

King's analysis of the graffiti art of Alberto Serrano, also known as Tito do Rio, and the how these ephemeral productions were captured in the 2015 graphic novel *Zé Ninguém*. King pays attention to how Serrano "tags" urban spaces in Rio de Janeiro (in a way quite unlike the librarians' tags to the book that contains Sor Juana's renewal of vows), arguing for the complex textuality of Serrano's images as they engage inhabitants of Rio neighborhoods but also people who buy the book (including me: highly recommended).

The book concludes with an afterword, "Texts, Coding and Translation", by Sara Castro-Klarén, that comments on the challenges represented by Latin American textuality, from Mayan glyphs and colonial manuscripts to the recent visual texts examined here. Castro-Klarén celebrates the excellent and varied scholarship in the volume, asking finally (with Zimmer) that we not forget the humans in the text, "the human consolation of finding meaning" (250). I join Castro-Klarén in commending this book to a readership not only of Latin Americanists but also of textual scholars who are studying other times and places; there is plenty here to stimulate new research and wonderful new writing.

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MURRAY, Joshua M., and ROSS K. TANGEDAL, eds. 2021. *Editing the Harlem Renaissance*. Clemson: Clemson University Press. Pp. 312. ISBN 9781949979558, Hardback \$120.00. ISBN 9781949979565, eBook \$120.00.

It seems impossible to talk about the period of unprecedented growth in Black American creative output, taking place a century ago and now commonly known as the Harlem Renaissance, without first mentioning how much it is talked about. The Harlem Renaissance, now also frequently called the New Negro Renaissance or New Negro Movement, was referred to by participants as both a "movement" and a "renaissance," and frequently as the "Negro renaissance," and many critics since have seen all of these words as misnomers in one way or another (MITCHELL 2010, 641). Considered broadly as a phenomenon of Black creativity concurrent with transatlantic cultural modernism, the period is without question the most discussed in Black literary, artistic, or cultural history. It has been the subject of histories and commentaries, analysis wide and narrow in scope, studies and "new studies", revisitations and recoveries. As Rachel Farebrother and Miriam Thaggert note in *The History of the Harlem Renaissance* (2021),

the unending dispute over the period's name is emblematic of its tendency to be "continually [. . .] re-born, re-made, and revisited" (14). Indeed, analysis of the Harlem Renaissance began during the period itself and retrospection certainly features among the hallmarks of its conclusion — the first signs of the period's wane are commentaries on its shortcomings. Richard Wright pulled no punches in "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (1937), which describes the recent past as "the fruits of that foul soil which was the result of a liaison between inferiority-complexed Negro 'geniuses' and burnt-out white Bohemians with money" (97). He instead argued for a revolutionized "perspective" for writers representing Black life, especially the Black working class. Or see Langston Hughes's account of the failure of the literary movement to substantially alter the social status of African Americans in his autobiography *The Big Sea* (1940).

2022 marks not only 100 (or so) years since the Harlem Renaissance, but also 50 years since the first book-length studies of it appeared — Nathan Irvin Huggins's *Harlem Renaissance* (1972) and Arna Bontemps's *Harlem Renaissance Remembered* (1972). Study of the Harlem Renaissance has grown alongside Black Studies more generally: "[M]any of the significant developments or 'turns' in the field (relating to debates about the politics of representation, vernacular theories of black literature, black radicalism, transnationalism, feminism, and performance studies) have been developed through close analysis of Harlem Renaissance cultural expression" (FAREBROTHER 2021, 3). With the emergence in recent decades of diasporic and transnational understandings of the period, revisionary readings through the lenses of queer studies and women's studies, the publication of numerous previously unpublished texts (or texts unpublished in book form), one thing that the Harlem Renaissance has needed is a distillation of this vast field of scholarship, a one-stop collection that would be accessible to students and novice researchers visiting the period in a survey course or even just a unit. Farebrother and Thaggert's volume, with its comprehensive array of extraordinarily researched new scholarship by the authors of some of the best recent monographs in the field, serves just that need. Packed with essays covering many of the newer themes in the historiography of the period, from a transnational focus to leftism, integrating analysis of music and visual culture into the historically literary focus on the period, the volume seems an ideal addition to any Harlem Renaissance syllabus. But one aspect of a newer Harlem Renaissance historiography is scarcely represented, and that's a focus on the material history of textual production in this period. Aside from Caroline Goeser's "The Visual Image in New Negro Renaissance Print Culture", the Farebrother and Thaggert

volume acknowledges the material publishing conditions of these writers only occasionally, and not to place those conditions at the center of its concerns.

