Black Love: A Symposium

In July, English/WGSS professor Ayesha Hardison was awarded a $7500 grant from the Kansas Humanities Council to serve as project director of Black Love: A Symposium. Supplemented by donations from several co-sponsors, including KU English, the grant will fund this 14-16 September gathering that commemorates the publication of Zora Neale Hurston’s classic Harlem Renaissance novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God, in 1937. Indeed, events related to the symposium will run from 11-18 September (see http://BLS.KU.edu for details). The program for the symposium itself is included in this digital version of the DNB (below), along with publicity for an offshoot of the symposium featuring N. Y. Nathiri, co-sponsored by the Applied Humanities Workshop and the English Department. Participants in the symposium include several English scholars from across the country, as well as KU English alumni such as DaMaris Hill and Carmeletta Williams. In a news release about the symposium, Hardison and American Studies/AAAS professor Randall Jelks “contend that an exchange about the evolving aesthetics and politics of ‘Black Love’ is just as important now as it was in 1937 given that its expression is still too often disavowed and pathologized in critical discourses or deemed illegible and unprofitable in popular culture.” The symposium is organized broadly around six themes related to Black Love: political economies; imaging; languages and literatures; traditions and principles; ethics and faith; and rhythms and tonalities. All events are free and open to the KU community and the public. Congratulations on securing this grant and organizing this project, Ayesha!

2017 Byron Caldwell Smith Book Award Winner

The Hall Center for the Humanities has named Megan Kaminski’s second book of poetry, Deep City, the winner of the 2017 Byron Caldwell Smith Book Award for poetry. Theatre professor Henry Bial’s book, Playing God: The Bible on the Broadway Stage, won the 2017 award for nonfiction. Kaminski and Bial will be honored formally and deliver a lecture on Tuesday, 12 September, at 7:30 pm in the Hall Center Conference Hall. There will be a reception and a book signing as well. Noemi Press publicity for Kaminski’s collection includes these comments from poet Jennifer Moxley: “Her delicate poems loiter at the intersection of bodies and letters (both alphabetic and epistolary), where objects and imagination collude. Kaminski’s poems beautifully illustrate how our sense perceptions insistently puncture through even the most rational arrangement. Deep City—not so much a place as a literary pleasure.” The Byron Caldwell Smith Award was established by a bequest from Kate Stephens, a former KU student and one of KU’s first female professors, in honor of pioneering language and literature KU professor Byron Caldwell Smith. The award is given biennially to individuals who live or are employed in Kansas and who have written an outstanding book published in the last two years. Congratulations, Megan!

Calendar

M 11
M18 Black Love Symposium, “80th Anniversary of Zora Neale Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God,” see below and <BLS.KU.edu> for full schedule of events. Co-sponsored by English.

T 12 Book Launch and Reading, The River Bank, by Kij Johnson, English, 7:00 pm, The Raven Bookstore, 6 East 7th Street.

2017 Byron Caldwell Smith Book Award Presentation and Lectures featuring Megan Kaminski, English, and Henry Bial, Theatre, 7:30 pm, Hall Center Conference Hall.

F 15 Fall 2017 Applied Humanities Workshop, Diverse Academic Careers presents N.Y. Nathiri, Executive Director of P.E.C. which hosts the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of Arts and Humanities, 4:00-5:30 pm, Hall Center Conference Room. Co-sponsored by English.

T 19 Department of English New Faculty Reception to welcome Randall Fuller and new GTAS/lecturers, 3:30-4:40 pm, North Gallery, Spencer Research Library.

2nd Annual State of the College, hosted by Dean of CLAS Carl Lejuez, will include an overview of College priorities and an audience Q&A. To be recorded for future viewing. 4:00 pm, The Commons.

Reading/Talk by Kij Johnson, English, to launch the new Gunn Center (CSSF) and Emily Taylor Center for Women & Gender Equity feminist science fiction book club, 6:00 pm, Jayhawk Ink.
**Publications**

Boynton, Anthony

Ellis, Iain

Fischer, Iris Smith

**Presentations**

Kaminski, Megan


“Meristicematic Possibility: Indeterminacy and Adaptivity.” Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment Conference, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 24 June.

