

## University of Massachusetts - Amherst

---

From the SelectedWorks of A Yemisi Jimoh

---

1999

# Dorothy West

A Yemisi Jimoh,, PhD, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*



SELECTEDWORKS™

Available at: <http://works.bepress.com/jimoh/26/>

# CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN NOVELISTS

---

## A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook

*Edited by*  
EMMANUEL S. NELSON



**Greenwood Press**  
Westport, Connecticut • London

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Contemporary African American novelists : a bio-bibliographical critical sourcebook / edited by Emmanuel S. Nelson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-313-30501-3 (alk. paper)

1. American fiction—Afro-American authors—Bio-bibliography—Dictionaries. 2. American fiction—20th century—Bio-bibliography—Dictionaries. 3. Novelists, American—20th century—Biography—Dictionaries. 4. American fiction—Afro-American authors—Dictionaries. 5. Afro-American novelists—Biography—Dictionaries. 6. American fiction—20th century—Dictionaries. 7. Afro-Americans in literature—Dictionaries. I. Nelson, Emmanuel S. (Emmanuel Sampath), 1954—

PS374.N4C658 1999

813'.5409896073—dc21 98-26438

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 1999 by Emmanuel S. Nelson

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 98-26438

ISBN: 0-313-30501-3

First published in 1999

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FOR ANTON, *with affection*



# CONTENTS

PREFACE	xiii
INTRODUCTION by Deborah G. Plant	xv
TINA McELROY ANSA by Joyce L. Cherry	1
DORIS JEAN AUSTIN by Evora Jones	6
JAMES BALDWIN by Emmanuel S. Nelson	12
TONI CADE BAMBARA by Nanette Morton	22
BARRY BECKHAM by Loretta G. Woodard	29
HAL BENNETT by Adam Meyer	36
DAVID HENRY BRADLEY, JR. by Marilyn D. Button	42
GWENDOLYN BROOKS by Suzanne Hotte Massa	47
CECIL MORRIS BROWN by Samuel B. Garren	53
FRANK LONDON BROWN by Charles Tita	58
ED BULLINS by Peggy Stevenson Ratliff	64

OCTAVIA E. BUTLER by AnnLouise Keating	69
BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL by Joyce Russell-Robinson	76
BARBARA CHASE-RIBOUD by Sarah McKee	82
ALICE CHILDRESS by Terry Novak	88
MICHELLE CLIFF by Cora Agatucci	95
CYRUS COLTER by Leela Kapai	102
STEVEN CORBIN by Terrence J. McGovern	108
SAMUEL DELANY by Grace Sikorski	115
WILLIAM DEMBY by Peter G. Christensen	122
MELVIN DIXON by André Hoyrd	129
LARRY DUPLCHAN by Emmanuel S. Nelson	137
RALPH WALDO ELLISON by Harish Chander	142
ARTHUR R. FLOWERS by Ymitri Jayasundera	154
LEON FORREST by Dana A. Williams	158
ALBERT FRENCH by Jeffrey T. Loeb	164
ERNEST J. GAINES by Eberhard Alsen	168
MARITA GOLDEN by Loretta G. Woodard	177
SAM GREENLEE by Adam Meyer	185
BILL GUNN by P. Jane Splawn	192
E. LYNN HARRIS by Grace Sikorski	198
CHESTER B. HIMES by Bruce A. Glasrud and Laurie Champion	203
KRISTIN HUNTER by Rennie Simson	211

