

## Contributors

### Richard Besel



Richard Besel first became interested in the Virtual Harlem Project after exploring issues related to technology and pedagogy in a course taught by James Sosnoski at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has recently completed his MA in Media Studies from UIC and is currently a Ph.D. student in the department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include rhetorical history and criticism, environmental communication, and various uses of media.

### Bryan Carter



Bryan Carter received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He spent 10 years in the United States Air Force, and 2 years as a high school teacher in Tempe, Arizona. His area of specialty is American Literature with a concentration in African American Literature of the Harlem Renaissance. Additionally, he has done extensive work with interactive media and learning theory and pedagogy. Dr. Carter pioneered an English course, "Survey of African American Literature" that was a first on the MU campus and most likely in the United States that incorporated the use of Virtual Reality to recreate Harlem, NY of the 1920s. Dr. Carter is currently an Assistant Professor at Central Missouri State University where he teaches African American literature and American literature courses.

"My courses combine relevant readings, lecture, discussion, and the use of technology to enhance a student's understanding of a particular topic. For the past four years, I have been making use of course management tools that enable faculty members to incorporate their course material into the World Wide Web." Recently, a more extensive use of advanced visualization has been added to classes at CMSU. The excitement that students display over the technology increases their enthusiasm of the course content and

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effects alternate understandings of the literature and figures studied.

### **Brenda Eatman Aghahowa**

Brenda Eatman Aghahowa was a "tour guide" in the Virtual Harlem cave last year. She is a Ph.D. student in Language, Literacy, and Rhetoric (LLR) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). On faculty at Chicago State University, she is an Assistant Professor of English there, and also the Coordinator of the Program of Professional and Technical Writing. A trained journalist, Brenda holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, and has more than 20 years experience as a writer, reporter, editor, and public relations specialist.



As an English instructor at CSU she teaches courses such as news writing, feature writing, editing, business writing, research paper writing, and technical writing. She also places students in paid and unpaid writing internships, both here on campus and around Chicago.

Brenda also is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, with experience in churches and hospital chaplaincy, and has earned both a Master of Religious Studies degree and the Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School. She is a member of Trinity United Church of Christ, where she is involved in Prison Ministry, the Women's Drill Team, and the Women's Chorus.

Of note, Brenda was one of fifty persons selected from the TUCC Women's Chorus to participate in a 14-day, 10-city singing tour of Switzerland in December 1999. The 50 talented women performed in cities such as Zurich, Geneva, and Bern.

The mother of three and native of Cleveland, Ohio is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She is married to the Reverend Dr. Stephen I. Aghahowa, who was born in Nigeria.

### **Duriel Harris**

Duriel E. Harris, holds a doctorate from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MA from the Graduate Creative Writing Program at New York University. A writer/performer, Ms. Harris is the recipient of a 2001 Illinois Arts Council Finalist Award and a past winner of the Gwendolyn Brooks Writer's Conference Poetry Slam. Currently at work on *Soma*, her first sound recording, Ms. Harris is a Poetry Editor for *Obsidian III: Literature in the African Diaspora*, a Cave Canem fellow, and a co-founder of two col-



lectives: Text(ure) and Black Took. In collaboration with the other founding members of Black Took, she is editing *Os Sacrum*, an anthology of oppositional/experimental writing by emerging Black poets, formally announced at the 2001 People's Poetry Gathering in New York City. In addition, the Black Took Collective Statement and "Pourmoreformore PoMoFunk dunk, dun paramour," Ms. Harris's Statement of Poetics, appear in *Fence 8* (fall 2001). Other Harris work appears or is forthcoming in *Bum Rush the Page: A Def Poetry Jam*, *Role Call*, *nocturnes: (re)view of the literary arts*, and *African American Review*.

### Andy Johnson

Andrew Johnson's research focuses on educational tele-immersive virtual environments, from elementary school through college.



Virtual reality gives educators a new way to present material and Andy is working with the other members of the Virtual Harlem project to find the proper way to integrate this new representation into the classroom and into the curriculum.

Andy is a member of the Electronic Visualization Laboratory and an assistant professor in the Computer Science Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He teaches courses in computer graphics, virtual reality, and human-computer interaction.

