



Topics for Discussion and Writing

1. What is meant by the term *realism*? What are examples of realistic elements in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*? What is the most realistic play or film that you have seen recently?
2. Anton Chekhov writes dialogue in which the characters do not listen to each other, and frequently one character responds by saying things unrelated to the subject of another character. Listen to several different groups of people talking together under different circumstances. Where do you see examples of Chekhov's observation that people are so absorbed by their own problems and concerns that they fail to hear the concerns of others?
3. If Ibsen were to write social problem plays today, what kinds of social problems might he address?

● For suggested readings and other resources related to this chapter, please visit www.mhhe.com/creativespirit6e

Expressing a Worldview through Realism

Looking at *And the Soul Shall Dance*

by Wakako Yamauchi

Wakako Yamauchi is another contemporary American playwright working in the realistic style. Yamauchi's plays have been compared to those of Anton Chekhov because of the small but precisely chosen details with which she renders her characters' lives and the quiet anguish that the

characters express. Her plays also focus on a group of characters rather than on a central individual. And like Tennessee Williams, whom she acknowledges as a major influence, Yamauchi creates plays with a heightened, lyrical quality.

We turn now to an exploration of the play *And the Soul Shall Dance*, by Wakako Yamauchi, with a focus on its realistic elements. Following the text of the play we analyze two different productions: one at East West Players in Los Angeles and the other at Northwest Asian American Theatre in Seattle. In our anal-



ysis of these productions, we take a close look at the development of performance techniques used in realistic staging.