# OAT English curriculum


## *Year 9: Freedom and "Their Eyes Were Watching God"*

# Teacher Guide



## Contents

## Curriculum intent

To introduce students to the theme of Freedom through *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and explore the theme further through a range of non-fiction, poetry and links to Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Students will evaluate how Hurston explores different themes through her use of setting, characterisation, dialogue and action. Students will be provided with opportunities to appreciate how the author's narrative arc engages and sustains the interest of the reader. Critical approaches will be introduced at different moments of the unit to inspire students to read from different perspectives. Students will also:

- take part in a series of structured, teacher led discussions where the use of academic language is modelled and scaffolded.
- learn to write powerful, analytical sentences and comparative statements through the granular 'Couch to 5k' approach to extended writing.
- experience regular reading fluency lessons which will focus on mastery and performance of texts.

### Key skill areas

- Construct analytical statements in the form of thesis statements
- Select and embed relevant textual detail
- Make use of appositives and 'excellent epithets' to signal the direction of extended analytical writing.
- Evaluate the writer's use of language, structure and form, using technical terminology accurately and with sophistication.
- Compare literary texts in relation to literary concepts, ideas and methods.
- Evaluate the writer's intent from a range of critical approaches and contexts

## Core knowledge

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|---|---|
| Content | **Freedom**<br>- *Spunk* by Zora Neale Hurston<br>- Chapter 19 *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou<br>- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston<br>- Extracts from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck<br>- Extract from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare<br>- *The Toxic Legacy of Colorism* by Kaitlyn Greenidge<br>- *Looking for Zora* by Alice Walker<br>- Extract from *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou<br>- Extracts from *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates<br>- Poetry: *America* by Claude McKay, *Sympathy* by Paul Dunbar, *My Little Dreams,* by Georgia Douglas Johnson, *Sonnets 71 and 130* by William Shakespeare, *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* by Dylan Thomas,<br>*The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost, *The Laboratory* by Robert Browning |
| Metaphor | Tenor, vehicle & ground, allusion, allegory, symbolism and motif. Language analysis |
| Story | Identity<br>Theme: understanding the difference between theme and motif.<br>Dialogue (punctuating speech; varying speech verbs; using speech to reveal character) |
| Argument | How to write grammatical construction of thesis statements; topic sentences using adjectives; comparative statements; how to embed textual detail and introduce analysis of writer's methods.<br>To evaluate writer's intent through the analysis of language, structure and form.<br>How to frame analysis through the lens of literary criticism (namely structuralism, post-colonialism and feminist theory)<br>Arguments for justice<br>Ethos, pathos, logos. |
| Pattern | The role of intertextuality and literary echoes (e.g. the metaphor of the flood).<br>Beginnings, changes and endings. |
| Grammar | Uses and effects of conjunctions; embedding and moving clauses; varying subordinating conjunctions for effect.<br>To explore ways in which to plan, write and self-assess evaluative essays.<br>Use discourse markers to link paragraphs which are bound through thesis statements. |
| Context | Understanding the evolution of the African-American literary and social voice, reflecting the need and want for literary, social, economic and political freedoms in society.<br>The Harlem Renaissance |

## Curriculum Related Expectations

### Students can define the following terms:

Narrative perspective
Bildungsroman
Structure
Dialect
Metaphor
Denouement
Allusion
Iambic pentameter / tetrameter
Dialogue
Protagonist
Frame narrative
Metaphor
Dramatic irony
Figurative language
Sibilance
Personification
Rhyming Couplet
Exposition
Pathetic fallacy
Context

### Students know:

- African – American English dialect is used throughout the novel to represent authenticity.
- Hurston uses a frame narrative, a cyclical structure and religious symbolism to create meaning.
- Hurston presents Janie's self-identification through an adaptation of the Lacanian 'mirror stage'.
- Janie's fictional life is a metaphor for the many challenges African – American women experienced.
- Janie is not Hurston and is a construct.
- Hurston uses a range of metaphors and mixes them in her description, akin to poetry.
- Hurston's choice of using the African – American English dialect was criticised by many black writers.
- The difference between theme and motif.
- What Ethos, Pathos and Logos mean in reference to persuasive writing.
- How discourse markers can be used to develop lines of analysis / enquiry in their analytical writing.

### Students can

- Use tenor, vehicle and ground to analyse a range of metaphors.
- Use excellent epithets to evaluate and analyse characters, symbols, settings and themes
- Construct thesis statements introducing alternative interpretations using subordinating conjunctions.
- Construct persuasive speeches / text which utilise ethos, pathos and logos.
- Critically evaluate how Hurston explores themes and ideas in her writing.
- Make links between texts based on the ideas and attitudes driving them using a range of discourse markers.
- Develop a line of enquiry from thesis statements through to conclusions in which they evaluate authorial choices

## Implementation: How to use this teacher guide

- The aim of this guide is to give you the texts, resources and information; both essential and expert, to deliver this *Freedom* topic to students of all abilities.
- In order to teach *Freedom*, you will need: a copy of Hurston's novel, the *Freedom and Their Eyes Were Watching God* Student Workbook and the secondary reading material included in this guide. It is recommended that teachers annotate their own copies of the Student Workbook prior to delivering the lessons.
- The vocabulary list is not exhaustive and should be added to where necessary to suit your own curriculum outline and intent. The Medium-Term Plan is offered as a guide and should be adapted to fit your class, including additional scaffolding and extension work where it is appropriate.
- A Big Question each week allows for greater discussion and debate in line with the concepts and texts covered. Be prepared to model how these questions will be explored and be mindful to elevate the ways in which students contribute to talk by stopping and modelling discussions in real time.
- The guide is divided into sections, each with its own medium-term plan, teaching suggestions, annotated extracts and additional reading. It is estimated that this unit should take between 8-12 weeks to teach depending on the number of lessons per week. There is an Appendix at the end which has an interesting article about African – American English.

### Reading for meaning

- It is suggested through the guide that extracts of the various texts and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are read in full during lessons. These moments of reading should be viewed as valuable moments of learning. Although there are many moments signposted for analysis, the unit is based on a wonderful novel and the students should be encouraged to enjoy it without excessive analytical paragraph writing.
- Accordingly, the focus should be to read for meaning; whilst opportunities for analysis will be highlighted, there should be lessons where classes are read to without analysis of extracts or an emphasis on writing.
- For example, over a course of 4 lessons in a week, students could read with the teacher for 2-3 of those lessons and the others within that week could be an analysis of what has been read; consolidating events and knowledge of characters, inference focuses and predictions for future reading.
- For this to be effective, a range of approaches should be trialled: students reading aloud in fluency lessons, a teacher reading sections to students, students reading in pairs or groups to each other or students reading sections independently.

### Reading fluency

- The Multi-Dimensional Fluency Rubric is a crucial for resource for any students struggling to read fluently: http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional_fluency_rubric_4_factors.pdf
- The recommendation is that students experience regular fluency lessons
- Teachers should model the reading of an extract from the Student Workbook and then students respond with echo reading or choral response.
- The emphasis in Fluency lessons should be on enjoyment and fluent performance.

## Analysis & comprehension

- Questions could be projected on screen or given as a handout to students for them to consider whilst reading alongside the enquiry question for the week. However, the answers to these do not always need to be written down. They could be a thought process or a discussion after reading.
- Extracts are included in the student workbook to suit the concept and key questions for each section. The highlighted phrases and sentences are a guide for discussion and analysis, considering the language used and the writer's craft. These extracts can be used as the focus each week but can also be added to, addressing other key moments.
- The topics that this scheme of learning contains are such that you are encouraged to explore beyond what is included in this guide if that interests you and your class.

