Jennifer Denise Williams

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**EDUCATION**

PhD English, The University of Texas at Austin, 2006

MA African and African American Studies, Clark Atlanta University, 1998

BS Psychology, African American Studies (minor), Howard University, 1993

Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa

**ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT**

2017- Assistant Professor, Department of English, Howard University

2013-2017 Assistant Professor, Department of English and Program in Women’s and Gender Studies, Morgan State University

2012-2013 Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Rice

University

2011-2012 Visiting Professor, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies,

Goucher College

2008-2011 Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow, Department of English, New York University

2006-2008 Assistant Professor, Department of English and Program in African American and African Studies, Michigan State University

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Books:**

*Intimate Cities: Black Women’s Literary Architectures of Segregation and Dreams of Freedom* (in

progress).

**Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters:**

“‘An Elegy of Place’: Affective Mapping in June Jordan’s *Civil Wars*.” *a/b: Auto/Biography*

 *Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, August 2023, pp. 525-541.

“Black Women’s 1930s Protest Fiction.” *African American Literature in Transition*, *1930-1940*:

Volume 10. Eds. Eve Dunbar and Ayesha Hardison. Cambridge UP, 2022.

“Gloria Naylor, Ann Petry, and Black Feminist Regard.” *Naylor in the Archives* (resubmitted; U of

Mississippi Press).

“Travelin’ Women: Black Feminist Migrations, Diasporas, and Cosmopolitanisms,” Special

Section Co-edited with Ifeoma Nwankwo. *Meridians*, vol. 15, no. 2, Fall 2017, pp. 382-388.

“Black American Girls in Paris: Sex, Race, and Cosmopolitan Desire in Andrea Lee’s *Sarah Phillips*

and Shay Youngblood’s *Black Girl in Paris*.” *Contemporary Women’s Writing*, vol. 9, no.2,

July 2015, pp. 238-256.

“‘A Woman was Lynched the Other Day’: Memory, Gender, and the Limits of Traumatic

Representation.” *Gender and Lynching: The Politics of Memory*, edited by Evelyn M.

Simien, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 81-102.

“Jean Toomer’s *Cane* and the Erotics of Mourning.” *Southern Literary Journal* vol. 40, no.2,

Spring 2008, pp. 87-101.

--reprinted in *Cane: Norton Critical Edition*, 2nd ed., edited by Rudolph Byrd and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., W.W. Norton and Co., 2011, pp. 404-417.

“The Performance of Trauma in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.” *Africanizing*

*Knowledge*, edited by Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, Transaction Publishers, 2002,

pp. 273-288.

**Reviews, Interviews, and Bibliographic Essays:**

“‘They Call it Bronzeville!’: Revisiting Chicago’s South Side,” Review Essay of *The South Side: A*

 *Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation* by Natalie Y. Moore, *Spatializing*

*Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* by Rashad

Shabazz, and *South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration* by Marcia Chatelain,

*The Black Scholar* vol. 47, no. 4, October 2017, pp. 69-75.

“An Interesting Woman: A Conversation with Andrea Lee,” *Meridians* vol. 15, no.2, 2017, pp.

507-517.

“Ann Petry” in *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century American Fiction*, edited by Patrick

O’Donnell, Justus Nieland, and David Madden, Blackwell Publishing, 2010, pp. 765-767.

“Bearing Witness: Review Essay of *Lynching Photographs* by Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle

Smith and *Lynching and Spectacle* by Amy Louise Wood,” *e-misférica*, vol. 7, no.1, July

2010.

Review of *South of Tradition: Essays on African American Literature* by Trudier Harris-Lopez,

*Modern Fiction Studies* vol. 51, no.3, Fall 2005, pp. 686-689.

Review of *Risking Difference: Identification, Race and Community* by Jean Wyatt and *Black*

*Women, Identity and Cultural Theory: (Un)becoming the Subject* by Kevin Everod

Quashie, *American Literature*, vol. 77, no.2, March 2005, pp. 432-434.

**Selected Public Scholarship:**

“*Chi-Raq* and Spike Lee’s Bad Feminism,” *Msmagazine.com*, January 13, 2016.

“Consuming Sugar: Kara Walker’s Marvelous Sugar Baby,” *Msmagazine.com*, July 8, 2014.

“Anita: Still Speaking Truth to Power,” *Msmagazine.com*, March 23, 2014.

“What would bell hooks say?” An interview with bell hooks. *Ms. Magazine*, vol. XXI, no. 2,

Spring 2011, pp. 40-43.

