

An Introduction to the Harlem Renaissance

**Presented by the Irving Arts Center
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“Celebrating the Harlem Renaissance Season”
with the Irving Black Arts Council**

What is the Harlem Renaissance?

- **The Harlem Renaissance** was an African American cultural movement that began in Harlem, New York after World War I and ended during the late 1930s.

What is the Harlem Renaissance?

- The **Harlem Renaissance** marked the first time that mainstream publishers and critics took African American literature seriously and that African American literature and arts attracted significant attention from the nation at large.

Literature During the Harlem Renaissance

- African American literature changed during the **Harlem Renaissance**--for the first time, the writing of the blacks dealt with exploring their own culture on a deeper and more complicated level. The writing of the **Harlem Renaissance** expressed a pride in being black and a growing sense of confidence among African Americans.

Writers of the Harlem Renaissance

- Black literary writers covered such issues as black life in the South and the North, racial identity, racial issues, and equality through poetry, prose, novels, and fiction. Some of the more popular writers tackling these issues included Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Jessie Redmon Fauset.



Zora Neale Hurston



Langston Hughes



Countee Cullen

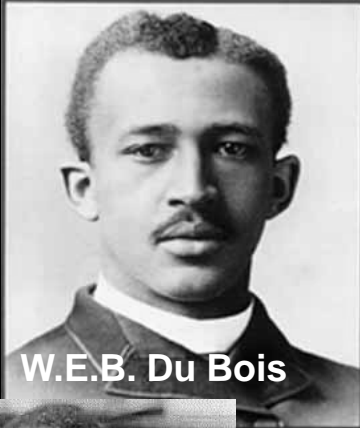


Jessie Redmon Fauset

Leading Intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance

- During this pivotal period, the **Harlem Renaissance** fostered black pride and uplifting of the race through the use of intellect. Thinking African-Americans, using artistic talents, challenged racial stereotypes and helped promote racial integration.
- Significantly, the genesis of the Civil Rights movement was rooted in radical political ideologies of **Harlem Renaissance** intellectuals.

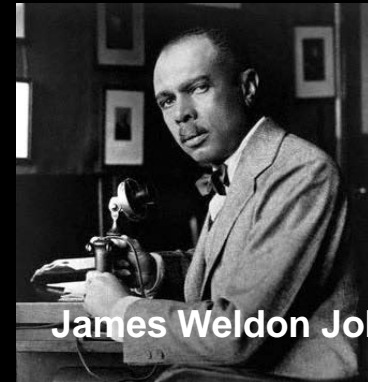
Leading Intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance



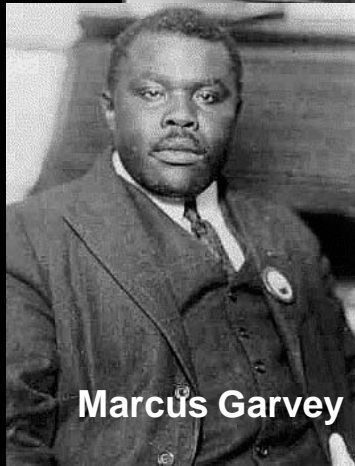
W.E.B. Du Bois



Alain Locke



James Weldon Johnson



Marcus Garvey



Charles Spurgeon Johnson



Arthur Schomburg

Visual Artists

- For African American artists in the 19th century, the only means to artistic acceptance and success required adherence to European aesthetics and a rejection of their personal experiences.

Visual Artists

- In his 1925 essay, "The New Negro", Howard University Professor of Philosophy Alain Locke inspired African American artists to create a school of African American art with an identifiable style and aesthetic, and to look to African culture and African American folk life for subject matter and inspiration.

Visual Artists

- These artists focused on class, culture and Africa to bring ethnic consciousness into art and create a new black identity. The New Negro movement would later be known as the **Harlem Renaissance**.

