

Ayana I. Karanja, Ph.D.

3213 South Calumet Avenue/Chicago, IL 60616/312.225.4424/Fax 312.225.4424

Loyola University Chicago
Tele. 312.915.8662
E-Mail: akaranj@luc.edu

Water Tower-LT-908
Associate Professor and Director
Black World Studies

Summary of Skills and Competencies

Long-standing demonstration of effective and competent teaching and administrative competence. A self-starter; fair-minded and people oriented. Creative and effective approach to pedagogy, skillful strategic planning and program development. Tenacious pursuit of personal growth and life skills enhancement, and supportive of life-long learning strategies.

Education

Ph. D., Cultural Anthropology and Africana Literature - Union University and Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio - 1981

Dissertation: "Zora Neale Hurston: Dialogue in Spirit and in Truth."

An interdisciplinary, innovative study that fuses critical methods in ethnographic research and writing and literary analysis which reflect contemporary epistemological issues in anthropologic discourses. Imaginative and dialogical, the work illuminates segments of Hurston's life through an exploration of her most widely read novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Transdisciplinary in nature, *Zora Neale Hurston . . .* is a "speakerly" text which reflects Africana oral literary tradition and emphasizes the writer/reader collaborative effort to construct and produce textual meaning.

Research Interests

Topical Foci: Humanistic and Cognitive Anthropology, including film and comparative literary analysis; religion and spirituality; Africana material and aesthetic culture; race, class and gender studies.

Regional Research Emphasis: U.S., Caribbean, Europe, Africa, South America, Australia, and Islands of the Pacific.

M.A., Anthropology/Social Science - The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois - 1975 (admitted by exceptionality, sans B.A.).

Courses included Culture, Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods in the Social Sciences, Cultural Geography, Anthropology and Film, Sociological Theory and Human Development.

Active Research:

Humanistic and Cognitive Anthropology—particularly, researches related to women's life narratives and oral histories. Other serious research interests include language, memory and representation in construction of identity.

Administrative Experience – I

1999 – Present: Associate Professor and Director, Black World Studies.

1992 - 1995: Director, Black World Studies Program, Loyola University Chicago.

1995 - 1999: Assistant Professor, Director, Black World Studies Program, teaching three courses in Anthropology each year.

Duties and Responsibilities: Establish an Advisory Board for BWS program. Publicize the program, its curriculum, and special programs within and outside the university community. Responsible for high volume of student counseling; scheduling and cross-listing courses in the minor through participating departments and expanding course offerings. Recruiting students to the program, and acting as liaison with larger community. Manage and administer BWS budget; provide reports to Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, upon request; plan and develop special programs. Represent BWS in larger Loyola community and beyond. Plan and design program articulation materials. Supervise auxiliary staff, (i.e., College Work-Study students).

Teaching - Loyola University Chicago

Courses:

1992 - Present: “History of Anthropological Thought” (ANTH 304); “World Cultures” (ANTH 271); “Anthropology and Film” (ANTH 210); “Contemporary African Cultures” (ANTH 213); “African American Anthropology” (ANTH 214); “Anthropology and Literature,” “Australian Aboriginal Culture,”—both developed as Special Topics courses, ANTH 361); “Black World Studies Colloquium” (BWS 201), (required for the BWS minor), “Directed Readings in Black World Studies” (BWS 395), and “Issues in Black World Studies” (BWS 101).

1999 - Special course designed for Teaching Leave of Absence: Newberry Library Undergraduate Seminar, “Mapping Identities: Racial, Ethnic and Gender Configurations in Modernist Representations.”

Awards in Teaching – Master Teacher/Loyola University Chicago

1999: Nominated: The Edwin T. and Vivijeanne F. Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence, Loyola University Chicago.

1998: Finalist for the Edwin T. and Vivijeanne F. Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence

1995: Nominated: The Edwin T. and Vivijeanne F. Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence, Loyola University Chicago

1992 -1994: Received the Loyola University Chicago Excellence in Teaching Award.

