

19th century african american literature

19th Century African American Literature: Voices of Resilience and Identity

19th century african american literature stands as a powerful testament to the resilience, creativity, and intellectual vigor of Black Americans during a time of profound struggle and transformation. Emerging from the shadows of slavery, oppression, and systemic racism, this body of work not only challenged dominant narratives but also laid the foundation for future generations of African American writers and thinkers. Exploring this rich literary tradition offers us a window into the complex social, political, and cultural realities of the 19th century while celebrating the extraordinary voices that dared to speak out for freedom, identity, and justice.

The Historical Context Behind 19th Century African American Literature

Understanding 19th century African American literature requires a grasp of the historical backdrop against which it developed. This period was marked by the brutal institution of slavery, the Civil War, the Reconstruction era, and the persistent fight against racial discrimination. Literature became a crucial medium for African Americans to assert their humanity and resist dehumanization.

During the early 1800s, the majority of African Americans were enslaved, denied education, and stripped of basic rights. Despite these harsh conditions, many began to record their experiences through narratives, poetry, and essays. The abolitionist movement also played a significant role in shaping this literature, as many writers used their works as tools to advocate for emancipation and racial equality.

The Role of Slave Narratives

One of the most influential genres within 19th century African American literature is the slave narrative. These autobiographical accounts detailed the brutal realities of slavery from the firsthand perspectives of formerly enslaved individuals. Slave narratives were not only literary works but also potent political instruments designed to expose the cruelty of slavery to wider audiences, particularly in the North and Europe.

Famous examples include Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). These texts provided vivid, personal insights into the physical and emotional toll of slavery, while also highlighting themes of resistance, self-education, and the quest for freedom.

Key Figures in 19th Century African American

Literature

The 19th century witnessed the rise of several pioneering African American authors whose works have become cornerstones of American literature. Their contributions helped shape the cultural identity of Black Americans and challenged the pervasive racism of their times.

Frederick Douglass: The Orator and Author

Frederick Douglass remains one of the most celebrated figures in African American literary history. His eloquence and powerful storytelling in his autobiographies brought the horrors of slavery to the forefront of public consciousness. Beyond his narratives, Douglass's speeches and essays advocated for abolition, women's rights, and social justice, making him an influential intellectual and activist.

Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Influence of African American Voices

While not an African American writer herself, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was profoundly influenced by African American narratives and experiences. This novel played an important role in galvanizing anti-slavery sentiments in the North. It also sparked conversations about representation and authenticity that African American writers would continue to engage with throughout the century.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: Poet and Social Reformer

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a prolific poet, novelist, and lecturer who used her literary talents to address issues like slavery, racial discrimination, and women's rights. Her poetry collections and prose, such as *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (1854), combined artistic expression with calls for social change, making her a vital voice in 19th century African American literature.

Thematic Currents in 19th Century African American Literature

African American literature of the 19th century is rich with themes that reflect the lived realities and aspirations of Black communities during this era. These themes offer invaluable insights into the cultural and psychological landscapes shaped by slavery and its aftermath.

Freedom and Identity

Central to much of this literature is the pursuit of freedom—not just in the physical sense of emancipation from slavery, but also in the broader quest for self-definition and dignity. Writers explored what it meant to be African American in a society that systematically denied their humanity, weaving narratives that asserted pride, resilience, and individuality.

Resistance and Liberation

Resistance appears as a recurring motif, manifesting through acts of defiance, education, and storytelling. Whether through the detailed recounting of escape attempts in slave narratives or poetic denunciations of injustice, these works embody a spirit of liberation that transcends their historical moment.

Faith and Spirituality

Religion and spirituality often permeate 19th century African American literature, reflecting the central role faith played in sustaining enslaved and free Black communities. Biblical imagery and Christian themes frequently emerge, offering hope and moral grounding amidst adversity.

The Evolution of Literary Forms and Genres

The 19th century saw African American writers experimenting with various literary forms, expanding the scope and influence of their work.

Poetry as Expression and Protest

Poetry was a vital outlet for African American authors, allowing them to express complex emotions and political ideas succinctly and powerfully. Poets like Paul Laurence Dunbar, though his most famous works belong to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, began to gain prominence toward the century's end, bridging earlier traditions with new stylistic innovations.