**AWARDS, HONORS, and FELLOWSHIPS**

2023 Inaugural Honors Faculty Fellow (COAS), Howard University

2022 Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership (CWGGL) Summer Research

Grant

2019-2020 National Humanities Center Residential Fellowship

2018-2019 National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Research Award

2019 Summer Faculty Research Fellowship, Howard University

2016-2017 Benjamin A. Quarles Faculty Fellowship, Morgan State University

2014 Faculty Summer Enrichment Grant, Morgan State University

2008-2011 New York University Postdoctoral Fellowship for Academic Diversity

2008 Arts and Letters College Fund for International Travel, Michigan State University

2008 International Studies and Programs Special Foreign Travel Fund, Michigan State

2007 NEH Summer Seminar, “Hemispheric American Literature,” participant

2007 CASID/Women in Development Curriculum Development Grant, Michigan State

2004 Ann Plato Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Trinity College

2004 Prestigious Bruton Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin

2004 Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Honorable Mention

**INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

Closing Keynote, “Black Feminist Regard: Gloria Naylor and Ann Petry’s Literary Friendship,”

“With a Pen in Her Hand”: Communities in Gloria Naylor’s Fiction and Archives,” Sacred

Heart University, October 19-20, 2023.

Speaker, “(re)Centering the Narrative: Black Women’s Voices of the 19th and 20th Centuries,”

National Humanities Center, July 10-14, 2023.

Panelist, “The Beginning of a New Era: Virtual Black Spaces,” Black Spaces Symposium (virtual),

July 13, 2021.

Speaker, “Meaningful Teaching and Learning in the Humanities Classroom” (virtual), National

Humanities Center, July 5-9, 2021

Panelist, “Writing Accountability: A Conversation with Fellows” (virtual), National Humanities

Center, October 1, 2020.

Speaker, “Architextural Reparations in June Jordan’s ‘Skyrise for Harlem’ and Gwendolyn

Brooks’s ‘In the Mecca,’” University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of

African, African American and Diaspora Studies, Chapel Hill, NC, January 29, 2020.

Speaker, “‘The North’s Lynch Mobs’: The Afterlife of Segregation.” University of North

Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Chapel Hill, NC,

November 8, 2018.

Panelist, “Amplifying Feminist Voices: How to Write for the Popular Press,” National Women’s

Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 2017.

Speaker, “Marriage Problems: Black Women’s Postwar Critiques of Traditional

Domesticity.” Unearthing the Hidden in Women’s Lives through Journals, Letters,

Periodicals. Borough of Manhattan Community College, NY, NY, March 2016.

Speaker, “Sexual Geographies of New World Slavery: The U.S. South and the Caribbean in

Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora* and Kara Walker’s *Slavery! Slavery!*” Rice University’s

Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Series, Houston, TX, March 2014.

Course Lecturer, “Sex, Race, and Cosmopolitan Desire in Shay Youngblood’s *Black Girl in Paris*.”

Black Paris Seminar, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, April 2012.

Speaker, “The Erotics of Travel in African American Women’s Fiction.” Narratives of Place

and Displacement Symposium, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, March 2, 2012.

Plenary, “Cosmopolitan Desire in Black Diasporic Women’s Texts.” Transnational

Feminism and the Black Diaspora Symposium, Brown University, Providence, RI,

November 2009.

Keynote, “Reasons to Riot: Black Women’s Urban Despair and Resistance in Ann Petry’s

*The Street*,” Annual Ann Plato Lecture, Trinity College, Hartford, CT, October 2004.

**CONFERENCES**

Roundtable Panelist, “Intimate Renderings of Black Homeplace,” American Studies Association,

New Orleans, LA, November 2022.

“Gloria Naylor, Ann Petry, and Black Feminist Regard,” The Gloria Naylor Archive Symposium,

virtual, November 2021.

Roundtable Panelist, “The Infrastructure of Emergency,” Modern Language Association

(virtual), January 2021.

“‘Between the Dry Hours’: Black Feminism and the Queer Urban Domestic,” American Studies

Association, Honolulu, HI, November 2019.

Roundtable Panelist, “Productive Precarity: African American Writing during the Depression

Era,” Modern Language Association International Symposium, Lisbon, Portugal, July

2019.

Discussant, “Constructing Black Womanhood,” Modern Language Association International

Symposium, Lisbon, Portugal, July 2019.

“‘a place where People live’: Gwendolyn Brooks’s Radical Acts of Looking,” College Language

Association, Chicago, IL, April 2018.