2003 – Field Museum of Chicago – Faculty Fellowship, Center for Cultural Change and Transformation.

Other Awards:

February 2002 – South Deering Community Leadership Award – Chicago, IL

March 2001 – Loyola University Chicago: Phenomenal Woman Award, Campus Life, Students and Ministry.

Teaching Leave of Absence

1998 - 1999: Awarded Teaching Leave of Absence, Semester II, to participate in Newberry Library Consortium, as the outcome of a collaborative teaching proposal co-authored with Dr. Pamela Caughie (English Department, Loyola University Chicago), Semester II, 1999 (course title as above).

Administrative Experience - II

1985 - 1992 - Associate Director with Teaching responsibilities, Northeastern Illinois University (Center for Inner City Studies CICS)

Managed Office of Admissions, Records, Recruitment and Retention. Supervised as many as twenty-five (25) full-time and auxiliary staff. Scheduled all Arts and Sciences and Business and Management courses for students matriculating through CICS--a function which required interaction with more than twenty departments housed at the main university campus. Conducted a variety of studies, examining issues such as student persistence and forces related to successful matriculation. Developed student Academic Services Program; developed curriculum for Graduate Student Internship Program; conceptualized and implemented Faculty Orientation Program, Annual Careers Program; Student Peer Assistance Program (installed university-wide); created Learning Modules Series for Title III student development initiative. Responsible for designing publication of the Mayor's Task Force on Education and articulation agreement between City Colleges and CICS. Acted in Director's absence.

Teaching - Northeastern Illinois University -Center for Inner City Studies

"Introduction to Inner City Studies" (ICSE 201); "Cultural Anthropology of the Inner City" (ICSE 215); "The Inner City Community" (ICSE 301); "Cultural Anthropology."

Other Teaching

1990 - 1991 Chicago State University - "Anthropology and the Urban Community"

1976 - 1977 University Illinois Chicago - "Introduction to Black Studies" and "African American Culture."

Dissertation and Related Service

Director, Derrick Brooms, Loyola University Chicago, Sociology Department, "Museums and Representation: African Americans and Exhibitions".

Patricia Williams, University of Illinois-Chicago, Anthropology Department - Dissertating.

Alphonso Green, Loyola University Chicago, History Department – Dissertating.

Prepared and evaluated Preliminary Examination questions for doctoral candidates, as follows: Temple Tsenes (History – Loyola University Chicago); Patricia Williams (Anthropology – University of Illinois Chicago, Spring 2000); Alphonso Green, Spring 2002.

Publications

1999 - *Zora Neale Hurston: The Breath of Her Voice*, New York: Peter Lang Publishers (December 1999).

1993 - "Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker: A Transcendent Relationship," in *Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston: The Common Bond*. Lillie P. Howard (Ed.). Westport: Greenwood Press.

1983 - "Research and Writing on Zora Neale Hurston," *AWARE*, Lillian Anthony (Ed.).

1982 - *Perspectives: A View From Within--A Compendium Text for Churchwide Study* (ed., comp.), Trinity United Church of Christ.

Works in Progress

Memory, Identity and Narrative: Life Writing in the Bronzeville Community,

a work in progress which, at completion, will comprise more than fifty life stories written by women who live and/or work in the Bronzeville community on Chicago's Southside. I am now in the process of holding Focus Groups with those who have written life stories to focus on themes which appear in the narratives. The final Focus Group will meet on February 2004.

Smoke, Fire and Liquid Blues. A collection of essays, fifteen of which have been submitted, that focuses on African American women's scholarship in particular connection with historical and contemporary gender relations issues.

From the Fog: A collection of verse.

Publication Invited Lectures: *Zora Neale Hurston: The Breath of Her Voice*

(New York: Peter Lang, 1999)

- Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL February 05, 2005.
- Dillard University, Social Sciences Department, March 2004.
- Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies, City University of New York, March 2001.

