

Black Education for Liberation
Conference Programme
2nd-4th November 2017
Birmingham City University

Thursday 2nd November, 2017
City North Campus, Baker Lecture Hall
Baker building
Perry Barr
B42 2SU

12.00pm-1.00pm- Registration

1.00pm-1.45pm - **Welcome & Introduction** - Kehinde Andrews

1.45-2.30pm - **Panel Session one - Why Black studies?**

Black Studies BA (Hons) Students: Why we chose Black studies.

2.30pm-3.30pm- **Panel session two: Religion and spirituality.**

a) Chikukuango Cuxima-Zwa: Sacred Art and Healing Practice: *Ritualized Body in Performance Arts*.

b) Alexander Holmes-Brown- In-communication: *Black Theology in the Americas*.

3.30pm-4.00pm- *Break*

4.00pm-5.30pm - **Panel session three: The journey to Black liberation.**

a) Phillip Beckles-Raymond - Economics for Liberation: *Resisting capitalistic values*.

b) Daniel Shodipo - Black education for liberation.

c) Sihlangu Tshuma - First-generation African cultural entrepreneurs in Birmingham.

5.30pm-6.30pm- Dinner

6.30pm-7.30pm

Keynote Speaker - Aparecida de Jesus Ferreira

Race and education policies in Brazil: Research examples from teacher education courses and textbooks.

7.30pm-8.30pm

Keynote Speaker- Linton Kwesi Johnson

An audience with Linton Kwesi Johnson

Friday 3rd November, 2017
City North Campus, Baker lecture hall
Baker building
Perry Barr
B42 2SU

12.00pm-1.00pm Registration

1.00pm-2.30pm- **Exhale: A performance and workshop** by Zeddie Lawal

2.30pm-4.00pm - **Panel session one: Black radical pedagogy**

Akin Abioye & Mali White-Collins- Black Radical Pedagogy: *How to move towards a more radical education for Black students in historically white spaces.*

4.00pm-4.30pm – *Break*

4.30pm-5.10pm- **Black Archives**

Mitchell Esajas - The New Urban Collective

Munira Mohamed and Sarah Buntin – Black Cultural Archives

5.10pm-5.40pm- **A Presentation of Artwork.** Joyce Treasure:

5.40pm-6.30pm – *Dinner*

6.30pm-7.30pm - **Panel Session two: (Neo)-liberal ‘Critical Black’ Studies and Black Pedagogical Politics of Black Study**

a) Theodore Foster- Post-Civil Rights in the Hold: *Race, Neo-liberalism and the Politics of Historical Memory in the U.S. South.*

b) Casey Goonan - Low Intensity Operations: *White Supremacy, Liberal-Democratic Nation Building, and the Discursive Politics of U.S. Policing.*

b) Ashley Ngozi Agbasoga - Race, Rights, and Recognition: *Conceptualizing Blackness, Indigeneity, and Citizenship in Neo-liberal Mexico*.

7.30pm- 8.00pm - **Huey and Louis**. Jonny Leigh-Wright: Short film presentation

8.00pm-8.45pm

Keynote Speaker-Aurora Vergara Figueroa

A movement and a field: Black and Afro-diasporic Studies in Colombia (1877-2017)

Saturday 4th November 2017

Room C192

City campus, Curzon Building

Cardigan Street

B4 7BD

10.00am-3.00pm - There will be sessions running about the Black Studies degree and the Library of Birmingham has offered a tour of their archive for those who sign up

3.30pm-5.00pm – **Plenary: Making Blackness Visible** Feat. New Urban Collective, Black Cultural Archives, Ylva Habel & Mónica Moreno Figueroa.

5.00pm-6.00pm

Keynote Speaker: Juliet Hooker

Theorizing Race in the Americas: Du Bois and Vasconcelos' Mestizo Futurisms.

Keynote speakers

Linton Kwesi Johnson

Linton was born in 1952 in Chapelton, Clarendon, Jamaica. He came to London in 1963, went to Tulse Hill secondary school and later studied Sociology at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. He was a member of the Black Panthers, and developed his work with Rasta Love, a group of poets and drummers. In 1977 he was awarded a C Day Lewis Fellowship, becoming the writer-in residence for Lambeth. He then worked at the Keswidee Centre, the first home of Black theatre and art. In 1974 Race Today published Johnson's first collection of poetry, *Voices of the Living and the Dead*. He has had four more books published and in 2002 became only the second living poet and the first black poet to have his work included in Penguin's Modern Classics series, under the title *Mi Revalueshanary Fren: Selected Poems*. Johnson's first album, *Dread Beat An Blood* was released in 1978, and since then he has released 14 more albums, including *LKJ Live in Paris in 2004*, a CD and DVD celebrating his 25th anniversary as a reggae recording artist. Linton Kwesi Johnson has been running his own record label, LKJ Records, since 1981.

