

Notes on Contributors

Myka Tucker Abramson is a teaching fellow at the University of Warwick. She is currently working on a book project about the post-war U.S. novel, urban renewal projects, and the rise of neoliberalism.

Phyllis E. Bernard M.A., J.D. is Robert S. Kerr, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Law and Director of The Center on Alternative Dispute Resolution at Oklahoma City University School of Law. Born in New York, she was raised in Oklahoma City's Deep Deuce Neighborhood and began her legal career in Washington, D.C. Noted for her work in alternative dispute resolution, Bernard's *pro bono* service in Rule of Law projects in conflict zones of Nigeria, post-genocide Rwanda, and post-civil war Liberia "rewrote the book" on tribal peacemaking and commercial/civil adjudication. From 2000 to 2006 she led projects for the American Bar Association, U.S. State Department, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation that are credited with preventing, reducing, and resolving tens of thousands of conflicts that would otherwise have reignited communal warfare in Africa. She has published widely on teaching, dispute resolution, and negotiation.

Sterling Lecater Bland, Jr. is Professor of English, African American Studies, and American Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. He has previously served as associate dean of the Graduate School-Newark and chair of the Department of African and African American Studies. He received his doctorate and master's degrees from New York University's Department of English. He has published or edited: *Voices of the Fugitives: Runaway Slave Stories and Their Fictions of Self-Creation*; *African American Slave Narratives: An Anthology* (three volumes); *The Pedro Gorino: The Adventures of a Negro Sea-Captain*. "Fire and Romance: African American Literature since World War II" appeared in *A Companion to Postwar American Literature and Culture*, edited by Josephine Hendin. He is currently working on a critical reassessment of Ralph Ellison's work that foregrounds the thoughts Ellison presented in his fiction, essays, and correspondence. This study refocuses Ellison's contributions to the broad implications of American literature and culture.

Kasia Boddy teaches in the English Faculty at Cambridge University, U.K. Her books include *Boxing: A Cultural History* (2008) and *The American Short Story Since 1950* (2010), and she has also published numerous essays on American writers, including two others on Ellison.

J.J. Butts is an Assistant Professor of English at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Prior to this, he held full-time appointments at Wartburg College and Hunter College. After studying English and Anthropology at Appalachian State University, he received master's and doctoral degrees in English from Syracuse University. He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Space Between Society and is the Review Editor of its journal *The Space Between: Literature and Culture, 1914-45*. His work focuses on literature's engagement with the emergent welfare state. He has published essays on representation of public housing and the critique of causal certainty in collective novels. He was awarded Honorable Mention for the Joe Weixlmann Award by *African American Review* for an essay focusing on documentary intertexts of the Federal Writers' Project. Currently he is working on a book manuscript, *Building in the Valley of Ashes: Literature and Development in the New Deal*, which explores the discourses of planning and development in literature of the New Deal era, as well as an essay focusing on Woody Guthrie's songs for the Bonneville Power Administration.

Keith Byerman is Professor of African American literature, Southern literature, and modern U.S. literature in the Department of English at Indiana State University. He is author of *Fingering the Jagged Edge: Tradition and Form in Recent Black Fiction* and *The Life and Work of John Edgar Wideman*, among other titles.

Matthew Calihman is Associate Professor and Graduate Director in the Department of English at Missouri State University. He has published articles on Amiri Baraka and John A. Williams. Among his current projects is a study of African American intellectuals' engagement with cultural pluralist thought.

John F. Callahan is Morgan S. Odell Professor of Humanities, emeritus, at Lewis & Clark College and serves as the literary executor of the Ralph Ellison estate. He is the author of the novel *A Man You Could Love*, along with many critical contributions on Irish American and African American literature, including *In the African-American Grain: The Pursuit of Voice in 20th Century Black Fiction* and *The Illusions of a Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. He is also responsible for editing and publishing Ralph Ellison's posthumous works, including *Juneteenth*, *Three Days Before the Shooting . . .* (with Adam Bradley), *Flying Home*, and *Trading Twelves*. He is currently editing the selected letters of Ralph Ellison.

