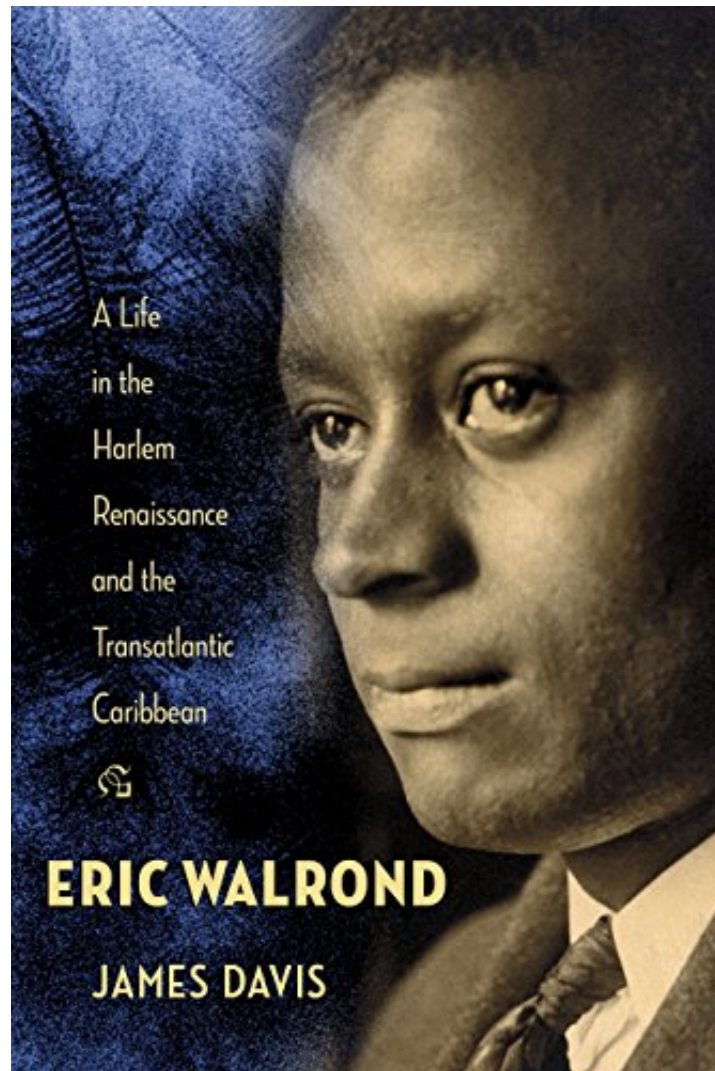


Eric Walrond: A Life in the Harlem Renaissance and the Transatlantic Caribbean



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Synopsis

Eric Walrond (1898–1966) was a writer, journalist, caustic critic, and fixture of 1920s Harlem. His short story collection, *Tropic Death*, was one of the first efforts by a black author to depict Caribbean lives and voices in American fiction. Restoring Walrond to his proper place as a luminary of the Harlem Renaissance, this biography situates *Tropic Death* within the author's broader corpus and positions the work as a catalyst and driving force behind the New Negro literary movement in America. James Davis follows Walrond from the West Indies to Panama, New York, France, and finally England. He recounts his relationships with New Negro authors such as Countée Cullen, Charles S. Johnson, Zora Neale Hurston, Alain Locke, and Gwendolyn Bennett, as well as the white novelist Carl Van Vechten. He also recovers Walrond's involvement with Marcus Garvey's journal *Negro World* and the National Urban League journal *Opportunity* and examines the writer's work for mainstream venues, including *Vanity Fair*. In 1929, Walrond severed ties with Harlem, but he did not disappear. He contributed to the burgeoning anticolonial movement and print culture centered in England and fueled by C. L. R. James, George Padmore, and other Caribbean expatriates. His history of Panama, shelved by his publisher during the Great Depression, was the first to be written by a West Indian author. Unearthing documents in England, Panama, and the United States, and incorporating interviews, criticism of Walrond's fiction and journalism, and a sophisticated account of transnational black cultural formations, Davis builds an eloquent and absorbing narrative of an overlooked figure and his creation of modern American and world literature.

What people say about this book

Damnjoie, "Interesting book about an interesting writer. I read this book after reading Tropic Death. Really interesting life of an interesting writer. James Davis is good too--lots of research but informal style and witty. I learned a ton about Harlem and its writers, and about the Caribbean during that time. Recommended for anyone who wants to learn more about Eric Walrond."

Leslie Gardner, "compelling portrait of important unrecognised man. This is more than simply the biography of one troubled man - it's about a history of Caribbean politics/statehood and its relationship first of all to the USA but also to rest of the world - it fits the individual man into his surroundings and the effects on him. Social status and the pressures of racism, internationally, answer some of the anomalies of the personality and this just makes so much sense that it embellishes the biography to make it more than a chronological story of one man who rather disappeared after his flowering. His life seems to have fallen apart but when examined closely it's that departure he made from his original trajectory in order to take on injustices that was the swerve - it cost him deep peace of mind and probably his family, but he regained part of his own past and settled (perhaps) with it - the history of Panama which absorbed him we are told for years, is enriched by his participation and his accurate portrayal in his early classic volume. Columbia is publishing important works of Afro-American scholarship which reveals new precepts of discussing American history as a country aimed at colonisation in what was a psychically destructive project, and the tools developed in Afro-American scholarship are enabling us to make that transparent with a view to dissolving them. This volume is a superb example, and hopefully it will be widely read."

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