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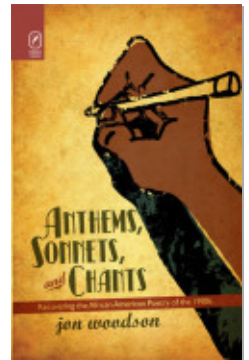
Published by

Woodson, Jon.

Anthems, Sonnets, and Chants: Recovering the African American Poetry of the 1930s.

The Ohio State University Press, 2010.

Project MUSE. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/24279>.



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Index

- African Americans: and Italo-
Ethiopian War, 146–50, 152, 153;
during the 1930s, 2, 6–7, 17–19,
140, 187, 191
“Air Raid,” (Hughes), 158–60
American jeremiad, 15, 17, 69–70
antimodernism, 166
ascent and decline, theory of, 63–64
- Baxter, J. Harvey L., 147, 160–61, 162,
163–65, 166, 182–84, 186, 187
Benjamin, Walter, 143
blues, the, 80, 84–85, 89, 95
body-self discourse, 88
Brown, Sterling, 4–6, 172. See also
The Negro Caravan
- Christian, Marcus, 109, 110–13,
124–25, 126, 129–33, 134, 135,
140
Cullen, Countee, 84–85
- Davis, Arthur P., 3, 14
Davis, Frank Marshall, 6
Decline of the West (Spengler), 12
documentary realism, 37, 86, 172
Dodson, Owen, 15, 17–20, 35–36,
37, 38, 39, 46, 85; documentary
elements, 161, 172–74, 175; social
realism, 6, 10–11; Spengler influ-
ence, 40–45, 47
- Du Bois, W. E. B., 119–20, 121–22,
134–35
- Ethiopia, 144, 153, 154
existential crisis, 11, 91, 92–95,
106–10
- “Flag Salute” (Popel), 192–93
- Great Depression, 2, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16,
19, 21
- Harlem Renaissance, 1, 2, 3
Harlem riot of 1935, 151, 152–53
Hayden, Robert: and *The Negro
Caravan*, 6
Hughes, Langston, 1, 118–19, 120–22,
148–49, 150, 154–55; “Air Raid,”
158–60; and Italo-Ethiopian War,
148–49, 150, 153–54, 155, 159,
172, 177–79; poetry of, 7, 21,
106–7, 108, 117–18, 121–24, 141,
156–58; satire, 179–82; use of cin-
ematic images, 155–58. See also
The Negro Caravan
- Hurston, Zora Neale, 1
- identity, self-fashioning of, 11, 70, 71,
80, 171

