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***The Black Women's Contribution to the
Harlem Renaissance
1919-1940***

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Dedication

At the outset, I have to thank “Allah” who guided and gave me the patience and capacity for having conducted this research.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family and my friends. A very special feeling of gratitude to my loving father, and mother whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

To my grand-mother, for her eternal love. Also, my sisters and brother, Khadidja, Bouchra and Ahmed who inspired me to be strong despite many obstacles in life.

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Abstract

Black women, writers, poets or artists, play a crucial role and have had a significant contribution to African American Literature. This extended paper examines the black women's contribution to the Harlem renaissance. Additionally, It seeks to find out and explore why the majority of black female and feminist works were overlooked, marginalized and excluded from the academic sphere and numbers among were ignored and unrecognized and neglected. The era of Harlem Renaissance is significantly highlighted by works of male writers such as Hughes, Alain Locke, Claude Mackey and others who defined as the pioneers of this artistic movement, but magnificent products by Zora Neale Hurston along with other works of writers and poets such as Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset are few to name whose participation has been only recognized after several years by anthologists and critics, mainly Black feminist critics' analysis of African American women literary productions show how these women were genderless and how they were alienated from the aspects of mainstream.

Keywords: Harlem renaissance-Black women – Black feminist criticism.

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General Introduction

African American literature is considered as a vital part of American literature and culture. African American literature's writers tackle the issues and the problems of racial discrimination in all its multidimensional meaning. This field of study departed initially from slave narratives of Douglas and others to the current times with all its socio-literary and cultural history that changed and recreated the American society. Accordingly, this research is significantly concerned with the so-called golden age of the African American literature that was called Harlem renaissance age.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, the United States witnessed enormous migration amongst African Americans, who moved from rural Southern groups to Northern industrial towns. Cities such as Chicago, New York, and Detroit, among others, received Southern migrants in numbers that rapidly and irrevocably altered the towns' social, cultural, and demographic landscapes. It is in the wake of the first of these Great Migrations, which coincided with the Great War and its aftermath, whose early articulations of black modernism emerged: a motion organized around codifying the modifications inherent in a marginalized, rural, and largely unlettered people transplanted to new environs, new trades, and new social structures and better life conditions.

Nevertheless, this significant period was known as the "*Harlem Renaissance*" or "the *New Negro movement*" that transformed literature, critical writing, music, theatre, musical theatre, and the visual arts as well as it affected politics, social development, and almost every aspect of the African American experience.

The era of Harlem Renaissance is significantly highlighted by works of male writers such as Hughes, Alain Locke, Claude Mackey and others who defined it as the pioneers of this artistic movement. However, magnificent products by Zora Neale Hurston along with other works of writers and poets such as Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset are but a few female writers whose participations have only been recognized

after several years by anthologists and critics. In other words, “the cultural producers who made up the Harlem Renaissance truly changed America, and their influence was felt throughout the world; however, women's contributions to this era have been dramatically overlooked” (J. Prince 82).

Therefore, this exclusion of black women's works from the canons of women's and mainly from the canon of this movement's literature raises a wide range of questions among literary scholars concerning the reasons for that suppression or what is called "burial of women's writing in general" (Lorraine xii). Accordingly, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to shed light on black women writers whose works were produced during the Harlem Renaissance by providing critical views on these neglected writers such as Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset and Neale Zora Hurston. These same female writers were significant participants among many talents in the New negro movement and actually received insufficient or no recognition during this period.

Nevertheless, it has been noted that the Renaissance was decidedly masculine as key figures like DuBois, Alain Locke, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and Langston Hughes have been lauded for taking the movement by the reins and dictating its direction and goals. However, their prioritization of race over gender marginalized the voice and concerns of Black women writers whose literature was often overshadowed, if not ignored, as compared to their male contemporaries. It is important to note that key figures of the Harlem era accused or excluded women from public and mainly from academia much like W.E.B. Dubois in his 1919 essay entitled “*The Damnation of Women,*” who noted that "women have been frankly trodden under the feet of men," but of women themselves he stated that none have been more sweetly feminine, more unswervingly loyal, more desperately earnest, and more instinctively pure in body and soul than the daughters of my black mothers.

Calvin Hernton who notes, "By its origin, nature, and function, Black writing is mission-conscious and is necessarily a hazardous undertaking. In turn, being a Black writer is an ennobling exigency, and Black literature constitutes one of the supreme enrichments of

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine and find out the contribution of black women writers to the movement of Harlem renaissance. The discussion at stake attempts to examine the issues and causes that marginalised many female writers and even excluded them from literary canon in that era. Put differently, this thesis's central focus is to reveal that Harlem renaissance was not only a men phenomenon but it was the contribution of both men and women for the sake of their main common purpose that is claiming their rights through literature and arts.

Nevertheless, most of the authors make great intention to the literary achievement of mainly major male figures such as Langston Hughes, Claude MacKay, Countee Cullen, Du Bois and others. However, the women's literary achievements of that era were invalid and in many occasions were ignored, and this led to raise a number of questions and provide hypothese, following question is raised:

- Why have several Black female poets and writers been overlooked, excluded and marginalized from the male literary canon during the Harlem renaissance?

The above major question is followed by the following sub questions:

1. What was Harlem renaissance about?
2. What are the main factors that led to its emergence?
3. Who were the key figures and leaders of the movement?
4. What was the role of the women in the movement?

Hypotheses

- Female writers were excluded from the male literary canon mainly because of the problem of inequality blacks suffered from at the time
- Racism, inequality, oppression and dehumanization of blacks led them use literature as weapon to claim their rights.

Objective and aims of the research

- To give a brief background on the socio-historical and cultural facets of the Harlem renaissance .
- to shed light on major leaders and key figures of that age
- to demonstrate the significant role of black women writings that mirrored their sufferings
- to provide the biographical background of four female writers along with analyses and perceptions
- to demonstrate the three main and indirect factors that led to the exclusion of women's literary works from the canon

Chapter one will give an extensive overview about Harlem renaissance period, its emergence as a literary movement, then it will shed light on the major features of the movement and its key themes. Chapter two will examine the black female literature of the Harlem renaissance and its position at the time. Chapter three will deal with the exclusion of women and their contributions from the literary canon by highlighting the main causes as the issue of publications, problem of double consciousness, and the main concerns of their writing. It will further how the trope of jazz and blues was used by female poets then it will provide autobiographical and biographical accounts of four selected black female writers

namely Jessie Fauset, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and Zora Neale Hurston.

Chapter I: The Harlem Renaissance (1917-1940)

Introduction

The Harlem Renaissance (1917-1935) was the name given to the cultural, social, and artistic explosion that happened in Harlem between the highest of war I and thus, the center of the 1930s. African Americans migrated towards the industrialized North to flee racial prejudices, economic hardships, and also to achieve higher social and economic status. This mass migration resulted within the transformation of certain streets of Harlem in NY. This gave rise to cultural changes led to the “New Negro Movement” which gained much popularity and have become what's termed as Harlem Renaissance. This part will tackle the definition of this movement, and the way researches define it with pertaining to how it rose, and the way its literary movement increased. Also, this chapter will shed the light on defining its basic characteristics, and themes.

1. Definition of the Harlem Renaissance Movement

It's essential to spotlight that, the Harlem Renaissance was founded on the ideals of racial pride, the importance of African culture, and therefore, the social power. African Americans exhibited their racial heritage through arts. These circumstances created a whole new phase of how modern African American culture for many years to return was to be recognized by unborn generations. During the 1930s, Harlem was a cultural center, drawing black writers, artists, musicians, photographers, poets, and students. Many had come from the South, fleeing its oppressive social organization to hunt out a neighborhood where they could freely express their talents. Among those artists whose works achieved recognition were Hughes and Claude McKay, Countee Cullen and Arena Bontemps, Zora Neale Hurston and Jean Toomer. During this era Harlem was the Mecca to which black writers, artists, musicians, photographers, poets, and students traveled. Among such scholars were Walter

White, James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. Du Bois. W.E.B. Du Bois encouraged talented artists to travel away from the South. Du Bois, then the editor of "The Crisis" magazine, the journal of the NAACP, was at the peak of his fame and influence within the black community. "The Crisis" published the poems, stories, and visual works of many artists of the quantity. Du Bois was ready to achieve this goal through his formation of NAACP. The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in NY attracted many Afro-American intellectuals who were upset with the rise in violence against Negroes within the US. These black leaders saw the NAACP as a vehicle for changing things of the Afro-American. The NAACP also attracted those (specifically the participants within the Niagara Movement) who were dissatisfied with Booker T. Washington's policy of accommodation. When Du Bois moved to NY, many black intellectuals followed his lead, for they shared similar ideas about upgrading the Afro-American's condition. Harlem was the proper place for black writers to voice their opinions on how the "New Negro" was going to be militant and self-assured, partly because there was an outsized population of Negroes in Harlem at the time. Marcus Garvey was another reason for articulate Negroes to maneuver to Harlem. Garvey attracted Negro intellectuals not only from the US but from all parts of the earth. They were called to Harlem to attend the Universal Negro Improvement Association conventions sometimes held in Madison Square Garden.

A number of these intellectuals remained in Harlem afterwards. Another relevance of Harlem Renaissance to the African American culture was the very fact that it gave rise to the rise of artists. The rebirth of traditional African culture saw the amount of African American Artists rapidly increase. As a result of this huge number of developed artists, employment became problematic or difficult. However, the Works Progress Administration established by President Roosevelt assisted in providing jobs but couldn't satisfy all the unemployment issues. To salvage the crisis, the Harlem Artist Guild under the leadership of Aaron Douglas

founded in 1928, collaborated with the WPA to make sure the success of African American Artist gaining employment within the 1930s. Thus, to an outsized extent demonstrate the relevance of Harlem Renaissance to the African American culture.

In addition, one distinguished impact of the Harlem Renaissance was its ability to redefine how America and the world at large viewed the African Americans, thus the Harlem Renaissance brought the black experience on a sociological level. The mass migration to the North changed the status quo or image of the African American from rural or uneducated peasants to that of urban, cosmopolitan, and sophisticated. It is keying to note that the new identity of blacks led to a greater social consciousness which resulted in the fact that African Americans became players on the world stage, expanding intellectual and social contacts internationally. This is to a large extent shows the relevance of the Harlem Renaissance to the African American culture.

Furthermore, the Harlem Renaissance served as a center of exhibiting black ideas. The new settlement did not attract any racial abuses to African American, this made them live freely without fear. This improvement made the African American gain a spirit of self-determination that provided a growing sense of both black urbanity and black militancy. Harlem Renaissance succeeded in depicting the Afro-American as an individual who was capable of making great achievements if given the opportunity. This further laid the foundation for the community to build upon for the Civil Right struggles in the 1950s and 1960s.