# CONTENTS

ix

BLYDEN JACKSON by Gwendolyn S. Jones	215
CHARLES JOHNSON by Christian Moraru	220
GAYL JONES by Kimberly N. Brown	227
JUNE JORDAN by Kimberly N. Brown	233
WILLIAM MELVIN KELLEY by Anissa J. Wardi	238
RANDALL KENAN by Chris Roark	243
JOHN OLIVER KILLENS by Harish Chander	250
JAMAICA KINCAID by Ymitri Jayasundera	260
ANDREA LEE by Sarala Krishnamurthy	267
AUDREY LEE by Charles Tita	273
PHILIP LEWIS by Jeffrey B. Dunham	279
AUDRE LORDE by AnnLouise Keating	284
CLARENCE MAJOR by Tracie Church Guzzio	289
PAULE MARSHALL by Shanna D. Greene	295
SHARON BELL MATHIS by Gwendolyn S. Jones	304
JOHN A. McCLUSKEY, JR. by Frank E. Dobson, Jr.	309
REGINALD McKNIGHT by Laurie Champion	314
TERRY McMILLAN by Rita B. Dandridge	319
LOUISE MERIWETHER by Kathy White	327
TONI MORRISON by Eberhard Alsen	331
WALTER MOSLEY by Kristina L. Knotts	350
ALBERT MURRAY by Roy Kay	355



WALTER DEAN MYERS by Terry Novak	360
GLORIA NAYLOR by Sarah Wheliss and Emmanuel S. Nelson	366
ANN PETRY by Marlene D. Allen	377
CARLENE HATCHER POLITE by Frank E. Dobson, Jr.	384
ISHMAEL REED by Pierre-Damien Mvuyekure	391
JEWELL PARKER RHODES by Pierre-Damien Mvuyekure	401
DORI SANDERS by Nicholyn Hutchinson	407
SAPPHIRE by Tracey Walters	411
GIL SCOTT-HERON by Suzanne Hotte Massa	416
NTOZAKE SHANGE by Sarah Wheliss and Emmanuel S. Nelson	421
CHARLOTTE WATSON SHERMAN by Bindu Malieckal	427
ANN ALLEN SHOCKLEY by Adenike Marie Davidson	433
APRIL SINCLAIR by Jacqueline C. Jones	438
ELLEASE SOUTHERLAND by Cherron A. Barnwell	443
JOYCE CAROL THOMAS by Amy E. Earhart	449
DAWN TURNER TRICE by Lean'tin Bracks	454
ALICE WALKER by Molly Roden	458
MARGARET WALKER by Annette Debo	469
DOROTHY WEST by A. Yemisi Jimoh	475
JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN by Robin Lucy	482
SHERLEY ANNE WILLIAMS by Trela Anderson	491
JACQUELINE WOODSON by Nicola Morris	495

CONTENTS	xi
SARAH ELIZABETH WRIGHT by Linda M. White	500
FRANK GARVIN YERBY by Louis Hill Pratt	505
Selected Bibliography	513
Index	515
About the Editor and Contributors	525

# DOROTHY WEST

## (1907–1998)

---

*A. Yemisi Jimoh*

### BIOGRAPHY

Dorothy West was born into the successful household of Isaac Christopher West and Rachel Pease Benson West in Boston. West was an only child whose extended family shared the Wests' large home in Boston. Virginia-born Isaac West owned a wholesale fruit business in the Boston Market. Rachel West was from Camden, South Carolina; she made a place for her family among Boston's small circle of successful, black, upper-middle-class families and provided her daughter with the fuel for an ironic literary approach to the issues of gender, race, class, and color consciousness, which inform much of Dorothy West's writing.

By the time West was seven, she knew that she wanted a literary career—after her father showed pride in her writing (McDowell 266–68). She attended the Girls' Latin School in Boston and, later, Boston University as well as the Columbia University School of Journalism. Dorothy West entered the second annual *Opportunity* magazine literary contest. Her entry, "The Typewriter," shared second prize with Zora Neale Hurston's story "Muttys." This literary accomplishment drew West—who was just seventeen—to New York for the *Opportunity* magazine awards banquet, which exposed her to the burgeoning Harlem Renaissance circle of writers and artists.

