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## Social Implications in Negro Poetry: A Study in Negro Poetic Expression

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Social Implications in Negro Poetry  
A Study in Negro Poetic Expression

by

Robert Baker Wynne

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Robert Baker Wynn

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS

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ERRATA

Disregard lack of p. 129: Read consecutively from p. 228 to p. 230.

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To

Nina V. Wynne

Her love made this possible.

## I See And Am Satisfied

The vision of a scion of a despised and rejected race, the span of whose life is measured by the years of its Golden Jubilee, and whose fancy, like the vine that girdles the tree-trunk, runneth both forward and back.

I see the African savage as he drinks his palmy wine, and basks in the sunshine of his native bliss, and is happy.

I see the man-catcher, impelled by thirst of gold, as he entraps his simple-souled victim in the snares of bondage and death, by use of force or guile.

I see the ocean basin whitened with his bones, and the ocean current running red with his blood, amidst the hellish horrors of the middle passage.

I see him laboring for two centuries and a half in unrequited toil, making the hillsides of our southland to glow with the snow-white fleece of cotton, and the valleys to glisten with the golden sheaves of grain.

I see him silently enduring cruelty and torture indescribable, with flesh flinching beneath the sizz of angry whip or quivering under the gnaw of the sharp-toothed bloodhound.

I see a chivalric civilization instinct with dignity, comity and grace rising upon pillars supported by his strength and brawny arm.

I see the swarthy matron lavishing her soul in altruistic devotion upon the offspring of her alabaster mistress.

I see the haughty sons of a haughty race pouring out their lustful passions upon black womanhood, filling our land with a bronzed and tawny brood.

I see also the patriarchal solicitude of the kindly-hearted owners of men, in whose breast not even iniquitous system could sour the milk of human kindness.

I hear the groans, the sorrows, the sighings, the soul striving of these benighted creatures of God, rising up from the low grounds of sorrow and reaching the ear of Him Who regardeth man of the lowliest estate.

I strain my ear to supernal sound, and I hear in the secret chambers of the Almighty the order to the Captain of Host to break his bond and set him free.

I see Abraham Lincoln, himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, arise to execute the high decree.

I see two hundred thousand black boys in blue bearing their breasts to the bayonets of the enemy, that their race might have some slight part in its own deliverance.



- I see the great Proclamation delivered in the year of my birth of which I became the first fruit and beneficiary.
- I see the assassin striking down the great Emancipator; and the house of mirth is transformed into the Golgotha of the nation.
- I watch the Congress as it adds to the Constitution new words, which make the document a charter of liberty indeed.
- I see the new-made citizen running to and fro in the first fruit of his new-found freedom.
- I see him rioting in the flush of privilege which the nation had vouchsafed, but destined, alas, not long to last.
- I see him thrust down from the high seat of political power, by fraud and force, while the nation looks on in sinister silence and acquiescent guilt.
- I see the tide of public feeling run cold and chilly, as the visl of racial wrath is wreaked upon his bowed and defenceless head.
- I see his body writhing in the agony of death as his groans issue from the crackling flames, while the funeral pyre lights the midnight sky with its dismal glare. My heart sinks with heaviness within me.
- I see that the path of progress has never taken a straight line, but has always been a zigzag course amid the conflicting forces of right and wrong, truth and error, justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy.
- I see that the great generous American Heart, despite the temporary flutter, will finally beat true to the higher human impulse, and my soul abounds with reassurance and hope.
- I see his marvellous advance in the acquisition of knowledge and acquirement of things material, and attainment in the higher pursuits of life, with his face fixed upon that light which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.
- I see him who was once deemed stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, now entering with universal welcome into the patrimony of mankind, and I look calmly upon the centuries of blood and tears and travail of soul, and am satisfied.

## PREFACE

That the field of Negro Poetry does not as yet offer material suited to a valuable study in critical evaluation, is a frequent statement. I am inclined to agree with this conclusion. Not wholly true, it is, nevertheless, more true than false. But the amazingly large amount of Negro poetry, much of it written in periods of social duress and during personal maladjustment, affords a wide field rich in sociological significance.

My interest in Negro poetry is not critical. Worthwhile criticism of Negro poetry demands, more than any other field of poetry of the last two hundred years, a thorough knowledge of poetics; for Negro poetry has a range including the very worst in lyricism and the very best in vers libre, exceedingly poor attempts at prose-poetry and fine portrayals of dramatic characterization, poor form and noble content, mawkish sentimentality and terse, excellent expressions of deepest feeling and loftiest passion. I make no literary appraisal that is of more than secondary importance to the main discussion of the sociological pregnancy of Negro poetry.

My primary interest in Negro poetry is as a medium of measurement of the Negro's growth in America, though I do not attempt to measure this growth. My concern lies in pointing out sociological sign-posts in the poetry, and in the establishment of Negro poetry as a possible slide-rule for students of sociology. Students other than myself, students more scientifically trained in social statistics and measurement, must be the ones to use this anthropo-social and politically-racial medium. Without the proper scientific instruments, an attempt to prove through a study of the poetry of any race that progress has occurred over a given span of years is always more provocative than scientifically conclusive.

My purpose is to bring to the attention of students of literature and sociology the latent possibilities existing within this coordinated study. My purpose is to combine the major and minor facts of both Negro poetry and sociology into a stable truth built upon research in both fields. If this study in any way promotes and develops within the students of English and the Social Sciences an interest of one for the other's field of knowledge, then a further purpose will have been fulfilled.

I am happy to express my gratitude to the many who have been of assistance to me in this work. For the encouragement and inspiration afforded me by Mr. Sterling A. Brown and Mrs. Annie F. Beale, I am especially thankful. Dr. Earl Gregg Swann, Librarian of the College of William and Mary, extended scholarly aid, as did Mr. Roberts, at the Library of Congress. Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Porter, of Howard University, made possible the use of rare books in the Negro collections of Howard University Library. Miss Jones, Mrs. Thurston, and the several assistants of the Huntington Memorial Library of Hampton Institute, rendered unusual service in the tracing and locating of rare books. Dr. Grace Warren Landrum, Dr. Jess Hamilton Jackson, Dr. Daniel James Blocker, Mr. John Rochelle Lee Johnson, Mr. Graves Glenwood Clark, and Mr. W. Melville Jones were also helpful.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Poetry of the American Negro, A Statement

There are no young poets of America more widely read than the Negro poets of to-day. Their volumes of poetry become quickly the "best-sellers" of modern, contemporary poets of the United States. The young intellectuals of the age read and discuss Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Sterling Brown, Langston Hughes, and Claude McKay as widely and as eagerly as they read Edward Arlington Robinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Carl Sandburg, Robinson Jeffers, and Vachel Lindsay. One may not know everything about these black poets, one may not praise them highly, but they are more than interesting, more than entertaining, more than a moment's hobby. None of the poets in all the field of American Negro poetry builds upon the best in the classic worlds as well as do Robinson Jeffers and E. A. Robinson. None of our black bards has perfected the beauty of the lyric to the degree attained by Leonora Speyer, Millay, Dickinson, and Robert Frost—though one cannot be wholly secure in the comparison with Frost. The black poets are equally as effective as white poets in dramatic appeal and startling effects in thought. In prose-poetic and versu libris forms they startle one as much as, yet no more than, Carl Sandburg and Amy Lowell. The redoubtable Lowell of Patterson and John Keats is incomparable, however, and as we grow to forget the anecdotes of Carl Sandburg's pedestrian, white-hair-blowing-in-the-breeze tours about Chicago we shall be less and less impressed by the Gertrude Stein proportions in his literary productions. The Negro poets of the present day, the Negro poets of the past, have not attained the high, perfected standards in poetics the white poets have attained. But they have always been as interesting, as breath-taking, as fascinating and as clever as their lighter brothers. The American public reads and discourses

upon the output of these Negro poets because of the content rather than the form of their poems. The American lovers of poetry are interested in the wealth of thought rather than the lack of classic perfection in the poems of the American Negro.

There may be several reasons for this predominant affection for the dark lyrics. The Negro draws almost wholly upon his deepest sense experiences; his general, expressive soul comes out through his singing, blue-red, thickened, muscular lips rather than through his head. Despite the fact that the modern Negro poet in America writes in free verse and assumes easily an air of impressionism and expressionism, one feels, after a thorough-going study and classification of over twelve hundred poems by American Negroes, that the Negro poet is primarily half-primitive in feeling and but secondary in literary composition. After talking with several outstanding Negro poets of the day, one suspects the Negro poet is primitive and a searcher of his ethnological cultural past, and a singer of social wrongs because he wants to be just that sort of poet. More than growth in form and manner of expression, he is interested in telling anyone who will hear him exactly what he thinks and feels about back doors, kitchen picnics, Jim Crow laws, race prejudice (the raw and rare-flesh propaganda of the unthinking masses of both races), himself, his loved ones, his attainments, nature, religion, politics, or even mythology and electrical rejuvenation if such happens to strike his mind. Whereas the Negro has not become a skilled technician in the medium of poetical composition, he has become an individual in his feelings—and, happily, racial or group-minded in his expression of them. One likes the Negro poet for his individual experience turned neatly into group significance. As a writer, the Negro gains a great

deal by the lack of Nordic egocentricity. Often he is an individual, but never an individualist; he is a singer for his people.

Because we are becoming a socially-minded nation in a federating world, we are, through our racial interests, attuned to the Negro's joyous song and to his lament. Because of international objectivity we attain more of a national subjectivity. Much of Negro poetry deals with the internal and introspective qualities of the "race problem" of America. The black minstrel dwells upon racial discrimination, racial mixture, racial sorrows—to him these are the deepest channels of tragedy and drama. Undoubtedly his period of racial accentuation in poetry has diminished and he has entered upon a period of transition, going toward a state of lyrical refinement and emasculated expression—a future most of us deplore for Negro poetry, though such a change always makes for growth in form if not in content—though the transition is no more literary than sociological. Regardless of social and racial "messages" within the poems, the form of Negro Poetry has grown from a primitive to a cultivated state. Of course, the Negro poet is not writing beautiful lyrics and forgetting to cry out his hates and sorrows—many critics regard the Negro literary production of the last five years as being swamped by the permeating, unrestrained cry of the mulattoes against their position in life—but the Negro has approached emasculated form as well as unusually virile content. He has become predominantly subjective in thought, and objective in form. He has become an introvert in poetic emotion, and an extrovert in the adoption of his inner personal thought to group needs, and in the widespread publication of it. The combination is always interesting at any time, especially if there is some racial taboo just beyond the printed word. One finds the taboo and the longing for a more lasting freedom and a more complete national assimilation

renewed and renewed throughout Negro poetry. And these notes of poetic sociology interest a growing and problem-breeding nation so closely attentive to international and racial studies.

Because, from all sides, we live in an age of cacophonous rhythm, the true jass of the African tom-tom, we catch eagerly at the swaying, hip-jerking, soulful songs of the Negro poets of America. The once gently-swaying, arm-pressing lullaby of the old Negro "mummy" of the South has grown into a national symphonic spiritual-jass opera in which we see the Negro among his tobacco, cotton, potatoes, rice, on the flooded, stormy delta, in a border-state mecca, in a Harlem cafe, in a Birmingham "diggings," low-crouched before a piano, drifting upon the sound-waves of a guitar, following the beckoning twist of a sepic hip, virile, alive, semi-primitive, extra-dramatic, figuratively lovable and socially magical,—singing, sobbing, fighting, strutting, moaning, swaying, dying, his song the best antidote for his sorrows. Our age is definitely interested in the musical romance of this dark brother,<sup>1</sup> More interested in what the Negro has to say about his problems than in his problems themselves, one suspects, the public is, nevertheless, sympathetically aware of the constant and impelling attention demanded of it by Negro poets of our own cotton fields, arid wastes, Harlem "flats," and American "gin mills." We have come definitely to a point where we are interested socially and poetically in the inner suffering of group tribulations; we are at the threshold of a period of social knighthood; we are alert and sensitive, philanthropically minded toward the vicissitudes of our dark brother, who is still socially and sociologically shackled. The sob-not-without-laughter, the joyous melancholy hum of the growing impetus of the Negro race is not unpleasant to the ears of the present-day intellectuals. The group of Negro

poets has us in its muscular, vibrant pain. Subconsciously, we study the Negro through his poetry more and more: consciously, we come now to regard his poetry as a medium of measurement of his growth and aspiring progressiveness.

The thesis of the cultured world of to-day is The Negro is Above All Interesting. He is more than entertaining, no longer merely a mark for laughter, no longer an inferior individual, when environment allows him to become an individual, no longer an outsider and an alien in our Anglo-Saxon world. Many of us may still regard him as an alien, a problem, but much of our regard is the result of hasty, often ignorant, judgments, failure to understand him as a racial yet a national integer, failure to know what he is thinking and often a total disregard of his needs as a citizen, as a person imbued with the nucleus for the development of a soul, as a national kinsman.

<sup>2</sup> The Negro has a far better chance of knowing the white man than the latter has of knowing the Negro. ....The white man has voluntarily admitted the Negro into every phase of his life from birth to death, from play to religion....Black servitors have over and over again been trusted with the management of their masters' affairs....Negroes and white people have played, worked, fought, struggled, and suffered together since the black man's entry into this country; and segregation laws to the contrary notwithstanding, those same relations continue to a degree of which few are aware except those immediately concerned....the Negro is in touch with every stratum and grade of white society, from the worst to the best. In these relations the white man tends more and more to lay aside reserve and let those around him see him as he is. At the same time the Negro cultivates a reserve which is not only his own defense but serves to commend him to the esteem of his employer. As a matter of fact, this reserve is a part of that "knowing his place" which is highly commended in everyone who serves where personal contacts are needed, and is particularly approved in the Negro.



.....In spite of emancipation Negroes still feel it necessary to conceal their thoughts from white people. In speech and in manner they may convey the impression of concurrence and contentment when at heart they feel quite otherwise. In these recent days the psychologists have come to call this a "defense mechanism," and some are sure that it is the only thing that enables the Negro to survive in his contact with the white man. Negroes are sometimes warned, even now, that they dare not manifest any resentment toward mistreatment; that the safest policy to pursue is to acquiesce in the judgment of those white people who have manifested a friendly attitude toward them and appeal to their consciences for the redressing of wrongs and correction of abuses. Small wonder that the Negro is so generally secretive. So it is that there is a whole region of thought and feeling among them of similar character with which those outside the race are thoroughly unacquainted. A large part of the Negro's humor is based on these reserves in his attitude toward white people. There is a play by Du Bose and Dorothy Heyward called Porgy based on Negro life in Charleston, which takes its title from the leading character. There is a scene where an officious looking white man comes into "Catfish Alley" looking for the hero. No one knows "Porgy," never even heard of him, till the man about to depart says he had just come to help him in his difficulty, when knowledge and intelligence burst forth on every countenance and a dozen voices exclaim in crescendo, "Oh, Porgy! You're lookin' for Porgy! Yes, we know him," and a dozen hands are stretched forth to show the visitor where Porgy lives....Where firmness is required rather than sympathy, where ruthlessness is the order of the day rather than consideration, a white man who "knows the Negro" is the most effective agent procurable. What he doesn't know about the Negro is the factor that produces the race problem."

The least of the Anglo-Saxon's inventions and improvements of the twentieth century is the Negro.

The thesis of this study is: The Poetry of the Negro in America is an Excellent Medium of Measurement of the Problems of Growth of the American Negro. Critics and writers express this thought again and again, some more clearly than others, a few discussing it briefly.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps one may re-lize more readily through a brief and introductory discussion of the author's own classification of poems by Negro authors the significance and truth of the statement that Negro poetry is a medium of measurement of the Negro race in America.<sup>4</sup> Over twelve hundred poems have been examined; the number is important in that the field of Negro poetry was not thoroughly covered before the twelve hundred mark had been reached. The best poems available were studied. After a poem was read it was classified according to its subject matter--- the titles are often quite misleading---and entered under the group heading describing its message or contents or purpose. Often a poem had to be classified under several headings before the range of its thought was completely exhausted and measured. From this classification one sees that the Negro poet in America has written of numerous ideas on love, nature, racial injustice, religion, the poetical significance of death, "mulattoism," classical themes, industry, nationalism, and of ideas falling under twenty other subject-headings. The fact that he has developed so many ideas and discussed so many conditions is indicative of growth in, and a grasp of, ideas. The fact that he has in very few cases written of them in perfected poetic form will indicate a lack of growth in the pure technique of poetry but will not deny the fact of his growth in ideas. A more searching study of this classified compilation appears in a later division of this work.<sup>5</sup>

HERITAGE

What is Africa to me:  
 Copper sun or scarlet sea,  
 Jungle star or jungle track,  
 Strong bronzed men, or regal black  
 Women from whose loins I sprang  
 When the birds of Eden sang?  
One three centuries removed  
From the scenes his father loved,  
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,  
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who all day long  
 Want no sound except the song  
 Sung by wild barbaric birds  
 \* \* \* \* \*

So I lie, who always hear,  
 Though I cram against my ear  
 Both my thumbs, and keep them there,  
 Great drums throbbing through the air.  
 So I lie, whose fount of pride,  
 Dear distress, and joy allied,  
 In my somber flesh and skin,  
 With the dark blood dammed within....  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Africa? A book one thumb  
 Listlessly, till slumber comes.  
 Unremembered are her bats  
 Circling through the night, her cats  
 Crouching in the river reeds,  
 Stalking gentle flesh that feeds  
 By the river bank;....  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Silver snakes that once a year  
 Doff the lovely coats you wear,....  
 \* \* \* \* \*

....bodies sleek and wet,  
 Dripping mingled rain and sweat,  
 Tread the savage measures of  
 Jungle boys and girls in love.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

While its primal measures drip  
 Through my body crying, "Strip!  
 Doff this new exuberance.  
 Come and dance the Lover's Dance!"  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Quaint, outlandish heathen gods  
 Black men fashion out of rods,  
 Clay, and brittle bits of stone,  
 In a likeness like their own,

My conversion came high-priced;  
 I belong to Jesus Christ,  
 Preacher of humility;  
 Heathen gods are naught to me.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
 So I make an idle boast;  
 Jesus of the twice-turned cheek,  
 Lamb of God, although I speak  
 With my mouth thus, in my heart  
 Do I play a double part.

Lord, I fashion dark gods, too,  
 Daring even to give You  
 Dark despairing features where,  
 Crowned with dark rebellious hair.....

Lord, forgive me if my need  
 Sometimes shapes a human creed.

All day long and all night through,  
 One thing only must I do:  
 Quench my pride and cool my blood,  
 Lest I perish in the flood,  
 Lest a hidden ember set  
 Timber that I thought was wet  
 Burning like the dryest flax,  
 Walking like the serpent wax,  
 Lest the grave restore its dead,  
 Not wet has my heart or head  
 In the least way realized  
 They and I are civilized.

Countée Callen

. . .

PART I

The African Heritage of the American Negro

The need to study the Negro in Africa; Authorities; Race Division; Ethnographical conditions; Physical geography; The peoples; Customs; Cultures; Religions; Tahona and cults; Literature of the African Negro; Conclusions.

An historical survey of the Negro in America, his folk-lore, songs, early poetry, and the sociological conditions from early slavery through emancipation, the new era of freedom and the effects of the World War to the present time will make possible a comparison and collation of materials, and a proof of the thesis of this study. But before one makes a study of the Negro in America, one should be familiar with the Negro in Africa, his native habitat for centuries, the birthplace of his cultures, the temple of his original religious expression, the background of his American scene in the drama of his sociological poetry. So it is that one must turn to Africa, continent of mysteries, land of voodoo, region of heat and cold, area of many cultures.

Whether true or not, whether scholarly or not, the following statements made by William Wells Brown in his book, The Black Man, are exceedingly interesting:<sup>6</sup>

"That, in the earliest periods of history, the Ethiopians had attained a high degree of civilization, there is every reason to believe; and that to the learning and science derived from them we must ascribe those wonderful monuments which still exist to attest the power and skill of the ancient Egyptians.

"Among those who favor this opinion is our own distinguished countryman, Alexander H. Everett, and upon this evidence I base my argument. Volney assumes it as a settled point that the Egyptians were black. Herodotus, who travelled extensively through that interesting land, set them down as black, with curled hair, and having the Negro features. The sacred writers were aware of their complexion; hence, the question, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin?' The

image of the Negro is engraved upon the monuments of Egypt, not as bondman, but as master of art. The Sphinx, one of the wonders of the world, surviving the wreck of centuries, exhibits these same features at the present day. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was supposed to have been an African princess. Atlas, whose shoulders sustained the globe, and even the great Jupiter Ammon himself, were located by the mythologists in Africa. Though there may not be much in these fables, they teach us, nevertheless, who were then considered the nobles of the human race. Euclid, Homer, and Plato were Ethiopians. Terence, the most refined and accomplished scholar of his time, was of the same race. Hanno, the father of Hamilcar, and grandfather of Hannibal, was a Negro. These are the antecedents of the enslaved blacks on this continent."

According to the scholarly opinion of M. J. Herskovits, "our knowledge of the African ancestry of the American Negro is of the vaguest."<sup>7</sup>

Many authorities show us that our Negroes were for the most part exported from the Guinea Coast of West Africa, but, as Herskovits points out, "we can only guess from how far inland they came."<sup>8</sup> Booker T. Washington, in his book, The Story of the Negro, propounds the same thought:

"Slaves were probably brought to America from every part of Africa, for the slave trade seems to have penetrated, before it ended, to every corner of the continent. But the large number of them came, undoubtedly, from the West Coast."<sup>9</sup>

In the same work, Washington emphasizes the need to know the Negro in Africa:

"I have sought to emphasize the vastness of the territories which divide them one from another; the variety of physical types in which they are represented; the complicated social relations that sometimes exist between them, and the difficulty of making general statements, laying down general laws that hold good at all times and all places for all of the African peoples.

"There is, however, a tie which few white men can understand, which binds the American Negro to the African Negro;..... which is constantly drawing into closer relations all the scattered African peoples whether they are in the old world or the new.

"There is not only the tie of race, which is a string in any case, but there is the bond of colour, which is especially important in the case of the black men."<sup>10</sup>

The average American white man in thinking of the Negroes, regards them as being of one unit, attributing to them certain traits, which, supposedly, are common to all groups and all localities. This attitude is not scientific, however; it may be likened to any attempt to classify the Aryan peoples as a homogeneous unit having common features and traits. Despite the fact that Booker T. Washington is correct in pointing out the fact that all Negroes, wherever their location, are bound by the ties of race and color, one must be strictly mindful of the fact that the Negroes of the world, just as are the Aryans, are scattered over a great area, live in different environments, and have varied and opposite mental and physical characteristics. The Negro races of the world differ from each other even more widely than the different branches of the Aryan stock. They differ in appearance, in stature, physiognomy, and mental and moral constitution. Especially are these facts true of the African Negroes.<sup>11</sup> They differ in the matter and degree of assimilation of the old-world cultures seeping down into Africa centuries ago.<sup>12</sup> They differ in the matters of superstitions, religions, folk-ways and whatever literary expression they may have produced as racial units, though in the literary output more similarity is to be found than in any other item of differences.<sup>13</sup> To speak of all Negroes in Africa as being of one unit system is misleading and unscientific, and no more correct than to consider all Europeans and Americans as of one race, attributing, in such a consideration, the same traits to them. They do not have the same climatic conditions; the terrain differs widely; they live upon different food substances. The native Negroes of Africa are widely different in many respects, having at the same time a certain likeness and common inheritance from the ethnographical racial stems. There is the great need to know the African, as well as one may in

a study of this nature, if one is to make an intelligent and comprehensive study of the sociological significances of the Negro in America. This need is well expressed by W. D. Weatherford as he approaches the gist of his study in The Negro From Africa To America:<sup>14</sup>

"The student of the American Negro today must come to his task with a knowledge of the Negro's past if he is to really understand him at the present. He must be willing to judge him as to the distance he has traveled since he left his African home, rather than compare him with the white man who has had thousands of years to start. He must recognize that traits built upon a race during long centuries cannot be bred out in a few years or even in a few decades, and that political and economic life of the present American Negro, in the light of his background, is nothing less than amazing. ....It is only when we study the race with such a background in view, that we are able to estimate his true capacity.....<sup>15</sup> ...It has been said that we do not and cannot really know a man until we know that from which he has reacted."<sup>16</sup>

Tillinghast says:

17 "United under our flag are two streams of racial heredity; the one had its origin and development in the north temperate zone, the other in the torrid zone. Before meeting here, the one had evolved an hereditary endowment, delicately adjusted to the highest civilization recorded in history; the other remained in benighted slavery. We have never for a moment dreamed that the nature of the Caucasian element in our population could be understood, if its long career in Europe were ignored. Infinite pains have been taken, therefore, to trace and interpret its history from the beginning. But what of the African? How many of us have definite ideas regarding the conditions which molded him through and through, long before we took him in hand? How many of us have in mind accurate data, by which to distinguish hereditary survival from acquired character? Yet, unless we can do this, we have no measure of his real progress under American tutelage, and therefore, no basis for estimating his probable future. We are left to deal with a compound, the proportion of whose elements we do not know.

"It may be questioned whether the African life of the Negro has been completely neglected. As a matter of fact, occasional notice has been taken of it, yet in a manner quite useless for modern purposes. In Philadelphia, as early as 1789, a little book was published by Anthony Bencket, entitled, Some Historical Account of Guinea. In it one finds a compilation of facts re-



garding the natives of West Africa, but the author evinced a strong bias in his selection and grouping of these facts, it being his philanthropic desire to show that the negroes were a much higher people than those interested in the slave-trade represented them to be. A contrary bias is revealed by one Josiah Priest, who published at Albany, in 1844, a book with the title, "The Origin and Character of the Negro Race." This sounds promising; but the fact that an entire chapter is devoted to proving that the curse of Noah on the race of Ham, as a judicial act, is endorsed by the law of Moses (Cf. p. 89, op. cit.), reveals its general spirit. Again, The Negroes in Negro-land, put forth in 1868, by Hinton T. Helper, as a protest against the pending proposition to enfranchise the freedmen, is simply a catalogue of verbatim quotations from works on Africa, regardless of the region our Negroes came from, and selected with a view to prove them as low as possible. In his two volume work, A History of the American Negro, George W. Williams, himself a mulatto, discusses in an introductory part the West African natives, but the execution is thoroughly unscientific, for example, his opening chapter relies almost solely upon scripture texts to prove the unity of human origin, no use being made of ethnological data. He hurries over this part superficially, giving attention principally to the race history in America, and here he seems to have done conscientious work of permanent value.

"This list, while not exhaustive, is thoroughly representative."

Realizing fully this need to know conditions in the past of the American Negro, and seeing plainly any satisfaction of this need must come through study of African background, the way is clear, but in no way easy. Authorities differ in their opinions and findings—opinions and discoveries supposedly scientific. Miss Kingsley and many others have been accused by their fellows of not knowing thoroughly the many varying languages with which they came in contact during their travel-studies. They are accused of allowing sentiment to creep into their accounts, on relying too much upon the words of native story tellers, witch doctors, tribal leaders. Miss Kingsley has been classed with Ellis and Dennet as being biased, without a complete knowledge of the African dialects with which she deals and subject to a fervent imagination. This accusation is no doubt correctly made by Stephen Septimus

Furrow in his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1924. But authorities seem to agree that Miss Kingsley's general statements are not wholly worthless. Many of the so-called authorities have been missionaries, weighted down with religious sentiment and doctrines; others have applied not only religion to their opinions but have likewise applied the conclusions regarding language, customs and folk-lore occurring in one section where they have spent years to the same phenomena occurring in other sections in which they have touched more lightly, or not at all. Despite these difficulties, one can be fairly well informed, and correctly, if one hews closely to the most outstanding writers. These are determined by a measurement of scientific approach to the problem at hand, the degree of regard they receive from other writers in the field, the frequency with which they are quoted and agreed with. With cross-checking and constant attention to details, one may determine the best writers in the field of African studies; as in any other field, enough material may be collected on the peoples of Africa, their cultures, customs, religious systems, literature (proverbs, folk-lore, animal stories, folk-verification) and general traits.

The Negro is of the Nigratian system of the Ethiopian race. The word race nearly always causes confusion. The masses often use the term for purposes of blanket phraseology. The scientist has his own special attitude toward the term, and often colors his set of remarks with his own specialization. Herskovits sounds the same worried note in many of his discussions:<sup>18</sup>

"What is a race? It is a question often asked and too readily answered, for we use it with amazing looseness. Not only do we apply it to the larger divisions of mankind, but we also speak of races when we have reference to nations, linguistic stocks, or cultured groups. I know of no definition of race that is both clear-cut and adequate; and yet the

question is fundamental to all discussions of the part of the biological basis of society (or race, if you wish to make the two synonymous) is said to play in the formation and maintenance of the bewildering variety of cultures which man has devised, and which some students are fond of rating as 'higher' or 'lower.' That the biological element in the make-up of the human being is very important, no one will deny; but just what its importance is, remains one of the greatest puzzles of the biological sciences."

Perhaps one may enliven the question by calling to the reader's attention

that "in this crude world in which we live, it is of importance to determine not what races are, but what men call races when they manifest racial antipathy."<sup>19</sup> This one cannot accurately determine, but one gets something of an idea of what is meant when studying the United States Government Immigration Pamphlets where the words Irish, Welsh, Bohemian, African and Spanish-American are listed as "races."<sup>20</sup> Because we have often used the word race incorrectly, as well as correctly, one should try to think of it as scientifically as possible, as meaning a great division of mankind, composed of tribes, nations, political groups or even allied countries, descended from a common stock, having the same distinguishing characteristics maintained to the same degree of purity—or impurity, according to the era of investigation. And if we think of race in this manner, we may perhaps define Negro. By Negro is meant a person belonging to the typical African branch of the Nigritish branch of the Ethiopian race. The Ethiopian race includes the Negro, the Bantu, the Negrito peoples, the Bejas, the Gallas, and often the Somalis. The Nigritian stem is distinct from the Hottentot stem. The outstanding characteristics of the Negro are tall stature, and often powerful physique, extreme dolichocephaly, convex forehead, prognathous jaws with large teeth, flat, broad nose, everted lips, wooly hair, and dark brown to sooty complexion.

Students of the Negro disagree as to his inclusive and exclusive limits of family groups. Many classify the Kaffirs, the Bushmen, the Bantu,

and the Negritoes as Negroes. The most distinguished scholars have come to regard these groups not as true Negroes but rather as racial units having classifications not wholly aligned with those of the true Negro.

21 "The true Negro is mainly confined to the neighborhood of the Guinea coast, including Nigeria and the French Sudan with some part of the Cameroons and, perhaps, the Congo. The rest of Negro Africa consists of Negroes hemicized to a varying extent: on the one hand the Banja, on the other hand the Nilotes and the "Half-Hamites"....

"West Africa, the home of the true Negro, may be regarded as extending from the mouth of the Senegal River....to the eastern boundary of Nigeria....Politically, no part of Africa is more confused, consisting as it does of a system of enclaves stretching back from the coast, each originating in a coastal trading center established between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, and now belonging alternately to France and Great Britain, with a single remaining Portuguese possession and the Liberian Black Republic of liberated slaves to add to the confusion....these facts....explain the origin of such terms as "Slave Coast," "Gold Coast,"....These enclaves....are Senegal (Fr.), Gambia (Br.), Portuguese Guinea, French Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory Coast (Fr.), the Gold Coast (Br.), Dahomey (Fr.), and Nigeria (Br.), all extending inland and embedded as it were in that great portion of Africa generally called the French Sudan.

"According to Haddon, the main physical characters of the true Negro are: black skin, wooly hair, a tall stature averaging about 68 inches, moderate dolichocephaly (average cephalic index 74-75), a flat broad nose, thick often everted lips, and frequently a considerable degree of prognathism."

The geography of the African continent is enlightening in the study of this Negro subject of the Ethiopian race. One of the first things an American child learns about Africa is the predominating heat of its climate; and the one predominating thought of the American adult is that Africa has the warmest of climates. Largely this is true, but not wholly exhaustive in geographical description. Weatherford discusses the African heat conditions as follows:

22 "Were it not for the fact that great stretches of the continent rise to high plateaus, the heat of the continent

would be unendurable. As it is, the western coast from the mouth of the Gambia River, at twelve degrees north latitude, to the settlement of Benguela, at fourteen degrees south latitude, is a section of very heavy rainfall, heavy forestation, and humid climate. The annual rainfall in this section varies from 100 inches along the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, the Slave Coast, and the Kamerun section, to between twenty and forty inches at the latitude of Benguela. This is the section....from which most of the American slaves were drawn, and the influence of these climatic conditions on the development of the ancestors of our slaves.... have a very vital bearing....There is no uniformity of type, but great variety, due to climate, food supply, labor, and various other modifying causes.....The climate and humidity are such as to discourage all regular work and hence slavery has been long known, both as a means of employing war captives and as a method of escaping that which is decidedly loathsome to the more powerful of the natives."

Here, Weatherford, speaking of several matters, is above all mindful of the effects of the raised plateau-lands of the continent, and of the varying weather conditions caused by these raised levels under a tropical sun. This matter of heat and weather modifies, and even conditions, after centuries, the modus vivendi of the African Negroes. Heat will effect and affect slavery, customs, cultures and emotions, especially the emotions attendant upon religious expression and war. Heat, or the lack of heat, is an important item in the background of any race or stem of races. Tillinghast points out that Africa is a "vast plateau" comparable to an "inverted plate" of irregular shape."<sup>23</sup> He says:

"On almost every side the high lands approach the coast line, then slope rapidly to the sea, sometimes by a gently terraced formation, sometimes by a succession of rugged escarpments. Hence it is that Africa, although considerably smaller than Asia in area, has nevertheless a larger volume of earth above sea-level. Our present interest in West Africa is confined to the region whence Negroes were taken for the American slave trade....It is known that before the close of the slave-trading era numerous districts along the West-African coast had been practically depopulated....The conclusion seems fairly justified that the vast majority of Negroes exported from Africa to America came from a belt of

coastal territory of immense length, but only a few hundred miles in width.

"A brief mention of the countries usually given distinct names, and constituting the divisions of Upper and Lower Guinea, is necessary. ...On the north is Senegambia....; next lies Sierra Leone, which has long been under British control; and then the so-called republic of Liberia. At the southeast corner of Liberia is Cape Palmas, from which point the coast takes an almost easterly course, stretching over 1200 miles....; this long east and west strip was usually divided into the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast, names indicating the commercial article once distinctive of each region. The Slave Coast exported more slaves, and ....the trade was maintained no longer than anywhere else, .... due to peculiar facilities it possessed for smuggling and for advising the cruisers sent to suppress the traffic.

"Below the vertex of the angle that enclosed the Gulf of Guinea, Lower Guinea begins. First is the Cameroon country....then the French Congo,....and finally the Congo mouth, and to the south of it Angola.

"The dominating climatic facts affecting this long sea board are two: (1) It lies entirely within the torrid zone, extending from about 18 degrees north latitude to 10 degrees south latitude; and (2) it is subject to pronounced wet and dry seasons, the former so far predominating as to occupy nearly all or three-quarters of the year. Hence the terribly debilitating effects upon foreigners....The element of humidity, which, combined with the high temperature, absolutely prohibits any considerable or prolonged exertion....must in any land, and with any people, limit their mental and aesthetic growth for long periods....the facts indicate that the (natives)....are injuriously influenced....subject to the powerful influences against mental or physical energy and progress. It is by no means infrequent for whole villages to be swept away by disease."

Here in an excerpt, pieced together from an amazing amount of material in the field is the sum and total of all important thought concerning the ethnological background of the American Negro's African forebears. Tillinghast develops this group of ethnological findings as carefully and with as great illuminating detail as he treats upon the ethnographical material. It is undoubtedly a fact that climatic conditions have always aided, in many cases even caused, the slow progress of the Negro in Africa. The ethnographical and ethnological maps appearing in this thesis are important acquisitions in a search for factual

data concerning the African Negro.<sup>24</sup>

To the visually minded, a glance at maps showing the divergent degrees of rainfall, the racial stems, and race divisions, will supplement the written word. From the maps concerning the geographical distribution of the African Nigritions and the Hottentot dispersions, one finds that the American slave trade, however far inland it may have reached, did not in all probability include the Damaras, the Namaquas, the Bushmen, the Bechuannas, the Zulu Kaffirs, the Coast Kaffirs, and the Hottentots. Despite the opinions of several anthropologists who would include them in the Negro family of the Ethiopian race, one has here little need to regard these branches of natives, little need to study their customs, beliefs and folk-lore in an attempt to place the African heritage of the American Negro poet, for it is not at all probable that they were herded into the Guinea area of slave traffic or the Slave Coast ships of the Americans. For the student who wishes to pursue further the ethnological study of the American slaves, the same map affords at a glance the fact that the tribesmen of Senegambia, Shantu, the Guineas, Timbuctu, Bundsd and Mabunde, the Congo Wady, Kaffur and Cordofan were easily caught up in the flourishing slave dealers' exports of human cargoes to America. For the most part all came under, or at least into contact with, the spell of the humid climate described by Wertherford above. The East, Central, and Southern Sudanese may or may not have been caught in the slave traffic. Their centrally-distant location, the less easily penetrable terrain of their surroundings may have protected them from the onslaughts of the African slave-chain treks to the West Coast plateaus. A glance at Map Chart No. 9 immediately shows the factual possibility that nearly all the slaves entering America brought with them the customs and cultures of the Nigrition

stem. Unquestionably one forcibly realizes through the vision enhanced by the maps how it is that authorities held to the conclusion that the greatest part of our American Negroes originally came from the West Coast. And, observing the map concerned with the Black, Brown, and Yellow races, one sees immediately the possibility that the greater number of our American Negroes had their origins within the Negro color-racial territories, rather than in the Negroid or Caucasian-tinged territories of nigritic racial intermixture. For the most part, our slaves came from pure stocks, at least the great numbers from the South came from the purer Nigritian stem. We are interested, then, in the folk-lore and culture customs of these purer types. Perhaps after a further study of the entire outlay of African heritage, we shall not wonder at the amazing ability of the Negro to advance himself when once given the chance, nor at the long-lived, persistent strain of racial bitterness coming out of, and accumulating from, the inherited purity of his stock in America, which has been dominated so furiously by the Anglo-Saxon. Perhaps, also, a study of the Nigritian's stock contributions to American culture will enable us to see more clearly the unusually startling and quickened impulses of the scientifically-termed illegitimate progeny of the two racial stocks of America, the "bronzes," "high-yellows," "dusk-drops," and "near-whites."

This dark continent, spread in its greatest length some 5000 miles and in its greatest width some 4600 miles, in superficial area comprises nearly 12,000,000 square miles and has a more or less standing population of 200,000,000 holding within its territories many interesting peoples. They are interesting aside from their racial values to us in this study, and are especially significant as contributory evidence of the penetrating culturization brought to the American continent by the "Dutch Man of Warre"



touching at Jamestown in 1619. Since the explorations of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, the African continent has held a certain thrilling interest for the entire civilized world. P. Thomas Stanford, a great Negro leader, and minister of a white Congregational church in the North, writes, in 1897, of the early explorations made by Portuguese and Spaniards:

25 "The Portuguese, who explored the West Coast of Africa in the fifteenth century, and the Spaniards, who gained possession of South America, were the first Christian powers that paid attention to Africa, and did indeed erect the figure of the Cross there, and upon every new land they discovered; but by their foul and brutal practices caused the holy symbol to remind the native tribes of rapine and murder. They respected no right of property in the land, in the produce of the country, not even in the flesh and blood of the natives; but threatened all and sundry with indignity and plunder....In the year 1482, just seven years before Columbus....(sailed) westward in search of unknown lands,....Alfonso de Pico discovered Benin, Africa, which then comprised Benin, Dahomey, and Yoruba, three Negro kingdoms, and subsequently Fernando Po of Portugal established a Portuguese colony and the Church of Rome at Gaton, Benin."

The conditions found and the conditions established by the early explorers were, of course, not quite the same. But to say that the African Negro of the fifteenth century was savage before the explorers landed and made their power felt, to the degree of established colonization, and that they were less savage after the contact, is to make an unjustly hasty statement. Ill treatment and limited means of changing the customs of the natives did little to produce new customs and a new cultural stimulus. The European's knowledge of the background of West Coast African Negroes may well have begun in this explorative fifteenth century, but for a long time the Negroes were perhaps affected to no degree whereby the character of their background would be changed or modified by the inroads of new

racial domination. Thus, even the earliest of the semi-scientific studies of African tribes represent the culture patterns of the West Coast Negroes both long before the coming of white influence, and even long after the beginnings of slave traffic.

The people of Africa may or may not have been characteristically savage for some hundreds of years. Whether they had fallen from an old high-cultural civilization matters, but is not too binding upon our efforts to determine something of their ways. There are many species of the savage, and many degrees of the savage's position upon the scale of human achievement. The American Indian was a savage, but one differing widely from the African Negro. A dismissal with the generic term savage does not place for us the conditions under which the Negroes of Africa reproduced their kind. It would be as futile in any study of the American white man to term his ancestors civilized—one can not ignore the histories of the Teutons, the Celts, and the Danes. Tillinghast says:

26 "To say that the Negro in Africa was savage is not a great disclosure....We have been content to make occasional vague allusions to a former condition of savagery, straightway proceeding to seek explanations of Negro nature and character in terms of American environment, chiefly that of slavery.

"The institution of slavery has loomed so large on our horizon that it has comparatively overshadowed what went before it in African history. At every mention of Negro inefficiency, improvidence, or immorality, it sufficed to recall slavery, and the characteristic was deemed explained. But it is time that we seek a truer conception of the forces that have made the American Negro what he is."

Actually, the African Negro has been the source of many interesting comments. In Senegambia dwell the Wolofs....reputed to be the blackest and most garrulous of Negroes. The name Wolof, indeed, signifies "talker."<sup>27</sup> Herbert Spencer, in his studies of African peoples,<sup>28</sup> discusses at great

length the true Negro groups from the characters of emotion and intellect and aesthetic sentiments. Emotionally, the Coast Negroes are fond of ease, voluptuous in their indulgence of social appetites, patient, but with alert, irascible tempers, lovers of coarse joking and repartee. Their affections are keen but not durable, and they are somewhat slow to form friendships. Their joys and sorrows are equally displayed in song; they are volubly expressive. When they trust the white man they are child-like, obedient and lovable. Their external manners are mild, and they are violent only when they are deeply stirred. To some extent they engage in a native method of fawning upon aliens.

The Dahomans, a West Coast tribal division, exhibit a mixture of ferocity and politeness; they are brave, generous, and generally hospitable. The inland Negroes are gentle, credulous, inquisitive, frank, good-humored, and faithful. Any expression of sorrow is chanted throughout the central Negro tribes. They are brutal to inferior animals. The Congo Negroes sometimes afford the student studies in good-natured stupidity. And yet, when given the chance, they learn with precocious rapidity.

Intellectually, the Congo people have a good memory, and a penetrating reckoning. The Coast Negroes have well-grown passions and a deep, racial proclivity. In perspective they are inferior, and almost wholly undeveloped in sentiment and moral niceties. They are sometimes mechanically skilled. The inland Negroes of this section are of superior mentality generally; they are eager for knowledge, gentle, complaisant, suffering from but little insanity, inclined to bright and original thoughts. The Dahomans possess no idea of time or numbers, are extremely verbose, hanker after recurring change, novelty, and originality, yet lack variety. They have been observed

each following his neighbor in a goose line down a road upon which four coaches could be driven abreast.

Of aesthetic sentiments, the Congo people are foul feeders, filthy, and devotees of pendent breast beauty among their women, with raised cicatrices on the skin and the two front teeth filed away. They dance when they are sorrowful as when they are joyful; they dance and sing at weddings, births, funerals. Men and women dance apart. The Coast Negroes are not dainty about their food either; they desire quantity rather than quality, yet generally, their habits are more cleanly than those of the Congo peoples. They are fond of dress and finery, the men spending as much time as the women caring for their hair. Obesity is considered one of the greatest charms of the female. They are passionately fond of music; their response to the rhythms of the drums is spontaneous. Often there is solo expression in group celebrations, and as a class they are great singers. The inland Negroes are cleanly to an unusual degree. They like animal and vegetable perfumes, and there is almost nothing of importance done without the songs of the tom-toms. They are for the most part river dwellers, neat in their dwellings and their persons. Elongated beacons are considered a charm of womanhood; there is no shame of women before men, and when made they are capable of the best of their extemporaneous songs. They are fairly moral. Likewise, the Dahomans are known widely for their singing and dancing; they have a passion for expressing through songs and body movements, all their thoughts and feelings, whatever the nature of these opinions and emotions.

Among the distinctive customs of the Negro peoples of western and middle Africa is the Yam Custom, "celebrated every year as soon as the priests

have pronounced the yams ripe. Yams are a dangerous food until thoroughly mellow.... The restriction....removed, there is great rejoicing, and the ceremonies usually last a week....Human sacrifices are surely to be offered, and this festival....furnishes opportunity for the wildest exhibitions of native license and passion. Theft, intrigue, and assault are all forgiven during the continuance of the feast."<sup>29</sup> Tillinghast records the following observations concerning the phenomenon of death:

<sup>30</sup>"Pepper is forced up the nose and into the eyes. The mouth is propped open with a stick. The shredded fibres of the outside of the oil-nut are set alight and held under his nose, and the whole crowd of friends and relations with whom the stifling hut is tightly packed, yell the dying man's name at the top of their voices, in a way that makes them hoarse for days, just as if they were calling to a person lost in the bush or to a person struggling and being torn or lured away from them. 'Hi? Hi! don't you hear? Come back--come back? see here. This is your place.'

"As soon as it is certain that the person is dead, the ceremonies begin. They last from two or three to seven or eight days, according to local habit and the rank of the deceased. The family abstain from food as long as possible, but may drink as much as they like, and usually do drink immoderate quantities of palm wine. They shave off the hair. Moanings and weird wailings proceed continually from the crowded hut, where the body, after being washed and dressed in full costume, ornaments and all, is propped up in a sitting posture on a stool, and receives the visits of numerous friends and relatives. They address the corpse again and again, reproaching the spirit for having gone away, and giving vent to the loudest lamentations. At intervals the hubbub is hushed while some female relative offers food to the corpse, beseeching it to take and eat. All watch eagerly, and upon its failure to comply, the lamentations break out afresh. During all this there is a crowd outside as well, sitting about, smoking and talking. Presents to the visitors are always expected, and this renders the occasion very expensive to the relatives.... At last, when restoration to life is found hopeless, and due honors have been offered, the body is buried."

From custom to culture-pattern is but a short leap. "All the cultural developments to be found among the peoples of the world may be attributed to (1) cultural inheritance of material and 'stored stimuli,' (2) the capacity for assimilating new acquisitions, and (3) the gift of shaping such acquisitions

into forms in harmony with the style natural to the people concerned, and then of developing them organically."<sup>31</sup> Tillinghast believes that the African Negro cultures are not "the accidental effect of external conditions," but that they possess an "inner constitution of many generations," coming from "a closer physical and psychical adaptation of the organism to its environment."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "We have seen what the West African environment is, and it is obvious that no great industrial system, no science, and no art could be self-developed there in the first instance; but it is also plain that without the rise of these secondary agencies of selection, the psychic nature could never be adapted to grasp such attainments....Yet it would be hasty to conclude that the West Africans are incapable of progress....With the advent of new standards of efficiency, selection would operate to bring forward those best fitted to the new regime, provided that competition of abler peoples did not enter upon the scene so soon as to overthrow and crush all alike....Where portions of the race have been removed into other regions, and placed in the midst of able and strenuous competition, the case is already different.

"Nothing so well reveals high development or is so vital to the welfare of a great society as the power to bridle passion, steady the emotions, and keep fixedly to a definite purpose. Infirmity of will means weakness at the root of life.. Now, the West Africans give marked evidence of a deficiency in will-power throughout every phase of their existence. Their intense emotions, their strong sexual passion, their cupidity, their erratic impulses, are continually breaking control, even at the cost of immediate disaster. The white men from the north, far-seeing, sure-footed, and iron-willed, at first witnesses their infatuated rashness with exasperated amazement, but in the end with resigned patience."

There are in Africa six outstanding cultures, four coming into Africa from "without" and two coming from "within" and more or less wholly indigenous to conditions of the folk-life of the continent.<sup>34</sup> Of the cultures coming from without the continent, there are the so-called Erythraean cultures---with south and north divisional headings. The South Erythraean culture centers in Zambezi, the North Erythraean culture about the Red Sea.

Third, there is the so-called Syrtic culture... Herodotus spoke of a people called the Garamantians living south of Syrtis major and Syrtis minor (south of the present Tripoli).... These Garamantians journeyed south from the Fezzan and carried away their culture into the Sudan."<sup>35</sup>

Fourth, the so-called Atlantic culture is of considerable significance.

....The Atlantic culture of West Africa.... is the extreme limit reached by a wave of culture that issued from western Asia in a millennium immediately preceding the Christian era...."<sup>36</sup> These cultures from without all have their peculiarities and characteristics.<sup>37</sup> The Atlantic culture undoubtedly had more influence on the greater masses of our slaves than any of the other outside cultures. Characteristics of this culture bearing upon the natives of the West African Coast are the idols made of small boards, coffin burial, use of a beheading sword, a theocratic state, a system of sorcery, and certain forms of secret societies.

Indigenous to the Negroes of Africa are the Hamitic and Ethiopian cultures. The Hamitic holds the desert area as its own special territory. The Ethiopian culture is found in the ring of steppes on the African continent.<sup>38</sup> The Hamitic culture takes its form from an unending and uninterrupted struggle for existence. Within the Hamitic culture the hunting mode of life has been overshadowed by the pastoral mode. The Ethiopian culture is agricultural throughout, but the hunting mode persists here somewhat. Though the slaves brought from Africa had never tended cotton and rice and tobacco, they had been under the widespread modifications of an ancient agricultural regime. That they brought some little of this influence along with them cannot be doubted; that they had not been highly skilled in agriculture is no doubt true and the facts of climate and location will account in large part,

for this fact, as well the characteristics of their emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic qualifications for a new life in a new world.

The Ethiopian culture concerns the African Negro who became the American slave more than any one culture of the African continent. Certain effects of this culture are that it gave the African Negro capacities for deep emotional life, capacities of soul and expansiveness. This trilogy of capacities may account for the American Negro's abilities in combating long periods of migration and almost complete sociological change in northern climates of the western world, mainly under urban conditions new to the general background of the Negro.

39 "In the Ethiopian culture, everything perceived by the senses and the intellect is the revelation of a reality other and more than the 'facts' perceived. This reality manifests itself in the course of human life just as it does in that of the plant; the conduct of life becomes a religious mystery....The feeling for life found in the Ethiopian culture, and hence in the Negro, roots in mysticism and need for mysticism, and has an organic basis.... The Ethiopian Negro culture is not directed as it develops toward some goal or purposes determined intellectually, but on the contrary is guided under the aegis of the emotional life. Consequently it is extremely receptive and of great formative, creative power. Many Negroes who all their lives have been deeply imbued with the emotional fervors of this culture have been carried off to other continents. If we raise the question as to whether they have been true to their nature while in exile, we must test their capacities in definite directions. Three questions naturally present themselves as guides for this testing:

"(1) Is the Negro in a strange culture still capable of emotional exaltation and ecstasy (i. e., in church?)

(2) Is the Negro still musical?

(3) Has he kept his sense of humor, i. e., has he still a sovereign superiority of soul able to smile without cynicism or mockery at any fate?"

Here is scholarly opinion relative to facts concerning the Negro in America during and after the times of slavery and even to-day. In answer to



these questions of Frobenius comes a discussion by James Weldon Johnson:<sup>40</sup>

"The Negro has already proved the possession of these powers by being the creator of the only things artistic that have yet sprung from American soil and been universally acknowledged as distinctive American products. These creations by the American Negro may be summed up under four heads. The first two are the Uncle Remus stories, ....and the spirituals, or slave songs....The other two creations are the cakewalk and ragtime."

Benjamin Brewley argues after the same manner:

41 "Negro music in America is especially interesting because it is not only the voice of an uncivilized people in Africa, but also a highly developed folk-music. Dr Du Bois distinguishes four steps in its development. The first stage exhibits native African music, and may be seen in such a chant as that for the words, You May Bury Me In The East; the second is that of Afro-American music, the great class, Steal Away to Jesus being an example; the third stage shows blending of Negro music with that of the foster-land, as in Bright Sparkles in the Churchyard. The fourth shows American melodies affected by the Negro music, as in the songs of Stephen Collins Foster. Another division of the melodies makes two classes of them, those which are the spontaneous expression of the Negro's own feelings, and those which, while now essentially Negro in character, show evidence of foreign origin....(The Negro songs) are affected by nature (and the phenomena of the unknown). A meteoric shower, a thunder-storm, or the dampness of a furrow was sufficient to give birth to a hymn.... The time structure of the melodies has frequently astonished musicians by its accuracy."

Henry Hugh Proctor says that "from the standpoint of art and music, the music of these songs has been a surprise....for the Negro....snatched from his native land, transported to distant shores to a hard bondage, so sang that the world could not choose but hear."<sup>42</sup>

Newman I. White, the most recent of authorities on Negro songs, tells us that "the Negro has always been a great singer, but the Caucasian peoples have had to be reminded of this fact again and again before they were convinced, or attached any importance to the conviction."<sup>43</sup>

44 "The Negro possessed....an inherited saturation with a music fundamentally different from that of the white man both in its pentatonic characteristics and in the marvellous rhythms caught from the African drum. Though he probably did his best to imitate faithfully, fortunately he failed. He had to modify the white man's songs. All the music that he originally possessed and all that he acquired fused into a new body of folk-song, fundamentally homogeneous, but neither African nor Caucasian....

"So far as the words of his songs go, there is practically no connection between the American Negro and Africa....In some respects other than the music, however, there is a connection between the two. There are the native work-songs which, like those of the American Negro, are short, improvised snatches about the work or some trivial subject of passing interest....As for the music, it seems probable that there is a much stronger connection....The slave had to change his language because it was the medium through which he must accommodate himself to the white man's world; but his music was his own, at least until he joined the white man's church. It was practically his own private affair, and it was deeply imbred wherever he went. He clung to his native triangles, drums, jawbones, and quills, long after his language was forgotten....

"Improvisation is not peculiar to Negro folk-song of course, but it is highly characteristic; it is a racial trait, and it is carried to much greater length than by white people. I am as confident as ever that the (Negro folk-songs) reveal the singer, if they are only read aright....(The singer) is a person invincibly likeable. In his songs I find him.... a most naive and unanalytical-minded person, with a sensuous joy in his religion; thoughtless, careless, unidealistic, rather fond of boasting, predominantly cheerful, but able to derive considerable pleasure from a grouch; occasionally suspicious, charitably inclined toward the white man, and capable of a gorgeously humorous view of anything, particularly himself."

From the three excerpts above one gathers that the Negro has maintained his capacities for emotional ecstasy, musical expression, and even his recurrent sense of humor in social situations of a different nature. One concludes that his racial instinct, or inherent capacity to express himself musically is not only derived fundamentally from Africa, but is maintained by him through his period of acclimation and adjustment to the slave-bondage of his new home. One concludes that without doubt he shows through his songs

this transplanting of musical rhythms, through his religion this ecstasy of feeling and through his life, both, with the addition of humor. Besides these retained tendencies, a call to the "beyond" to the "unreality" of existence is occasionally sounded through the spirituals, work songs and ballads.

Ballad<sup>45</sup>

"W'en de big owl whoops,  
An' de screech owl screeks,  
An' de wind makes a howlin' sound;  
You little wooly heads  
Had better river up,  
Case de ha'nte is comin' 'round."

(Folk-origin)

Rain Fall and Wet Becca Lewton<sup>46</sup>

Refrain: Rain fall and wet (Sun come and dry) Becca Lewton,  
Oh, rain fall and wet (Sun come and dry) Becca Lewton,  
(All de member)  
Oh, Brudder (All de member) cry holy!  
(We all, Believer)

Verses: (1) Been (beat, Bent, Back) back holy,  
I must come slowly;  
Oh, Brudder, cry holy!