Novels and Short Stories

While less common than poetry and autobiographies, novels and short stories started to gain traction, providing nuanced portrayals of African American life. Works such as Harriet Wilson's **Our Nig** (1859) and William Wells Brown's **Clotel** (1853) explored themes of race, identity, and social injustice through fictional narratives.

Oratory and Essays

Apart from literary genres, oratory and essays were crucial platforms for African American intellectuals. Public speeches and written essays disseminated ideas widely, influencing public opinion and inspiring activism. This form of literature was instrumental in shaping the abolitionist movement and early civil rights advocacy.

How 19th Century African American Literature Influences Us Today

The legacy of 19th century African American literature is profound and enduring. It provides contemporary readers with foundational perspectives on race, identity, and justice that continue to resonate.

For students, scholars, and enthusiasts of American history and literature, these works offer critical insights into the experiences that shaped modern America. Understanding these texts enriches conversations about systemic racism, cultural heritage, and the power of storytelling as a tool for social change.

Moreover, engaging with 19th century African American literature can inspire writers and activists today. It reminds us of the importance of using our voices courageously, standing against injustice, and honoring the diverse narratives that contribute to our shared humanity.

Exploring this literary tradition is not only an academic exercise but also a journey toward empathy and awareness—one that challenges us to reflect on the past while envisioning a more equitable future.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some key themes in 19th century African American literature?

Key themes include slavery and freedom, racial identity and resistance, the quest for equality, the importance of education, and the expression of cultural heritage.

Who was the first African American to publish a book of poetry in the 19th century?

Phillis Wheatley was the first African American to publish a book of poetry, with her collection 'Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral' published in 1773, and she influenced 19th century African American writers.

How did Frederick Douglass contribute to 19th century

African American literature?

Frederick Douglass was a prominent writer and orator whose autobiographies, such as 'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,' provided powerful firsthand accounts of slavery and advocated for abolition and civil rights.

What role did slave narratives play in 19th century African American literature?

Slave narratives were crucial in exposing the realities of slavery to a broad audience, humanizing enslaved people, and fueling abolitionist movements. They combined personal testimony with literary elements to advocate for freedom and justice.

Which African American female authors emerged during the 19th century, and what impact did they have?

Authors like Harriet Jacobs and Frances E.W. Harper emerged, with Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl' highlighting the unique struggles of enslaved women, and Harper's poetry and prose addressing social reform and racial uplift.

How did the Harlem Renaissance relate to 19th century African American literature?

The Harlem Renaissance was a 20th-century cultural movement that built upon the foundations laid by 19th century African American writers, who established literary traditions and themes of racial pride and resistance that Renaissance writers expanded and celebrated.

Additional Resources

****Exploring 19th Century African American Literature: Voices of Resilience and Identity****

19th century african american literature represents a profound and transformative body of work that emerged amidst the turbulent socio-political landscape of the United States. This era witnessed African American writers articulating their experiences, struggles, and aspirations through a range of literary forms, from slave narratives and poetry to essays and novels. As a critical component of American literary history, 19th century African American literature not only challenged prevailing racial ideologies but also laid the groundwork for future movements in Black arts and letters.

Historical Context and Significance

The 19th century was a pivotal period for African Americans, marked by slavery, the Civil War, emancipation, and the nascent stages of Reconstruction. These socio-political upheavals deeply influenced African American literary production. Literature became a vehicle for resistance against oppression and a means to assert humanity and intellectual agency. The rise of abolitionism and the fight for civil rights provided fertile ground for African American writers to engage with broader

audiences, often employing their narratives as tools for social change.

One cannot understand 19th century African American literature without considering the impact of slavery on its themes and forms. The slave narrative emerged as a dominant genre, offering firsthand accounts of bondage and escape. These autobiographical works were instrumental in exposing the brutal realities of slavery to Northern audiences and galvanizing abolitionist sentiment.