# Vocabulary

## Diagnostic vocabulary testing

With all of the specified vocabulary items, students should be given a quick, diagnostic test where they rate their understanding on a 4-point scale:

Please rate how well you know the word **implacable**:

- Never seen it before
- Seen it, heard it, unsure what it means
- Understand and can sometimes use
- Confidently understand and can explain

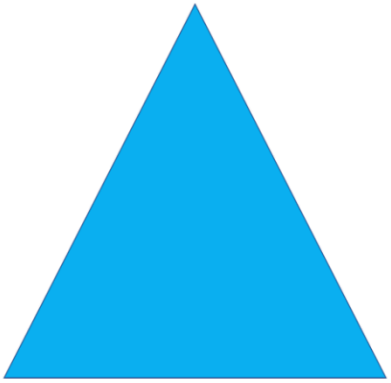
## Vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary instruction should also use the 'say it,' 'spell it,' 'understand it' model:

**New word: *Implacable***

**Say it!**

Im-**plack**-a-bull



**Understand it!**

**It's a bit like**: inflexible; unforgiving

**Example**: She was an implacable enemy of Mr Brown.
**Word class**: Adjective
Placate (verb); placid (adj)

**Spell it!**

Im-plac-able

Etymology: from Latin placatus – to soothe or calm down
**im** – opposite
**plac** – calm
**able** – possible; causing

# Impact: Assessment opportunities

- Frequent checks for understanding and multiple-choice questions provided.
- Regular opportunities to practise summarising and thesis statements.
- Summative assessment to test knowledge and key concepts
- Writing skills within this scheme that link to the assessment objectives and opportunities use the '**Couch to 5k'** model, where students will gradually develop writing skills by having key focuses week by week that are highlighted in the medium-term plan.

## Subject terminology

| | | | |
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| **Bildungsroman**<br>German: *bildung* 'education, growth' + *roman,* 'novel' | A novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education. | **Sonnet** | A poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables per line. |
| **Diachronic**<br>Greek: *dia* (throughout) + *khronos* (time) | How language, has developed and evolved over time | **Villanelle** | 5 Stanzas of three lines (tercets) followed by a single stanza of four lines (quatrain) for a total of nineteen lines. They use a specific rhyme scheme of ABA for their tercets, and ABAA for the quatrain. |
| **Protagonist**<br>Greek: *protos* (first)<br>Greek: *agonistes* | The leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film, novel, etc. | **Characterisation** | The creation or construction of a fictional character. |
| **Exposition**<br>Latin: *exponere* | The opening of a story, introducing characters, setting and plot. | **Pathetic fallacy** | The attribution of human feelings and responses to inanimate things, often used to describe the environment (weather and seasons). |
| **Foreshadowing** | An advance sign or warning of what is to come in the future. | **Frame narrative** | A story in which another story is enclosed or embedded as a 'tale within the tale', or which contains several such tales. |
| **Metaphor**<br>Greek: *metaphora* (a transport) | A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. For example: "time is money". | **Sibilance** | Letter combinations creating hissing sounds. |
| **Tenor**<br>Latin: *tenorem* (to hold) | The person, object or subject referred to in a metaphor. E.g., "**Life** is a walking shadow." Life is the tenor. | **Vehicle**<br>Latin: *vehiculum* (means of transport) | The part of the metaphor that makes the comparison. E.g., "Life is a walking **shadow**." Walking shadow is the vehicle. |
| **Ground**<br>Old English: *grund* (foundation) | In a metaphor this is the link between the tenor and the vehicle. E.g., 'Life is a walking shadow.' The link is that both life and shadows do not last. | **Allusion**<br>Latin: *ad* (near) + *ludere* (to play) | Calling something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect reference. |
| **Denouement**<br>French: *denouer* | The final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together, and resolved. | **Cyclical structure** | When a text begins and ends in the same place or with the same idea. |

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| **Personification** | Giving something inanimate human features | **Iambic pentameter / tetrameter** | A line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable/ four iambic feet. |
| **Climax** | The most intense, exciting, or important point of something; the culmination. | **Meter** | The rhythm of a piece of poetry, from the number and length of feet in a line. |
| **Figurative Language** | Words or expressions to convey a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. | **Dialogue**<br><br>Greek: *dialogos*<br>(converse with) | A conversation between two or more people |
| **Plosive** | Denoting a consonant that is produced by stopping the airflow using the lips, teeth, or palate, followed by a sudden release of air. The basic plosives in English are *t*, *k*, and *p* (voiceless) and *d*, *g*, and *b* (voiced). | **Fricative**<br>Latin: *fricare*<br>(to rub) | Denoting a type of consonant made by the friction of breath in a narrow opening, producing a turbulent air flow. e.g. *f* and *th.* |
| **Symbolism** | In literature, a symbol can be a word, object, action, character, or concept that embodies and evokes a range of additional meaning and significance. | **Dialect**<br>Greek: *dialektos* (way of speaking) | A particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group. |
| **Euphony**<br>Greek: *euphonia* (well sounding) | A quality of being pleasing to the ear. | **Dissonance**<br>Latin: *dissonant*<br>(disagreeing in sound) | A lack of harmony between people or things, harsh sounding aggressive vocabulary. |
| **Narrative perspective**<br>Latin: narrare (to tell or explain); perspicere (to look through) | A set of features determining the way a story is told and what is told. It includes the person who is telling the story, or the narrator, as well as the character from whose point of view the story is told | **Subordinating conjunction**<br>Latin: *sub* (under + *ordinare* (to set in order) + *coniugare* (to join together) | A conjunction that introduces a subordinate clause, e.g., *although*, *because or despite* |

## Excellent Epithets

**Hurston - Appositives:** Anthropologist, novelist, member of the Harlem Renaissance, luminary.

- Brilliant (adj): (of light or colour) very bright, exceptionally clever of talented.
- Enigmatic (adj): used to describe someone who is difficult to understand or place into a single category.
- Visionary (noun): a noun describing a person with original ideas.
- Contradictory (adj): an adjective to describe something mutually opposed or inconsistent.
  Contradict (v): a verb used to describe a person who provides an opposite argument.

**Spunk from Hurston's *Spunk* – Appositives:** controller, aggressor, manipulator, misogynist, possessor.

- Aggressive (adj): when someone is ready or likely to attack or confront.
  Aggressiveness (n)
- Territorial (adj): relating to the ownership of an area of land but can also allude to an animal's territory.
- Selfish (adj): lacking consideration for other people, concerned only for their own personal profit / pleasure.
- Violent (adj): using force to hurt in order to damage or kill someone or something.
  Violence (n): behaviour involving physical force.
- Covetousness (n): eager or excessive desire for something or someone.
  To covet (v): a yearning to possess something or someone (especially when it belongs to someone else).

**Claude McKay - Appositives:** poet, novelist, socialist, black intellectual, central to the Harlem Renaissance.

- Atheist (n): a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or Gods.
- Socialist (n): a person who advocates the political ideology of socialism.
  Socialism (n): a political and economic theory which advocates the equal distribution of wealth and production.
- Satirist (n): a writer of satire, be it personal, political or social.
  Satire
- Activist (n): a person who campaigns to bring about political, social or economic change.

**Paul Dunbar - Appositives:** dialect poet, novelist, influencer of Harlem Renaissance, prolific writer, true singer of the people.

- Influencer (n): a person or thing that influences another.
- African – American dialect (n): Ebonics, also called African American Vernacular English (AAVE).
- Diversity (n): the state of being diverse; variety.

**Janie from "Their Eyes Were Watching God" - Appositives:** intelligent, strong-willed, resilient, independent, irrepressible, stout, passionate.