Chair, “The Politics and Poetics of Gwendolyn Brooks,” College Language Association, Chicago,

IL, April 2018.

Invited Chair, “Transfeminisms Panel,” University of Maryland, Trans(form)ing Queer

Conference, College Park, MD, April 2018.

Roundtable Panelist, “Paratextual Space in Gwendolyn Brooks’s *In the Mecca*,” Modern

Language Association, New York, NY, January 2018.

“‘Grayed in and Gray’: Spatial Matters of Life and Death in Black Women’s Urban Literature,”

National Women’s Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 2017.

“To Bronzeville, With Love,” National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, Brooklyn,

NY, March 2017.

“‘There’s Nothing Worse than a Houseful of Women’: Parodying Urban Matriarchy,” American

Studies Association, Denver, CO, November 2016.

“Mapping Black Women’s Geographies in Segregation Literature,” Celebrating African American

Literature and Language, State College, PA, October 2016.

 Chair, “Race and Resistance in 21st Century African American Literature,” Celebrating African

American Literature and Language, State College, PA, October 2016.

“(Wo)Man of the House: Home Ownership and Gender Nonnormativity in Kristin Hunter’s *God*

*Bless the Child*,” Society for the Study of American Women Writers, Philadelphia, PA,

November 2015.

“From Harlem to Bronzeville with Love: Ann Petry’s and Gwendolyn Brooks’s Intimate Cities,”

American Literature Association Symposium on the City in American Literature, New

Orleans, LA, September 2015.

“‘the woman with the quilt on her back’: Unspeakable Acts in Marlon James’s *The Book of Night*

*Women*,” Collegium of African American Research, Liverpool, UK, June 2015.

“‘The Booty Don’t Lie’: Beyoncé, Janelle Monae, and New Black Feminism,” National Women’s

Studies Association, San Juan, PR, November 2014.

Roundtable Panelist, “Partus Sequitur Ventrum: Black Women and Non-Normative Family

Structures,” National Women’s Studies Association, San Juan, PR, November 2014.

“‘Sister Outsider’: Andrea Lee’s Fictions of Self-Exile,” Northeast Modern Language Association,

Harrisburg, PA, April 2014.

“Sexual Geographies of New World Slavery: The U.S. South and the Caribbean in Gayl Jones’s

*Corregidora*,” College Language Association, New Orleans, LA, March 2014.

“‘Records are Destroyed’: The Body as Archive in the Postslavery Imagination,” American

Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

Chair, “Writing Resistance to Empire: African American Transnational Alliances,” American

Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

Roundtable Panelist, “What Happens to Africana Studies If You Put Black Women’s Studies at

the Center?” National Women’s Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2011.

“The Audacity of ‘Quare’: The Practice and Politics of Black Queer Shamelessness,” The

Collegium for African American Research, Paris, France, April 2011.

Invited Chair, “Crafting Queerness in Contemporary Literature,” Center for Lesbian and Gay

Studies, City University of New York, New York, NY, October 2009.

“Melancholy Cosmopolitanism in African Diasporic Women’s Texts,” Association of Worldwide

African Diaspora Studies, Accra, Ghana, August 2009.

Chair, “The Crossroads of Race, Gender, and American Studies,” Women’s Committee of the American Studies Association, Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 2008.

“Motherless Girls: Melancholy Cosmopolitanism in Andrea Lee’s *Sarah Phillips* and Jamaica

Kincaid’s *Lucy*,” Unsettling Women: Contemporary Women’s Writing and Diaspora,

Leicester, UK, July 2008.

Chair, “Cosmofeminisms,” Special Session of the Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL,

December 2007.

 “Lynching and the Gender Politics of Public Memory,” An International and Interdisciplinary

Conference on Public Memory and Ethnicity, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR,

October 2007.

“Ocular Aesthetics and the Ethics of Witnessing in Jean Toomer’s *Cane*,” New Directions in

African American Literature, Theory, and Cultural Studies, Northwestern University,

Evanston, IL, April 2007.

Chair, “Sistas and the City: Black Women’s Urban Literature and Culture,” National Council for

Black Studies, San Diego, CA, March 2007.

“The Queerness of Blackness: Marlon Riggs’s *Black Is … Black Ain’t* and Queer In/Visibility Black

Cultural Interventions into Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Florida,

Gainesville, FL, March 2007.

“‘jazz songs and love’: The Theatre of Respectability in Jean Toomer’s *Cane*,” Modern

Language Association, Washington, DC, December 2005.

“Lutie’s Blues and Lil’ Kim’s Blue Eyes: Black Women’s Subjectivity in Urban Space,” American

Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2004.