Dorothy West lived a writer's life for more than seventy years. During this time she published some of her writing under the pseudonyms Mary Christopher and Jane Isaac (Dalsgard 42). West's literary life included membership in the 1920s in the Boston African American writers' group the Saturday Evening Quill Club—some of her stories were published in its magazine, *The Saturday Evening Quill*; she had a brief stint with the Works Progress Administration—Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s; as founder of the literary magazines *Challenge* and

*New Challenge*, West sought to nurture new, post-Renaissance literary talent, notably, Margaret Walker\* and Ralph Ellison;\* for more than two decades—1940s–1960s—she wrote short stories for the *New York Daily News*; and she contributed intermittently to the *Vineyard Gazette* from the 1960s until early in the 1990s, including a weekly column on the social activities around Oak Bluffs.

Dorothy West's father was among the first African Americans to purchase a vacation home in Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard. West returned to her family's vacation home in the 1940s and lived year-round on the island until her death. While living on Martha's Vineyard, she published two novels, *The Living Is Easy* (1948) and *The Wedding* (1995) as well as a collection of short stories, sketches, and memoirs titled *The Richer, the Poorer* (1995). With a grant from the Mary Roberts Rinehart foundation in the 1940s, West began writing *The Wedding*. She also wrote two other pieces of long fiction that were never published: "Where the Wild Grape Grows" (McDowell 277) and "The White Tribe of Indians" (281), which is about the web of denials concerning ancestry among some African Americans.

In the mid-1990s, she was hailed as the last living Harlem Renaissance writer, and there was an upsurge of interest in Dorothy West as a writer and as a participant in the Harlem Renaissance. Projects such as the PBS film *As I Remember It: A Portrait of Dorothy West* (Clark, "Rediscovering" 47) and a 1998 film (Steinberg 34) based on her last novel all attest to the growing interest in recovering the literary career of Dorothy West. Into her ninth decade of life, West continued to plan new writing projects. Her latest was a historical book on Oak Bluffs.

## MAJOR WORKS AND THEMES

For Dorothy West, short stories "are the most perfect literary form" (McDowell 281). West's first published story was "Promise and Fulfillment" (Ferguson, *Dictionary* 188). In "The Typewriter," her story for the *Opportunity* contest, a janitor dictates fictional letters to his daughter. He feels important and successful during these contrived business sessions, so he creates a fictional persona and begins to live in a fantasy world in which he is a successful businessman. This world crashes for the janitor after he reads in the newspaper that J. P. Morgan—with whom the janitor has had his most intense fantasy correspondence—has gone bankrupt. This story, among others, demonstrates West's inclination toward irony in her writing.

Seventeen of Dorothy West's stories are collected in *The Richer, the Poorer*. In stories such as "The Five Dollar Bill," "Funeral," "The Bird like No Other," "The Penny," and others she convincingly presents a child's perspective. Frequently, West's stories, written from the perspective of innocence, are moralistic yet engaging. Through the eyes of a child, West returns to adults the contradictions that children learn from adult examples. In "The Five Dollar Bill," a little girl named Judy—a name that recurs in West's stories with intelligent girl characters—witnesses and is affected deeply by her mother's duplicity.

West frequently writes about middle-class characters, yet not all of her short

stories are set in a middle-class environment. When West does write about the African American middle class, she often uses irony to present a critique of their "counterfeit bourgeois" (Rodgers 161) attitudes and their "color foolishness" (Dalsgard 32). In stories such as "Jack in the Pot," however, West situates poverty and its effects on one's character in the foreground. "Jack in the Pot" is the story of Mrs. Edmunds, a woman who wins money—jack—after she has suffered through hunger and while she is on welfare. She and her husband have lost their middle-class lifestyle because hard times caused her husband to close his business. West says that this story is her "statement on poverty" (Dalsgard 43). When West writes about poverty, she does not sentimentalize the poor. She, in fact, depicts the emotional and psychological impact of poverty. Most of West's characters, though, are successful or are from the struggling working class that made up much of the African American middle class in its nascent stages.

