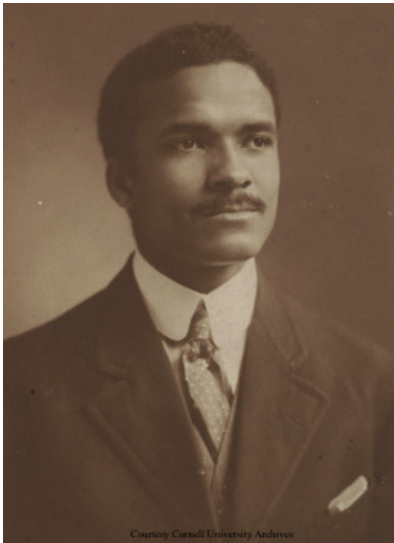


THE MULTIPLE SELVES OF JAMES BERTRAM CLARKE: A MODEL FOR AFRICANA HISTORIOGRAPHY

6PM APRIL 7

Dresher Center Conference Room (PAHB 2nd floor)



The multiple or fractured self: My talk reexamines this commonplace of African diaspora scholarship from the perspective of intentional strategy rather than as a reaction to racism and geographical dislocation. I focus on the life and writings of James Bertram Clarke, who uniquely recognized the multiple or fractured dimension of blackness and embodied it at the expense, perhaps, of his own psyche. A master of personal and literary self-invention, Clarke transformed himself, at different moments, into José Clarana and Jaime Gil. He lived

in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Cuba, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Haiti under one or more of these assumed identities. During the first decades of the twentieth century, Clarke wrote about the experience of racism from the diverse perspectives of these personae, forming his arguments using the language (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Hebrew—at one point, he lived as a Jew—American and British English) and the racial logic of his intended audience to advance an anti-racist agenda. Beyond the expansion of the archive of the field, Clarke's story lays bare not only the challenges involved in advancing transnational anti-racist struggles but also in telling the story of those struggles.

ZITA NUNES

Director of the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies and Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Maryland College Park

