Peyton Semjen

Mr.Haflin

Humanities

23 October 2016

The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance commenced at the beginning of the 20th century in Harlem, an

African American neighborhood located in northern Manhattan, New York. African Americans

migrated from the South to more northern cities to occupy jobs that opened up due to World War

I. This sparked an outburst of black culture called the Harlem Renaissance, an artistic movement

by the African American communities that altered the way society viewed this group. The

Harlem Renaissance positively affected humanity politically and artistically. The Harlem

Renaissance helped break stereotypes and contradict racism by utilizing African Americans'

artistic voice in a political manner. This movement generated a creative outlet for African

Americans to express themselves and create influential art that still holds relevance today.

Without the Harlem Renaissance, society may lack some of the inspiring artistic figures that

millions of people idolize today. If the Harlem Renaissance took place in the novel *To Kill a*

Mockingbird, by Harper Lee, the story and general effect of the story would dramatically change.

In the 1920's, America stereotyped African Americans as an uncultured community. The

Harlem Renaissance helped terminate this prejudice through using their voices to send a political

message about the necessity for equality in America. In his poem "Open Letter to the South",

Langston Hughes writes, "let us become instead, you and I,/One single hand/That can united

rise/To smash the old dead dogmas of the past-/To kill the lies of color" (Hughes Open). This

powerful poem reached both the black and white population of America and called upon them to unite. This political message led to the progression of acceptance of black culture and the end of segregation. This unification led to humanity opening to foreign ideas, therefore creating less conflict between races. Without the freedom that the renaissance granted, Hughes's impactful and influential voice would never reach the millions of people for whom he inspired. Since the Harlem Renaissance acted as the primary movement for black pride its relationship to the "Civil Rights movement was to some extent symbiotic, what one historian describes as a 'civil rights arts movement,' or 'civil rights by copyright.' That is, it was a cultural movement that used art to express the Civil Rights movement's goals of freedom and equality" (Smith 1). Though this movement didn't end racism, it allowed people to question the prevalence of inequality and hold more importance in black voices. Once America started to realize the importance of these opinions, the process of acceptance began. As the Harlem Renaissance started it "revitalized political organizations [that] also furthered the cultural revival. First, the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought African Americans and white supporters into a coalition to protest discrimination and open the door for expanded civil rights" (Faue 1). The Renaissance acts as a catalyst for other political movements for the furthering for black rights. By offering an organized platform for black and white people to unite in an attempt to fight discrimination, it formed an encouragement for society to follow suit. The Harlem Renaissance opened political doors for the African American community to express their voice and break harmful stereotypes while granting creativity and an influx in art.

The Harlem Renaissance acts as a time when African Americans could express themselves artistically and this led to millions of influential and outstanding works of art.

Langston Hughes, a famous poet and author, once wrote, "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too" (Hughes 4). This movement not only helped the white people of America better accept the African American population, but helped African Americans accept themselves and create art without worrying what others thought of them. This fearlessness to express themselves led to many artistic advancements that furthered American culture. Hughes goes on to say, "And within the next decade I expect to see the work of a growing school of colored artists who paint and model the beauty of dark faces and create with new technique the expressions of their own soul world" (Hughes 3).The creation of African American art increased, causing a new understanding and appreciation for their culture and ethnicity. This art affected the future innovations and creative processes that led to many pieces of art in modern society. Hughes believed that this renaissance would lead to more African Americans creating art, and he remains correct. In fact, "Harlem brought notice to great works that might otherwise have been lost or never produced. The results were phenomenal...For the first time, white America could not look away" (ushistory.org 1). The mark that these African Americans left on America could not be ignored. White Americans that once ignored and outcasted African Americans, now began to listen. Once white America began to listen, the process of cultural acceptance began. Jean Toomer, an activist in the Harlem Renaissance and an African American author,

> ...experimented with lyrical modifications of prose form in his...book *Cane*(1923),
>
> which to many seemed a radical new departure in writing about black
>
> life...Weaving together poems, sketches, short stories, and dramatic narratives, the

book seamlessly melded high Modernist literary techniques with African American style and subject matter that alternated between the rural South and the urban North... For many young black writers, *Cane* therefore marked the literary future. (Hutchinson 1)

His novel *Cane* inspired other writers and showed an original way to write novels in that time. Books of the time not only reflect the important ideas and advancements of the time, but they educate the reader. Books entertained and informed, and once books such as *Cane* popularized, society started to accept the concepts the books described. This novel exemplifies only one of the millions of works of art that came about because of the Harlem renaissance. This artistic outlet that the Harlem Renaissance opened to millions of African Americans resulted in beautiful and inspiring art that positively affected humanity.

Harlem Renaissance's political and artistic movements that broke stereotypes and cultivated the growth of African American art positively impacted humanity. Although the Harlem Renaissance happened over 90 years ago, it still contains a long lasting impact to our society. Langston Hughes, Aaron Douglas, and Billie Holiday represent just a few of the influential voices birthed by the Harlem Renaissance that millions still look up to and admire. Today there a myriad of black artists that reach people of all races and ethnicities. J.Cole, an African American rapper, exemplifies an artist today who still preaches equality. In his song, *Get It*, he states, "All created equal looks like equal to a less than, Depending on your race, or depending on your address" (Cole). Preached since the Harlem Renaissance, this message of equality, or lack thereof, still holds relevance today and continues to impact the modern art. If an outlet such as the Harlem Renaissance took place in *To Kill a Mockingbird's*, Maycomb,

Alabama, the white population of Maycomb might seem more accepting toward African

Americans in their community, thus resolving many of the large conflicts between the two races

within the novel.

Works Cited

Cole, Jermaine. "Get it" *The Come Up.* 2007. LLC, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.