In a number of West's stories, especially those that she wrote for the *New York Daily News*, the author does not describe her characters in ways that would indicate whether they are black people. In other stories—"Odyssey of an Egg" and "About a Woman Named Nancy"—she pushes the boundaries of characterization and setting by eliminating references to skin color. Further, in "Jack in the Pot" West's references to color are so subtle as to be nearly incidental to the overall story. In West's story *The Richer, the Poorer*, she writes about two sisters who take opposite paths in life. Bess lives in the moment, while Lottie is cautious and industrious. In this story, West emphasizes the poverty of Lottie's miserly "life never lived" (56) and the wealth in Bess' active life, but little in this story indicates that the characters are modeled after black women West knew. During an interview with Katrine Dalsgard, West comments on the colorlessness in some of her writing. When she began to write two short stories monthly for the *Daily News*, there was a tacit agreement between West and the publishers: "For their sake, and for my sake because I had to eat, I never mentioned the word 'black' " (37). West's own personal survival and the racial politics of publishing explain her silence on color in *The Richer, the Poorer*, "The Maple Tree," and other stories. As a writer, West often has had to strike a delicate balance between the demands of publishing and her desire to write from her experiences.

In many of Dorothy West's short stories, she presents in condensed form several of the issues and themes that are found in her novels. West's literary corpus demonstrates that she actively engages vernacular qualities such as the black sermon tradition and music, both of which have informed African American literature; more specifically, though, West is concerned with intragroup issues relating to class and color. These vernacular qualities as well as class and color concerns in her writing are clearly illustrated in "An Unimportant Man," "Mammy," "Prologue to a Life," and "Hannah Byde." A compelling issue in Dorothy West's writing, however, is gender. A persistent motif in her fiction centers on the repressed female who dreams of, or connives, a position of power for herself. This quite frequently is a Pyrrhic victory for West's female characters.

Cleo, the main character in *The Living Is Easy*, is just such a woman. West



takes her title for this novel from the song "Summertime," which is from Du Bose Heyward's Broadway play *Porgy*. This novel is set in Boston from July 1914 through April 1919. Cleo Jericho Judson is southern and beautiful. At nineteen, Cleo marries a significantly older, hardworking businessman from the South named Bart Judson. West prepares readers for Cleo's manipulations of her husband and her sisters as well as for her resistance to proscribed gender roles through flashbacks to Cleo's Southern childhood. An independently minded child, Cleo fights and beats a little boy who taunts her; then she wonders, "What was there to being a boy? What was there to being a man? Men just worked. That was easier than what women did" (21). As a married woman, Cleo wants to create her own domain over which she can rule. In fact, "It had never occurred to her in the ten years of her marriage that she might be his helpmate. She thought that was the same thing as being a man's slave" (71). In the summer of 1914, Cleo brings her sisters and their children to her home in Boston for a visit, and she effectively manipulates and deceives them until they are living with her and are estranged from their husbands. The Jericho sisters all illustrate the variety of ways that gender and power operate. Lily accepts dependence; she wants to "please" Bart; she will stay quiet to keep his protection (233). Charity feels empty without her husband and substitutes food. Serena wants her own independence—even from her sister Cleo—as well as love. Cleo wants a female domain. Bart, Cleo's husband, is the means through which she reproduces herself as well as her source of financial support. Judy, Cleo's only child, observes her mother and resists her control. Judy realizes that Cleo "was the boss of nothing but the young, the weak, the frightened. She ruled a pygmy kingdom" (308). Through Cleo, West complicates two prevalent images of black women. The author revises established representations of black, middle-class, female characters by refusing to create tragic sympathy for her near-white characters. Dorothy West also transforms the concept of the black woman as the enduring, loving matriarch.