Also, the Renaissance incorporated jazz, and therefore, the blues, attracting whites to Harlem nightclubs where interracial couples danced. But the Renaissance had little impact on breaking down the rigid barriers of Jim Crow that separated the races. While it's going to have contributed to a particular relaxation of racial attitudes among young whites, perhaps its greatest impact was to strengthen race pride among blacks. The Harlem Renaissance was

quite a literary movement: It involved racial pride, fueled partially by the militancy of the “New Negro” demanding civil and political rights. The Harlem Renaissance was one among the profound events that occurred within the African American history and thus its relevance to African American culture in times can never be underestimated. The Harlem Renaissance provided an avenue for African Americans of all backgrounds to understand the variability of black lives and culture. The Harlem Renaissance demonstrated the new appreciation of folk’s roots and culture. These folk materials broadened the scope of artistic and intellectual imagination which emancipated blacks from the establishment of past condition. This new development in Harlem led to a united racial identity through sharing of cultural experiences.

2. The Rise of the Harlem Renaissance

Harlem, the cultural capital of Black America, has for many decades provided enlightened leadership in the arts, unmatched by other urban communities. Significantly situated in the center of New York City, on the island of Manhattan, Harlem has attracted persons from all walks of life striving to become entertainers in the music, theater, and film worlds. Black poets and novelists have idealized Harlem and implanted its ethos in the soul of every Black American, since, the 1920s, when the community became a Mecca for the explorations of all the arts. Prior to that time, little was known of Black visual artists, other than those who managed to make their reputations in Europe. Few, indeed, were the aspiring artists fortunate enough to be well financed themselves or to be sponsored for a sojourn in Europe, particularly in Paris, then the capital of art in the Western world. For the most of Black artists who dreamed of practicing their craft in a supportive environment, Harlem seemed a likely place to call home. As early as 1905, the rush to own property in Harlem began among well-heeled Blacks. Their arrival brought stability to the community and the interest required to create a support system that would sustain Harlem’s intellectual and artistic movement in the early

1920s. Yet, the climate the community needed to prove itself worthy of the New Negro's cultural regeneration was the result of forces within and outside Harlem.

Before World War one, Black intellectuals were already migrating to Harlem from Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and the principal cities of the South. They swelled the ranks of Harlem's cultural activists and championed the call for a rebirth of the artistry Black people once had in their native Africa. Simultaneously, the art of Black Africa was beginning to enter American museums and was accessible through the collections of prominent avant-garde art dealers.

Most historians accept 1925 as the established date of the New Negro Movement's flowering of artistic expressions, later called the Harlem Renaissance. Yet, as early as 1919, when Black soldiers returned from the war in Europe, signs of a changing cultural order appeared in Harlem. There was a proliferation of literary clubs, private and public art exhibitions, and evenings of music, poetry, and dance that existed for the sole purpose of "uplifting the arts within the race." (*Black-Moses-story of Marcus Garvey*) The year 1919 was also the year in which an unusually sagacious, socially determined mind-set developed among the Black intellectuals assembled in Harlem. They espoused political philosophies that interested those Black artists who showed allegiance to their race and who felt the need to participate in the founding of a national movement to enlighten the arts of Black America. The voices that gave direction to the artists, who like their intellectual counterparts came to Harlem from across the nation, represented the best minds that Black America had to offer. Those who encouraged the visual artists to join ideological ranks with their literary counterparts were the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance: eminent philosophers and sociologists, seasoned critics, gallery dealers, and patrons of the arts.

3. The Literary Movement

The Harlem Renaissance was Foremost a literary movement. Other arts, and politics, were extremely significant for expanding the creative energies that inspired and enriched the Harlem Renaissance, and for contributing to the rich artistic, and cultural milieu that made Harlem within the 1920s such a special place. Literature, though—in the shape of poems, short stories, novels, and essays---formed the core of the movement. It was no literature, not music or neither painting nor even musical theater that the publishing community celebrated at the 1924 Civic Club dinner. The one-issue magazine Wallace Thurman edited was essentially a literary statement. Likewise, while culturally conservative political leaders like W.E.B Du Bois were not always happy with the popularity of jazz, and the blues, nor with the portrayal of blacks in musical theater and musical reviews, it was literature that most attracted their critical eye and generated their sternest condemnations.

Concerning literary production, this aspect of the Harlem Renaissance was an astonishing success. The main writers, authors who produced book-length literary works with major publishing houses, produced almost fifty titles within the thirteen-year period between 1922 and 1935. That compares to a few dozen books from four major authors published within the preceding twenty-two years, most by small presses with limited distribution. Additionally, to major, authors of the Harlem Renaissance, many other black writers written and published poems, short stories, or other literary works in newspapers or magazines, and with small presses with local or regional distribution. There was no common theme or style that characterized the work of the main literary figures that were in or related to Harlem. Their backgrounds and their political and social views were also diverse. They did share a determination to precise their vision in works that might be truthful and high literary quality,

which would formulate to the African American experience. It is important to notice their insistence there was no requirement that restricted them to black issues and topics. Furthermore, as Hughes proclaimed, they wrote for themselves, notwithstanding the stress or the agendas of the critics, black or white. (*Major Modern Black American Writers by Harold Bloom*)

The increase in African American intellectual literature had a profound effect on society in the 20s. African American concerns, problems, and styles were taken more seriously as famous writers such as Langston Hughes wrote poetry with rhythmic meter of blues and jazz. Claude McKay used powerful verses to encourage African Americans to stand up for their rights. Jean Toomer wrote many plays, short stories, and poems to capture the spirit of his times. Book publishers soon took notice of all these great works and started to recognize these many talents. Zora Neale Hurston was noticed with her touching novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which still remains a popular classic today. African American culture began to grow in a way it never had before. African Americans began to express their concerns and culture in a way that grew in popularity for everyone to finally be recognized.

4. The Characteristics of the Movement

In the twentieth century African American intellectual and cultural history, the Harlem Revival was the largest event. While known for its literature, from the end of World War I through the Great Depression, it touched on every aspect of African American literary and artistic creativity. It also influenced politics, social progress, and almost every part of African American experience from the mid-20s to the mid-1930s, and transformed literature, critical fiction, music, dance, musical theater, and visual arts. But there was also something ephemeral about the Harlem Renaissance, A complex and difficult to define something.

The Harlem Renaissance, then, was an African American literary and art movement anchored in Harlem, but drawing from, extending to, and influencing African American communities across the country and beyond. We date it roughly from the end of the First World War through the Great Depression, but its roots extend well before the war, and its legacy continued many years beyond the 1930s. It had no clearly defined beginning, or end, but emerged out of the social and intellectual upheaval within the African American community that followed war I, blossomed in the 1920s, and then faded away in the mid- to late 1930s and early 1940s.

Likewise, there is no single defined ideological or stylistic standard in the Renaissance of Harlem which unified and defined the movement. Instead, most participants resisted the efforts of black and white to categorize their art loosely or broadly. A group of writers headed by author Wallace Thurman and Langston Hughes, The declaration was one of the purposes of this initiative of their intention to take over the Renaissance literary property. In this period, they turned their hands on Alain Locke and W E B. Du Bois and those who were attempting to transform black imagination into the best path for aesthetics and politics. Notwithstanding, Thurman's actions and his youth, Burn!! The movement remained ill-defined after only one question. It was also the defining feature; no writing form or political philosophy typical to the Harlem Renaissance should remain. It is much more an ineptitude than an ideology or a school of literature or art. What united participants were their sense that they participated in a common effort, and their commitment to express artists' experiences in Africa. If there was a statement that defined the philosophy of the new literary movement it was Langston Hughes's essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," published in the Nation, June 16, 1926: We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. "We know we are beautiful, and ugly, too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom

laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they're not their displeasure doesn't matter either. We will build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we will stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves." (*Major Modern Black American Writers* by Harold Bloom)

This essay was both the independence declaration of the movement from the African American stereotypes that Whites held they have expectations of their literary work and expectations Black leaders and black critics had the expectations for black writers. They poured their effort into it. Black authors were willing to pursue their creative view point the main characteristic of the Harlem Renaissance was its diversity. The poetry of the time clearly shows this diversity where subjects, design, and tone differed from conventional to more imaginative inventive. For starters, Langston Hughes captured the working class' life and language in several of his poems, and the rhythm and blues style in "The Weary Blues." Claude McKay and Countee Cullen utilized more formal and classical styles in their writing, as compared to Hughes's embrace of the style of black music, particularly jazz and blues, and its use of blackened vernacular. Many of McKay's poetry focused on traditional literary allusions and metaphors, and typical poetic styles, and his opposition poetry were replaced by sonnets.

This diversity and experimentation also characterized music. This was seen in Bessie Smith's blues, the early jazz spectrum Jelly Roll Morton's rhythm to Louis Armstrong's instrumentation or Duke Ellington's sophisticated orchestra. In sculpture, Aaron Douglas' subtle colors and pastels dramatically contrasted the usage of vivid colors, and clearly colored details by Jacob Lawrence to build a hidden portrait of African-inspired pictures in his paintings and mural.

The emphasis on Black American culture and related topics characterized Harlem Renaissance poetry. Much of Harlem's poetry is described as an exploration of the past place

in history, and the potential of the modern Black America. This poem asks: where was the black American, and where is she? Migration issues— from Europe to the United States, from colonialism and the south to modern industrial jobs— were a prominent problem. Renaissance verse often deals with the issues of US nationalism and American aspirations. Langston Hughes wrote in two well-known poems: “I am America too” and “What occurs in a dream?”

The Harlem Renaissance character was an overarching racial pride, embodied in the New Negro philosophy, which could challenge ethnic or democratic politics, and racial and social integration through the intellect and creation of literature, art, and music. Production of art and literature produced, "exaltation" of the race. This was a powerful racial pride. The art which originated from the Harlem Renaissance would be consistently united. Rather, the curriculum featured a wide range of cultural dimensions and styles, from the conventional form of music to blues and jazz, to literature such as modernism and new artistic forms like, "common" and “low culture,” to “pan-African” perspectives. This duality led to a controversy among various African and American artists with black-intelligentsia liberals, who had some black-life representations.

5. Themes of the Harlem Renaissance

Many of the popular themes of the Harlem Renaissance included imposing slavery and new African American folk traditions on black culture, the impact of structural racism, the challenges that affluent white audiences face in playing and writing, and the issue of how the contemporary black experience in the urban North could be conveyed. A variety of themes appeared and established the Harlem Renaissance identity. All these ideas were not articulated by a black author, singer, or artist, but each individual discussed one or more of their work. The first of these subjects are attempts to recapture African American history, African identity

and rural south origins. African significance was the rise of the Black pan-Africanism in African American history, at the heart of the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, and a concern of W.B.E Du Bois as well.

In the nineteen-twenties, Poets Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes spoke about their African heritage, while Aaron Douglas' works of art was based on African motifs. Many artists also incorporated African-inspired rhythms and themes into their compositions from the legendary composer William Grant Still to the big-time Jazz Louis Armstrong. In the plays of Jean Toomer and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as Jacob Lawrence's art the study of black-south identity became clear. Their Eyes Were Seeing Heaven. Jacob Lawrence switched to African American history for several of his drawings, including his multichannel series, Harriett's Tubman series, and the series Black Migration. Zora Neale Hurston used her background as a storytelling artist to help her detailed research of rural mid-south life in 1937.

Harlem Renaissance authors and artists also explored Harlem's life and many centers of the region. Hughes and McKay also used descriptions of Harlem for their poems and McKay used the ghetto as backdrop for Harlem's first book. In the emulation of the abuse of Harlem by white writer Carl Van Vechten in his book, Nigger Heaven, several black writers like McKay and Hughes, as well as Rudolph Fisher and Wallace Thurman were suspected of over-emphasizing violence, and other negative facets of ghetto life to cultivate the voyeuristic impulses of white readers and publications.

A third pertinent theme of the Harlem Renaissance literature was ethnicity. Part of the poetry discussed virtually every novel and action. American race, in particular, the African Americans impact of race and racism. These works protested racial injustice in their simplest form. "If we have to die," Claude McKay's sonnet was one of the best of this kind. Like almost every black writer at one time or another, Langston Hughes also wrote protest pieces. Count Cullen, who was not noted as a political activist, nevertheless effectively tackled the

theme of racism in his poem, *The Incident*, which tells of a meeting of two eight year-old children on a train in Baltimore. Excited to be on the train ride, the black child saw the white child staring at him: Now, I was eight and very small, and he was no with bigger, and, so I smiled, but he poked out His tongue and called me, “Nigger.” Of his eight-month stay in Baltimore that one incident was all that the child remembered.

Lawrence illustrated the historical sequence of the visual artists the caste, which controlled the past of African America as Roman Recent illustrative research by Bearden was also based on social relations. A battle against the lynching in the mid-1920s spurred both anti-Glynch poetry and Walter White's thorough research on the topic of *Rope and Faggot*; at the beginning of the 1930s, the incident in Scottsboro spurred significant protest written and a Negro anthology in 1934 that addressed race in an international context.

The Harlem Renaissance avoided most of its literary efforts free agitation or manipulation, then concentrating on emotional and social problems Race impact. The two novels by Nella Larsen were among the best of these studies, *Quicksand* in 1928 and *Passing* one year later; the two exploring mixed characters Race patrimony who failed in a culture of bigotry and oppression to establish their ethnic heritage. In his poem Langston Hughes discussed similar subjects *Mulatto*, like Jessie Fauset in her novel *Plum Bun* in 1929 “*Bridge*” and his match in 1931. During the same year, Wallace Thurman discriminated against race, His novel *The Blacker the Berry* focuses on urban black communities. Finally, all facets of Africa are included in the Harlem Renaissance In his artistic job, American culture. The usage of black was all for Music, inspired by poetry or black folklore, inspires novels and shorts. The Langston Hughes, who used jazz and blues rhythms and styles in many of his early poets, was best known for this. The introduction of two books of black spirits by James Weldon Johnson in 1927 and in 1928 the trend that Hughes had begun persisted with Sterling Brown, who included blues and southern songs in some poems in his *Southern Road* poetry book in

1932. The black faith was used as a literary basis by many poets. In the poems in God's trombone, Johnson made the black preacher and his sermons, while the black religion and black preachers used Hurston and Larsen in their novels. The first of Hurston's books, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934), portrayed a southern black preacher's adventures, while a moral and a southern black preacher picked up in the last part of *Quicksand* Larsen's heroine.

Harlem Renaissance writers, musicians, and artists are committed, through all these themes to portray African Americans' experience as objectively as possible in all its diversity and complexity. This devotion to fact ranged from the ghetto realism that created such controversy in revealing negative aspects of Africans, the beautifully illustrated depictions of the black life in small towns like the novel *Not without Laughter* by Hughes and the humorous and biting portrayal of the black literati by Harlem in Wallace Thürmans *Spring Infants*.

While these themes were shared in different arts fields in the Harlem Renaissance, collaboration in these fields was very small, and there was generally a one-way street when there was collaboration. In other places, poets, and authors were inspired most by the artists. Although black music has had a more widespread influence on the work of Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson, the music (in particular, music, theater, jazz, blues, and places in which it is performed) has been one of those elements which appear frequently in Harlem Renaissance literature. This genre of arts was specifically recognized by Black writers who were music consumers. This concern was shared by the Black musicians. Black authors and musicians visited clubs and meetings, and even rented parties where they performed and played. They learned about musical theater, too, to a lesser degree. In comparison, most black musicians seem to have shown no interest or concern for the black book of that time. "Those of us in the music and entertainment business knew vaguely that something exciting happened, but we were not directly involved." (*New Negro Movement – Encyclopedia of*

Africa) Calloway noted in his autobiography ... Literature and entertainment, the two worlds rarely traversed.

Only slightly more popular was the partnership between black authors and musicians. Aaron Douglas was close friends and involved in the creation of the Fires with a number of Harlem Renaissance authors. In the mid-1930s, Romare Bearden frequently visited the '306 House' and met other artists as well as several Harlem Renaissance writers. The painting and the literary works included works such as Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman and James Weldon Johnson. Several years later, Bearden and Jacob Lawrence both rented a studio in a building in the middle of Claude McKay. Both young artists appreciated the conversation with the older author. Years later, Bearden was involved in designing Jazz record covers. Mostly, however, art, music, and literature practitioners worked independently. However, there is no evidence that black literature has had a profound impact on artist, or that either music or literature, were significantly influenced by their art.

6. Conclusion

The idea that Harlem Renaissance was an historical era, not a continuous affair caused critics to claim that the renaissance “failed” (*Mitchell 2010, 641*). As a matter of fact, taking the momentary decline of popularity of the black artistic production as a failure is equal to view the social and artistic developments in the 1920s in the discussion of African-Americans’ struggle as hopeless and unproductive (*Baker 1987, 91*). Huggins is one of the critics to see creation of the New Negro as a failure when he suggests the shock of Great Depression in 1929. He points out that it was not only African-Americans’ but the overall America’s failure. Nevertheless, he accuses the locals of Harlem for taking the system for granted and submitting to the hope they found in the New Negro. For him, “the Negro renaissance was shattered by [Great Depression] because of naïve assumptions about the

centrality of culture, unrelated to economic and social realities” (2007, 303). Another view is that black intellectuals had great expectations from themselves, but they failed to affect race relations, according to historian Levering Lewis (*Corbould 2007, 881*). He puts the blame on the intellectuals for having “a tragically wide, ambitious, and delusional striving” (*Baker 1987, 90*). They fancied themselves to be vanguard. Although they were shadow boxing is another analysis. Black magazines “gave a sense of importance to blacks who read them” (*Huggins 2007, 30*) and thus the intellectuals felt like social engineers. Regardless of these examinations, Harlem Renaissance should not be recognized as a failure, but it is a truth that restrictions in economic freedom caused it to lose strength. However, this does not mean that it did not affect future generations.

Chapter II: Black Women of the Harlem Renaissance

Introduction

Harlem Renaissance is a literary expression used to designate one of the most powerful African American artistic and intellectual movements in the history of the US. The aim of this period was to reject all the African American stereotypes and to confront the racist social, political and, economic ideas that rejected citizenship and the access to the "American Dream." The Harlem Renaissance movement covered years between 1914 and 1919, and between 1930 and 1945. The movement was prompted by social and political change in the country and the dream of Afro-American thinkers and intellectuals, sponsored by black and white supporters and mentors. In the decade of the twenties, black culture in America, all of the arts and literature, flowered unprecedentedly. As they were seeking opportunities of change, the Americans started to take their way north, in particular to New York, even after reconstruction. Harlem was the center of black cultural activity in the uptown Manhattan area where the blacks lived since the beginning of the century. To African-Americans around the country, Harlem seemed to be the cornerstone of all the glory, all riches, and all world freedom. Harlem's fame, like a magnet, has brought aspiring black writers to its suburbs. As a character in a novel by Claude McKay says « Oh ,to be in Harlem again after two years away...the deep-eyed color ,the thickness, the closeness of it ,the noises of Harlem, the sugared laughter, the honey-talk on its streets, and all night long, ragtime and « blues » playing somewhere...singing somewhere, dancing somewhere ! Oh, the contagious fever of Harlem ». The phenomenon known as the Harlem renaissance lasted for almost two decades, from 1917 to 1935.

Black women usually played an underlying role as promoters behind the scenes, but there were few more active participants. Literary gatherings and parties, sponsored by writers from black magazines, provided them with a shared repertoire of issues including urban inspiration, the exploration of African American identity and alienation and anger. The awakening of African-American artists in the 1920s and 1930s gave Harlem the fabulous status of capital of the Black World. With its provision of literary art and music, the Harlem Renaissance established a new period in African-American cultural history.

After the legal end of the institution of slavery with the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, Radical Reconstruction, beginning in 1867, became the governmental tool for transforming the South and repositioning freed slaves within this new national identity. The new generation of black Americans took full advantage of the reconstructed South in political, social, and economic arenas. Women, in particular, who had been key participants in the abolitionist movement, expanded their roles during Reconstruction to include leadership, administrative, and political involvement. As the government-supported Reconstruction ended in 1877, black Americans in both the South and north were presented with a legal sense of citizenship with the Fourteenth Amendment (1868), along with the Fifteenth Amendment (1870), which gave black men the right to vote.

Black women were bound by racism and further defined and limited by over sexualized gender stereotypes and perceived limited intellectual abilities. As they became more of a presence in the work force, family and women's place in the home was impacted by their evolving identity. Many black women were marrying later and having fewer children, and the issue of their sexuality was a key focus, particularly in how it related to the "Cult of True Womanhood," a Western Christian perspective of the role of women in society (*Giddings 1984, 137*). This concept required submission and dependence, while the survival of the black woman, and her family and community required participation, leadership, and independence.

This limited vision has fortunately shifted. Harlem Renaissance is gradually seen through a broader prism, which identifies it as a regional phenomenon with links to foreign art and culture trends, which highlights the non-literary facets of this phenomenon and inevitably puts greater focus on women's involvement at the core of the movement. The present Chapter will be devoted to profile the black women literature of Harlem Renaissance and to show where they did stand in Harlem.

1. Profiling Black Female Literature of the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance was historically considered as Harlem-focused literary movement that arose as the first black metropolis from the Black migration and the rise of Harlem. It has historically been seen as a male-dominated phenomenon, while female poets and authors have been accepted as second class talents in general. They were also named male authors — Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Claude McKay and more; other men, such as Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois and Charles S. Johnson, were the promoters, and leaders of the campaign. As a minor novelist, Zora Neale Hurston has been honored slightly, but her part in encouraging the movement was not mentioned much. For half a century after the end of the Renaissance, it was not recognized that Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston had full significance. Briefly, music and theater, more like history and local color, were stated as influenced by poetry and local literature. However, the advances in these areas have not been studied. Art was also primarily debated with Aaron Douglas and his Langston Hughes group, and the other young fire artists. But in 1926, the work of the African American artists was not any research. And the role of women in the world of literature, music and, theatre was much less discussed or evaluated.

The majority of the recognized literary and artistic contributors to the Harlem Renaissance were black males, but black women, motivated yet limited by the expectations of societal

roles were also key players. Some records of women's contributions during the early twentieth century attest to their success, as shown in 1916 publication *Who's Who in Colored America*, which is composed of 131 men and only 8 women, with 124 of the men and all of the women of mixed blood. Women's acknowledged participation in the Harlem Renaissance from an artistic perspective has been explored since that time, but only a portion of the broader picture has been presented and that shows women's roles in the transformation of individual and community concerns within black America. During the Harlem Renaissance era, black women were seen, "more in terms of their femininity, which broke racist and sexist stereotypes of the past, than from a feminist perspective that assumedly reflected a perspective of aggressiveness and male-hating" (*Giddings 1984, 183*). In the midst of this, black women redefined their roles as uneducated and submissive individuals and transformed themselves into partners in the struggle for equal rights and justice. A sense of pride regarding the black woman was presented in major black periodicals of the time, including *Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and particularly the January 1924 issue of *Messenger*, which announces its goal to "show in pictures, as well as writing, Negro women who are unique, accomplished, beautiful, intelligent, industrious, talented, and successful" (*Giddings 1984, 185*).

Although it was and is widely recognized as an unparalleled flowering of black artistic talent that Harlem's Renaissance between the two world wars was reported, it only covered a small number of women's contribution. From 1900 to the end of World War II, the field of African American women writers was almost unexplored. This created a short list with names spread around the masculine; Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen, the information available on the females was not extensive, so, it seemed like they are few. Even, during the Harlem Renaissance, many scholars characterized African-American literature, as a male event, and mentioned women only in passing participation. Nevertheless, a great number of women engaging in activities outside the spotlight are described in Bruce Kellner's *Harlem revival*, a

dictionary for that period. Kellen's book offered biographical sketches on Harlem scenes of female arts promoters.

As more of the stories of forgotten individuals came to light, a remarkably complex and varied picture of women who did not begin publishing until age sixty began to emerge. Most of the writing was published between 1920 and the early 1940s, but earlier work could be seen as a part of a continuous stream of novels, poems, essays, historical accounts, memories, and journalism. It emerged, too, that these enterprising African-American women had formed literary groups in many states and beyond the country's borders as well. Some published their own « little » magazines, while the majority published in the most famous magazines, using those magazines as a sort of national network. All the African-American authors of that period were subject to numerous barriers as racial publishing. The mainstream white publishers, with the exception of those who favored black writing at the Harlem renaissance, were unreceptive, and often the 'race magazines,' especially "Opportunity" and "The Crisis", were the only avenues for literary expressions. More than one hundred women answered the call for work to be submitted to those newspapers, some turned to self-publishing to circumvent the formidable barriers of the conventional discrimination. However, black women writers were confronted to further constraints what Mary Church Terrell called the contributions of black women to the literature of America have not been fully realized, let alone researched or appreciated" black women of the Harlem by Era by Bracks". Since the early twentieth century, African-American women writers have frequently discussed the problem of maintaining healthy human ties between blacks and whites in this specific sense color and sex "double-cross," while black people expected to play a supportive and subordinate role.

Many writers had a widespread interest in African American women's literature, but the focus on such brilliant figures as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks and Maya

Angelou among others had the old effect of making it look as if black women writers had been anomalous as if they had come out of nowhere. In the 1920s, three African American women from various parts of The U.S. assemble on Harlem with optimism and vigor. Neale Zora Hurston moved to New York in 1925 from Washington D.C. Jessie Fauset moved to New York City, in 1919 to work as a writer and became a writer. Crisis literary editor and Dorothy West moved into the city of New York.

Black women writers, most especially Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston, were more visible than visual artists in that period; this also was true of men, the silent films of James Weldon Johnson, Aron Douglas... This has been argued that Fauset and Larsen wanted to make their heroines, "light-complexioned, upper-middle --class black women with taste and refinement."(*Women of the Harlem Renaissance* by Cherly A. Wall) Fauset did not dwell on the "depressing conditions" that most blacks lived in at the turn of the century; like Du Bois, she preferred to emphasize characters that were "trying for a life of meaning and culture" Fauset collaborated closely with Du Bois at the Revolution, and was more than acquainted with his theories of the "Talented Tenth" She was not just a writer, but the poet Langston Hughes pointed out that she was one of the Harlem Renaissance intellectuals. There is ambiguity in her first book, a woman asks a friend to "put up Black sculpture," and her heroine replies: You do not understand that I intend to give up. Not at all, not at all. Yet, I would like to expose the world to us. Naturally, I'm colored, but first American. How do I not refer to America as a whole? "The characters of Larsen were less confident of them than those of Fauset. The two female authors helped, most notably, establish a black female arts culture the woman visual artists represented woman from all life parts of society, from the home staff to the dancer, from the Europeans to the Asians, from the white skinned to the black. They have represented their subjects with respect and dignity, as African American women writers. Artists in both fields pursue Du Bois' definition of society, "every cultural group had to learn

from, and educate every other cultural group." (*Women of the Harlem Renaissance* by Cherly A. Wall) and du Bois tried to characterize the race within a social, cultural and historical context.

Such visual artists decided to change their work."Also, all art is propaganda and must always be, given the puristic wailing, Du Bois urged all Black artists, males, and females alike, to create art that served a purpose. I'm in utter shame to tell that whatever art I write was only used for propaganda to give black people the freedom to live to appreciate. I don't care for any kind of art that is not used for advertising. Yet I am worried that propaganda is concentrated to one hand and the other is stripped and silent."(*Rereading The Harlem Renaissance Race, Class, and Gender in the Fiction of Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, and Dorothy West* by Sharon L. Jones) .Du Bois was not the first academic to understand the role art plays as propaganda. William Pickens, in 1924, gave his opinion on art and propaganda in the black newspaper the Messenger: "Art and Propaganda still do live side by side; for in reality propaganda is the subsoil of which all creativity has grown — religious, ethical, ethnic or class propaganda. Pickens also noticed that art exists with little propaganda, but asked: "There is a great deal of propaganda without art and there is at least a good little deserving art without propaganda, because propaganda is the basis of the greatest arts. We do not deal with an urge. If it is performed in good taste with the right art wear.

Within this list, the artists explored the facets of African culture. Du Bois related the arts of the diaspora in his "Answers of Africa" published in 1926: "The feeling of beauty is Africa's only best gift to the world, the real essence of a black man's soul. African art emerges from the African world, and the Black spirit. Africa's ancient art is still one of man's best words. African American Renaissance artists feel tremendous social responsibility in order to make art while overcoming immense obstacles, equilibrating their difficulties with insufficient preparation, minimal funding and the incredibly high burden of home life. Artists

took this responsibility and pressed on, locked out by a white-controlled culture from the world of art and sometimes brazen by their male peers, separated by "a vest veil" from the artistic community."(*Harlem Renaissance and beyond 1900-1945*). They enlightened the challenges of race and vowed to improve their peoples' spirits. The artists addressed in this movement had long-term proponents of social justice, particularly women's issues. The feeling, happiness and surrounding felt in their daily life played an unprecedented role in society. Du Bois even understood that Western society oppressed black women: "Our black women have been scornful in their freedom. We do have our misery and humiliation, our lewdness and our grievous labor, but we do have a huge number of Black women who, because of their strength of character, their spirit integrity, their unselfish devotion, today are comfortably peers to any group of women in the developed world. These women artists spoke about the challenges of their race, including racist injustice and African American violence: lynching, torture, bigotry. They discussed issues of war, politics, voting rights, education, family and maternity. It succeeded in an environment familiar to white women, not helping women who had a family and a job.

While the arrival of Fauset Hurston and Dorothy West did not garner the attention, one could argue that the longstanding effects of their entrance into the Harlem scene would have even more powerful ramifications from their diligence at challenging stereotypes of race, class, and gender in the literary expression, which laid a foundation for contemporary African American women writers such as Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, and Alice Walker. Not only does their work reveal the complexities of tripartite race, class, and gender relations, but their lives and the challenges they faced as writers all call attention to the double jeopardy of being black and female in pre-Civil Rights Movement America as they forged ahead in their desire to rewrite the American literary landscape.

While Hurston, for instance, was called a folk literature writer, she wanted more diversity of African-American representations in literature. "The realistic story about the official, dentist, general practitioner, businessman and the like in Negro is most telling," said Hurston (1995). (*Harlem Renaissance and beyond 1900-1945*). While the black bourgeoisie often describes Jessie Fauset in its 1921 meeting, Blacks from different parts of Africa attended the conference with the intention of linking up their shared concerns. She advocated a proletarian aesthetic as she supports black solidarity in "Pressions from the Second Pan-African Congress." Fauset (1995) wrote of the conference: "A common oppressor's rod made him feel his own community of blood, necessities and problem" While Hurston was labeled a folk literary writer, it called for more diversity in African-American representations in the literary arts. In the same vein, West, because of the affluent childhood of a businessman, has been often described as the epitome of successful upbringing, "the most telling thing would be the true story of a Negro insurance agent, dentist, general practitioner and like-minded. She says: "Others claim that these Blacks in Martha's Vineyard has come to predetermine the achievements from the world. No, the benefit of their forebears was that they were born out of slavery with a deep desire to repay time lost, and few descendants allowed their momentum to fall "(West 1995: 242). Her remarks indicate that the black people's bourgeoisie blurred lines because they have a common origin. Furthermore, West's remarks reflect a proletarian mentality that evokes the importance of understanding African Americans' obstacles to achieve the American Dream. In order to cross the racial class and sexual barriers which faced the artists and the publishers, Fauset, Hurston, and the West tried to censor them, they fought against narrow-mindedness and bigotry. Hurston, West, and Fauset attempted to give a multidimensional and nuanced view of the reality of African American art through a comprehensive handling of narrative technique, symbolization, imagery and topics, rather than the monolithic one-dimensional depictions of black life. However, their plays reflect an

interpretation and a re-configuration that has resurrected in African American literature throughout the Harlem Renaissance and elsewhere, the three aesthetics: the folk, the bourgeois and the proletarian.

African Renaissance American writers tend to be identified as referring exclusively to one of the above-mentioned three categories. As a result, the development and reception of works by these authors influenced binary views between critics, about which style constituted authentic African American literature. Before and during their lives, the misreading of the texts of these authors struggled against their critical recognition and gave birth to little news outlets. Perhaps notably, the stereotypes surrounding "proper" aesthetics for African American writers at the time, they published also influenced their critical reception and as a result contributed to the canonization of African American writers who appeared to represent the folk aesthetics, and the devaluation of the authors that brought to mind the capitalist or proletarian aesthetics.

The women artists of the Harlem Renaissance were on a mission of truth telling, of reclaiming a lost history, of dealing directly with issue of memory and identity, issues that denied their race, and their gender. Their legacy would provide the groundwork for the artists of the civil rights era and beyond.

2. The Black Female Position into the Harlem

African American artists tried during the Harlem Renaissance to promote each other and improve the race in a celebration and expression of Black culture. Women artists have had very little help in this project, in most cases even in the workplace, seeking to strike the equilibrium of the single obligation. Several of the women who chronicle their creative lives here were educators, who replied to the call to educate other aspiring artists. As Du Bois, women artists knew deeply that their subjects had to lift the masses. This goal may be

supported by reflective, fair African Americans coverage. But most black visual artists did not represent African themes in their work prior to the Harlem Renaissance. For many reasons they avoided it, especially since White employers had no interest in such issues. In the meantime, it was a long process to build a large market of black middle class workers to support such activities.

In seeking their identity, black women also envisioned their roles as integral to the community, while at the same time not determined by obligation or economics. With potential access to political power through the vote for women, black women intensified their efforts to confront negative factors in every aspect of their lives. Their roles within and beyond the church became even more crucial, as family and faith were the defense against a segregated, violent, and hypocritical American legal and social system. White women who often rejected blacks as equal participants in the struggle for rights had many who “broke ranks” and offered aid, new perspectives, and creative opportunities during the twentieth century. Black women recognized particularly through the suffrage movement that their participation in the vote could help ensure community well-being and thus familial progress and safety. The vote was the only way to secure their voice to obtain economic opportunities, since most were in menial jobs that were part of a growing movement of unionization to secure equal pay. The organization House of Ruth declared that because black women were primarily wage earners, they needed the vote for protection. This was combined with the fact that black male voters had been terrorized and tortured to eliminate their vote. With the end of World War I in 1918, and the return of white males to the work force, by 1919, black men and women had to struggle for employment of any kind to make a decent living.

The national reform movement, which advocated and offered birth control for all women challenged the narrowness of women’s lives and further impacted the roles of women. By 1918, the Women’s Political Association of Harlem, New York, offered the first open lectures

to black women regarding birth control, along with many other organizations and groups who would later follow their lead. In spite of this, the debate in the black community was waged regarding birth control as impacting community survival, racism, and sexual exploitation. As women sought ownership of their bodies and opportunities to enrich their minds, others challenged this as race suicide and an attack on the traditional roles of women, as voiced by such anti feminist figures as Kelly Miller, dean of Howard University (*Hine, Hine, and Harrold 2003, 129*). It took until almost the 1930s for this reform movement to secure a prominent place in the black community and be operated by the black community. Black women maintained their roles as activists and advocates, a reflection of African cultural traditions in defiance of masculine Western Christianity and culture, and encouraged a feminist perspective and the idea of the New Negro premise of “self-respect and self-dependence” (*Locke 2004, 985*). Middle-class women promoted women’s voices in the home and the work force through such organizations as the National Association of Colored Women, which, by the mid1920s, had nearly 200,000 members. As more and more women had to work low paying and largely domestic jobs, much of their individual gains were secondary to the need to resist poverty.

The Negro woman has become freer from barbaric household problems and grotesque types of physical and racial subjection than elsewhere. In this situation, her forces in the academic and economic areas of the big city are considerably calculated. The Negro woman was visualized in Harlem. First, there was an exceedingly small community of amused men-wives and daughters of men in industry, careers, and in some well-paid jobs in personal service, second highly engaged egalitarian community-women in business and careers. Fourthly, a group of weighty numbers struggling with the economic temperament of the time, with even less fortunate fringe of casual workers.

The first is an attractive category that can be observed, chosen for its exterior attractiveness by Negro men with an attitude that is pretty much the same as many Americans of the same ethnic status who keep their women free from ruling over their households. These ladies were influenced by the concerns of their wife's mother but were still twinkled by their races. Black wives find black maids generally not willing to work in their neighborhoods, for several reasons they do not want to work where there is a chance that they are met while they are on duty, and still have a misconception that Black people of any station cannot pay as many as people of the other race. The privilege of well-established homes, respectable cars, tennis courts and golf and country clubs, visits to Europe and California make it socially trendy. The difficulty of reassuring to the raffins of the Negro family is that it is harder to consider those with the same accomplishment. The two second groups characterize a spirit of stress and struggle. These businesses, professional and business women are central to progress. Their burden is double. Many women and mothers whose husbands have been underpaid, or who succumbed to social adaptation and abandoned their families faced the huge challenge of leaving home every day and, at the same time, of rehabilitating children in their spare time, in districts where there are large rents, high and expensive levels of clothes and leisure and rising social harm.

New York City's wonderful business life is just mildly influenced by our second black lady. Businessmen from Black countries offer most of their jobs, but their work is limited but black girls are educated and some hold outstanding jobs. Still, these women show their worth, so that when there are vacancy excises and a call, one competent, colored secretary who is not employed is difficult to find. The opportunities become more optimistic during the less busy working holidays. The Negro woman depends on herself and her own occupation in these areas; successful female practitioners have typically served through college and "business," in

the civil, dental, medical, and nursing sectors, on the small fees that can be given to the underpaid public.

The Black women in business have equally serious competition problems in her work field when she closes the door to her household anxieties. However, she has long established herself in dressmaking between helpers and finishing workers. In recent years, several Negro women were themselves owners of shops of the biggest fashion district of the country among draperies and fitter in some of the best factories. The talent and experience of the Negro woman is recognized in the field of commerce. From what was said, it is evident that Negro women were of a race not free politically, socially, or spiritually, even in the city of New York.

3. Conclusion

Very little serious critical attention has been directed toward the creative energy and expertise of that large body of black women who have provided the matrix for much of what is classic; what is significant, what is nurturing in the field of African-American literature. They were relatively few in number, included such brilliant and prominent figures Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset. More black women were visible during the 1950s and 1960s, but male writers clearly dominated the field.

The Harlem women artists were on a quest to the reality, to recover a lost past, to address the problems of memory and identity, to deny their race and gender. Their legacy would form the basis of the artists in and beyond the age of civil rights.

Chapter III: The Exclusion of Women's Contributions from the Literary Canon

Introduction

During more than two centuries of slavery, it had been a legal crime for blacks to read and write. Being a black writer was an ennobling exigency, and black literature constituted one among the supreme enrichment of black culture and black life. This has been and is the burden as well as the heritage and therefore, the legacy of each Black who takes up the pen within the US. There was a significant period in the US which was known as the “Harlem Renaissance” or “the New Negro movement” that transformed Literature, critical writing, music, theater, musical theater, and the visual arts as well as affected politics, social development, and almost every aspect of the African American experience. In his 2010’s *Harlem Renaissance: Encyclopaedia of African American History*, Christopher Buck writes:

[...] Harlem Renaissance was the fairest fruit of the New Negro movement, whose mission it was to bring about racial renewal through cultural diplomacy. The Harlem Renaissance was not only a golden age of African American arts but a valiant effort to remove the masks of racial stereotypes to put a new face on African Americans. ...it not only improved race relations somewhat... but instilled a racial pride and nobility among African Americans whose lives the Harlem Renaissance touched (795)

The era of Harlem Renaissance is significantly highlighted by works of male writers such as Hughes, Alain Locke, Claude Mackey and others who defined as the pioneers of this artistic movement, but magnificent products by Zora Neale Hurston along with other works of

writers and poets such as Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset, who are few names which marked the period, have been only recognized after several years by anthologists and critics. In other words, “the cultural producers who made up the Harlem Renaissance truly changed America, and their influence was felt throughout the world. However, women's contributions to this era have been dramatically overlooked” (*Tracy* 82).

Therefore, the exclusion of black women's texts from the canon and mainly from the canon of this movement's literature raises a wide range of questions among literary scholars concerning the reasons for that suppression or what they call "burial of women's writing in general" (*Lorraine xii*). Accordingly, the primary purpose of this part is to shed light on black women writers whose works were produced during the Harlem Renaissance and to find out and explore why the majority of black female and feminist works were overlooked, marginalized and excluded from the academic sphere and numbers among were ignored and unrecognized and neglected.

1- The main causes of Woman's Exclusion

There was a mean irony and a downright shame that the led's authors and gate-keepers of African-American Literature have historically ignored, belittled and suppressed the ladies authors and therefore, the works they need to produce. Historically, the line of the racial struggle within the US has been drawn exclusively as a struggle between the lads of the races. Everything having to do with race has been defined and counter-defined by the lads as an issue of whether black people were or weren't a race of Men.

Traditionally, the planet of Black Literature within the US has been a world of black men's literature. The “fathers” and purveyors of black writing are men. There are no recognized “mothers” of black literature. From the eighteenth-century manuscript of Olaudah

Equiano to Alex Haley's *Roots*, the narrative works receiving the foremost attention are authored by men. From Jubiter Hammon's "Address to the Negroes of the State of New York" to the "I Have a Dream" speech by Luther King, the remembered quotations, essays, polemics and scholarly writings are authored by men. The male authors have portrayed male heroes and male protagonists almost exclusively, and therefore, the complexity and vitality of black female experiences are fundamentally ignored.

Black women are involved within the development of Afro-American writing since its inception, yet no pre-twentieth century black women writers are treated as major contributors to the history of black literature. Despite women writers like Georgia Douglas Johnson, Anne Spencer, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Dorothy West; Helena Johnson, and others, it has been almost impossible to read the critical works, and general history of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and obtain any impression aside from that the "New Negroes" who were entirely of the male sex. The sole females to receive substantial recognition was Zora Neale Hurston-but only as an "oddball" eccentric who wrote folktales and ran around measuring Negroes' heads. Until recently Hurston's most vital books, "Their Eyes Were Watching God and *Jonah's Gourd Vine*" were neglected. Despite the legacy of these double standards—lack of equal reward for equal work—black women, like black men, continued to write throughout Depression years on into the 1960s. But unlike men, a number of whom rose to heights of literary dominance, the ladies received the standard secondary treatment. The same situation has prevailed regarding the works of other black women writers whose female protagonists stand as timeless samples of the autonomous humanity of their sex, such as the transplanted West Indian women in Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, Merle Kinbona in Marshall's *The Chosen Place, The Timeless people*, Mariah Upshur in Sarah Wright's *This Child's A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Vyry* in Margaret Walker's

Jubilee, the first contemporary slave-narrative novel. (*Calvin C. Hernton in his book The Sexual Mountain and Black Women Writers.*)

While numerous black writers, in particular poets, were present in the 1960s, chauvinism¹ continued to prevail within the black literary world. Nevertheless, the unequal representation and treatment of women authors became more strongly reflected than ever in the Black Arts movement of the 1960s. "Women's prone role is the only location inside the revolution! "Seven feet behind the men is a female location! "These precepts were frequently expressed in the writings, and deeds of the males of the amount. In reality, Black men have described themselves traditionally as the primary interpreters of the black experience. They have defined the goals, drawn up the plans and tried to enforce the rules.

Many incidents have given rise to the resentful feelings of Black men against Black women authors. Black women authors asserted their sovereignty like never before. Writers of Black women were gaining equal control over other black women. In areas of American society and culture that had previously been closed to women, Black writers made their lives known and seen. Black women writers were eventually remembered by white literary forces.

The reality about black men's aggressive approach to black women authors is that they interplayed the woman's new thrust as a "counter advantage" for the historical purpose of the black battle. Obviously, while black men have been distinguished in the history of black writing, black women have not accused the men of collaborating with the enemy to reverse race progress. In the sixties, white people praised all black male authors. Black men wrote a lot about the "castrating" black woman; they felt good about that. Unless however, black women said that black men were the castrations of Black people, and oppressors of Black women of all ages, and the whole of black women were accused that they were sowing, 'splits'

*1 Chauvinism : an attitude of superiority toward members of the opposite sex

in black cultures, and black women were accused of fostering animosities, not in the black communities.

Black male authors, for example, banded and wrote in fighting for the male hood of black people about the camaraderie, rivalry and fraternity. It is regarded by men as an individual and fit. However, when black women write about struggles, joys, difficulties, and the fight for self-esteem of Black women, the women are called, "feminists" by black people.

Hence, no matter how original, beautiful and formidable the works of black women writers might be, if such works bear the slightest criticism of black men, and if the women receive recognition from other women and especially from the white literary establishment—if such be the case, black men become "offended." (*Calvin C. Hernton*). They do not act as if the annals of black literature have added some value. Rather, they act as if something is deduced not only from the literature but from the whole race. Specifically, men feel that something has been taken away from them.

These black women writers of Harlem wrote both as 'black' and 'women' and many addressed the issue of 'race' and 'gender' inequalities. Their literary works share a theme that identifies and speaks to black women's spirit as Lisa Jones put it: "a Black woman is like bulletproof diva, whose sense of dignity and self cannot be denied; who though she may live in a war zone, goes out every day greased, pressed and dressed... she has the lip and nerve and she uses that lip and nerve to raise herself and the world" (*Lisa Jones 3*)

It is supposed that the neglect of women writers "raises the questions concerning the crucial connection between the politics and economics of publishing and the course of women writers' careers – which of their books get printed, how long those books are allowed to remain in print and why many of them disappear as if they had never been written" (*qt. Lorraine xii*). Lorraine adds that: "those women writers were born before 1915, their writing

introduced to the public during such period publications as *Opportunity*, *Crisis*, *Black Opals*, *Saturday Evening Quill*, *Messenger*, and *Palms*, or in significant period anthologies" (xiv).

Essentially, from previous information and critics' comments on these feminist writings, there were many critics and scholars, some claiming the negligence of the many female writing and others suggesting the reasons why they and their works were ignored. For instance, women were dominant in Blues but they were ignored from academic studies. Tracy J. Prince in an article entitled "The Harlem Renaissance" which appears in *History in Dispute, volume 3: American Social and Political Movements, 1800-111451 Pursuit of Progress*, wrote "In blues contributions to the Harlem Renaissance, women predominated, yet they were often overlooked by academic critics. Even though they were the first to record the blues and were routinely named as some of the most important blues artists, black women have been ignored in many studies of the blues (82).

Moreover, much of those black women poets and writers' central focus is 'women' and racial gender. Erlene Stetson gives another reason why black women writers, in particular, have been overlooked and marginalized in the literary canon: "description of the massive oppression [black women] have experienced do not support the white myths of American life" Hence, concerning poetry, many female poets used blues and jazz trope in their poetry. Thus, critics of Harlem Renaissance women's poetry often lament the lack of reflection of the decade's blossoming presence of blues and jazz in women's verse. In her comparison of the contribution of literary and blues women, Wall observe:

[...] the Renaissance produced more versifiers than poets, and a large number of these were women. No woman rivaled the achievement of Langston Hughes or Countee Cullen. Only in music did women and men share equal billing; Bessie Smith's reputation is as lustrous as that of any artist of the period. The twenties marked the heyday of classic blues singers, all of whom were female. Free of the

burdens of an alien tradition, a Bessie Smith could establish the standard of her art; in the process, she would compose more honest poetry than any of her literary sisters. They lacked the connection to those cultural traditions which shaped Smith's art. (75)

Additionally, the problem of the double audiences could serve as a reason why many female writers were unrecognized. James Weldon Johnson wrote on this conflict:

The Afro-American author faces a special problem which the plain American author knows nothing about—the problem of the double audience. It is more than a double audience; it is a divided audience, an audience made up of two elements with differing and often opposite and antagonistic points of view. His audience is always both White American and Black American. The moment a Negro writer takes up his pen or sits down to his typewriter he is immediately called upon to solve, consciously or unconsciously, this problem of the double audience. To whom shall he address himself, to his Black group or White America? Many a Negro writer has fallen, as it were, between these two stools (247)

Furthermore, another reason is the issue of publication when Black women did not have control of the institution that could print their work. But, there was no lack of intellect, imagination, and energy among Black women. They continued to write in their poetic tradition. At the movement's zenith, women were publishing poems in the era's popular small magazines. Crystal Lucky explains how this fact was 'etched out of the collective Harlem Renaissance memory':

“There were, without doubt, more women publishing during the 1920s in Harlem who, for various reasons, were not being included in male-edited anthologies. Because of

their exclusion from the Black mainstream vehicles, their works were relegated to even more marginalized journals and poorly distributed publications”. (*Ann Ried* 7)

Black writers were dependent on whites to voice their works. Because of their relationships with White patrons and publishers, Harlem Renaissance writers became the victim to harsh accusations about their work's authenticity and contribution to racial progress. The problem became further compounded as women writers and poets sought to create literature that spoke to gender-specific matters.

2. Selected female writers of Harlem Renaissance

Hence, this research provides a brief biography for each female writer or poet that is previously mentioned [Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset] as it gives critical perception for them.

2-1 Jessie Fauset (1882-1961)

I can remember when I was a little, young girl, how my old mammy would sit out of doors in the evenings and look up at the stars and groan, and I would say, "Mammy, what makes you groan so?" And she would say, "I am groaning to think of my poor children; they do not know where I will be and I don't know where they be. I look up at the stars and they look up at the stars!"-
Sojourner Truth-

Jessie Fauset was born in Camden County, New Jersey, on April 27, 1882. She was an editor, writer, poet, and essayist. In 1912, she began to write for *The Crisis* that founded by W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois hired Fauset to be the magazine's literary editor in 1919. In this role, she encouraged many Harlem Renaissance writers. Fauset published several novels known for their portrayal of middle-class African American life, including *There Is Confusion* and *Plum Bun*. She also edited *The Brownies' Book*, a periodical for African

American children, from 1920 to 1921. Fauset left *The Crisis* in 1926 to teach French at a high school in the Bronx. She married Herbert Harris, a businessman, in 1929, and they lived together in New Jersey until his death in 1958. Fauset then returned to Philadelphia, where she lived until her death on April 30, 1961. Much of Fauset's work addressed the issue of women.

I think I see her sitting bowed and black,
Stricken and seared with slavery's mortal scars,
Reft of her children, lonely, anguished, yet
Still looking at the stars.

Symbolic mother, we thy myriad sons,
Pounding our stubborn hearts on Freedom's bars,
Clutching our birthright, fight with faces set,
Still visioning the stars!

-Oriflamme-

Jessie Fauset's poem "Oriflamme" would be her first published in *The Crisis* after joining the staff in 1925. Fauset in These verses depicted an enslaved black woman who was separated from her children and become alone, "yet, Still looking at the stars", could serve as a symbol of the black woman writer herself. The poem represents motives, ideologies, gendered and marginalized relationships that arguably represent the driving force behind the Harlem Renaissance. It also represents the spirit of universalism represented with the knowing and empathetic "we," and the collective gaze toward something better, brighter, toward the "stars." as well as the poem includes another trope that is an often overlooked component of

the movement by critics both within and beyond the era which is the trope of Black motherhood.

Her poem share many traits with other women's poetry of the era, much of which is concerned with analyzing, challenging and reconstructing racial uplift's one dimensional, superficial characterization of Black motherhood as a solid, unflinching force. Accordingly, this poem is indicative of the work Harlem Renaissance women poets were doing to articulate their individualized disillusionment with their respective marginalization and to define, for themselves, their unique gendered role in the burgeoning race movement of uplift. The intersectional trope of motherhood would prove an effective and creative tool for women poets to broaden the parameters of their representation and resistance.

2.2. Georgia Douglas Johnson (1880–1966)

Poet, playwright, musician, fiction writer, mother, and wife, Johnson was one of the most prolific members of the movement. She is the most productive woman poet of the Harlem Renaissance, publishing three volumes of poems between 1918 and 1938 at a time where few women published one volume. Johnson was born in Atlanta, Georgia, to parents of African American, Native American, and English descent. She graduated from Atlanta University Normal College and studied music at the Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland College of Music. After graduation, she taught and worked as an assistant principal. In 1910 she moved with her husband to Washington, D.C. When her husband died in 1925, Johnson supported her two sons by working temporary jobs until she was hired by the Department of Labor. Johnson published her first poems in 1916 in the *Crisis*. Her weekly column, “*Homely Philosophy*,” was published from 1926 to 1932. She wrote numerous plays, including *Blue Blood* (performed 1926) and *Plumes* (performed 1927). Johnson traveled widely in the 1920s

to give poetry readings. In 1934 she lost her job in the Department of Labor and returned to supporting herself with temporary clerical work. (*Poetry Foundation*)

The infant's eyes look out amazed upon the frowning earth,
A stranger, in a land now strange, child of the mantled-birth;

Waxing, he wonders more and more; the scowling grows apace;
A world, behind its barring doors, reviles his ebon face:

Yet from this maelstrom issues forth a God-like entity,
That loves a world all loveless, and smiles on Calvary!

Johnson also wrote short stories, one-act plays, and songs, her reputation rests on poetry as she was the most anthologized woman poet in the New Negro movement. Claudia Tate sheds light on the poet's placement in the Harlem Renaissance: "Neither a subscriber to Victorian ideology nor a fully modern woman, Johnson stood between those of the generation who understood sex as the husband's conjugal right, race as fixed and poetry as sedate, speculative wonder on one extreme, and those of the next generation who assumed sexual liberty, fluid racial identities and poetic sensibility of social activism on the other."

Johnson's poetry, like other women's poetry of the era, presents a speaker confounded in her role to raise a "mantled" child. The word "mantled," meaning "cloaked in darkness," is a theme that reappears in much of her poetry. Her poem "One of the Least of These, My Little One" renders an example of this theme in her work. While the mother speaker is not explicitly present in the lines of Johnson's poem, it is she who is capable of viewing the world through both the weariness of the oppressed and the innocence of an infant.

2.3. Alice Dunbar-Nelson

Alice Dunbar-Nelson was a poet, playwright, journalist, and political activist. During the war, she was the only black woman to serve on the Women's Committee of the Council of Defence (organizing women's groups and supporting women's war efforts), and she was active in the Circle of Negro War Relief, establishing a local chapter to assist black soldiers and their families (*Behind their lines*). Her poem "I sit and sew" by Alice Dunbar-Nelson discusses the torment and worthlessness felt by a woman in a predominately male society. One mutual similarity in the two poems is the discussion of suffering oppression. The poem deals with gender oppression.

I sit and sew – a useless task it seems,
My hands grew tired, my head weighed down with dreams –
The panoply of war, the martial tread of men,
Grim-faced, stern-eyed, gazing beyond the ken
Of lesser souls, whose eyes have not seen Death,
Nor learned to hold their lives but as a breath –
But – I must sit and sew.

I Sit and Sew' is a three-stanza poem that is divided into sets of seven lines. Within each stanza the reader will notice that the poet has chosen to repeat the title of the poem, "*I sit and sew*." This short phrase acts as a refrain and mimics the speaker's circling, obsessive thoughts about her place in the world. The poem describes a narrator's deep desire to leave the world of sewing she is confined to and help those who are struggling for their lives all over the world. It begins with the speaker stating that her hands and head have grown tired of the task she is forced to, sewing. This is her lot in life as a woman, and society would not allow her to set off, as she will describe she wants to, and help those in need. She dreams, when her mind allows it, of the "panoply of war" and of all those who fight and suffer within it. She sees the

fallen men and those who have defeated their enemies. This is a world that she longs for; she wants to know something of real life.

In 1920, Dunbar-Nelson's lengthy essay "Negro Women in War Work" appeared in *Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War*. Her essay describes how "Into this maelstrom of war activity the women of the Negro race hurled themselves joyously. They asked no odds, remembered no grudges, and solicited no favors, pleaded for no privileges. They came by the thousands, hands opened wide to give of love and service and patriotism" (375). Dunbar-Nelson acknowledges:

The problem of the woman of the Negro race was a peculiar one (377)...There were separate regiments for Negro soldiers; should there be separate organizations for relief work among Negro women? If she joined relief organizations, such as the Red Cross Society, and worked with them, would she be assured that her handiwork would reach black hands on the other side of the world, or should she be great-hearted and give her service, simply for the sake of giving, not caring who was to be benefited? (378)

The poem "I Sit and Sew" testifies to the complex intersections of gender and race in America. In the conclusion to her essay "Negro Women and War Work," Dunbar-Nelson praises black women not only for their war service but also for their persistent hope in the face of discrimination.

2.4. Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960)

Zora Neale Hurston was a writer and was a fixture of the Harlem Renaissance and she was also an outstanding folklorist and anthropologist who recorded cultural history, as illustrated

by her *Mules and Men*. Hurston died in poverty in 1960, before a revival of interest led to posthumous recognition of her accomplishments (*Biography*). She is best known for her masterwork *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), a novel which recounts the story of Janie Mae Crawford, who learns the value of self-reliance through multiple marriages and tragedy. In her novel, Hurston portrays a “woman's position in black rural society and explores the development of women's sexuality and society's reaction to her decisions. Hurston's picture of a rural black Southern community is one in which a woman's quest for sexual fulfillment is a struggle, but she is probably freer to pursue her desires there than had she lived in much of white America” (*Tracy* 82).

When *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was originally released, it wasn't particularly popular amongst the African American community. Much of the little attention the novel initially received was negative criticism made primarily by male writers of the Harlem Renaissance period. What may be the most significant, and certainly the harshest, of these criticisms came from author Richard Wright who wrote a review of the novel in *New Masses* an American Marxist Magazine. Wright claimed that the problem wasn't that Hurston couldn't write, but rather that she intentionally chose to oversimplify and distort the character of African Americans in a way which he thought pandered to racist white audiences. Alain Locke, Hurston's mentor, contributed a briefer 1938 review that acknowledged Hurston's talent for writing but still criticized her supposed oversimplification of African American characters (*Awkward*).

On one hand, Georgia Douglas Johnson and Alice Dunbar Nelson remain among the most anthologized. But through obligatory reproductions of a select few poems, surprisingly little has been done to explore the significance and merit of Harlem Renaissance women's poetry. Dunbar-Nelson has usually been taught--if at all--as a very minor female poet of the Harlem

Renaissance, partly because of that period's notoriety and also because only a few of her poems have been available.

On the other hand, Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston were the prominent female writers but they were seen as minor in front of their male counterpart as Tracy argues that The writers Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset, for example, were marginalized by both their gender and their biracial identities. Zora Neale Hurston's work faded away from the academic eye, despite her status during the Harlem Renaissance. Hurston worked as an ethnographer, traveling throughout the South and collecting folk stories. At the time of publication her books were often denigrated for not focusing on the "Negro Problem," but Hurston did write about this issue. The difference was that she focused on women.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, The Harlem Renaissance was certainly as female as it was male. Scholars such as Tate, Honey, Davis, Hull, and Wall have made significant strides toward including women into canonical discussions of Renaissance studies. Accordingly, there were many anthologies and academic productions that emerge to revive and recognize those ignored females and reprint their works. For example, "Gerda Lerner's *Black Women in White America* (1973), James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin's *Black Women in 19th Century American Life* (1976), Erlene Stetson's *Black Sister* (1981), Dorothy Sterling's *We Are Your Sisters* (1984), William Andrew's *Sisters of The Spirit* (1986), and Mary Helen Washington's *invented lives* (1987)" (Lorraine xiv).

General Conclusion

This extended research paper has tackled African-American literature which began with slave narratives of the pre-revolutionary era with an emphasis on freedom and abolition of slavery. Then the Reconstruction period that was characterized by the Civil War until 1919, the works of that era mirrored the socio political atmosphere focusing on themes such as segregation, lynching, migration and the women's suffrage movement. By the 1920s, it was a birth of new age, the Harlem Renaissance, or the New Negro Movement as Alain Locke named it or the "flowering of Negro literature" as James Weldon Johnson called it. In short, the Harlem renaissance with its flourishing literature, art, music, defined a new era not in African American literature only but in a new age in African American cultural history.

Moreover, Black women in African American literature struggled hard to alter the stereotyped roles assigned to them by the society. The works and texts of the slavery, subjection objectification inspired the Black women to make an inclusion for black freedom. It additionally constrained them to go up against and challenge negative stereotypes of black womanhood. African American writers brought up looking through issues about African-American identity. Interestingly enough, African American culture has created in the course of recent decades the opportunity to the voices of African-Americans to be heard. African-American writings were composed during this period as endeavours to make a more multifaceted and different America.

Furthermore, the 1920s and mid-1930s was an incredible and productive time for black artists and their literary, visual, and melodic renderings in Harlem and other urban black networks all through the United States. Harlem was so dynamic and inconsistent segment, political, and social change that it is as though Harlem was a world into itself. People of colour and (men and women) could dream long for greatness and investigate their creative sensibilities. The incredible movement of Harlem Renaissance got enormous quantities of black people and families who experienced strict and severe conditions, a constrained satisfactory

lodging stock, and attendant social and medical issues. As a political development, the Harlem Renaissance neglected to meet the desires for their most vocal supporters. But as a literary movement, Harlem Renaissance authors impacted the ages of white and dark journalists in the United States and all throughout the world.

Therefore, from the previous discussion of the three chapters, the Harlem Renaissance period should then be defined as twentieth-century African American man and woman who is harmfully mindful of historical oppression and discrimination, in an erroneous portrayal, and shameful prohibition from American foundations. Harlem Renaissance artists fought against the society's powerlessness to invite them benevolently as skilful and meriting individuals. They had an illuminated comprehension of their race and looked to teach their partners with regards to the advancement of another Black stylish and political perfect world in America. Inside these convincing thoughts of Black Identity, Black Consciousness and Black Pride, African-Americans would participate in those undertakings that would keep alive their convictions in themselves and their past as a part of their desires and hopes for the future.

To be emphasized, Harlem renaissance has become a vigorous subject which in some extents is more difficult to be defined when it comes into the consideration of women as central figures as their counterpart's males to the movement. Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Jessie Fauset and Neale Zora Hurston, are few names who wrote and published some major fiction and poems even before World War I such as Fauset, and all of Hurston novels and of that several female authors were published after the Great Depression. These black female authors were selected as examples in this study to show how even they were significant participants among many talents in the New Negro movement and how they received insufficient or no recognition during this period.

Notwithstanding, the causes that led the black women's contribution to the Harlem renaissance to be ignored and overlooked are firstly their central focus was always womanhood, the second is the problem of double consciousness that had created contradictions

and fragmentations of the text of whether they wrote for white or black audiences, the third problem is that many female poets used the trope of jazz and blues, and may be their misuse of them has created the lack of contents, and finally, the issue of publication which was either in the hands of White male or Black male publishers.

To end with, one can advance that while male authors contributed individually, and each approached the problem of black literature from a personal perspective, the female writers mainly wrote about their common issue of oppression and otherness as women, thus adding a missing literary flavour that reflected not only female issues but also female black issues too.

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Appendices

Countee Cullen

Countee Cullen was born Countee Leroy porter on May 30, 1903. He was probably born in Louisville, Kentucky, although both NY City and Baltimore are cited as his birthplace. Orphaned in childhood, he was raised by a Mrs. Porter, who was probably his grandmother. In his teens he was adopted by African Methodist Episcopal church minister Fredrick Asbury Cullen and his wife Carolyn, who encouraged Countee to write down. Cullen's poetry was already seeing regular publication by the time he graduated from NY university in 1925. His first book, *Color*, appeared that same year; Cullen won the Harmon Gold award and important praise for his Keatsian verse, and his frank depiction of racial prejudice.

Cullen received an M.A. from Harvard in 1926, and then became assistant editor of the national Urban League journal *Opportunity*. In 1927, he published the acclaimed *Copper Sun* and therefore, the *Ballad of the Brown Girl*, and edited *Caroling Dusk*, a historic anthology of labor by black poets. The subsequent year he married Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W.E.B. Du Bois, and traveled to Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship. Yolande filed for divorce before he returned; their relationship inspired the tortured love poetry of *The Black Christ and Other Poems* 1929.

Back within the US, Cullen published a completely unique of life in Harlem, *One Way to Heaven* 1932, and a verse adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* 1935. From 1932 to 1945 Cullen settled into a teaching position at a junior high school in NY City. In 1940, he married Ida Mae Roberson and published children's book of verse entitled *The Lost Zoo (Arhyme for the Young, but not Too Young)*, sharing the bylines together with his pet, Christopher Cat. Two years later he published a prose work for youngsters, *My Lives, and the way I Last Them* 1942, which alleged to be Christopher's autobiography. Cullen authored and coauthored variety of

plays, most of which weren't published; his own selection of his best poems was published posthumously as *On These I Stand: An Anthology of the simplest Poems of Countee Cullen* 1947. Countee Cullen died on January 9, 1946.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born within the village of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on February 23, 1868. His father, Alfred, was born in Haiti, and after a stint within the Union Army settled within the Berkshires, where he met and married Mary Burghardt, a descendant of a slave brought from West Africa. However, Alfred Du Bois drifted far away from the family, and never returned to his wife and son. Du Bois's mother, crippled by depression and a stroke, raised her son with the help of her brother and sisters. Du Bois graduated from high school with honors and delivered a speech on the abolition of slavery. However, due to financial difficulties, Du Bois attended Fisk University rather than Harvard, his first choice. Du Bois later took his master's at Harvard, although by then he had shed most of his illusions about the university. He attended classes taught by George Santayana and James, and developed an in depth relationship with the University of Berlin to review. Although he had a deep distrust of orthodox religion, he nevertheless secured an edge at the African Methodist Wilberforce College in Xenia, Ohio, and published his dissertation for Harvard, *The Suppression of The African Slave-Trade to the United Sates of America, 1638-1870*(1896). He then accepted an edge to review the black neighborhoods of Philadelphia and compiled the primary sociological text on an African-American community within the United States: *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899).

At Atlanta University, where he began to show history and economics in 1897, Du Bois laid the inspiration for the sector of black sociology. He established annual conferences dedicated to "efforts of yank Negroes for his or her own social betterment", and edited its proceedings from 1896 to 1913. He also founded the journals *the Crisis* and, later, *Phylon*. This

work, along with his prolific writing, established Du Bois because of the leading black literary, educational, and political figure of the first twentieth century.