**PRESENTATIONS and WORKSHOPS at HOWARD UNIVERSITY**

Faculty Research Roundtable, “Centering Women’s Experiences, Voices, Perspectives, and

Bodies,” Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership, October 26, 2022.

Let’s Talk Forum, “Supporting LGBTQ+ Students and Allies,” CETLA and CWGGL, September 15,

2022.

Graduate Student Funding Workshop, October 19, 2021.

Invited Talk, “The Skin We’re In: *The Bluest Eye* at 50 and the Persistence of Colorism,” Zeta Phi

Beta Sorority Incorporated, October 2, 2020.

**MEDIA, INTERVIEWS, and COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

“The ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Bill Makes School Even Less Safe for Black Students,” interview with Maya

Pottiger, *Word in Black*, March 17, 2022.

Panelist, Diane Rehm Book Club: *The Prophets* by Robert Jones, Jr., February 24, 2021.

*The Bluest Eye*: A Community Reading, Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences, October

8, 2020.

Commenter, Breakthrough (U.S. Human Rights Group), “The Racist History of the Women’s

Suffrage Movement and the Black Women Who Persisted,” October 8, 2020.

Podcast, “The Poetry and Prose of Precarious Living: Black Women Writers and the Legacy of

Segregated Urban Spaces,” National Humanities Center, May 2020.

Panelist, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, *The Color Purple* screening and discussion, AFI Silver

Spring, MD, April 22, 2018.

“Cast Your Net Wide: Reflections on Activism and Community Engagement When Black Lives

Matter,” conversation with Patricia A. Matthew, *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the*

*Hidden Truths of Tenure*, edited by Patricia A. Matthew, UNC Press, 2016, pp. 222-240.

Guest, “Intersectionality in America,” WEAA: The Marc Steiner Show, October 3, 2016.

Moderator, Screening and discussion of *Vow of Silence* and *N.O.L.A. Circus* with Director Jean-

Luc Annest, Baltimore Black International Film Festival, Baltimore, MD, October 11,

2015.

Guest, “Sexual Assault Allegations Against Bill Cosby,” WEAA: The Marc Steiner Show,

November18, 2014.

Guest, “Tribute to Maya Angelou,” WEAA: A World of Higher Education News with Beverly

Burke, May 29, 2014.

### Guest, “The New Black: Exploring The Campaign to Legalize Gay Marriage in Maryland,” WEAA: The Marc Steiner Show, April 3, 2014.

**TEACHING**

**Howard University:**

*Undergraduate*

African American Literature from 1940

African American Literary Foundations

African American Realism, Naturalism, Modernism

African American Literature from the Black Arts Movement to the Present

Featured Author: Colson Whitehead

Featured Author: N.K. Jemison

Introduction to Black LGBTQ+ Studies

Topics in Literature and Writing: Black Women’s Literature and the Politics of Adaptation

*Graduate*

African American Literature I

Independent Study: Ekphrasis and Black Writing

**Morgan State University:**

*Undergraduate*

African American Poetry

American Realism and Naturalism

Freshman Writing

Honors English

Introduction to Caribbean Literature

Introduction to Literary Criticism

The African American Novel

Understanding Feminist Theories

*Graduate*

African American Drama

Diasporic Literatures

Major African American Novelists

Modernism/Postmodernism

Queer Theory

Twentieth Century American Fiction

**Goucher College:**

Black Women in America

Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies

Race, Class, and the Politics of Reproduction

Special Topics: Sistas and the City

Women, Gender, and Sexuality

Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance

**New York University:**

African American Literary Cultures

Contemporary African American Fiction

Memory in African American Literature and Culture

Postmodern Blackness

Twentieth Century African American Literature

**Michigan State University:**

*Undergraduate*

Fear of a Queer Black Canon

Introduction to Literary Studies

Postcolonial Literature and Theory

*Graduate*

Black Feminisms

Independent Study: Black Feminist Performance Theory

Introduction to African American and African Studies I

Sistas and the City

**ADVISING**

Committee Member, Barbra Chin, *Counter Aesthetics: Expanding the Canon in African American*

*Literature*, PhD December 2022.

Committee Member, Cecily Duffie, *And Equal Consumption for All: Terri McMillan, Towards a*

 *Black Women Writers’ Postmodernism*, MA May 2022.

Committee Member, Sarah Jenkins, *To Black Girls with Love: Black Women Writers’ Radical*

*Love Ethics in Rural Literature*, MA May 2022.