Selected Presentations:

2004 – Chicago Council on Black Studies – "W.E.B. DuBois and the Dark Princess"

2002 – Social Science Research Council – Mellon Minority Fellowship Summer Conference – June 6 – 9, "Building Our Own Legacies: Spaces of Community, Spaces of Scholarship, New Orleans, Louisiana – Iberville Suites and Dillard University

2002 – The Renaissance Collaborative, Inc., "The Life and Times of the Bronzeville Community", Chicago, IL.

2002 - Jordan School, Chicago Public School – Faculty Training Workshop, "Teaching Minority Students", April 2002.

2001 – February: Northwestern University, Evanston, IL-Panelist with Drs. Carol Boyce-Davies; Iva Carruthers, "Challenges to Students of Color in Majority Universities".

March – Loyola University Chicago, "The Classroom as a Non-Chilly Climate", lecture for Graduate Teaching Fellows.

March – St. Scholastica High School, "Diversity and Identity in Academic Life".

May – ***The Chicago Reporter*** day-long staff Retreat Facilitator.

August – Midwest Association of Women, Village Hyatt, “Knowledge: The Most Powerful Medicine”.

2000 – Lugenia Burns Hope Center for the Study of New World Community, Chicago, IL. “Conceptualizing Community: Critical Challenges in the New Millennium.”

1999 - Lugenia Burns Hope Center for the Study of New World Community, Chicago, Illinois. “Touching the Face in the Mirror.” Freshmen Orientation Sunday, Loyola University Chicago. Lecture on Jamaica Kincaid’s work, *A Small Place*.

1998 - Florida Education Fund - Tampa, Florida. Doctoral Fellows Symposium. “Fictions and Other Works of Imagination in Higher Education.”

University of Nebraska - Omaha, Pedagogy of the Oppressed Conference: “Autoethnography: A Model of Community Pedagogy.”

1997 - Lugenia Burns Hope Center for the Study of New World Community, Chicago, Illinois: “Race, Culture and Community.”

1995 - Chicago State University Black Writers’ Conference: “Writing a Life: ‘Saving the Text for Community.’”

1994 - Chicago State University Black Writers’ Conference: “The Value of an African-Centered Education.”

1993 - Loyola University Chicago: “The Goddess Isis: Great African Mother,” Liberal Studies Program.

1993 - Kennedy-King College, Chicago, Illinois, African Griot Society: “The Life and Times of Zora Neale Hurston.”

1992 - Kennedy-King College, Chicago, Illinois, African Griot Society: “Zora Neale Hurston: Southern Roots, Northern Magic.”

1991 - American Anthropological Association, Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois: “Zora Neale Hurston: Humanistic Anthropologist.”

Loyola University and Community - Selected Service

2004 – Kick-Off Speaker, Black History Month, February, Loyola University Chicago.

2004 – Organizer, 12th Annual Blacks in Science Program, Loyola University Chicago.

2003 – Organizer, “Black Women’s Health, Black Women’s Voices”, a National Conference, Loyola University Chicago.

2003 – Organizer, “Souls of Black Folk, 100 Years Later,” a National Conference on the work of W. E. B. DuBois, University of Illinois Chicago (Chicago Council on Black Studies, Co-Chair).

2003 – Speaker, “The Meaning of Kwanzaa”, Loyola University Chicago.

2002 – Loyola University Chicago, Black Cultural Center, “The History of Black Studies in America”, Black History Month Celebration.

2002 – Black World Studies, Co-Sponsor with Global Alliance for Africa, Conference on AIDS in South Africa with Dr. Alan Whiteside as Special guest speaker.

2002 – Blacks in Science, guest speaker, Dr. Henrek Clack, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.

2002 – Participated in meetings designed to produce a proposal to Rockefeller Foundation for a collaborative project involving major community organization on Chicago’s Westside, Bethel New Life, Inc. and Loyola University Chicago.