Aparecida de Jesus Ferreira

Aparecida de Jesus Ferreira started her career as an elementary and secondary school teacher in Brazil. She has a doctorate from the University Of London, UK. She studied for a postdoctoral qualification at King's College London (University of London) from February 2014 to January 2015. She is a Professor and Associate Researcher at the Ponta Grossa State University (UEPG), Paraná, Brazil and she currently teaches in the Languages course at undergraduate, MA and PhD levels. Dr Ferreira has published thirteen books in Brazil and has also published one book in the United States.

Abstract

Race and education policies in Brazil: research examples from teacher education courses and textbooks

The social identities of race is an issue that has been discussed in Brazil in relation to the need to include all social identities within schools, curricula and society. Changes to the Brazilian curriculum regarding the issues of race took place in January 2003 with the implementation of Federal Law 10.639/2003, which made the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture mandatory (Brasil, 2005). The contribution of this policy to education in Brazil was welcome in terms of addressing issues that were previously absent in curricula and in teacher education courses. This presentation reflects on autobiographic narratives about teachers regarding race. Over the last few years, much has been done in the field of narrative research (Clandinin; Connelly, 1998, 2000); teachers' identities (Norton & Early, 2011; Barkhuizen, 2013); and in the field of critical race studies that considers the importance of narratives (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Kubota & Lin, 2009). In order to reflect about race I use the theoretical framework that arises from Critical Race Theory (CRT), which was the basis for my data analysis (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The narratives were gathered during a course about teacher education that I teach as part of an MA course in Brazil. My research showed the personal benefits that teachers derived by reflecting about an issue that is very important and difficult to

discuss in Brazilian society. The narratives revealed that, in one way or another, the issue of race was present in the teachers' lives, whether as part of their own education at school and at university; in their family lives; and also in their classrooms as teachers.

Mitchell Esajas

Mitchell is co-founder and chair of New Urban Collective, a social enterprise with the mission to strengthen the socioeconomic position of youths with a migrant background, especially those of African descent. He obtained a master's degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology and a master's degree in Business Administration and works as a program manager of the master's Medical, Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. In addition, he organizes education, empowerment and advocacy programs for youths, students and young professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds in Amsterdam.

Aurora Vergara Figueroa

Aurora is a professor of Sociology and the director of the Afro-diasporic Studies Centre (CEAF) at Universidad Icesi in Cali/Colombia. She is also the author of the forthcoming book *Afro-descendant Resistance to Deracination in Colombia: Massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Presentation abstract

A movement and a field: *Black and Afro-diasporic Studies in Colombia (1877-2017)*

In Colombia, to what we could refer as Black Studies is a dynamic field of thought and action that materializes in research centers, research groups at universities and high school ethnic curricula. I will argue that one could trace this intellectual practice to the nineteenth century. I aim to describe how the first publication by Candelario Obeso in 1877 started a fruitful school of thought that is highly engaged with the African diaspora and is nourished by the Afrocolombian social movement. Hence, in this talk I present a chronology of the field of Black and Afrodiasporic Studies in Colombia starting in 1877 and ending in 2017.

Ylva Habel

Ylva Habel is a senior lecturer in media and communication studies at Södertörn University. Between 2017 and 2019 she is on leave to work as senior research fellow specializing in antiblack racism at CEMFOR, Center for Multidisciplinary Research on Racism, Uppsala University. Habel has a background as cinema studies scholar, and her interdisciplinary research includes Black and Afrodiasporic studies, intersectional, critical whiteness studies and postcolonial perspectives. Her most recent research interest revolves around exceptionalist affective economies mainstream media dialogue, and will try to tease out discursive affinities between contemporary Swedish and Dutch cultural debates on antiblack racism.

Monica G. Moreno Figueroa

Monica is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Cambridge. Her research, teaching and publications have developed around three main topics: the lived experience of 'race' and racism with a focus on Mexico and Latin America; feminist theory and the interconnections between beauty, emotions and racism; and visual methodologies and applied

research collaborations. Mónica has lectured at Newcastle, Princeton, Nottingham Universities, Goldsmiths, Birkbeck College, and El Colegio de Mexico. At Cambridge, Monica has established the provision for teaching on race and racism, as well as intersectional and transnational approaches to social issues relating to race, gender and class oppressions.

