



# **Contemporary African American Female Playwrights: An Annotated Bibliography (Bibliographies and Indexes in Afro-American and African Studies)**

*Dana A. Williams*

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Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) was a major dramatic success and brought to the world's attention the potential talent of African American women playwrights. But in spite of Hansberry's landmark contribution, both the theater and the literary world have often failed to include contemporary African American female playwrights within the circle of production, publication, and criticism. In African American drama anthologies, female playwrights are seldom given the degree of attention that is accorded their male counterparts. And because of space constraints, anthologies of works by women playwrights are forced to exclude numerous female dramatists, including African Americans. Meanwhile, some scholars have argued that the works of African American female playwrights are seldom produced in the mainstream theater because these plays frequently challenge the views of white America. But as *A Raisin in the Sun* demonstrates, plays by African American women dramatists can have a powerful message and are worthy of attention.

A comprehensive research tool, this annotated bibliography sheds light on the often neglected works of contemporary African American female playwrights. Included within its scope are those dramatists who have had at least one work published since 1959, the year of Hansberry's monumental achievement. The first section provides a listing of anthologies that include one or more plays written by an African American female dramatist. The second gives entries for reference works and for scholarly and critical studies of the dramatists and their plays. The third presents a listing of published plays by individual dramatists, along with a summary of each drama; the works of each playwright that are related to drama; and secondary sources that treat the dramatists and their plays. Entries are accompanied by concise but informative annotations, and the volume closes with a list of periodicals that frequently publish criticism of African American female playwrights, a section of brief biographical sketches of the dramatists, and extensive indexes.

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