2000 - Board Member - Loyola University Committee, Global Alliance for Africa.

- 1999/2000 - Co-Sponsor with Dr. Diane Suter: Blacks in Science Honors Program
 1999/2000 - Anthropology Program Committee, Loyola University Chicago.
 1992 - Present -Initiated the Faculty Mentoring Program for new African American students. (Included thirty faculty volunteers in first year).
 1993 - Faculty Mentoring Program expanded to include Hispanic first-year students.
 1995 - Present - Member, Hillel at Loyola
 1996 - Member, committee on Black Church Burnings in American South (lecture series).
 1994 - 1995: Member, Martin Luther King, Jr. Program Committee.
 1995 - Introduction, Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King, Jr., Program.
 1995 - Loyola University Chicago: Panelist, "Multiculturalism and the Arts."
 1995 - Loyola University Chicago: Panelist, "Race, Gender and Justice."
 1994 - Present: Member, Advisory Board, Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL).

Media Presentations

- 2002** – Guest panelist, "The Importance of Higher Education Among Minority Populations", WNUA, radio recording.
 1998 - Panelist: US-99 Radio, "Race Relations in Chicago."
 1998 - Interview for *Afrique*, "Myth and the African American Community."
 1993 - WVON, "The Stan West Show."
 1993 - WLWU, "The Life and Work of Langston Hughes," Loyola University Chicago.
 1992 - WVON, "Just Talk," Naurice Roberts.

Other Community Service

- 2002-2005** – Co-Chair, Chicago Council on Black Studies, affiliate of National Council on Black Studies.
 2001 – Community Writer's Workshop, Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago.
 1995 –Present: Board of Directors/Lecturer, Lugenia Burns Hope Center, Chicago.
 1998 - Panel Moderator: "Independent Black Women Filmmakers," Columbia College Chicago, Annual Black Film Festival
 1996 - Present: Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois. Member, Advisory Board for Annual African Film Festival, "African Visions."
 1996 - Present: Member, Rainbow/PUSH Commission on Fairness in the Criminal Justice System, Washington, D.C. and Chicago, Illinois.
 1978 - Founding member, Committee on Church in Society, Trinity United Church of Christ.
 1986 - 1989 - Member, Governor's Task Force on Infant Mortality and Morbidity (Coordinator of Grand Boulevard Initiative).
 1983 - Executive Coordinator, "A National Conference on the Black Woman," Northeastern Illinois University, McCormick Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

Professional Consultancies

- 2002** – Consultant on Evaluation, Strategies and Planning, Core Curriculum Committee, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2001 - Consultant, Lugenia Burns Hope Center—Development of training module on Life-Writing for nationwide use in Social Service Agencies.
- 1995 - Princeton, New Jersey. Secondary Teacher/Student Training Institute on Multicultural Education, sponsored by SONY.
- 1994 - Tougaloo College, Tougaloo Mississippi: Two-day faculty enhancement workshop, “Multiculturalism: The Humanities and Social Sciences in the Twenty-First Century.”
- 1984 - 1986: “Know Your Heritage.” Central City Marketing Production, for WGN - TV, Channel 9, Chicago, Illinois.
- 1983 - Authored and compiled the Administrative Handbook, Centers for New Horizons, Inc., Chicago, Illinois.