Juliet Hooker

Juliet is Professor of Political Science at Brown University. She is a political theorist specializing in multiculturalism, racial justice, Latin American political thought, Black political thought, and Afro-descendant and indigenous politics in Latin America. Her publications include *Race and the Politics of Solidarity* (Oxford, 2009) and *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos* (Oxford, 2017), and numerous journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. Her most recent publications are a co-edited special issue of the journal *South Atlantic Quarterly* on “After #Ferguson. After #Baltimore: The Challenge of Black Death and Black Life for Black Political Thought” and an article on “Black Protest/White Grievance: On the Problem of White Political Imaginations Not Shaped by Loss,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, vol. 3 (2017): p. 483-504.

Presentation abstract

Theorizing Race in the Americas: Du Bois and Vasconcelos' Mestizo Futurisms.

This talk is taken from two chapters in a larger book, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos* (Oxford University Press, 2017), that charts an intellectual genealogy of racial thought produced in the U.S. and Latin America during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. It reads two thinkers from subaltern philosophical traditions—the African-American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois and the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos—as hemispheric thinkers, thereby challenging dominant readings of both Du Bois and Vasconcelos and situating them as formulating concurrent anti-colonial projects that sought to challenge global white supremacy via the iconography of mixture.

Contributors

Chikukuango Cuxima-Zwa

Chikukuango is a British/Angolan performance artist-scholar. He explores interdisciplinary theoretical approaches pertinent to history, culture and identity of the African Diaspora. In (2004) he completed his BA, in Fine Arts and Arts for Community, Middlesex University and (2005) MA in Art History and Archaeology, SOAS-University of London and (2013) PhD in Performance Arts and Theatre Studies, Brunel University-West London. Currently, he is an assistant teacher in Theatre practice, Morley College.

Paper Abstract

Sacred Art and Healing Practice: *Ritualized Body in Performance Arts*

This paper will give a context of my performance practice and exploration of my body as an artistic medium of communication and education. My work emerged as part of my migration to Britain in the 1990s as a refugee and dislocated individual. However, it is important to highlight that Angola gain its independence from the Portuguese (1975) after a long fight and struggle against the imperial forces of oppression. After the independence, the leaders of the nationalist's political parties Agostinho Neto (MPLA) Holden Robert (FNLA) and Jonas Savimbi (UNITA) went into disagreement and wanted to control the power and natural resources of the country; because of this and with the help of external forces the nation embarked upon a long brutal civil war.

Alexander Holmes-Brown

Alexander is an Australian of Italian and Latin American background. He has been a youth worker for almost ten years, working in churches, schools, government departments and human rights organisations. He has been passionate about addressing issues of race since childhood. His research interest for the last five years has been Latin American Liberation Theology and other Liberation Theologies. He has recently been drawn further into Latin American philosophical thought. His desire is to help people of faith commit to racial and economic justice beyond tokenism and charity.

Paper Abstract

In-communication: *Black Theology in the Americas*

In Detroit, 1975, an event took place that would be something of a watershed moment in Christian theology. A week-long conference in August brought together ministers, activists, sociologists and theologians under the banner 'Theology in the Americas'. The attendees and speakers represented different social and political perspectives as well as different church traditions. It would be an ecumenical, multi-ethnic affair, with participants from all parts of the Americas, South and North, Central and Caribbean, from dominant and minority communities, First World and Third World. This presentation is about what took place at that meeting, as well as directly before and after it, and how these groups came into conversation, competition, and collaboration over time.

Phillip Beckles-Raymond

Phillip is co-founder and financial director of Let's Get Together Ltd, a collectively-owned company using group economics to support black liberation. Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, Phillip studied economics and history in the US, including at Morgan State University, a Historically Black Institution. He is also an international policy advisor and has worked with a number of African countries on tax administration. Phillip's educational interests include the transformative potential of bringing people together.

Paper abstract

Economics for Liberation: *Resisting Capitalistic Values*

Efforts to further the cause of Black liberation must necessarily include some focus on economics. [Davis, 1997] However, the role of capitalism as the dominant global economic paradigm today has long been shown to have undermining impacts on black struggles for economic freedom across the diaspora. [King, 1967] For this reason, black economic education plays an important role in helping black people survive and resist economic injustices. Insofar as the black struggle for economic freedom often involves the promotion of greater levels of black business ownership, the experiences and lessons from this domain offer useful insights for black liberation.

