



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **The Literary Corner: Introduction to African American Poetry with Eugene Redmond—Part I (side a)**

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were sold to a Wheatley family in Boston, hence since Phillis Wheatley. There's not a great deal of race consciousness imagery and diction in Phillis Wheatley's work

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although there's a lot more than she is given credit for.

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But the one important thing about Phillis Wheatley, and most of the early poets,

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the poets of the late 1800s, excuse me, 18th Century,

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is that they provide a real significant barometer to the development of Black intellectual, psychological, philosophical, emotional behaviour and growth and development.

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In other words, what does the first African making contact with the American culture, with the quote "New World" do.

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How does he or she put words together, how does he or she put ideas together in a new language, in another language, in a foreign language?

How does he or she envision the world or re-envision the world?

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But these isolated incidents were developing in more or less a correlative fashion to the folk material.

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So we actually have two spines when we talk about the development of Afro-American poetry. We are talking about the literary or the written form, right. These were the products of, in the north, servant slaves, people privileged and allowed, encouraged to read and write.

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At the same time on the plantations in the southern United States, you know, where the Black masses lived and where most of the Africans in the United States were brought to.

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There was a folk literature development, folk poetry, you know the field hollers, the shouts, the spirituals, the shouts, the gospels, ok. Now, so we must take in the folkloristic trump

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: The oral

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<i>Eugene B. Redmond</i>: The oral and gestural because that gave us...



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