### Steve Jones

Steve Jones has been working with the Virtual Harlem project team since it came to the University of Illinois at Chicago. Serving as a research associate, he hopes Virtual Harlem and similar projects will play a key role in the development of the New Media



Studies program in the Communication Department. Jones has been Internetworking since 1979 when he was using and co-authoring educational materials on the PLATO system at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He received his Ph.D. in Communication from the Institute for Communications Research there in 1987, and is author of six books, including *Doing Internet Research*, *CyberSociety* and *Virtual Culture*. A social historian of communication technology, his books have earned him critical acclaim and interviews for stories in *Time*, the *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Newsweek* and numerous other newspapers and magazines. He has also been interviewed on radio and TV, and has been a guest on NPR's "Talk of the Nation" and "Sounds Like Science."

Jones is Professor and Head of the Department of

Communication at the University of Illinois - Chicago. He serves as Senior Research Fellow for the Pew Internet & American Life Project co-editor of *New Media & Society*, and is co-founder. Steve Jones has been working with the Virtual Harlem project team since it came to the University of Illinois at Chicago. Serving as a research associate, he hopes Virtual Harlem and similar projects will play a key role in the development of the New Media Studies and President of the Association of Internet Researchers (<http://aoir.org>).

### Jason Leigh

Dr. Jason Leigh is a research scientist at the Electronic Visualization Laboratory (EVL) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) specializing in Tele-Immersion and remote visualization over high speed networks.



Leigh has led EVL's Tele-Immersion research agenda since 1995 after developing the first networked CAVE application in 1992. The outcome of his work has been in active use by a large community of users, including General Motors, Hughes Research Labs, Searle/Monsanto, members of the NSF-funded, PACI Alliance, the Next Generation Internet and Internet2, and research institutes around the world including:

the Cooperative Research Centre for Advanced Computational Systems (ACSys) in Australia, Institute of High Performance Computing in Singapore, Intelligent Modeling Laboratory at Tokyo University, and the National Center for High-Performance Computing in Taiwan; and many others.

His current areas of interest include: developing techniques for interactive, remote visual data mining of terascale data sets over high-speed gigabit optical networks; developing techniques for supporting long-term collaborative work in amplified work environments; scalable commodity graphics for large scale data visualization in immersive environments; and development of low cost collaboration, and virtual reality systems to support the humanities.

### Bruce Lincoln

Bruce Lincoln is an educational technologist, a design scientist and a multimedia designer/developer. Bruce was the first Ford



Fellow in Educational Technology in the country and from 1988-1992, he was engaged in advanced multimedia research, design and development at the Center for Children and Technology/ National Center for Technology in Education at Bank Street College of Education, the Interactive

Technology Group at Children's Television Workshop and the Center for Urban Youth and Technology, Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

From 1992-94, Bruce served as the Director of Educational Technologies at Playing To Win, Inc.'s Harlem Community Computing Center where he developed, funded and managed a state-of-the-art public access multimedia telecommunications learning center which was recognized as a national model for equitable access to advanced technologies for underserved communities.

In 1994, after producing the PACT '95 Young America website for the America's Cup Competition, Bruce returned to Columbia University where he is the Senior Educational Technologist at the Institute for Learning Technologies. He has been producing advanced digital networked multimedia demonstration projects such as the Harlem Environmental Access Project (HEAP).

Bruce also runs two virtual companies: Sirius B Productions, Inc. founded in 1988 and the Urban Cyberspace Company founded in 1994. Sirius B Productions, Inc. is an advanced multimedia research and development company that from 1989 to 1991 designed and produced the Black Inventors Continuum, an interactive multimedia software product on the contributions of African-American inventors to world science, industry and technology. Urban Cyberspace is a design think tank and consulting/marketing firm specializing in advanced Internet technologies.

From 1993-1995, Bruce was an adjunct professor at NYU's Book Publishing Institute where he taught a popular course on the future of electronic publishing.

### Janice Lively

Janice Tuck Lively is a Ph.D. candidate in the Program for Writers at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of English. She is currently in the process of writing her creative dissertation, which will also be her first novel.



Janice teaches courses in fiction writing, literature, and composition at UIC and is also an adjunct faculty member at Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, IL. Her short stories have been published in the anthologies *The Thing About Love Is...* and *Hair Trigger 16*. Her recent interview with author Carol Olivia Herron was published in the Spring 2001 issue of *Obsidian III* magazine. In addition to creative writing, Janice also is an African-Americanist. Her areas of scholarship include 19th and 20th century African-American Women Writers, African-

American Autobiography, American Literature, and the Literature of the Harlem Renaissance and Chicago Renaissance. When not reading and writing, Janice can be found crafting handmade soft-

sculpture dolls and quilting. Just like her fiction and her art, she believes that we must take the pieces of our life experiences and create some beautiful and purposeful.

