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History

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Annotated Bibliography

Bonner, Marita. "On Being Young—A Woman—and Colored." *The Crisis*, 31 (Dec. 1925), 63-65.

This article published in *The Crisis* magazine reflects on her own and other young Black women's experiences in the Harlem Renaissance. Bonner, a prominent woman writer from the Harlem Renaissance, urged Black women readers to not be bitter about all the struggles they had to face because of their race and gender so as to preserve their femininity. Her article drew attention to the fact that many Black women were perceived as uncontrolled, as trying their best to appear White, and were discriminated against in the 1920s. It would be beneficial to know how this article was perceived by the masses, as it would help with understanding whether or not people agreed with Bonner's message and whether Black women felt that this accurately represented their experiences as Black women in the 1920s. This article is useful because it gives the reader an idea of the obstacles Black women faced in the Harlem Renaissance era and their position in society. As Bonner was a prominent writer of the time and this article was published in a popular magazine, it is likely that Black women readers resonated with her message, though this needs to be confirmed.

Bracks, Lean'tin L., and Jessie Carney Smith. *Black Women of the Harlem Renaissance Era*. 1st ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014.

The book *Black Women of the Harlem Renaissance* examines Black women's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance in various forms of expression—art, literature,

entertainment, the professions, and education—through a collection of biographies on different Black women in the Harlem Renaissance. Bracks, a retired professor in English and African American literature from Fisk University, and Smith, a retired professor in library science from Fisk University primarily make use of secondary sources detailing the lives of several of these women, but also include some of these women’s literature, film, music, and other forms of artistic expression in the biographies. In their introduction, Bracks and Smith argue that despite facing limitations from societal expectations of being Black and female, Black women were key to the Harlem Renaissance because of their work in multiple fields of change. *Black Women of the Harlem Renaissance* is a collection of biographies, meaning that the book provides a holistic view of Black women’s contributions to the Harlem Renaissance compared to a book with a focus on certain individual women. However, because this book is comprised of brief biographies, it does not always include examples of the works through which Black women contributed to the Harlem Renaissance. *Black Women of the Harlem Renaissance* is useful because it gives the reader a “snapshot” of many different women of the Harlem Renaissance, which can help narrow down research to one or a few women in particular.

Ducille, Ann. “Blues Notes on Black Sexuality: Sex and the Texts of Jessie Fauset and Nella Larsen.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 3 (1993): 418–44.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704015>.

This article examines the intersection of gender and race in both Jessie Fauset’s and Nella Larsen’s writings. Ducille, a professor of English at Wesleyan University, uses Fauset’s and Larsen’s writings from the Harlem Renaissance and other scholars’ reviews of their work to make her claim. One of Ducille’s arguments that is relevant is that Larsen and Fauset adhered to traditional gender roles for women in their writing, but pushed for racial equality by having

mainly middle-class, fair-skinned, sophisticated Black women as central characters in their writing. Ducille's argument is effective because she responds to and integrates other scholars' work, such as Akasha Gloria Hull's and Cheryl Wall's, when making her own argument about Fauset and Larsen. This suggests Ducille is well-informed in the discussion surrounding Black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance, making her argument more credible. This article doesn't discuss Larsen and Fauset in relation with other prominent writers of the Harlem Renaissance, but is still very useful because it compares racial equality and women's rights advocacy in Fauset's and Larsen's writings to racial equality and women's rights advocacy in popular female Blues artists' works.

Fauset, Jessie. "Impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress." *The Crisis*, 23 (Nov. 1921), 12-18.

In Fauset's article published in the popular *The Crisis* magazine, she discussed her impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress, held in 1921. Specifically, she described the different people present, their contributions to the discussion, and argued—although briefly—that Black people in the US and in Africa shared “common blood” and were the same at heart. However, when compared to articles by other authors published in *The Crisis* that discuss the Second Pan-African Congress, she focused heavily on middle- and upper-class individuals at the meeting more than the content of the discussion on racial equality. This article, like many of her articles published in *The Crisis*, gives insight into the type of writing content that made Fauset so popular and *The Crisis* so widely known. It would be beneficial to know how readers reacted to this article compared to other articles in *The Crisis* about the Second Pan-African Congress that openly advocated for Black unity and racial equality. In other words, it would be beneficial to know how popular different articles were in comparison to each other. This article is useful

because it can be compared to other articles discussing the same topic, which gives insight into how radical/conservative Fauset was in advocating for racial equality in the Harlem Renaissance.

Fauset, Jessie. "The Thirteenth Biennial of the N.A.C.W." *The Crisis*, 24 (Oct. 1922), 257-260.

In her article published in *The Crisis* magazine, Fauset, a Black woman writer of the Harlem Renaissance, described her opinions and takeaways of an NACW (National Association for Colored Women) conference in 1922. She included details about who was present at the conference, what work they had contributed to the NACW, the work that the NACW had done previously, and what was accomplished at the conference. Fauset's article provides primary source insight into the types of writing that Black individuals in the Harlem Renaissance liked to read and the types of writing that made Fauset popular. It would be beneficial to know how other artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance felt about Fauset's article and her attending the NACW conference. This article is useful because it serves as an example of Fauset's writing centering around middle to upper class Black men and women, as the people described in her article are of higher class standing. The article is also useful because it gives insight into the extent to which Fauset was involved in her racial identity and the fight for racial equality.

Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. 1st ed. New York: W. Morrow, 1984.