Key Figures and Literary Contributions

Frederick Douglass: The Orator and Autobiographer

Among the towering figures of 19th century African American literature, Frederick Douglass stands out for his powerful autobiographical works and oratory. His seminal narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), combines vivid personal testimony with sharp social critique. Douglass's eloquence and intellectual rigor challenged stereotypes of Black inferiority and emphasized the universal quest for freedom and dignity.

Sojourner Truth and Harriet Jacobs: Voices of Resistance

Sojourner Truth and Harriet Jacobs contributed distinct perspectives to the literary landscape. Truth's speeches and narratives intertwined religious fervor with calls for abolition and women's rights, highlighting intersectional struggles. Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) broke new ground by foregrounding the gendered dimensions of slavery, exposing the sexual exploitation endured by enslaved women.

Phillis Wheatley: The Pioneer Poet

Phillis Wheatley, though her work spans the late 18th century and early 19th century, remains a seminal figure for her pioneering role in African American poetry. As the first published African American female poet, Wheatley's classical style and themes of Christian redemption and freedom set early literary precedents.

Frances E.W. Harper and the Emergence of Black Women Writers

The latter half of the century saw the rise of Black women writers like Frances E.W. Harper, whose poetry and prose engaged themes of abolition, suffrage, and racial uplift. Harper's works, including *Iola Leroy* (1892), are notable for their intersection of race, gender, and social justice, reflecting the complexities of Black life in post-emancipation America.

Major Themes in 19th Century African American Literature

The thematic scope of 19th century African American literature is vast, reflecting the multifaceted experiences of African Americans during this era.

Freedom and Emancipation

The pursuit of freedom—literal and metaphorical—is a central motif. Writers chronicled the horrors of enslavement while expressing hope for liberation and equality. This theme resonates through slave narratives, abolitionist literature, and post-Civil War writings that grappled with the realities of emancipation and persistent racial discrimination.

Identity and Self-Definition

African American authors of the 19th century actively engaged in the project of self-definition, crafting narratives that countered dehumanizing stereotypes. Literature became a space to assert Black identity, intellectualism, and cultural heritage, challenging dominant white narratives and reclaiming agency.

Resistance and Social Justice

Literary works served as tools for activism, addressing issues such as slavery, racism, misogyny, and economic inequality. Many writers aligned themselves with abolitionist and early civil rights movements, using their voices to inspire social reform and advocate for equal rights.

Literary Forms and Styles

19th century African American literature encompasses a variety of forms, each serving distinct purposes within the cultural and political contexts of the time.

- **Slave Narratives:** Autobiographical accounts emphasizing the brutality of slavery and the moral imperative for abolition.
- **Poetry:** Both classical and vernacular, poetry articulated emotional depth and political urgency, often incorporating spiritual and religious themes.
- **Novels and Fiction:** Emerging towards the latter part of the century, novels like *Iola Leroy* explored complex social issues, blending realism with advocacy.

- **Essays and Speeches:** Intellectual discourse and persuasive rhetoric used to challenge societal norms and mobilize support for racial justice.

Stylistically, many African American writers employed a blend of Enlightenment rationalism and Romantic expressiveness. Their works often juxtaposed the ideal of American democracy with the lived realities of racial oppression, creating a powerful dialectic that enriched American literature as a whole.

Impact and Legacy

The legacy of 19th century African American literature is enduring and multifaceted. It not only shaped the trajectory of African American cultural expression but also influenced broader American literary traditions. By foregrounding themes of freedom, identity, and resistance, these works paved the way for the Harlem Renaissance and contemporary Black literature.

Moreover, this literature remains a critical resource for understanding the historical struggles and resilience of African Americans. Contemporary scholars and readers continue to engage with these texts to explore issues of race, memory, and justice.

The challenges faced by 19th century African American writers—such as limited access to education, publication barriers, and pervasive racism—underscore the significance of their achievements. Their ability to produce compelling and enduring literature under such constraints highlights both the power of the written word and the indomitable spirit of those who wielded it.

In tracing the contours of 19th century African American literature, one witnesses a dynamic interplay of personal narrative, political activism, and artistic innovation. This body of work not only documents a critical chapter in American history but also asserts the profound humanity and creativity of African American voices during a century of profound change.

