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## ZORA NEALE HURSTON

**Born:** Eatonville, Florida; January 7, 1891

**Died:** Ft. Pierce, Florida; January 28, 1960

*Hurston created a body of literature that celebrates and preserves the sounds and spirits of black voices as she knew them.*

### BIOGRAPHY

Zora Neale Hurston was born on January 7, 1891, though she was later to list her birth date as 1901, taking a full decade out of her life. She was born in Eatonville, Florida, the first black incorporated town in the United States. Her father, John Hurston, a local minister, also served three terms as mayor of the town and wrote its laws. Her mother, Lucy Ann Potts Hurston, did the most to encourage young Zora's spirit and learning.

It was when Hurston entered high school in 1917, after having spent some time traveling with a Gilbert and Sullivan troupe, that she came up with her revised birthday, to make herself appear still a teenager. In 1918, she entered the Howard Prep School at Howard University to catch up on missed education, and in 1920 she received an associate degree from Howard.

In 1925, Hurston won second prize in a fiction contest for her short story "Spunk," which also landed her a job as a secretary with one of the contest judges, the popular novelist Fanny Hurst. The same year, Hurston entered Barnard College, the women's division of Columbia University, at the urging of Annie Nathan Meyer, also a novelist and one of the founders of Barnard. There, Hurston was the only black student. At Barnard, she studied anthropology with Franz Boas, one of the

most influential anthropologists of his time, and Hurston graduated in 1927 as a committed social scientist.

Hurston had arrived in New York during the Harlem Renaissance, the biggest literary, musical, and artistic flowering of African American culture that the United States had ever seen, and she immediately became an important part of it. Among her close associates was the poet Langston Hughes, who later recalled that Hurston seemed to know everyone. With Hughes and some others, Hurston was coeditor and frequent contributor to a shortlived journal called *Fire!!*, which was to have a lasting influence in its advocacy of black literature developing an authentically black voice, as opposed to following the traditions of English and European writing.

In 1927 and 1928, with the financial support of Mrs. Rufus Osgood Mason, who had also supported Langston Hughes, Hurston made several folk tale collecting trips to Florida and New Orleans, gathering material for what would eventually grow into her first book of folk tales, *Mules and Men* (1935). In 1930, she collaborated with Langston Hughes on a comic play, *Mule Bone*, which was to sever their friendship for all time when Hurston tried to copyright the play under her own name. The play was never produced in either of the writers' lifetimes.

In 1933, the writing of *Mules and Men* mostly behind her, a short story Hurston wrote that was published in *Story* magazine, called "The Gilded Six-Bits," led to an inquiry by a publisher, Lipincott, as to whether she was also working on a novel. She began writing a novel on July 1, 1933, and by September 6, she was done with it. In May,

1934, her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, was published. An autobiographically based novel, it presents a fictionalized version of her parents' marriage, concentrating especially on John Pearson, a character loosely based on her father. The novel was generally well received, but it was also misinterpreted by reviewers who had a hard time believing that a black preacher could be as eloquent as John Pearson.

It was the publication of *Mules and Men* in 1935 that marked the beginning of the debate over the worth and meaning of Hurston's work that was to follow her throughout her life. The work was well received but also widely criticized for ignoring the harsh realities of life in the South that had hit especially hard during the Depression. Also in 1935, she made an attempt to return to school at Columbia to study anthropology, but in fact she rarely attended classes. In 1936, Hurston was awarded a grant by the Guggenheim Foundation to continue her work in folklore. It was while on a trip to Haiti that she wrote her masterpiece, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Like her first novel, the material was her own life and her hometown transformed into art.

In 1938, Hurston's second book of folklore, *Tell My Horse*, much less successful than her first, was published. In 1939, she was hired to teach drama at the North Carolina College for Negroes at Durham, and she married Albert Price III, a twenty-three-year-old man. Their marriage was to last less than a year. In November, 1939, *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, widely considered to be her second-best novel, was published. In 1941, Hurston wrote her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, which was published in 1942, with her comments on Western imperialism excised. In 1943, she received several awards, including the Ansfield-Wolf Book Award in Race Relations, and appeared on the cover of the *Saturday Review*. It marked the zenith of her fame.

