

Haiti: Paradoxes, Contradictions, Intersections in the Making of a People

Haitian Studies Association

29th Annual Conference

November 1-4, 2017

Xavier University of Louisiana

Tulane University Roger Thayer Stone Center for
Latin American Studies

“Haiti: Paradoxes, Contradictions, Intersections in the Making of a People” is the main axis for the Haitian Studies Association’s 29th Annual Conference. The conference will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana at Xavier University of Louisiana and the Tulane University Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies, November 1-4, 2017. The deadline for submissions of proposals is June 1, 2017.

Description: The formation of Haiti as a sovereign state and the emergence and evolution of its people and its culture have followed a complex route. Since the birth of the nation of Haiti, multiple hierarchies and interconnected systems of oppression and exclusion have engendered structural inequities with respect to Haitian citizenship. As the society has continued to claim equality and liberty, differentiated and unequal citizenship have actually prevailed, with social, racial, colored, and gendered social groups having different levels of rights of participation and belonging.

Colonial St. Domingue’s socio-political and economic landscape granted unequal access to power and privilege. The Haitian Revolution did not achieve a radical transformation of these unequal relations. Rather, the régime agraire of Toussaint Louverture and the Code Rural of Jean-Pierre Boyer reproduced the patterns of exploitation and exclusion of the slave-centered society. These practices led to the construction of the category *moun andeyò*—the peasantry, a class of people with limited access to power and resources, yet, the primary actors in the waves of migration, and also, the primary victims of natural disasters. Over time, the *moun andeyò* concept has been mapped onto such other categories of people as women, the urban poor, practitioners of Vodou, and people of different sexual orientations.

The Haitian Studies Association will hold its 29th Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, a site that offers scholars a look at how the “making of the people” occurs outside of the geopolitical spaces associated with a nation-state.

Indeed, the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 forced not only the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, but also the migration of the enslaved, slave owners, and free Black people and mulattos between the two former French territories. These movements of people led to the creation of new spaces where migrants linked to an emergent Haiti would become part of a new North American dynamic also characterized by inequalities and exclusion.

The questions that the Conference will seek to answer address the nature, scope, and dynamics of citizenship in the making of a Haitian people. We want to: examine, deconstruct, and reflect on the concept of rights; critically engage the multiple and contested meaning of citizenship; explore how the “right to have rights” has evolved in parallel in Louisiana/NOLA; and observe and assess a paradox, where NOLA (NOLA Media Group) finds itself in a contradictory position, sponsoring many development projects in Haiti while similar features of exclusion and environmental catastrophes affect a large segment of its population (Hurricane Jeanne 2004, Hurricane Katrina 2005, Goudou Goudou 2010, and Hurricane Matthew 2016).

Finally, we want also to analyze issues of otherness, marginalization, exclusion, and struggles for inclusion in the “moral community of the nation.” We want to explore how citizens with partial or limited rights find ways to assert, reclaim, exercise, and redefine their rights within existing conditions created by enduring structural inequalities.

We seek a diverse set of scholarly interrogations of these themes from disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. We are especially interested in fully constituted panels, and will prioritize panels that speak directly to our themes and attempt an interdisciplinary dialogue.

Panel and roundtable proposals are to be no longer than 500 words, clearly listing the individual paper titles and authors. Individual paper abstracts should be around 250 words. Presenters are expected to register for the conference in advance to ensure their names are in the program. We will be accepting proposals until June 1st, 2017.

For guidelines for participation, see <http://haitianstudies.org/callforpapers/>