19th Century African American Literature

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19th century african american literature: The Portable Nineteenth-Century African American Women Writers Hollis Robbins, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2017-07-25 A landmark collection documenting the social, political, and artistic lives of African American women throughout the tumultuous nineteenth century. Named one of NPR's Best Books of 2017. The Portable Nineteenth-Century African American Women Writers is the most comprehensive anthology of its kind: an extraordinary range of voices offering the expressions of African American women in print before, during, and after the Civil War. Edited by Hollis Robbins and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., this

collection comprises work from forty-nine writers arranged into sections of memoir, poetry, and essays on feminism, education, and the legacy of African American women writers. Many of these pieces engage with social movements like abolition, women's suffrage, temperance, and civil rights, but the thematic center is the intellect and personal ambition of African American women. The diverse selection includes well-known writers like Sojourner Truth, Hannah Crafts, and Harriet Jacobs, as well as lesser-known writers like Ella Sheppard, who offers a firsthand account of life in the world-famous Fisk Jubilee Singers. Taken together, these incredible works insist that the writing of African American women writers be read, remembered, and addressed. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

19th century african american literature: The Schomburg Library of

Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers Henry Louis Gates, 2002-03 When the first volumes of the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers first appeared in 1988, critics and scholars applauded the publishing venture as historic. Oxford University Press, in collaboration with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, was credited with rescuing the voice of an entire segment of the black tradition. In all, forty volumes of compelling and rare works of fiction, poetry, autobiography, biography, essays, and journalism by nineteenth-century African-American women were published, each containing an introduction written by an expert in the field, as well as an overview by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the General Editor. Many of the volumes have since become unavailable--until now. Oxford is making available again all 40 volumes and, for the first time, is offering the complete clothbound set for a specially reduced price.

19th century african american literature: Resistance and Reformation in Nineteenth-Century African-American Literature John Ernest, 2011-08-19

19th century african american literature: Icons of African American Literature Yolanda Williams Page, 2011-10-17 The 24 entries in this book provide extensive coverage of some of the most notable figures in African American literature, such as Alice Walker, Richard Wright, and Zora Neale Hurston. Icons of African American Literature: The Black Literary World examines 24 of the most popular and culturally significant topics within African American literature's long and immensely fascinating history. Each piece provide substantial, in-depth information—much more than a typical encyclopedia entry—while remaining accessible and appealing to general and younger readers. Arranged alphabetically, the entries cover such writers as Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, and August Wilson; major works, such as Invisible Man, Native Son, and Their Eyes Were Watching God; and a range of cultural topics, including the black arts movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and the jazz aesthetic. Written by expert contributors, the essays discuss the enduring significance of these topics in American history and popular culture. Each entry also provides sidebars that highlight interesting information and suggestions for further reading.

19th century african american literature: African American Literature in Transition, 1800-1830: Volume 2, 1800-1830 Jasmine Nichole Cobb, 2021-05-13 African American literature in the years between 1800 and 1830 emerged from significant transitions in the cultural, technological, and political circulation of ideas. Transformations included increased numbers of Black organizations, shifts in the physical mobility of Black peoples, expanded circulation of abolitionist and Black newsprint as well as greater production of Black authored texts and images. The perpetuation of slavery in the early American republic meant that many people of African descent conveyed experiences of bondage or promoted abolition in complex ways, relying on a diverse array of print and illustrative forms. Accordingly, this volume takes a thematic approach to African American literature from 1800 to 1830, exploring Black organizational life before 1830, movement and mobility in African American literature, and print culture in circulation, illustration, and the narrative form.

19th century african american literature: *The Cambridge History of African American Literature* Maryemma Graham, Jerry Washington Ward, 2011-02-03 A major new history of the literary traditions, oral and print, of African-descended peoples in the United States.

