

The Harlem Renaissance



Essential Questions

- What were some of the stereotypes whites had of African Americans in the 1920s?
- How did the Harlem Renaissance affect the views whites held about African Americans as well as those that African Americans held about themselves?
- What events sparked the Harlem Renaissance?
- What significant contributions did the artists, writers, and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance make to American culture?

The Harlem Renaissance

- 1920s movement centered in Harlem, an African American neighborhood of New York City
- Included artists, musicians, activists, intellectuals, novelists, playwrights, and poets



The New Negro



Marcus Garvey

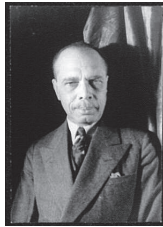
- New black identity
- Racial pride
- Black nationalism
- Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association
- Urban League

The Harlem Renaissance in Literature

- Countee Cullen
- Langston Hughes
- Claude McKay
- James Weldon Johnson
- Zora Neale Hurston



Claude McKay



James Weldon Johnson



Zora Neale Hurston

Countee Cullen (1903–1946)

"INCIDENT" (1926)

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

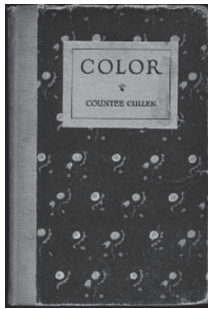
I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.





1928—Cullen married Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W. E. B. Du Bois, a leading African American intellectual and civil rights activist

“Yet Do I Marvel” from Color



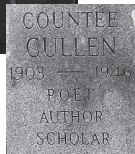
I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind,
And did He stoop to quibble could tell why
The little buried mole continues blind,
Why flesh that mirrors Him must some day die,
Make plain the reason tortured Tantalus
Is baited by the fickle fruit, declare
If merely brute caprice dooms Sisypheus
To struggle up a never-ending stair.
Inscrutable His ways are, and immune
To catechism by a mind too strewn
With petty cares to slightly understand
What awful brain compels His awful hand.
Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

Excerpt from “Heritage”

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
*One three centuries removed
From the scenes his father loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?*



Arna Bontemps



- 1934—Published *One Way to Heaven*, his first novel
- 1935—Published *The Medea and Other Poems*, the first translation of a classical work by an African American writer
- 1940, 1942—Published *The Lost Zoo* and *My Lives and How I Lost Them*, two novels for children
- 1946—Died in New York at the age of 43