(2) Do, Becca Lewton,  
Come to me, yonder;  
Oh, Brudder, cry holy!

(3) Say, Brudder Toms,  
What shall I do now?  
Oh, Brudder, cry holy!

(4) Beat (Been, Bent, Back) back holy,  
And rock salvation,  
Oh, Brudder, cry holy!

(Folk-origin)  
(Era of slavery)

"Who... Becky Martin was, and why she should or should not be wet, and whether the dryness was a reward or a penalty, none could say. I got the impression that, in either case, the event was posthumous and that there was some tradition of grass not growing over the grave of a sinner..."<sup>47</sup>

From Allen's notations in his book of Negro Songs<sup>48</sup> one finds that a Colonel Trowbridge heard a story that Peggy Norton was an old prophetess, preaching the thought that one must be baptized when rain is falling. From Allen one also learns that a certain Mr. Tomlinson feels that the Negroes singing this song always ended it with a burst of laughter, seeming, therefore, to regard the whole as a matter of nonsense. But the real conclusion of the matter of the song is unsettled. One may feel that it hints at unrealities, of something beyond the ordinary pale of reality, as well as to regard it in the light of these above opinions. Rain Fall and Wat Becca Lawton is both a work song and a spiritual, sung while at work as often as any of the more typical work-songs. It is interesting to observe its tendencies to express something of the African's half-futile attempt to explain the materially-mystical in his life. To many it may not illustrate the Negro's leaning to the mystical. It is, as evidence, more interesting than conclusive. Other work-songs of a half-spiritual character, definitely bearing a barbaric strain through their measures are Shall I Die<sup>49</sup> and O'er the Crossing. By title they seem wholly spiritual but titles attached to Negro songs, ballads, and poems are, for the most part, misleading, curiously enough. Mr. Allen says in his work that "where the (barbaric) character does appear, it is chiefly in short passages, intermingled with others of a different character."<sup>50</sup> He adds:

51 "These are the songs that are still heard upon the Mississippi steamboats (1900)——wild and strangely fascinating....The greater number of songs....seem to be a natural and original production of a race of remarkable music capacity...often retaining a distinct tinge of their native Africa."

Thus one concludes that transference from their native locale to American shores did not completely obliterate the African cultures from

the lives and minds of African Negroes. It seems rather evident that not only did the Negroes retain much of their folk-lore and culture-patterns but that they put them into everyday usage, modifying their own patterns and those of the white man at one and the same time. A knowledge of African cultures can come to be a rich bit of ore in the hands of the prospector working in American Negro poetry.

When one has studied, if but briefly, the minds and lives of the African Negroes there occurs the question of the way in which the minds and lives express themselves through participation in religious forms. Fenton Johnson, a Negro poet publishing his works in 1915, 1915, and 1916, expresses the thought that the Negro is the most intensely religious of all human beings:

52 "His religion is built upon emotion. As it is with all emotional creatures he makes vivid in his imagination the ideals of his faith. His Devil is an actual being who haunts him night and day, ready to pitch him any moment into a flaming dungeon. God and His angels dwell with him in his daily life. He awaits the Judgment Day as eagerly as a troubled world awaits the dawn of peace. As it was in primitive days his ministers are both his leaders and his teachers. They administer to him a theology picturesque with the superstition of a bygone world. They bring out of nature, as all primitive people do, those forces they deem worthy of idealization.

"The writer who purports to gain inspiration (in his study of the Negro) must not ignore such a religion. Neither must he treat it indifferently. The average Negro worshipper is not a hypocrite. He is sincere in his beliefs—probably more sincere than some of our New Thought followers or our Billy Sundays. He attends revival not as if it were a duty, but as part of a natural routine. To miss such an opportunity to express his emotion would be more disastrous to his peace of mind than to miss his....meals or his night's repose. It has reconciled him to conditions that no other race would or could endure."

Fenton Johnson is talking about the American Negro. Where does this fervent religious imagination and enjoyment in religious participation come from?

What part of it has Africa given?

53 "Surely, no one can hope to understand the present Negro who does not have some insight into his religious and social customs of the past. In the light of these we must judge him, not alone in the light of what he is, but in that broader and fairer light of the direction in which he is moving.

54 "In every country religion is the background of life.... One does not know a single great authority in Africa who does not feel that the Negro can be fully understood only by those who know something of his religious nature and its expressions."

The first element in African religion is that of God, "called by various tribes Ejambi, Anzani, Anyambie, Yemi, Nyasivi, meaning variously maker, creator, supreme being, great one, and even 'Great Friend' and 'Father.'"<sup>55</sup> There is a concept universally believed by the whole of the Nigritian regions of Africa that God, creator of all Negro peoples, has gone off and left them after the making. This is an absentee God with whom they deal, then. Not only has he left them, but he has thoughtlessly or purposely left them unprotected amidst great numbers of spirits, caring little, they believe, whether the spirits are good or evil, and in general about the daily existence of his man-creations, who must protect themselves as best they can against the host of spirits that are forever hovering about them. Because the African Negro believes so explicitly that God has left him, many white travellers and researchers have regarded the African's religion as one wholly built upon superstitions. This is not the case.<sup>56</sup>

The second element in the African's religion is spirits. The true Negro regards them as standing naturally in three classifications. There are spirits created by God, and spirits made by the departed souls of men. The Negro, alive, also has spirit forms within himself, the soul spirit and the body spirit. The soul spirit lives after death; the body

spirit dies with the body.<sup>57</sup>

58 "Among the Inaku of the Niger valley it is customary to bury chiefs inside the village, to build a hut over the grave, which is always swept and kept clean, and offerings of food and medicines are regularly placed in two holes which are made in front of the mound.

"The writer has found a survival of this old custom in America. Wandering through a cemetery in Hale county, Alabama, he noticed a number of fresh graves in the Negro section of the cemetery, and stuck into the fresh dirt of each grave mound were the half-emptied bottles of medicine which the deceased had evidently been using before death. On investigation it was found that every Negro grave in the cemetery had some such remains left on it. Doubtless this custom is a lineal descendant from the African customs, but of course has lost its significance and probably no Negro now following it has any definite idea why he does so."

Thus the Negro carries about in his religious emotions a fear of, as well as a joy in, spirits. The "hunts" and "goses" of the American Negro in slavery, and <sup>of them</sup> even to-day when uninformed and illiterate, is no doubt a survival of this very generalized description of his intricate spirit-system.

The third element in African religion is fetich. If one worships an absentee God, and is surrounded by multitudes of spirits, both good and bad, more often likely to harm one than to protect one, "it would be the natural bent of the human mind to find a way to establish friendly relations with the good spirits, and to ward off the power of evil spirits. This the African does through his system of fetich."<sup>59</sup> Rags, strings, sticks, teeth, bones, pieces of wood, shells, hair-cuttings, egg shells,---all things which will invite a spirit to take up his abode in them are fetiches. The object itself may have no material value, but if it will prove likable to a spirit it is priceless to the African Negro.

60 "It is sometimes thought that the more insignificant the material object the greater will be the manifest power of the spirit. Every man, therefore, must provide himself with a fetich or fetiches, for he must have a separate spirit to help him in each undertaking.... If your project fails, it is because your fetich was not strong enough. Some other stronger spirit has overcome yours."

The witch doctor is the fourth element in the African Negro's religious exercises. Often he is known as the medicine man because he concocts and sells the fetiches used to cure sickness and to drive away evil spirits which supposedly cause disease. Next to the chief of the tribe the medicine man or voodoo doctor (Voodoo is a special cult of spirits and fetiches) has more power than any person of the tribe. His attitudes toward superstitions and hidden meanings in the unrealities of existence are closely followed and adhered to. He is the morning paper of the African who would keep up on the latest news about his spirits; one must read his Afro-Delphic utterances as best one can. Unfortunately, he is about as correct and clear as the astounding headlines on the average scandal sheets issued by the Brooklyn Daily.

61 "Through their ceremonies they decide all questions of guilt, by their ordeal they may murder whom they will, they charge large fees for their services and woe to anyone who fails to pay or in any way incurs their enmity."

The constituent elements of the African Negro's religion are, then, an absentee God, innumerable spirits, fetiches with which the spirits must be appeased or entertained, and the dominating witch doctor. Such a religion cannot have any great progressive moral force. It but upholds and abets lying, stealing, cheating, sex immorality, cruelty, and enmity. Such a system of religion aids the climate in paralyzing the native's potentialities for progress or intellectual attainments. If one's God is away seeing to his



own sorrows, or enjoying himself at a fish-fry, why fret over moral standards? Any immorality brought to the attention of a God forever absent and bent upon the businesses of himself or some other peoples would only cause the God to lift an eyebrow or to make some perfunctory comment or temporary dispensation of judgment. Instead of spending one's time observing the highest theoretical standards of a God-like morality, the African considers it far better to outwit the possible machinations of the spirits more noticeable in their immediacy than God in his absence; instead of worrying about the religious development of one's better and God-like self, the Negro considers it far more beneficial to outwit a few of one's neighbors at the same time one outwits the spirits,—so much greater the victory of living successfully.

62 "Religion among the African tribes has little moral lifting power, has almost no power of inspiration or consolation, but rather plunges the native into a pit of fatalism and utter despair. It not only robs the individual of hope, but it robs the tribe of leadership by eliminating all who show leadership and capacity to move out of the beaten paths. Religion has thus been a power in favor of stagnation, retarding the development of the peoples of the dark continent."

The laziness of the American Negro, his mysticism, his superstitions, his fetiches, his low morality according to the white man's standards, may in large part issue from the deadening influence of religious domination, though one imagines that much of the American Negro's laziness was a silent rebellion against the idea of work without a progressive system of compensation, his mysticism a part of his fear of the white man's treacherous use of his dearest secrets, his superstitions a part of his laughter at the white man's belief in his ignorance—his superstitions, his mysticism, and his laziness all part of the mask he wore under white American domination of himself and the offspring of his reproductive passions. The religious

system of the pre-nineteenth century African Negro did, however, influence the New World Negro's attitudes and potentialities for partaking of a higher culture pattern.

Next to the African's religion the question of taboo is especially significant for one desiring to know the African heritage of the American Negro.

63 "Taboo is another outgrowth of primitive superstition. The word is Polynesian in origin and means anything that is "strongly marked." The institution of taboo seems to be practically universal....The name of Jehovah in the Old Testament was taboo because sacred, and for like reason it was said no person could see Jehovah and live. Among certain African natives the king may not be seen by the common people. To see him is certain death. Sometimes his feet alone may be seen, which Leonard thinks may account for the adoration of the feet of the Papal Pontiff and kissing of the feet of images of saints."

With the African Negro as with other peoples, taboo was a social force. To transgress a taboo was sin, and the sin varied in degree according to the nature of the taboo. The sin of disregarding a taboo could affect not only the person at fault but his immediate fellows and kinsmen. The effects of transgression were contagious, so to speak, and when one or several transgressed, the whole group was open to punishment from physical or spiritual powers. At least, the belief in taboo so decreed. The followers of taboo developed early a sense of social responsibility. If, for example, the transgression resulted in disease the taboo maledy would be plainly noticeable to more than the original transgressor. Whereas taboo was more largely concerned with matters of a spiritual and tribal nature---protective in both instances---than of a moral or strictly social nature, taboo perhaps originated from diseases affecting the social group as well as the tribal division of this or that ethnic district. Taboo united and limited peoples everywhere, especial-

ly in Africa, and it was so strong and persistent in its far-reaching admonitions that it lasted far into the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries among the American Negroes. This African taboo system will to a great degree account for the prevalent favorable attitudes toward group dances, chants, American-Haitian voodoo rites, herb-medicines, birth and burial customs, practiced by Negroes in America to drive away the evil and summon the good spirits. There is something about the religious and the taboo systems of the African Negroes which enters into the most secluded grooves of the Negro's being to reflect themselves in his psychic bearing and manifestations. The American Negro poet had for a long time this religio-psychic overtone and undercurrent in his nature, though as a mouthpiece of his group he was so taken up with sociological matters appertaining to his social niche that he failed to express it from a subconscious urge or from a conscious desire to use it for its own qualities. It is there in feeling and emotion, however. One finds the Afro-Spiritual note in Did You Hear, My Jesus? Dust and Ashes, and Keep Me From Sinkin' Down. In the following folk-song one sees a glimmer of a retained regard for lurking and omnipresent spirits mixed with the new, white man's more abstract conception of the spiritual manifestation of his deities. There may be something of a retained idea of an absentee God in the repeated phrase "Come here, Lord!" While an abrupt conclusion that this is the case is not scientifically accurate, the thought may be more than interesting comment:

Come Here, Lord!<sup>64</sup>

Come here, Lord!  
 Come here, Lord!  
 Come here, Lord!  
 Sinners crying,  
 "Come here, Lord!"

## Chorus:

O, little did I think  
 He was so nigh,  
     Sinners crying,  
     "Come here, Lord!"  
 He spoke, and He  
 Made me laugh and cry,  
     Sinners crying,  
     "Come here, Lord!"

(2) O mourners,  
     If you will believe,  
     The grace of God  
     You will receive.

(3) Some seek God's face,  
     But don't seek right,  
     Pray a little by day  
     And none at night.

(4) O sinner,  
     Now you had better pray,  
     For Satan's 'round  
     You every day.

A conscious sense of religious taboo, slight, perhaps, but noticeable,  
 is in the following spiritual:

Oh he's taken me feet from the wire and clay  
 And he's placed them on the rock of ages.

I am bound for the land of Canaan

If you get there before I do  
 Look out for me, I'm coming too.

Look out, sister Hannah, how you walk on the cross!  
 Your foot might slip and your soul git los'.

Hypocrite, s-member, the Lord he despise  
 De tongues will slip, and dey will tell lies

Look at the sun; see how she run;  
 Don't let her ketch you wid yer work undone.

I have some friends before me gone  
 And I'm resolved to follow on.

Who are those arrayed in white?

I hope to praise him when I die  
 And about salvation when I fly.

This world is not my home  
 This world is not my home  
 This world is all a wilderness,  
 But heaven is my home.

Gwine lay down my soul  
     For my Lord,  
 Yes, for my Lord, for my Lord.  
 Gwine lay down my soul  
     For my Lord  
     For my Lord.

A humorous folk-ballad of the era of slavery tersely admonishes the aspiring darkey with hints of a false step of a certain nature amounting to taboo determined by the group to protect themselves from group punishment because of an individual's transgression. Of course, it is more entertaining than indicative, and is above all hilarious and jocose, but there is a great deal back of it.

66 In the garden  
 Stealing cabbage.  
 White man's gun,  
 Rabbit run.  
 Rabbit stew,  
 That'll do.

Of a more serious nature and quaintly typical of the improvised refrain of the American Negro in his early periods of adaptation is this fragment which offers admonition amounting to a subtly-inferred taboo placed by the more tractable group of Negro slaves upon a few more rebellious and shiftless individuals who, quite likely, often made the daily field work harder by their run-away exploitations and protests against work.

67 Clean that corn a-coming,  
 Hoe that cotton bale,  
 Niggers always talkin' when they out of jail.

Relative to this attempt to place survivals of the religious and psychical sides of African heritage in American Negro folk-songs,

Henry Hugh Proctor offers us opinions that are coincidentally of interest to us at this point. "Most of these melodies are in the same scale as primitive music," he points out. "But there is more heart than art in these songs....more of a chance to determine survivals. They are to be admired for their art, loved for their heart, and treasured for their thought. The Negro was ever singing;....mingled with his troubles and hopes, his bondage and his freedom,...were echoes of his struggles with sin, his striving after godliness, his fleeing from Satan, his search for God."<sup>68</sup>

Through the American Negro folk-songs and spirituals one sees that the slaves believed God revealed Himself to them in the nature around them and in the consciousness of man, sometimes through a direct and immediate revelation. The American Negro or Negress "seer," the "Lord's blessed child" and "shoutin' guide" took the place of the witch doctor of the African jungles. This spiritual leader kept alive the uncritical belief that spirits and the absentee God sometimes chose to appear before them in the bodies and thoughts of their more mystical "bruders" and "sistren," often throwing the lean and sinewy, or the overly-fat sisters into ecstatic fits and swoons in the middle of the barn floor, or uncomfortably near the embers of a plantation fire, or even against the red-hot, shaky stove pipe of the "meetin' house yondah."<sup>69</sup> Coupled with their outlook upon the character of God, Jesus was their friend, companion, even in the fields, a helper in time of trouble, their hope of glory in another world better, they hoped, than this.

Their belief in the Holy Spirit is interesting. Though nowhere in their songs, nor their folk-expression can one find a reference to the

Trinity, as no one can find the word trinity in the Bible, the slaves expressed belief in the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity.

Angels were God's special messengers here, there, and everywhere and diligent in angelic dispensations and fiery deeds against the sinners making the direct transgressions. Angels were picture-book, tinsel-figured mechanisms to raise the "glory chillun" up through the ethers unto the "pearly gates" where the "Good Lord" would see to it that the gates swung evenly and neatly open so they might enter in to indescribable glories compensative for a hard life. Life was a stormy sea. The end of a Christian "walking" through life was glory and blessedness. The angels would see that one got from "thishere" to "that 'ere" without worry on the part of God's "Po' lam's". Their faiths and concepts were beautifully simple in the abstract visualization of the scheme but variously complicated in the concrete details of the abstraction.

Their belief in a physical Satan was positive in its strength of conception. Satan was their enemy, the arch-fiend working to destroy and then seize their souls. Satan was crafty and especially adept in deception. He would creep "up on yah yondah" when one least suspected his also omnipotent presence. Only the future life of glory could and would free one from the constant misery of guarding against this "cow feet" debbil. Heaven for the workers in the Lord's work, hell for the sinners—the future life was the blessed science of the defined, limited and fixed polarity of their own Christian-primitive universology. So much for a brief treatment of the survivals and New-World additions to African and American religious systems and beliefs.

Besides the religion of an absentee God, spirits, fetiches, and the power of fetich-makers, there are evidences of other less wide-spread, but nevertheless encompassing, semi-religious cults and beliefs working upon the African Negroes brought to America. "West Africa yields evidence of python worship, especially in Dahomey and southern Nigeria. There is....supplementary evidence with regard to the existence of python cults and beliefs."<sup>70</sup> More or less connected with the worship of the snake are the African cults of Voodoo and Obeah. Quoting Mary H. Kingsley, Williams says:

<sup>71</sup> "We have two distinct cults of fetich....Voudou and Obeah (tahanga and Banga). Voudou itself is divided into two sects, the white and the red---the first a comparatively harmless one, requiring a sacrifice of, at the most, a white cock or a white goat, whereas the red cult only uses the human sacrifice, the goat without horns....Obeah, on the other hand kills only by poison---does not show the blood at all....Voudou requires for the celebration of its rites a priestess and a priest. Obeah can be worked by either alone, and is not tied to the presence of the snake."

The cult and spiritual significance of Voodoo and Obeah have spread to other lands, including the United States.<sup>72</sup> Just what significance Voodoo and Obeah may have had upon the formation of the African Negro's mind is not especially clear; that they were outstanding superstitious attachments brought from Africa is clear; that they have lasted in a partial impurity of original purpose may be likely, even probable, somewhere in the less-enlightened regions of the United States where Negroes have, for one reason or another, retained in some modified state old customs, rituals, beliefs, and superstitions of a cult nature. The significance of a possible survival of Voodoo influences in the United States is a matter relative to the amount and degree of importance of all African heritage, no more, and no less.



What is there in the literature of our West Coast Negroes and the Negroes adjoining regional territories?

74

"A critical examination of the content of this (African) folk literature will result in a division somewhat similar to that found in the same type of literature of other races. Such a division discloses stories, poetry, riddles, and proverbs. So numerous are the proverbs that it has been said there is scarcely an object presented to the eye, scarcely an idea excited in the mind, but it is accompanied by some sententious aphorism, founded upon close observation of men and animals and in many cases of a decidedly moral tendency."

75

"Proceeding... (to)... the Gold Coast... which offered the Ashante, Cormantyn, and "Guinea Niggers," once so well known in Jamaica and in the southern states of the American Union,... (we find)... specimens of proverbs, of historical composition, of old stories of the Accra people, and of speeches delivered by the chiefs during the poll-tax disturbances which occurred in January, 1854. We also have Gafable,... then follow Lalai, or songs,... mere tautologies, however;... and then still advancing eastward, we enter the land of Yoruba, of which it will be remembered Dahome and Benin form parts. "The poetry of the Yorubas, if I may call it such, seems rather to be of the didactic kind, probably evincing a different character of mind in the people, and which cannot fail, I think, to remind us, both in sentiment and style, of some of the poetical books of Scripture.""

The characteristic of this Yoruba didactic poetry is the system of parallelism, being similar to the distinctive characteristic of Hebrew poetry. Burton claims, through his sources, instances of gradation, antithesis, and introverted forms, but does not furnish examples of these qualifications. Nevertheless, it is these qualities which he says give to the Yoruba proverbs the title of poetry, for there appears to be nothing which can be called rhyme or metre in any of them.<sup>76</sup> He offers the opinion that "there is in the main a conformity of length between the lines which are designed to be parallel or antithetic; and where there is a third line, either preceding or following, (it is) in most cases considerably longer."<sup>77</sup> These stanzas, if we may call them so, are of very frequent occurrence." He adds in a footnote in his find-

ings with Bishops Lowth and Jedd (students of African missionaries and religious explorers may recognize these Bishops): "The characteristic of the indigenous Sindhi poetry is the stanza of three lines, the third numbering two or more feet than the second or first."<sup>78</sup> This form of two short lines and a longer third line equalling the first two, may well be the beginning of the Blues form of modern Negro poetry which took on its American flavor in some form of American Negro folk-expression. "The Blues, unlike the Spirituola, have a strict poetic pattern: one long line repeated and a third line to rhyme with the first two. Sometimes the second line in repetition is slightly changed, and sometimes, but very seldom, it is omitted."<sup>79</sup> A fairly good example of the Blues form is the following:

Homesick Blues<sup>79</sup>

De railroad bridge's  
 A sad song in de air.  
 De railroad bridge's  
 A sad song in de air.  
 Ever time de trains pass  
 I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station.  
 Ma heart was in me mouth.  
 Went down to de station  
 Heart was in me mouth.  
 Lookin' for a box car  
 To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lowd,  
 'S a terrible thing to have.  
 Homesick blues is  
 A terrible thing to have.  
 To keep from cryin'  
 I opens me mouth an' laughs.

One regrets that Burton furnishes no definite examples of the parallel, and gradational forms within the type of Yoruba "poem" which seems to be the grandparent of the American Negro Blues.

Booker T. Washington furnishes an example of chant, somewhat

freely translated, a bit modernized, but essentially old and representative of prayer chanted just before ordeal or testimony.<sup>80</sup>

O God! come down, thou givest me food.  
 In this case I come as a witness and I will speak.  
 If I tell lies, I will go in the bush and serpent bite me;  
 If I go in a canoe, the canoe will sink and I drown;  
 If I climb a palm tree I must fall and die.  
 You, God, let the thunder fall and kill me.  
 If I tell the truth, then I am safe in Thee.

The chant is interesting because it is an oath, a plea, and a philosophy. It is indicative of general trends in religious beliefs. "It is an indication of survival or existence of the trials by ordeal which truly existed in the dark continent from time immemorial---before ordeal was found in the Middle Ages in Europe---long before the witch duckings of the Massachusetts and Virginia colonies."<sup>81</sup> Chants were used in meeting-houses where legislative, judicial, and literary matters as often as not originated and came to have a widespread approval for the natives.<sup>82</sup>

Strange as it may at first seem, one finds proverbs and tales, some containing snatches of poetry, in the primitive ages of the primitive tribes of darkest Africa. Heli Chatelein has collected and edited many of these ethnic expressions in Folk Tales of Angola.<sup>83</sup> This is one of the most scholarly and interesting works on African literary forms ever produced. In this work Chatelein quotes Henry Drummond's work Tropical Africa: "I have often wished I could get inside of an African's (mind) for an afternoon and see just how he looked at things...."<sup>84</sup> "This glimpse into the interior of an African's mind---for more than an afternoon---is afforded by the study of African folk-lore."<sup>85</sup> Proverbs form a large part of this folk-lore, and even in the terse forms of their clipped phraseology one finds the character of the African Negro's mind.<sup>85</sup> From Richard F. Burton's Vit and Fساد from

West Africa, 1865, <sup>87</sup> come some of the most enlightening of the proverbs, from the Yoruba, and Efik, languages and the Accra, Oji, Kamra and Wolof tongues: <sup>88</sup>

Asomo da etta, okere ni idon.

Familiarity breeds contempt: distance secures respect.  
(p. 267: Proverb 239)

Asara nina ogun ko se lagan, bi iwo ko le ajo, ajo li o nle 'o.  
A man does not run among thorns for nothing; either he is chasing a snake or a snake is chasing him.

(p. 263: Proverb 255)

Oku ajannaku li ayo ogbo ai, ta li oie yo oju agada sin erra.  
plabo gwo.

It is easy to cut to pieces a dead elephant; but no one dares attack a live one.

(p. 230: Proverb 72)

In much of African folk-lore the elephant is regarded as the king of beasts, the lion as lieutenant governor, so to speak.

Bi o boju bi o bonu isalle abon li a ipari re ai.

When the face is washed, you finish at the chin.

(p. 224: Proverb 46) <sup>89</sup>

The following proverbs are in the Efik language: <sup>90</sup>

Ata nikon akpa nyat, odun-obio owo akpa mbime.

The eater of pepper is like to die of pain; the sojourner is like to die of questions.

(p. 377: Proverb 249)

Efikere asana isan aka ikpat; ikpat akpasa isan ekikere.  
okpotut ni idok eyen.

The thought travels quicker than the foot; if the foot should travel at the mouth's rate, you would call me a bad boy

(p. 357: proverb 154)

Etikuo idim inone gwok.

A stream coming down won't let you swim up. (i. e., You cannot swim against the stream, a proverb common to almost all nations.)

Ekpo akpa mbufa ituba, etua ndi; ngwa akpo oyum akan ndi.

You lament not the dead, but lament the trouble of making a grave; the way of the ghost is longer than the grave. <sup>91</sup>

(p. 339: Proverb 70)

Proverbs in the Accra tongue:

Mantseai daaa lai kakadan ni mai anwo la no.

A thorn is not a long piece of wood that two persons may sit upon.  
(p. 151: Proverb 92)

Moko hamotomoo daaa no simo.

To precede a man is not to leave him.  
(p. 151: Proverb 93)

Kr foo logio.

A crab does not beget a bird.<sup>92</sup>  
(p. 135: Proverb 2)

These proverbs are homely, concise expressions, in the main unsophisticated though somewhat ostentatious. They indicate the African Negro's love for the crisp word-formulae, for repartee, and his inclination to follow the laws of taboo and custom. One doubts that there is much of fine parallelism or unusual thought within these proverbs. They are entertaining and amusing, but not especially revealing.

South Africa is of all territories the most productive area in African folk-lore. Casalis and Groot are the authorities for this region, giving excerpts and specimens of the Sutu and Zulu literature. Bleek is another interested collector of jungle tales from this part of Africa. His collection, Raynard the Fox in South Africa, deals mainly with tales of Hottentot origin and is, therefore, out of our special consideration. In 1866 Dr. Callaway published Zulu Nursery Tales and in 1870 Religious System of the Zulus. Callaway's books are scholarly and at the present time difficult to locate in even the largest of libraries, book-collectors having bought up nearly all of the limited editions.<sup>93</sup>

East Africa offers fewer native tales than any other section of Africa. Those in existence are found to be scattered in the prefaces of grammars and missionary journals. Swahili stories are really Arabian tales put into the Swahili dialect. The Rev. W. E. Taylor is the author of a collection of

of Sushili proverbs. Almeida la Cunha has written a thorough treatise on customs among the Mozambique tribes, but has failed to collect significant folk-lore for these people.<sup>94</sup>

West Africa, especially the coastal regions, offers more opportunity for study that will lead to scholarly conclusions. That this is true is fortunate, since most of our slaves came from the West African plateaus. The body of folk-lore material, especially the stories containing the beginnings of poetry, come from West African sources.

"African folk-lore is not a tree by itself, but a branch of one universal tree....Many of the myths, favorite types of characters, and peculiar incidents, which have been called universal, because they recur among so many races, can also be traced through Africa from sea to sea."<sup>95</sup>

One finds evidences of Portuguese and Arabic influences recurring in the tales of the West Africans as with tales of other sections. Still, Heli Chatelain, an expert collector, has managed to offer a large collection of proverbs and tales of the Angolans and surrounding tribes of the more southern locations along the West Coast.<sup>96</sup> The mythologies and superstitions of various tribes are reducible to a common type of treatment. The spirit gods are numerous, given to disguises for purposes of mating with earth peoples, invincible, quarreling among themselves, and taking sides with combating tribes. They are thought to intervene in courtships, births, wars, and death from general causes. The African spirit gods are anthropomorphic conceptions, and decidedly Greek in their characters, if not in their manifestations. Animal stories are usually widespread and of similar treatment, no matter the area or the dialect where they are found. Each animal is personified, and, while true to

its real nature, represents a standard character and is made to portray the same role in all areas of the African folk-fable.<sup>97</sup>

There is, as with all races, an etiologic class of tales. They account for the origin or cause of natural phenomena, often explaining the natural through the supernatural or mystical.<sup>98</sup>

*African stories* fall naturally into six classifications.

The first class includes fictitious stories, which are the products of imagination and speculation. They are more entertaining than instructive; they contain elements of the marvellous, the miraculous, and the mystical. Fables, personifying the characters of animals, belong to this class. Special formulae form their introduction and conclusion.

True stories form the second class. These stories correspond to our own anecdotes. Strictly historical tales form another class. These true stories instruct the young and remind the old of the best the tribe has contributed. The element of truth found in this class teaches one how to prepare for future emergencies, how to act, how to live; they are moral rather than expository.

The third class is made up of historical narratives, called ni-lunda or ni-sanda. These chronicles are carefully preserved by the tribes, being handed down by the elders of each political division of the ethnic school. The historical chronicles are considered state secrets; the masses gain little knowledge of them.

Fourth, the proverbs form the class of metaphysical philosophy. The proverbs are not moral, but they do disclose that the Negroes are not without philosophical faculties. In qualities of diction and meaning,

Nigrition proverbs equal those of any other race. Frequently a proverb will be an anecdote in compressed form, illustrating the African Negro's gift of concise expression and homely inference.

Riddles, called ji-nongonango, used only for pastime and amusement form a fifth class. Often the African riddle is little more than a play with words. They have formulae for introduction and conclusion.

The sixth class is that of poetry and music, allied subjects to the African Negro. For nearly all poetry is chanted, and vocal music is hardly ever expressed without words. Chatelain lists the types of poetry as epic, heroic, martial, idyllic, comic, satyric, dramatic, and religious, acknowledging, however, that all types are not equally prominent.<sup>99</sup> Travelers and missionaries and students have all noted the prevalence of snatches of poetry (poetic feeling in word-groupings) among African peoples. Not many really original or artistic pieces are to be found, but African Negroes are quick to extemporize. "Not even a child finds difficulty, at any time, if excited, in producing an extemporaneous song."<sup>100</sup> There seem to be almost no indications of rhyme in these improvisations, but one does find alliteration, parallelism and rhythm in them. Chatelain says:

101 "The myths and tales of the Negroes in North, Central, and South America are all derived from African prototypes, and these can easily be traced in collections.....Through the medium of the American Negro, African folk-lore has exerted a deep and wide influence on the folk-lore of the American Indians; and that of the American white race itself bears many palpable signs of African inroads. This gives the study of African folk-lore not only an original charm, but, for Americans, a decidedly national importance, and should induce American anthropologists to promote the study of Negro folk-lore on either side of the atlantic, by encouraging the collection and publication of more additional material."

The Four Uunas (A-Uunans Kinana) is a tale from Angola belonging



to the second class, the anecdotes. The Four Uona has its humor, but plainly it is told to instruct one in the art of living and acting within the bounds of certain customs. There is a quaint appeal to the literal translation; there is a certain indefinable quality pleasingly characteristic of the written as well as the spoken word of Angola. Certain portions of this tale are given in the original because of the expressive quality of the language.

The Four Uona <sup>102</sup>

"We will tell of the four Uona,<sup>103</sup> of the elder two, and the younger two. He Kimeneze kia Tumb'a Ndala, favorite of friends, built, lived. He begot his four children; all females. There came no male child. They all (had one mother.)

"The eldest, when she came to name herself, said: 'I (am) Uona.' Her younger, who followed her behind, also said: 'I (am) Uona.' Their sister, the third, says: 'I am Uona.'" The other people say: 'The name is one, that you call yourselves, in your sisterhood of four. How shall they call you?' The fourth says: 'I am Uona.'

"/kulu: Eka na itala ia kusakana.  
They grew up; have come to the age of marrying.

"Kubwa dijala na baka, kua Uona na kota. Ene inzo inoxi, ia unnenala. A na baka na kiliwa, Kumbi diafu. A na ralekela kudia; wadi. Uanku nasa; disii n'o'aso ia an'ashatu.

"There came a man to woo, to Uona the eldest. They (were in) one house, of virginity.<sup>104</sup> They placed him in the guest house. The sun died. They cooked food for him; he ate. The night came; the man went out; he went to the house of the girls.

"Uxi: 'Ngoloxi, sun, iingana.' An'ashatu a i tambula Uxi: 'Ngoloxi iiii.' A na salala dixisa hoxi; maxilama. An'ashatu a na nenkasa, Uxi: 'Unenaga kiebi, non' a dijala?' Unene uxi:

'Nenenga unenagi a namba.  
Nenata unati a dijala.  
Namba katanku, a na asa.  
Nila kafufuka, a i andala.  
Kangalafa ka nenenaga, kudia kua jinilia.  
O mibanda ni mibangu, kilincisa kie dibata.  
Ma tunda, ia an' a Nuvulu.  
O non' a dijala, na na di futila.  
Dibaka ka kisa.  
Namba, namba; xibata, xibata:  
Namba, ina i katola, nanku:

Xibata, tsa i knatele, nasalawendu.

Mekania asakela na kobo;

Mekania, tela dia nata;

Malumu, talu dia maka.

Kuena ka a na ii o maxima. Ku maxila, jingana.

"He says: 'Evening, you, ladies.' The girls accept it, saying: 'This is evening.' They spread for him a mat on the ground; he sits down. The girls entertain him; saying: 'Thou spendest (the day) now, young man?' He says:

'I spent the day as an elephant spends it.  
I played as a player of backgammon.  
The elephant is lame (because) they shot him.  
The path is worn down (because) they walked it.  
A nice bottle of bird seed, is (food) of birds.  
The wild fig tree and the Mubangu tree (are) ornaments of a home.  
In the East, we are children of the hippo;  
In the West, we are children of the governor. 105  
The young man, when he covers himself,  
(Casts) the mantle over the left (shoulder).  
Staff, staff; sword, sword:  
Staff, we took it for ornament;  
The sword, we took it for sergeantship.  
The tobacco slept at head of bed;  
The palm-wine slept in the glass;  
Tobacco (is) the cause of spitting;  
Palm-wine (is) the cause of talking.  
There is where his heart went. This is the end, ladies.'

"They say: 'We accept.' They say: 'Let us pass time. The sun is down, the evening dark. That thou thoughtest, saying, 'I will go to give them (good) evening,' we praise it, that thou didst so. The end.' He answered, saying: '(Is) of God.' They continue their conversation. He says: 'I came (because of) thee, thou, Uona the eldest.'

"Ka Uona says: 'Very well. Thou shalt marry me, (if) thou marriest us all, the four of us. If thou thinkest, that (thou wilt have) me alone, the eldest, thou canst not marry me. It must be that we marry our one man, the four of us in the fourhood (of) one mother.' The man assents, saying: 'I can marry you.' He gives them tobacco; he goes to the guest house; sleeps.

"At daybreak he goes to na Minanuese, saying: 'I have come to have a talk; I want to marry with thy daughters.' Ka Minanuese says: 'Very well. If thou canst afford the four of them, bring me the price.' The man agrees to, saying: 'I can. All right.'

"He returns to his home. He finds his father; says: 'Where I went, they accepted me. They asked me for the wooing-presents of four girls.' His father took up four mothers of cows; he gave them to him saying: 'Go and woo.' He slept."

The sisters are wooed and wed; the young husband, after certain ceremonies in which he eats and sleeps continually, carries his wives home. There he leaves them in separate houses and goes into the forest to hunt. From his hunting he sends each of the four wives a bundle of rats, ordering her by message: "the bundle, that the wise bound, let a fool untie it. Thou, only, I send this bundle; thy sisters, do not mention it to them."

Ten or more days pass and the husband returns. The three older wives have put their bundles away, united. The youngest of the four has behaved after this fashion: "She opened it; she sees the rats that are in. She cleans them out; she shaves them. She puts them in pot; she cooks them. She sticks them on a spit; she sticks it in the roof. She kept quiet. They live on some days; ten days." Now the husband goes from house to house, questioning his wives each in turn. Then: "The man laughs. He goes outside; he calls the crowd of the people of the village. He says: 'You gentlemen, I went a-hunting. I tied four bundles; I sent them to my wives, saying: ''The bundle that the wise tied, let the fool untie it.''' I made ten days in the bush. To-day I have come home, saying: ''you, wives, bring the bundles, that I sent you.''' They take out the bundles; those of the elder three are rotten; the bundle of the fourth, of the youngest, is dried. Her rats are these. The elder three are fools; they are not intelligent. I will marry the youngest.' The three elder went away."

"This brought about the saying: 'Elder and younger shall not marry one man.' Because the youngest took from her elder the man, because of her shrewdness."

"Thus far we heard it. Finished."

The Four Uogaa gives one an insight into the customs of marriage, the native's quaint method of testing the intelligence of his fellows, a typical form of extemporaneous poetic expressiveness, and native humor. Besides these points, it is characteristic of its class, offering by indirect method some instruction for living and acting. The poetry found in this tale is filled with parallelism in thought, and the humble, simple, and primitive expression of a cause-effect philosophy. "The elephant is lame (because) they shot him." "The path is worn (because) they walked it." "In the East, we are children of Hippo; in the West, we are children of the Governor." In the East we are wild, free, our own masters, fearful but of the hippo and the ferocious animals associated with him in these haunts; in the West, we not only have the animals to fear, but the governor as well: stay fierce and free, dwelling among the wilds, leaving behind the domination of the "governor." The homely reckoning in the following lines is interesting:

"The tobacco slept at head of bed;  
The palm-wine slept in the glass;  
Tobacco (is) the cause of spitting;  
Palm-wine (is) the cause of talking."

And then, speaking of himself in the third person, he says, "There is where his heart went," adding, "This is the end, ladies," in the usual formula standing in relation to the previous formula when he says, "Evening you, ladies."

#### Leopard and the Other Animals 106

"Ha neo nekala, kiau'eki, nuala in nu knata. Uxi: 'Ngibanga kiabi, Ngixana o jixitu joso nu neogon, ngixi 'izanu: tubanga nbanda! 'O ki jisa o jixitu, ome ngikvate, neidie.'"

"Mr Leopard lived. One day hunger grasps him. He says: 'How shall I do? I will call all the animals of the world, saying: 'Come ye, let us have a medical consultation.' When the animals come, then I may catch and eat."

"Utama kie kuizera Mbambi, ni Mbulungu, ni Soko, ni Kabula, ni Kasexi, Abongoloka, axi: 'Ua ku tumine-hi?' Muema axi: 'Tukuatiemu umbanda, ku di sansa!'

"He sends at once to call Deer, Antelope, Soko<sup>107</sup>, Hare, and Philantomba. They gather, saying: 'Why didst thou send for us?' He says: 'Let us consult medicine, that we get health.'

"Kumbi dinteloka. Akuata o ijimama ku kansa, ni miimbu. O muema heo muema nala na xika o muema; nala na kuishilia, axi:

'Mbulungu a: Mbambi!  
Mukuema ukata:  
K'u na holoka!  
Mbulungu a: Mbambi!  
Mukuema ukata:  
K'u na holoka!  
Mbulungu a: Mbambi!  
Mukuema ukata:  
K'u na holoka!"

"The sun is broken (down). They begin the drums outside with the songs. Mr. Leopard himself is beating the drum; he is singing, saying:

'O Antelope! O Deer!  
Your friend is sick;  
Do not shun him!  
O Antelope! O Deer!  
Your friend is sick;  
Do not shun him!  
O Antelope! O Deer!  
Your friend is sick;  
Do not shun him!"

"O Mbambi axi: 'Muema, O muema, nala na i xika kiabi? Baka-in kumu: ngi i xika.' Na heo na na bana-in, Mbambi wakata o muema, axi:

'Ki kuata:  
Muema ja ku kuata!  
Ki kuata:  
Muema ja ku kuata!  
Ki kuata:  
Muema ja ku kuata!"

"Deer says: 'Chief, the drum, how art thou playing it? Bring it here: that I play it. Mr. Leopard gives him it. Deer takes the drum, says:

'Not sickness;  
W illness holds thee!  
Not sickness;  
W illness holds thee!  
Not sickness;  
W illness holds thee!"

"O na Ngo nabalumaka boxi, xxi: 'Eia, Mbanbi, k'wilia kuzika ngoma.'  
 O iixita lona ha ilona'a, iixi: 'Ea Ngo nala ni iindanga ja ku in  
 kwita.'

"Mr. Leopard stood up from the ground, said: 'Thou, Deer, knowest not  
 (how) to play the drum.' The animals all then ran away, saying:  
 "Mr. Leopard has a scheme to catch us.'" 108

Leopard and the Other Animals belongs to the first class of African folk-tales. This story would strike the native as purely fictitious, even though an unwritten moral to the tale is present in its thought. One values it for two verses of poetic expression within it. Both of the stanzas give excellent examples of repetition and rhythm; and in the original tongue there is alliteration in the second. The elements just mentioned in this instance do not make true poetry, but one is rather pleased with the effectiveness of the stanzas, especially when one considers they are found in a fable. In the first stanza the slow, willing mood of the deceptive leopard is plainly evident in the rhythm. In the second stanza the laughing, mocking, playful mood of the deer is equally as well pointed. The use of drums in these tales is characteristic. That animals should pound upon several kinds of tom-toms does not seem strange to the natives, any more than that our Uncle Remus's Brer Rabbits and Mig' Hen should talk to each other. For the primitive African, the response to tom-toms is a natural, secondary impulse.<sup>109</sup> They not only beat upon them at all hours for all sorts of reasons, but with ease they consider them indispensable to others, even to the personified animals of their fables. Music plays a great part in the formation of what poetic forms the African has evolved. Music is made use of "to stimulate the religious sentiment, the military spirit, and the sexual passion....Priests have early seen its influence and have applied it to their own purposes; chiefs and rulers utilize it in the second case, and the youth of the towns and villages in the third, when the drums sound for moonlight dances."<sup>110</sup>

The natives have several kinds of crudely-formed instruments. The tom-tom is easily the most used of these instruments. It is made of the hollow section of a log with the skin stretched tautly over the ends.<sup>111</sup>

"The tom-tom accompanies the army to the field, the corpse to the grave, the bridegroom to his wedding, the royal embassy on its journey. Not a festival of any kind can proceed without it."<sup>112</sup> The native is skilled in beating the tom-tom; with the rhythms he creates he expresses definite ideas; the power of the pulsating throb of one of these drums is stirring, and when several are beaten together in juxtapositive rhythms, the effect is irresistible. Tillinghast quotes Da Chailu as saying:

113. "It is curious what a stirring effect the sound of the tom-tom has upon the African. It works upon him like martial music does upon excitable Frenchmen; they lose all control over themselves at its sound, and the louder and more energetically the horrid drum is beaten the wilder are the jumps of the male African, and the more disgustingly indecent the contortions of the women."

Tillinghast adds, in the same portion of his work, The Negro in Africa and America:

"The impulse to a lively, noisy sociability, moulds the racial habits in many ways. Regardless of temperature, there must invariably be blazing fires at night in each village, around which the crowd may gather and make merry. Bright moonlight is always the signal for all-night carousals, accompanied by infinite noise in the shape of tom-tom beating, gun-firing, music, and dancing."

Around these midnight jungle-fires the African Negro unwittingly improvised what was later to become the American Negro's propensity for poetic expressiveness.

114  
Mutalemba and Hounca

"Tuteletale Mutalemba ni Hounca.

"Mala niadi, kota ni ndenge, exi: 'Tuis na mbola.' O ndenge, muna nala

ni jimbua je jiladi; o jili lina dia Mutalembe. O jili lina dia Ngunga. Akutuka; abixila na mbola. Atunga funfu; abokona; akal'a.

"Ndence iala na lona o jixitu. o dikota kana. Abanga mbali, ndence nxi: 'Kota tui.' atu kia ku bata.'

"Agungula. Dikota wisingenka nxi: 'Tuafile na mbola. Mon'a ndence, muna naliha o jixitu; ama, na dikota, kana. Ki nabixila ku bata, soni li na knata'. Ualiha ndanga o. Uanomona o midia ja ndence a; na i hana Mutalembe. Mutalembe na i naba; nana. Ua i hana imba imakua, Ngunga; nana. Uagungula o mubamba na xitu. O jimbua jatale muna ia a na liba; ikala na kuimba:

'Ndala ia kota  
Ei Ndala ia ndence,  
Ela na ngunga  
Na dia skua.  
Tuximana  
Mutalembe ni Ngunga;  
A a taxila midia;  
Ngua ku i dia.

"Ndala ia kota utula o mubamba na xitu hoxi; naliha imba imoxi. Uxi: 'Janda ku nai tanga ku bata, joxi muna naliha ndence a.' 'Uagungula mubamba; naliha. Imba. i aliha, jili ia dinci ni kuimba.

"Utula dinci o mubamba na xitu hoxi; na ii liba jiladi. Uxende kina; na ii vumbika.

"Uagungula; naliha. Jimba ii lina dinci ni kuimba;

(The song is repeated.)

"Uabixila ku mbanda a bata. Uagunata; ngungula; abokona m'o'aso.

"A na imba: 'Ema mwendale kiladi; o mukoma nabi?' Muna nxi: 'Ea di tale ni ixi ia.' Uuba kungula, jimbua jabixila; abokona m'o'aso ia muna ia; ikala na kuimba dinci. Atu nxi: 'Ivuna o jimbua iala kuimba. Eia, Ndala ia kota, ndence a mwendale m'a, na na liba. O jimbua ia ia ia tangala.' 'ididi o tashi.'

"We will tell of Mutalembe and Ngunga.

"Two men, elder and younger, say: 'Let us go a-hunting.' The younger has his two dogs; this one dog his name (is) Mutalembe, this one dog his name (is) Ngunga. They start; they arrive in game-ground. They build a hut; they go in; they stay on.

"The younger is (always) shooting the game, the elder none. They spent a month, the younger says: 'Elder, let us go home now!'

"They start. The elder thinks, saying: 'We came a-hunting. The child, he killed the game; I, the elder, not. When I arrive at home, shame will



take me.' He killed his younger. He took out the bowels of his younger; he gave them to Mutalembe. Mutalembe smelled them; he refused. He gave them to the other dog, Ngunga; he refused. He lifted the basket of meat. The dogs looked at their master (who was) killed; they began to sing:

'Edala the elder  
And Edala the younger,  
They went into the world  
To destroy others.  
We praise Mutalembe and Ngunga,  
To whom were thrown the bowels;  
They refused to eat them.'

"Edala the elder set down the basket of meat on the ground; he killed them both; he dug a grave; he covered them up.

"He lifts up; goes on. The dogs, here they come again, singing:

(The song is repeated)

"He arrives in vicinity of the village. He dresses; lifts up; enters into the house.

"They ask him: 'You went two; thy companion, where is he?' He said: 'He went to his country.' He finishes speaking, (and) the dogs arrive; they enter the house of their master; they begin to sing again. The people say: 'Hear, the dogs are singing! Thou, Edala, the elder, thy younger thou wentest with him, thou has killed him. His dogs, they told us? They wailed the mourning.'

Chatelain remarks upon this story:

"Everybody will notice some, merely accidental, resemblance to the story of Cain and Abel....I have not yet found a Ki-xbundu word for remorse, but this story shows that the Angolans know its effects, for Mutalembe and Ngunga represent the protests of conscience....Personified animals are (often in these tales) the chief actors in combination with men....Ngunga is a large bell; Mutalembe, in the inland dialect, is a small bell."

The stanza assigned to Mutalembe and Ngunga, in this story belonging to class one, is less poetic in content than poems of the two stories preceding. The stanza has less rhythmic pattern than the others. But it is typical of the vast majority of poetic forms to be found in the folk-lore of Africa. Its qualities and characters are the qualities and characters of most poems of Africa before Africa was colonized and "civilized" by the

governments and nations of other continents. Whatever there is of poetic form or feeling in African folk-lore is poetic by chance, not poetic according to the most minor standards of poetry. One may almost say that African poetry is a product of accident. It was created extempore, improvised, and not "worked over" in an attempt to achieve better form or content. But the choice of words and the form do differ from the prose of African folk-lore to the extent whereby one concludes that there was something in the nature of poetry in the literature of the American Negroes.

From the Yoruba-speaking peoples of the slave coast of West Africa come three untitled stories containing poetic stanzas.<sup>115</sup> These poems are somewhat crude, brief, repetitious, and of but little aesthetic value, but their varying forms are as interesting as their variable contents.

"Some months afterward the mother went into the forest to look for leaves for medicine, and she came to the place where the child had been murdered. The body of the boy had already decayed, and from the bones had sprung up an ola (an edible fungus). The ola was very fine and large, and when the mother saw it she cried, 'Oh, what a fine ola!' She was stooping down to pick it, when the ola began singing---

Do not pluck me, mother,  
Do not pluck me, mother,  
Do not pluck me, mother,  
I'm a lowly plant on the ground.

I went to the village frolic,  
I went to the village frolic,  
I'm a lowly plant on the ground.  
I was given a thousand cowries,  
I'm a lowly plant on the ground.

(The first verse is repeated here.)

My brother received a thousand cowries,  
My brother received a thousand cowries,  
I'm a lowly plant on the ground.  
But he slew me here for my cowries  
I'm a lowly plant on the ground. 116

These stanzas are musical; they may as well be sung as spoken. They have within their simple structure something of the effective repetitions and wail of a modern Blues song. They are highly effective in this story. That the gũ should sing more than one verse is of dramatic force; that the verses disclose the nature of this fratricide is characteristic of the personification of plants as well as of animals in these stories having a supernatural stamp. These stanzas are climactic more than they are artistic.

Another tale of the Yoruba peoples contains a three-stanza poem having dignity in diction and content and something of form better than one finds in the majority of African tales.<sup>117</sup> A woman has lost a beautiful necklace, through the negligence of two boys. The head-chief, to whom she appeals, decrees that the boys must find the missing necklace, or die.<sup>118</sup>

"In this dilemma the elder boy, knowing that human agency could avail him not, sought assistance from the gods. He went to the head-priest,....unfolded his tale, and begged for aid. The priest consulted the god Ifa,<sup>119</sup> and Ifa replied that in order to know what his mother had done with the necklace, the boy must go to Deadland and ask her. The child said he was ready to go, but how was he to get there? Then the oracle instructed him as follows:

'Let the child in search of his mother  
Offer an ebony sheep to the dead,  
When night falls in the grove of Ifa.

Let the child in search of his mother  
Sprinkle his eyes with lustral water,  
Then shall the dead be visible to him.

Let the child in search of his mother  
Follow the shadows' s noiseless footsteps,  
So shall he reach the land of the dead.'

The repetition of the first line is effective apart from its semi-metric chant character; "Let the child in search of his mother" is a formula which is delightfully unifying.

Another primitive attempt at versification, or poetic phrasing, is found in a story of Yoruba origin.

120

"My ala is something about a certain king.

One day the king called all the birds to come and clear a piece of ground. But he forgot to call Kini-kini. 122

All the birds came. They set to work, and they cleared a large piece of ground.

In the middle of the piece of ground was an odan tree. 123  
At mid-day, when the sun was hot, and all the birds had left their work for the day, Kini-kini came and perched on the odan tree and began to sing: 124

The king sent to invite my companions, Kini-kini.

He assembled all the children of the folk with wings, Kini-kini.

Grow grass, sprout bush, Kini-kini.

Come, let us go to the house, Kini-kini.

And there we can dance the bata, Kini-kini.

If the bata will not sound we will dance the dundun, Kini-kini. 125

If the dundun will not sound we will dance the gangan, Kini-kini.

Perhaps the most noticeable quality of these songs, or poetic stanzas, is a simple, not unpleasant assonance. The assonance is more clearly discernible in the original language than in the English translations of the verses. The literary merit of this production of African poets is not very great, but its quaint appeal is lasting. Kuret makes an interesting comment on African songs:

126

"Songs are abundant among the blacks, and fill partly the functions of the Greek comedies in the time of Aristophanes and of newspapers in modern States. They denounce suspected persons, glorify victorious soldiers, and abuse the enemies of the country. Sometimes the singers improvise variants and sing the praises of their hearers, but this very rarely happens with respect to whites, for the Negroes generally cherish a great aversion against them, and they apply satirical verses to Europeans."

These folk-songs differ in form according to the differences found in religion, customs, cultures, and the like of distant tribal or ethnic units, just as the folk-songs of the American Negroes differ from the songs of different racial or ethnic units in America. The African songs have

certain variations of the strophe, more or less developed according to the personal development of the people who compose and sing them.<sup>127</sup>

Often in song the Negro boasts of what he will not disclose in ordinary speech.

128

"Sometimes the author (of a song) gives a pompous eulogy of himself; and even when he sings the praises of the lady of his heart he begins by proclaiming that he is no less a brave champion than an excellent poet, and declares himself ready to defend his double reputation in single combat."

When singing, moods of jealous suspicion, anger, or love sickness, come over the African poet. His song affects those about him; they react according to their own group-mood of the moment, showing their approval of his efforts by chanting chorus-like the repetitious refrain of his song, or making known their disapproval of his improvisation by shouts and noises having unbelievable volume.

The very fact that nearly all poetic stanzas, whether songs or chants or decorative parts of a folk-tale, are the result of improvisation, leads to the conclusion that background and heritage are important factors not only in the act of creation but in the degree to which the product is mediocre or unusually good. The folk-songs of the American Negro possess the same quality of extemporization. The think-it, feel-it, talk-it, sing-it system of the American black's production of folk-songs is thoroughly creative and akin to African methods. That the American Negro's mind, while in the throes of folk-poetics, does consciously or unconsciously think, feel, talk, and then sing his ideas is indicated in certain phrases from their folk-songs and even poems. The Negro refers to his songs and to his love of song-making in such phrases as: "Tell it, Mose," "Sing it, sister," "Say it once, say it twice," "Speak out, heart," "Shout, brother, shout," "Let Yo' heart say fo'th," "I means no mind," "Shout dat song."

"Do it, do it, do it, fo' yo' sake of peace," "Say it very softly," and  
 "Lord, I hear, an' ain't I singin'?"

The American Negro applied homely and unsophisticated figures in his poems, figures taken from his daily life and occupations. This incorporation of homely comparison is racial and a part of the African heritage of the American folk-lyricist. In folk-songs of unknown authorship, one finds the Negro turning his attention to objects near at hand. This is especially true in his more humorous type of ballads.

- 129 "I went down to my gal's house,  
 But couldn't get in at all;  
 I went around to de winder,  
 There was another male in my stall,  
 /ll night long, baby, all night long."
- 130 "If de river was whiskey,  
 An if I were a duck,  
 I'd go down and never come up."
- 131 "Come after breakfast,  
 Bring along your lunch,  
 /nd leave before supper time."
- 132 "Baltimore for its oysters,  
 Boston for its beans,  
 New York for its pretty girls,  
 But for niggers---New Orleans."
- 133 "Ole master had a little gray male,  
 /n' he bought him on Christmas day,  
 /n' de fust word dat accoun'dl beest said,  
 Was "I wants a little oats and hay."  
 Oh, Lord, you oughter hear him moan,  
 Lord I wish I had let him alone."
- 134 "My ol' captain---huh  
 Got a fo'ty-fo'ty---huh  
 My ol' captain---huh  
 Got a fo'ty-fo'ty---huh  
 Let dem picks go down."
- 135 "Somebody stole my old coon dog,  
 Wish they'd bring him back,  
 /uns the old coons over the fence  
 /nd the little ones through the crack."