In chapter 2 of the book *When and Where I Enter*, Giddings examines the ways through which Black women in the era of the "New Negro" fought past racist and sexist attitudes directed towards them. Giddings, a professor of Africana studies at Smith College, uses mostly secondary sources on women's experiences in the Harlem Renaissance, but also makes some use of Black women's literature from the 1920s. Specifically, she argues that Black women at the time took

on stereotype-breaking roles in the workforce, formed organizations, and confronted Black men and White women to fight for their equality in the US. Chapter 2 addresses many different avenues through which Black women fought against racism and sexism, giving the reader a better understanding of how Black women as a whole felt about their position in society in the 1920s. It would have been beneficial if chapter 2 were to specifically address Black women in the context of the Harlem Renaissance rather than only the 1920s as a whole. *When and Where I Enter* is useful because it does not solely provide analysis on women's artistic contributions to the Harlem Renaissance. Rather, it addresses Black women and the climate of the 1920s—their role at the ending of WWI, in the workforce, in politics, in education, and in reform.

Hull, Akasha Gloria. *Color, Sex & Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

The book *Color, Sex & Poetry* examines the position of women in the Harlem Renaissance and the intersectionality of race and gender in their poetry by focusing on three of these women: Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Angelina Weld Grimké. Hull, a professor of women's studies and literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz, uses the experiences of these three women to argue that Black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance struggled against obstacles that Black men did not because of both their race and gender. She also argues that many Black women writers more often addressed their gender identity in their literature and separated themselves from their racial identity. Hull uses Black women writers' poetry and other secondary sources that analyze Black women writers' poetry to support her argument. *Color, Sex & Poetry* is centered around three Black women writers that were significant in the Harlem Renaissance but do not have much scholarship done on their contributions, which is what sets this book apart from other secondary sources addressing Black

women's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance. However, because this book has a focus on three women specifically, it may not be reflective of Black women's experiences in the Harlem Renaissance as a whole. *Color, Sex & Poetry* is useful because it has a focus on poetry and because it addresses the interactions that these three women had with other Black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Jessie Fauset.

Johnson, Abby Arthur. "Literary Midwife: Jessie Redmon Fauset and the Harlem Renaissance." *Phylon* (1960-) 39, no. 2 (1978): 143–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/274509>.

This journal article examines Jessie Fauset's career from her work as literary editor of *The Crisis* in the 1920s to afterwards, when she lost her popularity as one of the most well-known Black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Johnson, who worked as a professor in Howard University's English department, uses Fauset's novels, her articles published in *The Crisis*, and other scholars' reviews of her career to argue that Jessie Fauset's career reflected the changing responses to the Black middle class during the 1920s and 30s. Specifically, she claims that Fauset appealed to young Black people in the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s because much of her work focused on middle to upper-class Black individuals rather than only depicting Black individuals as economically disadvantaged and in menial jobs. In the 1930s, Johnson argues, Fauset lost her appeal because the Great Depression caused instability in Black communities, which led young Black individuals to want "newer art" that she could not produce. Johnson's argument is effective because she acknowledges and responds to other scholars' arguments—like Hiroko Sato's—about Jessie Fauset's career while making her own argument. However, Johnson does not elaborate much on what exactly caused new young Black individuals in the 1930s to seek "newer art" or what this "newer art" was. This seems like an important piece of her argument, so it would have been beneficial if she had included it. This article is useful

because it is one of the few sources that has a focus on Fauset's career through two decades rather than an analysis of her literary works. The article explains, to a greater extent than other sources, why Fauset was so popular in the 1920s but essentially forgotten by the 1930s.

Sato, Hiroko. "Under the Harlem Shadow: A Study of Jessie Fauset and Nella Larsen," in *The Harlem Renaissance Remembered: Essays*, ed. Arna Bontemps. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1972.

This essay, published in a book of selected essays, examines both Jessie Fauset's and Nella Larsen's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance. Sato, who was previously an assistant professor of English at Tokyo Women's Christian College, uses mostly reviews of Jessie Fauset by prominent people within the Harlem Renaissance, Jessie Fauset's own literary works, and scholars' articles on Jessie Fauset's contribution to the Harlem Renaissance to argue that Jessie Fauset represents Black intellectuals who have assimilated into White society, but she still had a significant role in the advancement of Black individuals through her advocacy of Black unity and racial equality in her literary works. Sato's argument is effective because she makes heavy use of W.E.B Du Bois', Langston Hughes', and Alain Locke's written opinions on Fauset and her work, which allows the reader to understand how other Black intellectuals in the Harlem Renaissance felt about her work and her relationship with them. Her inclusion of these first-hand accounts strengthens her argument because it shows that people close to Fauset also confirm Sato's conclusion about her. It would have been beneficial if Sato had used more secondary sources to support her argument, as her usage of very few of them lessens the credibility of her argument. This essay is useful because it includes many Harlem Renaissance writers' views on Fauset and is another perspective on Fauset's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance.

Wall, Cheryl A. *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

The book *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* examines the journeys of many Black women's artistry—specifically literature—in the Harlem Renaissance, grounding their literary works in traditional African-American and American writing. Wall, an English professor at Rutgers University, argued that Black women of the Harlem Renaissance used artistic expression to consider intersectionality as well as the injustices they faced as Black people and as women in the 1920s. Wall primarily makes use of poetry and short fiction from Black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance, while also using some scholarly books discussing Black Americans and their art in the Harlem Renaissance era. Wall uses these works of literature to validate her argument, but her analysis of the poetry/fiction can often read as literary analysis as opposed to strictly historical analysis. However, this book has a focus on three Black women writers—Jessie Fauset, Nella Larson, and Zora Neale Hurston—allowing the reader to gain a more comprehensive and specific understanding of the impact of three women, rather than a general understanding of women in the Harlem Renaissance. *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* is beneficial for this reason, but also because it includes an extensive list of writings by different women (and some men) in the Harlem Renaissance. The book provides analysis on Black women's gender and race struggles for several of these pieces of literature.