In 1945, a novel on which she had been working called *Mrs. Doctor* was rejected for publication by Lippincott, and financial worries that Hurston had for years been keeping at bay began to catch up with her. In 1948, her novel about white southern life, *Seraph on the Swanee*, was published by Scribner's, the only novel of hers that is generally considered to be an artistic failure.

In 1948, she was arrested on a false charge of molesting a ten-year-old boy. Though the charges were dropped in 1949, Hurston never completely recovered from this or from the downturn in her professional success. In 1950, the *Miami Herald* published an article about Hurston working as a maid to support her writing. Though she published a few essays and stories during the last ten years of her life, she spent most of her time working on a never-to-be-published biography of King Herod. After supporting herself through a number of odd jobs for several years, she suffered a stroke in 1959 and moved into the St. Lucie Welfare Home, where she died on January 28, 1960.

In 1973, writer Alice Walker placed a gravestone remembering Hurston in the graveyard in which she had been buried and, two years later, published an essay in *Ms.* magazine called "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," which launched the revival of Hurston's literary reputation.

#### ANALYSIS

Hurston's depiction of black life in her writing stands in sharp contrast to the harsher views of black life depicted in works by such novelists as Richard Wright, who attacked her writing as "counter revolutionary." Unlike the work of Wright, who was committed to using his writing to demand social change, Hurston's writing is, first and foremost, a celebration of being black in America.

Wright was not the only critic, during her lifetime or afterward, to accuse Hurston of political naïveté; it is a charge that deserves consideration. It is true that the reader of Hurston's work searches in vain for some sensitive portrayal of the true plight of blacks during the Depression, the period during which Hurston wrote most of her best works. Poverty in the Eatonville she portrays is more likely to be the setting for a story or a joke than a cause for concerted political action.

Furthermore, it is equally true that Hurston, who grew up in a nourishing black community, remained a defender of some aspects of racial separatism well after the Civil Rights movement had identified integration as its goal; she even criticized the Supreme Court's *Brown v. the Board of Education* ruling, which demanded desegregation of public schools. If Hurston thought that blacks should be wary of what integration had to offer,

it was because she valued so highly what black culture had to offer and feared the possibility of black culture getting lost in an attempt to homogenize society.

The title of her most successful work of folklore, *Mules and Men*, might seem to suggest a grim setting of men being treated like beasts of burden. In fact, though, the stories within the book celebrate a bond of cleverness and zest that the people of the South she chronicles share with the folkloric animals about which they tell stories. It is not that Hurston was not a political writer but that the politics of her writing came from a greater appreciation for the culture and values that black Americans had developed than for the culture from which they were often painfully excluded. Furthermore, as becomes clear in some of her essays, such as “How it Feels to Be Colored Me” (reprinted in a collection of Hurston’s essays, *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing . . .*, 1979, edited by Alice Walker), she understood before many that it was only from a perspective of mutual respect that the black and white races would be able to cooperate.

When Hurston’s literary reputation began to be revived in the 1970’s, it was as much because of an appreciation of her sexual politics by feminist readers as because of her celebrations of black America. Her great novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is as much as anything else an account of main character Janie Crawford’s sexual awakening and search for equality in a relationship. Furthermore, her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, is an often frank (though sometimes guarded) account of a very independent-minded woman’s walk through life.

It is generally true that Hurston’s political vision, which was shaped within an autonomous black community, applies less well to the poor and often racially besieged black communities that existed elsewhere in the South. It is also generally true that the further she got from the realities of Eatonville as the setting for her writing, the less effectively her imagination and craft seemed to serve her. This can be seen especially in *Seraph on the Suwannee*, her one attempt at centering a novel on mainly white characters. It is the most disappointing of her fictions. The exception to this rule may, with some justification, be said to be *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, her version of the escape of

the Hebrews from Egypt and the founding of Israel; in fact, however, the book is successful precisely because it rewrites the story of Moses as a black fable about the establishment of an autonomous nation after the end of slavery.

The most valuable lesson that can be taken from Hurston’s writing, and her most important recurring theme, is the enormous beauty and power a distinctive voice can have when it has the courage to show itself as its cultural and personal self rather than hiding behind imitations of others.