Theodore Foster

Theodore is a PhD candidate in African American Studies at Northwestern University. He received an MA in African American and African Studies from Ohio State University. His dissertation is titled: "Post Civil Rights in the Hold: Neoliberalism, Race and the Politics of Civil Rights Memory in the US South." His research interests include Neoliberalism, Afro Latin American History and Politics, Black Political Thought and Critical Theory, Diaspora Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies, U.S. South and Black Geographies, Civil Rights Memory, U.S. Black-Latina Relations.

Paper Abstract

Post-Civil Rights in the Hold: *Race, Neoliberalism and the Politics of Historical Memory in the U.S. South.*

This paper examines how neo-liberal multiculturalism incorporates civil rights movement memory, blackness, and a nostalgia of the Jim Crow south as part of official commemorative practices in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama. I argue that in the post-civil rights era, these iconic sites of anti-black violence serve a pedagogical impulse for the neoliberal turn in black politics. In particular, I analyse the 2013 "50 Years Forward" campaign in Birmingham and 2015 "Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee" as two case studies demonstrating how neoliberal multiculturalism is both challenged and reproduced via commemoration. I also pay a special attention to how Black politics mutates to either incorporate or confront activism on behalf of Mexican and Central American immigrants in the U.S. south.

Casey Goonan

Casey is an abolitionist/anti-imperialist scholar-activist. He currently attends Northwestern University, where he is a PhD student in the Department of African American Studies. His current research focuses on the symbiosis between anti-racist liberal reformism and domestic

counterinsurgency warfare in the 19th/20th century United States. He is also working on his first book project which will be an intellectual history of the North American Prison struggle since the 1980s.

Paper abstract

Low Intensity Operations: *White Supremacy, Liberal-Democratic Nation Building, and the Discursive Politics of U.S. Policing*

Departing from the arguments made by scholar activists such as Dylan Rodriguez and Jared Sexton, I develop a working theoretical approach for theorizing the discursive structure of domestic policing during acute periods of “racial” crisis in the U.S. national form. Examining literary representations, government reports, television news broadcasts, and sociological studies of the 1965 and 1992 uprisings in Los Angeles, I theorize an enduring problematic that girds the long historical record of settler nationalist articulations: an affirmation of the white (political and physiological) body’s entitlement to “freedom” as a primary (and often tacit) foundation for the protocols and cultural structures of democratic nation building, which in turn serves to dynamically reproduce technologies of racially formed state surveillance and policing in the United States. Within this context, I interrogate the spectrum of nationalist discursive practices mobilized to co-opt, defuse, criminalize, and/or redirect anti-policing insurgencies experimenting with the political strategy of insurrection in the U.S. cities of Ferguson (2014), Baltimore (2015), and Charlotte (2016).

Ashley Ngozi Agbasoga

Ashley is a current third year doctoral student in Anthropology at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on Black/Afro-México, examining narratives of belonging, racialization and state formation, and racialized geographies--particularly concerning Blackness and Indigeneity--in the Costa Chica region of México. Ashley was the 2015-2017 Tepoztlán-Northwestern Graduate Fellow, in which she helped to plan the annual conference for the Tepoztlán Institute for the Transnational History of the Americas. Born and raised in Austin, Texas, Ashley loves to cook, dance, and play cello. She is also a member of the Comparative Race and Diaspora cluster at Northwestern.

Paper abstract

Race, Rights, and Recognition: *Conceptualizing Blackness, Indigeneity, and Citizenship in Neo-liberal Mexico*

The last twenty years have seen a sharp rise in social movements and state recognition for people of African descent throughout Latin America. Mexico is no exception—In December 2015, the Mexican government officially counted its population of African descent for the first time since gaining independence from Spain in 1810. This paper explores the ways that Black/Afro-Indigenous Mexicans negotiate for rights and recognition with the Mexican state in the age of neoliberal multiculturalism. The promises that institutional recognition offers runs alongside the ideology of multiculturalism, in which I argue serves as a new technology for extraction of cultural capital. This turn presents new challenges for Black/Afro-Indigenous Mexicans as they continue the fight for both rights and recognition by the state.

Zeddie Lawal

Theatre maker, musician, and recent drama graduate Zeddie has struggled to find queer Black British narratives within theatre and literature which explore these themes. Although such conversations are not unfamiliar within these communities, they have been under-represented within both arts and academia. Zeddie therefore took it upon herself to write her own narrative in *Exhale*, a piece which explores the possibility of being queer, Christian, and black.