- Independent (adj): free from outside control or not dependent on another for livelihood or subsistence. (n) an independent person or body.
- Resourceful (adj): able to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties.
- Graceful (adj) having or showing grace or elegance.
- Spirited (adj) full of energy, enthusiasm and determination.

**Joe Starks from "Their Eyes Were Watching God" – Appositives:** possessive, jealous, obtuse, begrudging, determined, obtuse.

- Cruel (adj): wilfully causing pain or suffering to others.
- Conceited (adj): excessively proud of oneself; vain.
- Uninterested (adj): not interested or concerned with Janie's feelings.
- Ambitious (adj): having a strong desire and determination to succeed.
- Obtuse (adj): annoyingly insensitive or slow to understand.

## Couch – 5k writing

Students will continue to be explicitly taught to write one sentence thesis statements using 'excellent epithets' but will also practise how to use thesis statements to form 3-4 topic sentences for the body of a more extended response. In addition, they will practise selecting textual evidence (including quotations) to support their arguments.

The challenging vocabulary selected in the 'excellent epithets' is attached to figures or characters explored in the scheme of work. This is intended to be activated in thesis statement responses. For instance, using the example of Janie's 'excellent epithets' above, students might be instructed to respond to the prompt 'How does Hurston present Janie as a complex character in "Their Eyes Were Watching God"?' using a thesis statement as follows: *Although Hurston presents Janie as a beautiful and passionate character, she was also keen to explore Janie's* ***resilience, grace and independence by the end of the novel.***

The key vocabulary items will then go on to form subsequent topic sentences, changing adjectives into nouns. For example*: Hurston's visionary and enigmatic portrayal of Janie is used to explore societal tensions around race and gender.*

| **1. Construct personal viewpoints in the form of thesis statements** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| One sentence to answer the question with two different viewpoints<br><br>Begin with a subordinating conjunction: Whereas, Despite, Although, At first glance, Because<br><br>Use a comma to pivot between viewpoints<br><br>Use at least three adjectives (and appositives) | Think of the surface meaning and then a deeper meaning which is less obvious and more interesting. (*At first glance*)<br><br>Acknowledge two or more contrasting interpretations (*Although, Despite, Whereas*)<br><br>Acknowledge a causal link between two ideas (*Because*)<br><br>Select adjectives + appositives from the **excellent epithets**. | At first glance [text] is about _____, but at a deeper level _____.<br><br>Although [the text] appears to be about _____, it is also referring to _____.<br><br>Because [first idea], [second idea.]<br><br>Despite [character + epithet], they can also be seen as [character + epithet.] |

| **2. Focus on the effects of the whole text and big ideas/themes** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Recall the big ideas/themes/intentions explored in the text | What have you been taught about this text? Or, what themes, ideas can you remember?<br><br>What is it about the extract that makes you think this? How is this | [Text] **explores** the idea/theme of _____ .<br><br>[Extract] exemplifies /reinforces/ amplifies/ the theme of _____. |

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| Think about how this extract fits these themes and ideas<br><br>Consider whether this is consistent throughout the entire text | similar/different to other texts you've studied, or other parts of *this* text?<br><br>How do ideas/themes change or develop? | [Writer] challenges/contradicts ideas about _____. |

| **3.Use the thesis statement to create topic sentences** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Each epithet will become the main point of a topic sentence.<br><br>Adjectives must be transformed into noun phrases. E.g., Implacable becomes implacability<br><br>Noun phrase must be followed by a verb.<br><br>The rest of the sentence must link to the question being answered. | Think about the epithets used in the thesis statement to consider how each can be turned into a noun to be explored in a separate topic sentence. Consider how each noun phrase links to the question being answered.<br><br>*Janie's <u>resilience</u> is one of the reasons she is chosen by Hurston to facilitate the various tragedies in her narrative* | [character, theme or writer] + [change adjective to noun] + [verb] _____. |

| **4. Select and embed relevant textual detail** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Use short, precise parts of the text (not whole lines)<br><br>Place the quote within a sentence<br><br>Place the quote inside single quotation marks<br><br>Reference what the quote is referring to | Select a part of the text which is interesting and that you'll have something that isn't obvious to say about it.<br><br>*Here, Defoe shows Crusoe's fear and agitation after discovering the footprint: "I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition."* | The writer refers to _____ as '_____' and '_____'<br><br>The writer compares _____ to '_____'<br><br>When the text states, '_____' it reminds the reader of _____.<br><br>[Character] says, "_____," conveying _____.<br><br>[Writer] repeats, "_____," because _____. |

| **5. Analyse a writer's use of language, structure and form** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Use accurate terminology<br><br>Think about effect not meaning | Why has the writer used that specific word? Is it part of a pattern of similar words? What effect does it create? Don't just state what it means in the dictionary.<br><br>*(Pamela) This combination of letters and the novel form conveys to the reader a sense of immediacy and urgency; we feel like we are alongside Pamela as she resist's Mr B's advances.* | This [literary device] **conveys** to the reader a sense of _____<br><br>[Writer] uses this [poetic device] to **depict** _____<br><br>[Writer] uses this [device] to **portray** to the reader _____ |

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| | *(Pamela) Richardson uses exclamations and short sentences bare to depict just how powerless and frightened Pamela has become. There is absolutely nothing she can do. The reader has no choice but to sympathise with her, a simple domestic servant.* | Furthermore, the word '_____' **evokes** an image of _____ |

| **6. Evaluate the writer's intent** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Use of adverb opener with a comma to follow<br>Reference to theme or literary concept | Consider why the writer wrote the poem and what message they want to give the reader or make them think about<br>*(Evelina) Thus, Burney is drawing the reader's attention to the layers of restrictive rules and petty codes that women have to negotiate.* | **Thus**, [writer] is drawing the reader's attention to_____<br>**Hence**, [writer] is challenging ideas about_____<br>**Consequently**, [writer] is highlighting_____ |

| **7. Compare texts in relation to literary concepts, ideas and methods** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Identify a clear similarity or difference between the two poems<br>Use comparative discourse markers<br>Use commas after comparative discourse markers<br>Reference to theme or literary concept | Think of interesting similarities and differences in relation to ideas, concepts or methods in Hurston's novel and Chapter 19 of Angelou's novel *I know Why The Caged Bird Sings.* | Both texts explore the concept of _____ .<br>_____ is equally significant in both texts. In [*Julius Caesar*] it is conveyed through _____, **whereas** in [MLK's speech] it is portrayed as _____<br>**Conversely**, in [text] _____<br>In [*Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare] presents [focus of the question] as _____. **Similarly**, in [*Paradise Lost*, Milton] _____<br>**Likewise**, in [text] _____ |

| **8. Linking to context** | | |
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| Teach | Model | Write |
| Identify a relevant contextual point.<br>Use adverbial time phrases.<br>Use commas after the time phrase.<br>Link to writer/text using 'and' or 'but' | Be selective in your use of context: does it add to your overall argument?<br>*At the time, women were expected to behave according to very strict social rules and Burney shows the pressure young women were under socially and morally.* | **At the time,** [relevant context] and [writer] depicts [reference to text].<br>**Contextually,** people were very concerned about [specific social rule], and [writer] employs [technique] to show [writer's intent related to social rule].<br>**In the mid 18th century**, [relevant context] but writers like [named writer] |

| | | |
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| Reference to writer's intent and themes. | | endeavoured to convey [writer's intention]. |

| **9. Extend: recognising different arguments** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teach | Model | Write |
| Identify an opposing point that you can refute/contradict.<br>Use subordinating conjunctions.<br>Use commas after subordinating conjunctions.<br>Reference to theme or literary concept | Be sure to choose an opposing point that you are sure you can disprove.<br>*Even though it is possible to argue that Fielding presents a more polished novel than Richardson, Pamela is still a compelling and persuasive story.* | **Even though it is possible to argue that**, [opposing point], it is still the case that [your point].<br>**Although it may be suggested that…**<br>**Whilst it could be argued that…** |

## Structured discussion

- Reading should be followed with structured discussions. Teachers ask planned questions about the aspect of the text being studied that students most need to remember and think about.
- This should include scaffolded practice of academic discourse mediated by the teacher where students are expected to 'speak like an essay.'