Poetry Reading. Eco/poe/tics. Detroit, MI, 23 June.

**Accepted for Publication**

Ellis, Iain

Harrington, Joseph

**KU and Regional Events**

- **Place Race and Space Seminar,** “Truth Crushed in the Earth Shall Rise Again’: The Political Evolution of General Baker, Black Revolutionary,” David Goldberg, Wayne State University, 11 September, 3:00-4:30 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

- **The Urban Experience Seminar,** “Modeling For-Profit College Entry and Exit,” Eric Shannon, School of Public Affairs & Administration, 14 September, 3:00-4:30 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

- **CTE Fall Workshop,** “Best Practices for Effective, Productive, and Civil Class Discussion,” Yvonne Chen, Journalism and Mass Communications and Ward Lyles, Urban Planning, 15 September, 12:00-1:00 pm, 135 Budig Hall

- **Digital Humanities Seminar,** “HathiTrust Research Center: Strategic approaches to opening research opportunities on closed data,” J. Stephen Downie, Director, HathiTrust Research Center, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 18 September, 3:00-4:30 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

- **CTE Fall Workshop,** “Inclusive Assignment Design,” Andrea Greenhout, CTE/Psychology and Lua Vuille, Law, 19 September, 12:00-1:00 pm, 135 Budig.

- **Oral History Seminar,** “Queering Flamenco: OUT in the Tropics 2016,” Michelle Heffner Hayes, Dance, 3:00-4:30 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

- **Military & Society Seminar,** “No Beer, No Booze, No Babes: Entertaining America’s Volunteer,” Kara Dixon Vuic, History, Texas Christian University, 21 September, 3:00-4:30 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

- **CTE Course Transformation Grants and Faculty Seminar: Innovations for Deep Learning.** Deadline: 15 September.

**The Glamour Thieves**

Not content with having written a novel, Don Allmon, a former KU English MA student and current KU English IT rep, decided to try his hand at playwriting. When I asked him about his book, published by Riptide Press on August 28th, he responded by contributing the following mock interview. (Ed. Note: Serves me right to have words put in my mouth after I’ve done it to so many of you!)

**BE:** So what’s your book about?

**DA:** It’s about a couple of old friends (with benefits) who had a falling out and are trying to patch things up. Oh, and they’re an elf and an orc. And they’re gay. And there are ninjas and robots and stuff. “Publisher’s Weekly” said some very nice things in a starred review, so I should probably quote them just to make the story sound legit:

“A cyberpunk sensibility, intense action, and flagrant sensuality make a potent mix in Allmon’s swoonworthy debut erotic romance…. With sharp wit and an eye for detail, Allmon builds a fascinating, complex world where anything can happen.”

**BE:** That’s… unusual.

**DA:** I never really meant for anyone to read it outside a couple of friends. About two years ago, I decided to take a break from the “serious” epic fantasy I was working on and indulge a guilty pleasure: take a silly idea (monster sex) and write it as well as I could. And it turned out people liked it, and eventually Riptide, a GLBT romance publisher, offered me a contract for a series.

**BE:** Wasn’t your MA on monsters?

**DA:** Yep. Twelfth century werewolf stories. In my research I came across some really interesting works that connected medieval monsters like giants and ogres with “untamed masculinity,” and that was something I had some fun with in GT.

**BE:** Do any of the villains or idiots resemble members of the English faculty? [Ed. Note: I confess I did ask this.]

**DA:** Um… *glances at some of the more explicit content* …no. Absolutely no.
Fall 2017 Applied Humanities Workshop

Diverse Academic Careers Presents

N. Y. Nathiri
Executive Director, Association for the Preservation of the Eatonville Community P.E.C.

Interested in the non-profit sector? Join us for food and conversation!