Cleo's world disintegrates after Bart's business fails, in the same way as other black-owned businesses in the novel that did not respond effectively to the forces of modernity. While West illustrates in *The Living Is Easy* the small space that black, middle-class women occupy, she also delineates the weakly derivative and obsessively color-conscious base on which her black middle-class characters rest. This small, exclusive group consists in the struggling descendants of tailors and stable owners who prefer light skin color and avoid acknowledging anything as ugly as lynching. Throughout *The Living Is Easy* West illustrates her ironic stance toward middle-class color consciousness and imitative behavior with poignant narrative commentary. When, for example, a black man "failed in business, and blew his brains out just like a white man, [e]verybody was a little proud of his suicide" (112).

Cleo Judson's actions in this novel are misguided, but her motive is to situate her vision of the lifestyle and cultural base of the African American South within the economic base of middle-class Boston and to define a space for female power. Cleo is defeated by the broader economic and gender issues of her time as well

as by her own overreaching. Cleo wonders if her sisters—because they are manless—are less like the image of their mother that Cleo remembers. She remembers the face of her mother when their father “was no where in her thinking” (284). Cleo’s dream of a female utopia has become strangely dystopic without Bart’s support. West’s novel demonstrates the power of the dominant discourse on race and gender.

Forty-seven years after the publication of Dorothy West’s first novel, she returns readers—in her second novel, *The Wedding*—to the complexities of a class- and color-conscious environment in an exclusive circle of African Americans. The immediate action of the novel occurs in 1953 on Martha’s Vineyard in the Oval, a fictional neighborhood on the island of Oak Bluffs. West’s narrator, however, supplies readers with more than 100 years of history through flashbacks. The new guard in the Oval has moved away from the entrenched cultural rules. Previously, marrying light-skinned—not white—and marrying well had been the rule. Between them, Shelby Coles and her sister Liz have broken all the rules. Liz’s husband is a dark-skinned physician whose occupation saves him from complete *déclassé* status in the Oval. Liz and Clark Coles—the sisters’ father—unlike their mother and neighbors, are concerned that Shelby is rejecting black men out of fear. Shelby, notwithstanding everyone’s restrained distress, is planning to marry a white jazz musician. Meade, her fiancé, is not a light-skinned black man; he is not a member of the right socioeconomic class; and his career is unsuitable for a resident of the Oval. Clark is worried about Shelby’s marriage to Meade, because “I’ve never seen you give your respect to a colored man and I can’t help but think that maybe that’s some warped extension of this family’s social snobbery” (201). The only member of the Coles family who has no reservations about Shelby’s marriage is Gram, Shelby’s white great-grandmother who dreams of regenerating the white branch of her family, which was cut off when her daughter Josephine married Hannibal, the son of a woman who was formerly enslaved at Xanadu, the family’s plantation.

With this novel, Dorothy West again interrogates issues of class, color, and, to a lesser extent, gender. She demonstrates the complexities of these issues through a story that illuminates the social construction of desire and race. She further shows the numerous moral and psychological convolutions in behavior and thought that restrictive color/class practices engender.

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

Dorothy West’s novel *The Living Is Easy* was reviewed widely when it was first published. These reviews were, for the most part, favorable. Most of the reviewers locate West’s strength in her ability to present unforgettable characters, especially Cleo. Too often, though, these early reviews were concerned with the ways in which Cleo’s actions affected Bart’s male identity. West occasionally has been critiqued—rightly—for her weak ending of this novel. This same, very right complaint has been leveled against West’s second novel, *The Wedding*. Most

agree, however, that Dorothy West's weak endings do not nullify the value of her novels.

To date, the bulk of scholarship on Dorothy West focuses on *The Living Is Easy*. In Philip Butcher's 1948 essay, he presents West as one of the then-current "raceless writers." For Butcher, "The trend toward raceless authorship seems a loss to the Negro and to American literature" (15). In 1982 the Feminist Press reissued *The Living Is Easy* with an afterword by Adelaide Cromwell. Cromwell discusses the ways in which West's novel transforms literary representations of black women as well as the literary image of the lives of black people in the United States. Edward Clark's 1985 essay "Boston Black and White" is concerned with Cleo's failed desire to "be both Southern and Bostonian" (85). Lawrence Rodgers presents one of the most intriguing readings of *The Living Is Easy*. He does not believe this novel is compromised by the dominant society's middle-class values. For him, West "mocks these values" (161). Rodgers reads Cleo as "a complex archetypal trickster whose resistance to the binary is rooted in the folk tradition" (165) of black people in the South.