Professional Associations

National Council on Black Studies
 Chicago Council on Black Studies
 American Anthropological Association
 American Anthropological Association, Society for Humanistic Anthropology, Society for Visual Anthropology, Association of Black Anthropologists
 American Association of University Professors
 Modern Languages Association, College Language Association, Jane Addams Conference (Chair, Africa Portfolio)

International Travel

Ghana, Senegal, West Africa; Egypt (Cairo, Luxor, Memphis), Kenya, East Africa; Europe (London, Paris); South America (Bahia, Recife, Rio de Janeiro); Association of Black Anthropologists (2000 – Cuba Research and Field Studies)

A Statement on Teaching, Research, Service and Administration

Ayana I. Karanja

I. Teaching

My philosophy of teaching is strongly influenced and informed by a belief in the liberating and humanizing potential that learning holds for members of our society. The characteristics to be found in a liberating learning encounter include the teacher's ability to view all of her/his students as deserving of the highest quality of education available, with the classroom at the center of this experience. The teacher must, therefore, desire to offer a qualitatively superior classroom engagement with each opportunity to interact in this setting with students. I strive to be the kind of teacher who inspires students to perform at their full potential and to thirst for more knowledge about themselves and the world in which we live.

So convinced am I that knowledge is the turn-key which opens the door to humanness, integrity and humility that I highly value the opportunity with which I am presented in the classroom to pursue these ideals. I consistently endeavor to enhance my teaching skills, broaden my practical and theoretical knowledge of pedagogy, and open myself to new epistemologies for envisioning and understanding our world so that I might make stronger connections with students in the classroom. It seems to me that research, self-critique and the critiques of my peers and students are useful approaches to achieving the goal of effective teaching. Another goal I hold is to be an excellent role model for all of our students. For me such a desire calls for competence, tenacity and personal integrity. I want to be more aware of my shortcomings so that I might more consistently demonstrate the characteristics of an effective teacher. I have been most fortunate to consistently receive Student Evaluations higher than the departmental range. It has also been my good fortune to have received several teaching awards, and nominations for the coveted Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence.

In my view the classroom is a space in which students' keenest desire to know more about the world, in both practical and philosophical terms, might be awakened. I seek to assist students in this enterprise. Each class is a new adventure; I am always anxious to meet a new group of students, hopeful that I might, simultaneously, put them at their ease and challenge them to become ever more curious and questioning about our world. Most importantly, I attempt to communicate with them. My message is that I desire to have them leave the classroom with a memorable teaching and learning experience, for they are also my teachers.

As a teacher of anthropology, in the broad sense, I attempt to employ strategies in the classroom that have the potential to open a space for understanding cultural and behavioral differences in what it means to be part of the human family. More frequently than any other course, I teach Anthropology 271 (World Cultures). In working with students in this course, my style of

pedagogy does not depart significantly from by belief in the efficacy of interdisciplinary approaches to teaching subject matter. Often I use the novel as “portal text” or the introduction to a culture. Group research projects and presentations broaden and deepen students’ understanding of the importance of cooperation in problem solving in practical ways. Examples of novels I have used as “portal texts” are N. Scott Momaday’s prize-winning novel, *House Made of Dawn* (Native American culture), and Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star* (Brazilian culture).

As a result of my academic training and commitment to interdisciplinary study, I am competent to teach a range of courses in cultural anthropology and 20th Century American Literature. I believe that this capability ought to reasonably be viewed as a significant value to the Loyola community.

II. Research and Scholarship

My research focus is interdisciplinary and is situated at the intersection of cultural and applied anthropology and Africana literary studies. It has meaning for and broadens existing discourses in anthropological and literary studies in that it argues for and is exemplary of a more humanistic anthropology, and adds to existing scholarship and a growing body of knowledge around interdisciplinarity in the practice of anthropology. Thus, my research and writing question positivist notions of what constitutes appropriate modes of anthropological and literary inquiry. The trajectory of my research follows an early interest in African cultural survivals, both material and non-material, among the descendants of that continent many of whom, since the 1500s, reside in nearly every country around the globe. My early research interest was enlivened and informed by the work of Lorenzo Dow Turner, most especially his *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, 1949. *Africanisms* is an investigatory work in linguistics among the Gullah peoples living in the Sea Island communities off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina since the early period of the slave trade to the Americas. Turner’s investigations of Gullah language revealed its Congo roots. Some of the writings of Melville Herskovits which also focus on African linguistic and material cultural survivals in New World African communities were also provocative and useful to me, particularly his 1958 publication, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Ultimately, my interest in these anthropological researches was grounded in late Nineteenth and Twentieth century autobiographies and memoirs of African Americans, particularly, those written by African American women.