P.E.C. is a 501 (c) 3, founded in 1987, based in Eatonville, FL, the hometown of Zora Neale Hurston. P.E.C. hosts The Zora Neale Hurston Festival of Arts and Humanities, held annually since 1990; The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts (The Hurston); and a host of year-round programs for pre-K through 12. Educated at Ithaca College and Syracuse U, with an honorary doctorate from Rollins College, N.Y. is a professionally trained librarian and an award-winning preservationist. In 1991, she published Zora! Zora Neale Hurston, a Woman and Her Community.

When: Friday September 15, 2017 4-5:30 PM
Where: Hall Center Conference Room

RSVP to mgraaham@ku.edu by 9/11/17

Sponsors: Hall Center for the Humanities, Department of English, Black Love Symposium, CLAS
Black Love: A Symposium
The 80th Anniversary of Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
University of Kansas, Lawrence
Schedule 2017

THURSDAY, September 14th


6:30 - 7:30PM Welcome Reception, *Spencer Museum of Art*

FRIDAY, September 15th

9:00 - 10:00AM Keynote II: Mark Anthony Neal, *Duke University*, “From ‘Tea Cake’ to ‘Hollywood’: Hurston, *Queen Sugar* and When Black Masculinity is Grown,” *The Commons*

10:15 - 11:45AM Panel I: Traditions and Icons of Black Love, *The Commons*


11:45AM - 12:15PM Book Signing I, *The Commons*

1:00 - 2:30PM Panel II: Black Love Acts and Legacies, *The Commons*

- Riché Barnes, *Yale University*, “The Ethnographic: Zora Neale Hurston’s Iterations of Black Love”
- Maria S. Johnson, *University of Delaware*, “‘Searching for Daddy?’ Young Black Women’s Theories about Dating and the Influence of Fathers”
- Jovonne J. Bickerstaff, *University of Maryland-College Park*, “‘Nothing But the Real Thang’: Expanding Narratives for Black Couples Beyond Broken Families and Black Love”

2:45-4:00PM Panel III: The Political and Spiritual Ethics of Black Love, *The Commons*


4:15 - 5:30PM Panel IV: The Images and Tonalities of Black Love, *The Commons*

- J. Brendan Shaw, *Central State University*, “Why Don’t You Love Me?: Real Love and Imagined Histories in Recent Black Women’s Music Videos”


Deborah Elizabeth Whaley, *University of Iowa*, “Polynoir Amour: *Love Jones, Friday Foster*, and the Struggle of Affective Citizenship”

Break

7:30 - 8:30PM Keynote III: Anthony Sparks, *California State University-Fullerton*, “Radical Love/Everyday Blackness: Zora Neale Hurston and Her Televisual Descendants in the 21st Century,” *Lawrence Arts Center*

8:30 - 9:30PM Reception, *Lawrence Arts Center*

SATURDAY, September 16th

9:00 - 10:00AM Keynote IV: Tera W. Hunter, *Princeton University*, “Black Love and Marriage in Bondage and Freedom,” *The Commons*

10:15 - 11:45AM Panel V: Black Love Languages and Literature, *The Commons*

- DaMaris B. Hill, *University of Kentucky*, “Imagining Black Love in Contemporary African American Literature”
- Nicki Night, *Writer*, “Romance by Black Authors and Perceptions of Black Masculinity”

11:45AM - 12:15PM Book Signing II, *The Commons*

Lunch

1:00 - 2:30PM Panel VI: Black Love Sites and Communities, *The Commons*

- Andréa N. Williams, *Ohio State University*, “Love on the Quad: Courtship, Surveillance, and the Black College Press”
- Kelly A. Harris, *Independent Scholar*, “Shout it from the Rooftops: Sustaining Black Love in a Post-Katrina New Orleans”

2:45 - 3:45PM Closing Roundtable Discussion with N. Y. Nathiri, Executive Director of *The Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc.*, and Maryemma Graham, *University of Kansas*, English and Director of *The Project on the History of Black Writing, The Commons*

5:00 - 7:30PM The Soul of Zora Neale Hurston, Quilt Exhibit and Reception, featuring performances by Lex Norwood and Carmelisha Williams, *Marla Quilts Inc. African American Quilt Museum and Textile Academy*