Janice Tuck Lively is a member of the Narrative Design team for Virtual Harlem. She has worked with Virtual Harlem in a number of capacities since it was installed on the UIC campus. She has served temporarily as project coordinator, conducted tours of the environment for visiting scholars and outside publics, provided voice-narration for portions of the narratives currently installed in the environment, and is just an overall goodwill ambassador for Virtual Harlem.

### Ken McAllister

Ken McAllister is the Executive Director of Alternative Educational Environments--the not-for-profit organization that houses Virtual Harlem--and is also Virtual Harlem's Southwestern Regional Director. In both roles he helps to identify and obtain institutional and personal support for ongoing projects, discern fruitful new directions for research and teaching, and facilitate the mentoring of new AEE and VH participants.



Ken is also an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English at the University of Arizona, where he studies and teaches rhetorics of technology, computer-mediated pedagogy, rhetorics of computer gaming, and histories of rhetoric.

### Dwight McBride

Dwight A. McBride (Ph.D., UCLA) is Head of the Department of African-American Studies and Associate Professor of English and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His published essays are in the areas of race theory and black cultural studies. He is author of *Impossible Witnesses: Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony* (2001, NYU Press), a booklength study of abolitionist discourse and the problem of witnessing slavery in Britain and the U.S. He is the editor of *James Baldwin Now* (1999, NYU Press). He also co-edited a special issue of the journal *Callaloo* titled "Plum Nelly: New Essays in Black Queer Studies" (Winter 2000). Both *James Baldwin Now* and "Plum Nelly" received special citation from the Crompton-Noll Award Committee of the Modern Language Association for their significant contribution to LGBT studies. He is co-editor of the forthcoming



ing *Black Like Us: A Century of Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-Sexual African American Fiction* (May 2002, Cleis Press). Currently, McBride is at work on two manuscripts tentatively titled: *Poetics, Politics, and Phillis Wheatley* and *Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality in America*.

### Marcelo Milrad

I was introduced to Bryan Carter and the Virtual Harlem project, during Bryan's visit to Sweden last summer, I got very excited about the idea of using advanced learning technologies to visualize complex ideas within the Humanities. The intense contact between Bryan Carter and I has resulted in the fact that my university in Sweden is taking part in a project proposal submitted by Dr. Carter to the National Science Foundation (NSF). Furthermore, I have been visiting EVL at UiC during my visit to Chicago last August. During that occasion I was introduced to many other key people working in this project in Sweden. He is also a staff member at the School of Mathematics and Systems Engineering at Växjö University (VXU), Sweden. Marcelo has been working during the last 10 years with the development and implementation of interactive learning environments, both in schools, universities and international corporations. Marcelo Milrad is an active member of international organizations such as AACE, SALT, IEEE Learning Task Force, and the Internet Society. Prior to his work at Framkom and VXU,

Marcelo has been working at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, at Uppsala University and the Institute for Media Technology (IMT) in Sweden.



### Kyoung Park



Kyoung Park is a Ph.D. student in the Electronic Visualization Laboratory (EVL) in the department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Her areas of interest include evaluating human performance and interaction in a tele-immersive environment and developing human-centered interfaces for supporting asynchronous and synchronous long-term work and long-distance collaboration.

### William Plummer

Bill Plummer (PhD in Mathematical Physics, University of Texas, 1966) is Professor Emeritus of Computer Engineering and Computer Science at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he has also served as Department Chairman, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Computing, and institutional representative to various state and national bodies. He was an early supporter of the internet, having installed the first TCP/IP node in a Missouri public institution, was a founding member MidNet, and was an early force in the establishment of Morenet. Educational uses of computers in many disciplines has consumed much of his time for over 25 years.



Dr. Plummer has had a particular interest in the use of interactive computer graphics. In the 1970's he was networking graphics terminals in classrooms to mainframes and mini-computers to support mathematics and science applications which he developed. This evolved into a locally constructed, microcomputer-based graphics system which, having wheels, was deemed portable by the standards of the day. Other efforts were devoted to interactive graphics in engineering design and analysis.

Advances in technology have made it viable to apply interactive graphics in disciplines outside of engineering and science. Appropriate databases working methods have been developed which have culminated in a number of "Virtual Reality" projects directed to experiential learning methods for students of English and Cultural Studies, as well as medicine and biology. The systems developed have been exploited in local settings, via networked "CAVES", and with a central server connected to desktop computers via Internet2.

### Tim Portlock

Tim Portlock received an MFA in Art and Design from the University of Chicago where he studied painting and drawing. He is currently a student in the Electronic Visualization Laboratory at the University of



Illinois at Chicago where he is learning to make art using digital technology.