To date, the most enduring site of my research interest in life-writing has resided in literary accounts of the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston, an African American, female anthropologist, folklorist, polemicist, and fiction writer. Hurston made noteworthy contributions to the Harlem Renaissance and far beyond. Zora Neale Hurston became the focus of my dissertation research for the particular ways in which she connects character, narration, memory and perception in the psyches of her female characters. Research on Hurston aroused an ever-deepening interest in discourses related to perception, memory and identity and literary form and their confluence in autobiography and memoir. In respect of my research interests, I view autobiography and memoir as fertile literary genres and rich sites of cultural and personal identity. In this connection I conducted field research, engaged in personal interviews and authored a full-length manuscript on the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston. Published by Peter Lang in Winter 1999, the book is entitled, *Zora Neale Hurston: The Breath of Her Voice*.

The work is constructed as an imaginative conversation, mythic in its double-voicedness, fusing literary poetics, art and ethnographic writing—pushing the boundaries of ethnographic discourse and literary studies.

In her most widely read works of fiction (*Jonah's Gourd Vine*, 1934, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937), Hurston infuses her female protagonists' narration with the language she heard in her youth, primarily in folktales, in a rural Florida community. My interpretation of Hurston's internalization of powerful childhood memories which she invests in her fictional women and their perceptions of community and personal identity are central figurations in the formulation of the community work in which I am engaged in the Bronzeville Community in Chicago, where I also utilize concepts of applied anthropology to some benefit.

III. Service and Administration

I have combined the categories of University Service and Administration because in many ways they are seamless activities, which, I trust, are also organically related in my approach to them. Administration of the Black World Studies (BWS) program brings me into regular contact with Directors of other interdisciplinary studies programs and with higher level administrative officers of the University. Philosophically, I attempt to carry out my duties efficiently, effectively and with a view towards finding new and improved methods for achieving the goals of the Program. I am interested in new and innovative approaches to advertising the Program and recruiting new Minors. BWS sponsors an annual Blacks in Science program during the month of February and cooperates with other programs and departments in the presentation of speakers and forums throughout the year. The Blacks in Science program often requires proposal writing and solicitation of funds from University sources. This annual event adds to Loyola's profile among members of the Chicagoland science community, and offers students and faculty an opportunity to interface with prominent and acclaimed African American scientists.

I hold membership on several committees internal and external to Loyola. Among my serviceships within Loyola are the following: I am a member of Hillel; founder of the Faculty Mentoring Program; and Faculty Advisor to the African American Graduate Student Association. Outside Loyola I work with Columbia College in the production of their annual film festival, Africa Visions; hold Board membership at the Lugenia Burns Hope Center on the southside of Chicago; and is a founder of the Chicago Council on Black Studies. Taken as a whole, these activities offer an opportunity for testing ideas and insights that may be useful in teaching, research or administration at Loyola. I especially value these experiences because I am able to disseminate more information to the high volume of students I counsel each year--not only BWS Minors, but many non-Minors who regularly seek information and advice. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to influence the development and shaping of young hearts and minds through teaching and research, administration and service as a member of the community that is Loyola University Chicago.

Works in Progress: A Summary

Bronzeville Autoethnography: Memory, Identity and Narratives of the Self

I believe that writing one's life embodies major introspective work and holds great potential for personal growth and, possibly, contains the seeds of social transformation. One of the ways in which I live out this belief is through my role as Lecturer for and a member of the Advisory Board of a Southside community organization—the Lugenia Burns Hope Center for New World Community. The goal of this organization is community transformation through activist leadership. Among other activities, community activists and leaders who enroll in the Hope Center's leadership training program write, read aloud, and analyze their life stories. These narratives focus on memory, perception and identity formation as vital steppingstones to new awareness and they become the site for practical application of major, sometimes life-altering, personal insights. Thus, in the case of the Hope Center life writing and the communal dialogue which it engenders, are first steps in the process of community transformation. This model embodies collective involvement, consciousness-raising, trust and human persistence.