136 "What did the rooster say to the little red hen?  
 'I ain't seed you since God knows when.'  
 What did the hen say to the little red rooster?  
 'You don't come round as often as you uster.'"

137 "My ole mistis promised me  
 When she died she'd set me free.  
 She lived so long that her head got ball,  
 'nd the Lord couldn't kill her with a hickory maul."

138 "Ole master had a yellow gal,  
 He brought her from the south;  
 Her hair was wrapped so close and tight,  
 She couldn't shet her mouf.

He carried her into the barber shop  
 To have her mouf cut small;  
 She backed her years all at once  
 And swallowed shop and all.

Her head looked like a coffee pot,  
 Her nose looked like the spout,  
 Her mouf looked like the fireplace  
 With the ashes taken out."

Though filled with Negro humor, these songs were not always sung for the sake of laughter. They afforded the slave a means of displaying an ironic mood, disgust, disapproval, and sorrow. They did not mean what one would at first think they did. Quite often the phrase "sadder mule in my stall" expresses sorrow and chagrin over the loss of a sweetheart, as do "Somebody stole my coon dog" and "What did the hen say to the little red rooster?" Disgust or disapproval was expressed more than once by "Come after breakfast, bring along your lunch, and leave before supper time." The fact that often an old mistress of slaves lived so long that "the Lord couldn't kill her with a hickory maul," was used in song to express sorrow and disappointment long after the chains of slavery had been dropped. Such songs, originally expressions in objectivity, became after a time, expressions in subjectivity, losing much of their original meaning and taking on various new ones.

A similar manner of origin accounts for many Negro spirituals: similarly these, too, transcended into new significance, but perhaps less readily than the work songs and the like. Later songs of ascertained authorship, written when poets of the race became more numerous, began to individualize group expression, following certain rules of the white man's poetry, contain homely comparisons with the immediate. The following is an example:

As Sifted Wheat

O sift me, Lord, and make me  
 Clean as sifted wheat;  
 My soul, an empty vessel, bring  
 To my redeemer's feet.  
 However sinful I have been or be,  
 Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee.

I am so closely hedged about,  
 Oh, Christ, as thou hast been;  
 My soul, hemmed in with flesh,  
 Is so in love with sin.  
 Sin stained am I, but sift me, Lord, complete,  
 And make me clean as sifted wheat.

George M. Mc Clellan

But Negro singers brought from Africa a characteristic more unusual and outstanding than any of the distinguishing characteristics already mentioned. This is the manner of singing to a superior that which would not be spoken by the subordinate singer. At a time when sarcasm, bitterness, rebellion, and satire cannot longer be held within their proper cavities of the emotions, these songs burst forth, usually sung in the third person, or as a quotation from someone else, first indefinite, becoming bold, harsh, extemporaneous outbursts.

139 "It is very common among African Negroes to express in song, with or without instrumental music, that which they would not dare to say in plain words. So the slaves of the plantations (African plantations) sing satires against their taskmasters; the carriers on the path against the head of the exposition; any ill-used inferior against his superior.



Beginning with very vague allusions, these artirical productions may often, if not checked in time, degrade into fierce denunciations and insolent curses."

This type of rebellious expression is found most often in American Negro work-songs, of which the following are examples:

- 140 "Captain, captain, you must be cross,  
It's done four o'clock and you won't knock off.  
Captain, captain, you must be cross,  
For the money's done come and you won't pay us off."
- 141 "I wish my captain would go blind.  
Wouldn't go to work till half past nine."
- 142 "Me and my pardner done made a plot  
To take all de money de white folks got.  
Me and my pardner and two or three mo'  
We raised hell, boys, round de pay car do'."

Newman I. White, in his American Negro Folk Songs, says:

- 143 "The Negro sang work songs long before he came to America. ....the work-song....persisted, and will persist as long as the Negro retains his dominant racial traits....The greater number of songs....are not timed particularly to the work at hand; they are merely sung in a way that keeps them from interfering with the work in hand....Their primary function is mental rather than physical....They express a great variety of transient moods about his captain, his partner, his pick and hammer, his work, his pay. Next to his women, the most important person in the gang-laborers song is his 'Cap'n' or boss. The 'Cap'n' is the man who hires him and fires him, who keeps him working, sometimes 'cusses' and abuses him, and sometimes helps him out of difficulties."

Other songs, less truly work-songs, express the Negro's pent-up emotions in the same manner of impersonal, "throw off" style. Newman I. White remarks concerning these songs that "beyond question there are some secular folk-songs in which the Negro does indulge in self-pity, also some in which he expresses resentment of the treatment accorded him by the white race...."<sup>144</sup>

- 145 "If a white man kills a Negro, they hardly carry it to court,  
If a Negro kills a white man, they hang him like a goat."
- 146 "A cold cup o' coffee and the meat's mighty fat,  
The white folks growl if I eat much o' dat."

- 147 "The old bee makes de honey-comb,  
The young bee makes de honey;  
Colored folks plant de cotton and corn,  
And de white folks gits de money."
- 148 "Oh little nigger baby,  
Black face and shiny eyes,  
Better than the po' white trash  
In the sweet bye and bye;  
Black face born that way, brains all in his feet.  
That's the song of the little nigger baby  
Down on Market Street."

The spirituals sometimes possess this spirit of rebellion thus indirectly expressed; these spirituals are few in number. The following is an example of such a spiritual:

- 149 "Well, de good Book say dat Cain killed Abel,  
Yes, Abel,  
Dat he hit him in de head wid de leg of a table,  
Yes, good Lord.

"Didn't Daniel in de Lion's den  
Say unto dem collud men  
'Git yo' long white gown an' pass 'em round,  
And be ready when the great day comes."  
Yes, Lord, I'm ready; yes, Lord, I'm ready,  
I'll be ready when de great day comes."

Here, the meaning is subtly hidden, and the thought is ably proportioned between the enigmatical Cain and Abel lines and the foil of the "collud" singer preparing for heaven in the "long white gown." Cain was a white; he committed the first crime; Daniel was persecuted by his superiors,—thus, the song takes on significance.

There is another type of song which subtly, indefinitely, expresses the Negro's rebellion, the song of the "Upstart Crows." The term is used by Newman I. White in his standard book on American folk-songs.<sup>150</sup> In speaking of the songs of the Upstart Crows he says:

- 151 "It would be too much to expect the Negro, or any other race,

to live and sing constantly on the high plan of the spirituals. The spirituals are naive, earnest. But the Negro is neither naive always, or always earnest. He has at times a spirit of mockery that must come to the surface: he must follow the universal trivial practice of making light of the things he reveres. Thus he sings a considerable number of songs in which the spirituals are openly flaunted, or in which matter that is seriously treated in the spirituals is regarded as humorous."

Thus he sings songs similar to the following: songs that are humorous:

152 "Jesus, lover of my soul,  
How many chickens have I stole?  
One last night, two night before,  
Going back tonight to get two more."

Of more interest to us than the foregoing song are these two selections of

Upstart Crow songs:

153 "Yonder comes Noah stumbling in the dark  
With his hammer and nails for to build the ark.  
Yonder comes the animals two by two  
The hippopotamus and the kangaroo.  
Shout, mourners, you shall be free  
When the good Lord sets you free."

"Great big Negro black as tar,  
Trying to go to heaven on a electric car,  
Negro! you'll never get thar!

Chorus:

"You shall be free,  
Just when the good Lord sets you free.

"Great big Negro settin' on a log,  
Finger on the trigger and eye on the hog,  
Gun went bang, bullet went sip,  
Jumped on dat hog with all his grip.  
Fresh meat!

Chorus.

"Well as I was going across the field  
Great big black snake took and bit me in the heel.  
Turned around and gave him a grin.  
Son of a gun took and bit me agin.  
Great God!"

Chorus.

The satirical lines are not clean-cut in either of these songs; but the fact that, after having been made fun of and abused by masters, the Negro grinned somewhat and tried to forget, only to be tormented the second time for grinning, may be indicated here in the last stanza of the second. There is certainly the thought in both songs that "you shall be free, just when the good Lord sets you free," and at no other time. The "good Lord" is a heavenly one, not an earthly one. The white masters are owners of slaves, not saviors or liberators of slaves. "Yonder comes Noah stumbling in the dark, with....the Hippopotamus and the Kangaroo," likely at inception a <sup>bit of</sup> pictorial imagination, may easily have become a satirical formula for the approach of some disliked master and his kinsmen. The Negro suffered much; it is but natural that during his servitude he should have carried his torch covered with a hood between itself and his face—the light blinding those who approached to discover his real identity.

Africa has contributed food for thought to the modern Negro poet of America. To many Negro poets, Africa is not merely "a book one thumbs listlessly till slumber comes," as Countee Cullen would at times try to persuade himself. <sup>154</sup> Africa is a land of ancient heritage and future opportunities, a land of mysterious call. Land of drums, spirit-filled moonlight, love-dances, slow pools, jungle beasts, dark shadows, and strange, beckoning gods, is Africa. As such, Africa, and African heritage, furnishes stimuli for the poetic reaction of the modern black poets of America. Langston Hughes's Fantasy in Purple, Poem for the Portrait of an African Boy After the Manner of Genghis, African Dance, Afraid, Drums, Afro-American Fragment, and Mc Kay's Africa and Outcast, with E. L. Haines's Spirits, are excellent examples of poems written from African stimulation. <sup>155</sup>

In Fenton Johnson's Voices of the Dusk, as in Heines's Spirits, the assimilation of ancient racial religious traits or tendencies is well marked.

### Voices of the Dusk

#### I

Do you hear the witches wailing?  
 Witches wailing, wailing, wailing.  
 Do you see the ghost robes trailing  
 Ghost robes trailing, trailing, trailing  
 It is but a nighttime whisper,  
 But a whisper of the zephyr?  
 Or my soul in secret meeting  
 That dim soul whose fate is loving?  
 Tell me, tell me, tell me,  
 Voices of the Dusk.

#### II

Do you see those spirits lonely?  
 Spirits lonely, lonely, lonely.  
 Can they be for lost souls only?  
 Lost souls only, only, only.  
 Are they but the fearful phantoms,  
 Fearful phantoms from my fancy?  
 Or the sprites of conscience stricken  
 From a region long forgotten?  
 Tell me, tell me, tell me,  
 Voices of the Dusk.

Fenton Johnson

### Spirits

Behind the tree a spirit standing guard.  
 Within the rain and wind, a fiend or friend.  
 And blessings show his favoring regard,  
 And ills assert his readiness to rend.  
 Fear steels the hand that slays the crouching beast  
 For savory, propitiating feast.

Along the trail one sees the viands set  
 For hunger-angry demons to devour.  
 But slaves, insured by charm or amulet,  
 Creep forth to banquet in the midnight hour.  
 Next day the empty bowls pronounce escape,  
 And life resumes its reasonable shape.

E. L. Heines

Claude Mc Key, in his I Shall Return, writing under a spell of nostalgia for both Africa and Jamaica, expresses the longing for all that once meant happiness of a sort peculiarly pleasant to the African of many past ages.

### I Shall Return

I shall return again; I shall return  
 To laugh and love and watch with wonder-eyes  
 At golden noon the forest fires burn,  
 Wafting their blue-black smoke to sapphire skies.  
 I shall return to loiter by the streams  
 That bathe the brown blades of the bending grasses,  
 And realize once more my thousand dreams  
 Of waters rushing down the mountain passes.  
 I shall return to hear the fiddle and fife  
 Of village dances, hear delicious tunes  
 That stir the hidden depths of native life,  
 Stray melodies of dim remembered runes.  
 I shall return; I shall return again,  
 To ease my mind of long, long years of pain.

Claude Mc Kay

A similar note of longing for the return to the primitive is in Mc Kay's  
In Bondage, though here the thought is more in the abstract than in I Shall  
 Return.

### In Bondage

I would be wandering in distant fields  
 Where man, and bird, and beast, lives leisurely,  
 And the old earth is kind, and ever yields  
 Her goodly gifts to all her children free;  
 Where life is fairer, lighter, less demanding,  
 And boys and girls have time and space for play  
 Before they come to years of understanding---  
 Somewhere I would be singing, far away.  
 For life is greater than the thousand wars  
 Men wage for it in their insatiate lust,  
 And will remain like the eternal stars,  
 When all that shines to-day is drift and dust  
 But I am bound with you in your mean graves,  
 O black men, simple slaves of ruthless slaves.

Claude Mc Kay

Haines's African Snapshots gives a picture of an Africa with an  
 old-world "devil in a bush-cow gown, rampant in a crowded town" of a modern-  
 world influence.

### African Snapshots

A kitchen where the rice-crop dries;  
 A naked child with gems for eyes.  
 A warri board with men sprawled 'round;  
 Mortars that sweating women pound.

A weaver squatted on his heels,  
Plying thread from colored reels.

Naked slaves about a dish,  
Gorging rice and peppered fish.

Little children, born for play,  
Bearing burdens large as they.

Women puffing stumps of pipe,  
Watching when the rice is ripe.

E. L. Haines

Doubly striking is the poem Drum, singing of death and the tom-tom, the "signal drum" in this instance.

### Drum

Be in mind  
That death is a drum  
Beating forever  
Till the last worms come  
To answer its call,  
Till the last stars fall,  
Until the last atom  
Is no atom at all,  
Until time is lost  
And there is no air  
And space itself  
Is nothing nowhere.  
Death is a drum,  
A signal drum,  
Calling all life  
To Come! Come!  
Come!

Langston Hughes

The Afro-American Fragment speaks of an "atavistic land" from which come songs that "beat back into the blood."

### Afro-American Fragment

So long,  
So far away,  
Is Africa.  
Not even memories live  
Save those that history books create,  
Save those that songs beat back into the blood—  
Beat out of blood with words and sung  
In strange un-Negro tongue—  
So long,  
So far away,  
Is Africa.

Subdued and time lost are the drums—  
 And yet, through some vast mist of race  
 There comes this song  
 I do not understand,  
 This song of atavistic land,  
 Of bitter yearnings lost, without a place—  
 So long,  
 So far away,  
 Is Africa's  
 Dark Face.

Langston Hughes

The first of the following poems is indicative of this idea of African influence; the second expresses but incidentally the call of the African past; the third is beautifully crisp and universally significant.

For the Portrait of an African Boy After the Manner of Gansuia

All the tom-toms of the jungle beat in my blood,  
 And all the wild hot moons of the jungles shine in my soul.  
 I am afraid of this civilization—  
 So hard,  
 So strong,  
 So cold.

Langston Hughes

Lament For Dark Peoples

I was a red man one time,  
 But the white men came.  
 I was a black man, too,  
 But the white men came.

They drove me out of the forest.  
 They took me away from the jungles.  
 I lost my trees.  
 I lost my silver moons.

Now they've caged me  
 In the circus of civilization.  
 Now I herd with the meny—  
 Caged in the circus of civilization.

Langston Hughes

Afraid

We cry among the skyscrapers  
 As our ancestors  
 Cried among the palms of Africa



Because we are alone,  
It is night,  
And we're afraid.

Langston Hughes

Likewise universally significant is this poem, O Black and Unknown Bards. It is equally interesting and provocative of thought when applied to the African and the American Negro.

O Black and Unknown Bards

O black and unknown bards of long ago,  
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?  
How, in your darkness, did you come to know  
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?  
Who first from midst of bonds lifted his eyes?  
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,  
Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise  
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?

James Weldon Johnson

Not wholly of wide-spread significance is Fenton Johnson's The Ethiopian's Song; yet it is of interest at this point, presenting as it does a note of contentment in a transplanted habitat.

The Ethiopian's Song

Where I go the lily blooms,  
Where I go the ivy climbs:  
All the earth is slave to me,  
All the orbs are merry chimes.  
White man longs to rule the world:  
I am happy where I am,---  
I, the lord of sweet content.

Where I go magnolias dance,  
Where I go the jonquils prance;  
Strength and might and power are mine,  
Song and cheer my freedom's lance.  
Let ambition die her death;  
I am happy where I am,---  
I, the lord of sweet content.

Fenton Johnson

The inclination is to regard this as purely an individual, not a racial expression.

Disregarding the spare content of the following poem, one notices that the form is quite possibly built upon African rhythm. It has the wailing

repetition, the moaning, sighing, swaying "feel" about it that many African poetic songs exhibit.

Moan

I'm deep in trouble,  
Nobody to understand,  
Lord, Lord!

Deep in trouble,  
Nobody to understand,  
O, Lord!

Gonna pray to Mr Jesus,  
Ask Him to gimme His hand.  
Ma Lord!

I'm moanin', moanin',  
Nobody cares just why.  
Fo, Lord!

Moanin', moanin',  
Feels like I could die.  
O, Lord!

Sho, there must be peace,  
Ma Jesus,  
Somewhere in yo' sky.  
Yes, Lord!

Langston Hughes

Hughes contributes two other poems of interest in the study of African survivals, or rather African stimulation, in the rhythm and metre of the American Negro's poetry.

Prayer

I ask you this:  
Which way to go?  
I ask you this:  
Which sin to bear?  
Which crown to put  
Upon my hair?  
I do not know,  
Lord God,  
I do not know.

Langston Hughes

### African Dance

The low beating of the tom-toms,  
 The slow beating of the tom-toms,  
     Low....slow  
     Slow....low---  
 Stirs your blood.

Dance!

A night-veiled girl  
 Whirls softly into a circle of light.  
 Whirls softly....slowly,  
 Like a wisp of smoke around the fire---  
 And the tom-toms beat,  
 And the tom-toms beat,  
 And the low beating of the tom-toms  
 Stirs your blood.

Langston Hughes

The simplicity of Prayer is pleasing and not unlike the naive sturdiness of African chants. In African Dance, the sound, the rhythm, the beating of the tom-toms has been transferred as plainly, as strikingly as possible in the temperate medium of English language. The words tom-tom, low, slow, blood, softly, slowly, smoke, fire, perhaps less noticeably the word beat, all carry the sound of the drums within their properly intoned pronunciation. The Negro Speaks of Rivers stirs one with a rapid, transient increase of vital energies taken from African heritage.

### The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:  
 I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the  
     flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
 I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
 I looked upon the Nile and raised my pyramids above it.  
 I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln  
     went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its  
     muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:  
 Ancient dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Langston Hughes

Nowhere has an outline of the historical significance of the American Negro been given so beautifully, so well, so smoothly. Africa appeals to Langston Hughes more than to any other Negro poet; perhaps No. Kay is the second Negro poet to feel fully the call of the dark continent. Again, in Fantasy in Purple, we feel Hughes's propensity for the jungle-rhythms of the tom-tom; and in The Negro, Hughes produces from the very best of the African stimulation within him. Whatever he may write in the future, he will hardly surpass this poem for clarity of thought, especially when one considers his poems from a sociological standpoint, as, for the most part, one considers all of the poems in this work.

#### Fantasy in Purple

Beat the drums of tragedy for me.  
 Beat the drums of tragedy and death.  
 And let the choir sing a stormy song  
 To drown the rattle of my dying breath.

Beat the drums of tragedy for me,  
 And let the white violins whir thin and slow,  
 But blow one blaring trumpet not of sun  
 To go with me

to the darkness  
 where I go.

Langston Hughes

#### The Negro

I am a Negro:  
 Black as the night is black,  
 Black like the depths of my Africa.

I've been a slave:  
 Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.  
 I brushed the boots of Washington.

I've been a worker:  
 Under my hand the pyramids arose.  
 I made mortar for the Woolworth building.

I've been a singer:  
 All the way from Africa to Georgia  
 I carried my sorrow songs.  
 I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:  
 The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.  
 They lynch me now in Texas.

I am a Negro:  
 Black as the night is black.  
 Black like the depths of my Africa.

Langston Hughes

Claude Mc Kay, Hughes's companion in a love of African rhythms and African subject-matter, writes of "When all the world was young and pregnant night," in Africa, a sonnet devoted to the matters of his heritage.

Africa

The sun sought thy dim bed and brought forth light,  
 The sciences were suckling at thy breast;  
 When all the world was young and pregnant night  
 Thy slaves toiled at thy monumental best.  
 Thou ancient treasure-land, thou modern prize,  
 New peoples marvel at thy pyramids!  
 The years roll on, thy sphinx of riddle eyes  
 Watches the mad world with immobile lids.  
 The Hebrews humbled them at Pharaoh's name.  
 Cradle of power! Yet all things were in vain!  
 Honor and Glory, Arrogance and Fame!  
 They went. The darkness swallowed thee again.  
 Thou art the harlot, now thy time is done.  
 Of all mighty nations of the sun.

Claude Mc Kay

In the sonnet On a Primitive Genoa, Mc Kay shows less race consciousness and more individual suffering and exaltation, becoming deeply subjective in his theme.

On a Primitive Genoa

Here, passing lonely down this quiet lane,

Before a mud-splashed window long I pause  
 To gaze and gaze, while through my active brain  
 Still thoughts are stirred to wakefulness; because  
 Long, long ago in a dim unknown land,  
 A massive forest-tree, ax-felled, adze-hewn,  
 Was deftly done by cunning mortal hand  
 Into a symbol of the tender moon.  
 Why does it thrill more than the handsome boat  
 That bore me o'er the wild Atlantic ways,  
 And fill me with rare sense of things remote  
 From this harsh night of fretful nights and days?  
 I cannot answer but, whate'er it be,  
 An old wine has intoxicated me.

Claude Mc Kay

Exhortation, Summer 1919 has the distinction of being the one poem of  
 exhortation of any poetical consequence for the sake of form, diction,  
 metre, and strength and reserve in thought.

Exhortation, Summer 1919

Through the pregnant universe rumbles life's terrific thunder,  
 And Earth's bowels quake with terror; strange and terrible storms break,  
 Lightning-torches flame the heavens, kindling souls of men, thereunder:  
 Africa! long ages sleeping, O my motherland, awake!

In the East the clouds grow crimson with the new dawn that is breaking,  
 And its golden glory fills the Western skies.  
 O my brothers and my sisters, wake! arise!  
 For the new birth rends the old earth and the very dead are waking,  
 Ghosts are turned flesh, throwing off the grave's disguise,  
 And the foolish, even children, are made wise;  
 For the big earth groans in travail for the strong new world in making---  
 O my brothers, dreaming for dim centuries,  
 Wake from sleeping; to the East turn, turn your eyes!

Oh the night is sweet for sleeping, but the shining day's for working;  
 Sons of the seductive night, for your children's children's sake,  
 From the deep primeval forest where the crouching leopard's lurking,  
 Lift your heavy-lidded eyes, Ethiopia! awake!

In the East the clouds grow crimson with the new dawn that is breaking,  
 And its golden glory fills the Western skies.  
 O my brothers and my sisters, wake! arise!  
 For the new birth rends the old earth and the very dead are waking,  
 Ghosts are turned flesh, throwing off the grave's disguise,  
 And the foolish, even children, are made wise;  
 For the big earth groans in travail for the strong new world in making---  
 O my brothers, dreaming for dim centuries,  
 Wake from sleeping; to the East turn, turn your eyes!

Claude Mc Kay

James E. Mc Girt, a lesser Negro poet of America, writes, in 1901, Africa's Cry, a poem of no importance or beauty save when regarded for purposes of isolating content or "message" of pregnant sociological significance. Mc Girt is thinking of a twentieth century Africa, in need of more missionaries than she has. Mc Girt's Africa speaks to him from dark shadows or in faint, tantalising, drum-tuning whispers. His stimulation is religious in the mould of the white man's god. The poem is a serious manifestation of the thought of many American Negroes who have sent funds, gone themselves, trained others to go to African jungles, fever areas old-new lands, that some call may be answered which the average Negro leader understands almost without concentration, almost instinctively, but a call indefinable and not easily understood by the minds of many outstanding white leaders of America.

Africa's Cry

From the land of Africa  
Comes a faint cry:  
"Send us the gospel---  
To save ere we die."

Dying unconscious  
Of a heavenly home  
We know not the Saviour.  
What will be our doom?

Send us a teacher  
Who will show us the way.  
We know not the law---  
How can we obey?

Come to us quickly,  
We have thrown wide the gate;  
Millions of souls  
Do anxiously wait.

James E. Mc Girt

Writing in 1917, Lewis Alexander, one of the younger Negro poets of America, reclaims Africa for himself and his race in a sonnet of some

merits in restraint and choice of thought.

Africa

Thou art not dead, although the spoiler's hand  
Lies heavy as death upon thee; though the wrath  
Of its accursed might is in thy path  
And has usurped thy children of their land;  
Though yet the scourges of a monstrous hand  
Roam on thy ruined fields, thy trampled lanes,  
Thy ravaged homes and desolate fanes;  
Thou art not dead, but sleeping—Motherland.

A mighty country, valorous and free,  
Thou shalt outlive this terror and this pain;  
Shall call thy scattered children back to thee,  
Strong with the memory of their brothers slain;  
And rise from out thy charnel house to be  
Thine own immortal, brilliant self again!

Lewis Alexander

Edward S. Silvers, a twenty-seven year old Philadelphia poet, has written a short ballad-like poem, Jungle Taste celebrating the "weird strangeness" of the songs of black men, and the "beauty in faces of black women." Silvers follows the newer school of poets who turn toward racial beauty and racial qualities for their inspiration, at the same time using a form that is often remindful of primitive simplicity.

Jungle Taste

There is a coarseness  
In the songs of black men  
Coarse as the songs of the sea,  
There is a weird strangeness  
In the songs of black men  
Which sounds not strange  
To me.

There is beauty  
In the faces of black women,  
Jungle beauty  
And mystery  
Dark hidden beauty  
In the faces of black women,  
Which only black men  
See.

Edward S. Silvers



Another of the younger poets, Helene Johnson, known for her poem Battled, which contains several lines applicable to this discussion, offers three poems treating the African stimuli in various ways. In Summer Matures there is splendid color and tropical effect. The note in which the poem ends is, one imagines, the possible-poetic expression of a black maid under the spell of a jungle night; of course, this expression is highly polished and made lyrical rather than dramatic.

### Summer Matures

Summer matures. Brilliant Scorpion  
Appears. The pelican's thick pouch  
Hangs heavily with perch and slugs.  
The brilliant-bellied newt flashes  
Its crimson crest in the white water.  
In the lush meadow, by the river,  
The yellow-freckled toad laughs  
With a toothless gurgle at the white-necked stork  
Standing asleep on one red reedy leg.  
And here Pan drums of slim stalks clean for piping,  
And of a nightingale gone mad with freedom.  
Come. I shall weave a bed of reeds  
And willow limbs and pale nightflowers.  
I shall strip the roses of their petals,  
And the white down from the swan's neck.  
Come. Night is here. The air is drunk  
With wild grape and sweet clover.  
And by the sacred fount of Aganippe  
Euterpe sings of love. Ah, the woodland creatures,  
The doves in pairs, the wild sow and her shoats,  
The stag searching the forest for a mate,  
Know more of love than you, my callous Phoen.  
The young moon is a curved white scimitar  
Pierced through the swooning night.  
Sweet Phoen. With Sappho sleep like the stars at dawn.  
This night was born for love, my Phoen.  
Come.

Helene Johnson

Poem, Little Brown Boy, by Helene Johnson, is joyous, youthful, unusually expressive in a poem all her own. The last fifteen lines are of interest to us. Distinct African types of Negroes carry African rhythms, African stimuli, African joys about with them better than the hybrid variety of Negroes. Little Brown Boy is evidently of this pure physical type

or else Helene Johnson's imagination is a vibrant catch-bag for her emotions, in this instance affording pleasure by her recall of characteristics all converging about a single stable object, the brown boy.

Poem. Little Brown Boy

Little brown boy,  
 Slim, dark, big-eyed,  
 Crooning love songs to your banjo  
 Down at the Lafayette—  
 Gee, boy, I love the way you hold your head,  
 High sort of and a bit to one side,  
 Like a prince, a jazz prince. And I love  
 Your eyes flashing, and your hands,  
 And your patent-leathered feet,  
 And your shoulders jerking the jig-wa.  
 And I love your teeth flashing,  
 And the way your hair shines in the spotlight  
 Like it was the real stuff.  
 Gee, brown boy, I loves you all over.  
 I'm glad I'm a jig. I'm glad I can  
 Understand your dancin' and your  
 Singin', and feel all the happiness  
 And joy and don't care in you.  
 Gee, boy, when you sing, I can close my ears  
 And hear tom-toms just as plain.  
 Listen to me, will you, what do I know  
 About tom-toms? But I like the word, sort of,  
 Don't you? It belongs to us.  
 Gee, boy, I love the way you hold your head,  
 And the way you sing and dance,  
 And everything.  
 Say, I think you're wonderful. You're  
 Allright with me,  
 You are.

Helene Johnson

In Maguin, Helene Johnson weaves an exotic spell about her subject. Maguin is a complete, circular style in rhythmic thought. The poet's idea about Maguin and the missionary is significant, coming as it does from one of the younger poets, and from an Americanized black poet of the advanced twentieth century.

Maguin

Summer comes.  
 The siroc hovers

'Round the greedy-mouthed crocodile.  
 A vulture bears away a foolish jackal.  
 The flamingo is a dash of pink  
 Against dark green mangoes,  
 Her slender legs rivalling her slim neck.  
 The laughing lake gurgles delicious music in its throat  
 And lulls to sleep the lazy lizard,  
 A nebulous being on a sun-scorch'd rock.  
 In such a place,  
 In this pulsing, riotous gasp of color,  
 I met Nagaiu, dark as a tree at night,  
 Eager-lipped, listening to a man with a white collar  
 And a small black book with a cross on it.  
 Oh, Nagaiu, come! Take my hand and I will read you poetry,  
 Chromatic words,  
 Seraphic symphonies,  
 Fill up your throat with laughter and your heart with song.  
 Do not let him lure you from your laughing waters,  
 Lulling lakes, lissome winds.  
 Would you sell the colors of your sunset and the fragrance  
 Of your flowers, and the passionate wonder of your forest  
 For a creed that will not let you dance?

Helene Johnson

Arna Bontemps, one of to-day's poets of Negro origin, has written in The Return some of the most memorable lines concerning the call of the jungle. He expresses a nostalgia for the primitive freedom of ancient Africa in a manner of thought similar to Mc Kay's Enslaved. Especially does the jungle call to the lovers of his poem, as noticeably as to the leaders and thinkers of his race. "Once more, listening to the wind and rain," and to the throbbing of remembered rain," the hearts of lovers steal back to quiet pools and jungle moons. "Darkness hangs (the) room with pendulums of wine," and the walls of the room in which they lie alertly listening, become shadowy forests. "Time has changed the years: the old days have returned."

### The Return

#### I

Once more, listening to the wind and rain,  
 Once more, you and I, and above the hurting sound  
 Of these comes back the throbbing of remembered rain,

Treasured rain falling on the dark ground.  
 Once more, huddling birds upon the leaves  
 And summer trembling on a withered vine.  
 And once more, returning out of pain,  
 The friendly ghost that was your love and mine.

## II

Darkness brings the jungle to our room;  
 The throb of rain is the throb of muffled drums.  
 Darkness hangs our room with pendulums  
 Of vine and in the gathering gloom  
 Our walls recede into a denseness of  
 Surrounding trees. This is a night of love  
 Retained from those lost nights our fathers slept  
 In huts; this is a night that must not die.  
 Let us keep the dance of rain our fathers kept  
 And tread our dreams beneath the jungle sky.

## III

And now the downpour ceases.  
 Let us go back once more upon the glimmering leaves  
 And as the throbbing of the drums increases  
 Shake the grass and dripping boughs of trees.  
 A dry wind stirs the palm; the old tree grieves.

Time has changed the years; the old days have returned.

Let us dance by metal waters burned  
 With gold of moon, let us dance  
 With naked feet beneath the young spice trees.  
 What was that light, that radiance  
 On your face?—something I saw when first  
 You passed beneath the jungle tapestries?

A moment we pause to quench our thirst  
 Kneeling at the water's edge, the gleam  
 Upon your face is plain; you have wanted this.  
 Let us go back and search the tangled dream  
 And as the muffled drum-beats throb and miss  
 Remember again how early darkness comes  
 To dreams and silence to the drums.

## IV

Let us go back into the dusk again,  
 Slow and sad-like following the track  
 Of blowing leaves and cool white rain  
 Into the old gray dream, let us go back.  
 Our walls close about us we lie and listen

To the noise of the street, the storm and the driven birds.  
 A question shapes your lips, your eyes glisten  
 Retaining tears, but there are no more words.

Africa gives the American a heritage ranging from a naïve sturdiness in thought to subject matter provocative of exhortation. The American Negro inherits African stimuli through aboriginal theology and philosophy, and a reversion to a free-and-easy mode of living, even in American civilization. Africa, through centuries of culture-patterns governing the native's daily life, religion, cults, taboos, and mysticism, influences the American Negro in his Colonial period of Americanization. From Africa come the American Negro's extemporaneous alertness, his power in the use of exotic coloring in folk-composition, his emotionalism, passions, self-pity, melancholia, pride, discontent, nostalgia for a fine, definite something often indefinitely expressed, and his characteristic tendency to express subtly a resentment against his superiors.

Though American customs, the vicissitudes of slavery, the adoption of a new language and climatic conditions all change the Negro's African ways, they but modify them, erasing the marks of primitiveness externally more than internally. The emotional capacities of the African Negro in America do change before the passage of at least two generations in slavery. And to-day, African characteristics in the American Negro are to be classed as internal survivals more than as external stimuli. That both loss and retention occur simultaneously is not paradoxical; the less-immute, more superficial characteristics disappear easily, the more firmly established, psychic characteristics survive in variable degree even to-day.

Africa gives the American Negro poet a heritage ranging from

effective repetition to subjectiveness that is the result of a prolonged, even if subconscious, study of objects dear to the natural psyche of the Nigrition. The Negro poet inherits, early, a set of simple metrics, patterns in simple assonance---especially pleasing in the native tongues and the American patois---rhythms, as in group-chants, virility of improvisation, homely and unsophisticated figures and comparisons of speech, and attempts at versification. More than these, the Negro poet inherits representative formulae in tale and song, a natural humor,---often parody of the serious---variational strophe forms, and a boasting, eulogistic style coupled with an indirect technique in satire which furnishes the Negro opportunity to display a seemingly harmless banter concerning matters really indicative of serious rebellion.

With the American Negro poet, African characteristics are to be classed as external stimuli rather than as external survivals. For through educational training, most of the Negro poets, especially those of to-day, become so individualized and "Americanized" that they lose the internal survivals more easily than the general class of Negroes. From 1900 to 1933, the Negro poet of America gains his African characteristics more through educational channels than through reliance upon intuitive inclination.

For both the American and the Negro poet, racial mixture causes as great a loss of African characteristics as segregation and oppression aid in their survival. But racial mixture and white American culture influence the Negro poet more than the uneducated, unaesthetic Negro farmer, porter, stevedore, or dining-car waiter.

Both the American Negro, an object of general observation, and the American Negro poet, an object of specialized observation, inherit from

Africa---as from the white man's religious credo---the anthropomorphic conception and depiction of deities. Almost always, from spirituals to vera libre forms having religious content, the Negro and the Negro poet think of deities in terms of attributed human form and personality. To this man-like god, or gods, is attributed the Negro's own capacity for suffering and exultation. From earliest slavery to present-day racial progressiveness, the Negro and the Negro poet conceives the true saviors of the race not so much in the forms of white or black leaders so much as in the ascribed deities; in America, God and Jesus are the Negro's redeemers, in Africa, God, Jesus, and many others of divine status ranging from Pope Legba to Dagbe.<sup>156</sup> The exceptions to anthropomorphism, the cults of the python and the adder, and of various animals, are ritualistic pastimes more than they are theological institutions.

As regards the extent of African heritage, extremely significant is the fact that Africa calls to the Negro even yet with the bata, the dundun, and the gangan.

The dundun and the bata hum.  
 Drums-----ming,  
 Strum-----ming.  
 Hum.

Quickened  
 Beats the gangan  
 Sounding,  
 Summons;  
 Rasping,  
 Beckons;  
 Sobs,  
 Impatient;  
 The gangan's sides excite the blood:  
Gangan's pulse  
 Means war.

"Time has changed the years....."

## NOTES TO PART I

- (1) "Behind the Negro there is a wealth of buried tradition. His is the most misinterpreted creature in our latter-day civilization. Builder of empires that have crumbled, and enslaved during the age of pirates and adventurers, he has taken his place in the greatest of republics as a peasant and menial. He has preserved none of his traditions, but has added to what we call Americanism his droll racial instincts.
- "Oriental and primitive, he is richly endowed with emotion. He is keenly attuned to the chords of human feeling. A Negro can feel sorrow to a greater extent than his Anglo-Saxon neighbor; likewise, he can display greater sensitiveness to humor. His humor is the humor of a vivid imagination; his pathos is born of deep sincerity. He has not been ruined by the culture of a decadent age, but through segregation and other methods, oppressive as they may be, he has been permitted to develop into a distinct group, original in ideas and expression." (Wenton Johnson, in Songs of the Soil, Introduction; Chicago: The Author, 1916.)
- (2) Moton, Robert Russa. What the Negro Thinks. New York: Doubleday Doran 1929, pp. 14-16; 12-13; 8.
- (3) Weatherford, W. D. The Negro from Africa to America. New York: Doran, 1924 p. 413-.
- (4) Cf. Appendix I.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Brown, William Wells. The Black Man and His Achievements. New York: 1863, p. 32.
- (7) Herskovits, Melville J. The American Negro. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1928.
- (8) "Our knowledge of the African ancestry of the American Negroes is of the vaguest. We know that they were exported from the Guinea Coast of West Africa; but we can only guess from how far inland they came. The stages of acculturation through which they passed after their arrival in this country have never been adequately described, nor, so far as one can see, are they likely to be." Ibid. p. xiii.
- (9) "It is said that, at one time, 200,000 slaves sailed from the West Coast of Africa, and during a period of two hundred years, it is estimated that 5,200,000 slaves were shipped to America from a point in the Niger Delta." (Booker T. Washington, in The Story of the Negro, Doubleday, Doran, New York, 1909, p. 57.) Washington is quoting from West African Studies by Mary H. Kingsley. It is plausible to suppose that Miss Kingsley is correct in these estimations, for she is accused of scholars superceding her of having written with a biased sympathy amounting to sentiment, but she is not accused of mistating facts relative to numbers, movements, and general research. Undoubtedly it is true that Miss Kingsley missed a good deal in not thoroughly understanding the dialects and the psychology of the various tribes she studied over a period of years, but her observations are valuable.



- (10) Ibid., p. 33.
- (11) Spencer, Herbert. Descriptive Sociology. New York: Appleton Co., 1875.
- (12) Cf. Annals of the American Academy, Vol. CXXX: The American Negro, Leo Frobenius's Early African Culture as an Indication of Present Negro Potentialities. Philadelphia: November, 1928.
- (13) "The people inhabiting Egypt, the Great Desert, and what lies north of it, belong to the Semitic and Hamitic families, of the white, red, or tanned complexion. The woolly-haired, but yellow colored, race of the Ba-tua, including the Hottentots, Bushmen, and pygmies, we only refer to as compared with the Bantu. Thus our ethnologic field is confined to the black or Negro race in Africa, generally divided into two families, the Nigritic, or pure Negro, and the Bantu, or modified Negro. Our students, however, have led us to reverse this division, and to hold, as Lepsius did, that the pure and main branch of the black or Negro race is to be found among the so-called Bantu, ethnically as well as linguistically, and that the so-called Nigritic family is but another branch of the same stock, linguistically modified by the mixture of Hamitic elements." (Heli Chatelein, in Folk Tales of Angola, 1894, p. 17.)
- (14) Weatherford, W. D. The Negro from Africa to America.
- (15) Ibid., p. 42.
- (16) Ibid., p. 69.
- (17) Tillinghast, J. A. The Negro in Africa and America, New York, 1902. p. 3.
- (18) Herakovits, op. cit., p. 67.
- (19) Johnson, Charles S. The Negro in American Civilization, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920, p. 355.
- (20) Ibid.
- (21) Seligman, S. C. Races of Africa, London: T. Butterworth, Ltd. 1930, p. 53-.
- (22) Weatherford, op. cit. p. 26-36.
- (23) Tillinghast, op. cit. p. 6.
- (24) Cf. Ethnographical and ethnological maps, this thesis, <sup>note</sup> p. 34.
- (25) Stanford, P. T. The Tragedy of the Negro in America, Boston: 1897. p. 13-.
- (26) Tillinghast, op. cit., p. 3.
- (27) Ibid., p. 23.
- (28) Spencer, op. cit., p. 2-5.

(28. continued)

Also, an interesting comparison of African and American Negro traits may be gained by keeping in mind the following summary digest of W. D. Weatherford's description of the traits of the American Negro. (Cf. Present Forces in Negro Progress, New York: Association Press, (Y. M. C. A.), 1912.)

Traits of the Negro in his Background and in Survival from His Background

Lack of self-control.

Extravagant imagination with lack of synthesis to relate properly facts of self-denial and further reward; must be trained to ability to fix attention on far objectives as well as near ones.

Prototype of the Grasshopper: gorge in plenty, starve in period of shortage.

Sexual Indulgence: odd instinctive cry for reproduction in large numbers to withstand the enormous death rate of the tropics; primitive emotionalization of all things.

Superstition: not inherent in Negro alone, but Negro race one of last branches of original tree. Therefore this survival significant; power of the fetich, witch doctor, laboo; an intense superstitious conservative; fear habit, not reason.

Cruelty to animals and dependents: feeling of power and release from servitude causes overleaping of the mark; stupid incapacity to put oneself into the other man's place.

Vanity and Conceit near to the child stage; eager for attention and easily filled with conceit; qualities of the "smart-alec" upon education; gaudy ties, pointed shoes, tilted hats, "loud" hosiery, mark the Negro who has just started.

Tendency to Wordiness: high-sounding palaver.

Lacking in Power of Initiative: a subordinate race, wholly, forever?

Fidelity: the inveterate body-servant to the white.

Gratitude.

Generous to a fault.

Without malice: quick, impassioned forgiving and forgetting.

Kindliness.

Sense of Humor: quaint, a help to excuse his mistakes and soften resentment; quick repartee proverbial.

Religious and Musical: religion a real part of life; music the very breath of life; an all-round rhythmic being.

(29) "There are lesser celebrations on the occasion of the three chief events in every individual life, birth, marriage, death. Livingstone says that 'the chief recreations of the natives of Angola are marriages and funerals.' These are the times for gathering together in crowds and making an inconceivable hubbub. The Negro's love of demonstration is alluded to frequently by all travellers in West Africa, sometimes good-humoredly, but sometimes resignedly, as if they had been worn out with it. Miss Kingsley is moved to exclaim: 'Woe to the men in Africa who cannot stand perpetual uproar. Few things have surprised me more than the rarity of silence and the intensity of it, when you do get it.' Du Chaillu was often tormented almost to distraction with the bedlam of the noises kept up all night long. Moonlit nights are a time for white people to avoid their villages, for then the whole population remains up until long after midnight, shouting, singing, dancing, and having an uproariously jolly time. Mac Donald remarks philosophically: 'It is a part of West African nature; nothing can be done without noise.'

"The natives find it very difficult to realize and admit the presence of death or to distinguish death from sleep or some form of temporary insensibility. The consequence is that, in spite of the warm and humid climate, they unflinchingly retain the corpse unburied until decomposition has proceeded so far as to give no possible escape from the conviction that death has occurred. If a person is dying or insensible from any suspicious cause, endeavors are made, by the most violent methods, to keep the spirit from leaving the body, or else recall it." (Tillinghast, op. cit., pp. 74, 77.)

(30) Ibid. p. 77.

(31) Frobenius, Leo, op. cit.,

(32) Tillinghast, op. cit.,

(33) Ibid.

(34) "The South Erythraean culture had its center of diffusion in the region about the mouth of the Zambesi and the Mozambique channel...The central point of the North Erythraean culture lay on the Red Sea near Kokoito. ....It is best preserved in the region about the upper Senegal and upper Niger among the Mande or Mandingo, a numerous group of peoples comprising many tribes. The tribal organization of the Mande-Germantians is clearly built up on a caste foundation. At the head stand the knights; next in line follow the bards or troubadours; then come the highly-skilled smiths; last of all the vast herds of peasantry 'grown fast to the soil'. ...Third, there is the so-called Syrtic culture. Fourth, the so-called Atlantic culture is of considerable significance. The knowledge has been current for several centuries that in West Africa, on certain coasts washed by the Atlantic, old glass beads have been found. These point to early cultural contacts, for the natives do not know how to produce such beads themselves. They were found first of all on the coast of Sierra Leone, and the farthest south they have been discovered is at Loanda, on the Angola coast. (The North and South Erythraean cultures are characterized by)...Remarkable governmental form: allotment of power to four chiefs; each chief administers one of four provinces of the kingdom---north, south, east, and west; these officials choose the king, who then takes up his residence in the middle of his kingdom, i. e., at the point where the four provinces converge. The king is more than a ruler; he is revered as a divine being. He must never permit the people to see him; must marry his own sister or daughter; is responsible for the yields of the fields; finally he is strangled by the same four officials who chose him king, and is sent to rule the other world. There is a highly honorable place in the state for the Queen Mother, a small army of pages; there are prescribed appliances to be used by the officials. They construct conical huts, they have animal fables with the hare as the hero; they build clay-walled rooms for storerooms; they have looms and bellows and well-constructed weapons. (The Syrtic culture is characterized by)....a caste system; bardic lays; certain characterizing form of the bow; architectural elements like castle construction, air-dried brick, houses pierced by gates, cities laid out in cruciform plan. (The Atlantic culture is characterized by)...Terracotta portraits; well-burned, decorated face bricks; sewer pipes; figures carved on silex; glazed urns and beads; cast glass churns; a theocratic state, the hierarchy of whose rulers is headed by the gods in the form

of venerated ancestors; house-god, Olukun, god of the sea; head god-form reigning in Ifa who is sometimes called O Ni. Religious sculpture offers a number of characteristics: kneeling images of the gods, altar thrones with middle and cardinal pillars, the *swastika* (Fylfot, Skr. lit., *sw*, well; *anti*, being; probably a class of old people cared for by the state after a life of public service.) the eightfold rosette, the world sea-serpent, idols made of small boards, ceremonial masks of definite type. Characteristics of their culture are: the destruction of corpses by fire; coffin burial, black as the mourning color, certain forms of secret societies. There are also the trident ear, a special kind of boat, the sedan chair, the monads, the weaving of plush, the wearing of the toga, a beheading sword, a point-net on arrows, the small triangular bow with sinewy reinforcement in front. (This bow has been found but in one other place, the home of the West Asiatics, the Hittites and Assyrians.) They recognize the god of the sea, Poseidon, and the Etruscan doctrine and discipline relating to lightning.

Characteristics of the Hamitic Culture: "The abilities of the male are developed to the highest pitch: tremendous ability to endure hardship and suffering, unflinching fortitude, subtly differentiated notions of honor, lust for, and right to robbery, and a passionate devotion of the 'knight for his lady.'" All the senses are trained to the utmost limits of perception. The rationalistic mentality of the women is developed to the highest degree. The women are masters of the social life of their culture. "Every vigorous and genuine Hamitic culture clearly shows its matriarchal foundations." There is the tendency to reject everything that cannot be grasped by the senses and the intellect; everything irrational is rejected. "The dying person is gagged before he draws his last breath, the openings of the body are plugged, the spine and limbs are broken, he is tied into a squatting position, and the corpse bundle is then carried into some uninhabited place and heaped over with stones or taken into the desert where the wild animals will consume it as quickly as possible. No child mourns its mother, no mother its child. Away with him! *Har fort!* The Hamitic culture, therefore, is religionless; in it we find only magic proper; the evil eye, sympathetic magic, etc.; thus its only psychic fears are physically and materially initiated. Its fundamental traits stamp this a unitary and 'natural' culture. Even such a trait as language is common to all its members."

"Since Paleolithic times the races has been marked by the tendency of the females toward stertopygy; the fat woman is the ideal. The rock carvings made for magical purposes evidence no change in meaning; they vary only in style." Tanning, the 'curl paper' bow, spiral basket-weaving, the use of blood instead of salt, the roasting of intestines, arm tattooing for magical purposes.

Ethiopian culture is opposite to the Hamitic culture. "The Ethiopian culture is marked by the piety of the men in the service of the plants they tend and by the complete subordination of the women to the service of the sib. In its purer forms this culture knows only devotion; its feeling for life is wholly that of submissive, unquestioning subordination

to the irrational elements of the core of that life. The so-called sib, no matter the number of generations, live together if feasible; the oldest man still mentally competent distributes the food-stuffs; at first all property is held in common. Division of labor, sacrifices for seed-time and harvest are determined by the oldest male still mentally competent. "The bodies of the dead are consecrated by death."

"No one can understand the potentialities of the present-day Negroes in Africa and America, and no one can imagine the course of their further development, who does not keep ever in mind the fact that they are the visible expression and form of Ethiopian culture....Certainly the most striking of all (the physical traits)....is the fact that all the great currents of culture came into contact with both the Hamitic and Ethiopian cultures....Although these incoming cultures seem scarcely to have influenced the Hamitic culture at all (for they affected it only in externals, leaving behind....no essential traits), they struck deep roots into the Ethiopian culture (which had) marvellous absorptive, assimilative power ....Out of the seeds sown upon African soil by foreign culture there have grown cultural formations that may with every justification be termed completely independent, in spite of the fact that their origins are clearly shown by their structures. Empires like those of the Sudan or South Africa must have presented a unique and splendid spectacle. Their capital cities had fifty, one hundred, two hundred, and more thousand inhabitants at a time when America had not yet been discovered; their life pulsed in long and enduring waves. The word 'barbarian' can hardly justifiably be applied to the propagators of such cultures; they had their own unique style. If in comparison with our own we can find for it no standard and no recognition, the fault lies with the mentality of our time; we have become so spiritually poverty-stricken and presumptuous that we think of our civilization as the axis about which all else revolves."...."The bearers of such a culture are schooled in piety, receptive to the irrational, capable of deep enthusiasm, joyously expressive, and at one with Fate, whatever it may have in store for them. Above all else they are naive, and are never intellectual, if though intelligent." (All above excerpts are from Frobenius, op. cit., 153-155. Maps supplementing this note follow on pp. 98-109.)



Rainfall: Showing Desert, Dry and Humid Regions.  
 Red areas: more than 20 in. per, an.  
 Green areas: between 10 and 20 in.  
 White areas: less than 10 in.

(After Supan, Verteilung d. mittl. jahr. Regenmenge auf d. Erdoberfläche.)  
 (Hann, Lehrb. d. Meteorol., 3rd ed., 1915 )

This map is a free-hand copy of Fig. 3, Febvre, Lucien and Bataillon, Lionel, A Geographical Introduction to History, p. 123.



Race Chart No. 8 ( Library of Congress)

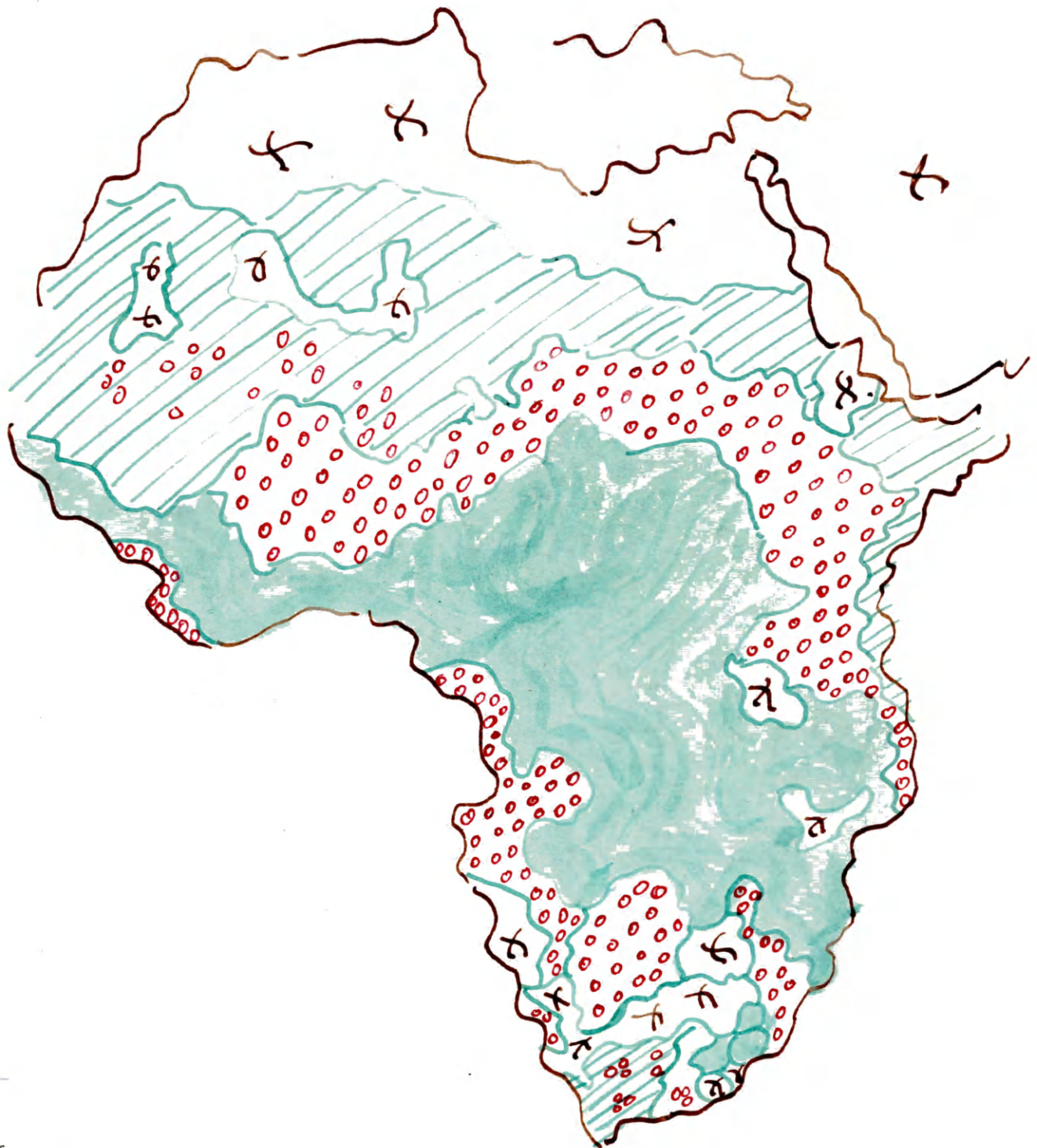
Showing: The Principal Political and Tribal States



Race Chart No. 8 (Library of Congress)

The Geographical Distribution of the African Nigritians  
and  
The Hottentot Dispersion





- Negroes
- Negroids
- Caucasian Races Tinged with "Nigritic" Racial Intermixture
- Caucasian Races Predominant in Given Area Approximation

Africa and the Black, Brown and Yellow Races  
No. 5. Royal Geographic Society (Map Division, Library of Congress)

**N.B.**

**The maps following are free-hand copies of maps appearing in Frobenius, op. cit., 153-165. They aid in explaining note 34, this thesis, pp. 95-97.**

The South Erythraean Culture In Africa(Maps 1-3)



1. Area of Deterioration,  
Ruins, etc.

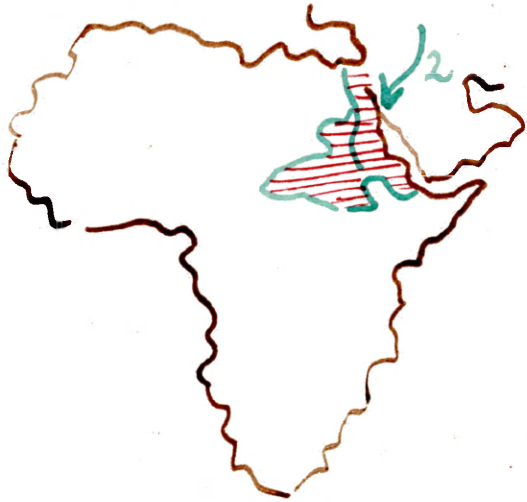


3. Contacts and Relations with  
(2) North Erythraean and  
(4) Atlantic Cultures



2. Greatest Extent of Culture Area

The North Erythraean Culture In Africa(Maps 4-6)



4. Area of Deterioration.  
Ruins, etc.



6. Contacts and Relations with  
(1) South Erythraean  
(3) Syrtic and  
(4) Atlantic Cultures



5. Greatest Extent of Culture Area: influenced during the most flourishing period of Cushite Culture and (following clues given by the form of arrow used) more recent radiations.