A structured discussion session might take the following form:

**TEACHER: Thomas, what impression do we get of Joe Starks in Chapter 8?**

*(This is an open question but focused on a chapter recently covered: it is low stakes but it invites the student to have their own response and not search for the response in the teacher's mind.)*

**Thomas: We think he has started to become uglier.**

**TEACHER: Can you say that in a full sentence beginning "The impression the reader has of Joe is… "?**

*(This is the start of a scaffolding of an academic register).*

**THOMAS: The impression the reader receives of Joe is that they think he is becoming uglier.**

**TEACHER: That's better. Sunita, what did Thomas just say?**

*(This is used to pivot attention to another student, keeping the topic alive. It is also a soft signal to other students to maintain their attention.)*

**SUNITA: The impression the reader has of Joe is … uh…**

**TEACHER: OK. He said, "The impression the reader receives of Joe is that they think he is becoming uglier." What did I just say?**

*(This quick retrieval is used to model, once more, the academic register we wish the students to use comfortably and naturally over time).*

**SUNITA: The impression the reader receives of Joe is that they think he is becoming uglier.**

**TEACHER: Good. Sian, what did Sunita just say?**

**SIAN: She said, "The impression the reader receives of Joe is that they think he is becoming increasingly ugly."**

*(The retrieval is used here to attempt to broaden the range of the academic register but also to reaffirm the language used by previous students).*

**TEACHER: Good. Aron, how do we know that Joe Starks is becoming increasingly ugly?**

*(This first phase probing question challenges a new responder to find evidence from the text or to summarise their understanding).*

**ARON: Um, Janie starts to describe his body and she says it is flabby and saggy.**

**TEACHER: Yes, can you say that so that it sounds more like an essay?**

**ARON: We know that Joe is getting older because Hurston describes his skin as a "loose filled bag of feathers".**

**TEACHER: That's a good effort. Jake, can you improve on what Aron said without repeating the word 'older? Start by saying, the impression the reader receives of Joe is that…**

*(At this juncture, we challenge the students to explore meanings generated from quotations without re-using the same words. It sometimes takes time to generate synonyms or to evaluate the meanings made from quotations).*

**JAKE: Er… The impression readers receive of Joe is that he is perceived by Janie to be an increasingly ageing character. Hurston uses a lexical field of decay, rot and agriculture to explore the ways in which Janie sees the ways in which time has affected Joe.**

When starting to deliver these structured discussions it is important to trial them first – consider doing them towards the end of a lesson when students are perhaps more confident in summarising and evaluating the key ideas or concepts that you have focussed their learning on.

When students have a greater sense of ownership of the content, they will be far more able to consider elevating their vocabulary in the moment of being challenged. Furthermore, in trialling them, the teacher can develop their own personal expertise and confidence levels before experimenting / implementing with other groups.

To aid the facilitation of the discussion, consider building a bank of terminology on a white board so that students can both see them and use them during the discussion.

## Overview of sequencing

Students begin with an introduction to the representation of the African – American dialect through Hurston's short story *Spunk*. They then study a range of extracts before exploring the representations of gender and race through a close reading of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The course continues to explore the themes of representation, voice and freedom through a range of non-fiction, poetry, prose and literary criticism. Texts for Fluency Reading are included in this Teacher Guide but not in the Pupil Booklet in order to maximise the flexibility in which the unit is delivered.

| Topic content | Pages |
|---|---|
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| **5 – Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 4 The Emergence of Janie**<br>Concepts: Authorial purpose and exploration of meaning, symbolism (kerchief, the candle), subordinating and coordinating conjunctions and alternative interpretations, colourism and narrative voice, foreshadowing, pathetic fallacy, stereotypes.<br>Texts:<br>• *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (Chapters 9-17)<br>• *Whose List To Hunt* by Thomas Wyatt<br>• *Sonnet 130* by William Shakespeare<br>• Extracts from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck<br>• *The Laboratory* by Robert Browning | 95 |
| **6 – Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 5 The Flood and Janie's Strength**<br>Concepts: Hurston's use of the Flood myth, the context of the novel's title, personification, cyclical narratives, structural shifts.<br>Texts:<br>• *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (Chapters 18 – 20) | 116 |

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context

| Key Questions | Core Knowledge | Terminology and vocabulary | Discussion, Reading and Writing |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Big questions:**<br>How does Hurston present the position of women in "Spunk"?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br>What is dialogue?<br>What is characterisation?<br>What is symbolism?<br>How is dialect different from dialogue? | Hurston presents Lena as a symbol of patriarchal property. She says very little in the text and the action that occurs within her narrative happens to her: with very little agency from her character.<br>The dialogue in the short story reflects the transactional relationships between the characters. There is little romantic or "loving" in these relationships: they are based on who can provide and who has respect in the community that Hurston has created.<br>Hurston creates characterisation through the description which accompanies the dialogue of her dialogue.<br>**Texts:**<br>*Zora Neale Hurston (1891 – 1960)* By Arlisha R. Norwood<br>*Looking for Zora* by Alice Walker<br>*Spunk* by Zora Neale Hurston<br>*America* by Claude McKay<br>*The Negro Speaks of Rivers* by Langston Hughes<br>Reading Fluency Texts:<br>*Looking for Zora* by Alice Walker<br>*Strivings of the Negro People* by Du Bois<br>*Enter the New Negro* by Alain Locke<br>*Ch 19 I know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou<br>*The Hope Speech* by Harvey Milk (1978)<br>*Between The World And Me* by Ta – Nehisi Coates<br>Extracts from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1745-1797)<br>*I have a Dream* by Martin Luther King (1963) | **Terminology**<br>Dialect<br>Metaphor<br>Characterisation<br>Symbolism<br>African – American dialect<br>Representation<br>Stereotypes<br>Dialogue<br>Eponymous<br>Sonnet<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br>Context<br>Inference<br>Phonetic<br>Short story<br>Alienation<br>Misogyny<br>Masculine<br>Subjugation | **Structured discussions**:<br>How does Hurston explore misogyny in her short story?<br>How does Hurston present the eponymous character in *Spunk*?<br>What can you recall about the sonnet form?<br>What attitudes does McKay have about America in his sonnet?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br>How does Hurston present Spunk in the short story? |
| **Expert Knowledge** | | | |

There are moments in which Lena begins to find a modicum of power within society but the contempt with which she views her husband and the ease with which she is "stolen" by Spunk force the reader to see her character as weak and disempowered, representative of many generations of subjugated women within patriarchal frameworks.

Hurston's use of the African-American English dialect was controversial at the time of writing and the dialect she employs is closer to the American South (of which she was very familiar) rather than the African – American dialect.

The criticism from other black writers aimed toward Hurston centred on the belief that the use of the dialect reaffirmed negative racial stereotypes. Critics of Hurston's writing argued that the black community needed to be represented beyond the stereotypical African – American English dialect. They accused her of holding back the progress of black emancipation in using a dialect which, from their perspective, reaffirmed racial prejudices.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is rich in dialect, known as the spoken version of a language. Early in the novel, Hurston tells her readers what to expect in the language of her characters. She states that Janie will tell her story to Pheoby in "soft, easy phrases".