The Lugenia Burns Hope Center is situated in the Bronzeville community. Bronzeville is historically significant for many reasons, among which is the vantage point from which one must consider that the groundbreaking sociological study conducted by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton (1945) is a seminal one and bears the title, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. According to the 1990 Census Bronzeville has a population of 170,000, ninety-eight percent of who trace their heritage to the continent of Africa. Bronzeville's boundaries are 12th Street on the North, 67th Street on the South. The East border from 12th to 39th Street is Lake Michigan, and from 39th to 67th Street, Cottage Grove Avenue. The Dan Ryan Expressway bounds Bronzeville to the West. A new Census will be taken in the year 2000.

As a resident of Bronzeville and as an individual who has strong interest in the notion of "human capacity building," I have maintained lectureship and Advisory Board status at the Hope Center for more than five years. A typical Hope Center class would consist of community organizers—some of whom have many years of organizing experience and others who are novices in that enterprise. Generally a class (held over a period of 15 weeks), twice a year, might comprise some 13 lectures offered by a wide range of professionals—physicians, lawyers, nutritionists, political pundits, corporate CEOs, and others, all of whom are volunteers. Lectures include topics such as community economic development, the nature of culture and its influence in value formation, the politics of community organizing, personal goal setting and a mission statement, and one-on-one interviews with Bronzeville residents.

The highlight of the work in which I am engaged with these organizer/students at the Hope Center is aimed at assisting them in reconceptualizing notions of leadership in a cultural milieu which focuses, first, upon their personal lives as *re-membered* events within contexts such as the familial, communal and the macro-sociological. I approach this work from a background rooted in cultural anthropology and critical interpretation and analysis. The dialogues that emerge culminate in each participant writing an autoethnography—telling the story of her/his life, in their own words. To say that I

approach the work from a cultural perspective means that I open discussions around issues such as the ways in which our families are sometimes differently constituted than are mainstream families; the role of personal values in decision-making, the centrality of point-of-view in problem resolution; and the influences of the larger society on the individuals who constitute that society. Self-narratives are written and read aloud on a volunteer basis. These stories of the self are incredibly powerful, so moving and instructive that it appears imperative to those of us who participate and observe this process that these articulations of the human will to overcome some of life's most potentially devastating adversities might become steppingstones for others, if read, to deeper personal understanding and encouragement toward humane thought and action. These individuals desire to serve and work with and for those who are suffering and whose rights to human dignity have been abridged; indeed, this is a most humbling experience for all that participate and bear witness.

After working with the second or third cohort at the Hope Center it became very clear from both my perspective and that of the writers of the self-narratives that a book constructed around these narratives would be a natural and useful outcome of the experience for community workers in US urban centers and elsewhere around the globe. I have moved forward with my work on the book. At present I have amassed more than fifty "autoethnographies"—far more than would be needed to compile the sizeable work that I am compiling. I have completed the first chapter of the work, which is now under consideration for publication in essay form, by several journals. (See attached chapter).

