

In his essay "Going to the Territory" (1980), Ralph Ellison wrote that "[i]n the United States all social barriers are vulnerable to cultural styles." This was so, Ellison recalled, even in the Oklahoma of his youth, where many arenas of public and private life were racially segregated. Although black Oklahomans lived under conditions of "social and political unfreedom," they enjoyed more than a little cultural freedom: the freedom to give to, take from, and adapt other U.S. and world cultures.

The 28th Annual MELUS Conference brings together scholars and creative writers to answer some of the questions raised by Ellison's essay. How have "social barriers" shaped culture in the U.S.? In what particular ways have ethnic literary cultures crossed social barriers in particular locales and regions, or in the nation at large? And how have these crossings transformed regional, national, and global cultures?

Deadline for proposals and abstracts (250 words in Microsoft Word): Nov. 1, 2013.

Please email conference abstracts and proposals to melusokc2014@gmail.com. To be considered for the graduate student travel award cc: mdennihiy@gmail.com. All presenters, chairs, and moderators must be members of MELUS. Membership information can be found on the MELUS website at www.melus.org.

If you would like to unsubscribe send an email to lhcaas@ku.edu to let us know, and we'll remove you immediately.

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