Mary Helen Washington initiates scholarly focus on gender in this novel. West, according to Washington, writes a novel that is "in contradiction with itself" because there is a "sisterly community which has deposed the powerful mother" Cleo (350–51). Gloria Wade-Gayles (1984) argues that African American mother–daughter relationships in literature are different from their European American counterparts because the socialization process among black women is rooted in gender and racial struggles. Eva Rueschmann investigates the importance of sister bonds, which allow black women a mirror that reflects a model for "identity formation," which is lacking in the dominant society. For Rueschmann, West's *The Living Is Easy* "comment[s] ironically on women's pre-scripted fantasies about their own development and underline[s] how standards for white women have shaped black women's self-perceptions and expectations" (130). Cleo, then, tries to find in her sisters just such a mirror of their mother and herself.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Works by Dorothy West

- "Hannah Byde." *The Messenger* 8 (July 1926): 197–199.  
 "Prologue to a Life." 1928. *The Sleeper Wakes: Harlem Renaissance Stories by Women*. Ed. Marcy Knopf. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993. 84–94.  
*The Living Is Easy*. 1948. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1982.  
*The Richer, the Poorer: Stories, Sketches, and Reminiscences*. New York: Doubleday, 1995a.  
*The Wedding*. New York: Doubleday, 1995b.

### Studies of Dorothy West

- Butcher, Philip. "Our Raceless Writers." *Opportunity* 26 (Summer 1948): 113–115.  
 Clark, Dorothy A. "Rediscovering Dorothy West." *American Visions* 8 (1993): 46–47.



- Clark, Edward. "Boston Black and White: The Voice of Fiction." *Black American Literature Forum* 19 (1985): 83–89.
- Cromwell, Adelaide. Afterword. *The Living Is Easy*. By Dorothy West. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1982. 349–362.
- Dalsgard, Katrine. "Alive and Well and Living on the Island of Martha's Vineyard: An Interview with Dorothy West, October 29, 1988." *The Langston Hughes Review* 12 (1993): 28–44.
- Daniel, Walter C. "Challenge Magazine: An Experiment That Failed." *CLAJ* 26 (June 1976): 494–503.
- Ferguson, Sally Ann. "Dorothy West and Helene Johnson in *Infants of the Spring*." *Langston Hughes Review* 2.2 (1983): 22–24.
- . "Dorothy West." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Vol. 76. Ed. Trudier Harris. Detroit: Gale, 1988. 187–195.
- McDowell, Deborah E. "Conversation with Dorothy West." *The Harlem Renaissance Re-Examined*. Ed. Victor A. Kramer. New York: AMS Press, 1987. 265–282.
- Rodgers, Lawrence R. "Dorothy West's *The Living Is Easy* and the Ideal of Southern Folk Community." *AAR* 26 (1992): 161–172.
- Roses, Lorraine Elena. "Interviews with Black Women Writers: Dorothy West at Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts July, 1984." *Sage* 2.1 (1985): 47–49.
- Rueschmann, Eva. "Sister Bonds: Intersections of Family and Race in Jessie Redmon Fauset's *Plum Bun* and Dorothy West's *The Living Is Easy*. *The Significance of Sibling Relationships in Literature*. Ed. JoAnna Stephens Mink and Janet Doubler Ward. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993. 120–132.
- Steinberg, Sybil. "Dorothy West: Her Own Renaissance." *Publishers Weekly* 242 (3 July 1995): 34–35.
- Wade-Gayles, Gloria. "The Truths of Our Mothers' Lives: Mother–Daughter Relationships in Black Women's Fiction." *Sage* 1.2 (1984): 8–12.
- Washington, Mary Helen. "I Sign My Mother's Name: Maternal Power in Dorothy West's Novel, *The Living Is Easy*." *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women 1860–1960*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1987. 344–353.