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Annotated Texts

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) was a world-renowned writer and anthropologist. Hurston's novels, short stories, and plays often depicted African American life in the South. Her work in anthropology examined black folklore. Hurston influenced many writers, forever cementing her place in history as one of the foremost female writers of the 20th century.

Zora Neale Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama on January 15, 1891. Both her parents had been enslaved. At a young age, her family relocated to Eatonville, Florida where they flourished. Eventually, her father became one of the town's first mayors.

In 1917, Hurston enrolled at Morgan College, where she completed her high school studies. She then attended Howard University and earned an associate's degree. Hurston was an active student and participated in student government. She also co-founded the school's renowned newspaper, The Hilltop. In 1925, Hurston received a scholarship to Barnard College and graduated three years later with a BA in anthropology. During her time as a student in New York City, Hurston befriended other writers such as Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. Together, the group of writers joined the black cultural renaissance which was taking place in Harlem.

Throughout her life, Hurston, dedicated herself to promoting and studying black culture. She travelled to both Haiti and Jamaica to study the religions of the African diaspora[1]. Her findings were also included in several newspapers throughout the United States. Hurston often incorporated her research into her fictional writing. As an author Hurston, started publishing short stories as early as 1920. Unfortunately, her work was ignored by the mainstream literary audience for years. However, she gained a following among African Americans.

In 1935, she published Mules and Men. She later, collaborated with Langston Hughes[2] to create the play, Mule Bone. She published three books between 1934 and 1939. One of her most popular works was "Their Eyes were Watching God". The fictional story chronicled the tumultuous life of Janie Crawford. Hurston broke literary norms by focusing her work on the experience of a black woman.

Hurston was not only a writer, she also dedicated her life to educating others about the arts. In 1934, she established a school of dramatic arts at Bethune-Cookman College. Five years later she worked as a drama teacher at the North Carolina College for Negroes at Durham. Although Hurston eventually received praise for her works, she was often underpaid. Therefore, she remained in debt and poverty. After years of writing, Hurston had to enter the St. Lucie County Welfare Home as she was unable to take care of herself. Hurston died of heart disease on January 28, 1960. At first, her remains were placed in an unmarked grave. In 1972, author Alice Walker located her grave and created a marker. Although, Hurston's work was not widely known during

[1] The African diaspora is the worldwide collection of communities descended from native Africans or people from Africa, predominantly in the Americas.

[2] James Mercer Langston Hughes (February 1, 1901 – May 22, 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri. One of the earliest innovators of the literary art form called jazz poetry, Hughes is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance.

her life, in death she ranks among the best writers of the 20th century. Her work continues to influence writers throughout the world.

By Arlisha R. Norwood, National Women's History Museum Fellow | 2017

### Check your understanding

What part of America did Hurston focus her writing in?

A) North
B) East
C) South
D) West

What is anthropology the study of?

A) People
B) Places
C) Animals
D) Stars

What do the words **debt** and **poverty** infer about Hurston's later life?

A) That she was able to help others financially
B) That her books made her a lot of money
C) That she did not have a lot of money

What is an antonym of poverty?

A) Happiness
B) Success
C) Wealth
D) Cleanliness

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Annotated Texts

***Spunk* by Zora Neale Hurston**

*In the following short story, Hurston presents the reader with three characters who are in conflict. The marriage between Joe and his wife is under threat from the arrogant and confident Spunk Banks. As you read, try to understand the dialect which Hurston is employing and secondly, consider the ways in which Lena is presented.*

A giant of a brown-skinned man sauntered up the one street of the Village and out into the palmetto thickets with a small pretty woman clinging lovingly to his arm.[3]

"Looka theah, folkses!" cried Elijah Mosley, slapping his leg gleefully. "Theah they go, big as life an' brassy as tacks."

All the loungers in the store tried to walk to the door with an air of nonchalance but with small success.

"Now pee-eople!" Walter Thomas gasped. "Will you look at 'em!"

"But that's one thing Ah likes about Spunk Banks—he ain't skeered of nothin' on God's green footstool—nothin'! He rides that log down at saw-mill jus' like he struts 'round wid another man's wife—jus' don't give a kitty. When Tes' Miller got cut to giblets on that circle-saw, Spunk steps right up and starts ridin'. The rest of us was skeered to go near it."[4]

A round-shouldered figure in overalls much too large, came nervously in the door and the talking ceased. The men looked at each other and winked.

[3] This is the first time that Lena is represented: Hurston clearly describes her as an active participant but she is "clinging" to him which presents him as the individual with power in the scene.
[4] This initial phase of dialect allows the reader to become accustomed to the rhythms of it and ensure understanding.

"Gimme some soda-water. Sass'prilla Ah reckon," the newcomer ordered, and stood far down the counter near the open pickled pig-feet tub to drink it.

Elijah nudged Walter and turned with mock gravity to the new-comer.

"Say, Joe, how's everything up yo' way? How's yo' wife?"

Joe started and all but dropped the bottle he held in his hands. He swallowed several times painfully and his lips trembled.[5]

"Aw 'Lige, you oughtn't to do nothin' like that," Walter grumbled. Elijah ignored him.

"She jus' passed heah a few minutes ago goin' theta way," with a wave of his hand in the direction of the woods.

Now Joe knew his wife had passed that way. He knew that the men lounging in the general store had seen her, moreover, he knew that the men knew he knew. He stood there silent for a long moment staring blankly, with his Adam's apple twitching nervously up and down his throat. One could actually see the pain he was suffering, his eyes, his face, his hands and even the dejected slump of his shoulders. He set the bottle down upon the counter. He didn't bang it, just eased it out of his hand silently and fiddled with his suspender buckle.

"Well, Ah'm goin' after her to-day. Ah'm goin' an' fetch her back. Spunk's done gone too fur."

He reached deep down into his trouser pocket and drew out a hollow ground razor, large and shiny, and passed his moistened thumb back and forth over the edge.

"Talkin' like a man, Joe. Course that's yo' fambly affairs, but Ah like to see grit in anybody."

Joe Kanty laid down a nickel and stumbled out into the street.

Dusk crept in from the woods. Ike Clarke lit the swinging oil lamp that was almost immediately surrounded by candle-flies. The men laughed boisterously behind Joe's back as they watched him shamble woodward.

"You oughtn't to said whut you did to him, 'Lige—look how it worked him up," Walter chided.

"And Ah hope it did work him up. 'Tain't even decent for a man to take and take like he do."

"Spunk will sho' kill him."

"Aw, Ah doan't know. You never kin tell. He might turn him up an' spank him fur gettin' in the way, but Spunk wouldn't shoot no unarmed man. Dat razor he carried outa heah ain't gonna run Spunk down an' cut him, an' Joe ain't got the nerve to go up to Spunk with it knowing he totes that Army 45. He makes that break outa heah to bluff us. He's gonna hide that razor behind the first likely palmetto root an' sneak back home to bed. Don't tell me nothin' 'bout that rabbit-foot colored man. Didn't he meet Spunk an' Lena face to face one day las' week an' mumble sumthin' to Spunk 'bout lettin' his wife alone?"

"What did Spunk say?" Walter broke in—"Ah like him fine but 'tain't right the way he carries on wid Lena Kanty, jus' cause Joe's timid 'bout fightin'."

"You wrong theah, Walter. 'Tain't cause Joe's timid at all, it's cause Spunk wants Lena. If Joe was a passle of wile cats Spunk would tackle the job just the same. He'd go after anything he wanted the same way. As Ah wuz sayin' a minute ago, he tole Joe right to his face that Lena was his.

'Call her,' he says to Joe. 'Call her and see if she'll come. A woman knows her boss an' she answers when he calls.'