19th century african american literature: African American Literature in Transition, 1865-1880: Volume 5, 1865-1880 Eric Gardner, 2021-05-13 This volume offers the most nuanced treatment available of Black engagement with print in the transitional years after the Civil War. It locates and studies materials that many literary historians leave out of narratives of American culture. But as important as such recovery work is, *African American Literature in Transition, 1865-1880* also emphasizes innovative approaches, recognizing that such recovery inherently challenges methods dominant in American literary study. At the book's core is the recognition that many period texts - by writers from Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and William Wells Brown to Mattie Jackson and William Steward - are not only aesthetically striking but also central to understanding key socio-historical and cultural trends in the nineteenth century. Chapters by leading scholars are grouped in three sections - 'Citizenships, Textualities, and Domesticities', 'Persons and Bodies', and 'Memories, Materialities, and Locations' - and focus on debates over race, nation, personhood, and print that were central to Reconstruction.

19th century african american literature: African American Literature Hans Ostrom, J. David Macey Jr., 2019-11-15 This essential volume provides an overview of and introduction to African American writers and literary periods from their beginnings through the 21st century. This compact encyclopedia, aimed at students, selects the most important authors, literary movements, and key topics for them to know. Entries cover the most influential and highly regarded African American writers, including novelists, playwrights, poets, and nonfiction writers. The book covers key periods of African American literature—such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Arts Movement, and the Civil Rights Era—and touches on the influence of the vernacular, including blues and hip hop. The volume provides historical context for critical viewpoints including feminism, social class, and racial politics. Entries are organized A to Z and provide biographies that focus on the contributions of key literary figures as well as overviews, background information, and definitions for key subjects.

19th century african american literature: William Cooper Nell, Nineteenth-century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist William Cooper Nell, 2002 For the first time, a biography of William Cooper Nell and a major portion of his articles for *The Liberator*, *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and *The North Star* have been published in a single volume. The book is the first to document the life and works of Nell and includes correspondence with many noted abolitionists such as Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, Amy Kirby Post and Charles Sumner.

19th century african american literature: African American Literature and the Classicist Tradition T. Walters, 2007-10-29 This is a groundbreaking study exploring the significant relationship between western classical mythology and African American women's literature. A comparative analysis of classical revisions by eighteenth and nineteenth century Black women writers Phillis Wheatley and Pauline Hopkins and twentieth century writers Gwendolyn Brooks, Toni Morrison, and Rita Dove reveals that Black women writers revise specific classical myths for artistic and political agency. The study demonstrates that women rework myth to represent mythical stories from the Black female perspective and to counteract denigrating contemporary cultural and social myths that disempower and devalue Black womanhood. Through their adaptations of classical myths about motherhood, Wheatley, Ray, Brooks, Morrison, and Dove uncover the shared experiences of mythic mothers and their contemporary African American counterparts thus offering a unique Black feminist perspective to classicism. The women also use myth as a liberating space where they can 'speak the unspeakable' and empower their subjects as well as themselves.

19th century african american literature: Encyclopedia of African-American Literature Wilfred D. Samuels, 2015-04-22 Presents a reference on African American literature providing profiles of notable and little-known writers and their works, literary forms and genres, critics and

scholars, themes and terminology and more.

19th century african american literature: Black Female Intellectuals in Nineteenth Century America Rebecca J. Fraser, 2022-12-30 Drawing on letters, personal testimony, works of art, novels, and historic Black newspapers, this book is an interdisciplinary exploration of Black women's contributions to the intellectual life of nineteenth-century America. *Black Female Intellectuals in Nineteenth Century America* reconceptualizes the idea of what the term intellectual means through its discussions of both familiar and often forgotten Black women, including Edmonia Lewis, Harriet Powers, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman, amongst others. This re-envisioning brings those who have previously been excluded from the scholarship of Black intellectualism more generally, and Black female intellectuals specifically, into the center of the debate. Importantly, it also situates the histories of Black women participating in the intellectual cultures of the United States much earlier than most previous scholarship. This book will be of interest to both undergraduate and postgraduate specialists and students in the fields of African American history, women's and gender history, and American studies, as well as general readers interested in historical and biographical works.

19th century african american literature: Black Women in New South Literature and Culture Sherita L. Johnson, 2009-09-11 This book focuses on the profound impact that racism had on the literary imagination of black Americans in the South. Sherita L. Johnson argues that it is impossible to consider what the South and what southernness mean without looking at how black women have contributed to and contested any unified definition of that region.