# ABOUT THE EDITOR AND CONTRIBUTORS

CORA AGATUCCI teaches African culture and literature as well as women's studies at Central Oregon Community College in Bend. She has published critical articles on African American literature and on the works of Doris Lessing.

MARLENE D. ALLEN is a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia at Athens, with a concentration in African American women's literature.

EBERHARD ALSEN is Professor of English at the State University College of New York at Cortland. A widely published scholar, he is most recently the author of *Romantic Postmodernism in American Fiction*.

TRELA ANDERSON is a doctoral candidate in English and Creative Writing at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

CHERRON A. BARNWELL is a doctoral candidate in English at Howard University.

LEAN'TIN BRACKS is an Assistant Professor of English at Fisk University and the author of *Black Women Writers of the Diaspora*.

KIMBERLY N. BROWN is an Assistant Professor of English at Texas A&M University.

MARILYN D. BUTTON is Associate Professor of English at Lincoln University. She has published several scholarly articles on British as well as American women writers.

LAURIE CHAMPION, Assistant Professor of English, serves as the coordinator of women's studies at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

HARISH CHANDER is Professor of English at Shaw University.

JOYCE L. CHERRY is Associate Professor of English at Albany State University, where she coordinates the Freshman Writing Sequence and teaches courses in American literature.

PETER G. CHRISTENSEN teaches in the Department of French, Italian, and Comparative Literature and in the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

RITA B. DANDRIDGE is Professor of English at Norfolk State University. Her most recent book is *Black Women's Blues: A Literary Anthology, 1934-1988*.

ADENIKE MARIE DAVIDSON is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Central Florida.

ANNETTE DEBO is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she is completing her dissertation on American literary modernism.

FRANK E. DOBSON, JR., is Assistant Professor of English at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

JEFFREY B. DUNHAM is a graduate student in English at SUNY-Cortland.

AMY E. EARHART is a doctoral candidate at Texas A & M University.

SAMUEL B. GARREN is Professor of English at North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro; he has published scholarly articles on Jean Toomer, William Attaway, and other twentieth-century writers.

BRUCE A. GLASRUUD is Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and Professor of history at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

SHANNA D. GREENE is a graduate student in English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

TRACIE CHURCH GUZZIO is a doctoral candidate in English at Ohio University, where she is completing a dissertation on John Edgar Wideman.

ANDRÉ HOYRD is a doctoral candidate at Howard University. His poetry has

appeared in *James White Review*; in 1995 he was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

NICHOLYN HUTCHINSON is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Georgia; she is completing a dissertation on African-American literature.

YMITRI JAYASUNDERA is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

A. YEMISI JIMOH teaches American literature and literary theory at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. She is currently writing a book on music in African American fiction.

EVORA JONES holds a doctorate in English and teaches writing at Howard University.

GWENDOLYN S. JONES is Professor of English at Tuskegee University. She teaches composition, literature, and speech communication.

JACQUELINE C. JONES is Assistant Professor of English and African American literature at Washington College, Maryland.

LEELA KAPAI is Professor of English at Prince George's Community College in Maryland. She has published numerous articles on multicultural literature.

ROY KAY is Assistant Professor of English at Macalester College. He is currently writing a book titled *Rewriting the Self in Emergent Literatures*.

ANNLOUISE KEATING is Associate Professor of English at Eastern New Mexico University, where she also directs the Freshman Composition Program. Author of *Women Reading Women Writing: Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde*, she has published numerous articles on American writers.

KRISTINA L. KNOTTS is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Currently, she is an instructor at Westfield State University in Massachusetts.