'Lena, ain't I yo' husband?' Joe sorter whines out. Lena looked at him real disgusted but she don't answer and she don't move outa her tracks. Then Spunk reaches out an' takes hold of her arm an'says: 'Lena, youse mine. From now on Ah works for you an' fights for you an' Ah never wants you to look to nobody for a crumb of bread, a stitch of close or a shingle to go over yo' head, but me long as Ah live. Ah'll git the lumber foh owah house to-morrow. Go home an' git yo' things together!'

"'Thass mah house,' Lena speaks up. 'Papa gimme that.'

"'Well,' says Spunk, 'doan give up whut's yours, but when youse inside don't forgit youse mine, an' let no other man git outa his place wid you!'

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[5] The characterisation is an excellent example to show students about how to "show" and not "tell" through description.

“Lena looked up at him with her eyes so full of love that they wuz runnin‘ over, an’ Spunk seen it an’ Joe seen it too, and his lip started to tremblin’ and his Adam’s apple was galloping up and down his neck like a race horse. Ah bet he’s wore out half a dozen Adam’s apples since Spunk’s been on the job with Lena. That’s all he’ll do. He’ll be back heah after while swallowin’ an’ workin’ his lips like he wants to say somethin’ an’ can’t.”

“But didn’t he do nothin’ to stop ’em?”

“Nope, not a frazzlin’ thing—jus’ stood there. Spunk took Lena’s arm and walked off jus’ like nothin’ ain’t happened and he stood there gazin’ after them till they was outa sight. Now you know a woman don’t want no man like that. I’m jus’ waitin’ to see whut he’s goin’ to say when he gits back.”

**II**

But Joe Kanty never came back, never. The men in the store heard the sharp report of a pistol somewhere distant in the palmetto thicket and soon Spunk came walking leisurely, with his big black Stetson set at the same rakish angle and Lena clinging to his arm, came walking right into the general store. Lena wept in a frightened manner.

“Well,” Spunk announced calmly, “Joe come out there wid a meatax an’ made me kill him.”

He sent Lena home and led the men back to Joe—Joe crumpled and limp with his right hand still clutching his razor.

“See mah back? Mah cloes cut clear through. He sneaked up an’ tried to kill me from the back, but Ah got him, an’ got him good, first shot,” Spunk said.

The men glared at Elijah, accusingly.

“Take him up an’ plant him in ’Stoney lonesome,”‘ Spunk said in a careless voice. “Ah didn’t wanna shoot him but he made me do it. He’s a dirty coward, jumpin’ on a man from behind.”

Spunk turned on his heel and sauntered away to where he knew his love wept in fear for him and no man stopped him. At the general store later on, they all talked of locking him up until the sheriff should come from Orlando, but no one did anything but talk.

A clear case of self-defense, the trial was a short one, and Spunk walked out of the court house to freedom again. He could work again, ride the dangerous log-carriage that fed the singing, snarling, biting, circle-saw; he could stroll the soft dark lanes with his guitar. He was free to roam the woods again; he was free to return to Lena. He did all of these things.

**III**

“Whut you reckon, Walt?” Elijah asked one night later. “Spunk’s gittin’ ready to marry Lena!”

“Naw! Why, Joe ain’t had time to git cold yit. Nohow Ah didn’t figger Spunk was the marryin’ kind.”

“Well, he is,” rejoined Elijah. “He done moved most of Lena’s things—and her along wid ’em—over to the Bradley house. He’s buying it. Jus’ like Ah told yo‘ all right in heah the night Joe wuz kilt. Spunk’s crazy ’bout Lena. He don’t want folks to keep on talkin’ ’bout her—thass reason he’s rushin‘ so. Funny thing ’bout that bob-cat, wan’t it?”

“What bob-cat, ’Lige? Ah ain’t heered ’bout none.”

“Ain’t cher? Well, night befo’ las’ was the fust night Spunk an’ Lena moved together an’ jus’ as they was goin’ to bed, a big black bob-cat, black all over, you hear me, black, walked round and round that house and howled like forty, an‘ when Spunk got his gun an’ went to the winder to shoot it he says it stood right still an’ looked him in the eye, an’ howled right at him. The thing got Spunk so nervoused up he couldn’t shoot. But Spunk says twan’t no bob-cat nohow. He says it was Joe done sneaked back from Hell! ”

“Humph!” sniffed Walter, “he oughter be nervous after what he done. Ah reckon Joe come back to dare him to marry Lena, or to come out an’ fight. Ah bet he’ll be back time and agin, too. Know what Ah think? Joe wuz a braver man than Spunk.”

There was a general shout of derision from the group.

“Thass a fact,” went on Walter. “Lookit whut he done took a razor an’ went out to fight a man he knowed toted a gun an’ wuz a crack shot, too; ’nother thing Joe wuz skeered of Spunk, skeered plumb stiff! But he went jes’ the same. It took him a long time to get his nerve up. ’Tain’t nothin’ for Spunk to fight when he ain’t skeered of

nothin'. Now, Joe's done come back to have it out wid the man that's got all he ever had. Y'll know Joe ain't never had nothin' nor wanted nothin' besides Lena. It musta been a h'ant cause ain' nobody never seen no black bob-cat."

"'Nother thing," cut in one of the men, "Spunk wuz cussin' a blue streak to-day 'cause he 'lowed dat saw wuz wobblin'—almos' got 'im once. The machinist come, looked it over an' said it wuz alright. Spunk musta been leanin' t'wards it some. Den he claimed somebody pushed 'im but 'twant nobody close to 'im. Ah wuz glad when knockin' off time come. I'm skeered of dat man when he gits hot. He'd beat you full of button holes as quick as he's look etcher."

**IV**

The men gathered the next evening in a different mood, no laughter. No badinage this time.

"Look, 'Lige, you goin' to set up wid Spunk?"

"New, Ah reckon not, Walter. Tell yuh the truth, Ah'm a lil bit skittish. Spunk died too wicket—died cussin' he did. You know he thought he wuz done outa life."

"Good Lawd, who'd he think done it?"

"Joe."

"Joe Kanty? How come? "

"Walter, Ah b'leeve Ah will walk up theta way an' set. Lena would like it Ah reckon."

"But whut did he say, 'Lige?"

Elijah did not answer until they had left the lighted store and were strolling down the dark street.

"Ah wuz loadin' a wagon wid scantlin' right near the saw when Spunk fell on the carriage but 'fore Ah could git to him the saw got him in the body—awful sight. Me an' Skint Miller got him off but it was too late. Anybody could see that. The fust thing he said wuz: 'He pushed me, 'Lige—the dirty hound pushed me in the back!'—He was spittin' blood at ev'ry breath. We laid him on the sawdust pile with his face to the East so's he could die easy. He heft mah hen' till the last, Walter, and said: 'It was Joe, 'Lige—the dirty sneak shoved me . . . he didn't dare come to mah face . . . but Ah'll git the son-of-a-wood louse soon's Ah get there an' make hell too hot for him. . . . Ah felt him shove me. . . !' Thass how he died."

"If spirits kin fight, there's a powerful tussle goin' on somewhere ovah Jordan 'cause Ah b'leeve Joe's ready for Spunk an' ain't skeered any more. Yes, Ah b'leeve Joe pushed 'im mahself."

They had arrived at the house. Lena's lamentations were deep and loud. She had filled the room with magnolia blossoms that gave off a heavy sweet odour. The keepers of the wake tipped about whispering in frightened tones. Everyone in the village was there, even old Jeff Kanty, Joe's father, who a few hours before would have been afraid to come within ten feet of him, stood leering triumphantly down upon the fallen giant as if his fingers had been the teeth of steel that laid him low. The cooling board consisted of three sixteen-inch boards on saw horses, a dingy sheet was his shroud. The women ate heartily of the funeral baked meats and wondered who would be Lena's next. The men whispered coarse conjectures between guzzles of whiskey.

