

The Harlem Cycle: A Rage in Harlem; The Real Cool Killers; The Crazy Kill (Harlem Cycle, #1-3) By Chester Himes The Harlem Cycle: A Rage in Harlem; The Real Cool Killers; The Crazy Kill (Harlem Cycle #1-3) Chester Bomar Himes began writing in the early 1930s while serving a prison sentence for armed robbery. In 1953 Himes emigrated to France where he was approached by Marcel Duhamel of Gallimard to write a detective series for Série Noire which had published works from the likes of Raymond Chandler Dashiell Hammett and Jim Thompson. The resulting Harlem Cycle gained him celebrity when he won France's Grand Prix de Littérature Policière for *La Reine des Pommes* (now known in English as *A Rage in Harlem*) in 1958. In 1953 Himes emigrated to France where he was approached by Marcel Duhamel of Gallimard to write a detective series for Série Noire which had published works from the likes of Raymond Chandler Dashiell Hammett and Jim Thompson. The resulting Harlem Cycle gained him celebrity when he won France's Grand Prix de Littérature Policière for *La Reine des Pommes* (now known in English as *A Rage in Harlem*) in 1958. Three of these novels have been adapted into movies: *Cotton Comes to Harlem* directed by Ossie Davis in 1970; *Come Back Charleston Blue* (based on *The Heat's On*) in 1972; and *A Rage in Harlem* starring Gregory Hines and Danny Glover in 1991. In the introduction by Melvin Van Peebles Himes doesn't seem to take himself too seriously as a writer writing exactly the word count he has to deliver and nothing more and he refers to his books as action novels so I don't see why we are supposed to take him seriously as a novelist. My only complaint is that the detective duo Grave Digger and Coffin Ed are little more than ciphers next to the colourful cast of murderers robbers and whores and it's hard to feel much for them. 512 The first two books feature at least three scenes so far of black people rooking white authorities by acting crazy because white folks will believe anything or at least they'll believe anything that involves black people acting insane stupid or violent. I suspect that this is Himes revealing the truth behind the pyrotechnic absurdist violence of his mysteries to an audience completely incapable of getting the joke or even that a joke is being told:

This collection of three novels presents Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones Harlem's toughest pair of cops: Renowned for their meanness and always armed with their legendary nickel-plated colts they patrol the streets of Harlem and attempt to keep some semblance of law and order: From there he produced short stories for periodicals such as *Esquire* and *Abbotts Monthly*: When released he focussed on semi autobiographical protest novels. Himes would be the first black author included in the series. Three of t Chester Bomar Himes began writing in the early 1930s while serving a prison sentence for armed robbery, From there he produced short stories for periodicals such as *Esquire* and *Abbott's Monthly*. When released he focussed on semi autobiographical protest novels: Himes would be the first black author included in the series. In 1968 Himes moved to Spain where he made his home until his death, {site_link} I had to give up halfway through *A Rage in Harlem*. As crime writing it was far inferior to the likes of Chandler Hammett James Ellroy or Jim Thompson: As gritty authentic writing about African-American street life it is far inferior to Iceberg Slim. I just couldn't be arsed to keep reading the stupid implausible plot and shitty prose. 512 Unputdownable - incredible pace crackling dialogue sparing yet vivid language, 512 I recently heard a reading of *Cotton Comes to Harlem* on BBC radio (by the always superb Hugh Quarrie) and was completely blown away, I immediately sought out the beginning of the Harlem cycle and was pleased to find this volume of the first three books. I wouldn't in other words take this as anything like social realism. I couldn't understand why his books are remembered. Oh wait I do. The French discovered him first. Himes is brashly and hyperbolically artificial. More on *A Rage in Harlem*. 512