## MULES AND MEN

**First published:** 1935

**Type of work:** Folklore

*Hurston returns to her native South to collect folklore.*

In writing *Mules and Men*, Hurston not only found a way to make a crucial bridge between her anthropological and literary ambitions but also created a lasting treasure of stories that captured the authentic voices of southern black storytellers in the late 1920’s. The book is divided into two parts. The first part details her collecting of folklore in Florida, the second part in New Orleans. The order in which the tales are related is ostensibly random, simply the order in which people told them to her, but as her biographer Robert Hemenway points out, and as inspection of the text reveals, the clusters of the stories are, to some extent, thematic.

Though there are a few stories about men and women in the first part of the book, most of the earlier stories deal with the days of slavery and with competition between the races in general. In the tales of slavery, the most common character is John, sometimes called Jack, who is often introduced as “Ole Massa’s” favorite slave, though he inevitably ends up tricking the slave owner somehow or another. John is a consummate trickster figure who, though he will often engage in hard physical labor, always triumphs through the power of his wits, and occasionally, good luck.

Sometimes John’s triumphs are smaller than at others—sometimes he merely survives—but at

times, when he has been attacked brutally or viciously, his revenge is brutal indeed, as in “Ah’ll Beatcher Makin’ Money,” in which he tricks Massa into killing his own grandmother, then into being drowned. John shows his proudest, most dignified, side in the story Hurston calls “Member Youse a Nigger,” in which he works extra hard for a year to arrange a banner crop for his master, on the condition that he be freed at the end of the year. Ole Massa does indeed keep his side of the bargain but shows his true self when, as John leaves, he keeps calling to him, “Member John, youse a nigger.” John replies to him after every call but keeps walking until he gets to Canada.

Many of the other stories are talking animal stories, similar to the ones Joel Chandler Harris had collected in his Uncle Remus stories some years earlier. In many of these, the animals are clever stand-ins for blacks and whites, such as the story “What the Rabbit Learned,” in which Brer Rabbit knows enough to keep away from Brer Dog, despite Brer Dog’s protestations that dogs have all agreed to be friends with rabbits. Perhaps the most important of these stories is the story “The Talking Mule,” in which an old mule called Bill, after years of doing plowing for the man who owns him, one day speaks up and refuses, which so startles the old man that he runs away as fast as he can. The encoded message, preaching resistance to oppression, could not be clearer.

Part 2 of *Mules and Men* has an entirely different feel to it. In part 1, it is clear that Hurston is collecting stories with which she is often already familiar, in an area that, though she occasionally stands out as citified, she basically considers to be home. Part 2, however, takes her to New Orleans, where she sets about collecting the lore of Hoodoo, which she argues is a suppressed religion. Whereas in the first part, Hurston herself is often as important as the stories she is collecting, in the second part, she removes herself more to the background, usually playing the role of student to the people she writes about.

Part 2 is written as series of profiles of individual Hoodoo doctors. Luke Turner, one such doctor, tells Hurston the legend of Marie Leveau, a famous nineteenth century Hoodoo doctor; Anatol Pierre is a Catholic who also claims to have learned from Leveau. Dr. Duke is a root doctor, who uses herbs and roots he gathers from the

swamps. Hurston is very careful about detailing the initiation ceremonies that different doctors make her undergo as well as the elaborate rituals they use to get rid of people, to get people back, and even to kill them. With Kitty Brown, the last Hoodoo doctor profiled, Hurston herself participates in a ritual to cause the death of a man who left one of Kitty Brown’s clients. When the man begins, several days later, to feel a pain in his chest, he returns to the woman he left, who quickly has the curse canceled. It becomes very plain in these stories that Hurston takes these rituals seriously indeed.

One of the complaints some reviewers had about *Mules and Men* was its general reluctance to show the economic realities of the southern blacks about which Hurston was writing. To some extent, this seems to have been the result of a deliberate choice by Hurston to emphasize the qualities she most cherished. The South that Hurston records in this volume of folklore is one fiercely alive with humor, irony, and mystery.

## THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD

**First published:** 1937

**Type of work:** Novel

*A black woman’s life becomes a personal odyssey in search of personal values.*

Janie Crawford, the main character of Hurston’s most important novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is the granddaughter of a slave woman, Nanny, who was raped by her owner, and the daughter of a woman who was raped by her schoolteacher. It is against the heritage of this racial and sexual violence that Janie tries to find a personally fulfilling life. The novel begins with Janie returning to Eatonville after the death of her third husband, Tea Cake Woods. Janie sits with her old friend, Pheoby, to tell her story, and the bulk of the novel, although narrated in the third-person voice, is the story Janie tells.