Advisor, John Merritt, *The American Underground: Spatial and Temporal Representations of*

*Cultural Hegemony in African American Literature*, HowardUniversity, BA May 2022.

Committee Member, Shaunte Montgomery, *Free Radicals: Resisting Clinical Subjectivity in Late-*

*Twentieth Century Novels from the African American and Caribbean Literary Traditions*,

Howard University, PhD June 2020.

Committee Member, Sherri Mehta, *“We Showed Our Natural Manhood”: The Civil War, Black*

*Masculinity, Black Nationalism, and a Black Male Epistolary Tradition*. Morgan State

University, PhD Dec. 2019.

Committee Member, Aryn Bartley, *Encountering Democracy: The Citizen-Witness in 20th Century*

*U.S. Literature*, Michigan State University, PhD June 2010.

**SERVICE**

**Department of English**

2022-2024 Burch Lecture Committee (Chair 2023-)

2020-2021 Executive Committee, HU

2020- Faculty Elections, HU

2020- Recruitment Committee, HU

2020- Departmental Assessment, HU

2021-2022 Chair, Curriculum Committee, Howard University (HU)

2021-2022 Departmental Chair Job Search Committee, HU

2020-2021 African American Literature Job Search Committee, HU

2017-present Undergraduate Studies Committee, HU

2016-2017 Student-Faculty Adjudication Committee, Morgan State University (MSU)

2016-2017 Curriculum Committee, MSU

2015-2017 Prizes and Awards Committee, MSU

2013-2017 Chair of Honors Committee, MSU

2013-2017 Graduate Studies Committee, MSU

**College of Arts and Sciences**

2022-2024 Executive Committee, HU

2022-2024 Distinguished Faculty and Outstanding Departments Awards Committee,

HU

2020-2021 Technology Committee, HU

2017-2020 Assessment Committee, HU

2015-2016 Recording Secretary, MSU

2014-2015 Mellon Foundation Working Group, MSU

**University-Wide**

2023 Program Innovation and Review Committee, HU

2023 Faculty Senate Community Relations, Student, and Alumni Affairs, HU

2022 LGBTQ+ Advisory Council, HU

2022 Advisor, Black Feminist Book Club, HU

2021- Graduate School Judiciary Committee, HU

2016-2017 LGBTQA Advisory Council, MSU

2013-2016 Intellectual Life Committee, MSU

2007-2008 Core Faculty, Center for Women and Gender in Global Context, Michigan State

**Service to the Profession and Public Humanities**

2022- Faculty Collective Member, “Black Queer . . . Everything”

2022 *Ms*. Magazine Committee of Scholars

2022 Invited evaluator, MacArthur Fellows Program

2022 Judge, James Baldwin Essay Prize

2020 Faculty Evaluation Panelist, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

2020, 2017 Nominating Committee, National Queer Art Prize

2007-2010 Women’s Committee of the American Studies Association

2007-present Manuscript reviewer, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, *Souls*, *Modern*

*Fiction Studies*, *Frontiers*

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Webinar, “What AI Means for Teaching” (virtual), Modern Language Association, July 26, 2023.

Webinar, “Unlocking Success: Navigating the Promotion and Tenure Journey—A Workshop for

Applicants” (virtual), Office of Faculty Development and Office of Faculty Affairs,

Howard University, June 28, 2023.

Seminar, “Naylor in the Archives” (virtual), June 2022.

Small-Group Workshop, “Enclosures: Blackness and Transmutation,” The Sojourner Project (US

and South Africa) (virtual), May 6 and 21, 2021.

Online Certification, “Distance Learning,” CETLA, Howard University, June 15, 2020.

Online Certification, “Blackboard,” CETLA, Howard University, June 1, 2020.

Online Certification, “Harassment and Discrimination Prevention,” Howard University,

November 15, 2019.

Seminar, “Junior Faculty Writing and Creative Works Summer Academy,” Howard University,

2018.

Workshop, “Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation (VONA): Nonfiction Essay,” University of

Miami, Miami FL, June 2016.

Scholar-in-Residence, “Faculty Resource Network,” NYU, Summer 2015 and 2016.

Seminar, “The City,” NYU Faculty Resource Network, Athens, Greece, January 2015.

Seminar, “Hemispheric American Literature,” National Endowment for the Humanities,

Columbia University, New York NY, June 18-21, 2007.

**MEMBERSHIPS and AFFILIATIONS**

American Studies Association

College Language Association

Modern Language Association

National Women’s Studies Association

**LANGUAGES**

Reading competency in French and Spanish