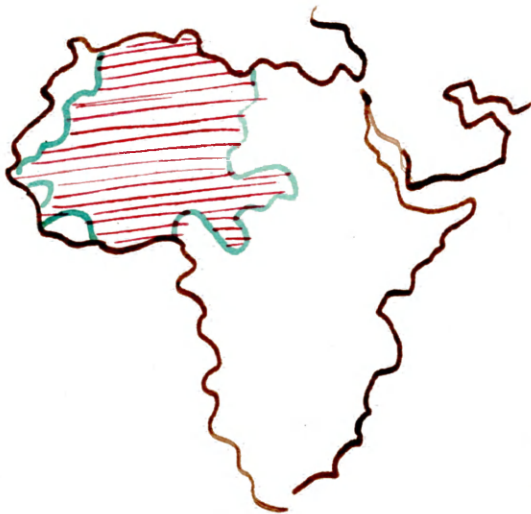
The Syrtic Culture In Africa (Maps 7-9)



7. Area of Deterioration, Ruins, etc.

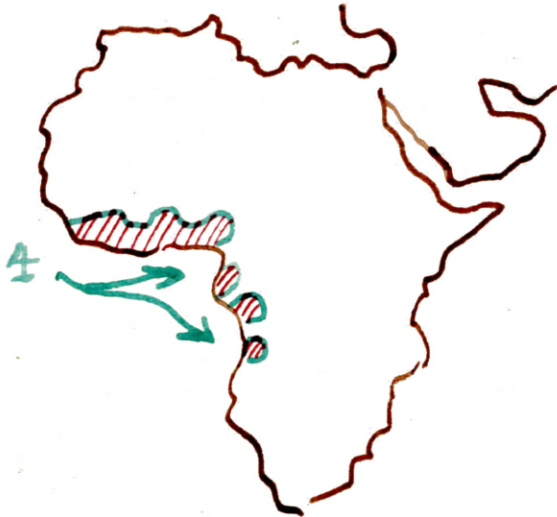


9. Contacts and Relations with  
(2) North Erythraean and  
(4) Atlantic Cultures



8. Greatest Extent of Culture Area

The Atlantic Culture In Africa (Maps 10-12 )



10. Area of Deterioration,  
Ruins, etc.



12. Contacts and Relations with  
(3) Syrtic  
(2) North Erythraean  
(1) South Erythraean Cultures



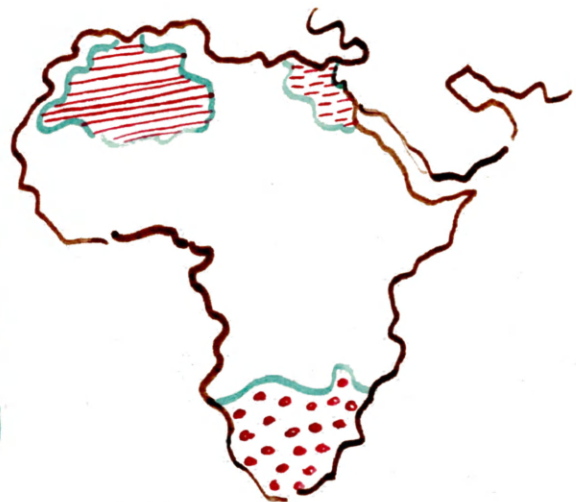
11. Greatest Extent of Culture Area

The Stratification of the Hamitic Culture In Africa

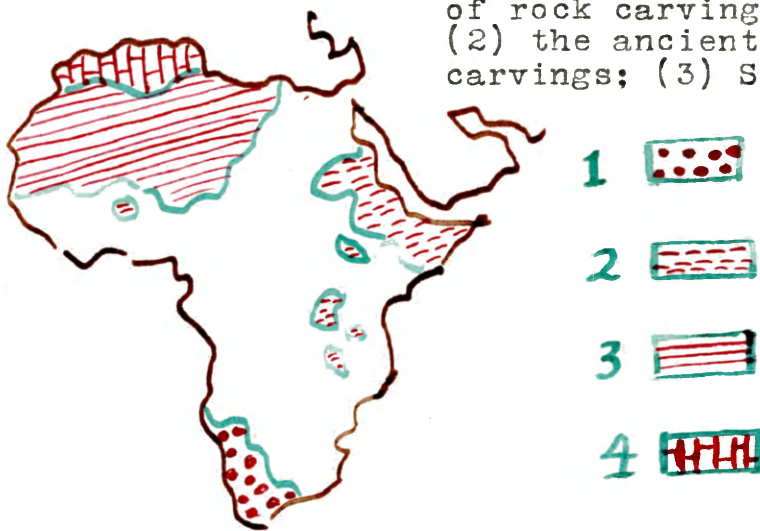
Three Overlapping Strata (Maps 13-15 )



13. (1) The South Hamitic  
 (2) The East Hamitic  
 (with the Fulbe in the West)  
 (3) The West Hamitic Languages



14. Rock Carvings: (1) Area where the art of rock carving still flourishes; (2) the ancient monumental rock carvings; (3) Stone Age rock carvings.



15. The "Fat Woman" : (1) In the South still born with this tendency; (2) in the middle regions, the idea; (3) or subjected to a fattening regimen; (4) and, North of the Atlas Mountains, preserved only in Stone Age rock carvings.

Chthonic- Hamitic Culture Traits (Matriarchate)  
(Maps 16-18)



16. Duel for Woman and Honor



18. Sexual Freedom of Married Women (ancient Libyan freedom of women )



17. Demand for Virginity



Telluric-Ethiopian Culture Traits(Patriarchate)  
 (Maps 19-21)



19. The Patriarchal Theft of the Bride

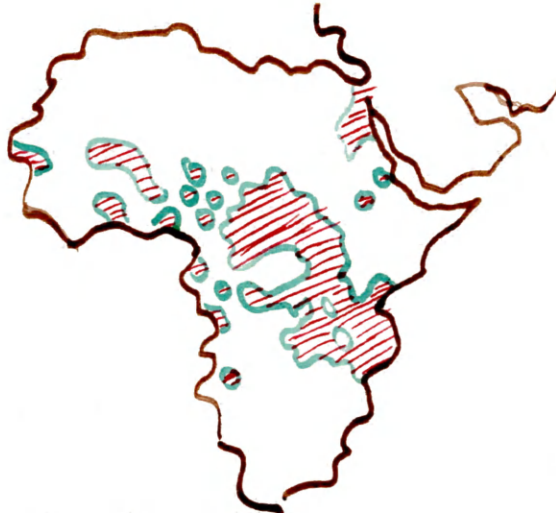


21. Areas Where the Widow Becomes A Possession of the Sib(levirate marriage, etc.)



20. Disregard of Virginity

Telluric-Ethiopian Culture Traits in Architecture  
(Maps 22-24)



22. The Post Bed



24. The Post Dwelling House



23. The Post Granary

- (35) Ibid.
- (36) Ibid.
- (37) Cf. Part I, Note 34.
- (38) Cf. Maps, pp. 98-109.
- (39) Frobenius, op. cit., p. 165.
- (40) Johnson, J. Waldon. An Anthology of Negro Poets. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922. Preface, p. viii.
- (41) Brewley, Benjamin. A Short History of the American Negro. New York: Macmillan, 1921, pp. 192-94.
- (42) Proctor, Henry Hugh. Between Black and White. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1925, p. 57.
- (43) White, Newman I. American Negro Folk Songs. Preface, p. viii.
- (44) Ibid., p. 1-29.
- (45) Horton, Lena B. Negro Poetry in America. Boston: The Stratford Co., 1926, p. 11.
- (46) Allen, Wm. Francis. Slave Songs of the U. S. Ware and Garrison, 1867. p. 29.
- (47) Ibid., footnote, p. 29.
- (48) Ibid.
- (49) Op. cit., Songs 52, 93.
- (50) Ibid., Preface, p. vi.
- (51) Ibid.
- (52) Johnson, Fenton. op. cit., Introduction.
- (53) Weatherford. The Negro from Africa to America, p. 69.
- (54) Ibid., p. 43.
- (55) Ibid.
- (56) Ibid.
- (57) Ibid., p. 45.

(58) "When a man dies his spirit adds itself to that innumerable company of spirits which fill the world....The spirit needs food and care, just as it did in its human incarnation, save that it now only consumes the essence of the food, leaving the visible or material food, which is eaten by the natives. A hut is built for the spirit of the departed man and food is regularly taken and left by relatives.

"A class of spirits greatly feared and omnipresent to the mind of the black men is the Ibanbo group composed of departed souls 'which are vague beings corresponding to our idea of ghosts. They have the capacity to become visible and this 'epiphany is dreaded, not revered.'" This class of spirits seems to be very numerous and many ceremonies are performed to deliver the Negroes from their power. They inhabit cemeteries, and may appear 'on lonely paths in the forest at night.' The highly-wrought imagination of the West African can see these terrible apparitions at every turn in the road, and he lives in mental horror of them. His descendants in America, at least the more ignorant types, have not shaken themselves free from the same fear. It is a rare Negro who will willingly go through a cemetery at night, and the ignorant white man has absorbed not a little of this same superstition.

"In Nigeria the distinction between good and bad spirits is accounted for carefully.....Since proper funeral ceremonies determine the destiny and hence the character of the spirit as benevolent or malevolent, much emphasis is placed on these ceremonies. Many a family spends all its earthly fortune on making these rites elaborate, and not infrequently a period of mourning leaves a crushing debt upon the family.

"I have no particle of doubt that this punctiliousness about proper burial, accounts to some extent for the terrible dread of a good many ignorant Negroes in the South, lest when they die they may not have a proper and decent burial....Customs cling to us long after their origin has been forgotten and when they really have no meaning whatsoever save that of a vague fear lest the breaking of the custom will in some way bring harm. A complete record of the effort of the poorer classes of Negroes to carry burial insurance would make both an interesting and heart-rending story....Some of the shrewder and less scrupulous of the race have made comfortable fortunes out of this haunting fear of their kind.

"Living thus in the presence of multitudes of spirits, which are disembodied and therefore ubiquitous, and which seem to retain their consciousness and memory of past experiences, the Negro is in constant terror lest he be harmed by some spirit, whom he may have injured while in human form. This constant element of fear has wrought greatly upon the emotions of the Negro we shall see later, thus explaining in part his highly emotional temperament." (Weatherford, in The Negro from Africa to America, p. 46-.)

(59) *Ibid.*, p. 49.

- (60) "If you failed in war, your enemy has the stronger fetich. You may have lost yours away and away and get another in the hope that this time you will be fortunate enough to get the stronger one.

"So long as these fetiches are used simply for protection, the owner is a practitioner of white art, but, when they are used to injure others or force others to do certain things pleasing the owner of the fetich, their possessor is said to practice black art. It is this latter that keeps the African in constant fear. All that an enemy has to do is get some of his victim's hair, his nails, or water in which he has bathed, and have a witch doctor make a consecration which, buried in front of the victim's door or hung secretly in his room, will bring sure death. If the man dies this black art has worked; if he fails to die, then he himself has a fetich stronger than the spirit that was trying to induce his death. In this murderous superstition the natives have absolute confidence.

The lineal descendant of this custom is the tooth, the nsafedita bag, or some other charm hung around the necks of thousands of children of Southern Negroes, and as I have observed more than one around the necks of many ignorant white children. The rabbit foot and the buck-eye, carried by men, look back to the fetich for their meaning." (Ibid., p. 49-50.)

- (61) "The methods of the witch doctor as distinguished from the ordinary village doctor, seem to me, to a certain extent, like those of the Christian Scientist, at least insofar as he seeks to work indirectly on the soul and to drive out the disease by driving the idea of it out of the patient's mind. The witch doctor has to do with malevolent spirits, but as some of these malevolent spirits are human beings, his methods often take the form of criminal proceeding, he being called in to assist in the conviction of the persons who are responsible for the disease. It is these criminal proceedings which have given the witch doctor his present bad reputation. (Booker T. Washington in The Story of the Negro, p. 70.)

"These monsters (the witch doctors) thus hold the entire community in fear of them and according to their superstitious wisdom measure out life or death. They undoubtedly believe in their own work, or at least are self-deceived---though they do not scruple to use their office to their own advantage." (Weatherford, in The Negro from Africa to America, p. 54.)

- (62) "The life of the native is so hedged about that one wonders how they ever accomplish anything. The survivals of these crude superstitions are not uncommon throughout the South. The author once knew a very competent country physician who, if a rabbit crossed the road in front of him from right to left, would invariably get off his horse and make a cross-mark to prevent ill-luck." (Ibid., p. 60.)

(63) Ibid., p. 61.

- (64) Work, John Wesley. Folk Songs of the American Negro, Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1915, p. 13.

(65) Ibid., p. 31.

(66) Ibid., Chap. VI.

(67) Ibid., Chap. XII.

(68) Their Belief as to God

"They believed strongly that God had all power and perfect knowledge. ....from this they would follow their belief that he was everywhere present. They saw God in everything....He was Father, and in their real trials he would be with them....In their distress they cried unto the Lord, and He heard them....He kept them from sinking down, and in his own time and way brought them out of the Egypt of American bondage.

Their Belief as to Christ

"They believed Jesus to be God's son come into the world to express his Father's love and to bring the sinning world to Himself. That Christ had a double nature, though in what way was incomprehensible to them (as to us) was obviously their belief in his divinity by ascribing to him supernatural power....Again they showed their belief in His divinity by kingly qualities they ascribed to Him....The stoning significance of His death gave proof of His divinity....But to them He was also human. He was 'a Man of sorrows'. He could sympathise with those "acquainted with grief"....In this suffering Saviours they found a friend.

Their Belief as to the Holy Spirit

"No meeting was successful without an outpouring of the Spirit, which would make itself felt by physical excitement. Indeed in their worship they approached the borderland of mysticism.

Their Belief as to Angels

"Perhaps the most beautiful of all their doctrines was that of the angels. They stood for all that was beautiful and lovely. It was the angels that officiated at conversion....It was the angels that welcomed their departed ones to glory....It was the angels who, when the world was on fire, the moon bleeding, the stars falling, and the elements melting, would attend the Saviour in the middle of the air to accompany the righteous home.

Their Belief as to the Christian Life

"To the slaves the Christian life was the ideal one---a life of dependence, of trust, of service and communion; a life linked with God, the Infinite One. Communion through prayer was uppermost in their minds; a devout slave, after being severely flogged, would go behind his cabin, and, sitting upon a certain log, would sing out his grief in a song....It was a life of strict morality as well as of highly-wrought emotion. (The slave owners caused more immorality among the second generations of the slaves than the slaves themselves.) Unwritten are the many instances in which slave women bared their bodies to the lash rather than submit to the lust of the master for exemption from drudgery, for ease, for luxury, for gold. The Christian life was thought of as being one of activity; their piety was of the robust sort; they could take it with them to the fields, to the slave-pen, the auction-block, wherever they went. This ideal was aggressively active and not merely defensive from the attacks of Satan; his ramparts must be attacked and taken. The Christian life was one of growth; perfection was not gained by a single bound, but was a matter of development---a growing in grace.' When the other side was reached there would be a new order of things. Sorrow and sighing would flee away....The climax of this Christian life was holiness....in Heaven alone would no sin be found.

Their Belief as to Satan

"Their expression would lead to the belief that they believed in a personal devil, as did Luther! Full of deception, his was the cloven foot....'Why don't de devil let a-me be?' they sang....To these untutored minds, God stood for all that was good, Satan for all that was evil....The principles of these opposite beings entered the hearts of men; their lives showed which they served. (But) in the darkest hour of the night of bondage, they never lost faith in the triumph of right over wrong.

Their Belief as to the Future

"The gaining of heaven and the shunning of hell were the leading motives held out to men to repent. To this doctrine may be traced the element of other-worldliness a parent in their songs. It is a common saying among ex-slaves of the older type: 'You may have the world, just so you give me Jesus.' Their bodies would live again; as Christ had risen, so they would rise....real bodies with 'a local habitation and a name.' The golden shoes, the long white robe, the starry crown, these would not be worn by spirits, but by the resurrected and glorified bodies of the redeemed. The issues of the judgment were everlasting punishment and everlasting happiness. It was ill with the wicked and well with the good." (Henry Hugh Proctor, in Between Black and White, pp. 57-60.)

(69) Ibid.

(70) Of Africa in general, Hamby says: "The distribution of python worship is clear. The main foci are the southwest shore of Lake Victoria Nyanza, also several centers in the coastal regions of the west, from Ashanti to the south of the Niger. Python worship was probably indigenous to an ancient, possibly aboriginal Negro population, which was driven to the west by racial pressure in the east." A geographical survey, through the Congo, South Africa, and up the east is negative with regard to the existence of python worship. Not until the region of Lake Nyanza is reached is there evidence of a definitely organized python worship with a sacred temple, a priesthood, and definite ritual acts including sacrifice. There appears to be no definite evidence of python worship in Cameroon, but the serpent design is often employed in wood-carving and the equipment of medicine men.....There are two unquestionable areas of python worship, namely, West Africa and a smaller region in Uganda, but there is no evidence of similar institutions in the great extent of country between two centres....The following factors are common to East and West Africa in forms of python worship. (1) The python only, but no other snake, is selected for definite worship. This choice may be due to the impressive size of the large species of python. The reptiles are tractable and non-poisonous. All observers are agreed that a python snake rarely attacks a human being. (2) Hut structures (temples) contain internal arrangements for feeding the reptiles. (3) The python embodies a superhuman being, god of war, spirit of the water, patron of agriculture, or goddess of fertility. (4) Priests and priestesses are employed; the latter are the wives of the python. Both dance themselves into ecstatic trance in which they make oracular utterances which are given in a language not understood by the worshippers.

"Williams accepts as a scientific working-basis Hamblly's distinction between worship and cult. Williams quotes Hamblly as saying: 'The difficulty of supplying a rigid and logical definition of an act of worship is indisputable, but in practice, confusion of thought may be avoided by using the word in connection with certain beliefs and acts. These might reasonably include ideas of a superhuman being, a priesthood, provision of a special house or locality, and also the employment of sacrifice and ritual procedure. The word 'cult' may be used to designate beliefs and acts whose nature is less clearly defined than worship....The subject of serpent worship has suffered from hasty generalizations and a lack of classificatory treatment. Consequently, there have been assumptions of similarities and identifications where they do not exist.'" (Williams, Joseph J., in Voodoo and Obeah: Phases of West India Witchcraft, New York: Dial Press, 1932. pp. 5-7.)

(71) Ibid., p. 118, quoting from Kingsley's East African Studies, p. 139.

(72) a.

From Voodoo

Ho, the pan-pipes call to Bassin Bleu  
 To dance the dance of the great voodoo;  
 The big drums boom, the conch shells flare;  
 The signal-fires flame and flare:  
 Oh-o-y-o-eyah, the strange songs sound  
 While the dancers gather at the singing ground.  
 The tympani louder and louder boom,  
 Echoing for their song of doom;  
 Oh-o-ay-o-eyah, the wild songs seem  
 The echo of the chick's scream.  
 Ho, the pan-pipes call to Bassin Bleu  
 To dance the dance of the great voodoo!

And ever the great drum beat, and beat,  
And ever the woman sang.

\* \* \* \*

Now was the time of sacrifice;  
 A cock was bound in a strange device  
 That only a savage could contrive,  
 Where he was slowly roasted alive.  
 A kid came next, a cow, a goat,  
 Then a spectacle on which to gloat,---  
 A goat without horns, an offering dear,  
 Caught where a blang may not appear  
 And guilty of killing the sacred snake  
 Sacrosanct for Obeah's sake---  
 A man in khaki was proudly led  
 To where the fire burned fiercely red:  
 There starved and weak he firmly stood  
 Before the priest in the singing wood.

And ever the great drum beat, and beat,  
And ever the woman sang.



His staring eyes were open wide;  
 His broken arms hung by his side;  
 With death before him, fiendish, grim,  
 Never a whimper came from him.

\* \* \* \* \*

And ever the great drum beat, and beat;  
 And ever the woman sang.

He uttered no useless plea or cry,  
 Silent he waited his time to die;  
 Only his blue eyes bulged and stared,  
 Stared, and stared, and stared, and stared,  
 As they laid him down on the gleaming fire  
 That was become his funeral pyre.  
 The voodoo priest performed the rite  
 Of sacrifice for full moonlight.

And ever the great drum beat, and beat,  
 And ever the woman sang.

The head witch doctor, Almaso,  
 Led their song, Oh-o-ay-e-ayah-oh,  
 And to its rhythm led the files about  
 In a savage serpentine, in and out;  
 The song became a barbaric psalm,  
 Oh-o-ay-e-ayah, again and again.  
 High over the fires they leaped and sped;  
 In the crimson glare black flesh shone red.  
 The high moon shining silver where  
 It fell on their skins, sweating and bare.

And ever the great drum beat, and beat,  
 And ever the woman sang.

Annice Callend

- b. For further contributions to the study of voodoo, see W. B. Seabrook's The Magic Island, pp. 7-70, and illustrations: 288, 302, 310, 320; Frontispiece; 20, 27, 35, 42, 50, 59, 67, 74, 277; (photograph insertions: 310: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15. This is one of the most thorough and contributory books ever written on the subject, even though written in Seabrook's florid, excited, exalted, style.

73) Taking his authority from the Report of the Lords of the Committee of the Council Appointed for the Consideration of All Matters Relating to Trade and Foreign Plantation, London, 1789, Part III, Treatment of Slaves in the West Indies, and All Circumstances Relating thereto, Digested under certain heads, Williams defines the term obeah, by direct quotation: "The term Obeah, Obiah, or Obia (for it is variously written) we conceive to be the adjective, and the Obe or Obi the noun-substantive; and that by the words Obiah-men and women, are meant those who practice Obi..... From the learned Mr. Bryant's commentary on the word Oph, we obtain a very

probable etymology of the term: 'A serpent, in the Egyptian language, was Ob or Aub.'.....'Obion is still the Egyptian name for a serpent.' 'Moses, in the name of God, forbids the Israelites ever to enquire of the demon Ob, which is translated in our Bible, charmer, or wizard....' 'The woman at Endor is called Oub, or Ob, translated pythonissa, and Oubaioa was the name of the basilisk or royal serpent, emblem of the sun, and an ancient oracular deity of Africa.'

"As far as we are able to decide from our own experience and information when we lived on the island, and from concurrent testimony of all the Negroes we have ever conversed with on the subject, the professors of Obi are, and always were, natives of Africa, and none other and they have brought the science with them.....

"Mary H. Kingsley (in West African Studies, London, 1899) says: '...we have two distinct cults of fetish....Voudou and Obeah (Tchanga and Wanga) Voudou itself is divided into two sects, the white and the red....'" (Williams, op. cit., p. 169.)

Williams calls attention to a quotation from W. P. Livingston's Black Jamaica, London, 1899, p. 19: "Obeahism runs like a black thread of mischief through the known history of the race. It is the result of two conditions, and results from an ignorant and receptive superstition on the one hand, and on the other, sufficient intelligence and cunning to take advantage of this quality. The Obeah man is any Negro who gauges the situation and makes it his business to work on the fears of his fellows. He claims the possession of occult authority, and professes to have the power of taking or saving life, of causing or curing disease, of bringing ruin or creating prosperity, of discovering evil-doers and vindicating the innocent. His implements are a few odd scraps, such as cock's feathers, rags, bones, bits of earth from graves, and so on. The incantations with which he accompanies his operations are merely a jumble of improvised jargon....Poisoning does not now enter his practices to any extent, but the fear he inspires among the ignorant is intense, and the fact that he turned his attention to particular persons is often sufficient to deprive them of reason." (Williams, op. cit.)

- (74) "A cursory reading of (the proverbs) discloses at once that our general knowledge of Africa has been based in the past mainly on these external facts that strike the sense of sight—such as the physical appearance of the population, native dress and handiwork, musical instruments, implements of warfare, and customs peculiar to the social and religious life of the people. Only through the folk-literature, however, can we get a glimpse of the working mind of the African Negro...." (A. O. Stafford, The Mind of the American Negro, Journal of Negro History, Vol. I, 1916.)
- (75) Burton, Richard F. Wit and Wisdom from West Africa. London: Tinsley Bros., 1865. p. xvii-xix.
- (76) *Ibid.*, p. xxi.
- (77) *Ibid.* Burton quotes from Bishop Vidal, who agrees in his findings with Bishops Lowth and Jebb.

- (78) *Ibid.*, Footnote, p. xix: "Perhaps the worst of the whole are the songs, which are mere repetitions. The hymns and spiritual pieces, translated by catechists, bear the impress of want of power. The two following were extemporized by Krobo children after the first fruits of the tribe had been baptized, and the second alludes to that event. They are sung, we are told, to a very sweet tune.

## I.

It is God's first born  
 Who died! Oh!  
 This is what grieves us 'too much!'  
 He will come! Oh!  
 Oh yes! oh yes! my friend!

## II.

People come, but people come not yet! oh!  
 To-day, when our Father has not yet come!  
 Yes! yes! yes! my friend!

- (79) Hughes, Langston. Five Cloths to the Jew. New York: Knopf, 1927, p. 13. "The mood of the Blues is almost always despondent, yet when they are sung, people laugh." (*Ibid.*)
- (80) Washington, Booker T. *Op. cit.*, p. 72.
- (81) *Ibid.*
- (82) "Though there are no written laws, certain ancient customs and usages form the precedent for discussion and settlement. When a law has been agreed upon, it is customary in some of the coast tribes for a public crier to proclaim it throughout the town. This is repeated at dusk, when all the people are supposed to be at home so that no one can plead ignorance in case the law is violated. In trial cases, the witness takes an oath. . . . Washington, in agreement with Prof. Boss, points to the fact that certain devices, legal and reactionary were known all the time in Africa whereas there is no indication of their existence ever in ancient America. . . . the chant, quoted in connection with this notes one must remark on its seemingly free translation from the usual conditions of the natives' expression in diction and syntax. The sense is perhaps true to form, that is, the meaning of the whole has in no way been tempered with in translation. (Excerpt from Washington, *Op. cit.*, p. 72)
- (83) Chatelain, Heli. Folk Tales of Angola. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1894, p. 19.
- (84) *Ibid.*, p. 15. Chatelain does not give a reference to chapter or page of Drummond's remark in his Tropical Africa.
- (85) *Ibid.*

- (86) "Nobody will deny that before a person or a people can be judiciously dealt with, their character must be studied and considered. The character of an individual can be known only through prolonged intimacy with typical representatives of its constituent classes, and by a thorough study of its literature.

"In Africa, where there are no facilities for intimacy with the natives, and where there is no written literature, the only way to get at the character, the moral and intellectual make-up, of the races and tribes, is to make a thorough study of their social and religious institutions, and of their unwritten oral literature, that is, of their folk-lore.

"Books of African travellers have been prominent before the public for the last two decades (since the middle of the century), but, as a rule, only such accessory parts of folk-lore as strike the sense of sight--- native dress, arms, and strange customs---have been described, and seldom accurately at that. The essential constituents of folk-lore, those embodied in words, have been ignored...."

"The failure of African explorers in this respect is due, first of all, to their ignorance of native languages, then to their vagrancy; but also to their lack of training in, and taste for, this youngest of sciences, comparative folk-lore." (Heli Chatelain, op. cit., pp. 15-17.)

- (87) Burton, op. cit.

(88) Ibid.

(89) Ibid.

(90) Ibid.

(91) Ibid.

- (92)a. Other Proverbs in the Oil Tongue

Abea kokosaki kasa kwarra homu kwarra fo-a, oke.

H. B. "The kokosaki or pate is the turkey-buzzard, one of the most useful birds in West Africa, feeding on carrion, and, therefore, most sacred to the Fetish. The homukwarra or homu is a long but narrow drum, garnished with the skulls of hostile chiefs, and daubed with the blood of human sacrifices: its hollow sounds are heard on all state occasions, and besides being sacred, it is supposed to be initiated in the mysteries of Fetishism. Hence the meaning seems to be, that members of the secret brotherhoods, of which many exist in West Africa, understand one another, and can communicate by means unknown to the multitude."

When the animal vulture speaks to the big drum, he (the latter) hears it.

Hai! hai! na 'maa akroa 'nye kasa

H. B. "'Hai!' is an interjection used in frightening off birds of prey. The proverb means, if the hawk had been allowed to eat his fill of the fowls and chickens, he would have become stronger and more dangerous: if evil were left unrestrained, we should soon be overpowered by it."

(The cry of) Hail! hail! has not suffered the hawk to grow big.

Obi nra, na obi nra.

N. B. "Literally, 'A person does not sweep, and another does not take up.' i. e., the same person must do both. So the European proverb, Quod quisque introivit, ipsi est excedendum: 'As you make your bed, so you must lie. Comme on fait son lit on se couche.

When one sweeps, another does not carry away (the sweepings).

b. Other proverbs in the Aara Tongue

Tatafa ka la yaa.

Gunpowder and fire do not agree.

Niame kaka daa niifu.

A good word removes anger.

N. B. "The natives of the Gold Coast have borrowed many of their sayings and not a few of their ideas from Europeans, with whom they have had intercourse for centuries."

Ke daa na la, shomei fa dio.

If it is dark, all men are black.

N. B. "So the French say, Tous les chats sont gris---at night."

En ni ske-baba la la, atacole kronkron.

Clear water is not wanted for quenching fire.

c. Proverbs in the Kamuri Tongue

The question was once asked---Kamuyi koanviri nduntaa namburo? i. e., Who are more in number, the women or the men? One answered, Koanviri gansa, kamuri namburo; aro kamuri namburo taedanta, koanviri gansa kamuri namburo aro kamuri kamuri taedanta, aro kamuri kamuri namburo. i. e., Men are in the minority, women are in the majority; the reason why there are more women is this, that men who listen to what women say, are counted as women."

Lama nua roba.

Property is the prop of life.

d. Proverbs in the Iolof Tongue

Aa nua da na suka bary, wanda da nua nua.

One may have much milk, but it is never too white.

Mara mandinga, doja buu suka a ko suka.

It is better to walk than to grow angry with the road.

Fan sikina daga aino ko fa roba.

Where the chin goes, the eyes carry it.

- (94) Ibid.
- (95) Ibid.
- (96) Ibid.
- (97) "In African folk-tales, the animal world, as also the spirit-world is recognized as organized and governed just like the human world. In Angola, the elephant is the supreme being of all animal creation, and the special chief of the edible tribe of wild animals. Next to him in rank, the lion is special chief of the tribe of ferocious beasts, and highest vassal of the elephant. Chief of the reptile tribe is the python....Chief of the feathery tribe is the kakulu ka hushi, largest of eagles.
- "Among the domestic animals the sceptre belongs to the bull:.... Even the ants and the termites have their kings and queens.
- "At the general assembly of the whole animal creation, in its proceedings and in the execution of its resolutions, every animal exercises the office for which it is qualified. Thus, in the fables, the elephant is equally supreme in strength and wisdom; the lion is strong, but not morally noble, as in European lore, nor wise as the elephant. The hyena is the type of brutal force united with stupidity; the leopard that of vicious power combined with inferior wits. The fox or jackal is famous for astuteness; the monkey for shrewdness and nimbleness; the hare or rabbit for prudence and agility; the turtle or terrapin for unsuspected ability. The partridge, on the contrary, is silly and vain....The turtle-dove is, as with us, symbolic of purity, chastity, and wisdom; but the dog, on the contrary, personifies all that is mean, servile, and despicable. (Chatelain, op. cit., p. 22.)
- (98) Ibid., p. 20.
- (99) Ibid.
- (100) Ibid., p. 22.
- (101) Ibid., p. 23.
- (102) Chatelain, op. cit.
- (103) Uona signifies 'silliness,' 'stupidity,' from ki-ona, a fool, a simpleton. Chatelain, op. cit., p. 284.
- (104) Insa in Usangala refers to the house in which one or more young folk, either male or female, live while unmarried. Children live in their parents' house until they are nine years old to twelve years. Then they enter the usangala, but continue to eat and stay over day with their parents. Where the houses are large and have two or more rooms, the ni-usangala, or young people, sleep in a separate room, the two sexes, too, being kept apart. There is more promiscuous living in the slums of a great American city than in purely native Africa.

- (105) The "governor" of this poetic passage is reminiscent of the white man's dominating presence on the West Coast of Africa since the first colonial settlements established by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. (Cf. p. 22, Part I.) The next two lines which follow undoubtedly refer to a characteristic of the survivals of the Atlantic culture, namely, the wearing of the togo. (Cf. Note 34.)
- (106) Chatelein, op. cit. p. 189.
- (107) "An envelope larger than the mbambi, of the same color, but with longer hair, and with large horns bent backward." Ibid., p. 296.
- (108) "The Leopard's ruse to obtain food suggests that of the Old Lion, for the same purpose, in one of the best-known fables of Aesop. The singing with drum accompaniment in order to induce one to approach, or to warn him before a danger, is also found in a Hausa tale..." (Chatelein, op. cit., Notes, p. 296.)
- (109) Cf. Note 29.
- (110) "The popular dances chiefly appeal to the sexual nature... Du Chaillu found himself irresistibly moved to depart from the scene of more than one dance especially given in his honour, although he ran serious risks of offending his hosts. No description of the dances could be ventured in his books.... He is attracted irresistibly to music and uproarious gaiety, and the more sex suggestion in it the better. When anger or fear arises, the tiger in him is out in a flash and somebody dies a bloody death. At all times and under all circumstances, he carries his emotions on his face and tongue, passionately loves companionship, and forgets each day's sorrow with the sunset." (Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, p. 99.)
- (111) "They have other instruments, horns made of elephant tusks, hollowed out and with holes, flute-fashion, so that various notes can be blown; also complex instruments, consisting of calabashes of different sizes, with prifices tightly covered with stretched skins; and a few other devices of similar character for producing musical notes." (Ibid., p. 99.)
- (112) Ibid.
- (113) Ibid.
- (114) Chatelein, op. cit., p. 128.
- (115) "The portion of the West African coast occupied by the Yoruba-speaking peoples is situated on the eastern half of the Slave Coast, and lies between Badagry, on the west, and the Benin River, on the east. The extent of seaboard held by them is thus smaller than that occupied either by the Tshi or Ewe tribes; but the Yorubas are really inland peoples, and it was not until the beginning of the present century that they moved to the south and colonized Lagos and the adjacent littoral.

"The territory now inhabited by the Yoruba tribes is bounded on the west by Dahomi, on the south-west by Porto Novo and Appe, on the south by the sea, on the east by Benin, and on the north by the Mohammedan tribes from the interior, who have within recent times conquered and annexed the Yoruba provinces of Ilorin.

"The inhabitants of all these states speak one language, the Yoruba. They are called Nagos by the French, and by the English are named after their political divisions, as Egbes, Iodans, Jebus.

"The first king of whom the arokin, or chroniclers, have any knowledge, is Ajagbo, who appears to have reigned soon after 1780, and whose name is preserved in the metrical sentence which fixes the rhythm of the ogidigbo drum, as follows: Gbo, Ajagbo, gbo, obo, gbo, ki emi ki oxi gbo." Translated, Ellis tells us it means: "Grow old, Ajagbo, grow old king, grow old, I may also grow old." Ellis says: "Each drum has its own measure or rhythm, which is proper to it, and, in order to preserve this rhythm, sentences are invented to call it to mind. In this case the rhythm is:

Gbo/Ajagbo/--/gbo/ obo gbo/--/ki emi ki oxi/ gbo

- (116) (Ellis, A. B. Yoruba Speaking Peoples of Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 1) Ibid., p. 135.
- (117) Ibid., Cf. p. 139.
- (118) Ibid.
- (119) Ifa is the Yoruba's god of divination. He is often called 'The God of Palm Nuts' since sixteen palm nuts are used in the process of divination. Ifa's secondary attribute is the power to cause fecundity; he presides at births; also women pray to him to be made beautiful. Cf. also, Note 34, Part I.
- (120) Ibid., p. 253.
- (121) Here Alo means take. Literally it means departure.
- (122) The kini-kini is a small black and white bird, sometimes called the doctor-bird. It is named for its cry, which resembles the words kini-kini.
- (123) The odan tree is a shade tree, a variety of fig.
- (124) The native of the West Coast regions does not work in the middle of the day. At this time the sun is unbearably hot, even for the African Negro, and it is at this time that the dry winds blow strongest. The Negro's character and his dislike for work of any kind during the middle of the day is attributed to these birds called by the king.
- (125) "Bata, dundun, and gangan are the names of different kinds of drums. The bata is a tall drum, the dundun is hung with little bells, and the gangan is properly a war-drum. These names are onomatopoeic.



Each drum has its own measure and rhythm, and people say 'to dance the batz,' 'to dance the dandan,' 'to dance the gangan,' just as we say 'to dance a waltz, to dance a polka, or to dance a quadrille.'" (Ellis, op. cit., p. 254.)

- (126) Muret, M. The Literature of the African Negroes, Appleton's Popular Science Monthly, June, 1898, p. 242.
- (127) Ibid.
- (128) Ibid., p. 243.
- (129) White, op. cit., Chapter X, p. 334.
- (130) Ibid., Chapter XII.
- (131) Ibid., Chapter XIV.
- (132) Ibid., Chapter IX, p. 274.
- (133) Ibid., p. 288.
- (134) Ibid., p. 255.
- (135) Ibid., Chapter VI, p. 252.
- (136) Ibid., p. 240.
- (137) Chapter IV, p. 152.
- (138) Ibid., p. 153.
- (139) Ellis, op. cit., 126, footnote.
- (140) White, op. cit., p. 256.
- (141) Ibid., p. 258.
- (142) Ibid., p. 260.
- (143) Ibid., p. 250.
- (144) Ibid., p. 376.
- (145) Ibid., p. 376.
- (146) Ibid., p. 382.
- (147) Ibid.
- (148) Ibid., p. 385.
- (149) Ibid., p. 86.

- (150) *Ibid.*, Chapter III.
- (151) *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- (152) *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- (153) *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 139.
- (154) Cf. Heritage, pp. 8-9, this thesis.
- (155) Cf. Appendix I, this thesis.
- (156) Cf. Seabrook's The Magic Island, pp. 289-90.

END OF NOTES TO PART I

157

Come See The Negro

Come see the Negro,  
 Ye who doubt his progress;  
 See him on Sunday in pulpit and in pew.  
 He's striving onward,  
 He's striving upward,  
 He treads the close path with God's chosen few.

Come see the Negro,  
 Ye who doubt his thriftiness;  
 Visit the home he is building to-day.  
 He's economic,  
 Modern and frugal,  
 Brilliant as any whom God made of clay.

Come see the Negro,  
 Ye who doubt his valor,  
 Come take a peek into his sturdy heart.  
 Learn what he's thinking,  
 Hoping and doing,  
 He knows that skin and the soul are apart.

Come see the Negro,  
 See him ever cheerful,  
 Finding life's best in his sequestered sphere,  
 Good faith and courage,  
 Ever enduring,  
 Success awaits him, he needs never fear.

Theon LeMarr

## Part II

The Negro In America. A Sociological Movement in Literature

The Negro from Africa to America; Periods of cultural growth in America; Review of significant Negro poets from 1619-1890 and from 1890-1918; Attempts at natural expression in poetry; the imitative and the creative; The literature of protest; Significance of Negro poetry; 1619-1918; Folk-lore background of Negro poetry: spirituals, "shouts," "blues," rhythm; "The Black Renaissance" and the "New Negro"; A detailed study of sociological significance in modern Negro poetry; Conclusions.

In the study of the American Negro, one passes from the African to the Afro-American and the American sociological stimuli. The Negro of to-day is a part of all three, being in turn, and at once, somewhat primitive-minded, under binding and constant modification, and emancipated. Time has charged the years, especially for the Negro poet, with rhythms of the drums; time has left alive some of the most vital points of the African heritage; the sounding rhythms echo through the Negro's life and expression. Even more significant, perhaps, are the Afro-American stimuli, coming to the Negro with the slave traders, the labors of the plantations, the economic enslavement by another race, and the lasting social bondage of a super caste system made possible by the Negro's toil for the master. Later, there appears the emancipatory reaction legally, and then at last structurally, which, being both the cause and result of sectional strife, serves the Negro but little sociologically for many generations after the discountenancing of the system of slavery by federated power. It is this Afro-American period which gives to the Negro both a heritage and a renewal of heritage. Slavery, with its segregation, its restrictions, its lack of educational training kept alive the African's native-custom patterns of thought, and created simultaneously the "sorrow song" of the Negro in America. Slavery had existed, by the time of Emancipation, quite long enough to create deeply-carved culture-traits built of both African and American

materials. Slavery in America died a death so lasting in its throes that the Negro has not yet wholly eradicated from his racial memory the agony of his existence under it. Thus Negro poetry has within it all three sets of stimuli, the African, the Afro-American, and the American (the last occurring, for the most part, just after the World War). And thus we pass, at this point, from the call of the hats and the gangans to the call of the horns of the slave-traders, the sounds of their musket-shots, the lure of their red bunting, the stench of their slave boats, to the barking, rasping hubbub of their American markets, to the clang of the large, iron bell singing out over the plantation "mess-hall."

Slavery had existed for countless generations on the African continent, but never to the devastating degree perpetrated by the *Caucasian* race. Slavery in ancient Africa was a system including the servitude of hostages and captives of wars, a few, low-caste tribal groups in slavery for commercial purposes, and many men and women sold by kinsmen in need of money. Not only were the Nubians slaves and servants to the Egyptians and the Eastern powers, but the Dahomans were slaves to the Ashantee, and the Ashantee to the Dahomans, and the Guineans to the Congo tribesmen, and vica versa; and all about the slave units were often mixed and entangled by systems of indemnification and commercial marketing. The vicissitudes of African slavery were somewhat alleviated by the ever present avenues of escape, the jungle trails beckoning homeward. The dangers of the jungle--beasts, poisonous plant-foods and hostile tribes--were formidable, but if one escaped the master and then withstood the dangers of the forest at least one's home would not still be on the other side of a wide ocean. And often, a native served as a slave for a third of his natural life that he might return home after indenture with money and resources for maintaining himself until natural death in old age. There were, of course, the cruelties and hardships and rebellions commonly associated with slavery in any land in any period. But African slavery was recurrently active, rather than

constantly a menace to tribal propagation.

The American slave traders but followed in the footsteps of the Dutch, English, Spanish, and Portuguese explorers of Africa and traders in African goods. Beginning in the fifteenth century, and continuing to the nineteenth century, Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, all found the West Coast of Africa rich in ivory, gold, and flesh, just as the Romans and Greeks in ages long before had found and enjoyed these same products through central routes into the African continent. The Dutch introduced the first Negroes into America, and the Anglo-Americans, especially the landed gentry, were not long in demanding numbers of Africans for slaves in this New World. The English supplied the Colonies with a good number of slaves; Holland came again and again, and Spain, Portugal, and France sent load after load of African Negroes to these colonial settlers. American trades-ships, equipped and fitted for service as soon as the demand developed a definite market, sailed the seas carrying thousands of blacks to America, to England, and to several foreign countries. The need for slaves turned rapidly into a fad for slaves. All countries of enterprising nature demanded and received slaves. America bought more slaves than any other one country, yet all countries dealt in the traffic. The numbers of Negroes taken from West Coast Africa are myriad. Africa rhythms came with them; in the case of America, Afro-American stimuli grew with unusual significance and power. The slave trade, and the system of slavery, is the bridge between the African and the American growth and accomplishments of the Negro. Cruelties of the trade afford a way for the amenities of emancipation. Perhaps emancipation in a new land may mean no more to the Negro than ancient freedom in his native land, but this cannot be measured, since on the one hand time colors and embosses the old more than it ever illuminates it, while on the other hand so much of the good is lost that the bad predominates and becomes more outstanding than it should be. Despite

either good or bad effects, so far as we are concerned the American slave trade is the natural connecting link between a study of the Negro in Africa and in America, a study showing African rhythms and American modification and growth.

From the first, the Negro has been the source of many problems to white America. And white America has always been the Negro's main problem, from every angle. This condition of a problematical outlook upon life, mutually shared to various degrees of awareness, has in practice upheld the theory that such unsettled, maladjusted and unequalised conditions sooner or later produce a literature charged with sociological significances. The Negro's status has ranged from indentured servant, to slave, to freeman; his religious expression has been primitive, and superstitious, and theological; his poetry has been on a folk-level, imitative, sorrowfully wrung from protesting hearts, cultural and emasculated. The divergent qualities of status, religion, culture, and poetic expression in/ America echo African pasts and combine to become a medium of measurement of the growth of the Negro in the United States. From Africa to America, from African jungle rhythms to American colonial labors, by way of a penetrating and cruel slave-trade system, the Negro enters the American scene of progress,— a scene so filled with growth that the Negro, even as a slave, goes forward dragging his chains beyond the border line of servitude. Through much of slavery, and afterwards, he demands, receives, loses, sinks, rises, shifts, re-casts his life into new moulds, and keeps coming on and on to something higher, manifesting strength if not always wisdom as he goes. Passing now from the African heritage of the Negro, we come to the cultural growth of the Negro in America.

"There are two distinctive elements in the cultural background of the American Negro : one, his primitive tropical heritage, however vague and clouded over it may be, and second, the specific character of the Negro group experience in America both with respect to group history and with regard to unique environing social conditions. . . . . Such an accumulating body of collective experience inevitably matures into a group culture which just as inevitably finds some channels of unique expression, and this has been and will be the basis of the Negro's characteristic expression of himself in American life. . . . ."

"Torn from his native culture and background, (the Negro) was suddenly precipitated into a complex and very alien structure of culture and civilization, and passed through the fierce crucible of rapid, but complete, adaptation to its rudiments, the English language, Christianity, the labor production system, and Anglo-Saxon mores. His complete mental and spiritual flexibility, his rapid assimilation of the essentials of this new culture. . . . is the outstanding feat of his group-career and is almost without parallel in history. . . . . From the earliest efforts at crude self-expression, it was from the African or racial temperament, creeping back into the overtones of his half-articulate speech and action, which gave to his life and ways the characteristic qualities instantly recognized as peculiarly and representatively his."

"The materials were American, but the design and pattern were different,— in speech, social temper, songs, dances, imagination, religious attitude. Some of these actions were so vivid and so irresistible that they communicated themselves by curious condescending imitation to the Southern whites. This generally unacknowledged influence was the Negro's first and perhaps most basic contribution to American culture. It is a fallacy that the over-lord influences the peasant and remains uninfluenced by him; . . . in humor, emotional temper, superstitions, nonchalance, amiability, sentiment, illogicality,— . . . .—the Negro colored the general folk-ways of the South. Also the Negro has influenced American culture with the contagious influence of the "jazz-spirit," a corrupt hybrid of the folk-spirit."



The cultural history of the Negro in America falls naturally into two periods. The first records his status under the generally widespread system of slavery, from his entrance into this country in 1619 to a generation after Emancipation. The second records his growth and ever-changing status in a shorter period running from 1890 to the present day. In the first period, the Negro is at a folk-level of expression. This is, for the most part, an era of sustained status, a span of years in which the Negro is expressively at a folk-level. In the second period, the Negro is semi-literary and culturally articulate. The second period "stretches back in exceptional and sporadic instances to 1787," receiving momentum "with the anti-slavery controversy from 1835-1860."<sup>159</sup>

<sup>160</sup> "It was inevitable that the peculiar experiences of the American Negro should have sooner or later found artistic expression. The history of the situation is that they did not wait for a...control of the formal, civilized means of expression. They expressed themselves first in folk-ways and folk-arts. (From the standpoint of poetry, they found expression) in song, (in) both the spirituals and the less-known but equally abundant seculars, and the folk-tale and the proverb....Paradoxically enough, it may be that in slavery the Negro made American civilization permanently his spiritual debtor....More and more....we are coming to a new appreciation of the extent, quality, and originality (of the Negro expression)."

Negro expression has gone from guttural moaning, crude religious and work songs, copying the pattern of white Americans, to "the so-called 'New Negro Movement' which, growing in volume since 1917, has in a decade produced the most formal and outstanding contributions of the Negro to American literature and art."<sup>161</sup> This new Negro movement has within its bounds the "race-realists," and the "race-symbolists." Locke says:

<sup>162</sup> "The 'race-realists' follow the best traditions of the universal school of realism, dealing in local color material of the American Negro freely and with often a deep insight. The 'race-symbolists' have made a cult of the revival of the traits of race temperament, its philosophy of life, and the re-expression of the cultural level of the folk-spirit and folk-history, including the half-forgotten African background."

R. T. Kerlin, author of Negro Poets and Their Poems, 1923,

discusses cultural Negro expression in poetry by starting with Untaught Melodies The Folk-Song, Spiritual and Secular, The Earlier Poetry, (Hammon, Whertley, Reason, Horton, Harper, Bell, Albery Whitman, Dunbar, Allen,) Renaissance of the Negro, The Heart of Negro Womanhood, Ad Astra Per Aspera, The New Forms of Poetry, Dialect Verse, The Poetry of Protest, and Eulogistic, Commemorative and Occasional Poems.

163 His angle of approach and development is somewhat unorganized and confusing for a book of so little literary critical acumen or discussion, but it is fairly evident that he regards his material in much the same light as the manner of division made by Alain Locke in the above.

164

"There are an amazing number of rhymes about animals....Reasons: the colored slave spent most of his time in the out-of-doors, ....Again, the slave was just from Africa....; he....retained his native peculiarities although these were modified by Christianity....The enslaved Negro did not forget that rhymes furnished both admonition and amusement for children; there grew up a wealth of Negro nursery rhymes."

From this period of folk-expression we have been given such jingles as the following, concerning everyday matters, from the rearing of white children to love-making with their own kind:

165

"A, B, C,  
Double down D;  
Lasy chillun gits hick'ry tea."

166

"In come de cat,  
Out go de rat,  
Down go de baby wid 'is big straw hat."

167

"I told her dat I love her,  
Ded my love was bed-cord strong;  
Den I axed her w'en she'd have me,  
An' she just say, 'Go along.'"

Lenz Morton points out that the American Negro even in the folk-stage of cultural expression had rhyming schemes though he was unconscious of having

them. She gives the following classification of rhymes employed by the Negro in his earliest cultural manifestations through folk-songs and folk-expression.

169

" 1. Rhyming Solitaire

'In many lines there is a rhythmic line dropped in here and there that doesn't rhyme with any other line.'

I don't like Miss Jane, Oh no, I don't.  
She's fat and stout,  
Got her mouf sticked out,  
And she loks to pout.

2. Regular rhymed Doublet: a. a. b. b.

3. Divided Rhymed Doublet Including Close Rhyme

'In ordinary Close Rhyme one set of rhyming lines (two in number) is separated by two intervening lines, but in Negro rhymes there is much freedom in the number of lines separating the Rhyming Couplet.'

4. Supplemented Rhymed Doublet

Jube jump! Jube sing!  
Jube cut dat pigeon's wing! Juba! Juba!  
Jube kick off Jube's shoe.  
Jube dance dat Jubal Jew. Juba! Juba!

5. Rhyming Couplet, Regular

'(This) is the same as our common interwoven thyme and is very frequently used in Negro Rhymes, a. b. a. b.'

6. The Inverted Rhyming Doublet, a. b. b. a.

7. The Regular Rhymed Cluster: a. a. a.

8. The Divided Rhymed Clusters: a. a. b. a. a. (Two lines may divide the cluster as a. a. b. b. a)

9. The Supplemented Rhymed Clusters: a-x. a. a-x.

De frog went a-co'tin', de did ride  
Wid a sword and pistol by 'is side. Uh-huh! Uh-huh!

To many, this array of rhyme schemes may appear plentifully adequate to the Negro's need for expressing his thoughts to children and to his fellows. But one should not forget that these rhymes were not known of, by the Negro who used them, as schemes for expression; they were almost invariable accidental

requirements, and unquestionably the barest fundamental in poetic expression of any kind. The Negro grew slowly in the matter of acquired technique, as it was by nature natural that he should. Most of the rhymes were stark and unadorned by any semblance of a consciousness of scheme.

Miss Morton classifies the themes of Negro folk-rhymes as: (1) Love Songs, (2) Dance Songs, (3) Animal and Nature Lore, (4) Nursery Rhymes, (5) Charms and Superstitions, (6) Hunting Songs, (7) Drinking Songs, (8) Wise and Gnomie Sayings, (9) Harvest Songs, (10) Biblical and Religious Themes, (11) Play Songs, and (12) Miscellaneous.<sup>169</sup> Here again the Negro has acquired a number of themes of expression, or rather has unconsciously expressed himself through a number of channels; but these classes of themes are closely related, indicate but a narrow field of expression, and need not be above the folk-culture level. Of these themes the Negro has perhaps been at his best in folk-expression through his love songs.

170

"I see'd her in de Springtime,  
I see'd her in de Fall,  
I see'd her in de Cotton patch,  
A-comeing from de Ball.

She hug me an' she kiss me,  
She wrung my han' and cried.  
She said I was de sweetes' thing  
Dad ever lived or died.

She hug me an' she kiss me,  
Oh Heaben! De touch o' her han':  
She said I was de putties' thing  
In de shape o' mortal men."

As the Negro developed, his poetry developed in range and significance. He gained in form and style and technique; his later themes are comprehensive. Miss Morton feels that, once the Negro was emancipated, his forms of poetic expression had a phenomenal growth, ranging from the sonnet to imagistic verse, free verse, and polyphonic prose. The Negro lost his dialect, at least to a

large extent; he became diversified in his life, varied in his interests, and ambitious. His forms of expression soon came to harmonize with the themes coming from his new life.

One feels that Miss Morton is more polemic than scholarly; her study, nevertheless, has several points. There are moments of real zeal, of warmth, of penetration in her writings. And occasionally she sticks to stable facts as defined by statistical classification.

171 "The dominant note of Negro poetry (of the present day, mainly,) is the race question....The peculiar estrangement of the blacks and the whites remains a fact, and the black poet feels duty bound to use his lyre in defense of his people. ....It is consuming too much of his talent; it is fettering his poetical expansion. In the strictest sense of the word a poet is pre-eminently a singer rather than a moral philosopher or a social reformer."

Or so the majority of us have felt. What a poet ought to be, and what a poet is, are questions which will never fully be answered, or satisfactorily answered to all critics concerned. Miss Morton says that "for passionate beauty, beauty of form, and expression, few poets have surpassed the black bard in the lyric." 172 This statement is hasty and without scholarly background. The true lyric is the most difficult form the black bard has to master. Some of his very poorest poetic expression has been in the lyric form. In passionate beauty he far excels the white poet of America, though his day of excellence in this qualification is recent. His background is decidedly richer in the exotic, in emotion and in color than the background of the average Nordic. As for beauty of form, he has had much to learn. As for beauty of expression, lyrical refinement, and diction, he has not been as strong as has his natural bent for strength in diction. None but the most viscid of sentimentalists could regard the Negro poet as excelling in beauty of form. As a distinct kind of American poet he does excel the white poet in vera libre, and, somewhat strange to many, his simplicity in the modern free forms is dynamic and superb, but this accomplishment is too recent to have colored as yet

a survey of the poetical output of his race, or to qualify his power as a racial quality, rather than as an individual achievement.

Miss Morton surveys the field of American poetry generally. Her book is weak in the matter of her selections of verse representative of this group of Negro poets, individually speaking, and it is also misleading in the representation of the poetic growth of the race. One may remember her work, however, for the lasting impression of two comments and excerpts:

173 "Consider Miss Grimke's Dawn:

'Grey mist, grey skies, and not a star;  
Grey mist, grey hush;  
And then, frail, exquisite, afar,  
A hermit thrush.'

