

Week 11 Day 2: The Harlem Renaissance

ENGL201: Introduction to Modernism

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

- American poet, social activist, novelist, and journalist
- Central figure of the Harlem Renaissance
- Emphasized the representation of black peoples' "real" lives
- Developed "jazz poetry" — inspired by the rhythms of jazz music
- *The Weary Blues* (1926)
- *The Ways of White Folks* (1934)



Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

- Born Countee LeRoy Porter
- American poet, novelist, and playwright
- Married Yolande Du Bois
- Attended NYU and Harvard
- Developed a style based on traditional Western poetry
- *Color* (1925)
- *Copper Sun* (1927)
- *The Black Christ and Other Poems* (1929)





Photographs by Carl Van Vechten



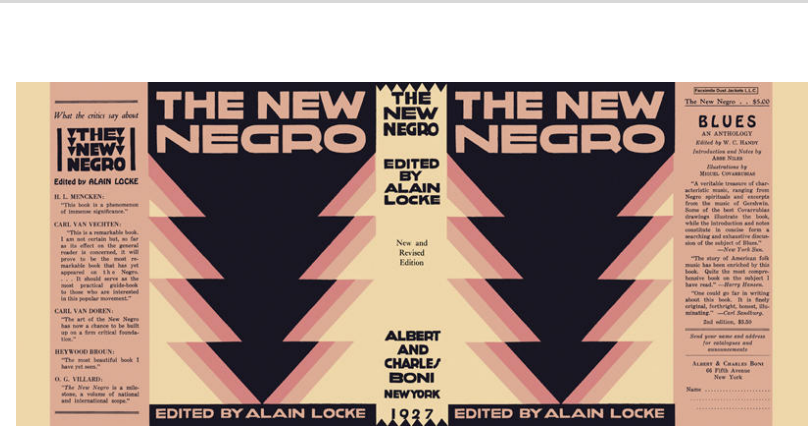
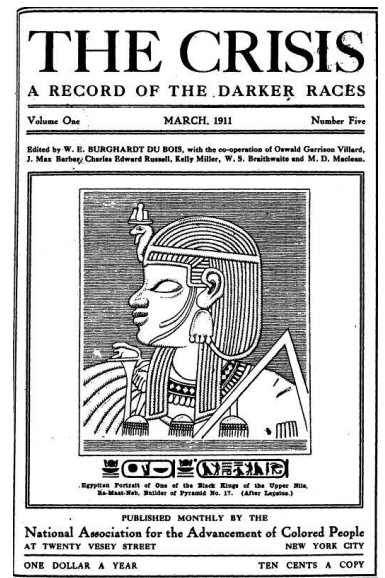
Aaron Douglas, "Idylls of the Deep South," 1934

The Great Migration

- 1910-1945: over 1 million African Americans left the American South
- Settled in major urban centres: New York, Chicago, Detroit

Harlem Renaissance

- Intellectual and artistic movement between the wars
- Cultivation of black and African American identity, often accompanies Pan-African movements
- Frequent overlaps with Communist politics



The Tyger – William Blake (1794)



Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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THE WEARY BLUES



By
LANGSTON HUGHES

Cover art: Miguel Covarrubias

