



The Harlem Group of Negro Writers, By Melvin B. Tolson (Contributions in Afro-American & African Studies)

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Melvin B. Tolson (1898-1966) was both a participant in and historian of the Harlem Renaissance, probably the most significant movement in African American literature and culture. Known mostly for his poetry, and an unduly neglected figure in American literary history, Tolson was one of the first African American critics of the Harlem Renaissance. This book is an edition of his 1940 MA thesis, the first academic study of the Harlem Renaissance written by an African American scholar. Tolson's thesis, previously unpublished in its entirety, provides a unique look at this important era and draws heavily on his familiarity with some of the most important writers of the movement.

Included are discussions of such major figures as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and W.E.B. Du Bois, along with chapters on lesser-known authors such as George Schuyler, Eric Walrond, and Jessie Fauset, who are now being rediscovered. An introductory essay surveys the history of Harlem Renaissance criticism and Tolson's place in it and evaluates his methodology and use of sources. The introduction additionally presents a brief biography and details the creation of his thesis. The text of Tolson's thesis appears in its entirety, along with his notes and those of the volume editor. The book closes with a bibliography of works on Tolson and a large but selective bibliography on the Harlem Renaissance in general.

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