Her story begins when Janie’s grandmother, Nanny, spies her enjoying her first romantic kiss. Realizing that Janie, at the age of sixteen, is

almost a woman and that Nanny herself will not be around much longer to take care of her, Nanny quickly arranges Janie's marriage with a local farmer so Janie can be protected. Janie, however, finds no happiness in being Mrs. Logan Killicks, so when Joe Starks comes by, Janie happily runs off and marries him.

Joe has heard about a black town being formed, Eatonville, to which he wants to move and become a "big voice." From the first day he is there, Joe starts organizing the town around his own principles, opening the first store, then a post office, and finally becoming the first mayor. As the wealthiest man in town, he also builds himself the grandest home. Janie's place in all of this, it turns out, is to reign over the town at his side—but without speaking, and to work in the store while he entertains friends out on the porch.

Starks is a deliberately contradictory character. On one hand, the reader can admire him for his organizational ability. On the other hand, he organizes Eatonville into a model of the white towns in which he has lived, except with himself at the head of it. Janie gets lost in the shuffle. Joe relegates Janie to the role of a voiceless servant and deliberately keeps her apart from most of the town—partly out of jealousy, partly out of contempt for the townspeople.

From Janie's perspective, her marriage to Starks becomes an almost twenty-year-long struggle to assert herself. She finally does, in front of the whole store, when, defending herself against insults about her looks, she hits him with a comment about how old he looks. Taking this wound to his pride as a mortal blow, Joe moves out of their bedroom and sleeps downstairs, and in fact he does die shortly thereafter of kidney failure.

The story of Janie's third marriage, to Tea Cake Woods, takes up most of the second half of the novel, and it involves many interesting and deliberate reversals from the first half. Whereas Janie entered her marriage to Joe as the younger and poorer of the two, she is about twelve years older than Tea Cake and considerably richer. Nevertheless, they fall in love, get married, and move further south so that Tea Cake can do the work he likes best, picking crops and gambling.

The story of Janie's marriage to Tea Cake has troubled many critics. After the long process by which Janie eventually was able to fight her way

out of one oppressive marriage, she hardly seems to notice that she has fallen into a marriage with another man who is every bit as dominating as Joe Starks. Tea Cake is portrayed as more genuinely respectful and loving of Janie than Joe ever was, and several scenes between Janie and Tea Cake have an evident erotic charge. Yet he, too, begins to get violent with Janie when he feels jealous.

Thus, the hurricane from which Janie and Tea Cake flee almost becomes an expression of Janie's subconscious rage. Certainly the rabid dog that bites Tea Cake during this storm and which several days later makes the now rabid Tea Cake sound like a reincarnation of Joe Starks seems to be a deliberate plot device to force Janie to make a painful decision to live: She has to shoot Tea Cake to prevent him from killing her.

When Janie returns home to Eatonville, she is in a sense returning in failure; the only personally rewarding love she has found was one that was too volatile to hold. She feels satisfied at the end that she found such a love affair at least briefly, but, as many feminist critics have pointed out, Janie's story serves as a better illustration of the need for a mutually respectful relationship than it does as an example of such a relationship.

## MOSES, MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

**First published:** 1939

**Type of work:** Novel

*A retelling of the saga of Moses, making it particularly relevant to the experience of blacks.*

Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain* is a novel about greatness, taking as one of its main themes the sacrifices that are required for a people to become great. The novel, despite some excellent passages, falls short of this goal. The conceptual problems Hurston had in putting this work together are summarized in the character of Moses himself. On one hand, she sees him as a hereditary Egyptian, and thus as an African. On the other hand, within the metaphor with which she begins and which allows the Hebrews to talk like African Americans, the Egyptians represent white



plantation owners. Thus, Moses's speech becomes an inconsistent mixture of black dialect and grand biblical rhetoric.