Portlock is one of several people that generated 3d models and yggdrasil scripting for the Virtual Harlem project. During his time working on the project he created avatars for use during networked presentations of Virtual Harlem and also contributed to some of the interactive elements to the virtual environment. Portlock also worked with others on the Harlem team to begin to develop narrative strategies for virtual reality. He is also the lead

designer for Studio-Z, a Chicago based theater company that brings together live theater and new technology.

### Jim Pyfer



Jim Pyfer is a masters student in the Communication department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is pursuing interests in communication technology and virtual reality.

Pyfer was first introduced to the Virtual Harlem project by Jim Sosnoski while working as his research assistant. Pyfer considers the Virtual Harlem project as a foundation for further research on his thesis.

### Erec Smith



Erec Smith is a doctoral candidate in Language, Literacy and Rhetoric at the University of Illinois-Chicago. My dissertation, entitled "A Rhetoric of Mythic Proportions: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Trickster Consciousness" discusses the influences such mythological figures as Hermes, Loki, Esu, Dionysos and Shiva have on the construction of rhetorical motives and ideologies. My interest in the Virtual Harlem project revolves around the activities of a specific category of Trickster (exemplified by Hermes, Loki and Esu most prevalently) can be realized as a meta-character in the virtual space of Harlem. His eclecticism, ambiguity, and ability to get in and out of all situations makes him an ideal icon for the ambience of Harlem during the 20s and 30s.

### James Sosnoski



In the summer of 1998, I drove down to Columbia, Missouri, with some colleagues to see Virtual Harlem and was excited by its potential as an instructional technology, which is my field. Bryan and Bill wanted to visit Chicago to talk to Andy and Jason at UIC's Electronic Visualization Lab. I arranged it with the help of Steve Jones and ever since I have been coordinating the Virtual Harlem project. Since Ken McAllister, who had worked with me on several projects while he was at UIC, took over Alternative Educational Environment from me, it was almost inevitable that he would join the project. Last summer

I met Marcelo when Bryan brought him to Chicago to see the immersion CAVE. I have been collaborating with David for many years. Janice, Duriel, Dwight, Georgia, Brenda, and Erec—all in the English department when I was there—are my colleagues and collaborators as are Richard from Communication and Kyoung from Computer Science. I've worked closely with Tim and, more recently, with Jim. Veronica, David's colleague, came to Chicago to see Virtual Harlem and we got to know each other a little bit during her stay. I met Bruce when he came to the MOBE reception in the fall of 1999. This is an amazing group of people. I am very fortunate to be a part of the Virtual Harlem project.

James J. Sosnoski is a professor of Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author of *Token Professionals and Master Critics: A Critique of Orthodoxy in Literary Studies*, and *Modern Skeletons in Postmodern Closets: A Cultural Studies Alternative*, as well as various essays on literary and pedagogical theory, computer-assisted pedagogy, and online collaboration. With David Downing, he co-edited "The Geography of Cyberspace," "Conversations in Honor of James Berlin," and "The TicToc Conversations" -- special issues of *Works and Days*. He was the Executive Director of the Society for Critical Exchange (1982-86), the Director of the Group for Research into the Institutionalization and Professionalization of Literary Studies (82-4) and the TicToc project (96-97), a collaborative effort to bring together experts in technology with the members of the English department at UIC to develop an online work environment. He has been a member of the MLA's Delegate Assembly, Ethics Committee, and Emerging Technologies Committee. He is collaborating with David Downing on *Living on Borrowed Terms*, a study of the use of terminology in literary and rhetorical studies. He is currently coordinating the Virtual Harlem, an instructional technology project using virtual reality scenarios and working on *Configuring*, a study of analogous understanding.

### Georgia Tappan

Georgia Tappan is an M.A. student in Creative Writing at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In addition to her writing projects and her work as a research assistant for Professor James Sosnoski, she teaches a freshman composition course on detective fiction. She earned her B.S. in math at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She's married to an engineer who is also a musician. Their home is a melange of music, books, art and technological gadgetry. Her delight in the intersection of technology and the arts has led her inexorably to Virtual Harlem.



**Veronica Watson**

Dr. Veronica Watson is an Assistant Professor of African American Literature and Coordinator of Pan African Studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her primary areas of research include twentieth century African American Women Writers, the Harlem Renaissance, and feminist theories. In preparation for writing this article, she was invited to visit the Virtual Harlem project at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) during October, 2001.

**The History  
of the  
Virtual Harlem Project**