Jordan Casteel (b. 1989 in Denver, CO) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Casteel received her MFA in 2014 from Yale University. In 2015 Casteel held artist residences at Yaddo and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Additionally, her work was selected for inclusion in *New American Paintings* Northeast Issue #116 - 2015. Her first solo exhibition in New York was with Sargent's Daughters gallery in August 2014 and was featured in *Time Out New York*, *The New York Observer*, and *Interview*.

Renowned for her sculptures of black life, especially black women, in the United States, Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) had a career that spanned from the 1930s into the twenty-first century. She worked in wood, clay, linocut, stone, and metals, and

earned degrees in art at Howard University and the University of Iowa. In the 1940s, Catlett left the segregated United States and became an expatriate in Mexico. In her later years, she maintained residences in the United States and Mexico. Among Catlett's distinguished sculptures are *Mother and Child* (1939), *Louis Armstrong* (1975), *Sojourner* (1999), and *Invisible Man* (2003).

Kansas-born Hugh Hawkins has lived most of his life in western Massachusetts, teaching at Amherst College for forty-three years. Besides his books on academic history and his memoirs *Railwayman's Son* and *They Spoke, I Listened*, he has published *The Escape of the Faculty Wife and Other Stories*.

Paul Devlin completed his Ph.D. in English at Stony Brook University in 2014. He is the editor of *Riff tide: The Life and Opinions of Papa Jo Jones* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011) and *Murray Talks Music: The Unpublished and Uncollected Music Writings and Interviews of Albert Murray* (University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2016). His essay "Why Did Ralph Ellison Never Publish His Second Novel? A New Theory" appeared in *Slate* in 2013. He was a curator of the exhibition *Ralph Ellison: A Man and His Records* at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem in 2014. He currently teaches at St. John's University and at the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

Tracy Floreani is Professor of English and Chair of the English Department at Oklahoma City University. She served as the head of Oklahoma City's citywide steering committee for the Ralph Ellison Centennial. She is the author of *Fifties Ethnicities: The Ethnic Novel and Mass Culture at Midcentury* and is currently working on a biography of Fanny McConnell Ellison.

Terrance Hayes is the author of *Lighthead* (Penguin 2010) and three other poetry collections. His honors include the 2010 National Book Award, a Whiting Writers Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a MacArthur Fellowship. His fifth book is *How To Be Drawn* (Penguin, 2015).

Casey Hayman is a Ph.D. candidate in English Literature and American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His book project, "*The Machines Inside the Machine*": *Techno-Performativity and Meta-Blackness in 20th/21st-Century African American Culture*, traces an aesthetic of techno-performative, "meta-black" masculinity through late 20th and early 21st-century black cultural expression. His essays have appeared in *MELUS*, *African American Review*, and *The Massachusetts Review*.

Lena M. Hill is Associate Professor of English and African American Studies at University of Iowa. She received her doctorate in English from Yale University and her bachelor's degree from Howard University. She held a post-doctoral Mellon fellowship at Duke University. Hill has published or co-authored two books: *Visualizing Blackness and the Creation of the African American Literary Tradition* (Cambridge UP; 2014) and *Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man: A Reference Guide* (Greenwood; 2008; co-authored with Michael Hill). An edited collection, *Invisible Hawkeyes: Iowa, Integration, and the Ellisons*, is currently under contract (UP of

Iowa; co-edited with Michael Hill). “The Visual Art of *Invisible Man*: Ellison’s Portrait of Blackness” appeared in *American Literature* in 2009 and “A New Stage of Laughter for Zora Neale Hurston and Theodore Browne: *Lysistrata* and the Negro Units of the Federal Theater Project” is forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas* (Oxford; 2015). She currently serves as the vice president of the American Literature Association Ralph Ellison Society, a position she has held since 2010.

Mike Hoffman holds a BFA from Oklahoma State University. Compelled by mysterious, non-monetary forces, he spends most of his time holed up in an Oklahoma farmhouse making images on and out of repurposed materials like barn wood and landscape paintings found at thrift stores. His images are largely figural and from the past. His media vary from painting to small-scale sculpture to tramp art carving. Mike Hoffman was co-founder of The Gallery in Stillwater, OK in the 1980s, an art space and music venue for young upstarts like the artists at Exploding Sky Worldwide and the Flaming Lips. More recently, he has shown work in group shows in Oklahoma City and solo exhibits in Lawrence, KS.