Faue, Elizabeth. "Harlem Renaissance." *Encyclopedia of American History, Vol. 7, Revised*

    Edition, Facts On File, 2009, *American History Online*,

    http://online.infobase.com/hrc/search/details/199115?q=harlem renaissance.

"Harlem Renaissance". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.*

    Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. 23 Oct. 2016

    <https://www.britannica.com/event/Harlem-Renaissance-American-literature-and-a

    rt/Poetry>.

"The Harlem Renaissance." *Ushistory.org*. Independence Hall Association, n.d. Web. 23 Oct.

    2016.

Hughes, Langston "An Open Letter to the South" *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*.

1932.

Hughes, Langston. "The Negro Artist and the Cultural Mountain," *Annals of American History.*

<**http://america.eb.com/america/article?articleId=384960&query=harlem+renaissan**
ce>

[Accessed September 29, 2016].

Smith, Robert C. "Harlem Renaissance." *Encyclopedia of African-American Politics, Second*
Edition, Facts On File, 2014, *American History Online*,

http://online.infobase.com/hrc/search/details/159895?q=harlem renaissance.

Category	5 (Excellent)	4 (Very Good)	3 (Good)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Poor/Incomplete)
Introduction: Background, Thesis Statement (MI, CI, DIs), Hint at RFS	**Introduction creatively introduces the topic and main idea.** Intriguing hint at the RFS.	Introduction effectively introduces the topic and main idea. **Hint at the RFS.**	Introduction introduces the topic and main idea. **Hint at RFS may be missing.**	Introduction could use some more background, and the main idea might be a little confusing. No hint at the RFS.	I have no idea what topic this paper plans to discuss, its purpose, or its overall significance.
Organization: Topic and Concluding Sentences, DQ integration	TS and CS are originally expressed and clearly introduce or end each paragraph; transition devices. No dropped quotations.	**TS and CS are expressed and effectively introduce or end each paragraph; transition devices could use revision.** 1 dropped quotation possible.	TS and CS are expressed and introduce or end each paragraph; transition devices need work. 2 dropped quotations possible.	One TS or CS is missing, hindering the essay's "flow". No transition devices. Multiple dropped quotations.	Multiple TS or CS missing, resulting in an ineffectively organized essay. Transition devices are an afterthought. Sundry and multitudinous dropped quotes.
Lead-Ins: Who, When, Where	Lead-ins creatively introduce the following detail and include all necessary information.	**Lead-ins adequately introduce the following detail and include all necessary information.**	Lead-ins introduce the following detail and include all necessary information, with one exception.	2-3 Lead-ins fail to include all necessary information for introducing the following detail.	Lead-ins? What are those? Quotes are not introduced and are simply presented to the audience.
Details: Relevancy and effectiveness	**Details demonstrate a superb understanding of both the text and prompt via impeccable topical relevance.**	Details demonstrate a solid understanding of both the text and prompt via their topical relevance.	Details demonstrate an understanding of both the text and prompt, with one exception.	2-3 Details fail to demonstrate an understanding of both the text and prompt.	Multiple details missing or completely irrelevant to the topic at hand.
Analysis and Interpretation: Relate details to DI and MI	Analysis insightfully connects each piece of evidence to the DI and MI. Goes	Analysis effectively connects each piece of evidence to the DI and MI.	Analysis connects each piece of evidence to the DI and MI, with one exception.	**Analysis fails to connect 2-3 pieces of evidence to the DI and MI.**	Analysis restates the quote, misses the point, or is absent in multiple instances.

	well beyond the obvious.				
Conclusion: Restate MI, CI, and DIs in an organized manner	**Conclusion is extremely well organized and restates the necessary information in a unique manner.**	Conclusion is well organized and restates the necessary information in an interesting manner.	Conclusion is relatively organized and restates the necessary information in the same manner as the introduction.	Conclusion lacks organizational structure and would benefit from further revision. Fails to restate at least one of the required pieces of information.	The conclusion is either incomplete or missing.
Reach For Significance	The RFS reflects a mature thought process by creatively relating the topic to another literary work, real life, or calling the audience to action.	**The RFS reflects a clear thought process which relates the topic to another literary work, real life, or calls to audience to action.**	The RFS reflects some thought which relates the topic to another literary work, real life, or calls the audience to action.	The RFS is left vague and could express a more concise connection to another literary work, real life, or call the audience to action.	The RFS is either incomplete or missing.
MLA Format: Header, page numbers, parenthetical citations	No header, page number, or parenthetical citation issues. Works cited present ,if necessary	**1-2 header, page number, or parenthetical citation issues. Works cited present ,if necessary, possibly with minor issues**	3-4 header, page number, or parenthetical citation issues. Works cited present ,if necessary, possibly with minor issues	5-6 header, page number, or parenthetical citation issues. Works cited present ,if necessary, potentially with some major issues	Sundry and multitudinous header, page number, or parenthetical citation issues. Works cited absent, if necessary. Paper may be plagiarized.
Grammar and Spelling	No spelling or grammatical issues.	1-2 spelling or grammatical issues, generally minor in nature.	**3-4 spelling or grammatical issues.**	5-6 spelling or grammatical issues which obfuscate meaning.	Sundry and multitudinous spelling or grammatical issues which severely detract from meaning.
Word Choice	Scholarly diction! Efficacious phraseology. A veritable amalgam of the best words English has to offer. Consider me impressed.	**Effective diction which exceeds expectations and avoids clichés and overly used words.**	Fairly effective word choice which meets expectations and avoids clichés and overly used words.	Relatively repetitious and repetitious (see what I did there) word choice, resulting in a loss of clarity. Bolster your vocabulary and expression.	Word choice is incomprehensible or overly mundane and banal, predictable, hackneyed, etc.

Overall: