

Critical Insights: Harlem Renaissance

“Thought to represent the most significant artistic period in African American history, the Harlem Renaissance gave voice to a unique culture. At the same time, the Harlem Renaissance challenged the assimilation (or the lack thereof) of this culture into greater society. This volume in the *Critical Insights* series **serves this complex and long-studied artistic movement well by delving deeper into themes** previously explored in the works of such icons as Zora Neale Hurston or Langston Hughes. The book also **showcases more from lesser-known authors and critics to provide a truly fresh perspective.**

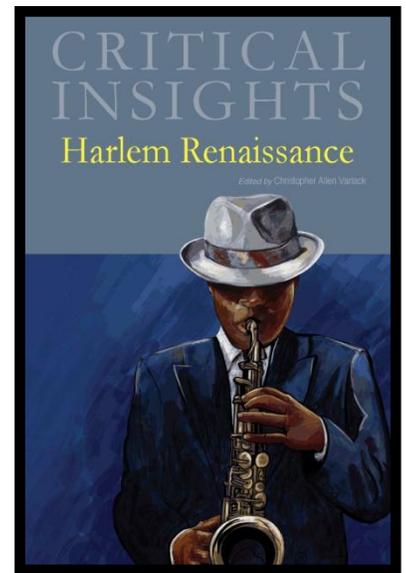
The Critical Contexts section provides **excellent foundational essays concerning a number of topics**, including the multifaceted visions melding into the art of the Harlem Renaissance, the short-sighted "apathetic" criticism of the times, and, in Allyson Denise Marino's "Sugar Cane and Women's Identity in Selected Works of Zora Neale Hurston" the racial and economic oppression suffered by African American women during the 1920's.

Following this section are 14 essays making up the Critical Readings section. These essays are further subdivided into four sections covering the principal artistic and political sensibilities behind the Harlem Renaissance, racial passing, the rise of the new Negro woman in regards to both literary subject and author, and the more controversial or neglected works and/or approaches to them. Highlights of the Critical Readings sections include Tiffany Austin's essay "'Blue Smoke' and 'Stale Fried Fish': A Decadent View of Richard Bruce Nugent," which re-examines the more obscure, and only openly gay Harlem Renaissance artist, and Seretha D. Williams' "'The Bitter River': Langston Hughes and the Violent South" which points out how Hughes' poetry transcends the period of the Harlem Renaissance to capture the ongoing subjugation of blacks.

An extensive chronology, complete list of Harlem Renaissance works, a bibliography, and an index round out this **intelligently conceived, thought-provoking essay collection.**”

—ARBA

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2 University Plaza, Suite 310, Hackensack, NJ 07601
(800) 221-1592 FAX (201) 968-0511
www.salempress.com csr@salempress.com