

Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction. Voices Within the Circle: A Historical Overview of African
American Literary Criticism 1

I The Harlem Renaissance

The New Negro · *Alain Locke* 21

The Negro in American Literature · *William Stanley Braithwaite* 32

The Gift of Laughter · *Jessie Fauset* 45

The Negro-Art Hokum · *George S. Schuyler* 51

The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain · *Langston Hughes* 55

Criteria of Negro Art · *W. E. B. DuBois* 60

Our Literary Audience · *Sterling A. Brown* 69

Characteristics of Negro Expression · *Zora Neale Hurston* 79

II Humanistic/Ethical Criticism and the Protest Tradition

Blueprint for Negro Writing · *Richard Wright* 97

American Negro Literature · *J. Saunders Redding* 107

What White Publishers Won't Print · *Zora Neale Hurston* 117

New Poets · *Margaret Walker* 122

Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity

Ralph Ellison 134

Everybody's Protest Novel · *James Baldwin* 149

Integration and Race Literature · *Arthur P. Davis* 156

III *The Black Arts Movement*

The Myth of a "Negro Literature" · *LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka)* 165

Ethnic Impact in American Literature: Reflections on a Course

George E. Kent 172

The Black Arts Movement · *Larry Neal* 184

Towards a Black Aesthetic · *Hoyt W. Fuller* 199

Cultural Strangulation: Black Literature and the White Aesthetic

Addison Gayle, Jr. 207

Toward a Definition: Black Poetry of the Sixties (After LeRoi Jones)

Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti) 213

Tripping with Black Writing · *Sarah Webster Fabio* 224

IV *Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and the African American Critic*

Preface to Blackness: Text and Pretext · *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* 235

I Rose and Found My Voice: Narration, Authentication, and Authorial

Control in Four Slave Narratives · *Robert B. Stepto* 256

Generational Shifts and the Recent Criticism of Afro-American Literature

Houston A. Baker, Jr. 282

Literary Production: A Silence in Afro-American Critical Practice

W. Lawrence Hogue 329

The Race for Theory · *Barbara Christian* 348

Appropriative Gestures: Theory and Afro-American Literary Criticism

Michael Awkward 360

Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American

Literature · *Toni Morrison* 368

V *Gender, Theory, and African American Feminist Criticism*

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens · *Alice Walker* 401

Toward a Black Feminist Criticism · *Barbara Smith* 410

New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism · *Deborah E. McDowell* 428

"The Darkened Eye Restored:" Notes Toward a Literary History of Black

Women · *Mary Helen Washington* 442

Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book

Hortense J. Spillers 454

Gender and Afro-Americanist Literary Theory and Criticism

Valerie Smith 482

But What Do We Think We're Doing Anyway: The State of Black Feminist Criticism(s) or My Version of a Little Bit of History <i>Barbara Christian</i>	499
Some Implications of Womanist Theory • <i>Sherley Anne Williams</i>	515
Useful Sources for Related Reading	523
Acknowledgment of Copyrights	526
About the Critics	528
Index of Selected Names	531

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see.—Frederick Douglass, 1845

Fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and customs—religious, political and social. It is a record of growth and development from generation to generation. No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history.—Pauline E. Hopkins, 1900

A people may become great through many means, but there is only one measure by which its greatness is recognized and acknowledged. The final measure of the greatness of all peoples is the amount and standard of the literature and art they have produced. The world does not know that a people is great until that people produces great literature and art. No people that has produced great literature and art has ever been looked upon by the world as distinctly inferior.—James Weldon Johnson, 1921

It is one thing for a race to produce artistic material; it is quite another thing for it to produce the ability to interpret and criticize this material.—W. E. B. DuBois, 1925