

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction

Toward a History of the Black Present 1

- 1 History, Culture, Discourse
America's Racial Formation 13

PART I. MEMORY

- 2 Burying the Dead
The Pain of Memory in Beloved 27
- 3 Bearing Witness
The Recent Fiction of Ernest Gaines 38
- 4 Troubling the Water
*Subversive Women's Voices in Dessa Rose and
Mama Day* 54

PART II. DESIRE

- 5 A Short History of Desire
Jazz and Bailey's Cafe 75
- 6 The Color of Desire
Folk History in the Fiction of Raymond Andrews 94
- 7 Postmodern Slavery and the Transcendence of Desire
The Novels of Charles Johnson 107

PART III. FAMILY

8 Family Secrets

Reinventions of History in The Chaneyville Incident 125

9 Family Troubles

*History as Subversion in Two Wings to Veil My Face and
Divine Days* 137

10 Lost Generations

John Edgar Wideman's Homewood Narratives 157

PART IV. THE END(S)

11 Apocalyptic Visions and False Prophets

*The End(s) of History in Wideman, Johnson,
and Morrison* 179

Notes 203

Bibliography 209

Index 223