"Whether or not this should be called imagist poetry, I cannot say, but certainly more vivid imaging of objects can scarcely be found by contemporaries. Surely it is imagistic, whether or no it was written by a professed imagist.

174 "Much is expected of the Negro in poetry, for, in addition to having a natural gift for music, he is a tenacious worker, and an unceasing aspirant. No nobler words can express the idealistic aspirations of the present Negro than those of Miss Jessie Fauset, a present-day poet:

'Symbolic mother, we thy myriad sons,  
Pounding our stubborn hearts on freedom's bars,  
Clutching our birthright, fight with faces set,  
Still visioning the stars!'"

There have been curious and quaint presentations by Negro poets,---at least curious and quaint to us---which represent the growth of the black poet in America, and the growth of the Negro, as well. Jupiter Hammon, a Negro versifier, composing in 1760, the first American poet, so-called, writes in that year An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries: Composed by Jupiter Hammon, a Negro belonging to Mr. Lloyd, of Queen's Village, on Long Island, the 25th of December, 1760. These poems, published in a broadside, have eighty-eight lines printed in double column set. In 1779 Hammon wrote An Essay On Ten Virgins,

and, sometime after 1782, the date unknown, he published a poem entitled An Evening's Improvement, having within the unique poetical dialogues, The Kind Master and the Dutiful Servant.<sup>175</sup>

Phillis Wheatley<sup>was</sup> called "a Negro of the North, a child of God, a minister of His Grace, a sweet singer of divine thoughts, a link which bound the coloured slave to the white owner on the highest plane of life, one that gave proof to the world of the common origin of the human race."<sup>176</sup>

A Hymn to Humanity  
To S. R. G. Esq.

Lo! for this dark terrestrial ball  
Forsakes his azure-paved hall  
A prince of heavenly birth:  
Divine Humanity behold,  
What wonders rise, behold,  
What wonders rise, what charms unfold  
At his descent to earth.

The bosoms of the great and good  
With wonder and delight he view'd,  
And fix'd his empire there:  
Him, close compressing to his breast,  
The sire of man and gods address'd,  
"My son, my heavenly fair!

"Descend to earth, there place thy throne;  
"To succor men's afflicted son  
"Each human heart inspire:  
"To act in bounties unconfin'd  
"Enlarge the close contracted mind,  
"And fill it with thy fire."

Quick as the word, with swift career  
He wings his course from star to star,  
And leaves the bright abode.  
The Virtue did his charms impart;  
Their G----! then thy raptur'd heart  
Perceived the rushing God:

For when thy pitying eye did see  
The languid muse in low degree,  
Then, at thy desire  
Descended the celestial nine;  
O'er me methought they deigned to shine,  
And deigned to string my lyre.

Can Africa's muse forgetful prove?  
 Or can such friendship fail to move  
     A tender human heart?  
 Immortal Friendship laurel-crown'd  
 Those smiling Graces all around  
 With every heav'nly Art.

Albery A. Whitman, writing in 1877 and 1885, penned the following lines, somewhat unexpected of a Negro of Whitman's status.

\* \* \* \* \*

He was of manly beauty, ---brave and fair;  
 There was the Norman iron in his blood,  
 There was the Saxon in his hair  
 That waved and tossed in an abandoned flood;  
 But Norman strength rose in his shoulders square,  
 And so, as manfully erect he stood,  
 Norse gods might read the likeness of their race  
 In his proud bearing and patrician face.

\* \* \* \* \*

George Moses Horton, born 1797, Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper, born 1825, James Madison Bell, 1826, George Marion McClellan, 1860, Joseph Cotter, Sr., 1861, Kelly Miller, 1863, the most outstanding early Negro writers of verse, were all peculiar hybrids of unusual mental capacities for imitation of the most prevailing poetic forms of their dry and emotional background which prompted them to express themselves, even though in a stilted fashion, and without any full significance of this background. Others followed in their striving but stumbling footsteps. Reviewing the field, one finds unusual determination to express, without the tools for the job; and ability to acquire, but hardly to create, strictly speaking.

The sociological significance behind the poems of these writers is of minor importance. Hanson advised his followers to ease their troubles onto the back of Jesus, Master of the white master; Hanson did not preach freedom,---his owner was kind to him and encouraged him in the ways of imitating white writers of the day. Phillis Wheatley concerned herself almost not at all with the diffi-



cult situations within her race; Phillis Wheatley was saturated completely with love and regard for those immediately about her: her master and lady were the gods of her everyday life; Jehovah was a beckoning power, and in Him she would find Perce, ultimately and without cessation. She wrote after the learned and pedantic style of her contemporaries, drawing freely from Pope, travelled with her white friends, and published her poems in England. George Moses Horton, longing to be freed, failed to realize this hope, although friends published his poems in an effort to raise the required sum to buy his freedom. He is a bit wistful in his longing, imitative, not excellent in any respect, and important chiefly because of the quaint character of his work. Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper and Albery Whitman are surer poets and stronger henchmen of the race. Their work is interesting from the standpoint of literature as well as sociology. James Madison Bell, Mc Clellan, Cotter, Sr., and Kelly Miller show a decided growth, both in the capacity for improved expression and in the message behind the poem itself. All in all, there is a decided growth without the growth being of a definite character.

And there are still others who deal in constant poetic glimpses, strained parallelism, far-fetched metaphor, and stilted, forced, style. There are others who exhibit a self-consciousness, a race consciousness of a negative sort, not to be discovered in such wholesale fashion in the history of any poetic literature in any age or nation. In 1901, James F. Mc Girt, one of the American Negro poets of lesser distinction, publishing volumes of poetry in 1901 and 1906, wrote the following as a preface to his Avengeing the Main, A Drunken A. B., and Other Poems:

177 "I have a tender feeling for this bookn that is about to be sent into the world, to bear such an humble burden as my feeble thought.

"First, I must say these poems were written under very unfavourable circumstances....

"I must also state that I am conscious of the fact that this work does

not come up to the standard work of the mighty masters of poetry, but you need not censure me—it is not my fault. The muse has not yet taught me to sing as they. Had she given me the same power, do you not think I would have written?

"....Moreover, I am just beginning,...Often I have thought of laying these few poems aside and not giving any to the public until I became able to write as good poems as other poets. I publish them because I do not wish the muse to find me with my one talent buried when she comes to take up her jewels and reward her servants. She might serve me as his lord did the other one-talented servant we read of in the Bible."

Mc Girt's manner of presentation represents, in one way and another, the feelings of many of his fellow-poets. They were conscious of their shortcomings, yet truly anxious to succeed. They are the pseudo-aesthetes of their day but the staunch forefathers of the Negro poets of the present time. Their efforts were balked by a lack of technique, by sentiment, by almost no suitable opportunities for the leisurely art of poetic creativeness.

R. Edgar Ford, born 1869, once a student at Howard University, wrote verses at fifteen. He published allegorical poems, several of which would make pamphlets running from thirty to forty pages in length. His epic poem of mixed society in Washington, D. C., is written in the style of Lucille, so say his friends; there is one in the metre of Byron's Don Juan, and this, called Country and City Life, would make a book of about one hundred pages.<sup>178</sup> His veritable camel's hump of capaciousness is exploited by his friends and by the members of his race inclined to polemics and unwarranted eulogies. Generally, his verse is freakish, a product of sportive fancy without a compensating knowledge of technique. Selections of his verse follow in an effort to show another side of the unusual and formative periods in the mental, literary, and sociological growth of the American Negro, as a poet. The following seems representative of the steady flow of Ford's work; it seems neither better nor worse in spots:

Canto II

179

"And I may never tell just how she came;  
 All that I know, I first beheld her there,  
 And all surprized, I gazed upon the dame,  
 Who stood as if she wavered in the air.  
 Her face, what beauty is there to compare?  
 Not Cleopatra's charms, which Antony won;  
 Nor Helen's, which brought on the Trojan war;  
 Nor any yet I've met beneath the sun  
 Could well compare with such as I now gaze on.

\* . . . \*

"And, rising, I addressed her thus: 'Fair maid,  
 I wandered to this lovely place, serene,  
 So I might rest beneath the bowers and shade  
 Of these tall oaks--upon this moss so green,  
 I did not think that there would come between  
 Me and this happiness a woman's face;  
 At least, I deemed that in this lovely scene  
 I should find nothing of the human race;  
 But cometh thou to me in all thy magic grace!"

\* . . . \*

The Song

"Come to our lighted halls, maidens are dancing;  
 Joy holds supreme her sway, Love at her side  
 Bright eyes, filled full of soft affection, glancing,  
 Ask that our simple wish be not denied.  
 Come, noble youth, oh come!  
 And make this place thy home,  
 Come join our joyful band, and with us abide.

"Wines of the table are spread out before thee;  
 Fruits that luxuriant grow, mellow and sweet;  
 Beauty to bathe thy brow, maids to adore thee,  
 Living upon thy smiles, slaves at thy feet!  
 Long has thy journey been,  
 Here, in this place serene,  
 Dwell thou, where bosoms for thee daily beat."

The following stanza, taken from the verse which follows Canto II, represents the mood, tenor, and feeling, manner of expression, and technique employed by Ford when in poetic mood. It is perhaps no more than fair to judge Ford's merits as a poet on the above and following selections: it is perhaps not too difficult

to see just how it is that Ford has been heard of almost not at all even within the literary domains of his own race.

"I looked, and lo! before me far away,  
 I saw a rolling ocean stretching wide,  
 A white-sailed vessel on its bosom lay,  
 Drifting with the ever-restless tide.  
 'This,' said the old man, standing at my side,  
 'Is called the "Sea of Life," there one must meet  
 All that's meant for him; oft the sun will hide  
 His face, and strong and high those waves will beat,  
 But stand its storms, thou'lt enter harbors sweet.'"

Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper was one of the first Negro poets to protest against the wrongs committed upon her people. The Slave Mother is one of her early attempts at versification. Such poems, appearing during the incentive days of the Abolition movement, though imitative in style, and in a way but wet, flapping sheets whipping about in a hurricane, were well thought of for their content.

### The Slave Mother

180 "Heard thou that shriek? it rose  
 So wildly on the air,  
 It seemed as if a burdened heart  
 Was breaking in despair.

\* \* \* \*

She is a mother pale with fear:  
 Her boy clings to her side,  
 And in her kirtle vainly tries  
 His trembling form to hide.

He is not hers, although she bore  
 For him a mother's pains;  
 He is not hers although her blood  
 Is coursing through his veins.

He is not hers, for cruel hands  
 May rudely tear apart  
 The only wreath of household love  
 That binds her breaking heart.

\* \* \* \*

They tear him from her circling arms,

Her last and fond embrace;  
 O, never more may her sad eyes  
 Gaze on his mournful face.

No marvel then, these bitter shrieks  
 Disturb the listening air;  
 She is a mother, and her heart  
 Is breaking in despair.

Howman I. White, author of American Negro Folk Songs, writes of the Racial Feeling in Negro Poetry.<sup>181</sup> According to his study, there is but little race consciousness in Howman's writings; he admonishes the slaves to be obedient, and that is about all he does in the way of sociological significance. Wheatley, Mr. White thinks, is barely race conscious; except for her poem to a Negro sculptor, and the mention of "Afric's muse," and the like, there is almost no consciousness of her color or heritage as being definitely connected with the Negro slaves of America. Ann Plato does not touch upon race questions. Horton is appealing, but from a personal point of view: he wishes to be freed, but is not socially concerned with the travails of his companion slaves. Harper, White points out, was loved by her race for her poems treating religious subjects with freedom. Some of her best known poems are Eliza Harris, Bible Defense of Slavery, Freedom Bell, Dying Fugitive, and Bury Me In A Free Land. Her bitterness is directed more at the institution of slavery than at the white race as the perpetrators of the system.

James Madison Bell begins the aggressive era of race consciousness. Professor White marks him as an aggressive champion, militant in his verses of Black Man's Wrong, The Dawn of Freedom, and Triumph of the Free. J. M. Simpson, deeply bitter, follows with the history-making Emancipation Car, a poem of exciting content, if not excellent form. Charles L. Reason's desire for freedom

is calmer, though he greatly desires freedom for all his people. His writing has dignity. His follower, F. B. Coffin, 1897, is exceedingly bitter and polemic.

Since the Civil War, there has, according to Mr. White, come about a period of effort to assert the dignity of the race.<sup>182</sup> Dunbar's Slow Through the Dark, and J. W. Johnson's Fifty Years, represent this movement. Albery Whitman's Not A Man And Yet A Man is bitter but at the same patriotic; this poem has a note of reserve that, up to the time it was written, was not often used. G. C. Rowe's Emancipation, glorifying freedom, and his The Reason Why, a hero-poem, accompany his constructive The Teachers of Georgia to further this attempt to formulate a racial dignity and present a front marked with reserve and capacity for thought. H. W. Fordham writes with pride of his race in the Atlanta Expedition Ode. With Mc Clellan nature is all-important rather than racial matters. Dunbar's heart bled for his people; his aspiration to be a poet known for his contributions in classic English were personally disappointing. He displayed new dignity and capacity; he proved that his race was capable of expression in a tongue comparatively new to them.

In the twentieth century, S. A. Beadle scorns all those who worship Nordic supremacy because of difference in color or the lack of it, deploring the fact that Negroes in America are still regarded as aliens, and as enemies. G. R. Margetson gives violent utterance to his pent-up emotions over matters of racial injustice; he is ironic and satirical, a poet who laughs bitterly. J. D. Corrothers is pessimistic and despairing. A. B. Thompson feels his race to be "a trodden nation." In his Ode to Ethiopia, P. J. Thompson is bitter and sullen, unforgiving. Though C. R. Dinkins loves the south, he is a victorious

singer of his peoples' wrongs and problems. Richard E. S. Toomey displays a coexistence of patriotism and bitterness. O. M. Shackleford remembers past wrongs, but is not embittered over social inequalities; he protests against political and economic injustices and discrimination. C. Ann Thompson feels the Negro has suffered great wrongs in not having been granted full citizenship, but thinks conditions are gradually improving. She is known for her Uncle Remus on the Race Problem, Uncle Remus's Defense, and Uncle Remus to the Young People.

Fenton Johnson ignores racial injustice, seeking to stir his people with a positive quality of innovation rather than to stir them up by an ever mindful re-discussion of old questions, or the attention to new questions with old significance. William Stanley Braithwaite and E. Cordelia Ray practically ignore the race question, being interested in matters of artistic consideration. J. Mord Allen and James Weldon Johnson, while writing some things tinged with bitterness, follow for the most part the lead of Ray and Braithwaite. James Weldon Johnson touches on the race question in Fifty Years and O Black and Unknown Bards, but his manner of expression, his attitude, is more that of a lyricist than of a reformer. J. Mord Allen has a humor that is essentially racial.

Newman I. White summarizes his race consciousness study of Negro Poetry in these words:

183 "The one fact is plainly evident....that the Negro poets have racial pride and sensitiveness and a conviction that their race has not been justly treated in the past and is not receiving justice to-day. ....(There is) the persistent strain of race consciousness and discontent in Negro verse."

Countee Cullen seeks to be a poet in his own right, not relying primarily upon racial stimuli; he does, however, touch upon injustices, offering

political protest occasionally. Langston Hughes is exceedingly bitter. Sterling Brown indicates a consciousness of racial differences without devoting his talent to bitterness and satire. Brown and Hughes are very subtle in some of their poems. Race consciousness artistically expressed has interested both white and black leaders in their work. Claude Mc Kay is primarily a lyricist working with themes of love and nature and locale, but when he writes of racial injustice it is to protest as violently as any of his people. Joseph S. Cotter, Jr. was strongly resentful in his short time of singing; there are qualities in Mc Kay which are reminiscent of Cotter, Jr.

W. E. B. Du Bois is militant in whatever channel of leadership he fixes upon. Frank Horne startles one with the ease of expression, the subtle satire of his verse. Lewis Alexander is conscious of wrongs and needs. Arna Bontemps and Gwendolyn Bennett protest only incidentally, being interested in a semi-symbolic lyricism. J. Henderson Brooks, known for his A Brown Anathema Speaks, recognizes discriminations and injustices, but wishes to improve conditions by improving the Negro and by bridging the gulf between the white and black divisions in America. In Northbound, Lucy Ariel Williams expresses the philosophy of opportunity. Richard Bruce, Helene Johnson, Albert Rice, Edward Silver are all poetically conscious of racial matters, but not preëminently bitter, despairing, or lost in the mazes of their problem.

In the work of Jean Toomer there is more of the picturesque than in Braithwaite, but one notices lyrical similarity between the two. Toomer employs the symbolic in such pieces as Song of the Sun, and Georgia Dusk. Braithwaite has a hidden message here and there, not necessarily symbolical. On the whole, the women poets bring more of peace and calm than bitterness. Effie Lee Newsome, Anne Spencer, Jessie Fauset, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson,



Angelina Weld Grimké, Blanche Taylor Dickinson, Clarissa Scott Delaney, Gladys May Hayford, and Lala Lowe Weeden are first of all lyricists; any race consciousness they show is of no more than secondary importance.

The Negro developed culturally according to the development of his tendency over long periods of protest against social wrongs and racial injustices. His poetic protests make him known as an individual and as something of a poet long before his lyrical qualities bring him into any prominence. In his folk-level he employed fable; in his more expressive levels, he has made use of controversial discourse in both prose and poetry. One concludes that conversely the use of the fable kept him at a folk-level, and controversy pulled into play latent faculties which, once employed, raised the Negro to varying levels of cultural expressiveness. But the Negro was always creative, no matter what the level of his expression; one must not lose sight of this fact.

James Weldon Johnson reviews the field of American Negro poetry briefly but well. He points out that Phillis Wheatley, addressing the bulk of her poems to persons of prominence, was writing under the influence of Pope and Gray, especially of Pope; he thinks that had she been under influence of Byron, Wordsworth, Keats, or Shelley, she would have done greater work.

185

"Phillis Wheatley has never been given her rightful place in American Literature. By some sort of conspiracy she is kept out of most of the books, especially the textbooks on literature used in the schools. Of course, she is not a great American poet---and in her day there were no great American poets---but she is an important American poet."

Johnson thinks that few of the Negro poets before 1890 showed anything in the way of technique. Many of them proved surprising "finds" to the Abolitionists, many of them made a lasting impression upon the minds of their associated pioneer leaders. Limitations in education, training, and general culture

definitely held back these black poets. With these considerations well in mind, Horton, Harper, Bell, and Whitman all deserve attention.

186 "Paul Laurence Dunbar stands out as the first poet from the Negro race in the United States to show a combined mastery over poetic technique, to reveal innate literary distinction in what he wrote, and to maintain a high level of performance. He was the first to rise to a height from which he could take a perspective view of his race. He was the first to see objectively its humor, its superstitions, its shortcomings; the first to feel sympathetically its hear-wounds, its yearnings, its aspirations, and to voice them all in a purely literary form."

Newer Negro poets have the tendency to discard dialect in their poetry, even in the poetry concerned with racial characterization or plantation types. James Weldon Johnson feels that the newer poets are not rebelling against all that dialect represents or calls to mind, but that they are attempting to eradicate all limitations placed upon poetic expression by the folk patois. "...Even when he confines himself to purely racial themes, the Afro-american poet realizes that there are phases of Negro life in the United States which cannot be treated in the dialect either adequately or artistically."<sup>187</sup>

Braithwaite takes his place in American Literature as a critic and an anthologist rather than as a poet. Mc Kay is a poet who seems to have passed through the worst stages of polemic writing to become an artist. Du Bois and Brewley are to be thought of as essayists rather than as poets. Fenton Johnson seems promising. Jessie Fauset is a care-taking technician. Georgia Douglas Johnson is limited by conventional forms and rhythms. Holloway reminds one of Dunbar; his works have spontaneity, lilt, charm. Daniel Webster Davis has not lasted as a poet of merit; his humor was unctuous, his form crude. But all of the more recent outstanding Negro poets, even when not lyrically or technically above average, possess creative rather than imitative powers. Johnson  
the  
states that Negro has created the only things truly from the American soil

and acknowledged as distinctive American products."<sup>188</sup>

Some greater significance must lie behind the first feeble attempts of the early Negro poets, the growth into cultural levels of expression, and the modern schools of "racial-realists" and "racial-symbolists" then is indicated by the above reviews of American Negro poets. Some rather penetrable qualities of cultural awakening must have occurred in the early folk-period of the American Negro poet.

Fenton Johnson believes that slavery was in itself the mothering background for the Negro's folk-level of expression.

<sup>189</sup> "To the Negro, slavery is his epic hour. The freedom from the restraint he enjoyed in his own circles kept alive those qualities he brought with him from Africa. The language he used during that period is so typical of him that the sons of the masters constantly associate it with him...The cabin, the slave market, the crude but sincere songs of the bondmen had about them a glamour that grows more intense as the years advance. No institution in American life is more exploited than the negro mammy. Her loyalty to Southern ideals has endeared her to every true son of Dixie. The Confederacy is dead, but Mammy lives on and on, the most cherished tradition of either race."

Charles Bertram Johnson feels that slavery and emancipation furnished the Negro population with just the strong social upheavals needed to form a new homogeneity reaching out for a higher level of expression.

" . . . . .  
I hear the sad refrain,  
Of slavery's sorrow-strain;  
The broken half-lispt speech  
Of freedom's twilit hour;  
The greater growing reach  
Of larger latent power.  
" . . . . ."

Charles Bertram Johnson

Slavery gave the Negro his first lessons in true agriculture. From slavery the Negro learned to wear clothes, to speak new languages, to adjust to

differing conditions. He got an impression of monogamous marriage that was bad as well as good for him. Though missionaries had been in Africa some several decades at least before his entrance into America, the Negro really gained his knowledge of the Christian religion through the net of slavery. There was little cultural progress in the 1619-1800 era. "Outstanding progress was the mark of the exceptional few rather than of the many."<sup>190</sup>

Slavery taught the Negro to work, and at the same time implanted in his mind a definite connection of work with servitude. For a long time after Emancipation he was indolent, shiftless, unprogressive because of this folk-faculty of associating one with the other. Slavery gave the Negro the sense of domestication that he had never developed in Africa---the true African Negro lacked domestic stability. From hut to house, from nakedness to clothes, from cults to a Trinity-Godhead leading oppressed peoples to glories in the future life rather than in this one, the Negro began to learn and to assimilate, slowly, often retrogressively, but nevertheless steadily, over a long period of time. Partly responsible for the Negro's little cultural attainment in his folk-period is the white owner's habit of breeding the mothers of the race for commercial disposal. Taking for granted that the African jungles could in no way produce a body of people at all capable of morality, the white man of the South prolonged his attitude of Christian forbearance toward pagan morality in order that the slaves should produce indiscriminately for commercial gain, defeated the possibility of an early start for Negro moral progress, and closed this channel of progression for many years by his own evidence in the bartering of black flesh. In the Revolutionary era, many men of the mental perspective of Jefferson, pondered the inconsistency of a doctrine of Liberty and Equality for All Men within the institution of human slavery. From 1800 on, pro-slavery and anti-slavery

sentiments began to grow into what later became a civil-war upheaval; meanwhile the Negro suffered, remaining as a racial unit on his original folk-level. His greatest step toward progress was the growing advance toward personal freedom. Oppression and hard work left more marks upon the Negro mind than any act of Emancipation could eradicate or alleviate in the necessary step toward growth along higher levels of expression.

Because life was "wearisome," the Negro looked forward to some mysterious, indefinable spirit-world where all would be changed. This outlook upon his problem retarded actual growth, yet produced the spirituals. Because life was oppressive, the Negro attempted forgetfulness through laughter and a relaxation from moral tension. This kind of psychical philosophy produced the work songs, or folk-songs. The folk-songs are the Negro's one poetical contribution in his first period of growth in this country. I'm Goin' To Lay Down My Sword and Shield, Nobody Knows De Trouble I See, There is a Balm in Gilead, When I Get To Heaben Goin' To Put On My Robe, and like songs, indicate the hope which the Negro entertained for a better life in "the distant unknown." Often, too, the Negro entertained for a better life a hope which is apparent in the hymns, which also exhibit the Negro's feelings, habits, and slave opinions.

191

"One of their customs, often alluded to in their songs, is that of wandering through the woods and swamps, when under religious excitement, like the ancient bacchantes. To get religion is with them to 'fin' dat ting."

Akin to the spiritual is the "Shout." Finding "that thing" in the throes of the "Shout" was a frequent way of finding relief both spiritually and socially.

192

"One day, on our way to see a 'Shout,' we asked Bristol whether he was going: 'No, Ma'am, wouldn't let me in---hain't found dat ting yet---hain't been on my knees in de swamp.'...The tree

'Shout' (where one 'fin dot ting') takes place on Sundays or on 'praise nights' through the week....either in the 'praise house' or in some cabin wherein a regular religious meet has been held. Very likely more than half the plantation is gathered together.... For some time one can hear....the vociferous exhortation of the presiding elder or of the brother who has a gift that way....and at regular intervals one hears the elder 'deaconing' a hymn book hymn, which is sung two lines at a time, and whose wailing cadences borne on the night air, are indescribably melancholy....The benches are pushed back to the wall when the formal meeting is over, and old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely clad field hands, (all types) stand up in the middle of the floor, and when the 'aperichil' is struck up, begin walking first, and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring....The procession is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration....Some and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often when the "Shout" lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the ('shout-house')."

The "shout," then, is both a song and a kind of meeting. Famous "shout" songs are Bell da Ring, Shall I Die? and I Can't Stay Behind My Lord. They are typically folk-born.

There are, also, songs that are not work songs, not spirituals, not true "shouts," not definitely of any group-meaning. Such a one is Round the Corn, Sally. When it was used, if for any special occasion, to what degree it was significant, and how it began to be popular as an expression of the folk, is not known. There are other songs similar in character and of unknown origins and meanings and purposes, but they are meaningful of something in the slave's existence.

193

Round the Corn, Sally

1. Five can't catch me, and ten can't hold me,
2. Here's your iggle-quarter and here's your count-aquils.
3. I can bank, 'ginny bank, 'ginny bank by the weaver.

Ho,....round the corn, Sally!  
 Round the corn, round the corn,  
 Round the corn, Sally!  
 Ho, ho, ho, round the corn, Sally!

My Brethren, Don't You Get Heary, Gwine Up, Rise and Shine,  
Some O' Dese Mornings, Hail! Hail! Hail! are hybrids between spirituals,  
 shouts, and the kind of nameless songs as discussed above. The types of  
 songs of the American Negroes became mixed in feeling, title, meaning, and  
 rhythms according to the mixture of the levels of slave intelligence and  
 slave occupations. Jesus Ain't Comin' Here To Die No Mo', A Wheel in a Wheel,  
Gideon's Band or Da Milk White Horsea are more the results of mixed creative-  
 ness than they are products of mysticism.<sup>194</sup> Go In the Wilderness is both  
 a spiritual and a shout. Pray All Da Member' is likewise a song proving satis-  
 factory for many occasions.<sup>195</sup>

The dialect of the songs of the Negro in the folk-period is not  
 at all adequately indicative of the Negro's progress in learning the language  
 of his new habitat. For the speech of the songs existed (and still exists,)  
 long after the Negro had mastered the English language to a degree far removed  
 from the character of his songs. At best, "Negro dialect was never so standard  
 or so consistent as dialect writers have made it....(Where it exists at all)  
 it is merely a mixture of ordinary illiterate English with a very few dialect  
 elements; it is no longer a very significant element."<sup>196</sup>

197 "Underlying the more important traits of the Negro folk-song,  
 there is a sort of balance between the conservatism of the  
 singer, which leads him to preserve many of the old conventional  
 ideas, forms, and expressions, and his desire for novelty,  
 which leads him to improvise. But the improvising is due  
 partly to an inherited convention and....to a failure in memory,  
 as well as an extraordinary indifference to the meaning of words.  
 ....From the white man's standpoint this difference may be ex-  
 pressed as the predominance of feeling over meaning. Thus it  
 makes little difference to the singer of spirituals (or shouts,  
 or seculars) whether all God's chillun gets shoes or all 'ot's  
 chillun got shoes; whether Sister Mary wore three links of chain,  
 wove three links of chain, or merely had three links of chain."

There is, then, in the folk-experience of the Negro in America both a conservatism, which was a subconscious withholding from innovations, and improvisation, which makes him as a bard seem careless of details when probably what he is doing first of all is to express himself through tone more than through context or meaning.

In his folk-period of cultural acquisitions, the American Negro was not only learning; he was also retaining his heritage. Thus it is that the African heritage of the American Negro is important if one will understand the underlying significance of his earliest poetry---the folk-song. He retained his native pride, his capacity for extemporization, his spirit world of religion, his natural "immorality," his love of noise, his belief in the "future world" as an answer to the fears and hopes of this one, and his capacity for a shiftless, easy-going but silently rebellious servitude under peoples of stronger cultural backgrounds. These characters he modified through his very great desire to attain freedom. His love of noise remained over-long; his "immorality," so-called, would have become more modified, than evidence seems to indicate, had it not been for his master's desire to market his offspring and to use his body as a vessel for the removal of strong passions. His African spirit world religion he modified with the white man's "Chu'ch ways" and "bleed-in' saviour." The desire for freedom intensified the Negro's comfort-taking in a Jesus of Thorns. His pride became modified with the need for adjustment to conditions of servitude; though the Negro retained his pride more subtly and more secretly than any other quality he possessed, unless it can be that his delight in superstitions has ever remained uppermost in his psychical character. Africa was not so easily forgotten that the earliest bits of poetry could have been more than they were---refrains from, and incomplete poems of simple nature, great feeling, and no sophistication.



The secular songs show less conservatism, and a gift for extemporizing more in the spirit of the time than in the past. Work songs were encouraged by the planters because of the increase in the amount of labor obtained by their use. Booker T. Washington tells of the practice in his preface to Samuel Coleridge Taylor's Twenty-Four Negro Melodies. The secular songs have always seen queer as well as natural uses. Newman I. White finds that slaves were brought on deck during their passage to this country on slave boats, and made to sing and dance in order that they should have exercise and fresh air, thereby living until the traders could sell them in the slave markets of the States.

198

"There are old prints which show cargoes of slaves being whipped into song. It was thought to have prevented many a slave from jumping overboard or from grieving himself into sickness and death."

The work songs come by their name correctly; they are so numerous that connoisseurs preserve them "in three groups, those dealing with gang laborers, those dealing with rural laborers, and those dealing with miscellaneous occupations." 199  
Then songs to accompany dances, songs allowing vent to passions and joys were often encouraged by the planter to give the Negro a more or less harmless outlet for pent-up emotions. The Negro was kept happy through this medium of expression,---as happy as he could be in slavery. Then, too, the songs cost the planter nothing, they afforded him amusement at the same time they allowed the Negro expression, and they were generally harmless. Often the group improvisation was exceedingly interesting as unadorned artistry.

The movements of the Abolitionists and the Pre-Slavery leaders affected the songs of the Negro but little. Except in the Upstart Crow songs and parodies, the songs indicate almost no reaction to either movement. There was,

"in responses to the emotional appeal of Mrs. Stowe,....what would be called a literary propaganda....the beauties of slavery and the horrors of free society (were) developed in a number of ways. (It was preached) that slavery had elevated the Negro from savagery...(that) Capitalism should be abolished and slavery spread throughout an enlightened land."<sup>200</sup> What the Abolitionists did in literature as well as in oratory is history of a striking nature. But neither pro- nor anti-slavery movements affected the Negro's extemporaneous productivity beyond the sociological changes effected thereby into harder or less strenuous conditions of his life on plantations.

As pointed out before,<sup>201</sup> the Negroes were fond of parody built upon the spirituals. That this was an allowable and natural inclination has been concluded by several students of American Negro folk-songs. Such a ditty as The Whale Swallowed Jonah, Yes He Did, indicates without doubt the ability of the folk-Negro to see the humorous in the serious, to retain something of his native African distrust of new legends, and to strut and sway before his fellows in a semi-sacrilegious enjoyment.

The Whale Swallowed Jonah, Yes He Did<sup>202</sup>

The whale swallowed Brother Jonah,  
 Yes, he did, no, he didn't.  
 Faked him up on sandy land,  
 An' a goad vine grewed round Brother Jonah's head.  
 The greatest prayer that ever I heard  
 Was the prayer that Jonah prayed,  
 When the worm came an' cut the goad vine down  
 From around Brother Jonah's head.

The Upstart Crow songs express the same character of strutting and "sassin' around," while singing before a crowd. This love of the natural "show-off" character is typical of these songs and makes them related to those songs sung in the third person and indicating ironic displeasure with the master. Examples of both Upstart Crow songs and songs of Boasting Dissatisfaction follow here in order of their mention.

203 "I'm from old Virginia wid a haid full o' knowledge,  
 And I nebber ben to free school or any odder college,  
 But I'll tell yo' a story what's a mighty simple fact;  
 The world wasn't built in de twinkle ob a crack.

Refrain:

Lib-a-hum-bug, lib-a-hum-bug, till  
 De good Lord comes again.

Adam was the first man, Eve was the tother,  
 Cain walked a treadmill case he killed his brudder.  
 Old mudder Eve wouldn't sleep wit out a fudder;  
 Lewd bless you, honey, old Adam oughta killer.

Refrain

De clouds commence to rain, an' de rain commence to fell;  
 De water got so deep dat it drowned de niggers all;  
 It rained forty days jes' exactly by de count,  
 An' landed Noah's ark on de Allegainy mount."

Refrain-

\*

204 "I went up to town to get a cake of cheese,  
 The skippers and the maggets and a long-tailed mouse,  
 Yonder come a nigger with a bucket full o' souze;  
 Just come down from the white folks house."

\*

205 "White man in the dining room eating cake and cream,  
 Negro in the kitchen eating those good old greasy greens."

\*

206 "Water-boy water-boy,  
 Bring de water roun';  
 If yo' don't like yo' job,  
 Set de bucket down."

\*

207 " A goat one day was feeling fine,  
 He ate ten shirts from off de line;  
 Sal took a stick and broke his back  
 And tied him to de railroad track."

208 "Mary had a little lamb,  
His fleece was black as jet;  
I went to school with Mary one day,  
And haven't quit scratching yet.

Mary had a little lamb,  
She tied him to de track,  
Every time de train whistled  
De lamb would ball de jack."

.

Besides these kinds of folk-poetry, one finds the personal "moan" or sob-song. This usually expresses a desire for the goods of the earth, a wish to get away from the "seamy side" of existence; these songs contain a genuine quality of earnestness, at the same time having that indefinable humor which causes persons, especially white persons, to laugh when they are sung.

209 "My chilluns on de ground,  
My wife is out of work,  
Ain't got no shoes fer de chillun,  
Can't find my wife no work.

Refrain:

So come you seben,  
Oh! bones, will you leben?  
Can't find my wife no work  
And baby needs a new pair ob shoes."

Thus the Negro sang about his women.

210 "The songs in which the Negro sings about women come from all sources---from the mine, the construction gang, the jail, the dance, the minstrel show, the fair, the levee, even sometimes from the popular songs of the white men. Wherever the Negro is at work on a task which allows his mind to wander, it wanders sooner or later to his women."

211 "I rather be dead  
An' laid in de dirt  
Than to see my gal  
With her feelin's hurt.

I rather be dead  
An' laid in de sand

Then to see my gal  
With another man.

I rather be dead  
An' laid in de ground  
Than to see my gal  
In anoder weddin' gown.

Many of the songs about women are of a coarse nature. Some are amusing even to the Negro who sings them; most of them furnished the nucleus from which the blues song grew.

212 "It is in his songs about women that the modern folk-Negro reveals the most unpleasing side of his nature....Love is always an appetite, almost never an abstraction. His attitude toward women is cynical and utilitarian. She is useful in bringing him food; he expects little constancy in her and apparently finds little. Certainly he himself makes no bones about deserting or beating a woman. Sometimes the song shows pride in the possession of a woman, or admiration for her physical qualities or her abilities as a 'provider.' Very rarely indeed do they show real or genuine affection."

213 "Oh, a black-headed woman  
Make a tadpole hug a whale.  
But a red-headed woman  
Send a po' man straight to jail."

From songs like the above come melodies and themes for the modern "blues" of vaudeville and radio fame. There is no difficulty in recalling snatches of several Negro "blues" corresponding in feeling and thought to the above. Such expressions as the following made Negro songs very popular just after the World War and keep them in favor to-day.

214 "When you see me leavin' mommer,  
Huh!--Ha--ang yo' head and criecee.  
When you see me leavin' mommer,  
Huh! Huh! Ha--ang yo' head and criecee;  
But when you see me comin' honey,  
Raise yo' window haighee.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now my lovin' ways, sweet mommer,

Uh-huh! Make a rabbit hug a how-dun'  
 Said my lovin' ways, sweet mommer,  
 Said Huh! Make a rabbit hug a how-dun'  
 And if you two-times me mommer,  
 Gwine turn yo' damper dow-oun'"

Other songs typical of the Negro's feeling for humor in his love render his expression highly entertaining. In thinking of these songs, one must of course remember that they are not true poetry, but stand as stanzas revealing the early American Negro's gift for extemporizing; and that they do not represent the Negro man's attitude toward his wife. Nor are they in any way a representation of the thought held by the educated and informed Negro on a cultural level. To-day they exist as a part of the American folk-lore of the Negro of the past, even though they are sung by modern Negroes of the steel mills, the road gangs, and the vaudeville stage.

215 "If you don't believe I'll treat you right  
 Let down your windows and turn out the light."

216 "Good lookin' woman,  
 Le' me be your teddy bear;  
 Put a rope aroun' my neck  
 An' lead me anywhere."

217 "When my sporn tied in a bow  
 You was always hangin' round my door.

Now my sporn barely will pin,  
 You pass by and won't stop in.

When my money you could blow,  
 You was always hanging aroun' my door.

Now my money's all blowed in,  
 You pass by and won't look in."

218 "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,  
 Ef whiskey don' kill you  
 Den the woman must."

Here is a song decidedly humorous, yet having a certain pathos, also. There is more indication of the laboring man's attitude toward life than may at first be realized.

219

"White gal rides in automobile,  
 Yellow gal does the same.  
 Black gal rides in an old ox-cart,  
 But she gets there just the same.

The white gal uses good cold cream,  
 The yellow gal does the same,  
 But the black gal uses pure hog-lard,  
 But she gets there just the same.

The white gal uses perfume soap,  
 The yellow gal does the same,  
 But the black gal uses no soap at all,  
 But she smells just the same."

Definitely of the "blues" type, of folk-song, the following is also of interest in any consideration of the Negro's attitude toward his women.

220

"I had a good woman, I had a good woman,  
 But the fool laid down and died;  
 I had a good woman but the fool laid down and died.  
 If you got a good woman, you better pin her to your side.

When a man gets the blues, when a man gets the blues,  
 He jes' catches a train and rides;  
 When a woman gets the blues, he catches a train and rides.  
 But when a woman gets the blues, she lays her little head and cries."

"Some folks say, oh some folks say,  
 That the nigger blues ain't bad.  
 Oh, some folks say that the nigger blues ain't bad,  
 Well, it must not have been the nigger blues I had."

Typical of the Negro's elusive humor is this snatch of song:

221

"My daddy drives a street car and my brother drives a hack,  
 My mummy takes in washin' while I bell de jack."

The folk-songs represent best the Negro's limits of expression during his first stage of growth in America from 1619 to 1890.<sup>222</sup> They show, also, his first attainments in artistic contribution. Though not sophisticated, not embellished, not refined, they are, however, artistic in the essential sense of the word, especially in the sense of being genuinely creative.

True poetic stanzas by Hammon, Wheatley, Reason, Harper and Alberty Whitman, and other verse writers of this first period of the Negro in America, are few and far between, so to speak, and when found at all are thoroughly imitative. But Negro folk-songs are not imitative; they are, in their original pattern, genuine & effortless demonstrations of the African Negro's power to improvise. They are important in a study of the Negro. Vernon Loggins, author of The Negro Author, the one standard book on the subject, acknowledges in his preface the importance of studying Negro folk-songs.

224 "The reader may wonder why I have restricted myself to the Negro's consciously produced literature. When I decided four years ago to write this book, my plan was to devote at least one full chapter to the folk-song and the folk-tale. Much of what I intended to say in that chapter was said in Professor Newman I. White's American Negro Folk Songs (1928). Unwilling, however, to publish a book on Negro literature without some discussion of its strongest element, I have appended in the form of a conclusion a brief estimate of the literary significance of that element."<sup>225</sup>

Loggins regards the study of Negro literature as important in the study of the Negro.<sup>226</sup>

227

"Although productive of little that is truly artistic, that field extends far and wide. It embraces in a way the entire struggle for the extinction of slavery, the Civil War, the reconstruction of the South, and the late nineteenth century problem of racial adjustment. Viewed in the light of its historical associations it is indeed rich. And in the light of the remarkable progress which the Negro has made in letters during the last forty years it is interesting and important."

In a study of the Negro's reaction to slavery and oppression, Lena Beatrice Morton goes straight to the folk-songs of this first period. (1619-1890.)

228

"The thing that lingers with the modern reader of the old Negro Folk Rhymes is the fine spirit, and the good will with which these black men and women bore their oppression..../nd although abused and made to work for the profit of others he had no bitter hatred for his masters. He welcomed freedom, but he showed no contempt for his old oppressors; he rather poked fun as he watched his old

'Missus and Mossa a-walkin' de street,  
Deir han's in deir pockets an' nothin' to eat,



She'd better be home a-washin' up de dishes,  
An' s-cloasin' up de ole man's raggity britches.

He'd better run 'long an' git out de hoes  
An' clear out 'is own crooked weedy corn rows;  
De Kingdom is come, de Niggers is free,  
Hain't no Nigger slaves in de Year Jubilee!"

This snatch of dialectic verse seems singularly in a way reminiscent of the vein of the third person songs sung by the carriers along the journey over the trek-ways of the African Jungles. One will recall how it is explained that the black porters sang what would seem to the tenderfoot explorer to be a harmless, impersonal song, telling of porters who have become tired, of porters who are poorly paid and who have deserted the whites because of such a condition, leaving the whites to their own devices in the jungles. All this is sung in unison, here and there a line being given to the group by some unrecognized leader and the group chanting the refrain, with a great deal of repetition coming into play during the process. This impersonal-personal sort of song has a way of growing slowly into abuse of a definite nature; if not stopped at its beginning it grows into an emotional expression of unusual force, causing mutinies, desertion and murder. The Negro has always used this form of speech in his conversation with whites; with his fellow blacks he is given to more direct speech, yet even here he uses the impersonal with an insinuating and involved meaning behind the actual words. This method may be termed racial, of semi-cultural significance, or characteristic of any group of persons subjected to an inferior position in life. In its angle of approach to a more definite and direct expression, it is psychologically perfect.

The Negro surrenders himself easily to the rhythms of his early American folk-songs. He had long been used to the rhythms of the tom-tom of his ancient heritage; the drums had called from him responses as completely submissive to

the call as these responses made to the sorrow of his life here in America. The stimuli are widely different; the ability to lose himself in a higher harmony, a larger power, than self, affords the Negro his coordination with the compulsive rhythmic law of the universe, and is the same. Rhythm is the universe's womb of creation. The African's vivid imagination, his power of feeling, his gradual growth in even homely expression, all make the folk-songs of special significance.

The era of slavery did more, then, than to furnish Hemmon the opportunity of admonishing slaves to be obedient. It contained more stimuli than the protesting poems of Horton, Harper, Bell, Simpson, Reason, Albery Whitman, Rowe, and Coffin would indicate. Bitterness was certainly not all that the period offered the black poet. The span of years from 1619 to 1890 kept the African-American Negro sensitized to his power of rhythmic emotionalism, inherited from his Africa and reinforced by the land of his oppression. We find this characteristic definitely noticeable in the spurts of his expression. The era afforded time for, and experience in, imitation; the few hybrid leaders among the blacks made use of their opportunities, and, though they accomplished little of artistic merit, raised humble standards for their successors. The era of slavery forced the Negro to remember the land and customs of the nativity of his people; this power of emotional memory retained for the Negro some of his most valuable stimulation, and the folk-songs are products of simple artistic warmth, if not of technique.

229 "If slavery moulded the emotional life of the Negro, it was the anti-slavery struggle that gradually developed his intellect and brought him to artistic expression....From the literary point of view, anti-slavery literature by both white and black writers is admittedly second-rate, but no one can deny its representativeness of its historical period."

Harper, Bell, Reason, Simpson, Rowe, and Coffin at various times furnished poems for anti-slavery journals, or at least wrote poems suitable to and used by these journals. Their poems may have been unusual for their background, but the use of these poems by the abolitionists was a normal procedure, following the precedent for the black man to aid the agitators for his race's freedom as set by Frederick Douglass, Negro orator, Martin Delaney, and Henry Highland Garnett, essayist, William Wells Brown, commentator, and Frank J. Webb, novelist. But of more importance than the spokespersonship of these few and exceptional Negroes was the widespread agitation and momentum for freedom among the great masses of Negro slaves. There can be no progress, no wealth in growth, either sociologically or aesthetically without freedom. The anti-slavery portion of the first period of the Negroes in America gave the incentive to steps for this growth.

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"The Civil War in one sense drained the energies of the anti-slavery campaign; in another sense gave it a specious satisfaction. In this and the early Reconstruction period little was produced by the Negro intellectuals....Memoirs and amateurish histories were the vogue, but a huge mass of valuable historical data got itself written down, beginning with Samuel Nell's Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, and The Services of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812, published in 1852-55, running through work like Frederick Douglass's Life and Times (1862) and Simmon's Man of Mark, (1867), and culminating in 1893 with George William's speech-making, two-volume History of the Negro Race from 1619-1890.

"....Meanwhile, in literature, the Southern protagonists had their innings in an uncontested field,—the enthusiasm of the North having spent itself in the furious and bitter campaign of anti-slavery. Reconstruction literature....created the stereotypes by which the Negro is still popularly known in America; and then after Cable, Harris, and Nelson Page, indeed before the end of their writing careers, became still more violent propagandist and caricaturist in its treatment of the Negro,—this phase culminating in the work of Thomas Dixon.

"Only in the late eighties did Negro literary effort recover itself, to succeed really with only two figures, Charles Waddell Chestnut, the novelist and short-story writer, and Paul Laurence Dunbar, known as a dialect poet, but also considerably versatile as a sentimental lyric poet, story teller and novelist. Chestnut

modelled upon Cable and Bret Harte, and achieved a real success.....(The poetry) of Paul Laurence Dunbar, known as a dialect poet, but also considerably versatile, heralded by William Dean Howells, started that increasingly popular school of dialect poetry, about which there has been such controversy. There is no question about the representativeness of Dunbar's happy-go-lucky, self-pitying peasant; it is only a matter of realizing....that he stands for the race at a certain stage of its history, and a certain class at that stage. Braithwaite, the critic, has the vital word on this question: 'Dunbar was the articulate end of a regime, and not the beginning of a tradition....'

There is no gainsaying that Dunbar's work in dialect is far superior to his handling of abstract themes in literate English. Dunbar lived and worked in a period during which the Negro sought to emphasize the dignity of his potentialities, and to raise his standards. Many of Dunbar's friends, associates and race leaders were seeking to leave behind all traces and memories of slavery. The dialect, for them at this time, but reminded both races of all the bitterness, hardship and antagonisms from which they had escaped by an act of national Congress, but not by any act sound and definite and firm in a new sociological status.

It is in this period of social struggle to meet an ever-changing status of the Negro as well as Southern white that Maurice Corbett begins his life, later writing The Horn of Ethiopia, an epic poem of seven thousand five hundred lines in rhyme with a narration of the entire history of the Negro in America. It is in this period of sociological turmoils that George Merion McClellan makes a bid as a nature poet, trying to forget the nature of the racial strife within the American part of his heritage. Joseph S. Cotter, Sr., tries to build something of friendship between the races; his aim is education for both races and he works from that angle of thought. Kelly Miller has a broad outlook upon the problems of this period. Du Bois

is definitely bitter and stands for the opposite of all that Booker T. Washington, Robert Russa Moton, and James Weldon Johnson advocate to alleviate the difficulties of a new adjustment and adaptation.<sup>231</sup> Leslie Pinckney Hill celebrates the deeds of Toussaint L'Ouverture and writes also The Wings of Oppression, dealing with the many sociological questions with dignity and some fineness in technique. Lucien B. Watkins protests avidly; Charles Bertram Johnson returns to the memories of his people under oppression as well as in their new-found freedom. Raymond Grafield is more a personal poet than Walter Everette Hawkins or Roscoe C. Jamison, George Reginald Margetson is to some extent concerned with social problems; Fenton Johnson is more the poet than the reformer, yet when he turns his attention to race consciousness he is alive and vigorous.

There is really little in this period of racial settlement that is notably artistic; there is a great deal that is indicative of racial growth and attempts at national adjustment.

The Negro seems to have progressed most when he was able to forget his past, his persecution, and his limited participations in the white American scene--limitations more surely placed upon him by the white man's fear and dislike of his capacities than by his own incapacities. The Negro has had much to forget to find for himself better things to remember. Whenever the Negro has built upon opportunity rather than remembered wrongs, he has gone further in cultural advancement. Numbers of Negro leaders who realize this fact preach it from the pulpits of their educational shrines. John T. Cox has expressed the doctrine in Servias. Du Bois, a great leader of the school of opposition to white supremacy, has in his so-called radicalism proved himself as true and as untiring in his efforts as a Stanford or a

Dunbar; but he has lost as well as gained ground by spending much of the virile seed of his energies in antagonistic onslaughts against his opponents. The Brawley-Weldon Johnson-Locke school of leadership has in its constructive malleability undoubtedly lifted the race more than the Du Bois-Hughes-Mc Kay school of bitterness and the disgenic influences of constant "torch-bearing."

To The Black Man Of Letters<sup>232</sup>

"To you my strong black brothers,  
 Du Bois, Cullen, Mc Kay,  
 Break ye your phials from which bitterness  
 In torrents doth pour each day.  
 Your pen, my strong black brothers,  
 A weapon that reaches afar,  
 May teach many a lesson,  
 Or many an heart may mar.  
 Bitterness my dear black brothers,  
 Is a demon dreadful and foul.  
 It wrings from the heart the love of man  
 And stamps on the brow a scowl.  
 Speak not of the beautiful brown maiden  
 Who from righteousness has been led afar.  
 Speak not of her nordic seducer,  
 Speak not of the Jim Crow car,  
 Too well we know the old story  
 Of Ku Klux, feathers and tar,  
 Reflect not on deeds that are gory,  
 Fix your eye on the morning star.  
 For your pen my strong black brothers,  
 A weapon that reaches afar,  
 May teach a perfect lesson  
 Or many a heart may mar.

Theresa May Justice

This poem, though written recently, expresses well the general thought of the Booker T. Washington school of Negro leadership.

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"Let us learn," the dark ones say.  
 They have learned that Faith must do  
 More than meditate and pray  
 That a boulder may fall through  
 Making one large man size entrance

Into wondrous Jericho.  
 They have learned: forget the distance,  
 Count no steps, nor stoop to blow."

\* \* \* \* \*

Blanche Taylor Dickinson

The Negro poets of this controversial age beginning with Emancipation and going to the World War are weighted down to a degree by a failure to face facts, by sentiment which makes them loath to profit by strong criticism, yet by a certain willingness to learn that is not always applicable as a fitting tribute to other poets and racial leaders of other periods of adjustment and attempts at progress. This statement is divided against itself and paradoxical, but so are Negro leaders and Negro movements. J. Henderson Brooks, one of the modern Negro poets, depicts the Negro's joy in learning and acquiring new standards and new cultural characters.

A Brown Aesthete Speaks

"No; I am neither seeking to change or keep myself;  
 Simply acting upon new revelations.

There was a time, I own,  
 When I fared, quite pleased with myself,  
 With my unkempt curls, unhealthy-pores myself;  
 When Jenny Lind  
 In songs that brought you tears,  
 Was like morphine, teasing me to sleep and dream,  
 When Beecher's sermons stirred no shout in me,  
 And when I thought it a miracle that your visage flushed with  
                   delight as you recited Aeschylus and Homer.  
 But since the time, I met Keats and Poe,  
 (Wisdom can evolve a simple taste  
 And love is a feeling deep and universal.)  
 Now, I perceive:  
 Ah, you had tasted Beauty!  
 Now I understand you;  
 Try you by myself,---  
 Now that Beauty is religion in my soul!  
 I fired your furnaces,  
 Served your parties,  
 Washed your dishes;  
 Yes, on my hands and knees like a quadruped creature,  
 I scrubbed your kitchen floor---

That I might learn of Beauty,  
 Of Keats and Poe.  
 And why shall I not love Keats and Poe?  
 Feel their genius,  
 Marvel at their fire,  
 Laud their martyrdom,  
 Love the art they loved?

Did I cary when you created beautiful curls,  
 Becoming curls, to deck your Marcian Bob?  
 Or the Bob itself?  
 Or of how you smiled to hear me sing  
 Of how Malindy sings?  
 Or when you required of me the sad songs of my fathers?  
 Or when your body tilted to the sway of new folk-music?  
 And your nimble feet tangled in the double-quick movement  
                   of my body-wriggling, syncopated dance?  
 Did I charge that you were sping me?  
 (Why should I  
 Or why should anyone?)  
 I only thought that you were questing Beauty.

Oh, friend, let's be kind to one another!  
 Let us be mutual teachers,  
 Mutually questing El Dorado;  
 Lovingly Aready;  
 These are wonderful hands that fashioned us!  
 Handle those cosmetics softly;  
 I would more beautify these curls,  
 This skin:  
 Would refine this brain.  
 Oh, chide me not if I meet Keats and Poe---  
 If I met Keats and Poe---  
 And love them!"

J. Henderson Brooks

Sterling Brown considers the thought that in several generations so much of the Negro's past struggles will be put aside that he will become emasculated, and unaware of his true heritage.

#### Children's Children

"When they hear  
 These songs, born of the travail of their sires,  
 Diamonds of song, deep buried beneath the weight  
 Of dark and heavy years;  
 They laugh.

When they hear  
 Saccharine melodies of loving and its fevers,



Soft-flowing lies of love everlasting;  
 Conjuring divinity out of gross flesh itch;  
 They sigh  
 And look goggle-eyes  
 At one another.

They have forgotten, they have never known,  
 Long days beneath the torrid Dixie sun  
 In Misser's rice-swamps;  
 The chopping of dried grass on the third go-round  
 In strangling cotton;  
 Wintry nights in mud-daubed makeshift huts,  
 With these songs, sole comfort.

They have forgotten  
 What had to be endured---

That they, babbling young ones,  
 With their paled faces, coppered lips,  
 And sleek hair coiled into Caucasian straightness,  
 Might drown the quiet voice of beauty  
 With sensuous stridency;

And might, on hearing these memoirs of their sires,  
 Giggle,  
 And nudge each other's satin clad  
 Sleek sides.....

Sterling Brown

Perhaps the greatest thing the early school of protest did was to encourage cultural equality and discourage melodramatic sentimentalism. Certainly it raised the general morale for more cultural pursuits and self-expression. <sup>234</sup>

About the time of the American entrance into the World War, the Negro poet as well as the Negro leader became conscious of his powers in American thought. He found suddenly that he had made something of a place for himself, and had before him the opportunity to make himself heard in national speech where for the most part he had chiefly been acknowledged when he had been militant and radical. He became tired of butting his head against stone walls; he took to heart the criticism offered from all angles, used it to better his cultural and political status and began to produce both quantity and quality in racial and emotional expression. The opposite schools

of Negro leadership united to an extent of which the white observers had not thought possible. Braithwaite seems to have led the Negro aesthetes into lines of "racial symbolism," returning to find the best in African and American heritage of the American Negro. The "racial-realists" were no less active, emphasizing the beauty and the wonder of folk-life, emancipated adjustment, nobility and pride in its line of descent from African cultures. Both the "racial-realists" and the "racial symbolists" emphasized the fact that as yet the American Negro has not on any large scale absorbed the deteriorating influences of Western civilization; somewhat emaculated and weakened, they are nevertheless the most virile race group we have in the Western World.

