



# The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White

By George Hutchinson

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## The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White By George Hutchinson

It wasn't all black or white. It wasn't a vogue. It wasn't a failure. By restoring interracial dimensions left out of accounts of the Harlem Renaissance--or blamed for corrupting it--George Hutchinson transforms our understanding of black (and white) literary modernism, interracial literary relations, and twentieth-century cultural nationalism in the United States. What has been missing from literary histories of the time is a broader sense of the intellectual context of the Harlem Renaissance, and Hutchinson supplies that here: Boas's anthropology, Park's sociology, various strands of pragmatism and cultural nationalism--ideas that shaped the New Negro movement and the literary field, where the movement flourished. Hutchinson tracks the resulting transformation of literary institutions and organizations in the 1920s, offering a detailed account of the journals and presses, black and white, that published the work of the "New Negroes." This cultural excavation discredits bedrock assumptions about the motives of white interest in the renaissance, and about black relationships to white intellectuals of the period. It also allows a more careful investigation than ever before of the tensions among black intellectuals of the 1920s. Hutchinson's analysis shows that the general expansion of literature and the vogue of writing cannot be divorced from the explosion of black literature often attributed to the vogue of the New Negro--any more than the growing sense of "Negro" national consciousness can be divorced from expanding articulations and permutations of American nationality. The book concludes with the first full-scale interpretation of the landmark anthology *The New Negro*.

A courageous work that exposes the oversimplifications and misrepresentations of popular readings of the Harlem Renaissance, this book reveals the truly composite nature of American literary culture.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

A groundbreaking book...Much of what happened in the black creative world dovetailed with what was happening in the white artistic world, and vice versa. It's difficult to separate the two, although it has been fashionable in recent years to single out artists in both camps and argue--unconvincingly...that certain black artists sold their souls to white hegemony...The brilliance of [this book] emerges from Hutchinson's reconstruction of an era, especially his painstaking examination of the early years of the movement. Hardly a scrap of information has been ignored, and the rewards are plentiful...One finishes reading *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* with a sense of invigoration and hope. (Charles R. Larson *Chicago Tribune*)

George Hutchinson's *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* is one of those historical works that utterly and meticulously overturns most previous understanding of its subject matter. Hutchinson places the Harlem Renaissance in a wider context than previous commentators have done. He shows how the pluralist ideas of the Harlemites were part of much broader cultural and intellectual developments that took in pragmatism, the new relativistic anthropology of Franz Boas and a turn toward regionalism in fiction...Hutchinson's enthusiasm for the pragmatist outlook gives the book an energy and urgency that takes it far beyond the bounds of its historical subject matter. It deserves to be read by all those interested not just in a crucial episode of American cultural history, but in the ideal and reality of multiculturalism. (Adam Lively *Times Literary Supplement*)

The great service of George Hutchinson's comprehensive study is its unabashed willingness to acknowledge the many inconsistent philosophical and institutional influences on those who brought the Renaissance to life: all the 'pragmatist philosophers, Boasian anthropologists, socialist theorists, and new journalists' in the background...A landmark in the field. (Carlin Romano *Philadelphia Inquirer*)

Hutchinson's study moves the Harlem Renaissance from the periphery of American life to the center. His courageous and sophisticated redefinition of 'Americanness' subverts the comfortable Jim Crowism of the contemporary academic discourse. His approach to American Studies calls for disciples, critical disciples anxious to move beyond their mentor. (Maria Diedrich *American Studies*)

George Hutchinson presents to us in black and white the role of both black and white intellectuals in the shaping of the Harlem Renaissance...[A] well-researched and scholarly work. (*Indian Journal of American Studies*)

The greatest strength of *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* lies in the author's portrayal of the discussions of concepts of nation and race that took place in the twenties in the United States. Hutchinson insightfully reminds us that contemporary controversies on multiculturalism, the canon and African American literature were initiated and anticipated by the Harlem Renaissance authors...The interdisciplinary qualities of this study make it highly recommendable to a wide academic readership, especially those engaged in cultural studies, American history and literature. (Pilar Sánchez Calle *Borderlines [UK]*)

Authoritative and challenging, complex yet lucid, this volume is a welcome addition to recent studies of the Harlem Renaissance and of American cultural pluralism more generally. Hutchinson has produced an elaborate cultural history of the interactions between those writers, editors, and publishers who helped create and sustain the image of the New Negro during the 1920s. (Martin Padget *American Studies*)

Hutchinson's study opens necessary and provocative new critical directions. (S. Bryant *Choice*)

#### Review

A refreshingly original analysis of a pivotal period in American cultural history. This book, in my opinion, is the most detailed and subtle study of the complex interplay between text and context, black and white, high modernism and the vernacular, in short, the hybridity that was the Renaissance. (Henry Louis Gates, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, Harvard University)

#### From the Back Cover

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### Users Review

#### From reader reviews:

##### Michael Albin:

The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to place every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White however doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into new stage of crucial imagining.

##### Patricia Skinner:

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