He is, at any rate, a very interesting character. Though there is a story in this novel that Moses is Hebrew, it is not given any credence by Moses himself. This Moses grows up the grandson of a pharaoh and becomes a military leader before he starts to plead for more humane treatment for the Hebrews. When he kills an Egyptian guard for senselessly beating a Hebrew worker, rumors about his birthright start to spread, and he chooses to exile himself to Midian, across the Red Sea.

In Midian, he becomes a student of Jethro, a monotheist priest who teaches Moses magic for twenty years, and whose daughter Zipporah he weds. After learning all he can from Jethro, he travels to Koptos, where he battles and defeats a deathless serpent to consult the Book of Thoth, which teaches him even greater secrets. Afterward, he is ready to return to Egypt to teach the Hebrews Jethro's religion and demand their release from Pharaoh.

As the leader he becomes in Egypt, Moses is a shrewd politician who is careful not to intimidate Pharaoh too quickly with his series of plagues. He needs the stage that his confrontation with Pharaoh provides in order to establish his credibility with the Hebrews. When he finally does win the Hebrews' freedom, his job as lawmaker has barely begun, as has his task of making the freed slaves understand how perilous a thing their newfound freedom is and how carefully it has to be guarded.

Although it is included for a point, the endless quarreling among the freed Hebrews, especially by Miriam and Aaron, the brother and sister who started the rumor that Moses was a Hebrew in the first place, goes beyond showing the human foibles of a "chosen" people and becomes a sustained and relentless performance of pettiness.

At times, the grumbling of the Hebrews against Moses is played for comedy. Indeed, this comedy of showing the historical Hebrews grumbling like the men outside Joe Clarke's store in the Eatonville of Hurston's youth has an important role in making the connection between the emerging culture of black Americans and the Hebrews after leaving slavery. Hurston's point is that the cultural limitations of slavery take time to overcome. Still, the almost complete lack of faith in Moses

by anyone other than Joshua seems more the perspective of the beleaguered Moses himself than of the lover of her own people that Hurston was; one suspects that the writer's real motive was to bring out the contradictions that were part of Moses's character as the giver of freedom and law.

Moses reflects on this paradox when he consistently tells the Hebrews that he did not promise to make life easy, he promised to make them a great nation. He also says, "People talk about tenderness and mercy, but they love force." It is force that Moses has to show, as when he returns from Mount Sinai to find the Hebrews have built a golden Egyptian idol, and he demands that those who are on his side slaughter those who are not.

Eventually, the contradiction between freedomgiver and patriarchal lawmaker is too great to be sustained, and Moses knows that he will not accompany the Hebrews when they cross the river Jordan to found the state of Israel. By this time, the wandering of the Hebrews in the wilderness has cost the lives of almost all the people who originally fled from Egypt, and the generation that founds the state of Israel was born as free men and women. Moses's work is done.

In one respect, Moses can be read as an idealized version of Hurston's father, the dynamic preacher John Hurston, who as mayor of Eatonville wrote many of the laws of that town and who was featured in her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, as John Pearson. Moses, unlike Hurston's father, who was a noted philanderer, is a man with enough strength of character not to take advantage of such a position. The book is a study of the value such powerful, patriarchal lawmakers can have during a time of transition, but Hurston fully understands the limits of the role, and, in her study of Moses as a person, the heavy burden it places on a person who accepts such a role.

## DUST TRACKS ON A ROAD

**First published:** 1942

**Type of work:** Autobiography

*Hurston recalls her childhood in Eatonville and her success as a writer, and she speculates on great questions.*

Though Hurston's autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, was a success with the general public when it was first published, it has in many respects hurt her reputation in the long run because of its seeming inconsistencies. In part, the inconsistencies in the book's tone come from Hurston's uncertainty as to who her audience was. At times she seems to be addressing a predominantly black audience, as also seems to be the case in her best fiction. At other times, she seems to want to address a white audience, and the writing becomes stiffer, less lively, and less forthcoming.

The first half of the book, at least, shows Hurston's writing at its best. She begins with descriptions of Eatonville and of her parents before introducing the story of her own birth in a chapter titled, logically enough, "I Get Born." Beginning with the line, "This is all hearsay," the chapter tells the story of Hurston's birth being midwived by a local farmer who happened to stop by while Hurston's mother had sent one of her older children out to fetch the local midwife. It may not be entirely true, but that only makes it an appropriate birth for a woman who grew up to record the town's folk tales, called "lies" by the tellers.