19th century african american literature: Ethnic American Literature Emmanuel S. Nelson, 2015-02-17 Unlike any other book of its kind, this volume celebrates published works from a broad range of American ethnic groups not often featured in the typical canon of literature. This culturally rich encyclopedia contains 160 alphabetically arranged entries on African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American literary traditions, among others. The book introduces the uniquely American mosaic of multicultural literature by chronicling the achievements of American writers of non-European descent and highlighting the ethnic diversity of works from the colonial era to the present. The work features engaging topics like the civil rights movement, bilingualism, assimilation, and border narratives. Entries provide historical overviews of literary periods along with profiles of major authors and great works, including Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Maya Angelou, Sherman Alexie, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *American Born Chinese*, and *The House on Mango Street*. The book also provides concise overviews of genres not often featured in textbooks, like the Chinese American novel, African American young adult literature, Mexican American autobiography, and Cuban American poetry.

19th century african american literature: A History of American Literature Richard Gray, 2011-09-23 Updated throughout and with much new material, *A History of American Literature*, Second Edition, is the most up-to-date and comprehensive survey available of the myriad forms of American Literature from pre-Columbian times to the present. The most comprehensive and up-to-date history of American literature available today Covers fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction, as well as other forms of literature including folktale, spirituals, the detective story, the thriller, and science fiction Explores the plural character of American literature, including the contributions made by African American, Native American, Hispanic and Asian American writers Considers how our understanding of American literature has changed over the past thirty years Situates American literature in the contexts of American history, politics and society Offers an invaluable introduction to American literature for students at all levels, academic and general readers

19th century african american literature: Bulletin MLSA University of Michigan. College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, 2007

19th century african american literature: Women in Medicine in Nineteenth-Century American Literature Sara L. Crosby, 2018-09-14 This book investigates how popular American literature and film transformed the poisonous woman from a misogynist figure used to exclude

women and minorities from political power into a feminist hero used to justify the expansion of their public roles. Sara Crosby locates the origins of this metamorphosis in Uncle Tom's Cabin where Harriet Beecher Stowe applied an alternative medical discourse to revise the poisonous Cassy into a doctor. The newly "medicalized" poisoner then served as a focal point for two competing narratives that envisioned the American nation as a multi-racial, egalitarian democracy or as a white and male supremacist ethno-state. Crosby tracks this battle from the heroic healers created by Stowe, Mary Webb, Oscar Micheaux, and Louisa May Alcott to the even more monstrous poisoners or "vampires" imagined by E. D. E. N. Southworth, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Theda Bara, Thomas Dixon, Jr., and D. W. Griffith.

19th century african american literature: African American Literature in Transition, 1900-1910: Volume 7 Shirley Moody-Turner, 2021-05-13 African American Literature in Transition, 1900-1910 offers a wide ranging, multi-disciplinary approach to early twentieth century African American literature and culture. It showcases the literary and cultural productions that took shape in the critical years after Reconstruction, but before the Harlem Renaissance, the period known as the nadir of African American history. It undercovers the dynamic work being done by Black authors, painters, photographers, poets, editors, boxers, and entertainers to shape 'New Negro' identities and to chart a new path for a new century. The book is structured into four key areas: Black publishing and print culture; innovations in genre and form; the race, class and gender politics of literary and cultural production; and new geographies of Black literary history. These overarching themes, along with the introduction of established figures and movement, alongside lesser known texts and original research, offer a radical re-conceptualization of this critical, but understudied period in African American literary history.

