

## Call for Papers and Panels

### Unleashing the Black Erotic: Gender and Sexuality—Passion, Power, and Praxis

The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center and African American Studies  
Program 2013 Conference and Symposium

September 18-21, 2013

Historic Downtown Charleston

*I believe in the erotic and I believe in it as an enlightening force within our lives as women. I have become clearer about the distinctions between the erotic and other apparently similar forces. We tend to think of the erotic as an easy, tantalizing sexual arousal. I speak of the erotic as the deepest life force, a force which moves us toward living in a fundamental way. And when I say living I mean it as that force which moves us toward what will accomplish real positive change.* -Audre Lorde

By extracting the salacious, Lorde elevates the erotic from that which merely titillates the body to that which is essential, vital, and most paramount to our survival, our happiness, our fulfillment—our joy as humans. Lorde suggests that our ability to fully understand, embrace, and harness the power, beauty, and essence of the erotic is the key to our positive evolution as people. The question remains, however: can we unleash the erotic?

As a Black woman, lesbian, feminist, mother, writer, and artist, Lorde articulates the power, beauty, strength of the feminine creative force, as well as the isolation, pain, and marginalization she often experienced due to her queerness and her blackness. Black scholars still wrestle with the ghosts of slavery, the mutilation of Black bodies, the dispensability of black life, and caricatures of black sexuality, ~from the grotesque, comical, to the hypersexualized—all the while confronting the politics of respectability which traps us with the binary opposition of our blackness and the erotic. By challenging and dismantling these binaries and limiting narratives, we can awaken, honor, and harness the passion, power, and praxis of the erotic. We see this time and space as ripe for articulating the wide, varied, and expansive nature of gender and sexuality, and the performance of both.

We invite proposals from across disciplines. We are most interested in proposals that address aspects of the following topics:

- Black bodies in popular culture
- Black sexuality in television, film, and literature
- Queering the Black body in art and performance studies
- Iconic Black Queer motifs

- Sex and Sexuality and Black Faith
- Naughty, but nice: Black women and the politics of respectability
- Black Erotica, Romance Novels, Comic Books
- The Black Body and Public Health
- Hip Hop and the Hypersexuality of Black Women
- Alternative Modes of Black Love and Family
- The Politics and Economics of Porn

Proposal deadline: May 10, 2013.

The deadline for proposals is May 10, 2013; complete papers due by August 1, 2013. Please send all paper and panel proposals to friersons@cofc.edu with your name, institution, title, email address, presentation title and format, along with a 150 word abstract, brief bio, and recent cv. Please put “Unleashing the Erotic” in your subject line. Presentations will be limited to twenty minutes.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane, Executive Director, Avery Research Center, at [lessanepw@cofc.edu](mailto:lessanepw@cofc.edu) and Dr. Conseula Francis, Associate Professor, English Department and Program Director, African American Studies Program (AAST) at [francisc@cofc.edu](mailto:francisc@cofc.edu).

Information regarding registration, lodging, and symposium schedule will be available on the Avery Research Center’s website beginning in May 2013.