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# What Is a Black Author?: A Review of Recent Charles Chesnutt Studies

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Anyone who has made a habit of roaming the book exhibits at MLA conferences during the last ten years has watched the quiet cottage industry that was Charles Chesnutt studies grow into a publishing juggernaut. Many

formerly obscure writers enjoy sudden bursts of posthumous critical acclaim, of course, but Chesnutt's decade-long vogue is unusual in that recent additions to his rapidly expanding bibliography include more primary than secondary texts. Three of the novels left unpublished at his death, *Mandy Oxendine*, *Paul Marchand*, *F.M.C.*, and *The Quarry*, appeared for the first time in print between 1997 and 1999. During the same period, Stanford University Press issued *To Be an Author: Letters of Charles W. Chesnutt, 1898–1905* (1997) and *Charles W. Chesnutt: Essays and Speeches* (1999), a 600-page tome that includes 38...

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