- ideology, 3
interiority, 90
isolationism, 144
Italo-Ethiopian War, 142–46, 147;
 African American poetry and,
 142–44, 147, 153–55, 172; conclu-
 sion, 177; and racial identity, 148, 153,
 154–55; response to, 144, 145, 146,
 147, 148–49, 150–52, 153–54, 168–69,
 171, 187–88
- Jenkins, Welborn Victor, 10, 47–51, 172
Johnson, James Weldon, 2
- League of Nations, 143–44, 176, 183, 184,
 185, 188
Lee, Ulysses, 3
lynching, theme of, 69–70, 131, 191
- Mayakovsky, Vladimir, 155–56
McDonogh, John, 124–25, 126
McKay, Claude, 99–100, 152
media, 24–25, 72–73, 146
modernity, 173, 189, 195
- Negro Caravan, The* (Brown, Davis, Lee),
 3–4, 5–6, 7, 14
“Negro History: A Sonnet Sequence”
 (Dodson), 35–36, 37, 38
Negro Poetry and Drama (Brown), 4–5
New Negro Movement, 7, 19–20
- poetry, African American, 1–3, 5, 6–7,
 11, 14, 69, 126, 136, 159–61, 171–72,
 191; media and, 159–60; modernity
 of, 135; new realism, 85–86, 88, 192;
 recovery of, 1, 2, 3, 7–9, 195–96;
 during the 1930s, 6–7, 9, 90, 140, 191;
 and subjectivity, 73, 170, 171; themes,
 6–7, 13, 14, 46, 124–25, 127, 134–35,
 136–68, 159–61
- Popel, Esther, 191, 192–93
Pound, Ezra, 169–70
- race war, 185, 189. *See also* Italo-Ethio-
 pian War
racial identity, 148, 154–55
romantic modernism, 85–86, 87, 192
- Schuyler, George S., 185–86, 187, 188
Selassie, Haile, 144, 145–46, 176, 183, 184,
 185, 188
social progress, 7, 46
social realism, 5–6, 10–11, 70, 81, 82,
 163–64
sonnet-as-body concept, 11, 126, 136
sonnet pantext, 88–93, 94t, 95, 113,
 135–36, 140
sonnets: as narrative, 75–77, 88–89, 94;
 poets, 85; as response to racism, 74,
 75, 77–78, 89, 90, 91–92, 93, 94; and
 self-fashioning concept, 70, 93, 114,
 170. *See also* Owen Dodson; Langston
 Hughes; Richard Wright
Spengler, Oswald, 12, 39–45, 47, 142
subject positions, 96
surrealism, 23, 24
- Tolson, Melvin B., 98–104, 105, 106
“Transcontinental” (Wright), 17; and
 gangster theme, 33, 34; and identity,
 33–35; on poverty and wealth, 26, 27,
 29; use of film as subject, 24–25
“Trumpet in the New Moon” (Jenkins):
 and Bible narrative, 20–21, 49, 50, 66;
 themes, 47–48, 51, 52–54, 56, 65–66,
 67–68; theory of ascent and decline,
 49, 57–59, 63–64
- Walker, Margaret, 6
Waste Land, The (Eliot), 179, 180
White, P. J., 161, 176
Whitman, Walt, 87
Wright, Arthur N., 148, 149–50, 151
Wright, Richard, 1, 6, 7, 9–10, 17, 21–23,
 190–91; and *Communist Manifesto*,
 30–31; film influence, 24–25, 26, 28,
 32–33; on modernity, 30; poems as dis-
 sent, 22–23; and proletarian poetry, 22,
 23; themes, 15, 26, 27, 28–30, 33, 34



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Jon Woodson's *Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants* is a thoroughly engaging work. He makes a convincing case for not only reading a wide range of neglected poetry from the period, but for reading it through the rich interpretive lens he provides. This is a major work of scholarship which genuinely breaks new ground in the field."

—James A. Miller, professor of English and American studies,
The George Washington University

In the 1930s African Americans faced three distinct historical crises that impacted the lives of African Americans directly: the Great Depression, the existential identity crisis, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, with its threat of a race war. A sizeable body of black poetry was produced in this decade, which captured the new modes of autonomy through which black Americans resisted these social calamities. Much of it, however, including the most influential protest poems, was dismissed as "romantic" by major, leftist critics and anthologists.

Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants: Recovering the African American Poetry of the 1930s, by Jon Woodson, uses social philology to unweave social discourse, self-fashioning, and debate in genres performed from anthologies, magazines, newspapers, and individual collections. The first chapter examines three long poems, finding encroaching paranoiac discourse that inaugurated a militant, politically aware agent. Chapter two examines self-fashioning in the numerous sonnets that responded to the new media of radio, newsmag, movies, and photo-magazines. The third chapter shows how new subjectivities were generated by poetry addressed to the threat of race war in which the white race was sacrosanct.

The black intellectuals who dominated the interpretive discourse of the 1930s favored essentiality, while black culture as a whole plunged into incoherence. *Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants* delineates the struggle between these inner and outer worlds, a study made difficult by a contemporary intellectual culture which trends from a belief in a consistent, integrated self.

JON WOODSON is professor of English at Howard University.

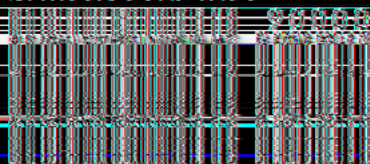
COVER DESIGN: LAURENCE J. WELK

COVER ILLUSTRATION: STOCK INC.

The Ohio State University Press
Columbus

www.ohiostatepress.org

ISBN 978-0-8142-1149-6



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