**Structured Discussion**:

- What can you infer about the different characters from the words and phrases they use?
- Why do you think it is important that Hurston is writing in the African – American English dialect?
- How does Hurston present the position of women in this short story?
- How has Hurston used the natural world in this short story?

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Annotated Texts

Claude McKay Claude McKay, born Festus Claudius McKay in Sunny Ville, Jamaica in 1889, was a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance, a prominent literary movement of the 1920s. His work ranged from vernacular verse celebrating peasant life in Jamaica to poems that protested racial and economic inequities.

In the poem *America*, McKay presents the conflicting emotions he feels about the country. He is both drawn to it and loves it but also feels hatred about the aspects of it that affect his life and the lives of others so profoundly.

***America***
**By Claude McKay**

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate,
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred
Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.[6]

**Structured Discussion:**

- How does McKay explore the idea of being alienated from others in this poem?
- Which powerful metaphors are used and what meanings do you think they could suggest?
- Why do you think it is important that Hurston uses the African-American English dialect in her short story in light of having read and understood this poem?
- What form is the poem composed in? Why is this important?

[6] McKay's critique of America was not the first, nor the last to accuse the country of various crimes, prejudices and inequalities. For many countries around the world, its premise of global capitalism and interventionalist foreign policy has made it both the champion of the "free world" and the pariah of many countries in South America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. McKay speaks as though he understands the true strength and morality of the country will take time and his strength lies in his determination to wait "Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand".

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Annotated Texts

Langston Hughes was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of black intellectual, literary, and artistic life that took place in the 1920s in a number of American cities, particularly Harlem.

A major poet, Hughes also wrote novels, short stories, essays, and plays. He sought to honestly portray the joys and hardships of working-class black lives, avoiding both sentimental idealisation and negative stereotypes.

The issue that Hughes faced was that many of his contemporaries wished to present the voice of African-American writers as different from reality whereas Hughes (and Hurston) wanted to reflect the voices just as they were: without apology or attempted '*elevation'.* Their use of dialect came under severe scrutiny from many literary critics at the time, believing both authors to be holding back representations of the African – American voice.

**Langston Hughes - 1901-1967**
***A Negro Speaks of Rivers***

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates[7] when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

**Structured Discussion**

What do you think Hughes is exploring when he speaks of knowing rivers?

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Annotated Texts

An enslaved man who bought his freedom and wrote compellingly about his experiences, Olaudah Equiano (c. 1745–1797) was an extraordinary man who became a prominent figure associated with the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

Equiano was born in what is now Nigeria and sold into slavery aged 11. After spells in Barbados and Virginia he spent eight years travelling the world as slave to a British Royal Navy officer, who renamed him Gustavus Vassa. His final master, an English merchant in Montserrat, let him buy his freedom for £40 – almost a year's salary for a teacher, but Equiano made it in three years of trading on the side.

Equiano worked as an explorer and merchant for 20 years, and eventually settled in England, the country where he had converted to Christianity in 1759. With the encouragement of the Abolitionists, who campaigned against the slave trade, he published these memoirs in 1789.

The Life of Olaudah Equiano - The British Library (bl.uk)

**Excerpt I. Enslavement**

[7] The Euphrates is the longest and one of the most historically important rivers of Western Asia. Together with the Tigris, it is one of the two defining rivers of Mesopotamia. Originating in Turkey, the Euphrates flows through Syria and Iraq to join the Tigris in the Shatt al-Arab, which empties into the Persian Gulf.

My father, besides many slaves, had a numerous family, of which seven lived to grow up, including myself and a sister, who was the only daughter. As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favourite of my mother, and was always with her; and she used to take particular pains to form my mind. I was trained up from my earliest years in the arts of agriculture and war; and my mother adorned me with emblems, after the manner of our greatest warriors. In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner:

- - Generally, when the grown people in the neighbourhood were gone far in the fields to labour, the children assembled together in some of the neighbourhood's premises to play; and commonly some of us used to get up a tree to look out for any assailant, or kidnapper, that might come upon us; for they sometimes took those opportunities of our parents' absence, to attack and carry off as many as they could seize.

One day, as I was watching at the top of a tree in our yard, I saw one of those people come into the yard of our next neighbour but one, to kidnap, there being many stout young people in it. Immediately, on this, I gave the alarm of the rogue, and he was surrounded by the stoutest of them, who entangled him with cords, so that he could not escape till some of the grown people came and secured him.

But alas! ere long, it was my fate to be thus attacked, and to be carried off, when none of the grown people were nigh. One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night.

We were then unbound; but were unable to take any food; and, being quite overpowered by fatigue and grief, our only relief was some sleep, which allayed our misfortune for a short time.

**Excerpt II. The Middle Passage**

I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly. I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind.

There I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life. With the loathesomeness of the stench and the crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, Death, to relieve me.

Soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands and laid me across the windlass and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before. If I could have gotten over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not. The crew used to watch very closely those of us who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water. I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself.

I inquired of these what was to be done with us. They gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate. But still I feared that I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted in so savage a manner. I have never seen among my people such instances of brutal cruelty, and this not only shown towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves.

One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast that he died in consequence of it, and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more, and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner.

I asked them if these people had no country, but lived in this hollow place? They told me they did not but came from a distant land. "Then," said I, "how comes it that in all our country we never heard of them?"

They told me because they lived so far off. I then asked where were their women? Had they any like themselves? I was told they had.

"And why do we not see them" I asked. They answered, "Because they were left behind."

I asked how the vessel would go? They told me they could not tell, but there was cloth put upon the masts by the help of the ropes I saw, and then vessels went on, and the white men had some spell or magic they put in the water when they liked in order to stop the vessel when they liked.

I was exceedingly amazed at this account, and really thought they were spirits. I therefore wished much to be from amongst them, for I expected they would sacrifice me. But my wishes were in vain- - for we were so quartered that it was impossible for us to make our escape.

At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel.

The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time. . . some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air. But now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number of the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us.

This produced copious perspirations so that the air became unfit for respiration from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died- - thus falling victims of the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, which now became insupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs [toilets] into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

Happily perhaps for myself, I was soon reduced so low that it was necessary to keep me almost always on deck and from my extreme youth I was not put into fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon the deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs. Every circumstance I met with, served only to render my state more painful and heightened my apprehensions and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites.

One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea. Immediately another quite dejected fellow, who on account of his illness was suffered to be out of irons, followed their example. I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion among the people of the ship as I never heard before to stop her and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However, two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery

## Structured Discussion

Why do you think we have read this extract?

What links can you make between it and the texts you have read so far?

**Opportunity for revision of Ethos, Logos and Pathos**

**"Countries should be held accountable for historical crimes committed by that country".**

**To what extent do you agree?**

**Ethos** – what areas of factual detail and information could be used in support of, or against this motion?

**Logos** – what logical arguments can be constructed in support of, or against this motion?

**Pathos** – what emotive arguments can be constructed in support of, or against this motion?

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Du Bois February 23, 1868 – August 27, 1963) was an
American sociologist, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor. He was a scholar at the historically Black Atlanta University, established himself as a leading thinker on race and the plight of Black Americans. He challenged the position held by Booker T. Washington, another contemporary prominent intellectual, that Southern Blacks should compromise their basic rights in exchange for education and legal justice.

He also spoke out against the notion popularized by abolitionist Frederick Douglass that Black Americans should integrate with white society. In the following essay published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1897, *Strivings of the Negro People*, Du Bois writes that Black Americans should instead embrace their African heritage even as they worked and lived in the United States.