A Yemisi Jimoh is Professor of African American Literature and Culture in the Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a cultural analyst with a foundation in critical race studies. Her publications include articles, reviews, and essays in a number of scholarly journals, *These Truly are the Brave: An Anthology of African American Writings on War and Citizenship* (co-editor), and *Spiritual, Blues, and Jazz People in African American Fiction*, which includes a chapter—“These (Blackness of Blackness) Blues”—with a section on Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*. She was the President of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) from 2012-2015 and is a member of the editorial board (since 2003) for its journal *MELUS*.

David Phelps is a sculptor whose art is in collections around the world. He produces large-scale sculptures and frequently his art connects people to a location. Phelps, who grew up in California, lives in Oklahoma.

Horace Porter is the F. Wendell Miller Professor of English & American Studies and is chair of the American Studies department and the African American Studies program at the University of Iowa. Porter received his B.A. from Amherst College and Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University. Before joining the faculty at Iowa, he taught at Wayne State University, Dartmouth College, and Stanford University. He is the author of *Jazz Country: Ralph Ellison in America* (2001), a study that addresses Ellison’s essays and comments about jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Parker. Porter also highlights the significance of Ellison’s friendship with two other jazz aficionados—the writer Albert Murray and the painter Romare Bearden. Porter’s articles on Ellison include: “Ralph Ellison and Charlie Christian in Oklahoma City” (1999). He is also author of *Stealing the Fire: The Art and Protest of James Baldwin* (1989) and is one of the editors of *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African-American Literary Tradition* (1998). Porter was a consultant for and commentator in the documentary film *Movie Star: The Secret Lives of Jean Seberg* (2014). His commentary focuses on the Iowa

native's activities as a civil rights activist and as a supporter of the Black Panther Party. In 2003, Porter published *The Making of a Black Scholar*, a memoir in which he tells of getting to know Ralph Ellison. Porter first met Ellison in 1969 at Amherst College. He visited Ellison for the first time in 1977 and remained in touch with the writer until his death in 1994.

Todd Bryant Weeks is a Brooklyn based jazz historian and trade unionist. His 2008 book, *Luck's In My Corner: The Life and Music of Hot Lips Page* (Routledge), received a 2009 Certificate of Merit for Best Research in Recorded Jazz Music from the Association of Recorded Sound Collections, a national award. Weeks is a regular contributor to *Allegro, the News Magazine of the American Federation of Musicians*, *Local 802* and his writing has appeared in the *Annual Review of Jazz Studies*, *Forever Harlem: Celebrating America's Most Diverse Community*, *Uptown Magazine*, *Dipperrmouth News*, and the *New York Amsterdam News*. Weeks is the 2004 recipient of the Morroe Berger-Benny Carter Fellowship from Rutgers University-Newark and has received two awards for his labor writing from the International Labor Communication Association. Weeks has worked as an adjunct at Rutgers University-Newark and with the Bard Prison Initiative, where he lectured on jazz and its importance to American culture with emphasis on a re-contextualization of jazz in American history, aesthetics, race politics, economic trends, and sociological themes. Weeks has given talks and papers on jazz and literature at various venues and institutions including the Institute of Jazz Studies, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections annual conference, the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, the Apollo Theater, the Louis Armstrong House Museum, and at the Westport Public Library in Westport, Connecticut. He is currently researching his next book, an interdisciplinary examination of the Hill District in Pittsburgh, PA. He is a 2015 Resident Artist at both Jentel Artist Residency Program in Sheridan, Wyoming and the Millay Colony for the Arts in Austerlitz, New York. Weeks is a 2004 graduate of Rutgers University-Newark's MFA Program in Jazz History and Research.

Jack Whitten was born in Alabama and began painting in the 1960s. He is an abstract and experimental artist whose work has appeared in exhibits and museum collections around the world, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, and the Venice Beinnale, The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and the Tate Modern in London.

John S. Wright teaches U.S. literature and African American literature in the Department of English and the Department of African American and African Studies at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of various articles on Harlem Renaissance writers as well as the critical monograph *Shadowing Ralph Ellison*.



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