

[Notes on Black Thought 2.0](#)

by Faithe Day | HASTAC

Through the beauty of the Internet I was able to spend Friday and Saturday watching and taking part in discussion via twitter on the [Black Thought 2.0 Conference](#) at Duke University that was broadcast via UStream. Here are my notes, which mostly reflect the questions that were addressed and some of the responses, from my interaction with the conference as well as some additional links that I found interesting. Look out for some more blog posts in which I will give my thoughts on some specific aspects of the conference.

Keynote Address: April 6th @7PM by S. Craig Watkins

Here is a link to the tweets from before the conference and the tweets that were written during S. Craig Watkins Keynote:

<http://drgoddess.com/2012/04/blackthoughtcraig>

- Rhyme books and the creation of a culture of ethnographers that wrote down the realities of black experience in the 1980's and 1990's.
- Despite the fact that Black and Latino individuals take up a small amount of the United States population they have greater visibility on social networking sites such as Twitter i.e. Black Twitter.
- How are minority youth interacting with these social media sites and/or the Internet?
 - o The use of mobile devices to gain internet access; Steve Jobs and "holding the internet in your hand"
 - o What kind of experience does one have using the internet on a mobile device? How does this influence access?
- Similarities between Trayvon Martin and Emmett Till (Jet Magazine and the social mobilization of black individuals around an important cause).

Panel #1 9-10:15 am

The Chocolate Supa Highway: Precursors to Black Social Media

Abdul Alkalimat (University of Illinois)

Michelle Ferrier (Elon University)

Lynne d Johnson (Director of Strategy & Engagement at Whisprgroup)

Lee D. Baker (Moderator, Duke University)

- What will happen when there is greater internet connectivity?
- Michelle Ferrier noted that Technology is used to “divide and fragment”, but as a commenter stated from the audience black culture is about bringing together.
- The use of social media to connect people, but still being aware of the problem with connectivity.
- The idea that anything that we do to connect with others can be seen as a form of social media
 - o During the keynote address S. Craig Watkins drew connections between slaves using work songs to relay messages to each other in the fields and the use of leaflets during the Civil Rights Movement.
 - o Even the underground railroad was a social network.
 - o In many ways, Black public intellectuals have regularly incorporated aspects of social media into their platforms.

Panel #2 10:30-11:45

On the Grid: Teaching and Researching in the Digital Age

Allison Clark (Founder AMedia1/HASTAC)

Kim Pearson (College of New Jersey)

Simone Browne (University of Texas at Austin)

Howard Rambsy II (Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville)

Thomas F. DeFrantz (Moderator, Duke University)

- The big questions:
 - o How can we open up access to information? What does it mean to do open access?

- o Do students need to know how to write? What is the new normal for writing in 2012? What can writing become for us as a community?
- o The long-form that's happening in electronic media that only some people have access to? What happens to the creation of the public intellectual when only some people have access? "Teach your kids to have a public persona"-Allison Clark
- o The question of public and private life in the digital world and in the real world?
- o What is digital literacy?
- o How can we incorporate the digital into the classroom?

Panel #3 1:30-2:45 pm

From Jena Louisiana to Tahrir Square: Activism in the Age of Social Media

Jasiri X (Pittsburg based artist & activist)

Alexis Pauline Gumbs (Broken Beautiful Press/Mobile Homecoming Project)

Moya Bailey (Emory University/Crunk Feminist Collective)

Kimberly Ellis aka Dr. Goddess (artist, activist, historian)

Salamishah Tillett (University of Pennsylvania)

Treva Lindsey (Moderator, University of Missouri)

· Question 1: How has social media or New Media transformed your life as an activist? How has it changed the way you think about activism?

o Jasiri X: New Media has given him more of a "worldview" based on feedback that he has gotten from different people around the world. The internet encourages global thinking.

· Discussion of Black feminism and queer studies.

· We should be using the tools of our campus to start activism.

o [The Allied Media Conference](#)

· The campus as "neutral place" in which we can enact change.

· There should be a greater move towards using the internet to connect multiple campuses and on and off campus communities.

Panel #4 3:00-4:30

The Twitterati and Twitter-gentsia: Social Media and Public Intellectuals

Marc Lamont Hill (Columbia University/ *Our World with Black Enterprise*)

Jay Smooth (Editor of Ill Doctrine)

Blair LM Kelley (North Carolina State University)

Latoya Peterson (Editor of Racialicious)

Imani Perry (Princeton University)

Mark Anthony Neal (Moderator, Duke University)

- How does social media create or influence the presence of the public intellectual?
- What does it mean to be a public intellectual?
- Social media, such as Twitter, gives black intellectuals the chance to interact with a wider community in a more accessible way
- How do you get people to interact with an intellectual site or blog by balancing text on entertainment and Pop Culture while still critically thinking?
 - o Latoya Peterson discusses how you can use Pop Culture as an invitation into more serious discussion i.e. *Sons of Anarchy* and a discussion of race and class
- It's important to not interact with Pop Culture, such as rap music, as low culture but to see both the pleasure and critical possibilities of interacting with this type of media.
- Marc Lamont Hill: The importance of protecting Black thought in an age of Neoliberalism and the influence of corporate interests on academia.
 - o It is also important to remember that as academics we cannot just “think deeply” about things or talk on Twitter but it is also important to go out and do something.
- Questions from the audience
 - o Wikipedia and what constitutes legitimate knowledge/information.
- § Latoya Peterson: Who gets to define what is relevant? What do we do when we share a language but not a culture?

§ The creation of and the debacle behind [the Mackmende page](#) on Wikipedia

o What do you do when white students are resistant to learning about African American Culture or the black experience?

o Are there some strategic ways for us to be activists?

· The importance of visibility and accessibility in academia as a professor and/or public intellectuals and addressing the misconceptions that people have towards or about academia.