From the Fog

A selection of poems which I have authored for publication both as a short collection of verse and as single poems submitted individually to relevant journals is attached to this document. Upon completion the collection should include approximately twenty original pieces. (See attached samples)

Smoke, Fire and Liquid Blues

It is interesting to consider that the impetus to the call for essays to constitute *Smoke, Fire and Liquid Blues* was a proliferation of dialogues among women of color in the early to mid-1990s. These dialogues were inspired by the release of Shahrazad Ali's book, *The Black Man's Guide to Understanding the Black Woman* (1990). *The Black Man's Guide* became an immensely controversial book and its author appeared often in both print and electronic media and consistently excited hostile responses to presentations on her work from African women. It was also very clear then that a constituency of black women scholars had much to say about many of the gender-relational issues considered in *The Black Man's Guide*. It was my belief that these scholars might usefully apply their critiques in a more productive manner through a literary venue that minimized attention to Ali's claims and elevated thoughtful consideration of black women's culture. Not only might such an approach critique Ali's work, it would also perform a revisionist function as a kind of research engine through which to examine early Islam and its impact on the cultures of African women. Papers have been solicited for this volume which my co-editor and I entitled *Smoke, Fire and Liquid Blues*. We now have approximately 17 essays in hand that cover a variety of topics appropriate to

the broader concept of the book. Some essays have been returned to contributors for rewriting and other editorial work.

My challenge in the production of the manuscript is to co-author an Introduction to the book and to construct and weave throughout the interstices of the essays a culture-historical and literary sensitive critique of relevant passages from the work known as *The Thousand and One Nights*. Thus, we have two Shahrazades—the author of *The Black Man's Guide* and the primary interlocutor of the mythological *Nights*, Shahrazade. Shahrazade of *The Nights* is a teller of stories within stories in the central triad of this *magnam opus*. In one version of *The Nights* the triad includes Shahrazade, her sister, Dunyazade, and the mythic King Shahriyar to whom Shahrazade utters hundreds of fantastic tales which she continues *ad infinitum*, as means to keeping her head off the chopping block, for King Shahriyar habitually beheads young maidens the morning after he has seduced them. In another version of the tales King Shahriyar has a brother, Shahzaman. When the two brothers find that their wives have been unfaithful to them they seek a man who has had a similar experience. Finding one who keeps his wife captive in a chest with seven padlocks the brothers believe they have found a solution to their problem of unfaithfulness. Such a reading might be interpreted to have implications for cultural predilections such as *pardah*. *The Nights* are known in some literary circles for their bawdiness and phantasmagorias. Yet, ultimately, Shahrazad of *The Nights* might be viewed as an *empowerer* of women and one who saves her own life by dint of her fertile imagination and voice. No doubt, in its various emendations since the derivation from ancient Persian folklore to literary translation, one notices that *The Nights* contains both racist and sexist passages.

Tracing the path of *The Nights* from oral literature (as early as A.D. 947) is indeed challenging. For example, Sandra Nadaff writes,

As with all works of popular and folk literature, one cannot locate the origins of the collection of stories we call the *1001 Nights*; indeed, once the transmission from oral to written has been made. . . one cannot even accurately speak of *the fixed text of the 1001 Nights*. One is instead confronted with a multiplicity of editions, ranging from the so-called first Calcutta edition of only the first two hundred nights (vol. 1, 1814; vol. 2, 1818); to the Breslau edition spuriously claimed to be based on a Tunisian manuscript . . . followed by the famous Bulaq edition of 1835. . . .
(*Arabesque 4*)

Ali's *The Black Man's Guide* does have in common with *The Nights* its origins in a cultural that for many years relied heavily on orality, as much of what Ali's critique of ways and means to managing and controlling Aficana women depends on orality and lacks any basis in research.

We are in the process of organization and writing preparatory to publication of the manuscript. Specifically I am working on intertextual critiques of tales within *The Nights* with a view toward completion of a framework for the Introduction. (See attached outline).

**Bronzeville Autoethnography: Memory, Identity
and Narratives of the Self**

Working Outline

Chapter

1. Introduction: Memory, Identity and Narrative: The Work of Life-Writing in Community
2. Storytelling as Performance: “Event as Being”
3. Words: “Unspeakable Things Unspoken”
4. Spaces of Memory: Reflections of Home, Perils of Location
5. Burying Deep Cultural Roots
6. Revival: “Remaking Community”

After/Words