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Aaron Douglas



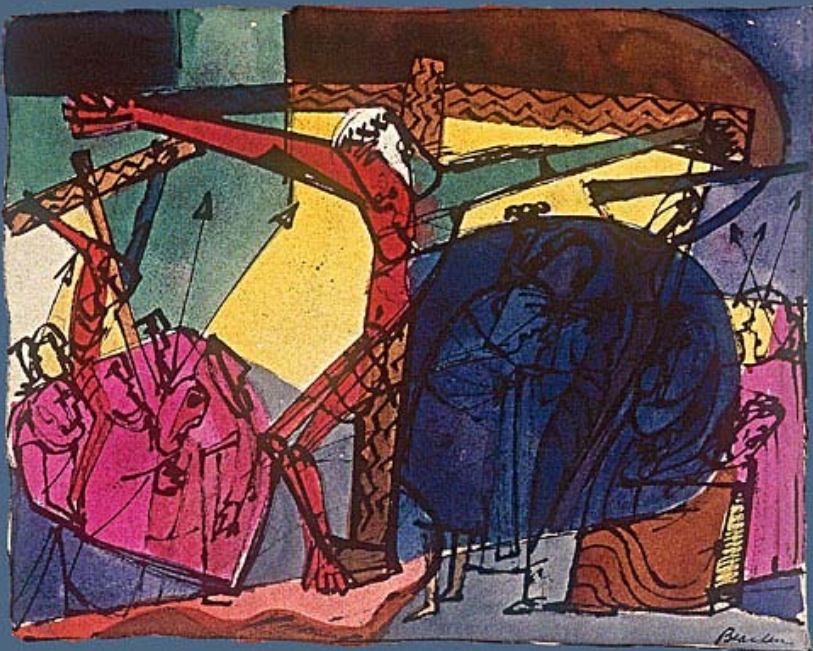
Into Bondage, 1936



Aspirations, 1936

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Romare Bearden



Golgotha, 1945



Sacrifice, 1941

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Jacob Lawrence



Migration Series, No. 58. 1940-1941



The Ironers, 1943

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

William Johnson



Young Man in a Vest, 1939-1940



Cafe, 1939-1940

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Charles Henry Alston



Dancing Couple, c. 1930



Girl in a Red Dress, 1934

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Archibald Motley



Jockey Club, 1929



The Liar, 1936

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Malvin Gray Johnson



Roll, Jordan, Roll, 1931



Self-Portrait, 1934

Visual Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller



Ethiopia Awakening, 1914



Mother and Child, 1914-1920

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

- The music of the **Harlem Renaissance** - including jazz, swing, and big band - was an inherent expression of the joyous revolt from the confinement of racial prejudice experienced by African Americans.

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

- Jazz was all the rage during the 1920s. Extremely popular in Harlem, historians agree that the musical genre of jazz was most influential during the **Harlem Renaissance** period, and its style and characteristics would influence many classical composers. Jazz music not only coursed its way through the United States, but found tremendous popularity in Paris, France as well.

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

- Black musicians and singers – along with dancers, comedians, and variety acts – were showcased at several famous nightclubs in Harlem. While the Cotton Club and Connie's Inn were segregated and restricted their audiences to whites only, the Apollo Theatre and the Savoy Ballroom entertained both white and black crowds.

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

- **Harlem Renaissance** music was defined by the lively clubs and talented individuals who constantly improved and modified jazz's sound, including swing and big band music.

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

Musicians & Singers



Fats Waller



Bessie Smith



Billie Holiday



Louis Armstrong

Music of the Harlem Renaissance

Big Band Leaders



Duke Ellington



Cab Calloway



Count Basie



Fletcher Henderson

Entertainers of the Harlem Renaissance

- **During the Harlem Renaissance,** African Americans were not only gaining popularity in music, but also in other avenues of the entertainment industry.

Entertainers of the Harlem Renaissance

DANCERS



Bill "Bojangles" Robinson



Josephine Baker



The Nicholas Brothers

Entertainers of the Harlem Renaissance

ACTORS



Charles Gilpin



Ethel Waters



Paul Robeson



Adelaide Hall

Resources

- **42eXplore: Thematic Pathfinders for all ages**
 - <http://www.42explore2.com/harlem.htm>
- **The Kennedy Center**
 - <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/harlem/artsedge.html>
- **Read * Write * Think**
 - http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson252/websites.html
- **PBS**
 - http://www.pbs.org/search/search_results.html?q=harlem+renaissance