SARALA KRISHNAMURTHY is a Reader in the Department of English at Bangalore University in India. She is a specialist in postcolonial literature.

JEFFREY T. LOEB, senior teacher at the Pembroke Hill School in Kansas City, has published extensively on the literature of the Vietnam War.

ROBIN LUCY is a doctoral student at McMaster University in Canada, where

she is completing a dissertation on African-American literary response to World War I.

BINDU MALIECKAL is a doctoral candidate in English at Baylor University and an instructor at the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg.

SUZANNE HOTTE MASSA is a graduate student in English at SUNY-Cortland; she also teaches multicultural literature at a private high school in Ithaca, New York.

TERRENCE J. McGOVERN is a librarian at the SUNY campus at Cortland.

SARAH McKEE teaches English and reading at A-B Technical Community College in Asheville, North Carolina.

ADAM MEYER is Assistant Professor of English at Fisk University. Author of a book on Raymond Carver, he has published several articles on contemporary writers.

CHRISTIAN MORARU is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. He is the author of *The Poetics of Reflection* and has published scholarly articles in numerous journals.

NICOLA MORRIS is on the faculty of the Goddard College Fine Arts Writing Program. A poet and fiction writer, she is the author of several critical articles in various journals.

NANETTE MORTON is a doctoral candidate in English at McMaster University in Canada. She is completing a dissertation on the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass.

PIERRE-DAMIEN MVUYEKURE is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Northern Iowa. His teaching and research interests include American multicultural literature as well as postcolonial writing.

EMMANUEL S. NELSON is Professor of English at SUNY-Cortland. Author of over thirty articles on various international literatures in English, he has edited several volumes, including *Connections: Essays on Black Literatures* (1988), *Writers of the Indian Diaspora* (Greenwood, 1993), and *Contemporary Gay American Novelists* (Greenwood, 1993).

TERRY NOVAK is Instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

DEBORAH G. PLANT is Associate Professor of Africana Studies at the Uni-

versity of South Florida. She is the author of *Every Tub Must Sit on Its Own Bottom: The Philosophy and Politics of Zora Neale Hurston*.

LOUIS HILL PRATT is Professor of English at Florida A & M University. Author of *James Baldwin* (1978), he has edited *Alice Malsenior Walker: An Annotated Bibliography* (1988) and *Conversations with James Baldwin* (1989).

PEGGY STEVENSON RATLIFF is Chairperson of the Humanities Division at Claflin College, South Carolina.

CHRIS ROARK is Associate Professor of English at John Carroll University. He has published articles on a variety of writers ranging from Shakespeare to Malcolm X.

MOLLY RODEN teaches at the Brooklyn Friends School in Brooklyn, New York.

JOYCE RUSSELL-ROBINSON teaches literature at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina.

GRACE SIKORSKI teaches English at the Pennsylvania State University and at Juniata College.

RENNIE SIMSON is Lecturer in the African-American Studies Department at Syracuse University. She has published numerous articles on African American women writers.

P. JANE SPLAWN is an Assistant Professor of English at Beaver College, Pennsylvania.

CHARLES TITA is the Chairperson of the Department of Humanities at Shaw University.

TRACEY WALTERS is a doctoral candidate at Howard University; her areas of concentration include African American and Afro-British literatures.

ANISSA J. WARDI teaches English at Chatham College, where she also coordinates the Cultural Studies and African-American Studies Program.

SARAH WHELISS is a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her areas of interest include African American literature and film.

KATHY WHITE teaches at A-B Community College in Asheville, North Carolina.

LINDA M. WHITE is a doctoral candidate in African American literature at Howard University.

DANA A. WILLIAMS is a doctoral candidate at Howard University. Her book on contemporary African American playwrights is scheduled for publication by Greenwood Press.

LORETTA G. WOODARD is Associate Professor of English at Marygrove College in Detroit. She is a contributing editor to *Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia* (1996).