Du Bois achieved tremendous fame for a set of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), which went through many editions. In 1909, he published a considerable biography of Brown. His seminal work, *The Negro* (1915), is vital therein its theoretical departure was Pan-African: the study of African writing and culture could not ignore slavery, also because the extended links between the peoples of Africa and people of the Caribbean and therefore, the Americas. Other important volumes of essays are *Dark water: Voices from within the Veil* (1920), *The Gift of Black Folk* (1924), *Black Reconstruction* (1935), *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), and lots of others.

In addition to his nonfiction, Du Bois published several novels over his long literary career. His first was *The Search of the Silver Fleece* (1911). *Dark Princess* followed in 1928, and after a few years Du Bois wrote a trilogy collectively titled *Black Flame*, consisting of *The Ordeal of Mansart* (1957), *Mansart Builds a Faculty* (1928), and *Worlds of Color* (1961). With the passing of years Du Bois became a problematic leader; his closest disciples found him cold and arrogant and such figures as Claude McKay and Marcus Garvey challenged his achievements and socialist ideology. He was dismissed from the NAACP as its director of special research in 1948; he became a target of domestic anticommunism, being tried in 1951 for being an “unregistered foreign agent” and acquitted by a federal jury. In 1961, at the invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Du Bois traveled to the present Western African country and commenced to direct the *Encyclopedia Africana* project, joining the U.S. Communist Party also. Denied a U.S. passport due to his politics, Du Bois became a citizen of Ghana and died there on August 27, 1963, at the age of ninety-five. His *Autobiography* was published in 1986, and editions of his *Complete Published Works* are being compiled by Herbert Aptheker. His wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois, has written a memoir of her life with him, *His Day Is Marching On* (1971).

James Langston Hughes

James Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, on February 1, 1902. His mother, Carrie Hughes, had been a schoolteacher; his father, James Nathaniel Hughes, was a storekeeper. James left for Mexico while his son was still an infant, and therefore, the latter was raised mostly by his grandmother, Mary Langston. Hughes lived for a time in Illinois together with his mother, who remarried, and visited high school in Cleveland. He spent the summer of 1919 in Mexico together with his father, and then taught for a year in Mexican schools. He entered Columbia University in September 1921, a couple of months after his poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", appeared within the Crisis for June 1921.

After a year of schooling, Hughes took on various jobs in NY, on trans-Atlantic ships, and in Paris. He returned to America in 1925, and while working as a busboy in Washington, D.C., he slipped three poems beside Vachel Lindsay who was impressed and commenced promoting the young poet. In 1925 Hughes won a literary contest in Opportunity, and his writing career was launched. His first collection of poems, *The Weary Blues*, was published in 1926. Another volume, *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, appeared subsequent year. A benefactor sent Hughes to Lincoln University, from which he received a B.A. in 1929.

Hughes subsequently supported himself as a poet, novelist, and writer of stories, screenplays, articles, children's books, and songs. His first novel, *Not without Laughter*, appeared in 1930. His first story collection was *The Ways of White Folks* (1934). He wrote children's book together with Arna Bontemps, *Popo and Fifina, Children of Haiti* (1932), supported a visit Hughes took to Haiti in 1931. He also collaborated with Zora Neale Hurston on a folk comedy, *Mule Bone*, but it had been not published until 1991.

Having received several literary awards and fellowships within the 1930s, including a Guggenheim Fellowship on 1935, Hughes was ready to write without financial worries. He promoted black theater in both Harlem and L. A., and himself wrote variety of plays, the

foremost famous of which is *Tambourines to Glory* (1958). In 1940, he published his first autobiography, *the Big Sea*.

Hughes moved to California in 1939, settling in Hollow Hills Farm near Monterey. Two years later he moved to Chicago, and from 1942 onward he lived in Harlem. Such volumes as *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942) and *Fields of Wonder* (1947) established him because of the leading black poet in America. Hughes's communist learning, initially triggered by a visit to the Soviet Union in 1931, caused him to be summoned before the House un-American activities committee (HUAC), where, fearful of being imprisoned or black-balled, he repudiated any communist, or socialist tendencies and maintained that his repeated involves social justice for black Americans, expressed in his earlier work, were not incompatible with American political ideals.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Hughes gained popularity through the recurring protagonist of his stories, Jesse B. Semplze, or "Simple." These stories were collected in four volumes: *Simple Speaks His Mind* (1950), *Simple Takes a Wife* (1953), *Simple Stakes a Claim* (1957), and *Simple's Uncle Sam* (1965). A variety, the simplest of straightforward, appeared in 1961. Story collections not involving Simple are *Laughing to stay from Crying* (1952) and *Something in Common, and Other Stories* (1963). A second autobiography, *I'm wondering as I'm wondering*, was published in 1956.

In his later years Hughes devoted himself to promoting black literature by compiling anthologies of African-American poetry, fiction, and folklore, and by writing nonfiction books for youngsters, including the primary *Book of Negroes* (1952), the primary *Book of Jazz* (1955), and therefore, the *First Book of Africa* (1960). He received the NAACP's Spingarn Medal in 1960 and was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1961. Hughes never married. He died of congestive coronary failure in NY City on May 22, 1967.

Claude McKay

CLAUDE McKay was born in Sunny Ville, Jamaica, on September 15, 1890. After being apprenticed to a wheelwright in Kingston, he emigrated to the U.S. in 1912 and studied agriculture at the Tuskegee Institute and at Kanas State University. He abandoned his studies in 1914 and moved to Harlem, where he became a number one radical poet. Before coming to America, McKay had published a set of poetry entitled *Songs of Jamaica* (1912). While in Harlem he frequently wrote under the pseudonym Eli Edwards, a reputation derived from that of his wife, Elulaie Imelda Edwards. This marriage led to 1914 after only six months; McKay's wife gave birth to a daughter whom he never saw.

"If We Must Die," perhaps McKay's best-known poem, was published in Max Eastman's magazine, the *Liberator*, in 1919. This stirring call to arms was written after the race riots that followed the top of war 1. McKay lived in London from 1919 to 1921; during this point, he first read Marx and worked for the Marxist periodical *Worker's Dreadnought*.

In 1922---the year he published his celebrated poetry collection *Harlem Shadows*---he made a "magic pilgrimage" to the USSR, where he was warmly welcomed by the Communist leaders and addressed the Third Communist International. He wrote two, works that were translated into Russian by P. Okhrimenko in 1923: *Sudom Lincha*, a set of three stories, and therefore, the treatise *Negro v America*. These works were translated into English by Robert Winter, the primary (as *Trial by Lynching: Stories about Negro Life in America*). In 1977, the second (because of the *Negroes in America*) in 1979. McKay's interest in Marx seems to possess been supported his perception of its involves a return to agrarian values and for racial equality. However, McKay never joined the Communist Party and by the 1930s he had completely renounced all association with communism.

From 1923 to 1934 McKay lived overseas, having left the US as a result of his alienation from the African-American intelligentsia and from the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance. In

Paris, he came to feel that racial barriers separated him from “the lost generation”; he subsequently moved to Marseilles, and later to Morocco. In Marseilles, he wrote his first two novels, *Home to Harlem* (1928) and *Banjo* (1929). On its publication, *Home to Harlem* became the foremost popular novel ever written by a black author. In 1932 McKay published a set of short stories, *Gingertown*, followed by a 3rd novel, *Banana Bottom* (1933).

Returning to the U.S. in 1934, McKay worked briefly as a laborer during a welfare camp. In 1938, he wrote an extended *Way from Home*, an account of his life since first coming to America. In 1944, he was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church and wrote essays on Christian faith. He died in Chicago on May 22, 1948.

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in February 1818 on a plantation in Maryland. The exact date of his birth, and therefore, the identity of his father was never known to him. Though Douglass knew his mother, Harriet Bailey, he had little contact together with her. He eluded the stress of slavery and lived in relative happiness together with his maternal grandmother Betsey Bailey until 1824, when he was forced by his master Aaron Anthony to serve the Lloyd family, from whom Anthony rented a farm. Thereon day, he claims, his childhood ended. Douglass was introduced to the horrors of slavery during this era, also because the ostentatious wealth of the Loyd family. Douglass was the companion of Colonel Lloyd’s son, Daniel, until 1826 when he was sent to Baltimore to serve the Auld family, in-laws off Aaron Anthony, where he became the companion of the Auld’s newborn son, Thomas. Douglass also received the tutelage of Sophia Auld, who began to show him the way to read and write until forbidden to try to so by her husband.

From 1827 to 1832 Douglass, who became the property of Thomas Auld upon the death of Aaron Anthony in 1826, remained with Hugh and Sophia Auld. During this point, he continued to teach himself, met free blacks, and skim abolitionist newspapers. He also helplessly watched

the Aulds separate his family, selling many members south. Thomas Auld, discouraged by Douglass's worsening disposition, sent him to a slave breaker named Edward Covey. Douglass endured the worst of slavery—the fields and therefore, the whip—until he could stand no more and wrestled Covey for his dignity. His will strengthened by the victory over Covey, Douglass planned an escape. The escape, however, was discovered, and Douglass was returned to the Aulds. From 1836 to 1838 Douglass worked as an apprentice ship caulker. His life round the docks brought him into contact with the surface world again, renewing his hope for freedom. On September 3, 1838, Douglass, within the guise of a sailor, boarded a train and rode without incident to the Free states. Shortly thereafter, on September 15, he married Anna Murray, a free Blacks woman from Baltimore. The couple moved from NY City to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where Douglass was invited by the prominent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison to recount his life as a slave at abolitionist meetings. Douglass revealed an aptitude for oratory and has become a strong abolitionist speaker. Douglass's eloquence, in fact, caused many audiences to doubt that he was once a slave. In 1845, to substantiate his biographical speeches, he published *Narrative of the lifetime of Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself*. In exposing his identity, circumstances, and former owner, he exposed himself to recapture and thus fled to Great Britain, where he continued speaking for the abolitionist cause while his book became a best-seller in Europe and America. Money was raised by his English friends to purchase his freedom, and in 1847 he returned to America as a freeman. Douglass began publishing a newspaper, the *Polaris* (renamed *Fredrick Douglass's Paper* in 1851), I, which he published his only known work of fiction, "The Heroic Slave." In 1855, he published a revised edition of his autobiography entitled *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which was also well-received, and still another version in 1881, entitled *Life and Time of Douglass*. Many of the speeches Douglass delivered over his long career as orator were published as pamphlets. These and his other writings were assembled by Philip S. Foner within the *Life, and Writings*

of Douglass (5 vols, 1950 – 75). A replacement edition of his works, under the title The Douglass Papers, is now being compiled under the editorship of John W. Blassingame.

In his later years Douglass received several political appointments: assistant secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission (1871), president of the Freedman's Bank (1874), Marshall (1874-81) and recorder of deeds (1881-86) of the District of Columbia, and U.S. minister to Haiti (1889-91). He died on February 20, 1895, after attending a woman's suffrage meeting.