



Dictionary of Literary Biography: Afro-American Writers after 1955

Thadious Davis

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Since the mid-1950s, drama has emerged as a major genre for African-Americans writers. The flood of creative outpourings in the 1960s that led to the black arts movement brought in its wake a new generation of dramatists who provided some of the most influential voices in American literature. The early 1960s introduced new dramatic forms to larger audiences. Ossie Davis' *Purlie Victorious* and Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro* are examples of productions that carried messages of a reality rarely seen outside African-American communities. Just as African-American dramatists were interested in creating a theater in their own image, prose writers were interested in literary creations relevant to African-Americans. During this time, autobiography and biography became increasingly important as modes for expressing this history. 35 entries include: Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, Alice Childress, Ossie Davis, Alex Haley, Lorraine Hansberry, Adrienne Kennedy, Ron Milner, Larry Neal and Samm-Art Williams.

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