19th century african american literature: Bearing Witness to African American Literature Bernard W. Bell, 2012-05-15 An interdisciplinary, code-switching, critical collection by revisionist African American scholar and activist Bernard W. Bell. *Bearing Witness to African American Literature: Validating and Valorizing Its Authority, Authenticity, and Agency* collects twenty-three of Bernard W. Bell's lectures and essays that were first presented between 1968 and 2008. From his role in the culture wars as a graduate student activist in the Black Studies Movement to his work in the transcultural Globalization Movement as an international scholar and Fulbright cultural ambassador in Spain, Portugal, and China, Bell's long and inspiring journey traces the modern institutional origins and the contemporary challengers of African American literary studies. This volume is made up of five sections, including chapters on W. E. B. DuBois's theory and trope of double consciousness, an original theory of residually oral forms for reading the African American novel, an argument for an African Americentric vernacular and literary tradition, and a deconstruction of the myths of the American melting pot and literary mainstream. Bell considers texts by contemporary writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, William Styron, James Baldwin, and Jean Toomer, as well as works by Mark Twain, Frederick Douglass, and William Faulkner. In a style that ranges from lyricism to the classic jeremiad, Bell emphasizes that his work bears the imprint of many major influences, including his mentor, poet and scholar Sterling A. Brown, and W. E. B. DuBois. Taken together, the chapters demonstrate Bell's central place as a revisionist African American literary and cultural theorist, historian, and critic. *Bearing Witness to African American Literature* will be an invaluable introduction to major issues in the African American literary tradition for scholars of American, African American, and cultural studies.

19th century african american literature: 70+ Anthology. African American literature. Novels and short stories. Poetry. Non-fiction. Essays. Illustrated Frederick Douglass, Nella Larsen, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Jean Toomer, Phillis Wheatley, Frances E. W. Harper, James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Harriet Jacobs, Booker T. Washington, William Still, W. E. B. Du Bois, 2025-05-05 African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. It begins with the works of such late 18th-century writers as Phillis Wheatley. Before the high point of enslaved people narratives, African-American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual

narratives. The genre known as slave narratives in the 19th century were accounts by people who had generally escaped from slavery, about their journeys to freedom and ways they claimed their lives. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s was a great period of flowering in literature and the arts, influenced both by writers who came North in the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands. The collection includes works by such prominent masters of American literature as Frederick Douglass, Nella Larsen, Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Phillis Wheatley, Langston Hughes, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois and many others. Contents: Novels and short stories Frederick Douglass The Heroic Slave Nella Larsen Quicksand Passing The Wrong Man Freedom Sanctuary Alice Dunbar-Nelson A Carnival Jangle Violets The Woman Ten Minutes Musing Titee Charles W. Chesnutt The Goophered Grapevine Po' Sandy Sis' Becky'S Pickaninny The Doll The Wife Of His Youth Paul Laurence Dunbar The Scapegoat Jean Toomer Becky Poetry Phillis Wheatley To The Right Honourable William, Earl Of Dartmouth On Virtue An Hymn To The Morning An Hymn To The Evening Frances E. W. Harper Bury Me In A Free Land Songs For The People My Mother's Kiss A Grain Of Sand Our Hero The Sparrow'S Fall James Weldon Johnson Sence You Went Away Paul Laurence Dunbar The Lesson Sympathy We Wear The Mask Claude McKay After The Winter If We Must Die The Tropics In New York Countee Cullen For Paul Laurence Dunbar Incident Langston Hughes The Weary Blues Jazzonia Negro Dancers The Cat And The Saxophone (2 A. M.) Young Singer Cabaret To Midnight Nan At Leroy'S To A Little Lover-Lass, Dead Harlem Night Club Nude Young Dancer Young Prostitute To A Black Dancer In "The Little Savoy" Song For A Banjo Dance Blues Fantasy Lenox Avenue: Midnight Non-fiction Frederick Douglass Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass Harriet Jacobs Incidents In The Life Of A Slave Girl Booker T. Washington Up From Slavery William Still UNDERGROUND RAILROAD Henry Box Brown James Hambleton Christian Theophilus Collins Seth Concklin William and Ellen Craft Abram Galloway and Richard Eden Charles Gilbert Samuel Green Jamie Griffin Harry Grimes James Hamlet and Others John Henry Hill Ann Maria Jackson and Her Seven Children Jane Johnson Matilda Mahoney Mary Frances Melvin Aunt Hannah Moore Alfred S. Thornton Essays W. E. B. Du Bois The Souls Of Black Folk Charles W. Chesnutt The Disfranchisement Of The Negro Paul Laurence Dunbar Representative American Negroes

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