The publication of magazines, anthologies, and books by a small cadre of publishers was central to the cultural significance of this period. One need look no further than George Hutchinson's *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (1995) and its discussions of *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, *The Messenger*, and *Survey Graphic*, as well as mainstream magazines less frequently included in histories of the Harlem Renaissance: *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Modern Quarterly*, and *American Mercury*. Nevertheless, histories of the editorial process in producing Harlem Renaissance texts in their own time, and the editing of these texts for 21st-century readers, are areas in which there remains more detailed work to be done. Think how few scholarly editions of Harlem Renaissance texts have been published (though excellent trade critical editions of some have), how few Harlem Renaissance collections of letters published. Though one of the most studied areas in Black literary history, it is one of the least edited areas in American literary history.

This is the gap that *Editing the Harlem Renaissance*, edited by Joshua M. Murray and Ross K. Tangedal, attempts to fill, even though at times the capaciousness of its scope makes it seem more aimed at offering a general introduction. Theirs is the inaugural book in Clemson University Press's African American Literature Series, edited by Valerie Babb and Rhondda Robinson Thomas, and the volume's editors claim it will be "the first centralized authority on the subject" of "editing and editorial issues" in relation to the Harlem Renaissance (5). Eleven essays (two drawn from previously published material), framed by an introduction and a coda, are divided into three parts: "Editing an Era", on how texts during the period of the 1920s and 1930s were edited and how to understand those texts in light of those processes; "Writers, Editors, Readers", on individual textual histories, *romans à clef*, and intellectual property; and "Editorial Frameworks", on 21st-century editorial practices and case studies for how we read these texts now.

Several of the essays offer compelling new insights. Jayne Marek gives what may be the most thorough account to date of Jessie Fauset's editorship of *The Brownies' Book* (1920–21), the children's magazine published from the offices of *The Crisis*. (There was an excellent special issue in 2019 [43.2] of the journal *The Lion and the Unicorn* devoted to *The Brownies' Book*.) Marek bases her account largely on a close reading of the complete run of the magazine. In her exploration of Fauset's regular column "The Judge"

(published with an avatar of a glowering, bewigged, quill-pen-wielding white man) she surmises that Fauset used it to “communicate the virtues of self-improvement and self-control through the pleasant device of anecdotes” (133). Examining Fauset’s focus on instruction and middle-class virtues, Marek contends that Fauset knowingly edited *The Brownies’ Book* in part for an adult readership whose literacy skills may have prevented them from reading *The Crisis* — an assertion supported by theory of children’s literature but not by any specific evidence in this case. This argument, with such close attention to features like “The Judge”, invites more examination of Fauset’s vanguardism or even elitism in her role as editor. Still, Marek’s overview is a more than welcome addition to the commentary on this important and usually overlooked publication, which carried some of the first published writings by Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, and Georgia Douglas Johnson, among others.