The World War gave the Negro a chance to prove himself to himself. As usual, the white population cared little whether he could prove himself to them or not; as usual, their chief concern was in getting something done well and quickly. But the Negro saw more than wages from the bosses of big ammunition and supply factories, something more than a call from his country, something more than a threadbare chance for martial equality. The World War period in Negro letters began the so-called Black Renaissance. This is nothing more nor less than a slogan-like title instituted by the "race-symbolists" wishing to catch the attention of both races in their endeavors to call the Negro back to the best and most stimulating of his past purity of strain and customized characteristics. The Black Renaissance was accepted as an inclusive and appealing title for the "race-realists" who wished to call the Negro to all that was fundamental in his growth, and in his then-present structure. The movement, like its interesting, catchy title was more inclusive than specialized. The World <sup>War</sup> Period and the movement of the Black Renaissance united the Negro; and both were aided by post-war conditions

which so frankly disillusioned many of the Negro's pet theories and expectations, sending him into a period of vigorous endeavor, renewed bitterness and new hopes based upon perhaps the most realistic footing he has yet attained.

One can discuss the modern Negro poets best through a discussion of their several types of work. They are more individual, less confined, less bound by the past than any heretofore mentioned. When they are bitter, as some of them are, it is with the immediate wrong not the past sorrow. We have not yet had enough time to understand them as leaders or spokesmen of their period. They are best studied through their work, and their work is best studied through the varying subject-matter it represents.

235 "Sweet music in the soul'---that is the Negro's boon from Heaven. 'We learn in suffering what we teach in song.'...Poetry, in the popular mind, is no more than the fringe of a people's solid achievement, being merely decorative to railroads and factories, the products of mines and fields, big engineering feats and immense populations. Yet of ancient civilizations, not necessarily inferior to our own, virtually all of moment that remains, or that passed on into the world's sum of good, might be included under the term poetry; namely, the people's heroic deeds and heroic ideals and heroic dreams, embodied in some form of beauty---words, color, or stone---all their material wealth, all that ministered merely to bodily comfort, or to vain pride, or to fleeting physical power, having perished and returned to that dust whence it sprang."

"This is the moral writ large in the ruins of a whole series of 'mighty' empires...!Where there is no vision, the people perish.' Vision, then, means all spiritual wealth, it means not merely religion in the restricted sense of that term, but that larger expression of the totality of life which we call poetry. Poetry is the witness of the vision, the embodiment of it. In its final analysis it is so much of a people's life as is not perishable. ....Such is the dignity, the importance, of poetry. A people's poetry, therefore, affords the most serious subject of study to those who would understand that people---that people's soul, that people's status, that people's potentialities. A people that is producing poetry is not perishing, but is astir with life, with vital impulses, with life-giving visions. It is a people that is becoming noteworthy....Poetry, it may be said to a practical age, is the most practical thing in every age of the world, in every country whatsoever. It is really the most efficient thing, to

use the watchword of our generation. It can build up, it can tear down, it can create revolutions....As it is the friend of all noble, aspiring, it is not less the foe of all that should not be, of custom that sins against justice, of tradition that wars against new-born truth, of all darkness that would extinguish the light, of all that is inhuman."

The Negro poet has written of everything from nature to racial protestation.<sup>236</sup> It is natural that he should write on nature; this leaning toward the phenomena of Spring, morning, night, bird-life, clouds, flowers, and the like, is what helps largely to make the Negro a poet rather than just a black Bernard Shaw spluttering atop a soap box. The Negro has grown a great deal in his capacity for the enjoyment of nature. He has come to regard nature and to react to its charms much as the white poet does. Perhaps the Negro poets specialize, or unconsciously limit themselves in their selection of nature subjects. He is not so apt to write of Northern May as of Southern April; he is not likely to see beauty in Cape Cod sand dunes, New Hampshire white pines, Wisconsin silos or Chicago bridges as is the white poet. But when he expresses himself through a treatment of the beauties of nature, the out-of-doors means a great deal to him and there is a strength in his consciousness of it that is decidedly alive and spontaneous and less excoigitating than the Nordic's reaction. The Negro rarely attains perfection of form in his lyrics of sea or sky, weather, and the like, but perhaps this is due to the fact that he has not yet lost the inherited inhibitions of his subaltern genera. He has <sup>not</sup> dropped the clay from his limbs, and he has not developed highly his recent study of intricate poetic forms.

Jean Toomer's November Cotton Flower is a subtle poem, half-allegorical in character. His Reapers is fragmentary and brittle.

#### November Cotton Flower

Bell-weevil's coming and the winter's cold  
 Made cotton-stalks look rusty seasons old,  
 And cotton, scarce as any Southern snow,  
 Was vanishing; the branch, so pinched and slow,  
 Failed in its function as the autumn rake;  
 Drouth, fighting spill, has caused the soil to take  
 All waters from the streams; dead birds were found  
 In wells a hundred feet below the ground---  
 Such was the season when the flower bloomed.  
 Old folk were startled, and it soon assumed  
 Significance. Superstition saw  
 Something it had never seen before;  
 Brown eyes that loved without a trace of fear,  
 Beauty so sudden for that time of year.                      Jean Toomer

Lula Lowe Weedin, the youngest of all modern Negro poets,<sup>237</sup> writes simply  
 and with a certain distinction short poems on abstract subjects.

Robin Red Breast

Little Robin Red Breast  
 I hear you sing your song.  
 I would love to have you put it into my little cage,  
 Into my little mouth.

The Little Dandelion

The dandelion stares  
 In the yellow sunlight.  
 How very still it is!  
 When it is old and grey,  
 I blow its white hair away,  
 And leave it with a bald head.

Lula Lowe Weedin

Langston Hughes's Poema D' Antonna is finely chiseled. His Sea Charm is  
 unusual.

Poema D' Antonna

The autumn leaves  
 Are too heavy with color.  
 The slender trees  
 On the Vulcan road  
 Are dressed in scarlet and gold  
 Like young courtesans  
 Waiting for their lovers.  
 But soon  
 The winter winds  
 Will strip their bodies bare  
 And then

The sharp, sleet-stung  
 Caresses of the cold  
 Will be their only  
 Love.

### Sea Charm

Sea charm  
 The sea's own children  
 Do not understand.  
 They know  
 But that the sea is strong  
 Like God's hand.  
 They know  
 But that the sea wind is sweet  
 Like God's breath,  
 And that the sea holds  
 A wide, deep death

Langston Hughes

In Rain Music Joseph S. Cotter, Jr. has caught something of the patter of drums and rain blending.

### Rain Music

On the dusty earth-drum  
 Beats the falling rain;  
 Now a whispered murmur,  
 Now a louder strain.

Slender, silvery drumsticks,  
 On an ancient drum,  
 Beat the mellow music  
 Bidding life to come.

Chords of earth awakened,  
 Notes of greening spring,  
 Rise and fall triumphant  
 Over every thing.

Slender, silvery drumsticks  
 Beat the long tattoo---  
 God, the great Musician,  
 Calling life anew.

Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.

Claude Mc Kay has written nature poetry with nostalgia and personal suffering running through its cadences. Flame Heart and Winter in the Country are perhaps his best nature poems. Notable contributions in this grouping are

Edward E. Hale's Sunrise, John T. Cox's Summer Breeze, Nathaniel J. Dett's An Soir, the Dogwood Blossoms of George Marion Mc Clellan, and James F. Mc Girt's Winter.

Though the Negro poet has given a great deal of attention to his racial problems, he has, however, been active in writing lyrical outbursts without racial distinctiveness. Braithwaite's Sig Vita, and his Ironic: LL. D. have a philosophy that has lost its racial tracings. Lula Lowe Weedin's Dance, Dunbar's To A Lady Playing the Harp, and his sonnet On An Old Book With Uncut Leaves, Mc Kay's Subway Wind, and the Shakespearean Aspiration, and the Beethoven of H. Cordelia Ray are poems that one does not define as belonging to any racial or ethnic grouping. Benjamin Brawley's Chaucer, and Lucy Ariel Williams's J'ai Paur, Alice Dunbar-Nelson's sonnet, I Had No Thought Of Violets Of Late, Countee Cullen's Two Poets, Dett's The Rubinstein Staccato Etude are impersonally musical, possessing lyrical qualities of abstraction without any trace of the color of their authors. The Consumptive, Two Things, Demand, and Sailor, by Langston Hughes, are also poems without any racial reaction traceable through them. Hughes's Suicide's Note is interesting; there are many poems in this same terse style.

#### Suicide's Note

The calm,  
Cool face of the river  
/ asked me for a kiss.

Langston Hughes

The poetical outbursts lack racial characteristics both objectively and subjectively. They are nature poems, they are not "blues;" they are best thought of as lyrical "outbursts," as spontaneous, lively, uninhibited "spurts" of lyricism. Occasionally there is the barest suggestion of personal suffering; usually not. Fenton Johnson has written Illion, a poem within this classi-

cation but with a hint of personal suffering, although the note of sorrow is not racial.

### Illion

I stood at Illion, and looked upon the world,  
 Beneath me rolled the ocean of my great desire.  
 The yesterdays that drift into a wasted mist,  
 And future hours that make my soul a living fire;  
 The love that once was mine descends into a vale,  
 Wherein the angels, man, and devil never trod  
 (So long I laugh! So long I laugh! So long I laugh!  
 That Jesus smiles, and Mary weeps, and I know God.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fenton Johnson

There is a distinctive classification of poems which express the individual's suffering and exaltation. In these poems the anguish or happiness may be the results of racial ties, but in most of these poems the emotion is too general to permit disclosure of causes. Incident, by Countee Cullen is one of these poems of individual suffering caused by ties of race; it protests, and it shows consciousness of race, but the suffering, and the reaction, is definitely personal and individual.

### Incident

(For Eric Walrond)

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
 Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,  
 I saw a Baltimorean  
 Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,  
 And he was no whit bigger,  
 And so I smiled, but he poked out  
 His tongue, and called me "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
 From May until December;  
 Of all the things that happened there  
 That's all that I remember.

Countee Cullen

Cullen's Yet Do I Marvel is a poem of less specific marking than Incident;



it is personal in its subjection to the indefinable, and it is more a poet's poem than a race's song. Claude McKay's On Broadway is personal, full of suffering, and indicates the effect of locale on the Negro; yet the poem is not racial. Without the knowledge that McKay is a Negro, one would have no way of knowing or seeing the increased nostalgic suffering because he is black. Some approach, but not closely, the rebellious spirit and grief of the Negro's poems of protest and his poems of yearning for a freedom more lasting. Such a poem is Sterling Brown's Salutamus.

#### Salutamus

'O gentlemen, the time of Life is short.' Henry IV

The bitterness of days like those we know;  
 Much, much we know, yet cannot understand  
 What was our crime that such a searing brand  
 Not of our choosing, keeps us hated so.  
 Despair and disappointment only grow,  
 Whatever seeds are planted from our hand,  
 What though some roads wind through a gladsome land?  
 It is a gloomy path that we must go.

And yet we know relief will come some day  
 For these seared breasts; and lads as brave again  
 Will plant and find a fairer crop than ours.  
 It must be due our hearts, our minds, our powers;  
 These are the beacons to blaze out the way.  
 We must plunge onward, onward, gentlemen.

Sterling Brown

Most of these poems are individual reactions to stimuli of special and peculiar nature not characteristically racial. The Heart of a Woman, by Georgia Douglas Johnson is a standard poem of this group.

#### The Heart of a Woman

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,  
 As a soft bird, lone winging, so restlessly on,  
 Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam  
 In the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night,  
 And enters some alien cage in its plight,  
 And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars  
 While it breaks, breaks, breaks, on the sheltering bars.

There are poems which depict the individual's suffering or exaltation in such a definite way that they are distinctive in form and name; these are the "blues." Originally of folk-origin, their form is widely used today by white as well as colored poets, but especially by the Negroes. Their content is as distinctive as their form. The form is always stable in pattern, even when possessing variations in that pattern. Each stanza opens with one long line, repeated, and a third line rhyming with the first two. Though sometimes, the second line in repetition deviates from the first, or is omitted altogether, the sighing, swinging rhythm and the smooth-running form is always discernible. From the standpoint of content, the "blues" song always has a mood; usually the feeling is one of despondency, but persons both black and white frequently laugh after the "blues" is sung or moaned. This type had its beginning in Negro cafes, cabarets, houses of prostitution, and the "gin mills." As a medium having distinct form, it has often been used to express a less formal, less searching grief. The "blues" has become increasingly popular with both races as a way of expressing the Nigritian "humors." In their native and segregated haunts, the Negroes use the "blues" form as a stimulus for sexual expression, and, as they say, "messin' aroun gen'ally." In both white and black-and-tan cabarets, whites and blacks alike employ the "blues" form in a more sophisticated and less obvious sexual excitation. Generally, the true "blues" has been an individual expression enjoyed by a group of listeners. This form is distinctly a racial product. Langston Hughes is fond of writing in this pattern. His most interesting pieces are A Ruined Gal, Po' Boy Blues, and Song for a Banjo Dance. Song for a Banjo Dance is highly varied from the folk-pattern, and A Ruined Gal is more than the usual form, but both are "blues." Po' Boy Blues follows the pattern closely.

Po' Boy Blues

When I was home de  
 Sunshine seemed like gold.  
 When I was home de  
 Sunshine seemed like gold.  
 Since I come up North de  
 Whole damn world's turn cold.

I was a good boy,  
 Never done no wrong.  
 Yes, I was a good boy,  
 Never done no wrong.  
 But this world is weary  
 An' de road is hard an' long.

I fell in love with  
 A gal I thought was kind.  
 I fell in love with  
 A gal I thought was kind.  
 She made me lose ma' money  
 An' almost lose ma' mind.

Weary, weary,  
 Weary early in de morn.  
 Weary, weary,  
 Early, early in de morn.  
 I's so weary  
 I wish I'd never been born.

Langston Hughes

The Negro's poems of love and passion deal in homely and courtly love, mental and sexual passions, the love of children for their parents, love between neighbors and friends, and idealized platonic affection. One does not recognize them as poems having a distinct racial background except when they employ dialect, patois, or metaphors, similes, allegory, and parable which are indicative of racial characteristics. Flower of Love, by Claude Mc Key, is not a racial poem; its lines flow with passion that is not to be defined by color.

Flower Of Love

The perfume of your body dulls my sense.  
 I want nor wine nor weed; your breath alone  
 Suffices. In this moment rare and tense  
 I worship : t your breast. The flower is blown,

The saffron petals tempt my amorous mouth,  
 The yellow heart is radiant now with dew  
 Soft-scented, redolent of my loved South;  
 O flower of love! I give myself to you.  
 Uncovered on your couch of figured green,  
 Here let us linger indivisible.  
 The portals of your sanctuary unseen  
 Receive my offering, yielding up to me.  
 Oh, with our love the night is warm and deep!  
 The air is sweet, my flower, and sweet the flute  
 Whose music lulls our burning brain to sleep,  
 While we lie loving, passionate and mute.

Claude Mc Kay

The Caprice of Countee Cullen has a color touch and an indication of love between black and white. Dead Fires by Jessie Fauset, is quite secure against interpretation. Langston Hughes's Poem: I Loved My Friend, is not racial in its simplicity.

Poem

I loved my friend.  
 He went away from me.  
 There's nothing more to say.  
 The poem ends,  
 Soft as it began---  
 I loved my friend.

Langston Hughes

Hughes is again the simple singer of love's passions in A Black Pierrot which, with the poem above and others similar, has done a great deal to offset the usual quaintness of the Negro love poems of the past; that Negro expressed himself in such poems as Fenton Johnson's Come Along, and Malindy. Nathaniel J. Dett has been restrained and yet impassioned in Album of a Heart. The poem, My Love, by Fenton Johnson, is a fine expression of the black man's love for his mate. Here, Fenton Johnson portrays in polished style the old-fashioned outlook on love held by many of the darkies of the Old South who had enjoyed some little contact with refinements through their service in "the big house."

My Love

Young gallant from the fairer race of men,  
 Have you a love as comely as the maid  
 To whom I chant my lyre-strung passion songs?  
 Has she large eyes that gleam from out the shade,  
 And voice as low as when Ohio stream  
 Glides silently along a summer dream?

Her face is golden, like the setting sun,  
 Her teeth as white as winter's virgin snow;  
 Her smile is like a gleam from Paradise,  
 Her laugh the sweetest music that I know;  
 And all the wide, wide world is but a mite,  
 When she, my darling elf, is in my sight.

Fenton Johnson

Countee Cullen's In Passant and Langston Hughes's Passing Love go hand in hand to express something of a new semi-racial philosophy concerning love and the passions; of course, this philosophy of "here to-day and gone to-morrow, let there be joy," is not true of the Negro alone, but it finds expression in his songs, his "blues," and his poems concerning love and life. The note is repeated again and again.

In Passant

If I was born a liar, lass,  
 And you were born a jade,  
 It's just the way things come to pass,  
 And men and mice are made.

I tell you love is like the dew  
 That trembles on the grass;  
 You'd not believe me, speaking true,  
 That love is wormwood, lass.

You swear no other lips but mine  
 Have clung like this to yours,  
 But love, I know how such strong wine  
 Draws bees and flies by scores.

I now voluptuously bask  
 Where Jack tomorrow will,  
 And while we kiss, I long to ask  
 "What girl goes up that hill?"

You love me for the liar I am;  
 I love the minx you are;  
 'Tis heaven we must bless or damn  
 That shaped us on a par.

Countee Cullen

Passing Love

Because you are to me a song  
I must not sing you over-long.

Because you are to me a prayer  
I can not say you everywhere.

Because you are to me a rose---  
You will not stay when summer goes.

Langston Hughes

Hughes makes use of the dramatically primitive elements in Negro love-making among the lower strata, in Beale Street Love.

Beale Street Love

Love  
Is a brown man's fist  
With hard knuckles  
Crushing the lips,  
Blackening the eyes,---  
Hit me again,  
Says Clorinda.

Langston Hughes

A peculiar form in Negro poetry is the poetical epitaph. Several have used it, but none as notably as Cullen. There are unwritten records of the Negro's humor at the expense of the supposed dignity and form of the white man's epitaphs,---parodies of epitaphs upon ancient tombstones are numerous. That they should occur is not strange, for the white man has been often droll and ludicrous in the writing of his epitaphs. The white man has himself often parodied the standard schemes of his inscriptions, and the Negro has followed his example with a relish characteristic of the Negro mind in jocose imagining. Countee Cullen delights in employing the crisp form of the epitaph for poetic expression. Many of his poetic epitaphs are humorous; most of them are philosophical and ironical, as well. This form for modern

poetry is, in a way, unique. The student interested in these epitaphs will find the following of interest: For A Lady I Know, For A Pessimist, For A Mouthy Woman, For Paul Laurence Dunbar, An Epitaph for Amy Lowell, For A Fool, For My Grandmother, For A Virgin, For An Evolutionist and His Opponent.

An Epitaph For Amy Lowell

She leans across a golden table,  
Confronts God with an eye,  
Still puzzled by the standard label  
All flesh bears: Made to die---  
And questions Him if He is able  
To reassure her why.

For A Mouthy Woman

God and the devil still are wrangling  
Which should have her, which repel;  
God wants no discord in his heaven;  
Satan has enough in hell.

For A Pessimist

He wore his coffin for a hat,  
Calamity his cape,  
While on his face a death's head sat  
And waved a bit of crape.

For A Lady I Know

She even thinks that up in heaven  
Her class lies late and snores,  
While poor black cherubs rise at seven  
To do celestial chores.

For A Lady I Know certainly contains protest, though in a mild form. Certain of the epitaphs are used for such purposes. They are not always humorous, nor always philosophical---rarely are they profound.

Poems decidedly humorous run from ballad to prose-poetry forms. The Negro laughs at others and at himself as well. In humorous jingles he remembers racial characterization as well as dialectic dialogue. Several social strata of whites still regard him as being most entertaining when "folksy." Many of the humor poems are racially distinctive; others are not at all. Sterling Brown's Slim Lands A Job is enjoyed for the racial characterization behind the situation as much as for the O. Henry development and ending of the situation itself. This is a modernized application of perspective upon the old-time "folksy" humor.

Slim Lands A Job

Poppa Greer happened  
Down Arkansaw way,  
An' ast for a job  
At Big Peet's cafe.

Big Peet was a six-foot  
Hard-boiled man  
Wid a forty-four dungeon  
In his han'.

"Nigger, kin you wait?"  
Is what Pete ast;  
Slim says, "Cap'n  
I'm jes' too fast."

Pete says "Dat's what  
I wants to hire;  
I got a slow nigger  
I'm gonna fire—"

Don't 'low no slow nigger  
Stay roun' hyeah,  
I plugs 'em wid my dungeon!"  
An' Slim says "Yeah?"

A noise rang out  
In a rush a man  
Wid a tray on his head  
An' one in each han'

Wid de silver in his mouf  
An' de soup plates in his vest  
Pullin' a red wagon  
Wid all de rest....



De man's said "Dere's  
 Dat slow coon now  
 Dat wuthless lazy waiter!  
 An' Slim says "How?"

An' Slim threw his gears in  
 Put it in high,  
 An' kissed his hand to Arkansaw,  
 Sweetheart.....good-bye!

Sterling Brown

Eligia, The Bad Boy, by W. T. Carmichael, is of the same class as Brown's poem above. It is perhaps more interesting from a standpoint of humor than from the standpoint of racial characterization, yet the characters stand out plainly.

Eligia, The Bad Boy

"Jest look at 'em---'e got on my dress"  
 "Sister Fannie is 'e got on yo' dres'?"  
 "Yes! an' 'e got on my shoes."  
 "Well, catch de little devil and beat 'em good,  
 If I jest could see 'em I 'ould beat 'em ter de'th."  
 "Well Isaac he got on my hat."  
 "Doggon'it; is 'e got yo' hat?"  
 "Yes! an' 'e got on my dres'."  
 "Well catch de little scamp an' gea yo' bes'."  
 If I jest could see 'em I 'ould beat 'em ter de'th."  
 "Confound'd 'e got on my specks."  
 "Don' tell me 'e got on yo' specks!"  
 "Yes! an' 'e got on my hat."  
 "Well catch de little scamp an' beat 'im good  
 If I jest could see 'em I 'ould beat 'em to de'th."

Carmichael's When The Different Churches Meet is more representative of the life of a group than of humor for itself.

When The Different Churches Meet

You talkin' 'bout de time in town,  
 It was in las' September:  
 W'en all de different churches 'roun'  
 Came hyeah wid ebery member.

An' man, dey done some singin' too,  
 I want to tell you dat;  
 It made Sis Hannah Bonner shout  
 Till she tored up her hat.

W. T. Carmichael

Such poems as Baby, by Hughes, and Amateur Night, by Charles E. Burbridge, are less racial than humorous. Baby is a vignette of life; Amateur Night is a less substantial expression.

Baby

Albert!  
 Hey, Albert!  
 Don't you play in dat road.  
     You see dem trucks  
     A goin' by.  
     One run ovah you  
     An' you die.  
 Albert, don't you play in dat road.  
Langston Hughes

Amateur Night

Shrill-voiced sopranos  
 Off-pitch pianos  
 Untrained dancers  
 Clumsy prancers,  
 Nothing's right.  
 It's amateur night.

Charles E. Burbridge

From time to time the Negro poet has written something on Industry, Trade, Commerce, Labor, and the Professions. This is a field of thought that does not appeal to many poets, to the Negro least of all. The reason for this lack of interest on his part may be that he has not yet recovered from his racial dislike for labor; but it may also be that he has seen nothing poetic in labor and commerce and the like. After all this decision of the material for poetry is a matter of opinion, and no more. Certainly these subjects are, to the average mind, far from poetical; yet true it is that only recently the Negro, as a racial unit, has come to believe in the dignity, necessity, and compensation of work. When the Negro poet does write of industry, trade, or labor, he is, however, affected by them in thought, if not in form. Fenton Johnson's The Plaint Of A Factory Child has poor form and style---as perhaps the treatment of the

subject would only too readily allow for---but it is significant, despite the fact that no definite color is attached to the child. Brown's Old King Cotton has a slight epic tonality about it; Brown looks back upon the past and sees the entire tableau at a glance.

The Plaint of a Factory Child

Mother, must I work all day?  
 All the day? Ay, all the day?  
 Must my little hands be torn?  
 And my heart bleed, all forlorn?  
 I am but a child of five,  
 And the street is all alive  
 With the tops and balls and toys,----  
 Pretty tops and balls and toys.

Day in, day out, I toil---toil!  
 And all that I know is toil;  
 Never laugh as others do,  
 Never cry as others do,  
 Never see the stars at night,  
 Nor the golden glow of sunlight,---  
 And all for but a silver coin,---  
 Just a worthless silver coin.

Would that death might come to me!  
 That blessed death might come to me,  
 And lead me to waters cool,  
 Lying in a tranquil pool,  
 Up there where the angels sing,  
 And the ivy tendrils cling  
 To the land of play and song,---  
 Fairy land of play and song.

Fenton Johnson

Old King Cotton

Ole King Cotton,  
 Ole King Cotton,  
 Keeps us slavin'  
 Till we's dead an' rotten.

Bosses us 'roun'  
 In his ornery way,  
 "Cotton needs pickin'"  
 De hell he say....

Starves us wid bumper crops,  
 Starves us wid po'  
 Chains de lean wolf  
 At our do'.

\* \* \*

Ef flood don't git us  
It's de damn bo' weevil  
Crap grass in de drought,  
Or somep'n else evil;

Ef we gets de bales  
When de hard luck's gone,  
Bill at de commissary  
Goes right on.

\* \* \*

Cotton, cotton,  
All we know;  
Plant cotton, hoe it,  
Baig it to grow;  
What good it do to us  
Gawd only know!

Sterling Brown

There are poems expressing extreme nostalgia and a raging Wanderlust. Perhaps industry and the trades have caused the Negro to go from the farm to the factory, from the woods to the city, from the river to the mill. Whatever his reason, more likely his frequent lack of reasons, the Negro has been in movement steadily since the days of reconstruction. <sup>238</sup> The World War gave him a chance at other places, other customs, other attitudes. He had always been adaptable to a change of scenes; after the World War he became migratory. As a defined type in American literature the Negro has been a wanderer. His shiftlessness, no matter the reasons for his exploitations has endeared him to white American novelists. He has long been "material" and "color" for their stories. Ill treatment, injustice, despair of rising in the community of his birth, all have led the Negro to wander in search of a better material outlay of opportunities. And coupled with this tendency, the Negro has always known nostalgia; he may not show this characteristic as

readily as others (the white man, though less emotionally expressive than the Negro, is prone to give way to homesickness), but he feels deeply the condition of severe aloneness. He is quickly changeable in his longings. Once in the city, he longs for his country hut; once back at the door of his shanty, he longs to submerge himself in the throngs of another and more thickly populated location. The Negro poems express tendencies toward wanderlust and nostalgia humorously, seriously, quaintly. Brown's Odyssey of Big Boy is a notable poem.

### LONG GONE

I laks yo' kin' of lovin',  
 Ain't never sought you wrong.  
 But it jes' ain't machal  
 For to stay here long;

It jes' ain' machal  
 Fo' a railroad man,  
 With a itch fo' travelin'  
 He can't understan'....

I looks at de rails,  
 An' I looks at de ties,  
 An' I hears an old freight  
 Puffin' up de rise.

An' at nights on my pallet,  
 When all is still,  
 I listens fo' de empties  
 Bumpin' up de hill;

When I oughte be quiet,  
 I is got a itch  
 Fo' to hear de whistle blow  
 Fo' de crossin' or de switch,

An' I knows de time's a-nearin'  
 When I got to ride,  
 Though it's homelike and happy  
 At yo' side.

You is done all you could do  
 To make me stay;  
 'Fain't no fault of yours I'se leavin'---  
 I'se jes dataway.

I don't know which way I'm travelin'—  
 Far or near,  
 All I knows for certain is  
 I cain't stay here.

Ain't no call et all, sweet woman,  
 Fo' to carry on—  
 Jes' my name an' jes' my habit  
 To be Long Gone....

Sterling Brown

The Tropics In New York

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root,  
 Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,  
 And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,  
 Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs.

Set in the window, bringing memories,  
 Of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,  
 And dewy dawns, and mystical blue skies  
 In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;  
 A wave of longing through my body crept,  
 And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,  
 I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

Claude Mc Kay

There are poems dealing with folk-lore not indigenous to the racial group as a whole. Down Upon The Palatine, Rome Is Dying, Frankie and Johnny, The Passing Indian, One Day We Played A Game, and When I Speak of Jamie are some of the poems dealing in the folk-lore of other races. The Negro has not gone out of his own racial folk-lore to any great extent. The few times he has handled the folk-material of other races, for the most part he has written upon characters and situations that have been treated over and over again. In dealing with foreign folk-matters, the Negro lacks initiative. Also, his adventures into extraneous material of any nature have been wary; he has employed the safe method of building upon old models. An unusual piece of this nature is The Legend of Tamborax and Elisabeth, a dramatic piece, and is about the best that

George Marion McClellan ever wrote. It is not too well sustained, but it lacks racial inhibitions of expression or psychology or philosophy. It is entertaining to modern readers, in spite of its character of Victorian style and mode of treatment.

The Legend of Tannhäuser and Elizabeth

\* \* \* \* \*

For one long year, with ever-changing scenes,  
Tannhäuser stayed within the Venusburg  
And thought that he was happy there. The change  
In shifting scenes, the wild bacchantes, and  
The nymphs in mimic war, in graceful dance,  
Afforded for his ever-restless soul  
The wild excitement which he craved. And for  
His softer moods the chording voices of  
The sirens satisfied. He breathed the scent  
Of flowers wondrous sweet, and watched at times  
Their rosy hues. With Venus long he sat  
At other times, and more and more she wove  
Her spells which bound him fast to her....

\* \* \* \* \*

There are poems dealing in classical, romantic, and Biblical subject-matter. The Negro poet is at home with Biblical legend. He possesses the same spirit of homely application to Biblical lore that Marc Connelly depicted in Green Pastures, the ultimate personification of the religious mind of the Negro-in-prototype. Subjects run along with the more usual treatments, such as Alex Rogers's Why Adam Sinned, to the lyrical and well sustained Vision of Lazarus by Fenton Johnson. The Band of Gideon, O Little David, Play On Your Harp, Simon the Cyrenian Speaks, Judas Iscariot, and Goliath of Gath are representative titles of poems within this class. <sup>240</sup> Poems of this class are, on the whole, not nearly so interesting as the spirituals of the folk-period. Cullen's Simon the Cyrenian Speaks is perhaps notable in that the note of protest is well expressed.

The Negro poets have not found a great deal of inspiration from the classics, but that material which they have chosen is rather well treated.

From Wheatley's Ode To Mantua, and Niobe in Distress, through H. Cordelia Ray's sonnet on Niobe, Raphael, Shakespeare, and Milton, and Fenton Johnson's Marathon Runners, to Cullen's To Endymion, the expression has been rather meritorious.

### To Endymion

Endymion, your star is steadfast now,  
 Beyond aspersion's power to glitter down;  
 There is no redder blossom on the bough  
 Of song, no richer jewel in her crown;  
 Long shall she stammer forth a broken note,  
 (Striving with how improvident a tongue)  
 Before the ardor of another throat  
 Transcends the jubilate you have sung.

High as the star of that last poignant cry  
 Death could not stifle in the wasted frame,  
 You know at length the bright immortal lie  
 Time gives to those detractors of your name,  
 And see, from where you and Diana rise,  
 Your humble epitaph---how misapplied!

Countee Cullen

The Negro has grown ever fonder of the romantic subjects in the real or fictitious life of other lands as well as his own. From the German of Umland (J. W. Johnson), Del Cascar (W. S. Braithwaite), Life-long, Poor Browning (Anne Spencer), Lancelot's Defiance (Fenton Johnson) show the Negro's manner of handling the romantic material, usually by lyrical rather than a dramatic treatment.

### Lancelot

The fruit of the orchard is over-ripe, Elaine,  
 And leaves are crisping on the garden wall.  
 Leaves on the garden path are wet and rain  
 Drips from the low shrubs with a steady fall.

It is long, so long since I was here, Elaine,  
 Moles have gnawed the rose tree at its roots;  
 You did not think that I would come again,  
 Least of all in the day of falling fruit.

Arna Bontemps



The Vision of Lazarus has been given an interesting, Biblical, and romantic treatment combined. It is a long narrative poem in blank verse, typical of the few but fairly noble efforts of black singers toward verse forms of prolonged and stately measures. It is not wholly fine in that parts of it are so obviously strained and the results of great effort.

There are a few poems dealing with Afro-American folk-lore, concerning animal tales, proverbs, superstitions, and like matter. Once in America, the Negro did not fail to adapt himself to his new environment as quickly as possible, perhaps more quickly than any other race might have done under similar circumstances. But he did not forget easily the heritage of African folk-lore; to this store of knowledge he added newly-learned fables, and one modified the crisp characteristics of the other. The field of Afro-American folk-lore, of complimentary stimuli has not appealed to the Negro poet as the wealth of inherited intangibilities coming straight from Africa, untouched and unlimited by American interpretative renditions of the original significance. Mistah Witch, Ethiopia, The Haunted Oak, De Coniah Man, are perhaps the outstanding poems of this class with Langston Hughes's Gal's Cry For A Doin' Lover one of the very best. <sup>241</sup>

There are many poems concerned with racial habitation and locale, and racial characterization. Racial habitation and locale in poetry concern the Negro in Harlem, on the plantation, levees, in Europe, in Africa, ---wherever he has gone and left impressions, wherever he has gone and received impressions and transmitted them to his thought and his poetry. Sambo's Trip to Yankee Land (F. J. Lee), extends the thought that freedom and privilege may be found at home as well as away from home---perhaps sooner in one's native locality if the proper adjustment is made. This is the answer to the "greener hill argument" often

used by Negroes when in an unsettled, unhappy state. Hughes's Aesthete In Harlem expresses the idea that segregation, instigated by one's race or kind does not necessarily result in independence or happiness.

Aesthete In Harlem

Strange,  
That in this nigger place,  
I should meet life face to face  
When for years, I had been seeking  
Life in places gentler speaking  
Until I came to this near street  
And found life---stepping on my feet!

Langston Hughes

Railroad Avenue (Hughes) is a faithful picture done quickly and without effort to delete. Jean Toomer's Georgia Dusk concerns not only locale but race characterization and nature as well. Mc Kay's Rest In Peace treats of the city's hold upon the man of inferior social economic position, as well as giving vent to a protest against this condition and hinting at the significance of death. In Hughes's Harlem Night Club one feels locale forcibly. In Fenton Johnson's Harlem: The Black City one finds political protest. In Tuskagee, Leslie Pinckney Hill uses locale and habitation as a reminder of possibilities of peace for both races if certain things are held to.

Tuskagee

Wherefore this busy labor without rest?  
Is it an idle dream to which we cling,  
Here where a thousand dusky toilers sing  
Unto the world their hope? "Build we our best,  
By hand and thought," they cry, "although unblessed."  
So the great engines throb, and anvils ring,  
And so the thought is wedded to the thing;  
But what shall be the end, and what the test?  
Dear God, we dare not answer, we can see  
Not many steps ahead, but this we know---  
If all our toilsome building is in vain,  
Availing not to set our manhood free,  
If envious hate roots out the seed we sow,  
The South will wear eternally a stain.

Leslie Pinckney Hill

Poems dealing in racial characterization delineate Negro manners, customs, Negro types and prototypes, and stereotypes, race psychology as seen through characters and characteristic expressions, and pictures of the Negro in the ante-bellum and plantation day, and of the "New Negro". The "old-time" Negro is portrayed in the following poems: At Candle-Lightin' Time (Paul Laurence Dunbar), MOON, (Dunbar), Uncle Eph's Banjo Song (J. E. Campbell) Oriflame (Jessie Fauset), Annoyance (W. T. Carmichael), Home Instruction (Carmichael), Annat Chloes's Lullaby (D. W. Davis), Mah Mamma (Fenton Johnson). Something of the Negro of the Transition Period is shown in the following poems: Back From School and Leavin' Church, (John T. Cox), Examinations of Luke Johnson (Sterling Brown), The Washer Woman (Otto Leland Bohanan), The Rain Song (Alex Rogers), Calling the Doctor (J. W. Holloway) Colera (Red) (Countee Cullen). The modern, more sophisticated Negro, the "New Negro" is seen in these: Bottled (Helene Johnson), Laughers (Langston Hughes), To Sallie, Walking (Sterling Brown), Jazzonia, To A Black Dancer In The Little Savoy, Closing Time, Sport, To Midnight Man At La Roy's (Langston Hughes). These poems concerned with racial characterization speak for themselves.

### MOON

Shadder in de valley  
 Sunlight on de hill,  
 Sut'ry wish dat locus'  
 Knowed how to be still.  
 Don't de heat already  
 Mak a body hum,  
 'Dout dat insec' sayin'  
 Nottah days to come?

Fiel' 's a shinin' yaller  
 Wid de bendin' grain,  
 Guinea hen a callin'  
 How's de time fu' rain;  
 Shet yo' mouf, you rascal,  
 Wha's de use to cry?  
 You do' see no rain clouds  
 Up dah in de sky.

Dis hyeah sweat's been po'in'  
 Down my face sence dawn;  
 Ain't hit time we's hyeahin'  
 Dat ah diannah ho'n?  
 Go on, Ben an' Jaspah,  
 Lif' yo' feet an' fly,  
 Hit out fu' de shadder  
 Fo' I drap an' die.

Hongry, laud a' nussy,  
 Hongry as a baiah,  
 Seems lak I hyeah diannah  
 Callin' evahuhaih;  
 Daih's de ho'n a blowin'  
 Let dat cradle swing,  
 One no' sweep, den da'kies,  
 Beat me to de spring.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

#### Amoyance

Hush! hyeah mighty singin'  
 Over on de hill,  
 Goodness, wish you' stop yo' fuss  
 An' learn to be still.

Singin' soundin' mighty good  
 Wish I could be dere,  
 Sit down dere an' hush yo' mouth,  
 An' plat up yo' hair.

You can't hyeah me w'en I talk,  
 Can't you keep still some?  
 W'en I git through wid you Mis',  
 You will go frum hom'.

I can't hyeah a single thing,  
 Dad goes on eroun,  
 Fur you makin' all yo' noise,  
 You are out 'er bou'n'.

Ebery night you sit eroun,  
 Hollerin' like a fool;  
 I's goin' buy a book fur you,  
 An' send you to school.

I don't want yer growin up  
 So much like a nigger;  
 You must le'rn to read an' write,  
 Cypher, add, an' figger.

Dere are nuff o' peoples now,  
 Who can't read an' write;  
 You mus' stop yo' nigger ways,  
 An' act like you white.

Waverley Turner Carmichael

### Leaving Church

Martha, Martha, what you at?  
 Now, you jes' put on dat hat!  
 You is tryin' to show you'self,  
 Jes' er friskin' right an' lef':  
 Gal, who tole you you could co't?  
 I'm gwine to beat you till you bleat.  
 Make dat boy turn loose yo' han':  
 Don't scrape yo' footses in dat san':  
 Come up here, dat's what you do.  
 I'll be boy enough for you!

Straighten dat face, an' git ahead.  
 An' I don't want one more word said.  
 You're no woman! Don't you think!  
 Jes' started in yo' teens, you slink!  
 If yo' pa knowed all how you ask,  
 He sho' would frail yo' stubborn back.  
 I expect I oughter beat you, too,  
 I done hot, all through an' through.  
 Think you gwine hab yo way?  
 Habber hab it in my day!

Now, break me dat switch, right dar near.  
 Hurry! hurry! don't you hear?  
 I jes' wish I had a stick.  
 Gal, I'd knock yo' head off quick!  
 Stop dat lockin' back at me!  
 I wish 'twas so you couldn't see.  
 "Oh, mummy, don't whip me dis time,"  
 Shat up dar, stop yo' cryin'.  
 Ain't gwine hab dat fuss from you;  
 I know what I want to do.

John T. Cox

### Colors

(Red)

She went to buy a brand new hat,  
 And she was ugly, black, and fat:  
 "This red becomes you well," they said,  
 And perched it high upon her head.  
 And then they laughed behind her back  
 To see it glow against the black.  
 She paid for it with regal mien,  
 And walked out proud as any queen.

Countee Cullen

Bottled

Upstairs on the third floor  
 Of the 135th Street Library  
 In Harlem, I saw a little  
 Bottle of sand, brown sand,  
 Just like the kids make pies  
 Out of down at the beach.  
 But the label said: "This  
 Sand was taken from the Sahara Desert."  
 Imagine that! The Sahara Desert!  
 Some bozo's been all the way to Africa to get some sand.

And yesterday on Seventh Avenue  
 I saw a darky dressed fit to kill  
 In yellow gloves and swallow tail coat  
 And swirling a cane. And everyone  
 Was laughing at him. Me too,  
 At first, till I saw his face  
 When he stopped to hear a  
 Organ grinder grind out some jass.  
 Boy! you should have seen that darky's face!  
 It just shone. Gee, he was happy!  
 And he began to dance. No  
 Charleston or Black Bottom for him.  
 No sir. He danced just as dignified  
 And slow. No, but slow, either.  
 Call it slow, not with all the cuttin' up he did.  
 You would a died to see him.  
 The crowd kept yellin' but he didn't hear,  
 Just kept on dancing and twirlin' that cane  
 And yellin' out loud every once in a while.  
 I know the crowd thought he was coo-coo.  
 But say, I was where I could see his face,  
 And somehow, I could see him dancing in a jungle,  
 A real honest-to-cripe jungle, and he wouldn't have on them  
 Trick clothes---those yaller shoes and yaller gloves  
 And swallow-tail coat. He wouldn't have on nothin'.  
 And he wouldn't be carrying no cane. He'd be carrying  
 A spear with a sharp fine point  
 Like the bayonets we had "over there."  
 And the end of it would be dipped in some kind of  
 Hoo-doo poison and he'd be dancin' black and naked and  
 gleaming.  
 And he'd have rings in his ears and in his nose  
 And bracelets and necklaces of elephant's teeth.  
 Gee, I bet he'd be beautiful then, all right.  
 No one would laugh at him then, I bet.  
 Say! that man that took the sand from the Sahara Desert  
 And put it in a bottle on a shelf in the library!  
 That's what they done to this shine, ain't it? Bottled him.  
 Trick shoes, trick coat, trick cane, trick everything---  
 all glass---  
 But inside---  
 Gee, that poor shine!

That the Negro now has a unitary racial philosophy is doubtful.

He may have had one when he was unified through the opiate influences of slavery; he may have had one, so-called, when he was a wanderer and a fugitive from injustices during Reconstruction Era. He may still have something in the way of a philosophy unwritten and without formula; but if there does exist a racial philosophy in use at this time, it is difficult to find it in more than formative snatches. These bits and parts of something racially serene or upset, complacent and resigned or embittered, give one an insight into the Negro's vision or conception of ultimate reality, a theoretical accounting for causation, a quaint angle of the study of natural objects and phenomena, and the study of principles of human action and conduct. Many of the poems of this class are the concepts of individuals rather than those of a racial grouping, but nearly all have something of racial character. These "philosophical" poems deal in the theories of ambition, of stoical calm, and lazy indifference to the obstacles in life, the "rolling stone" idea, of desire for Epicurean amenities, of a state of being that is decidedly self-contained and confident. Occasionally, a poem dealing in these so-called philosophical attitudes builds upon homely but genuine philosophy; more often, these "metaphysical" poems contain brief glimpses of minds eager to reach out into the theoretical and sublime stages of life and thought, only to be held back by the natural weakness of the fleshly bodies in which they reside, ---bodies incapable of nourishing the mind in flight because of racially incurred inhibitions, deficiencies born of prejudicial judgments from others, and a definite ethnic stability. In this class, Northbound by Lucy Ariel Williams, hints at what many Negroes have for a long while held to be truth: that the North was the land of opportunities, the land of freedom, equality, money, and the rest. "Go North" became a philosophy for the cure of all ills, a panacea, which, like

most cure-alls, failed to work for all. Song For A Dark Girl (Hughes) represents the feeling of many thousands of Negroes have that the South-land is a land of misery and oppression. This belief quickly becomes a nucleus for philosophical reckoning. Isolation, By Georgia Douglas Johnson, says that the races will never be able to bridge the gulf and maintain upkeep on the bridge. John T. Cox, in Service, sends out a message advocating constructive building with the idea of having the black man forget his oppressive wrongs. F. J. Lee's Forget expresses much the same thought, adding that there is power in forgetting. Braithwaite would go within the soul for comfort; his Turn Me To My Yellow Leaves explains his attitude. Hughes's Brass Spittoons represents the inferior Negro position in life as a cleaner-after-others---but at least one can offer God a clean spittoon, perfection being perfection, even in pot-scraping. His Dream Variation is personal and lyrical and indefinitely beautiful in its wish to enjoy life to the full. Plantation Prayer (Fenton Johnson) is very definitely philosophical in its "No othah joy, O Lawd, but jes' to Wu'k, no othah joy, but jes' to shout fu' you." Comfort Ye My People, by J. H. Brooks, Saturday Night and Youth, both by Hughes, are, with Song For A Dark Girl, definite expressions of racial philosophy.

### Song For A Dark Girl

Way Down South in Dixie  
 (Break the heart of me)  
 They hung my black lover  
 To a cross roads tree.

Way Down South in Dixie  
 (Bruised body high in air)  
 I asked the white Lord Jesus  
 What was the use of prayer.

Way Down South in Dixie  
 (Break the heart of me)  
 Love is a naked shadow  
 On a gnarled and naked tree.

Langston Hughes



Saturday Night

Play it once.  
 O, play some more.  
 Charlie is a gambler  
 An' Sadie is a whore.  
     A glass o' whiskey  
     An' a glass o' gin:  
 Strut, Mr. Charlie,  
     Till de dawn comes in.  
 Pawn your watch  
 An' diamond ring.  
 Git a quart o' lick'er.  
 Let's shake dat thing!  
     Skoo-de-dad! De-dad!  
     Doo-doo-doo!  
     Won't be nothin' left  
     When de worms get through  
     An' you's a long time dead  
     When you is  
     Dead, too.  
 So beat dat drum, boy!  
 Shout dat song:  
 Shake 'em up an' shake 'em up  
 All night long.  
     Hey! Hey!  
     Ho....Hum!  
     Do it, Mr Charlie,  
     Till de red dawn come.

Langston Hughes

Comfort Is My People

A voice cries from the wilderness, saying,  
 "How must you try yourselves:  
 The gods are weary.....tired of merely praying."

We have not tried ourselves.  
 We are our lone damnation,  
 And our own salvation.

Arise; let us be trying ourselves.

J. Henderson Brooks

The Negro furnishes a wonderful opportunity for study in his out-  
 look on religion.<sup>242</sup> Certain of his poems deal with the belief and disbelief  
 of the Negro, his solace in religion, his hope for a better life in the "beyond,"

---a life envisaged through the Negro's interpretation of the subject-matter, form, general appeal, and the indefinable "promise" of the New World, white man's, catholic and protestant orthodoxy. The Negro's strong anthropomorphism aids him in creating and contemplating a distant land of milk and honey, continual fish-fries, gayety, harps hanging on every sign post on the streets of gold, spotless, airy rooms flooded with sunlight and the scent of clover bloom, and innumerable hours for resting. The Negro's eagerness and capacity for learning, on the other hand, has allowed him to enter somewhat the lands of a higher conception of God's kingdom. Then among Negroes are atheists, jokers, laughers, just as one finds in any racial unit. These phenomena appear in Negro poetry. In Gods, Cullen pours out his two-sided, battling nature. The Creation and Go Down Death, from God's Trombones by J. W. Johnson show the Negro's mind in its fertile ability of personification. To Our Friends (L. B. Watkins) and A Song of Thanks (E. S. Jones) are distinctive. Gilead (Georgia Douglas Johnson) and the Sonnet (And Thou art One) (Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.) offer notes from the past anthropomorphism. Brown's Sister Lou is indicative of the same power of imagination felt in Go Down Death, Connely's Green Pastures, and many of the oldest spirituals. Cullen, in She of the Dancing Feet Sings, sings the impracticability of heaven as the proper place for everyone who wants something better in the "beyond."

#### Sister Lou

Honey  
 When de man  
 Calls out de last train  
 You're gonna ride,  
 Tell him howdy.

Gather up yo' basket  
 An' yo' knittin' an' yo' things,  
 An' go on up an' visit  
 Wid frien Jesus fo' a spell.

Show Marfa

How to make yo' greengrape jellies  
An' give po' Lazarus  
A passel of them Golden Biscuits.

Scald some meal

Fo' some rightdown good spoonbread  
Fo' li'l box-plunkin David.

An' sit aroun'

An' tell all them Hebrew Chillen  
All yo' stories.

Honey

Don't be feared of them pearly gates,  
Don't go round to de back,  
No more dataway  
Not evah no no'.

Let Michael tote yo' burden

An' yo' pocketbook an' evahthing  
'Cept yo' Bible,  
While Gabriel blows soap'n  
Solemn but loudsome  
On dat horn of his'n.

Honey

Go straight on to de Big House.  
An' speak to yo' God  
Widout no fear an' tremblin'.

Then sit down

An' pass de time of day awhile.

Give a good talkin' to

To yo' favorite 'Postle Peter,  
An' rub the po' head  
Of mixed up Judas,  
An' joke a while with Jonah.

Then when you gits de chance,

Always remember yo' raisin',  
Let 'em know youse tired,  
Jest a mite tired.

Jesus will find yo' bed fo' you

Won't no servant evah bother wid yo' room.  
Jesus will lead you  
To a room wid windows  
Openin' on cherry trees an' plum trees  
Bloomin' everlastin'.

An' dat will be yo's

Fo' keeps.

Den take yo' time....  
Honey, take yo' blessed time.

Sterling Brown

Sba Of The Dancing Feet Singa; (To Oattie Graham)

"And what would I do in heaven, pray,  
Me with my dancing feet,  
And limbs like apple boughs that sway  
When the gusty rain winds beat?

And how would I thrive in a perfect place  
Where dancing would be sin,  
With not a man to love my face  
Nor an arm to hold me in?

The seraphs and the cherubin  
Would be too proud to bend  
To sing the faery tunes that brim  
My heart from end to end.

The wistful angels down in hell  
Will smile to see my face,  
And understand, because they fell  
From that all perfect place.

Countee Cullen

It is significant that the Negro has never had in his religion any great horror of death.

The Negro offers poems based upon the spiritual and poetical significance of death. Many of the more recent poets have gone beyond the theological interpretations and views upon death to become the authors of concepts highly lyrical in form. They contemplate death as a physical and psychological passing from one to the other, from manifestations here to others beyond. This concept tolerates, but does not dwell upon the anthropomorphism of the realists. This concept is not easily limited, being in turn theo-credible and then partially abstract, consistently many things, multifariously pagan, and purely individual, and spiritually unassigned to any creed or belief.

Mammy

I'm waiting for my mammy,----  
She is Death.

Say it very softly,---  
Say it very slowly if you choose.

I'm waiting for my mammy,----  
She is Death.

Langston Hughes

To A Skull

Ghastly, ghoulish, grinning skull  
Toothless, eyeless, hollow, dull,  
Why your smirk and empty smile  
As the hours away you while?  
Has the earth become such bore  
That it pleases nevermore?  
Whence your joy through sun and rain?  
Is it because of loss of pain?  
Have you learned what men learn not  
That earth's substance turns to rot?  
After learning now you scan  
Vain endeavors o man by man?

Joshua Henry Jones, Jr.

Song For A Love That Is Dead

Toil the bell and cover  
Love from head to feet;  
Turn him over, over,  
In his winding sheet.

Burn grief in the altar;  
Touch God's heart on high;  
Measure great Gibraltar  
By a butterfly.

In the stillness, ponder  
Ways which do not sever;  
In deep silence, wonder  
What endures forever.

J. Henderson Brooks

There are certain poems based on old spirituals. In a way the spirituals afford a background for the art that has appeared in the poems of to-day, especially in giving emotional rhythm to the poet from birth. <sup>245</sup> Poems based on spirituals bear witness to the Negro's untutored gift for poetasting. They

remind one of the days when Negro poets were unknown, generally, and their work was unrecorded. Some of the poems based upon spirituals take their likeness to them from the thought of the piece, others are akin in rhythm, and many in metre and repetition. These are reminders of struggles from the past, the worth of which is felt by connoisseurs and specialists in Negro poetry.

### The Big Bell In Zion

Come, children, hear the joyful sound,  
Ding, Dong, Ding.  
Go spread the glad news all around,  
Ding, Dong, Ding.

### Chorus

Oh, the big bell's tollin' up in Zion,  
The big bell's tollin' up in Zion  
The big bell's tollin' up in Zion,  
Ding, Dong, Ding.

Theodore Henry Shackelford

### Shout, My Brother, Shout

Working in the cornfields for the Master,  
Bringing in the sheaves to stack the garner,  
Shout, my brother! Shout!  
Sleeping in the Master's Glory cabin,  
Dreaming of the mighty Bridegroom's coming,  
Shout, my sister! Shout!

Hoing cotton till day of Judgment,  
We will reign with God in Heaven  
Shout, my brother! Shout!  
Turning cheek to overseer and tyrant  
We will walk the fields of God's plantation  
Shout, my sister! Shout!

Fenton Johnson

Poems expressing race consciousness concern the Negro's love for the race, a feeling of belonging exclusively to this race, a desire to see this race improve its status in the world, and any generalized expression of racial injustice. Poets writing with the race consciousness may or may not feel

antagonistic toward the whites.<sup>244</sup> The race consciousness feeling means universal Negro consciousness, more than any other one thing. It is a consciousness of the Negro's need and potentialities more than it is a state of being strictly racially racial.<sup>245</sup> The color line in Europe becomes more closely the color line in America. All quickened means of communication bring more of an intellectual homogeneity to the leadership groups of all countries. Race consciousness, then, is knowing the race life of other countries besides one's own.<sup>246</sup> Self-respect as a group factor is found in this modern outlook of race consciousness.<sup>247</sup> Race consciousness has in mind the "Black Renaissance" of America, a movement that lacks apology for its being. New leaders, creating new factors for advancement, and new factors, creating new leaders, mean race consciousness in such a way that the black man is proud of his beauty, his learning, his heritage, his future, his ability to survive in the American scene.<sup>248</sup> Everywhere Negroes are beginning to realize that what American blacks have done may be done for others in various countries. Africa watches America; this movement, or feeling, or wish for strength in a brotherhood grows, becomes more and more conscious on everyone's part and creeps out in the political, news, and poetic writing of black writers everywhere.

#### My Race

My life were lost, if I should keep  
 A hope forlorn and gloomy face,  
 And brood upon my ills, and weep  
 And moan the travail of my race.

Who are my brothers? Only those  
 Who wear my own complexion swart?  
 Ah, no, but all through whom there flows  
 The blood-stream of a manly heart.

Wherever the light of dreams is shed,  
 And faith and love to toil are bound,  
 There will I stay to break my bread,  
 For there my kinsmen will be found.

Leslie Pinckney Hill

The Gulf

How they are gone to sunset lands who told  
 Of how the slave and master loved each other;  
 And after them is rising up another  
 Who knows not Sambo, crowned in days of old.  
 Between us cleaves a chasm, deep and cold,  
 In spite of humanist and Christian brother.  
 America becomes our mutual mother;  
 How dare we keep a hate, so rank and bold?  
 The gulf wears deep and wider with the years;  
 (A cruel truth, perhaps too true to utter)  
 Between us loom unutterable fears.  
 God of our Fathers, if we carp and matter  
 Against the ways of love; though we forget,  
 Stay Thou nearby—oh, we shall need Thee yet.

J. Henderson Brooks

The Caucasian

Kinsmen of Alexander and the Christ,  
 He owns the world and is the pet of God.  
 He knows the pigment of a pumpkin rind  
 Can make the pumpkin worthy. They who plod;  
 Dark aliens through this world must acquiesce  
 But they could tell him how his white-hot fire  
 Of persecution smelts them from the dross,  
 And burns their base content to high desire.

J. Henderson Brooks

To My Fairfax Brethren

Though I score you with my best,  
 Treble circumstance  
 Must confirm the verdict, lest  
 It be laid to chance.

Insufficient that I match you  
 Every coin you flip;  
 Your demand is that I catch you  
 Squarely on the hip.

Should I wear my wreaths a bit  
 Rakishly and proud,  
 I have bought my right to it;  
 Let it be allowed.

Countee Cullen

Shadow

Silhouette  
 On the face of the moon  
 Am I.



A dark shadow in the light.  
 A silhouette am I  
 On the face of the moon  
 Lacking color  
 Or vivid brightness  
 But defined all the clearer  
 Because  
 I am dark,  
 Black on the face of the moon.  
 A shadow am I  
 Growing in the light,  
 Not understood as is the day,  
 Not more easily seen  
 Because  
 I am a shadow in the light.

Richard Bruce

### My People

The night is beautiful,  
 So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,  
 So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
 Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

Langston Hughes

Joseph S. Cotter, Jr., writing Is It Because I Am Black? expresses his half-wondering belief that his color dominates the minds of those about him, especially the thoughts of his white friends. Hughes, in The Jester, sobs a modern sorrow-song for his people. The form of G. W. Mc Corkle's A Plea For Racial Purity is poor, but not too great an obstacle in the way of the significant strength of the thought. Shadow is unusual. The Black Madonna is so completely itself; Mr. Rice has expressed race consciousness even above religion. In The Gulf, The Caucasian, and To My Fairer Brethren, one sees the "white side" of race consciousness. In a way, Black Majesty is an answer to many questions concerning the Negro's future.

To some extent black poets are conscious of the love and friendship between black and white; for the most part, they have found their interests in the love of their kind for kind. But for those who "have crossed the line" in friendship and in love, the Negro poets have something to say occasionally, especially if the poet writing is himself partly white. On the whole, though, he has had to be more occupied with the joys and griefs occasioned by the turbulent social phenomena accompanying "miscegenation." Whenever he has written of the love between opposite races, his touch has been delicate, yet distinctive. Not infrequently, he has sounded notes of rebellion and protest; now and then, as in Cullen's Tableau, the black poet has been an interested spectator more than an argumentative misanthrope. Cotter, Jr. has a novel attitude in The Deserter.

#### Uncle Jim

"White folks is white," says uncle Jim;  
 "A platitude," I sneer;  
 And then I tell him so is milk,  
 And the froth upon his beer.

His heart welled up with bitterness,  
 He smokes his pungent pipe,  
 And nods at me as if to say,  
 "Young fool, you'll soon be ripe."

I have a friend who eats his heart  
 Away with grief of mine,  
 Who drinks my joy as tipplers drain  
 Deep goblets filled with wine.

I wonder why here at his side,  
 Face-in-the-grass with him,  
 My mind should stray the Grecian urn  
 To muse on uncle Jim.

Countee Cullen

#### Tableau

Locked arm in arm they cross the way,  
 The black boy and the white,  
 The golden splendor of the day,  
 The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare,  
 And here the fair folk talk,  
 Indignant that these two should dare  
 In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and word  
 They pass, and see no wonder  
 That lightning brilliant as a sword  
 Should blaze the path of thunder.

Countee Cullen

There are poems forming a distinct class concerning the joys and tragedies of mulattoism---expressing the tangles of psychological, philosophical, and sociological griefs and happiness of the eighth, quarter, half-breed, the octroon, quadroon, half-white, near-white, "pinkie"---all persons of color, whatever the degree, having their status, so far as the widespread, representative population of America is concerned, legally, socially, and, very often, economically, within the Negro race. <sup>249</sup>

### The Mulatto To His Critics

Ashamed of my race?  
 And of what race am I?  
 I am many in one.  
 Through my veins there flows the blood  
 Of red man, black man, Briton, Celt, and Sect,  
 In warring clash and tumultuous riot.  
 I welcome all.  
 But love the blood of the kindly race  
 That swarthes my skin, crinkles my hair,  
 And puts sweet music into my soul.

J. S. Cotter, Jr.

### Near White

Ambiguous of race they stand,  
 By one disowned, scorned of another,  
 Not knowing where to stretch a hand,  
 And cry, "My sister," or "My brother."

Countee Cullen

### Color (The Unknown Color)

I've often heard my mother say,  
 When great winds blew across the day,

And, cuddled close and out of sight,  
 The young pigs squealed with sudden fright  
 Like something speared or javelined,  
 "Poor little pigs, they see the wind."

Countee Cullen

Cross

My old man is a white old man  
 And my old mother's black.  
 If ever I cursed my white old man  
 I take my curses back.

If ever I cursed my black old mother  
 And wished she were in Hell,  
 I'm sorry for that evil wish  
 And now I wish her well.

My old man died in a fine big house.  
 My ma died in a shack.  
 I wonder where I'm gonna die,  
 Being neither white nor black?

Langston Hughes

Malatto

Georgia dusk  
 And the turpentine woods.  
 One of the pillars in the temple fell.

You are MY son!  
Like hell!

The moon over the turpentine woods.  
 The Southern night  
 Full of stars.  
 Great big yellow stars.  
     Juicy bodies  
     Of nigger wenches  
     Blue-black  
     Against black fences.  
 O, you little bastard boy,  
 What's a body but a toy?

The scent of pine woods stings the soft night air.  
What's the body of your mother?  
 Silver moonlight everywhere.  
What's the body of your mother?  
 Sharp pine scent in the evening air.

A nigger night.  
 A nigger joy.  
 A little yellow  
 Bastard boy.  
Now, you ain't my brother.  
Niggers ain't my brother.  
Not ever.  
Niggers ain't my brother.

Langston Hughes

The black poets have concerned themselves, especially of late, with racial injustice. By racial injustice is meant the unlawful, persistent domination and persecution by the white man, or by the alien residing in this country for a time, with or without expectation of taking out citizenship papers. Racial injustice concerns the Negro's lack of full and true social rights, and his attempts to take them, and the consequent persecution. It includes the question of the lynching, burning, murder of the black by the white in preference to the full course of justice accorded by national law, theoretically, but often not accorded, by anything in the way of protection and impartial judgment when the Negro most needs them.

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And What Shall You Say?

Brother, come!  
 And let us go unto our God.  
 And when we stand before Him  
 I shall say---  
 "Lord, I do not hate,  
 I am hated.  
 I scourge no one.  
 I am scourged.  
 I covet no lands,  
 My lands are coveted.  
 I mock no peoples,  
 My peoples are mocked."  
 And, brother, what shall you say?

Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.

If We Must Die

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
 Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While around us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
 Making their mock at our accursed lot.  
 If we must die, O let us nobly die,  
 So that our precious blood may not be shed  
 In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
 Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  
 O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!  
 Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,  
 And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!  
 What though before us lies the open grave?  
 Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
 Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

Claude Mc Kay

Christ In Alabama

Christ in a nigger,  
 Beaten and black---  
O, bare your back.

Mary is His mother---  
Mamma of the South  
Silence your mouth.

God's His Father---  
White Master above,  
Grant us your love.

Most holy Bastard  
 Of the bleeding mouth:  
Nigger Christ  
On the cross of the South

Langston Hughes

The Lynching

His spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven.  
 His father, by the cruellest way of pain,  
 Had bidden him to his bosom once again;  
 The awful sin remained still unforgiven.  
 All night a bright and solitary star  
 (Perchance the one that ever guided him  
 Yet gave him up at last to fate's wild whim)  
 Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char,  
 Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view  
 The ghastly body swaying in the sun  
 The women thronged to looked, but never a one  
 Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;  
 And little lads, lynchers that were to be,  
 Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.

Claude Mc Kay

Cabaret

Rich, flashy, puffy-faced,  
 Hebrew and Anglo-Saxon,  
 The overlords sprawled here with their glittering darlings.  
 The smoke curls thick, in the dim light  
 Surreptitiously, deaf-mute waiters  
 Flatter the grandees,  
 Going easily over the rich carpets,  
 Wary lest they kick over the bottles  
 Under the tables.

The jazzband unleashes its frenzy.

HOY, HOY,

In it, Hogar; that's a nice doggie,  
Show your tricks to the gentleman,

The trombone belches, and the saxophone  
 Wails curdlingly, the cymbal clashes,  
 The drummer twitches in an epileptic fit

Muddy water  
 Round my feet  
 Muddy water

The chorus sways in.  
 The 'Creole Beauties from New Orleans'  
 (By way of Atlanta, Louisville, Washington, Yonkers,  
 With stop-overs they've used nearly all their lives)  
 Their creamy skins flashing rose warm,  
Oh, la bal des belles quarterones!  
 Their shapely bodies naked save  
 For tattered pink silk bodices, short velvet tights,  
 And shining, silver-buckled boots;  
 Red handanas on their slick and close-clipped hair;  
 To bring to mind (aided by the bottles under the tables)  
 Life upon the river---

Muddy water, river sweet

(Lafitte the pirate, instead,  
 And his doughty diggers of gold)

There's peace and happiness there  
 I declare

(In Arkansas,  
Poor half-naked fools, tagged with identification numbers,  
Worn out upon the levees,  
Are carted back to the serfdom  
They had never left before  
And may never leave again.)

See--dap--ee--DOOP, dee--ba--dee-BOOP

The girls wiggle and twist

Oh you too,  
Proud high-stepping beauties,  
Show your pace to the gentlemen,  
A prime filly, ah-  
What an I offered, gentlemen, gentlemen...

I've been away a year to-day  
 To wander and to roam  
 I don't care if it's muddy there

(Now that the floods recede,  
What is there left the miserable folk?  
Oh time in abundance to count their losses,  
There is so little else to count.)

Still it's my home sweet home,

From the lovely throats  
 Moans and deep cries for home:  
 Nashville, Toledo, Spout Springs, Boston,  
 Creeks from Germantown—  
 The bodies twist and rock;  
 The glasses are filled up again....

(In Mississippi  
The black folk huddle, mute, uncomprehending,  
Wondering 'how come the good Lord  
Could treat them this a way')

shelta  
 Down in the Delta

(Along the Yangtze  
The buzzards fly over, over, low,  
Glutted, but with their scrawny necks stretching,  
Feeling still.)

I've got my toes turned Dixie ways  
 Round that Delta let me lax

The hand goes mad, the drummer throws his sticks  
 At the moon, a pariah macabé moon,  
 The chorus leaps into weird posturings,  
 The firm-fleshed arms plucking at grapes to stain  
 Their corralled mouths; seductive bodies weaving  
 Bending, writhing, and turning.

My heart cries out for  
 MUDDY WATER



(Down in the valleys  
The stench of the drying mud  
Is a bitter reminder of death.)

Dee---da---dee D A A A H

Sterling Brown

There are also poems of protest which are not quite the same as poems concerning racial injustice, but deal with political, economic, and social disqualifications rather than lynchings, mob-murders, factory-slavery and like injustices. Poems of protest deal with questions coming from the loss of the vote, economic discrimination, social caste systemization. 251

Mister Samuel And Sam

\* \* \* \* \*

Mister Samuel speak in de Chamber of Commerce,  
Sam he speak in chu'ch;  
Both of 'em talk for a mighty long time,  
Widout sayin', Lawd knows, ve'y much.

Mister Samuel deal wid high finance,  
Sam deal in a two-bit game;  
Mister Samuel crashes, Sam goes broke,  
But deys busted jes' de same.

Mister Samuel wife speak sof' an' low,  
When dey gits in their weekly fight;  
Sam catches a broomstick crost his reary  
An' both of 'em's henpecked right.

Mister Samuel drinks his Canadian Rye,  
Sam drinks his bootleg gin;  
Both gits as high as a Georgia pine,  
An' both calls de doctor in.

Mister Samuel die, and de folks all know,  
Sam die widout no noise;  
De worl' go by in de same ol' way,  
An dey's both of 'em po' los' boys.

Sterling Brown

White House

Your door is shut against my tightened face,  
And I am sharp as steel with discontent;  
But I possess the courage and the grace  
To bear my anger proudly and unbent.

The pavement slabs burn loose beneath my feet,  
 Ax chafing savage, down the decent street;  
 And passion rends my vitals as I pass,  
 Where boldly shines your cultured door of glass.  
 Oh, I must search for wisdom every hour,  
 Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,  
 And find in it the superhuman power  
 To hold me to the letter of your law!  
 Oh, I must keep my heart inviolate  
 Against the potent poison of your hate.

Claude McKay

### Justice

That Justice is a bitch goddess  
 Is a thing to which we black are wise.  
 Her bandage hides two festering sores  
 That once perhaps were eyes.

Langston Hughes

### Nigger

Little black boy  
 Chased down the street—  
 "Nigger, nigger never die  
 Black face an' shiny eye.  
 Nigger....nigger....nigger."

Hannibal....Hannibal  
 Bangin' through the Alps  
 Licked the proud Romans,  
 Ran home with their scalps—  
 "Nigger....nigger....nigger."

Othello....black man  
 Mighty in war  
 Listened to Iago  
 Called his wife a whore—  
 "Nigger....nigger....nigger."

Crispus....Attuck's  
 Bullets in his chest  
 Red blood of freedom  
 Runnin' down his vest  
 "Nigger....nigger....nigger."

Toussant....Toussant  
 Made the French flee  
 Fought like a demon  
 Set his people free—  
 "Nigger....nigger.....nigger."

Jesus....Jesus  
 Son of the Lord--  
 --Spit in his face  
 --Nail him on a board  
 "Nigger....nigger....nigger..."

Little black boy  
 Runs down the street---  
 "Nigger, nigger never die  
 Black face an' shiny eye,  
 "Nigger....nigger....nigger...."

Frank Horne

There are poems that do not protest definitely, either against racial injustice or political wrongs, but seem to express yearning for a more lasting freedom and completeness of national assimilation. This yearning is partly social, political and economic; what protest exists here is not necessarily bitter--usually it aims to lift--and it may be individual self-pity, self-pride, and racial, not group, demonstration. The injustice lies behind the poem, not in it; the protest is subtle, hidden, diffused in day-dreaming, longing, and yearning. These poems are never as strong expressions as poems of political and racial protest. Poems of yearning are associated with poems expressing an individual suffering, yet those of the former differ in that the suffering is racially caused, while in those of the latter, it usually is not.

Colors  
 (Black)

The play is done, the crowds depart; and see  
 That twisted tortured thing hung from a tree,  
 Swart victim of a newer Calvary.

Yes, he who helped Christ up Golgotha's track,  
 That Simon who did not deny, was black.

Countee Cullen

Einstral Man

Because my mouth  
 Is wide with laughter  
 And my throat  
 Is deep with song.

You do not think  
I suffer after  
I have held my pain  
So long?

Because my mouth  
Is wide with laughter,  
You do not hear  
My inner cry?  
Because my feet  
Are gay with dancing,  
You do not know  
I die?

Langston Hughes

From The Dark Tower

We shall not always plant while others reap  
The golden increment of bursted fruit,  
Nor always countenance, abject and mute,  
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;  
Not everlastingly while others sleep  
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,  
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;  
We were not made eternally to weep.

The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,  
White stars are no less lovely being dark,  
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all  
In light, but crumple piteous, and fall;  
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,  
And wait, and tend our agonizing needs.

Countee Cullen

The South

The lazy, laughing South  
With blood in its mouth.  
The funny-faced South,  
Beast-strong,  
Idiot-brained  
The child-minded South  
Scratching in the dead fire's ashes  
For a Negro's bones.  
Cotton and the moon,  
Warmth, earth, warmth,  
The sky, the sun, the stars,  
The magnolia-scented South.

Beautiful, like a woman,  
 Seductive as a dark-eyed whore,  
     Passionate, cruel,  
     Honey-lipped, syphilitic---  
     That is the South.  
 And I, who am black, would love her  
 But she spits in my face.  
 And I, who am black,  
 Would give her many rare gifts  
 But she turns her back upon me.  
     So now I seek the North---  
     The cold-faced North,  
     For she, they say,  
     Is a kinder mistress,  
 And in her house my children  
 May escape the spell of the South.

Langston Hughes

### The White Ones

I do not hate you,  
 For your faces are beautiful, too.  
 I do not hate you,  
 Your faces are whirling lights of loveliness and splendor, too.  
 Yet why do you torture me,  
 O, white strong ones,  
 Why do you torture me?

Langston Hughes

Poems concerning race progress are poems of admonition and exhortation as often as they are eulogies. Race stamina is an interesting question; the Nigritian race has withstood as much as any other race in the world's history: change of climates, long servitude, new diseases added to old, racial injustice, inferiority caused by biased education and unwarranted prejudice. The enterprise of the race is not unusual; individuals have proved more enterprising than the general masses of any race. Also, one must point out that individuals have characterized the race as lazy, shiftless, of no account, more than the masses. Race memory is a boon to race pride; race forgetfulness is likewise an active agent in progress and the acquisition of new ideals.

Sonnet To Negro Soldiers

They shall go down unto Life's borderland,  
 Walk unafraid within that living Hell,  
 Nor heed the driving rain of shot and shell  
 That round them falls; but with uplifted hand,  
 Be one with mighty hosts, an armed band  
 Against man's wrong to man---for such full well  
 They know. And from their trembling lips shall swell  
 A song of hope the world can understand.  
 All this to them shall be a glorious sign,  
 A glimmer of that resurrection morn,  
 When age-long faith, crowned with a grace benign,  
 Shall rise and from their brows cast down the thorn  
 Of prejudice. E'en though through blood it be,  
 There breaks this day their dawn of Liberty.

Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.

Glory

They stood, these two,  
 Against a mammoth wall....  
 So high  
 That neither could surmount it.  
 One brother stooped,  
 And on his back the other stood  
 And sealed the wall.  
 Men seeing him atop  
 Acclaimed him great.  
 They never saw his brother  
 Who lay prostrate  
 On the other side.

Lucy Ariel Williams

Walkers With The Dawn

Being walkers with the dawn and morning,  
 Walkers with the sun and morning,  
 We are not afraid of night,  
 Nor days of gloom,  
 Nor darkness---  
 Being walkers with the sun and morn.

Langston Hughes

Negro Dancers

Me an' ma baby's  
 Got two mo' ways,  
 Two mo' ways to do de Charleston!  
 Da, da,  
 Da, da, da!  
 Two mo' ways to do de Charleston!

Soft light on the tables,  
 Music gay,  
 Brown skin steppers  
 In a cabaret.

White folks, laugh!  
 White folks, pray!

"Ma an' ma baby's  
 Got two mo' ways,  
 Two mo' ways to do de Charleston!"

Langston Hughes

### Mother To Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
 Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
 It's had tacks in it,  
 And splinters,  
 And boards torn up,  
 And places with no carpet on the floor---  
 Bare.  
 But all the time  
 I'se been a-climbin' on,  
 And reachin' landin's,  
 And turnin' corners,  
 And sometimes goin' in the dark  
 Where there ain't been no light.  
 So, boy, don't you turn back.  
 Don't you set down on the steps  
 'Cause you finds it kinder hard.  
 Don't you fall now---  
 For I'se still goin', honey,  
 I'se still climbin',  
 And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes

In Mother To Son, the idea is plain---onward, and up, and to remember that no one has an easy time of this Negro life. In Negro Dancers, the meaning lies hidden, subtle, symbolic; "Two mo' ways" is the Negro's idea and belief in his powers to rise. In Walkers With The Dawn, one sees an indication of the philosophy of the New Negro,---his hope, his belief, his youth and new stance in life---he is becoming independent, and perhaps just a bit confident of being

able to realize more than the Negro of the past. GLORY expresses the tragedy often connected with racial progress. The sonnet To Negro Soldiers shows the Negro's fine regard for his fellow-man, who went into overseas service during the World War. Brooks's A Brown Aesthete Speaks, indicates the Negro's own attitude toward his progress and also his reaction to the result. Brown's Children's Children has something of the possibilities of progress. His Strong Man is indicative and symbolic of the whole of Negro growth in America. <sup>253</sup>

The Negro poet has praised the leaders of his race, and the white friends of his people. Race leaders have always worked to emphasize and to quicken the feeling of race consciousness whenever the race has needed protection from incoming influences of deterioration; whenever the race has been dominated by unlawful procedure, whenever the race has been unfavorably pushed aside that the white man may profit by his retirement. Race leaders have never preached race consciousness from the standpoint of race self-consciousness, knowing through both intuition and study that self-consciousness in an individual or a group is always disconcerting, restricting, and inhibitory. Race leaders have been both militant and patient. Some have advocated resentment programs, protests by arms if need be; most have advocated education, especially industrial education, patience, attempt to understand the whites, reserve, caution against a hasty, unplanned progressiveness. Many poems have been written in praise of race leaders, and so stand as commemorative and occasional poems. Also, there have been many white friends of the Negro race. Most of them are unsung by Negro poets. Even the most outstanding have not been the subjects for odes, but occasionally, one finds eulogies of inter-racial friends.

For Paul Laurence Dunbar



Born of the sorrowful of heart  
 Birth was the crown upon his head;  
 Pride kept his twisted lips apart  
 In jest, to hide a heart that bled.

Countee Cullen

Toussaint L' Overture

\* \* \* \* \*

TOUSSAINT: I cannot treat with you upon these terms.  
 Though easily I now might take the tide  
 Of public favor and become a king,  
 That were a pretty self-aggrandizement  
 When I am called to set a nation free;  
 That were to do and be what I abhor.  
 No, General, my object is achieved  
 When Hayti has been cleared of all her foes,  
 And we are left to live our lives in peace.

MAITLAND: Then I will hear you, Sir.

TOUSSAINT: Well, I propose  
 That England shall forever quit the isle,  
 Renouncing every claim, my promise given  
 That in all future intercourse her cause  
 Shall ever be considerately heard,  
 Her nationals protected in their rights,  
 Our harbors freely open to her ships  
 For interchange of all commodities,  
 With nothing more exacted in return  
 Than equal treatment and neutrality.  
 Such are the terms of this brief covenant  
 To which as signatories, you and I  
 May honorably now attach our names.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leslie Pinckney Hill

The Negro Soldiers

These truly are the Brave,  
 These men who cast aside  
 Old memories, to walk the blood-stained pave  
 Of Sacrifice, joining the solemn tide  
 That moves away, to suffer and to die  
 For Freedom---when their own is yet denied!  
 O Pride! O Prejudice! When they pass by,  
 Hail them, the Brave, for you now crucified!

These truly are the Free,  
 These souls that grandly rise  
 Above base dreams of vengeance for their wrongs,  
 Who march to war with visions in their eyes  
 Of Peace through Brotherhood, lifting glad songs,  
 Aforetime, while they front the firing line.

Stand and behold! They take the field to-day,  
Shedding their blood like Him now held divine,  
That those who mock might find a better way!

Roscoe C. Jamison

The Negro, more of late years than in former times, has felt the spell of nationalism.<sup>254</sup> The Cuban and World War produced this feeling in him as much as any stimuli occurring during his residence in America. The Negro masses, those bodies of people lacking a high educational training, dwell upon the satisfying emotional values of public patriotic displays, in band-parades, national commemorative festivals, waving of the flag, the tooting of horns, excitable gestures. Throughout this display of a love for a country and its heroes, the Negro finds a natural outlet for his love of colorful existence exotic and Matissean in its rawness, reverberant and filled with virility. Though patriotic exhibitions, furnish the Negro an outlet for his repressed and underfed desire to become assimilated by the thing he waves flags to, but is still restricted by. Just what this thing is he doesn't know—but it is vibrant, and that is enough during his moments of patriotism. Certain freedom he has gained, and the flag stands for the man who gave it to him and kept the flag floating over the forty-eight states. Through patriotic exuberance, the Negro forgets something of his sorrow, losing himself in the carnival atmosphere which he invariably creates upon occasions of the outstanding of his national celebrations. His natural tendencies to melancholy is displaced by the melancholia's strong enemy: a composite structural embodiment of laughter, "strutting" pride and exhibitionism, "and fulfilled gregarious instinct." This ability to "strut," this longing for laughter, this gregarious feeling, are strong in the Negro. More than these inclinations toward a display of national feeling are true love of country and a desire for unification. The Negro, despairing of the external unification between whites and blacks,

rejoices somewhat in an appearance and manifestation of national or federated unity; there is a feeling of confidence and latent protection, in nationalism.

Displays of nationalistic feelings, moreover, are enjoyed and participated in by the less educated and less emancipated classes in the country. Here, in America, where we have so many more-or-less disinterested citizens, the Negro finds opportunity for personal and racial reaction in national expression through voluble demonstration and celebration. But the Negro is deeply alive to the call of duty; he fights for the country politically, economically, and socially and slaves his best potentialities. He dies for the flag which waves above the scene of his lynched bodies; he goes to war to protect the crude cabin, crude and bare, often even to-day because the whites of certain districts will not allow the Negro to enjoy the progress of which he is economically capable.

The World War gave the Negro an international awareness. The contacts made abroad by the American Negro soldiers last in political and social government, having aided the Negro in economic displacement of the foreigner. The Negro was needed for industry, especially by manufacturers of war goods. The Negro saw his opportunity and made the most of it. Some disappointment and bitterness arose from the let-down which occurred when the war became a thing of triumphal hierarchy and gold star mother's clubs. But the Negro gained more than he lost in the World War. It enabled him to see, as he had not seen before, that he was needed by his country; it taught him that race prejudice was an American and not a universal concept; it made him realize that he had been a man all along.

America

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,  
 And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,  
 Stealing my breath of life, I will confess  
 I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!  
 Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,  
 Giving me strength erect against her hate.  
 Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.  
 Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,  
 I stand within her walls with not a shred  
 Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.  
 Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,  
 And see her might and granite wonders there,  
 Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,  
 Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

Claude Mc Kay

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
 They send me to eat in the kitchen  
 When company comes,  
 But I laugh,  
 And eat well,  
 And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
 I'll sit at the table  
 When company comes,  
 Nobody'll dare  
 Say to me,  
 "Eat in the kitchen,"  
 Then.

Besides,  
 They'll see how beautiful I am  
 And be ashamed---

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes

### CONCLUSIONS

There exists in the poetry of the Negro the qualities of instability, yet of growth, of incompleteness, of a something nearer to completeness than is generally thought to be true by the population of America. There is a lack of sustained aesthetic handling of the lyrical, but there is a wealth of depth, emotion, and colorful subject-matter. Much of this subject-matter is of decided sociological significance, yet, too, the Negro has become to an extent a mature poet, a singer of subjective thought, a lover, humorist, an innovator, (with his poetical epitaphs and "blues"), and a painter of racial character. Indications of locale, of natural and foreign folk-lore, of philosophy, and of outlook upon religion and death, are also here in Negro poetry. But chiefly, the Negro poet deals in matters of race consciousness, injustice, rebellion, protest, appraisal of leaders and friends, and enterprise and progressiveness. His feeling for nationalism is perhaps his newest growth in poetical expression.

Negro poetry is wise, vast, inclusive; it is expressive of a great deal of the Negro's thought, racial inclinations, problematical excursions into the white man's point of view of the Negro. It has some little quality of form, style, and lyrical beauty, but no great deal. For the most part, Negro poetry is valuable as a means of studying further sociological movements of the American Negro. To know the American Negro one must know something of the African Negro who left him his heritage of emotion, rhythm, adaptability, perseverance, virility, capacities for the many sides to religious thought and belief, folk-lore, and his dark skin---the last a quality which will someday mean the conclusion of a lengthy progression into a settled, united, forceful, compact racial predominance in the more emotionalized

creativity of the Western world.

Having existed in Africa, native, naked, superstitious, primitive, touched here and there by certain cultures from within and without, the Negro then suddenly found his way into America through the paths of the slave traders. Having lived in America, oppressed, protected, clothed, worked, sold and parted one from the other, rebellious to some extent, complacent and subdued for the most part, the Negro suddenly found his way into Emancipation through the political vision of a Northern leader, and the defeat of a Southern world gone mad for individual rights. Having lived long in a subdued and limiting slave system, then suddenly being plunged into a new system, the Negro passed through a heart-rending, ear-splitting bombardment by new ideas, freedom(so-called), lack of protection and steady employment from the "buckra," and poor, ever-changing conditions, ill treatment, flight into a still stranger climate, economic competitiveness, and a group yearning to place the bottom rung nearer the top of the ladder, the Negro gradually developed.

Now, aided by a World War in which the Negro made a most unusual record for loyalty and bravery, by national restlessness and movement among all classes of peoples irrespective of coloring, by the social education of both white and black, by white philanthropy and black assertiveness, by endless suffering, wailing in the darkness, working in the sun, learning with facile rapidity, by travel and contacts on foreign shores, the black man has not so suddenly reached a new plateau. The tom-tom chant has become a sonnet, an ode, perhaps a lyrical outburst of pure formalized expression. The black song has reached a point of poetic expressiveness redolent of group consciousness seen through individual suffering, of group

perseverance seen through individual staunchness, of sociological and psychological outlooks mingled with lyrical beauty, of epic significance crossed with classic allusions.

There is yet much to be done: Negro poetry is like Negro life, unstained, "flighty," emotionally fugitive by its own qualities. Yet the essence and germ of high poetry has been recorded in some degree by the black poet, just as the essence of good living has been attained in some degree by the Negro as a citizen. Through the medium of Negro poetry as a measuring rod of sociological movement one sees down through the years that "the strong men have been getting stronger."

. . .

### Strong Men

The strong men keep coming on . . . .

Sandburg

They dragged you from homeland,  
They chained you in coffles,  
They huddled you spoon-fashion in filthy hatches,  
They sold you to give a few gentlemen ease.

They broke you in like oxen,  
They scourged you,  
They branded you,  
They made your women breeders,  
They swelled your numbers with bastards . . . .  
They taught you the religion they disgraced.

You sang:

Keep a-inchin' along  
Lak a po' inch worm . . . .

You sang:

Bye and bye  
I'm gonna lay down dis heaby load . . . .

You sang:

Walk togadder chillen

Doutcha git weary....

The strong men keep a-comin' on

The strong men git stronger.

They point with pride to the roads you built for them,

They ride in comfort over the rails you laid for them.

They put hammers in your hands

And said---Drive so much before sundown.

You sang:

Ain't no hammah

In dis' lan',

Strikes like mine, bebbly,

Strikes like mine.

They cooped you in their kitchens,

They penned you in their factories,

They gave you the jobs that they were too good for,

They tried to guarantee happiness to themselves

By shunting dirt and misery to you.

You sang:

Me an' mah baby gonna shine, shine

Me an' mah baby gonna shine.

The strong men keep a-comin' on

The strong men git stronger....

They bought off some of your leaders

You stumbled, as blind men will....

They coaxed you, unwontedly soft-voiced....

You followed a way.

Then laughed as usual.

They heard the laugh and wondered;

Uncomfortable;

Unadmitting a deeper terror....

The strong men keep a-comin' on

Gittin' stronger....

What, from the slums

Where they have hemmed you,

What, from the tiny huts

They could not keep from you---

What reaches them

Making them ill at ease, fearful?

To-day they shout prohibition at you

"Thou shalt not this"

"Thou shalt not that"

"Reserved for whites only"

You laugh.

One thing they cannot prohibit---

The strong men...coming on

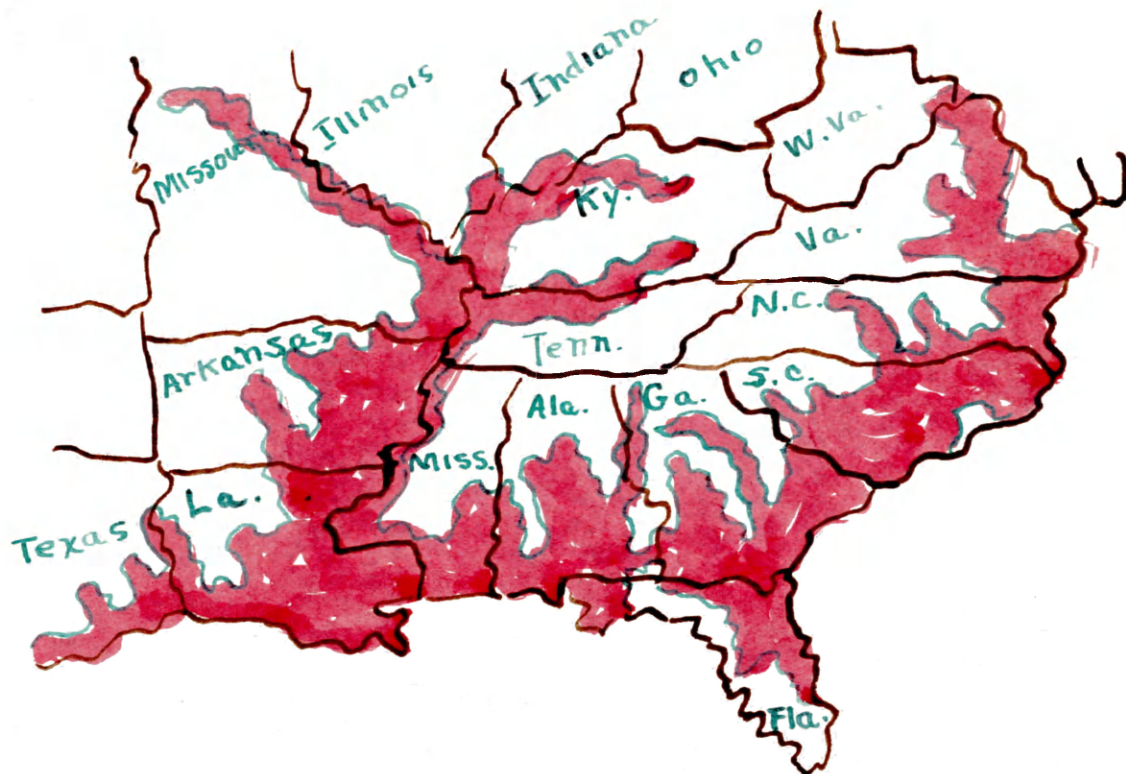
The strong men gittin' stronger.

Stronger men....

Stronger....

Sterling Brown





A Map Showing "The Black Belt"

(Clowes, W.Laird, Black America, London 1891, p.232.)

## NOTES TO PART II

- (157) This poem appears in The Hampton Script, the news and journalistic organ of Hampton Institute, of Saturday, February 8, 1930.
- (158) Locke, Alain. The Negro's Contribution to American Literature and Art. The Annals of the American Academy, 1928, pp. 234-253.
- (159) Ibid. p. 235.
- (160) Ibid. p. 234.
- (161) Ibid.
- (162) Ibid.
- (163) Kerlin, R.T. Negro Poets and Their Poems, 1923, Table of Contents.
- (164) Morton, Lena B. Negro Poetry in America, 1925, p.5.
- (165) Ibid.
- (166) Ibid. p. 7.
- (167) Ibid. p. 4.
- (168) Ibid. pp. 8-10.
- (169) Ibid. p.11.
- (170) Ibid.
- (171) Ibid. p. 26.
- (172) Ibid. p. 27.
- (173) Ibid. p. 32.
- (174) Ibid. p. 34.
- (175) Wegelin, Oscar. Jupiter Hammon, American Negro Poet: Selections From His Writings and a Bibliography, with Five Facsimiles. 99 copies printed for Charles. Frederick Heartman. New York, 1915, pp.12-16.

- (176) Stanford, Rev. D. Thomas. The Tragedy of the Negro in America, 1897, p.178.
- (177) McGirt, J.E. Avenge the Maine. A Drunken A.B., and Other Poems, Preface, written at Greensboro, N.C., August 17, 1899.
- (178) Bruce, J.E. Eminent Men and Women, Yonkers, 1910, p.76.
- (179) Ibid. pp. 76-84.
- (180) Ibid. p. 120.
- (181) White, Newman I. Racial Feelings in Negro Poetry. So Atlan Q 21:14-29 Ja 1922.
- (182) Ibid.
- (183) Ibid. pp. 27-29.
- (184) Johnson, J.W. The Book of American Negro Poetry. 1922, Preface pp. vii-xlvi.
- (185) Ibid. p. xxii.
- (186) Ibid. p. xxxiii.
- (187) Ibid. p. xxxix.
- (188) Ibid. p. viii. Also, Cf. p. 30, Note 40, this thesis.
- (189) Johnson, Fenton. Songs of the Soil. Introduction.
- (190) Cf. Nicholls, R.T. The American Negro in Slavery. Annals of the American Academy, 1928, pp. 116-121.
- (191) Allen, W.F. (Ed.) Slave Songs of the United States. New York, 1867, p. xii.
- (192) Ibid.
- (193) Ibid, p. 68, song 87.
- (194) Cf. Fenner, T.P. Cabin and Plantation Songs as Sung by the Hampton Students. pp. 151, 110, 131.
- (195) Cf. Allen, W.F. op. cit.
- (196) Newman I. White. American Negro Folk Songs. p. 27.

- (197) Ibid.
- (198) Ibid. p. 5.
- (199) Ibid. p. ix.
- (200) Tandy, Jeannetta Reid. Pre-Slavery Propaganda in the American Fiction of the Fifties. S Atlan Q 21:41-50, 170-8 Ja-Apr.1922.
- (201) Cf. pp. 69-72, this thesis.
- (202) White, Newman I. American Negro Folk-Songs. p. 98.
- (203) Ibid. p. 143.
- (204) Ibid. p. 176.
- (205) Ibid. p. 381.
- (206) Ibid. p. 284.
- (207) Ibid. p. 251.
- (208) Ibid. p. 201.
- (209) Ibid. p. 364.
- (210) Ibid. pp. 311-313.
- (211) Ibid. p. 340.
- (212) Ibid. pp.311-313.
- (213) Ibid. p. 314.
- (214) This song is given from memory; if it had an author he is not known to the author.
- (215) White, Newman I. American Negro Folk-Songs. p. 272.
- (216) Ibid. p. 333.
- (217) Ibid. p. 327.
- (218) Ibid. p. 322.

- (219) *Ibid.* 318.
- (220) *Ibid.* p. 395.
- (221) *Ibid.* p. 399.
- (222) Cf. Note 158, this thesis.)
- (223) Loggins, V. The Negro Author. New York, 1931.
- (224) *Ibid.* Preface, pp. vii-viii.
- (225) Vernon Loggins divides his study as follows:
- I. The Beginnings of Negro Authorship, 1760-1790.
  - II. Writing of the Pioneer Racial Leaders, 1790-1840.
  - III. Biography, Poetry, and Miscellaneous Writings, 1790-1840.
  - IV. Writings of the Leading Negro Antislavery Agents, 1840-1865.
  - V. Writings of the Racial Leaders, 1840-1864.
  - VI. Biography, Poetry, and Miscellaneous Writings, 1840-1865.
  - VII. Biography, History, Sociological Treatises, Oratory, and Theology, 1865-1900.
  - VIII. Fiction and Poetry, 1865-1900.
  - IX. Conclusion. (American Negro Folk Songs)
- (226) Loggins, V. *op.cit.* p. 353.
- (227) *Ibid.* Preface, p. vii.
- (228) Morton, Lena B. *op. cit.* p. 16.
- (229) Locke, Alain. The Negro's Contribution to American Art and Literature. 1928, pp. 238-239.
- (230) *Ibid.* pp. 238-241.
- (231) *Ibid.* p. 240.
- (232) This poem appeared in The Hampton Script, Saturday, May 25, 1929.
- (233) From: The Walls of Jericho (Dickinson), Second Stanza, Caroling Dusk, p. 106.
- (234) Locke, Alain. The Negro's Contribution to American Art and Literature. Annals of the American Academy, 1928. Cf. p. 241.

- (235) Kerlin, R.T. Contemporary Poetry of the Negro. 1921, pp. 4-7.
- (236) Cf. Appendix I, this thesis.
- (237) Lula Low Weedin is now fifteen years of age.
- (238) Prector, H.H. Between Black and White. Chap. XIV.
- (239) Cf. Appendix I, Class 12, for authors of these poems.
- (240) Cf. Ibid. Class 20.
- (241) Ibid. Class 11.
- (242) Cf. the following: (1) Loggins, V. op.vit. p. 3.  
 (2) Johnson, J.F. God's Trombones. 1927, pp. 1-11.  
 (3) Haynes, G.E. Annals. The Church and Negro Progress. pp. 264-271.
- (243) Cf. Kerlin, R.T. Contemporary Poetry of the Negro, pp. 10-12.
- (244) Johnson, Fenton. Songs of the Soil. Introduction.
- (245) Cf. Herskovits, op. cit. p. 81.
- (246) White, Walter. Annals. The Color Line in Europe. 1928 pp. 321-356.
- (247) Bond, H.M. Annals. Self-Respect as a Factor in Racial Advancement, pp. 24-25.
- (248) Cf. followings: Morton, Lena, B. op. cit. pp. 24, 25.  
 (2) Locke, A. Annals. The Negro's Contribution to American Literature and Art. 1928, pp. 242-247/(3) Washington, B.T. Story of the Negro. pp. 7, 11-15, 24.
- (249) Cf. the following: (1) Herskovits, op.cit. pp. xiii, 1-9, 16-17, 58-66. (2) Roman, C.V. American Civilization and the Negro. pp. 246(also footnote, 246), 344, 349. (3) Reuter, E.B. Annals. The American Mulatto. pp. 36-43.
- (250) Cf. following: (1) Roman, C.V. op. cit. pp. 403-405.  
 (2) Stanford, P.T. Tragedy of Negro in America. pp. 134, 141-145, 155. (3) Sellin, T. Annals. The Negro Criminal. A Statistical Note. pp. 52-53, 56, 59, 63-64.

- (251) Kerlin, R.T. Negro Poets and Their Poetry. p. 299.  
Also: Park, R.E. The Basis of Race Prejudice. pp.11-13.
- (252) The following references are important in any study of the progress of the American Negro:
- (1) Weatherford, op.cit. pp. 68, 267.
  - (2) Stanford, op.cit. p. 172.
  - (3) Nicholls, R.F. Annals. The Progress of the American Negro in Slavery. p. 116.(1928)
  - (4) Roman, op. cit. p. 340.
  - (5) Willets, Gilson. Alexander's Magazine. After Forty Years of Freedom. 1905, p. II.
  - (6) Baker, Henry E. The Colored Inventor. 1913.
  - (7) Werk, Monroe N. Negro Year Book. 1931, pp. 118-119.
  - (8) Fry, C.L. The Annals. The Negro in the United States. pp. 27-28, 34-35.
  - (9) Herskovits, op.cit. pp. 18-20, 25, 33, 49, 53, 56, 75.
  - (10) Gordon, E. Annals. The Negro Press. pp. 248-256.(1928)
- (253) Strong Men appears at the end of this thesis, p.232.
- (254) Locke, Alain. A Decade of Negro Self Expression. 1928. pp. 3-10.

END OF NOTES TO PART II

## APPENDIX I

### A Classification of Poems by Negro Authors

(Whenever the need has arisen, a single poem has been classified under several headings according to its inclusive expressiveness.)

#### 1. Poems Expressing Race Consciousness

By Race Consciousness is meant a love for the Negro race, a feeling of belonging exclusively to this race, a desire to see the race improve its status in the world, and any generalized expressions concerning racial injustice. All specific expressions concerning racial injustice are listed under Racial Injustice (3).

Alexander, Lewis: The Dark Brother

Allen, Winston: The Black Violinist

Bennett, Gwendolyn: To A Dark Girl

Bontemps, Arna: God Give To Men

Brooks, J. Henderson: The Caucasian, The Gulf, Comfort Ye My People, A Brown Aesthete Speaks,

Brown, Sterling: Strong Men, Salutaris

Burrell, Ben E.: To A Negro Mother

Campbell, James Edwin: Compensation

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: A Word To Ethiopia

Corrothers, James D.: At The Closed Gate Of Justice

Cotter, Joseph S. Jr.: The Band of Gideon, And What Shall You Say? Is It Because I Am Black? Sonnet To Negro Soldiers

Cotter, Joseph S. Sr.: The Negro Child

Cox, John T.: The V. T. S. and C.

Cullen, Countee: To Certain Critics, Yea Do I Marvel, Two Who Crossed A Line, To My Fairer Brethren, The Shroud of Color, The Litany of the Dark People, Black Majesty, From the Dark Tower, Colors

Dickinson, Blanche: The Walls of Jericho

Da Bois, W. E. B.: A Litany of Atalanta



- Dunbar, Paul Lawrence: We Wear The Mask
- Fenner, John J. Jr.: Rise! Young Negro!—Rise!
- Hale, Edward E.: Emancipation
- Hill, Leslie Pinckney: My Race, Self-Determination
- Hughes, Langston: I, Too, The White Ones, The Jester, The Negro, Mother To Son, Negro Dancers, Minstrel Man, Walkers With the Dawn, My People, The Negro Speaks of Rivers, Laughers, Afro-American Fragment
- Jamison, Roscoe C.: The Negro Soldiers, The Edict
- Johnson, Fenton: De Ol' Sojer, The Soldiers of the Dusk, The Passing Indian
- Johnson, Georgia Douglas: To My Son
- Johnson, May Smith: To My Grandmother
- Jones, Joshua Henry: Brothers
- Jordan, W. Clarence: What Is The Negro Doing?
- Justice, Theresa May: To The Black Man Of Letters
- Lee, F. J.: Forget
- Mc Call, J. Edward: The New Negro
- Mc Corkle, G. W.: Immortal Words of General S. C. Armstrong, A Plea For Racial Purity
- Mc Clellan, C. P.: Daybreak, Somebody's Child
- Mc Girt, James E.: The Siege of Manila, Africa's Cry
- Mc Kay, Claude: The Barrier, Enslaved, Africa, Outcast, Exhortation: Summer, 1919, O Word I Love To Sing, White Houses,
- Miller, Kelly: I See And Am Satisfied
- Ray, H. C.: Self-Mastery, Incompleteness, Life, Aspiration
- Rasafkeriefe, Andrea: The New Negro, The Negro Woman
- Rice, Albert: The Black Madonna
- Sexton, Will: To My Lost Child
- Silyera, Edward: Jungle Taste

- Todd, Walter E.: Progress of the Negro
- Toomer, Jean: Song of the Song, November Cotton Flower
- Toomey, Richard E. S.: Allegory
- Watkins, Lucian B.: Ebon Maid And Girl of Mine. The New Negro
- Wheatley, Phillis: To The University of Cambridge in New England, 1767. A Hymn To Humanity
2. Poems Written in Praise of Race Leaders and Friends of the Race
- Bell, James Madison: Poem In Commemoration of the Death of Abraham Lincoln
- Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Booker T. Washington, Paul Laurence Dunbar
- Cotter, Joseph S. Jr.: Sonnet To Negro Soldiers
- Cox, John T.: The Man Of The Hour
- Cullen, Countee: For Helen Keller, Black Majesty, For Paul Laurence Dunbar, In Memory Of Colonel Charles Young, Millennial
- French, James Edgar: Dunbar and Cotter
- Harper, Mrs. Frances E. W.: Lines To Charles Sumner, President Lincoln's Proclamation of Freedom
- Hill, James Pinckney: Toussaint L'Ouverture
- Hughes, Langston: Alabama Earth, Lincoln Monument: Washington
- Johnson, Penton: Ah's Gwine Away, To Jeanne Robert Foster, S. Coleridge Taylor
- Johnson, James Weldon: Fifty Years
- Lee, F. J.: The Singer (A Tribute to the Late Paul Laurence Dunbar)
- Mc Girt, James E.: Memory of Lincoln and the Yankees
- Mc Corkle, G. W.: An Ode To Dr. D. J. Sanders, A Tribute to Dr. J. C. Masses, Bishop Richard Allen, To The Memory of Rev. P. P. Alston, To The Memory Of James Warren
- Spencer, Anne: Dunbar
- Walker, James R.: My Tribute To Washington
- Wheatley, Phillis: To The King's Most Excellent Majesty, On The Death of Rev. Dr. Sewall, 1769, On The Death Of Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 1770, A Hymn To Humanity, To S. M. A Young African Painter On Seeing His Works, To Gen. Washington

3. Poems Concerned With Racial Injustice

Bell, James Madison: The Black Man's Wronks, Abolition of Slavery in D. C.

Bontemps, Arna: Golgotha In A Mountain

Brown, Sterling: Salvamus, Sam Sailey, Strong Men, Cabaret

Campbell, James Edwin: Compensation

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: A Word To Ethiopia

Corrothers, James D.: At The Closed Gate Of Justice, In The Matter Of Two Men

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: The Band of Gideon, And What Shall You Say? Is It Because I Am Black?

Callen, Countee: Incident, The Shroud of Color, From The Dark Tower, Confession

Dandridge, Raymond H.: Facts

Du Bois, W. E. B.: A Litany of Atlanta

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: We Wear The Mask

Grimke, Angelina: Surrender

Hawkins, Walter Everette: A Festival In Christendom

Horne, Frank: On Seeing Two Brown Boys In A Catholic Church, Nigger

Hughes, Langston: Song For A Dark Girl, Poem (The night is beautiful.....), The Negro, The White Ones, Lament For Dark Peoples, Mulatto, Scottsboro Limited, Christ In Alabama, Scottsboro, Justice, Flight

Jamison, R. C.: The Edict

Jones, Joshua Henry, Jr.: Brothers

Johnson, Charles Bertram: Negro Poets

Johnson, Fenton: Harlem; The Black City, Tired

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Old Black Man

Johnson, James Weldon: The Black Mammy

Lewis, Ethyl: The Optimist

Mc Girt, James E.: Slavery

Mc Kay, Claude: Enslaved, The Lynching, If We Must Die, To The White Fiends

Thompson, Eleanor A.: Ballad (Uncle Tom)

4. Poems Giving Racial Characterization

By Racial Characterization is meant a delineation of Negro manners, customs, Negro types and prototypes, race philosophy as seen through characters, and characteristic expressions and pictures of the Negro in the ante-bellum and plantation days, and of the "New Negro."

Allen, J. Maude: A Victim of Microbes

Alexander, Lewis: Negro Woman

Bontemps, Arna: The Return: A Black Man Talks Of Reaping

Brown, Sterling: Mammae Ruth: When De Saints Go Ma'ching Home: Beanie: Dark of the Moon: Ruminations of Luke Johnson: Virginia Portrait: Johnny Thomas: To Sallie, Walking: Memphis Blues: Ma Rainey: Children of the Mississippi: Foreclosure: Checkers: Mose: Slim Greer: Convict: Mecca: Chillen Get Shoes: Sporting Beasley: Cabaret: Odyssey of Big Boy

Campbell, James Edwin: Negro Serenade: De Cunjah Man: Uncle Eph's Banjo Song: Ol' Doc' Hvar: When Ol' Sis Judy Pray

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Mammy's Baby Scared: 'Taint No Need O' Women Worrin': I Ain't Turn Sussie Out: The Escort: Scolding Baby Boy: The Day Of Freedom: The Lover's Spat: The Invitation: I Am Ma' An' Papa' Baby: I Use Tar Drog': Home Instructions: Annoyance

Corrothers, James D.: The Road To The Bow: An Indignation Dinner

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Sonnet To Negro Soldiers

Cox, John T.: Crazy Love: A Choice: Leaving Church: Back From School: Leaving

Cullen, Countee: Song Of Praise: To A Brown Girl: To A Brown Boy: Black Madalena: Atlantic City Waiter: Harlem Wine: She Of The Dancing Feet Sings: Fruit of the Flower: Saturday's Child: Two Who Crossed A Line: Uncle Jim: Colored Blues Singer: Colors: A Brown Girl Dead

Cuney, Waring: Dust

Dandridge, Raymond G.: 'Little Tonsle Head: Zalka Peetrusa: De Drum Mahlah

Davis, Daniel Webster: Signs: When You Gits A Rabbit Foot: Aunt Chloe's Lullaby: Wah Down Souf: Hog Meat

Dett, Nathaniel J.: The Gossip

- Dunbar, Paul Laurence: Little Brown Baby; Lover's Lane; When De Co'm Pone's Hot; The Deserted Plantation
- Fauset, Jessie: Oriflamme
- Gaillard, Julia: Jus' Livin'
- Holloway, John Wesley: Calling The Doctor; Miss Melerice; Cora Song
- Hughes, Langston: Mexican Market Woman; Beggar Boy; Parisian Beggar Women; Irish Wake; Death of an Old Seaman; Minstrel Man; When Sue Wears Red; Baby; Lullaby; Aunt Sue's Stories; My People; Jazzonia; The Cat and the Saxophone; Cabaret; Young Singer; To Midnight Man At Le Roy's; Soledad; To A Black Dancer In The Little Savoy; Harlem Night Club; Made Young Dancer; Young Prostitute; Lanox Avenue; Midnight; Blues Fantasy; Harlem Night Song; Ardella; Pierrot; To The Dark Mercedes of 'El Palacio De Amor'; Summer Night; Poem For the Portrait of an African Boy After the Manner of Gains; Mother To Son; Bad Man; Gypsy Man; Cora; Railroad Avenue; Brass Spittoon; A New Cabaret Girl; Ballad of Jim Marx; Death of De Dirty; A Rounder's Song; Sport; Elevator Boy; Porter; Saturday Night; Angel's Wings; Workin' Man; Bad Luck Card; Evil Woman; Black Gal; Lauchers; Florida Road Workers; Closing Time; The Negro Speaks of Rivers
- Johnson, Fenton: What Mistah Robin Sees; Uncle Isiah Lies A-Dyin'; Malindy; Come Along; Mah Mammy; Mammy's Honey Boy; A Plantation Christmas; Plantation Revery; De Music Call; Injun Summah; Eulogy; Loyalty; Last Days; Uncle Rufus; Shuffle 'Long; De Eighth; Wintuh On De Plantashun; A Plantation Santa Claus; The Song Of The Fish Market; De Dyin' Ca'line Lou; Lullaby; Visions of the Dusk; De Cabin; De Ol' Home; Kin You Tell Me?; 'Long Cool De Night; De April Song; Fiddlah Ike; De Chu'eh; The Banjo Player; The Scarlet Woman
- Johnson, Helene: Sonnet To A Negro In Harlem; Poem; Little Brown Boy; Bottled
- Johnson, James Weldon: O Black And Unknown Bards; The Creation; The White Witch
- Lee, F. J.: Sambo's Trip To Yankee Land
- Means, Sterling M.: The Old Plantation Grave; The Old Deserted Cabin
- Mc Clellan, G. M.: The Bride of Nitta Yum
- Mc Kay, Claude: Alfonso, Dressing To Wait At Table; On The Road; The Harlem Dancer; The Castaways; Two Am' Six
- Rogers, Alex: The Rain Song
- Spencer, Anne: At The Carnival
- Todd, Walter E.: Parson Brown's Philosophy

Toomer, Jean: Georgia Dusk; Readers; Face

Williams, Lucy Ariel: The Black Magician; Northbound

5. Poems Concerned With Racial Habitation and Locale

Racial Habitation and Locale concern the Negro in Harlem, on the Plantation, on the levees, in Europe, in Africa,--- wherever he has gone and left his impressions, wherever he has gone and received impressions as found in these poems.

Braithwaite, William Stanley: At Newport

Brown, Sterling: The Negro Speaks of Rivers; Children of the Mississippi; Foreclosure; Riverbank Blues; Cabaret; Convict

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: My Little Cabin Home; Where Hearts Are Gay

Cullen, Countee: Harlem Wine; Georgia Dusk

Davis, Daniel Webster: De Baptis' Chu'ch; 'Web Down Souf'

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: The Deserted Plantation; Lover's Lane; When De Co'n Pone's Hot

Fauset, Jessie: Christmas Eve In France

Hill, Leslie Pindney Hill: Tuskegee; Christmas at Melrose

Hughes, Langston: Acsthete in Harlem; The Negro Speaks of Rivers; The South; Our Land; Disillusion; Afraid; Harlem Night Club; The Negro; Railroad Avenue

Johnson, Fenton: Kentucky Moon; Harlem; The Black City; Ol' Louisville; Visions of the Dusk; De Cabins; De Ol' Home; De Chu'ch; The Creed of the Slave

Johnson, James Weldon: My City; O Southland!

Johnson, Charles Bertram: A Little Cabin

Lee, F. J.: Sambo's Trip To Yankee Land

Mc Clellan, G. M.: The Hills of Sevenses; The April of Alabama; A September Night; She Went Down In Beauty; A January Pandelion; May Along The Cumberland

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Immortal Words of General S. C. Armstrong

Mc Kay, Claude: When Dawn Comes To The City; Rest In Peace; La Paloma In London; The Tropica in New York; Winter In The Country

On Broadway: The City's Love: North And South:  
The Wild Goat: Harlem Shadows: The White City: Africa:  
On The Road: The Harlem Dancer: Dawn In New York:  
The Tired Worker: Subway Wind: The Night Fire

Silvera, Edward: South Street

Toomer, Jean: Georgia Dusk

#### 6. Poems Expressing the Negro's Outlook On Religion

These poems deal with the Negro's belief, disbelief, solace in religion, and his hopes for a better life in the world beyond through the promise and appeal of religion.

Bell, James Madison: Banishment Of Man From The Garden Of The Lord

Brooks, J. Henderson: A Student I Know

Brown, Sterling: Sister Lou: New Steps: When De Saints Go Ma'ching Home

Campbell, James Edwin: When Ol' Sis Judy Pray

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: The Night I Went To Church: A Daily Prayer:  
When The Different Churches Meet: The Prayer  
of the Faithful: A Daily Prayer: Sing On To  
Jesus: Keep Me, Jesus Keep Me: The Day of  
Repentance: When the Way Seems Dark

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Oh Little David, Play On Your Harp: Sonnet (And  
Thou art One....)

Cox, John T.: A Hymn: Omniscience

Cullen, Countee: Mood: Counter Mood: Never the Final Stone: Not Sacco and  
Vanzetti: Dictum: Simon the Cyrenian Speaks: Pagan Prayer:  
Gods: Heritage: For An Atheist: She of the Dancing Feet  
Sings: The Litany of the Dark People

Fauset, Jessie: Christmas Eve In France

Haines, E. L.: A Call To Youth

Hale, Edward E.: Palm Sunday: The Lord of the Vineyard: Jehovah Liveth:  
Adepte Fideles

Harper, Frances E. W., Mrs.: Mary At The Feet of Christ

Hayford, Gladys: Nativity

Hill, Leslie Pinckney: The Teacher

Hughes, Langston: Feet O' Jesus: Sinner: Prayer: Judgement Day:  
Ma Lord: Prayer Meeting: Moan

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Impelled: Gilead

Johnson, Fenton: The All-Time: Gift O' Love To Me: Illions: Ah's Gwine Away:  
Plantation Prayer: De Elduh: De Dvin' Ca'line Lou:  
Hymn: The Soul Of Boston: Slave Death Song: De Chu'ch:

Johnson, James Weldon: God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons In Verse:  
The Creation

Jones, Edward Smyth: A Song of Thanks

Lee, F. J.: The Christian Knight

Mc Clellan, G. M.: Hydromel and Rue: The Feet of Judas: Eternity:  
A Butterfly In Church: As Sifted Wheat: Last Lines  
Written In Jerusalem: On the Mediterranean Sea: At the  
Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Immortal Words of General S. C. Armstrong: Men Wanted:  
A Prayer: Hymn: The Ways of Providence: An Ode to Dr. D. J.  
Sanders

Mc Girt, James E.: The Century Prayer

Mc Kay, Claude: Russian Cathedral

Razakeriefo, Andrea: The Negro Church

Walker, James R.: The Holy Bible

Wheatley, Phillis: To The University Of Cambridge In New England, 1767:  
On Being Bro't From Africa To America: Thoughts On The  
Works Of Providence

**7. Poems Indicating a Yearning For a More Lasting Freedom and Completeness**  
**of National Assimilation**

Bell, James Madison: Abolition of Slaves in the District of Columbia:  
What Shall We Do With The Contrabands?

Brooks, J. Henderson: A Brown Aesthete Speaks

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Is It Because I Am Black?

Cullen, Countee: From the Dark Tower: The Shroud of Color: Brown Boy To  
Brown Girl: Harsh World That Lashest Me: Thoughts In A Zoo

Dickinson, Blanche: Four Walls

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: Sympathy: The Debt



Hughes, Langston: The South: The White Ones: Dream Variation

Johnson, Fenton: Children of the Sun: Ah's Gwine Away

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Hopes: The Suppliant: Letha

Mc Clellan, G. M.: Daybreak

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are: Immortal Words Of  
General S. C. Armstrong

Mc Kay, Claude: White Houses

Spencer, Anne: Crad

Wheatley, Phillis: Liberty And Peace

8. Poems Concerned With Race Progress, Stamina, Enterprise, Race Memory,  
and the Power of Forgetfulness

Brooks, J. Henderson: The Gulf: Rogars' Will

Brown, Sterling: Strange Legacies: Children's Children: Salutamus: Strong Men

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: A Word To Ethiopia

Cotter, Joseph. S., Jr.: Sonnet To Negro Soldiers

Cullen, Countee: To My Fairer Brethren

Hughes, Langston: Mother To Son: The Negro: Negro Dancers: Walkers With The  
Dawn: Red Silk Stockings: Laughers

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are: A Plea For Racial Unity

Mc Kay, Claude: Africa

Toomer, Jean: Song Of The Son

Wheatley, Phillis: On Being Bro't From Africa To America: To S. M., A Young  
African Painter, On Seeing His Works

Williams, Lucy Ariel: Glorv

9. Poems Of Protest Against Political, Economic, and Social Injustices

Brown, Sterling: Mister Samuel and Sam: Sister Lou: Strong Men: Salutamus:

Cox, John T.: The Half Has Not Been Told

Cullen, Countee: The Black Christ; Yet Do I Marvel; Incident; Simon the  
Cyrenian Speaks; For A Lady I Know

Harper, Mrs. Frances E. W.: Make Me A Grave Where'er You Will

Horton, George Moses: Alas! And Am I Born For This?

Hughes, Langston: As I Grew Older; I, Too; The White Ones; The Jester;  
Minstrel Man; My People; Mulatto; Scottsboro Limited;  
Scottsboro; Christ In Alabama; Justice; Florida Road Worker

Johnson, Fenton: To An Afro-American Maiden; The Song of the Passing;  
De Ol' Sejer

Mc Kay, Claude: America; The White City; The Lynching; If We Must Die; White  
Houses; Rest In Peace

Reason, Charles L.: O Freedom, Freedom!

Watkins, Lucian B.: A Message To The Modern Pharaohs

10. Poems Exemplifying the National and International Consciousness of the Negro

Braithwaite, William S.: The New Day

Brooks, John Henderson: The Gulf

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Red, White, And Blue; Sleep On, Ye Happy Sons

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: O Little David, Play On Your Harp

Cullen, Countee: At The Etoile; Two Epitaphs

Dandridge, Raymond H.: Facta

Hill, James Pinckney: Ode To Patriotism

Hughes, Langston: I, Too

Johnson, Fenton: De Ol' Sejer; The Soul Of Boston; Soldiers Of The Dusk

Jones, Joshua Henry, Jr.: Flag of the Free

Mc Kay, Claude: Exhortation; Summer 1919; America

Nelson, Alice: I Sit And Sew

Toomey, Richard E. S.: Ode To Columbia

Wheatley, Phillis: Liberty And Peace

11. Poems Dealing With Afro-American Folk-Lore: Animal Tales, Proverbs, Superstitions, and the Like.

Campbell, James Edwin: De Cunjah Man

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: The Haunted Oak

Hughes, Langston: Gal's Cry For A Dying Lover

Johnson, Fenton: De Windin' Road; Ethiopia; De Witch 'Ooman; Mistah Witch; In De Benlahlan'

Johnson, J. Weldon: The White Witch

12. Poems Dealing With Folk-Lore Not Indigenous To The Racial Group As A Whole

Brown, Sterling: Frankie and Johnny

Corrothers, James D.: The Negro Singer

Cullen, Countee: One Day We Played A Game; Song of the Rejected Lover

Johnson, Fenton: Down Upon The Palatine; Rome Is Dying; The Gallman's Melody; Kathleen; When I Speak of Jamie; The Passing Indian

Lee, F. J.: A Christian Knight

McClellan, G. M.: The Legend of Tambuzer and Elisabeth

13. Blues Poems: Typical and Distinctive Forms of Blues

Brown, Sterling: Kentucky Blues; Southern Road; New Saint Louis Blues; Tin Roof Blues

Hughes, Langston: Dressed Up; Negro Dancers; Homesick Blues; Bound No'th Blues; Wide River; The Weary Blues; Po' Boy Blues; Night and Morn; Song for a Banjo Dance; Misery; Gypsy Man; A Ruined Gal; Gal's Cry For A Dying Lover; Young Gal's Blues; Hard Daddy; Listen Here Blues; Midwinter Blues; Ma Man

Johnson, Fenton: Howdy Do

Johnson, James Weldon: Songs You Went Away

#### 14. Poems Depicting the Joys and Tragedies of Mulattoes

These poems express the tangles of psychological, philosophical, and sociological griefs and joys of the octoroon, the quadroon, the half-white, the near-white, the mulatto,---all persons of color, whatever the degree, having their status in the American scene legally, socially, and very often economically, within the Negro race.

Brown, Sterling: Children's Children

Braithwaite, William S.: The Mulatto's Song

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: The Deserter: The Mulatto To His Critics

Cullen, Countee: Near-White: Tableau: Two Who Crossed the Line: Uncle Jim

Hughes, Langston: Cross: Mulatto

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: The Octoroon

#### 15. Poems Concerned With Friendship and Love Between Black and White

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: The Deserter

Cullen, Countee: To An Unknown Poet: Tableau: Uncle Jim

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are

Mc Kay, Claude: The Barrier: One Year After

#### 16. Poems of Individual Suffering and Exaltation

The anguish or happiness of the individuals of the poems may be the result of racial ties, but in most of the poems the emotion is too generalised to permit concrete disclosures.

Alexander, Lewis: Negro Woman: Day and Night

Bennett, Gwendolyn: Hatred

Bontemps, Arna: Gethsemane

Braithwaite, William S.: Rhapsody

Brown, Sterling: Salutamus: Rain: Return

Bruce, Richard: Shadow

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: The Day of Freedom; Der Fiddle Is My Comfort; Seek the Lost; The Day of Repentance; The Combat

Cotter, Joseph S., Sr.: The Way-Side Well

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Dreams; I'm A-Waiting and A-Watching; Supplication; Sonnet (I would not tarry...); The Goal; Compensation

Cullen, Countee: Black Magdalene; Saturday's Child; To My Fairer Brethren; Africa; Confession; Lament; The Spark; The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth; Ultima Verba; The Foolish Heart; A Wish; Revelation; The Law That Changeth Not; Yet Do I Marvel; Incident; Heritage; A Song of Sour Grapes; In Memoriam; To One Who Was Cruel

Delaney, Clarissa: Solace

Dickinson, Blanche: Revelation

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: The Debt

Fauset, Jessie: La Vie C' Est La Vie

Griksa, Angelina: The Puppet Player

Hughes, Langston: Fantasy In Purple; Joy; My People; Misery; Closing Time; A Ruined Gal; Song For A Dark Girl; Gal's Cry For A Dying Lover

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Recessional; What Need Have I For Memory? The Heart of A Woman; Sympathy; Contemplation; Pent; Elevation; Peace; Repulse; Youth; Joy; Omega; Tears and Kisses; Where?; Tired; Smothered Fires; Rhythm; Where'er I Lift My Eyes To Bliss; Despair; When I Am Dead; Poetry; Springtide; Pendulum; Retrospect; Glamour; Love's Tendril; My Little Dreams

Lee, F. J.: The Penitent's Resolve; The Curse

Mc Clellan, G. M.: A Faithless Love

Mc Corkle, G. W.: A Prayer; George Edward

Mc Kay, Claude: Desolate; America; On Broadway; The Barrier; Adolescence; The City's Love; Fild May; Harlem Shadows; The White City; In Bondage; Heritage; When I Have Passed Away; Morning Joy; I Shall Return; On A Primitive Canoe; Spring in New Hampshire; Dawn in New York; The Tired Worker; Birds of Prey;

I Know My Soul; The Catawaya; Baptism; Poetry; Tormented; Summer Morn In New Hampshire; French Leave; White Houses

Moore, Wm. H. A.: Dusk Song

Wheatley, Phillis: To The University of Cambridge In New England. 1767; Thoughts On The Works Of Providence; To Captain H---D, of the 65th Regiment; To The Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth. His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State For North America &c.

### 17. Poems of Love and Passion

These poems deal in homely and courtly love, mental and sexual passion, mother-love, the love of children for their parents, love between neighbors and friends, and idealized platonic affection.

Brown, Sterling: Seeking Religion; Georgie Grimes; Challenge

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Mammy's Baby Scared; The Lover's Spat; Forget Me Not; Seek The Lost; The Departure; 'Twas Mother; The Mother's Farewell To Her Son

Clement, Thelma T.: Sentiment

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Is This The Price Of Love?; Then I Would Love You; Memories; Love; Inconstancy; Remembrance; To Florence

Cullen, Countee: The Simple Truth; At A Parting; Bright Bindings; Ghosts; Song In Spite Of Myself; There Must Be Words; Valedictory; One Day I Told My Love; Lesson; Passing Love; Beloved; A Song Of Praise; The Dance Of Love; Oh, For A Little While Be Kind; Spring Reminiscence; Sacrament; Caprice; To One Who Said Me Nay; If You Should Go; Pity The Dead In Love; Lament; Timid Lover; Words To My Love; En Passant; An Old Story; The Spark; Song of the Rejected Lover; Sonnet To A Scornful Lady; If Love Be Staunch; The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth; The Love Tree; Love's Way; The Poet Puts His Heart To School; To Lovers Of Earth; Fair Warning; Lines To My Father; Song; A Poem Once Significant, Now Happily Not; Lines To Our Elders; Youth Sings A Song Of Rosebuds; Variation On A Theme; Open Door; Disenchantment

Cox, John T.: Daddy Knows; My Love; Mother's Last Words

Dett, Nathaniel J.: Draw Nigh Unto Me

Hughes, Langston: Songs To The Dark Virgin; Ariella; Poem (To The Black Beloved) Natcha; Poem (I loved my friend...); Black Pierrot; Beale Street Love

Johnson, Fenton: Beloved: Love's Good Night: Flower Of The Summer Night: Death Of Love: The Lover's Soliloquy: My Love: Can You Tell Me?: In The Evening: And The Hound Is Not For Men To See: Come Along: Wait For Me: De Windin' Road: Prelude: The Parted: To My Father: De Call: Lyrics of Love: Memories: The Clinging Kiss: In Lonely Lan'

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Mate: Emblems: Pages From Life: Recall: Supreme: A Fantasy: Devastation: Walt: I Want To Die While You Love Me

Mc Clellan, G. M.: In The Heart Of A Rose: The Secret: A Serenade: Estranged: Sustaining Hope

Mc Corkle, G. W.: Albertha

Fauset, Jessie: Dead Fires

Mc Girt, James E.: True Love: A Song Of Love: A Test Of Love

Mc Kay, Claude: My Mother: December 1919: Summer Morn In New Hampshire: Heritages To O. E. A.: Romance: Flower Of Love: The Snow Fairy: La Paloma In London: A Memory Of June: Flirtation: Polarity: One Year After: Commemoration: Jealousy: Memorial: Futility: Through Agony

Reese, V. A.: To A Brown Lass

Rodgers, Richard Cecil: A Love Song

Taylor, Harold: Wash Baby

Todd, Walter E.: Mother

#### 18. Poems Expressing Wanderlust or Nostalgia

Brooks, J. Henderson: Remembrance

Brown, Sterling: Odyssey Of Big Boy: Long Gone: Tin Roof Blues

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Take Me Home

Cox, John T.: When My Wife Was A Girl

Davis, Daniel Webster: Ol' Niatia

Hughes, Langston: To A Little Lover-Lass, Dead

Lee, F. J.: Sambo's Trip To Yankee Land

Mc Clellan, G. M.: Heart Yearnings

Mc Kay, Claude: To One Coming North: When Dawn Comes To The City: Outcast: The Tropics In New York: Flame Heart: Home Thoughts: Homing Swallows: North And South: Wild May: The Spanish Needle: My Mother: In Bondage: Winter In The Country: Spring In New Hampshire

Moore, Wm. H. A. It Was Not Fate

Wheatley, Phillis: A Farewell To America: To The Right Honourable William, Earl Of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Principal Secretary Of State For North America

19. Poems On Industry, Trade, Commerce, Labor, and the Professions

Brown, Sterling: Old King Cotton

Harris, Leon R.: The Steel Workers

Hughes, Langston: The Negro

Johnson, Fenton: The Plaint of the Factory Child

Toomer, Jean: Cotton Song

20. Poems Dealing In Classical, Romantic, or Biblical Subject Matter

Bennett, Gwendolyn: Lines At The Grave Of Alexander Dumas

Bontemps, Arna: Lancelot

Braithwaite, William S.: Del Cascar: October XXIX, 1795

Corrothers, James D.: The Negro Singer

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: The Band Of Gideon: Oh, Little David, Play On Your Harp

Callen, Countee: To J. Keats, Poet, At Springtime: Judas Iscariot: To Endymion: To The Three For Whom The Book: That Bright Chimeric Beast: Simon The Cyrenian Speaks: Mary Mother Of Christ: At The Wailing Wall In Jerusalem

Harper, Mrs. Frances E. W.: Moses, A Story Of The Nile: The Sin Of Achan

Johnson, Fenton: Puck Goes To Court: The Marathon Runner: Dream of a Whisper:



Launcelot's Defiance: Waters of Forgetfulness: Dream Song:  
The Vision of Lancelus

Mc Clellan, G. M.: The Feet Of Judas Iscariot

Mc Girt, James K.: The Death of Hector: Herod's Slaughter of the Babes

Ray, H. Cordelia: Niobe: Milton: Shakespeare: Raphael: Beethoven

Rogers, Alex: Why Adam Sinned

Spencer, Anne: Before The Feast Of Shushan: Life-Long, Poor Browning

Wheatley, Phillis: To Maecenas: Goliath of Gath: Isaiah LXIII. 1-8:  
On Recollection: Ode To Neptune: Niobe In Distress For Her  
Children, Slain: By Apollo. From Ovid's Metamorphoses,  
Book VI. And From A View Of The Paintings Of Mr. Richard  
Wilson

## 21. Nature Poems

Babanon, Otto Leland: The Dawn's Awake

Braithwaite, William S.: To A Persian Rose (To E. A. B.): Sea Voices: By An  
Inland Lake: Holly Berry And Mistletoe: A Lyric Of  
Autumn

Brooks, J. Henderson: The Last Quarter Moon Of The Dying Year

Brown, Sterling: After Winter

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: De Signs O' Spring: The Old Mill: The Flowers:  
Winter Is Coming

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Memories: An April Day: November

Cox, John T.: Immortality In Costume: Summer Breeze: Little Sparrow

Cullen, Countee: In The Midst Of Life: Epilogue

Davis, Daniel Webster: A Rose

Dett, Nathaniel J.: To The Sea: An Matin

Griske, Angelina: A June Song

Hale, Edward E.: Life

Hill, Leslie Pinckney: Summer Magic

Hughes, Langston: Winter Moon: Autumn Thought: April Rain Song: Long Trip:

After Many Springs: Water-Front Streets: Sea Calm Seascapes:  
Sea Chants: Winter Moon: Poeme D'Automne: March Moon

Johnson, Audrey: Spring In Carolina

Johnson, Fenton: May: Injun Summah: His Song: Wintuh On De Planteshun:  
Close De Book! The Dying Rose: A Fragment: De April Song:  
The Phantom Rabbit: When April Comes

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Eventide: Posthumous: Modulations

Johnson, Helene: Nature Matures

Johnson, James Weldon: Nether Night

Lowery, L. Doretta: The Wind

Mc Clellan, G. M.: The Path of Dreams: To Hollyhocks: Spring Dawn: Ephemera:  
The Hills of Sevince: Dogwood Blossoms: The April Of Ala-  
bama: A September Night: The Sun Went Down In Beauty:  
The Harvest Moon: A January Dandelion: A Related Ofiolo:  
A Parake of Spring: May Along The Cumberland: Estranged:  
A Butterfly In Church: June: The Bridal Wreath's Lament:  
The Woods Of October: The March's Promise: A Meadow Land:  
In Summer: Lines To Mount Glen

Mc Girt, James E.: Summer Is Gone: The Evening: Winter

Mc Kay, Claude: Flame-Heart: The Easter Flower: The Snow Fairy: Homing Swallows:  
To One Coming North: North And South: The Plateau: Morning Joy:  
After The Winter: The Spanish Needle: Winter In The Country:  
To Winter: Spring In New Hampshire: Birds of Prey: A Red Flower:

Moore, Wm. H. A.: Dusk Song

Nelson, Alice: Snow In October (New Orleans): Sonnet (I had no thought of violets.)

Nivens, W. Blanche: Lights: Tulips

Preer, Hilda: To A Wounded Bird

Rodgers, Richard Cecil: The Skylark and the Slave: Evening

Thompson, Eleanor A.: Triplet (A Wish)

Toomer, Jean: November Cotton Flower: Georgia Dusk: Reapers

Walker, James R.: Sunrise: Busy Bee

Wheatley, Phillis: An Hymn To The Morning: An Hymn To The Evening

22. Poems Decidedly HumorousBenton, A. H.: DisappointmentBrown, Sterling: Macca; Scotty Has His Say; Partners; Slim Lands A Job;  
Slim In AtlantaBurbridge, Charles E.: Amateur NightCarmichael, Waverley Turner: The Favorite Diet; I Ain't Turn Sussie Out;  
Eligia, The Bad Boy; Scolding Baby Boy; The Escort;  
The Night I Went To Church; The Lover's Spat;  
The Invitation; I Am Ma' An' Papa' Baby; When The  
Different Churches Meet; I Use Tar Drea'Cox, John T.: News; Leaving ChurchCullen, Countee: For A Lady I Know; For A Passimist; For A Mouthy Woman;  
An Epitaph (For Amy Lowell); Under The MistletoeJohnson, Fenton: De Mule23. Lyrical Outbursts Without Racial DistinctivenessAllen, George: To MelodyAllen, J. Maud: The Psalm of the UpliftAlexander, Lewis: Japanese HokkuBell, James Madison: Poem (O Liberty, what charm so great...)Bethel, Elaine: Poem (They say that a poem...)Braithwaite, William S.: Sandy Star And Willie Gae; Turn Me To My Yellow Leaves;  
Ironic; LL. D.; Sic VitaBrawley, Benjamin: ChancerBrooks, J. Henderson: Out Of The Dingy Alleyways; God's Masterpiece; Paean;  
And One Shall Live In TwoBrown, Sterling: Telling Fortunes; Mill MountainCarmichael, Waverley Turner: The New Year's Resolve; Sing Out For Peace;  
What Have I Done? EventideClement, Thelma T.: DesireComer, Charles H.: The Life Of The Spirit In The Natural World

- Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Prayer: Dreams: Memories: November: Compensation
- Cullen, Countee: To Lovers of Earth: Fair Warning: Scandal and Gossip: An Epitaph (For Amy Lowell): I Have A Rendezvous With Life: Wisdom Cometh With The Years: Epitaphs: A Song Of Sear Graves: She Of The Darning Feet Sings: Caprice: The Wise: On Going: Pity The Deep In Love: One Day We Played A Game: En Passant: An Old Story: Little Sonnet To Little Friends: Light Lady: The Wind And The Weather: The Street Called Crooked: Therefore, Adieu: The Proud Heart: Two Poets: Suicide Chant: Requiem: To John Keats, Poet, At Springtime: Nocturne: The Touch: Thoughts In A Zoo: Love's Way: Portrait of a Lover: Cor Cordium Protest: Advice to a Beauty: To Endymion: Leaves
- Dett, Nathaniel J.: The Rubinstein Staccato Etude: An Soir
- Dunbar, Paul Laurence: Ships That Pass In The Night: Ere Sleep Comes Down To Soothe The Weary Eyes: Life
- Dunbar-Nelson, Alice: Sonnet (I had no thought of violets...)
- Fauset, Jessie: Words, Words: Touches: Noblesse Oblige: La Vie C' Est La Vie
- Gibbs, Leonidas: The Organ Recital
- Green, William H.: Triplet (I /m Happy To-Day)
- Grimke, Angelina: Your Hands: The Eyes of My Regret: Hushed By The Hands of Sleep
- Harper, Mrs. Frances E. W.: Truth
- Hill, Leslie Pickney: To William James
- Hughes, Langston: The Dream Keeper: Quiet Girl: Fairies: Winter Sweetness: A Farewell: Carribbean Sunset: Young Sailor: Death of an Old Sailor: Troubled Woman: Suicide's Note: Sick Room: After Many Springs: Prayer: Sailor: Poem (We have tomorrow.....): Poem (I loved my friend...): The Consumptive: Demand
- Johnson, C. B.: So Much
- Johnson, Fenton: Swinburne: Baby: Abandoned: The Magic-Master: The Lost Summer: Revers: The Lonely Piper: The Golden City: Voices of the Dusk: Spinning: The Woman Of My Dreams: Your Soul And Mine: Miracles
- Johnson, Georgia Douglas: The Return: Gleanings: Illusions: Reconnoiss: In Quest: Foredoom: Memory: Inevitably: The Measure: Thrall: Query: Mirrored: Quest: Weather: Dawn: Dead Leaves: Gossamer: The Dreams of the Dreamer: The Heart Of A Woman
- Kelly, Katie: A Lyric
- Lucas, Portia: Laughter

Margetson, George Reginald: The Light of Victory

Mc Kay, Claude: The Plateau: The Wild Goats: Heritages: When I Have Passed Away: I Shall Return: Morning Joy: Like A Strong Tree: Subway Wind: The Night Fire: To A Poet: Poetry: A Prayer: Absence: Courage: O Word I Love To Sing: Tormented: French Leave: Thirst

Newsome, Effie Lee: Sky Pictures: The Quilt: Sassafras Tea

Nivens, W. Blanche: The End

Ray, H. Cordelia: The Two Musicians: The Poet's Ministrants

Robinson, Alice: Triplet (How Can I Forget?)

Spencer, Anne: Substitution: Guesting: At The Carnival

Thompson, Eleanor A.: My Mother

Toomer, Jean: Face

Weiss, Edna May: Commencement

Wheatley, Phillis: On Virtue: On The Death Of A Young Gentleman: On Imagination: To A Lady On Her Coming To North America With Her Son, For The Recovery Of Her Health: To A Lady On Her Remarkable Preservation In A Hurricane In North Carolina: A Rebus. By I. B.

Whitman, ~~Abel~~Hyrb.: The Hero

Williams, Lucy Ariel: J'ai Peur

#### 24. Poems Expressing Individual or Racial Philosophy

Within these poems are the expressed theories of ambition, of stoical calm and lazy indifference to life, of the "rolling stone" idea, of desire for Epicurean amenities, of a state of being self-contained.

Brooks, J. Henderson: Self-Indictment: Sonnet (Though You Have Hurt...): Sonnet (I Pity You...): Still I Am Marveling: Comfort Ye My People

Brown, Ethel: Triplet ('Tis Difficult)

Brown, Sterling: Revelations: Old Man Buzzard: Riverbank Blues: Harlem Street Walkers: Sporting Peasley

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: 'Tain't No Need O' Women Worrin': A Word To Ethiopia: It's All Through Life: Snow Hill: The Flower:

Labor On; Good After Ill; "You'll Reap What You Sow";  
Move On; The Mother's Farewell To Her Son; When The Way  
Seems Dark

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Ego; Dreams; Sonnet (And Thou art One...)

Cox, John T.: The Half Has Not Yet Been Told; Service; A Plea To The Young;  
What's The Use?; Looks Won't Put You Through; The Women

Cullen, Countee: Tribute; Nothing Endures; Minutely Hurt; By Their Fruits;  
A Miracle Demanded; Tongue-Tied; Asked And Answered; Self-  
Criticism; A Song No Gentleman Would Sing To Any Lady;  
A Thorn Forever In The Breast; For A Brown Girl; For An  
Evolutionist And His Opponent; Wisdom Cometh With The Years;  
She Of The Dancing Feet Sings; Bread And Wine; Suicide Chant;  
Advice To Youth; For A Philosopher; The Wise; Dialogue;  
To My Friends; Harsh World That Lashes Me; Requiescam;  
En Passant; The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth; Ultimatum

Dett, Nathaniel J.: Bagatelle

Hayes, Erskine: The Child

Hughes, Langston: Dreams; Reasons Why; Song (Lovely, dark, and lonely one...);  
Youth; Dream Variation; Walkers With The Dawn; Negro Dancers;  
Black Pierrot; Passing Love; Song For A Banjo Dance; Misery;  
Hard Luck; Suicide; Bad Man; Gypsy Man; Brass Spitoons;  
A New Cabaret Girl; Prize Fighter; Ballad Of Gin Mary;  
Death Of Do Dirty; A Rounder's Song; Elevator Boy; Saturday Night;  
Moan; Magnolia Flowers; Jazz Band In A Parisian Cafe; Lament  
Over Love; Song For A Dark Girl; Gal's Cry For A Dying Lover

Hunter, Oliva M.: Spring Is Here!

Johnson, Georgia Douglas: Souvenir; Transpositions; The Willow; Deluge; Gilead;  
Isolation

Johnson, Fenton: The Ethiopian's Song; Fiddlah Ike; Protest; Questions;  
Dreamin' Lan'

Lee, F. J.: Forget; Ode To Life

Love, Miles: Triolet (You Never Can Tell)

Margetson, George Reginald: The Fledgling Bard; The Poetry Society

Mc Corkle, G. W. Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are

Mc Kay, Claude: The Wild Goat; In Bondage; I Shall Return; I Know My Soul;  
Baptism; Courage; Like A Strong Tree

Pickett, Herbert G.: Hard Is A Horse To Ride

Reese, V. A.: Songs Of The Dusky Worker

Toomer, Jean: Song Of The Son

Williams, Lucy Ariel: Apples: Northbourn'

25. Poems Concerned With So-Called African Rhythms

The poems within this grouping may concern ancient tribal fires, the call of the tom-toms, jungle ways in love and hate, the call of cool pools in dense forests, the smell of Numa, a longing for the racial primitive.

Cullen, Countee: A Song Of Praise: Heritage

Haines, Elwood Lindsay: Bokari's Wives: Women: Steamer: Something More: Spirits: African Snapshots

Hughes, Langston: Drum: Afro-American Fragment: Afraid: Fantasy In Purple: Poem (For The Portrait Of An African Boy After The Manner of Gauguin): African Dance

Mc Kay, Claude: Africa: On A Primitive Canoe: Outcast

26. Poems Based On The Poetical Significance Of Death

Braithwaite, William S.: Scintilla: She Sleeps Beneath The Winter Snow

Brooks, J. Henderson: Song For A Love That Is Dead

Brown, Sterling: Funeral: Thoughts Of Death: Against That Day

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: In The Hour Of Death

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: I'm A-Waiting And A-Watching: Sonnet (I Would Not Tarry)

Cullen, Countee: On A Brown Girl Dead: On Going: Requiescam: In Spite Of Death: Tereody For A Brown Girl: Two Thoughts Of Death

Dandridge, Raymond G.: Time To Die

Dunbar, Paul Laurence: A Death Song

Harper, Mrs. Frances E. W.: The Bride Of Death

Hughes, Langston: Dear Lonely Death: Tower: Two Things: Young Bride: Mummy

Johnson, Fenton: De Po' Ol' Man: Lif' Up De Spade: Spinning: The Song Of The Passing: At The Grave Of Mandy

Love, Miles: Balld

Mc Clellan, G. M.: In Memory of Katie Reynolds. Drink

Rodgers, Richard Cecil: Death

Wheatley, Phillis: On The Death Of F. C., An Infant; A Funeral Poem On The Death Of G. E., An Infant Of Twelve Months; To A Lady And Her Children On The Death Of Her Son And Their Brother; To A Gentleman And Lady On The Death Of The Lady's Brother And Sister And A Child Named Avis, Aged One Year; On The Death Of Dr. Samuel Marshall, 1771; To A Gentleman On His Voyage To Great Britain For The Recovery Of His Health; To A Clergyman On The Death Of His Lady; To A Lady On The Death Of Three Relations; To A Lady On The Death Of Her Husband; On The Death Of A Young Gentleman; On The Death Of A Young Lady Five Years Of Age; On The Death Of The Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, 1770; On The Death Of Reverend Doctor Sewall, 1769

## 27. Poems Based On Spirituals

These poems are, on the whole, constructed from or upon the form, message, words, or thought, of the American Negro spirituals.

Brown, Sterling: When De Saints Go Ma'ching Home

Carmichael, Waverley Turner: Sleep On, Ye Happy Souls; Run On Home

Cotter, Joseph S., Jr.: Oh Little David, Play On Your Harp

Johnson, Fenton: A Plantation Christmas; The Lonely Mother; De Po' Ol' Man; John Crossed The Island; Shout, My Brother, Shout; Sing Hallelujah; Slave Death Song; Song Of The Whirlwind; My God In Heaven Said To Me; The Prodigal Son; Song Of Revulsion; Plantation Sermon

## 28. Poetical Epitaphs

Countee Cullen delights in employing the crisp form of the epitaph for poetical expression. Many of his poetical epitaphs are humorous; most of them are philosophical and ironical, as well.

Cullen, Countee: For A Poet; For My Grandmother; For A Cynic; For A Singer; For A Virgin; For A Lady I Know; For A Lovely Lady; For An Atheist; For An Evolutionist And His Opponent; For An Anarchist; For A Magician; For A Pessimist; For A Mouthy



Woman: For A Philosopher: For An Unsuccessful Sinner:  
For A Fool: For One Who Gayly Sowed His Oats: For A  
Skeptic: For A Fatalist: For Daughters Of Magdalen:  
For A Wanton: For A Preacher: For One Who Died Singing  
Of Death: For John Keats, Apostle Of Beauty: For Hazel  
Hall, American Poet: For Paul Laurence Dunbar: For Joseph  
Conrad: For Myself: For All The Dead: For Amy Lowell

## APPENDIX II

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. History, Criticism, Sociological Treatises, Scientific Investigations

The Following books are listed according to authors, in alphabetical order.

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American Anti-Slavery Almanac, The, Vol. 1, No. 1. (For 1836-37-38 & 40.) Being Bisextile or Leap-Year, and the 60th of American Independence. Calculated for Boston, New York and Pittsburgh, and adapted to Most Parts of the United States. Boston: Published by Webster and Southard.

American Unitarian Association, 1905, From Servitude to Service---Being the Old South Lectures on the History and Work of Southern Institutions for the Education of the Negro. Boston, 1905.

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Blyden, W. E. African Life and Customs. London: C. M. Phillips, 1908.  
A Scholarly Vindication of African Folk-Ways.

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A valuable interpretative historical survey.

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- Bruce, John Edward. Short Biographical Sketches of Eminent Negro Men and Women in Europe and the United States, With Brief Extracts From Their Writing and Public Utterances. Inscribed to the Negro Youth of America, in the Humble Hope That They May Stimulate a Reverence For the Virtues and an Imitation of the Examples Here Set Forth. Yonkers, N. Y., 1910.
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The Messenger. Published monthly at 2311 Seventh Avenue, New York City, J. Philip Randolph, editor. A journal that began as an expression of Negro radicalism, but which has shifted from the strict economic radicalism to a program of independent criticism and reportorial features.

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The Southern Workman. Published monthly at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia. A journal representing the Southern educational field and other activities.

- Matthews, Elsie Collins. Aunt Phoebe, Uncle Tom and Others. Character Studies Among the Old Slaves of the South, Fifty Years After. Illustrated with photographs made by the author in the cabins and on the plantation. Columbus, Ohio, 1915.
- Merriss, G. S. The Negro and the Nation. 1906.
- Morton, Beatrice Lena. Negro Poetry in America. Boston: The Stratford Co., 1926. Gives a general survey of the development of American Negro poetry from the pre-Civil War to the present time.
- Moton, Robert Russa. What The Negro Thinks. New York: Doubleday Doran, 1929.
- Muret, M. Literature of the African Negroes. Popular Science Monthly 53:241, 1898
- Negro Literature. An Anthology Of American. The Modern Library, n. d.
- Negroes. On Writing About. Journal of Negro Life 3:227, August, 1925.
- Pickens, William. The New Negro, His Political, Civic, and Mental Status. Chicago: Neale Publishing Company, 1916.
- Price, John Ambrose. The Negro, Past, Present, and Future. N. Y. and Washington 190
- Proctor, Henry Hugh. Between Black and White. Autobiographical Sketches. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1925.
- Puckett, Newbell Miles. Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1926.
- Rogers, J. A. From Superman To Man. New York: Lenox Publishing Company, 1917. A polemic on the notion of race superiority.
- Roman, Charles V. American Civilization and the Negro. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1916. The Afro-American in relation to progress.
- Schomburg, Arthur Alfonso. A Bibliographical Check List of American Negro Poets. New York, 1916.
- Seligman, C. G. Races of Africa. London: T. Butterworth, Ltd., 1930.
- Spencer, Herbert. Descriptive Sociology: African Races or Groups of Sociological Facts. Compiled and Abstracted by Prof. David Duncan. Classified and Arranged by Spencer. New York: D Appleton and Company, 1875.
- Stanford, Rev. P. Thomas. The Tragedy of the Negro In America. A condensed history of the enslavement, sufferings, emancipation, present condition and progress of the Negro race in the U. S. Boston: Charles A. Watson, Printer, 1897.

- Tandy, Jeannette Reid. Pro-Slavery Propaganda in American Fiction of the Fifties. South Atlantic Quarterly 21:41-50, 170-8; January, April, 1922.
- Tillinghast, Joseph Alexander. The Negro in Africa and America. American Economic Association, Macmillan Company, New York, May, 1902. Publications of the Association, Third Series, Vol. III, No. 2.
- Van Doren, Carl. Negro Renaissance. Century 111:653-7, March, 1926.
- The Younger Generation of Negro Writers. Journal of Negro Life, May 2, 1924.
- Washington, Booker T. The Story of the Negro, The Rise of the Race From Slavery. Vol. 1. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1909.
- Washington, Booker T. and Du Bois, W. E. B. The Negro in the South. His economic progress in relation to his moral and religious development. The William Levi Bull Lectures for 1907. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, 1907.
- Weatherford, W. D. The Negro From Africa To America. New York: Doren, 1924.
- Present Forces In Negro Progress. New York: Association Press (Y. M. C. A. National Council), 1912.
- Wegelin, Oscar. Jupiter Hanson, American Negro Poet: Selections From His Writings and a Bibliography. (Heartman's Historical Series No. 13.) New York: C. F. Heartman Company, 1915.
- Werner, D. Leeds. The Idea of Union in American Verse. (Thesis) Library of Congress Inspection Copy.
- Wheatley, Phillis. Six Broadides Relating To Phillis Wheatley (Phillis Peters) With Portrait and Facsimile of her Handwriting. New York: Twenty-five copies printed for C. F. Heartman, 1915. (The author's of these broadsides cannot be ascertained. Since C. F. Heartman is neither the author, nor even the editor of this collection, the listing is placed under Wheatley.)
- White, Newman I. American Negro Poetry. South Atlantic Quarterly 20:304-22, October, 1921.
- Racial Feeling in Negro Poetry. South Atlantic Quarterly 21:14-29, January, 1922.
- Willets, Gilson. After Fifty Years of Freedom. Alexander's Magazine, Boston, 1905. November 15, No. 7.
- Williams, Joseph J. Voodoo and Obeahs, Phases of West India Witchcraft. New York: Lincoln Mc Veagh, Dial Press, Inc., 1932.
- Woodson, Carter G. Free Negro Herds of Families in the U. S. in 1830, Together with a brief Statement on the Free Negro. Washington: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., 1925.

The Journal of Negro History. Vol. 1, Nos. 1-5, January -October, 1916. Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. Washington, D. C.

Work, John Wesley. Folk Songs of the American Negro. Nashville, Tennessee: University Press, 1915.

Work, Monroe M. A Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America. Tuskegee Institute (Ala.) New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1926.

Negro Year Book. An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1931-1932. Tuskegee Institute, 1931.

## 2. Publications of the Greater Negro Poets

The publications are listed according to the date of birth of each author; the authors are listed alphabetically under the year dates. All anthologies of Negro poetry have been listed according to year of publication.

1720; Hammon, Jupiter. An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ, with penitential cries; composed by Jupiter Hammon, a Negro belonging to Mr. Lloyd of Queen's Village, Long Island, the 25th of December, 1760. A Broadside of 88 lines, printed in double column and having the word "Finis" at the bottom.

1753: Wheatley, Phillis. Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a native of Africa and a slave, dedicated to the friends of the Africans. 4 lines quotation. 2d ed. Boston. Light and Horton, 1 and 3 Cornhill. Samuel Harris, printer. 1835. 110 pp.

Poems on various subjects, religious and moral, by Phillis Wheatley, a Negro servant to Mr. John Wheatley of Boston in New England. London. Reprinted in New England, 1816. 103 pp.

1797: Horton, George Moses. The Black Post. Rev. by Capt. W. W. S. Banks, 9th Michigan cavalry, and compiled by Wm. B. Smith and Company, Raleigh, N. C. Southern Banks and Fireside Book Publishing House. 1865. 100 pp.

Hymns Of Liberty. Raleigh, N. C.: J. Gales and Son, 1829. 30 pp.

Poetical Works of the Colored Bard of North Carolina, To Which Is Prefixed The Life Of The Author, Written By Himself. Hillsborough, N. C. 1845. 96 pp.

1811: Payne, Daniel Alexander. Pleasures, and Other Miscellaneous Poems. Baltimore, Maryland: Sherwood and Company, 1850.



- 1825: Harper, Mrs. Frances Ellen Watkins. Forest' Leaves. Baltimore: The Author, 1885.
- Lyrics of the Bible. Philadelphia: The Author, 1895. 64 pp.
- Miscellaneous Poems. Boston: The Author 1854.
- Moses: A Story of the Nile. Philadelphia: Merrihew and Son, 1869. 47 pp.
- Poems. Philadelphia: Merrihew and Son, 1871. 48 pp.
- Poems. Philadelphia: The Author, 1900. vi, 90 pp.
- Poems On Miscellaneous Subjects. Philadelphia: The Author, 1857. 48 pp.
- 1826: Bell, James Madison. The Day and the War. San Francisco, 1864.
- The Poetical Works of James Madison Bell. Lansing, Michigan: Press of Wynkoop Halsbeck Crawford Company, 1901. Twenty-seven poems devoted mostly to Negro freedom.
- The Progress of Liberty. San Francisco, 1886.
- 1856: Fortune, Timothy Thomas. Dreams of Life. New York: Fortune and Peterson Company, 1905. 192 pp.
- 1857:
- Whitman, Albery A. An Idyl of the South: an Epic Poem in Two Parts. New York: Metaphysical Publishing Company, 1901. 126 pp. Contents: Part: I: The Cataract; Part II: The Southland's Charm and Freedom's Magnitude.
- Not A Man and Yet A Man. Springfield, O.: Republic Printing Company, 1877. 254 pp. Lengthy poems.
- Twaginta's Seminoles, or, The Rape of Florida. Rev. ed. St. Louis. Nixon Jones Company, 1885. 95 pp. Best known.
- 1859: Corbett, Maurice E. The Horn Of Ethiopia. Nashville, Tennessee: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1914. 275 pp. Epic poem, 7500 unrhymed lines, narrating entire history of the Negro in America.
- 1860: Mc Clellan, George Marion. The Path Of Dreams. Louisville, Kentucky: J. P. Morton Company, 1916. 76 pp.
- Poems and Skeriettes. Nashville, Tennessee: The Author. 1895. 145 pp.
- 1860: Mc Corkle, George Washington. Poems of Perpetual Memory.
- 1861:
- Cotter, Joseph Seamon. Links of Friendship. Louisville, Kentucky: Bradley and Gilbert Company, 1898. 64 pp.

1863:

Kelly, Miller. Out of the House of Bondage. Chicago: Neale and Company, 1914.

1868: Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. The Gift of Black Folk. The Negroes in the Making of America. Boston: The Stratford Company, 1924.

The Souls Of Black Folk. Chicago: Mc Clurg, 1898. A classic of intimate spiritual interpretation of the Negro.

1871: Johnson, James Weldon. Fifty Years And After and Other Poems. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1917. xiv, 93 pp.

God's Trombones. Seven Negro Sermons in verse. New York: The Viking Press, 1927. 56 pp. The first, an important contribution on the middle period of Negro poetry, and the latter, one of the outstanding contributions of the recent school.

1872: Dunbar, Paul Lawrence. Collected Poems. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1920.

1875: Allen, J. Ford. Rhymes, Tales and Rhymed Tales. Topeka Kansas: Monotyped by Crane and Company, 1906.

1876: Jones, Joshua Henry, Jr. The Heart of the World. Poems. Boston: The Stratford Company, 1919. 82 pp.

Poems of the Four Seas. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1921. 52 pp.

1878: Braithwaite, William Stanley. House of Falling Leaves, With Other Poems. Boston: J. W. Luce and Company, 1908. xi, 112 pp.

Lyrics of Life and Love. Boston: H. B. Turner Co., 1904. 80 pp

Sandy Star and Other Poems. Boston: The Brimmer Company, 1928. The original poems of the well-known poetry critic and editor of the Anthologies of Magazine Verses.

1880: Hill, Leslie Pinckney. The Wings of Oppression. Boston: The Stratford Company, 1921.

Toussaint L' Overture. A Dramatic History In Five Acts. Boston: The Christopher Press, 1928.

1879: Watkins, Lucian B. Voices of Solitude. Chicago. The Author, 1903.

1880: Johnson, Charles Bertram. Songs of My People. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918. 55 pp.

Johnson, Charles S. (Ed.) Ebony and Ivory. A Collection. New York: Opportunity (Journal of Negro Life) Press, 1927. 164 pp.

1882: Dandridge, Raymond Garfield. Pencil'd Poems. Cincinnati, Ohio: 1917.

The Poet and Other Poems. Cincinnati, Ohio: 1920.

- 1882: Dett, Nathaniel J. Negro Spirituals. 3 volumes. New York: John Church Company, 1919.
- The Album of a Heart. n. p. 1911.
- 1886: Hawkins, Walter Everette. Chords and Discords: Poems. Boston: R. G. Badger (Gorham Press) 1920. 100 pp.
- Jamison, Roscoe C. Negro Soldiers and Other Poems. St. Joseph, Missouri: W. F. Neil, 1918. 16 pp.
- 1887: Margateon, George Reginald. Flagging Bard and the Poetry Society. Boston: R. Badger Company (Gorham Press). 1916. 111 pp.
- Songs Of Life. Boston: 1910. Twenty-six poems.
- 1888: Johnson, Fenton. Visions of the Dusk. New York: The Author, 1915. 71 pp.  
Songs of the Soil. Chicago: The Author, 1916. Poems of protest and radical expression. Volume has 41 poems.
- A Little Dreaming. Chicago: Peterson Company, 1914. (59 Poems)
- 1889: Mc Kay, Claude. Harlem Shadows. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922. A representative present generation poet.
- 1895: Cotter, Joseph Seamon, Jr. The Band of Gideon and Other Lyrics. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918. 29 pp.
- 1901: Brown, Sterling. Southern Road. Harcourt, Brace, 1932.
- 1902: Hughes, Langston. The Weary Blues. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926.
- Fine Clothes To The Jew. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.
- The Negro Mother and Other Poems. Dramatic Recitals. New York: The Golden Stair Press. n. d.
- Scottishers Limited. New York: The Golden Stair Press, n. d.
- 1903: Cullen, Countee. Color. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925.
- Copper Sun. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925.
- Caroling Dusk, An Anthology. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927.
- Ballad of the Brown Girl. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927.
- The Black Christ and Other Poems. New York: 1929.
- 1914: Lavieaux, Leon. Ebon Muse and Other Poems. (Tr. J. M. O' Hara) Portland, Maine: 1914. Most brilliant of contemporary foreign Negro poets.

- 1922: Johnson, James Weldon, (Ed.) The Book of American Negro Poetry. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922. / comprehensive anthology of Negro poetry, with a valuable introduction on "Negro Creative Genius."
- 1923: Kerlin, Robert Thomas. Negro Poets and Their Poems. Washington: Associated Publishers, 1923. xv, 285 pp.
- 1924: White, Newman I. An Anthology of Verse by American Negroes. Edited with a critical introduction, biographical sketches of the authors, and bibliographical notes by Newman I. White..... and Walter Clinton Jackson. Durham, N. C.: Trinity College Press, 1924. xi, 250 pp.
- 1925: Youth Snacks, Poems. By Countee Cullen, Anne Spencer, Angelina Grimke, Claude Mc Key, Jean Toomer, and Langston Hughes. Survey Graphic, 53:660-3, March, 1925.
- 1926: Handy, W. C. and Hiles, A. B. Elmer: An Anthology of Jazz. New York: York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1926.
- 1927: Lock, Alain, (Ed.) Four Negro Poets. Pamphlet Poets Series. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1927. / popular handbook of the most representative Negro verse.
- 1931: Bryson, Clarence F. and Robinson, James H. Dunde, Anthology of (Negro) Poetry by Cleveland Negro Youth. Cleveland: The January Club, 1931.
- 1932: Voorhees, Lillian Welch, (Ed.) The Brown Thrush, Anthology of verse by Negro students, Talladega College, Tougaloo College, edited in conjunction with Robert. W. O'Brien. Claremont, California: Lawson-Roberts Publishing Company, 1932.

### 3. Publications of Lesser Negro Poets

The publications are listed according to the year of publication of the poems of each poet; when the poet has published in more than one year the earliest date has been used as heading and the subsequent years are noted afterward. The dates of birth of these poets are not known; the best anthologies and histories of Negro literature do not furnish these dates. Many of these poets (verse-writers) are "Broadside" and Pamphlet Poets, assuming no importance as writers other than as contributors to sociological and racial expression.

- 1841: Essays. Including biographies and miscellaneous pieces, in prose and poetry. by Ann Plato. Hartford: Printed for the author, 1841. xx, 122 pp.
- 1874: Simpson, J. Mc. The Emancipation Car. Being an original composition of anti-slavery ballads, composed exclusively for the Underground Railroad. Zanesville, Ohio: 1874. 152 pp.

- 1887: Rowe, George Clinton. Thoughts In Verse; Poems. Charleston, S. C.: 1887.
- 1890: Rowe, George Clinton. Our Heroes. Patriotic poems on men, women, and sayings of the Negro race. Charleston, S. C.: Walker, Evans, and Cogswell Company. 1890. 68 pp.
- 1895: Bibb, Eloise. Poems. Boston: Monthly Review Press, 1895.
- Campbell, James E. Echoes From the Cabin and Elsewhere. Chicago: The Author, Donohue and Henneberry, 1895. 86 pp.
- 1897: Davis, Daniel Webster. Wah Down Song. New York: Herrick and Co. 1897. 133 pp.
- Fordham, Mary Weston. Magnolia Leaves. Charleston, S. C.: The Author. 1897. 104 pp.
- 1901: Mc Girt, James E. Avenge The Maine and Other Poems. Philadelphia: George F. Lisher, 1901. 119 pp.
- Some Simple Songs and a Few More Ambitious Attempts. Philadelphia: The Author, 1901. 72 pp.
- Toomey, Richard E. S. Thoughts For True Americans. Washington, D. C.: Neale Publishing Company. 1901.
- 1902: Rodgers, B. C. Day Dreams From Dixie. H. N. & A. I.: Hampton, 1902.
- 1904: Dinkin, Charles E. Lyrics of Love, Sacred and Secular. Columbia, S. C.: The Author, 1904. 230 pp.
- Johnson, H. T. Wings of Ebony. Philadelphia: African Methodist Episcopal Publishing House, 1904.
- 1905: Brawley, Benjamin G. The Problem and Other Poems. Atlanta, Georgia: The Author, 1905. 18 pp.
- Ford, Robert E. Brown Chapel: A Story in Verse. n. p. The Author, 1905. 307 pp.
- 1906: Hale, Edward E. For Christmas and the New Year. Privately printed for the Holidays, 1906.
- Mc Girt, James E. For Your Sweet Sake. Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1906.
- 1907: Harleston, E. Nathaniel. The Toller's Life. Philadelphia: 1907. 238 pp.  
Shackelford, William H.:  
Pearls in Prose and Poetry. Nashville, Tennessee: African Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union Press, 1907.

- 1910: Ray, Henriette Cordelia. Poems. New York: Grafton Press, 1910. 169 pp.  
Sonnets. n. p., n. d.
- 1911: Brawley, Benjamin G. The Dawn and Other Poems. Washington: The Author, 1911.
- Jones, Edward Smyth. The Sylvan Cabin: A Centenary Ode On The Birth Of Lincoln, And Other Verses. Boston: Sherman, French, and Company, 1911. 96 pp.
- Shakelford, Otis M. Seeking The Best. "An autobiography. Ten chapters of true stories....Bits of history in verse....Essays and Poems." Kansas City: 1911.
- 1912: Todd, Walter E. Gathered Treasures. Washington, D. C.: Murray Bros., 1912.
- 1914: Dancer, Wm. E. To-Day and Yistiddy. Poems in dialect. Tuskegee Institute, The Author, 1914.
- 1915: Johnson, Adolphus. The Silver Chord: Poems. Philadelphia: The Author, 1915. 48 pp.
- Means, Sterling M. The Deserted Cabin and Other Poems. Atlanta: A. C. Caldwell and Company, 1915. 96 pp.
- Shackelford, Wm. H. Poems. Nashville, Tennessee: African Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union Press, 1915.
- 1916: Battle, Mrs. Effie T. Gleanings From Dixie Land. Okolona, Mississippi: The Author, 1916. 25 pp.
- 1917: Dancer, Wm. E. Facta, Fama, and Fiction. 4th ed. Jacksonville, Florida: The Author, 1917. Is made up generally of poems written during the World War, which, while generally dealing with some local event, touch upon the conditions brought about in the South by the War and the migration. The most noted, 'notorious' poem in the book is Farewell, We're Good and Gone, which tells why the Negroes were leaving the South.
- 1918: Carmichael, Waverley Turner. From the Heart of a Folk: A Book of Songs. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918. 60 pp.
- Johnson, Georgia Douglas. The Heart of a Woman and Other Poems. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918. xii, 62 pp.
- 1919: Holloway, J. W. From the Desert. New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1919. 147 pp.
- Means, Sterling M.:  
The Black Devils and Other Poems. Louisville, Kentucky: Pentecostal Publishing Company, 1919. 56 pp. (To the nine hundred thousand black troops who fought in France and Flanders.)

- 1920: Fleming, Mrs. Sarah Lee Brown. Florida and Sunshine. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1920. 58 pp.
- 1922: Johnson, Georgia Douglas. Bronze. A Book of Verse. The Brimmer Company, 1922. 101 pp. The leading woman Negro poet.
- Talley, T. W. Cabin Memories. Four Spirituals. New York: Fisher, 1921.
- Negro Folk Rhymes, Wise and Otherwise. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922.
- 1923: Fulton, David B. Mother of Mine. Ode to the Negro woman. New York: Harlem Printing Studio, 1923.
- Williams, Henry Roger. Heart Throbs. Poems of Race Inspiration. Mobile, Alabama: Gulf City Printing Company, 1923. 80 pp.
- 1925: Wiggins, Bernice Love. Tearsful Tales. El Paso, Texas: The Author, 1925. 174 pp.
- 1926: Harrison, James M. Southern Sunshine. Richmond, Virginia: The Saint Luke Press, 1926. 10 pp.
- 1927: Flanagan, Thomas Jefferson. The Road to Mount Ma Kithan. Atlanta, Georgia: The Author, 1927.
- Witherspoon, J. William. A Breath of the Muse. A Volume of Poetic Browsers Containing Several Prose Writings. Columbia, S. C.: Hampton Publishing Company, 1927. 132 pp.
- 1928: Haines, Elwood Lindsey. Poems of the African Trail. Milwaukee: The Morhouse Publishing Company, 1928.

VITA

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1930-1932, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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