

CALL FOR PAPERS
African American Literature and Culture Society
American Literature Association
30th Annual Conference
May 23-26, 2019
Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA

The African American Literature and Culture Society invites abstracts (of no more than 250 words) for presentations at the annual conference of the American Literature Association (<http://americanliteratureassociation.org/>). We will also consider a limited number of panel proposals (of no more than 500 words).

The notion of ancestry is central to the formation of continuums in African American Literature and Culture. Whether in music, in novels, in polemical texts, or in poetry, the acknowledgment of the elders, of traditions, of memory can take on many forms. For instance, in the wake of the Black Arts Movement, poems eulogizing John Coltrane and Malcolm became a genre on their own. Those poems become occasions to address political struggles, vexed historical moments of the black experience, and deferred dream of equality and freedom. In intersecting ways, Sonia Sanchez and Natasha Tretheway both historicized in verse a mapping of black women experiences, from slavery to contemporary times. They address ancestry by reasserting the cultural significance of history and artistry as resistance.

In recent African American Young Adult Fiction (*e.g. The Hate U Give, Ghost Boys, I Am Alphonso Jones*), protagonists also evoke the ghosts of black martyrs (Emmett Till, Henry Dumas) as a way to re-member and remember a fragmented past, one that can trace lineages, honor those whose suffering and brief life became symbolical of the treatment of African Americans throughout U.S. history. More than assessing notions of influence, those works interrogate the legacy of ancestry, the way contemporary writers revisit, recast, and reaffirm the lives, the experiences, and the sustained cultural meaning of previous generations. So, central questions arise: how do we reread and revisit the past? How do cultural legacies continue to shape our identity, our notion of history? What are the interlinkings between ancestry and canon formation? What figures of the past do we turn to in times of crisis?

Topics include, but are not limited to the following:

- Literary dialogues across the tradition: Black writers and the notion of Ancestry
- Black Lives Matter and Young Adult Fiction
- Didacticism, activism and artistry in Black Literary texts
- African American Literature and cultural memory
- Black writers and renegotiations of vernacular continuums

-The Legacy of Black Power in contemporary African American Texts

We are also looking to organize a special panel or a roundtable as a tribute to Ntozake Shange to celebrate her work and contribution. Contributors interested in this opportunity, contact Belinda Waller-Peterson at waller-petersonb@moravian.edu .

While we welcome papers on the above themes and subthemes, **we also strongly encourage submissions on any topic related to African American literature and culture.**

Please send abstracts or proposals to Belinda Waller-Peterson (waller-petersonb@moravian.edu) and Jean-Philippe Marcoux (jean-philippe.marcoux@lit.ulaval.ca) **no later than January 4, 2019**. Presenters must be members of AALCS by the time of the conference. Information about the Society can be found at the AALCS website: <https://aalcsblog.wordpress.com/>