The chapters that follow chart her growth from young girlhood to young womanhood, and they are written with a zest for recalling herself and the people she knew. In one characteristic passage, recalling the richness of her inner life, she recalls her roughness with toys: "Dolls caught the devil around me. They got into fights and leaked sawdust before New Year's . . . I wanted action."

One of the early lessons she learns in the all-black Eatonville, and which she very much wants to communicate to her readers, is the importance of never seeing her blackness as an encumbrance or excuse. This is a position that has been both applauded and criticized. On one hand, her admirers point out the courage it took to adopt such a perspective in a society in which black children were often taught early not to forget their place; her detractors, meanwhile, have pointed out the extent to which this point of view led Hurston to underestimate the effect that the harsh political realities of her time had on shaping the lives of her fellow blacks.

One of the most traumatic experiences Hurston describes in her autobiography is the death of her mother, who was the dominant influence on

her. This passage, which is written in the figurative language of folklore that sees death as a sentient being stalking the living, tells of Hurston's mother telling the young Zora not to let her father take away her pillow or cover the mirror and clock, as is the village custom with the dying. Hurston alone is not able to stand against the custom, however, and she watches her mother die uneasy, feeling that perhaps her mother is berating her for her failure.

Several years after her mother's death, Hurston leaves Eatonville with a traveling Gilbert and Sullivan company, and with, as she says, "A map of Dixie on my tongue." Her account of her subsequent schooling up North is as interesting for what it does not say as for what it says. "I have no lurid tales of race discrimination at Barnard," Hurston says. She omits mentioning an episode Robert Hemenway reveals in his biography of her in which Annie Nathan Meyer, who had arranged for Hurston's scholarship, forbade Hurston to go to a dance, believing that it would be improper. Such willingness to avoid seeing race prejudice may be partly a capitulation to an assumed white audience for her book, but it is certainly partly an extension of her own feelings about her race.

The outbreak of World War II while Hurston was writing her autobiography caused her to spend an uncharacteristically long time revising the manuscript. For example, at the urging of her editor, she excised comments that were very critical of Western imperialism in Asia. In general, the second half of the book seems to run out of energy. Most of these chapters are topic-oriented essays following Hurston's thoughts, and the writing in some of them gets notably awkward. For example, her chapter on religion lacks the power of the fictional sermons in *Jonah's Gourd Vine* and takes refuge behind an uncharacteristically general rhetorical style which leads her to say such things as "what need of denominations and creeds to deny myself the comfort of all my fellow men?"—which may be a noble thought, but the saying lacks Hurston's personal rhetorical power.

Among the treats of the later part of the book, though, is the chapter titled "Love," which tells of her on-and-off love affair with a younger man, whom she identifies as A.W. P. Though he seems to bear no resemblance to the character, he apparently served as Hurston's model for Janie

Crawford's third husband, Tea Cake, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Hurston says that the novel was written in an attempt to "embalm" the tenderness she still felt for A.W. P. after an (unsuccessful) attempt to break up with him.

Hurston's autobiography was motivated as much by the wish to avoid saying too much as it was by a desire to tell her story. Hemenway points out in his biography of Hurston that she was ambivalent about the idea of writing an autobiography, and this ambivalence shows. Nevertheless, much of the book beautifully recounts a spirited black girl's explorations of life and her growth into young womanhood.

### SUMMARY

The gravestone that Alice Walker placed on Hurston's grave identifies her as a "Novelist, Folklorist, Anthropologist," and "A Genius of the South." This is an excellent summary of Hurston's career. The three occupations combined to form the basis for her genius. She did not need her training as an anthropologist to convince her that the life of southern blacks was worth recording, but she did use this training to help her record it. The spirit she captured in her writing belonged as much to

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Which works of Zora Neale Hurston's reveal her absorption with the character of her father?
- How do the emphases in Hurston's fiction reveal her to be a writer before her time?
- How do Hurston's anthropological interests color her depiction of African American life?
- What qualities define the character of Janie Crawford in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*? Does Janie grow significantly in stature in the course of the novel?
- What can be said in favor of Hurston's critical attitude toward the historic Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*?

Eatonville as it did to Hurston herself, and it is a vibrant and lasting spirit.

Thomas Cassidy

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