Two of the essays issue important calls for more bibliographic attention to the Harlem Renaissance period, a mission shared by the Black Bibliography Project ([blackbibliog.org](http://blackbibliog.org)), a grant-funded project led by Jacqueline Goldsby and Meredith McGill to create publicly available bibliographic information about Black print. John K. Young’s “The Renaissance Happened in (Some of) the Magazines” offers a compelling case for how editorial theory, and particularly the abstraction known as the “work”, might cause us to rethink the status of texts published in magazines and in books in this period, though he reverts to some fairly well-known examples, such as Jean Toomer’s *Cane* (1923). In “Clad in the Beautiful Dress One Expects: Editing and Curating the Harlem Renaissance Text”, Ross K. Tangedal justly laments the lack of scholarly critical treatment of Harlem Renaissance texts. He draws a (perhaps unnecessarily) strong divide between “scholarly editions” from academic presses and “critical editions” from trade presses like Norton, even though excellent Norton Critical Editions have been published of James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), edited by Goldsby, and the book Tangedal examines, Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, edited by Carla Kaplan. *Passing* (1929) and Larsen’s 1928 novel *Quicksand* have been available since 1988 in Deborah E. McDowell’s joint volume from Rutgers University Press, a rare example of Harlem Renaissance works from a university press. As Tangedal notes, the Library of America produced a set of editions of Harlem Renaissance novels, edited by Rafia Zafar, as well as a volume of the works of Zora Neale Hurston, edited by the late Cheryl A. Wall. Still, Tangedal is right that even trade critical editions remain relatively uncommon, and few novels or collections of this period have been published in critical editions from

academic presses. To illustrate the problem, Tangedal reproduces “notes on the text” from five different editions of *Passing*, whose final paragraph was inexplicably dropped in its third printing, which Alfred A. Knopf ordered in the first year of its publication after robust sales. Tangedal demonstrates how some editors have handled this ambiguity by offering certainty where there is none, and many have also misstated the facts. I’m skeptical of Tangedal’s assertion that bibliographic analysis — such as examining many copies of the early printings of Larsen’s novel — will resolve the ambiguity of a decision-making process that is not documented archivally in, say, Knopf’s records, held at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, or some yet-to-be-discovered statement by Larsen (who did not leave any known archive of personal papers). But it certainly couldn’t hurt to try this approach with a trained eye.

Some of the most interesting essays in the volume are those that narrate 21st-century editorial processes around Harlem Renaissance texts. Gary Holcomb’s thoroughly detailed account of preparing Claude McKay’s unpublished novel *Romance in Marseille* for its 2020 publication after decades of research delivers on its joint promise, that the story of the text’s creation, and of its life in the 90 years after McKay abandoned it, are both “as fascinating as the novel itself” (234). Holcomb expands on the account he offered with William Maxwell in their introduction to the novel as published by Penguin. With impressive logical clarity, he connects his extensive research in McKay’s correspondence with editors and publishers to his conclusions about the priority of the two extant manuscripts (one at the Schomburg Center for Research, the other at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

With such overall promise, the volume could have benefitted from a great deal more of the very processes it examines. Many of the essays are marred by unfortunate conceptual and even factual errors that would make this reader reluctant to point a student or someone else new to the field in this direction. Several of the essays suffer from a lack of generosity in their accounts of the vast existing scholarship with which I began; at least one is entirely derivative, relying on both long-established and recently published books that were thoroughly researched in archives, and others provide shallow rather than thoroughgoing accounts of people and movements in order to instrumentalize them in their arguments — for example, the notion that hatred of Garveyism would prevent any interest in Africa. Additionally, the volume’s capacious definition of “editing” sometimes ventures close to meaninglessness. “Editing and editorial issues” seem to encompass anything outside the process of creating the first draft of a work,

from patrons to the printing press, and sometimes even the writing process itself, as “editing” is invoked in examples of life writing from memoirs to *romans à clef* (5).

These shortcomings are especially unfortunate in light of the work this volume aims to do. Reading over the essays, I often wished they had gone through more rounds of revision or wondered how a faulty explanation of a concept had made it past review. This is all the more regrettable because the volume’s intervention is crucial and necessary. If an editor can do all the things this volume argues — clarify the histories of these texts, advocate for their essential importance, contextualize them attractively for decades more readers — then, as the best essays in the volume show, an editor is what the Harlem Renaissance most needs now.

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Matthew Kirschenbaum’s *Bitstreams* arises out of the 2016 A. S. W. Rosenbach Lectures in Bibliography at the University of Pennsylvania, originally organized under the rubrics of “the archive”, “the computer”, and “the book”. His thinking in this beautifully written and thoroughly researched book extends considerably beyond these guiding conceptual “fictions”, as he puts it, into bibliography as “a way of knowing, a habit of mind whose remit is nothing less than accounting for all the people and things that make meaning possible, each in their own irreducible individuality” (14).