Performance & workshop abstract: Exhale

The performance of *Exhale* is a multidisciplinary solo play which uses music, spoken word poetry, and theatre to talk about coming of age and coming out in an abusive Afro-Caribbean Christian household. Music played and looped live provides a starting point for an exploration of identity of diaspora.

The workshop will mirror Zeddie's artistic practice, inviting the audience to share in her ethos of escapism through creation and challenging them to also take control of their stories and write their own narratives. The workshop will result in a collection of stories, poems, and songs; a whole new body of work illustrating the ways in which individual stories can echo the voices of a generation. The research framework and development of the piece and workshop has been supported by Tawala Theatre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and Free Radical.

Mali Collins-White

Mali is a PhD student in the English department at the University of Delaware. Her research and creative writing interrogates the Background conceptual formation of the African Diasporic archive and how black literature, broadly understood, articulates and disarticulates this formation. She is also interested in black public humanities and the ways in which Blackness disrupts "public" institutional spaces, such as the museum, the library, and the school. She earned a BA in Comparative Literature with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies from the University of Minnesota and a MA in Culture and Theory from the University of California, Irvine.

Akin Abioye

Akin is an EdD student in Leadership for Change at Fielding Graduate University. His research centres on the notion that Anglo created spaces are fundamentally racist and there exists no room for a radical education of Black children within these spaces. Additionally, Akin serves as the Policy Specialist for FosterClub, where he works to elevate the youth voice towards the goal of creating more equitable policies for foster youth who are disproportionately members of the Diaspora.

Presentation abstract

Black Radical Pedagogy: How to move towards a more radical education for Black students in historically white spaces?

Black scholar Joy James writes that Black educational spaces must be theoretically-oriented toward an African cosmology called the "living thinker" approach, where "community" is not

bound by physical or geographic limits, such as a classroom. However, white institutional settings present a foreclosure on this Black intellectual growth. But how do we radically liberate the collective consciousness of Black students in historically white spaces to engender a race-based pedagogy? Has code-switching, private tutoring groups, and supplemental mentoring sufficed in creating radical(-izing) spaces for our Black students? If so, at what cost?

Sihlangu Tshuma

Sihlangu is in the first year of his PhD, working on his thesis; “The lived experiences of first-generation African cultural entrepreneurs in Birmingham”. He is a product of BCU’s BA Media and Communication and MA Online Journalism.

Paper Abstract

The first-generation African cultural entrepreneurs in Birmingham

Among new immigrant communities in the UK are African cultural entrepreneurs, who contend with transitioning from original contexts of their practice into unfamiliar structures of the dominant culture. The experiences of first-generation African artists are just another motif in a pattern of institutional neglect, negation and surveillance of black cultural practice. The paper exploits salient theoretical debates on cultural and ethnic entrepreneurship, to facilitate a deeper understanding of the experiences of new immigrant African cultural entrepreneurs. I argue that a deeper appreciation of race and racism in cultural production is integral for explaining their lived experience.

Joyce Treasure

Joyce Treasure is a mixed media artist, writer, filmmaker and street artist living in Birmingham. She works in layers and body forms to slice cultural and iconic imagery together using collage, print and acrylic. Treasure is interested in exploring new narratives regarding identity and social settings on a contemporary landscape, making enquiries into our visual historic backdrops; the examined and unexamined, the seen and the unseen. She tries to increase the spirit between author and audience by investigating the duality that develops through different interpretations. Her work uses symbols of power, travel and finance to represent hierarchy, imperialism and colonialism, sometimes by appropriating images found and of the queen. Within this she also looks at how this affects her own identity as a mixed race woman in a patriarchal setting. Joyce will further investigate the topic of Black identity by commencing a Black studies course at Birmingham City University in September 2017 to further develop her artwork, philosophy and profession.

Daniel Shodipo

Born and raised in North London by Nigerian parents, Daniel’s ‘holiday’ to Nigeria turned into 6 years of boarding school on the outskirts of Lagos. Daniel had dreams of being a forensic scientist but instead decided to apply his degree to working with young people. The last 4 years have seen Daniel work across the West Midlands and London as a science teacher, whilst simultaneously working on a master’s at the University of Warwick. In his spare time, Daniel

is part of the reigning undefeated British American Football national champions, the Tamworth Phoenix. All work and no play would make Daniel a very dull man.