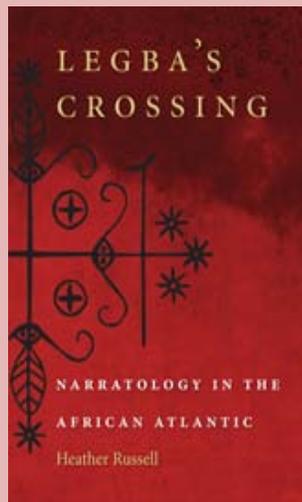


BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear Friends,

I am so pleased to announce that *Legba's Crossing* is finally here. It would not have been possible without your support. Thank you. For those of you teaching in African diaspora, African American, Caribbean, Postcolonial and Postmodernist studies, or if you're just interested in African Atlantic history, literature, politics, philosophy and/or aesthetics, please consider purchasing my book, or asking your libraries to acquire it:



Heather D. Russell, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Florida International University

Description: In *Legba's Crossing*, I examine literary texts, all of which engage key historical moments of black subjugation and resistance to slavery, colonialism, Cold War imperialism, neocolonialism and the ascendancy of neoliberalism. Intending to be diasporic and cross-temporal, my work includes analyses of the C19th Xhosa cattle killing in South Africa, US Reconstruction, the Grenada Revolution and invasion, C18th yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia, Independence and post-Independence movement in Jamaica, Trinidad, US Civil Rights, US postindustrial complex, and, “globalization and race” in its African diasporic contexts. Within these parameters, I examine how the works chosen for analysis challenge conventional Western knowledge structures through innovative use, disruption and reconfiguration of form.

Breaking with traditional forms governing time, space and narration, through their narrative structure, African Atlantic writers produce a liberating, revolutionary poetics of form. Such formal poetics is framed in light of the West African aesthetic principle of *àshe*, a quality ascribed to art that transcends the prescribed boundaries of form. *Àshe* is linked to the characteristics of improvisation and flexibility that are central to jazz, quilting and other art forms. These modern aesthetic forms can be productively linked to much older

West African philosophy and its African Atlantic iterations, which I call the “Legba Principle.” Invoking the Haitian loa *Papa Legba*, who is the “god of the crossroads” -- as the sign of African Atlantic narrative intervention -- I explore how the philosophical, epistemological, ethical concepts embodied by this god, provide a rich theoretical methodological paradigm for discussing African Atlantic narrative form.

Reviews:

"The words *Legba* and *crossing* signal far more than another predictable book tracing the here and there of a so-called Black Atlantic. *Legba's Crossing* heralds, instead, a virtuoso scholarly cross over. Russell arrives resolutely at comprehensively nuanced and analytical ports of call. Her critical voyage is scintillatingly original, manifestly interdisciplinary, and instructive. Readers will find themselves renewed by her activist scholarship as well as her formalist analyses. *Legba's Crossing* indisputably pilots Diaspora Studies to the forefront of contemporary expressive cultural analysis and debate."

--Houston A. Baker, Distinguished University Professor, Vanderbilt University

"This text contributes to intellectually and academically pertinent concerns on nation and nationhood, freedom and slavery, and race, gender, and sexuality as contentious ontological sites in the conquest and reformulation of the Americas."

--Glyne Griffith, coeditor of *Color, Hair, and Bone: Race in the Twenty-first Century*

"*Legba's Crossing* is a fascinating, well-written book of considerable significance to African diaspora literary studies. Professor Russell's readings of the simultaneous 'materialist immersion and formal innovation' of these writers is an original and highly generative theoretical perspective."

--Arlene R. Keizer, author of *Black Subjects: Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narrative of Slavery*

"*Legba's Crossing* puts Heather Russell among the best of her generation of scholars, adept in reading both formal literature and its theory and popular culture. Her work demonstrates a fluidity in its critical movements between Caribbean and U.S. African American textualities. Her book dislodges the earlier Black Atlantic discourse from its North Atlantic framing and makes it applicable to a larger African diaspora understanding. Legba, who has been coming through in a variety of other texts, is a prominent articulator of a middle-passage epistemology, which finally gets full presentation here. Above all, Heather Russell demonstrates an ease, confidence, and critical astuteness, particularly in her attention to what she calls the "formal eruptions of the African Atlantic."

--Carole Boyce Davies, author of *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*

For information on ordering *Legba's Crossing*, please see:

http://www.ugapress.org/index.php/books/legbas_crossing/0/1

or

<http://www.amazon.com/Legbas-Crossing-Narratology-African-Atlantic/dp/0820328677>