**Strivings of the Negro People By W. E. Burghardt Du Bois**

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience, — peculiar even for one who has never been anything else, save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe. It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first burst upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, — refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads.

Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the world I longed for, and all its dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head, — some way. With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white; or wasted itself in a bitter cry, Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The "shades of the prison-house" closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the

whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly against the stone, or steadily, half hopelessly watch the streak of blue above.

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, — a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

This is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, and to husband and use his best powers. These powers, of body and of mind, have in the past been so wasted and dispersed as to lose all effectiveness, and to seem like absence of all power, like weakness. The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan, on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde, could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause. By the poverty and ignorance of his people the Negro lawyer or doctor was pushed toward quackery and demagogism, and by the criticism of the other world toward an elaborate preparation that overfitted him for his lowly tasks. The would-be black-savant was confronted by the paradox that the knowledge his people needed was a twice-told tale to his white neighbours, while the knowledge which would teach the white world was Greek to his own flesh and blood. The innate love of harmony and beauty that set the ruder souls of his people a-dancing, a-singing, and a-laughing raised but confusion and doubt in the soul of the black artist; for the beauty revealed to him was the soul-beauty of a race which his larger audience despised, and he could not articulate the message of another people.

This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of eight thousand people, has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and has even at times seemed destined to make them ashamed of themselves. In the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment; eighteenth-century Rousseauism never worshiped freedom with half the unquestioning faith that the American Negro did for two centuries. To him slavery was, indeed, the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice; emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of wearied Israelites.

In his songs and exhortations swelled one refrain, liberty; in his tears and curses the god he implored had freedom in his right hand. At last it came, — suddenly, fearfully, like a dream. With one wild carnival of blood and passion came the message in his own plaintive cadences: —

Shout, O children!
Shout, you're free!
The Lord has bought your liberty!

Years have passed away, ten, twenty, thirty. Thirty years of national life, thirty years of renewal and development, and yet the swarthy ghost of Banquo sits in its old place at the national feast. In vain does the nation cry to its vastest problem, —

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble!

The freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land. Whatever of lesser good may have come in these years of change, the shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon the Negro people, — a disappointment all the more bitter because the unattained ideal was unbounded save by the simple ignorance of a lowly folk.

The first decade was merely a prolongation of the vain search for freedom, the boon that seemed ever barely to elude their grasp, — like a tantalizing will-o'-the wisp, maddening and misleading the headless host. The holocaust of war, the terrors of the Kuklux Klan, the lies of carpet-baggers, the disorganization of industry, and the contradictory advice of friends and foes left the bewildered serf with no new watchword beyond the old cry for freedom. As the decade closed, however, he began to grasp a new idea. The ideal of liberty demanded for its attainment powerful means, and these the Fifteenth Amendment gave him. The ballot, which before he had looked upon as a visible sign of freedom, he now regarded as the chief means of gaining and perfecting the liberty with which war had partially endowed him. And why not? Had not votes made war and emancipated millions? Had not votes enfranchised the freedmen? Was anything impossible to a power that had done all this? A million black men started with renewed zeal to vote themselves into the kingdom. The decade fled away, — a decade containing, to the freedman's mind, nothing but suppressed votes, stuffed ballot-boxes, and election outrages that nullified his vaunted right of suffrage.

And yet that decade from 1875 to 1885 held another powerful movement, the rise of another ideal to guide the unguided, another pillar of fire by night after a clouded day. It was the ideal of "book-learning;" the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic letters of the white man, the longing to know. Mission and night schools began in the smoke of battle, ran the gauntlet of reconstruction and at last developed into permanent foundations. Here at last seemed to have been discovered the mountain path to Canaan; longer than the highway of emancipation and law, steep and rugged, but straight, leading to heights high enough to overlook life.

Up the new path the advance guard toiled, slowly, heavily, doggedly; only those who have watched and guided the faltering feet, the misty minds, the dull understandings, of the dark pupils of these schools know how faithfully, how piteously, this people strove to learn. It was weary work. The cold statistician wrote down the inches of progress here and there, noted also where here and there a foot had slipped or someone had fallen.

To the tired climbers, the horizon was ever dark, the mists were often cold, the Canaan was always dim and far away. If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting-place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect. In those sombre forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself, — darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another. For the first time he sought to analyze the burden he bore upon his back, that dead-weight of social degradation partially masked behind a half-named Negro problem. he felt his poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, he had entered into competition with rich landed, skilled neighbours.

To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. He felt the weight of his ignorance, — not simply of letters, but of life, of business, of the humanities; the accumulated sloth and shirking and awkwardness of decades and centuries shackled his hands and feet. Nor was his burden all poverty and ignorance. The red stain of bastardy, which two centuries of systematic legal defilement of Negro women had stamped upon his race, meant not only the loss of ancient African chastity, but also the hereditary weight of a mass of filth from white whoremongers and adulterers, threatening almost the obliteration of the Negro home.

A people thus handicapped ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But alas! while sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his

prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair. Men call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defence of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the "higher" against the "lower" races.

To which the Negro cries Amen! and swears that to so much this strange prejudice as is founded on just homage to civilization, culture, righteousness, and progress he humbly bows and meekly does obeisance. But before that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this he stands helpless, dismayed, and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all-pervading desire to inculcated disdain for everything black, from Toussaint to the devil, — before this there rises a sickening despair that would disarm and discourage any nation save that black host to whom "discouragement" is an unwritten word.

They still press on, they still nurse the dogged hope, — not a hope of nauseating patronage, not a hope of reception into charmed social circles of stock-jobbers, pork-packers, and earl-hunters, but the hope of a higher synthesis of civilization and humanity, a true progress, with which the chorus "Peace, good will to men,"

May make one music as before,
But vaster.

Thus the second decade of the American Negro's freedom was a period of conflict, of inspiration and doubt, of faith and vain questionings, of Sturm und Drang. The ideals of physical freedom, of political power, of school training, as separate all-sufficient panaceas for social ills, became in the third decade dim and overcast. They were the vain dreams of credulous race childhood; not wrong, but incomplete and over-simple. The training of the schools we need to-day more than ever, — the training of deft hands, quick eyes and ears, and the broader, deeper, higher culture of gifted minds.

The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defence, and as a guarantee of good faith. We may misuse it, but we can scarce do worse in this respect than our whilom masters. Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek, — the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think. Work, culture, and liberty—all these we need, not singly, but together; for today these ideals among the Negro people are gradually coalescing, and finding a higher meaning in the unifying ideal of race, — the ideal of fostering the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to, but in conformity with, the greater ideals of the American republic, in order that someday, on American soil, two world races may give each to each those characteristics which both so sadly lack. Already we come not altogether empty-handed: there is to-day no true American music but the sweet wild melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales are Indian and African; we are the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal, dyspeptic blundering with the light-hearted but determined Negro humility; or her coarse, cruel wit with loving, jovial good humour; or her Annie Rooney with Steal Away?

Merely a stern concrete test of the underlying principles of the great republic is the Negro problem, and the spiritual striving of the freedmen's sons is the travail of souls whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength, but who bear it in the name of an historic race, in the name of this the land of their fathers' fathers, and in the name of human opportunity.

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Alain Locke March 1925: Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro

Alain Locke (1886-1954) was born and raised in Philadelphia. He graduated from Harvard and continued his studies in Europe as the first African American Rhodes Scholar. After teaching English at Howard University for four years, he returned to Harvard in 1916 to begin work on a Ph.D. in philosophy, which he obtained in 1918.

He rejoined the Howard faculty and taught there until his retirement in 1953. In 1925 he edited a special edition of the magazine Survey Graphic, devoted exclusively to the life of Harlem. He later expanded it into

an anthology, The New Negro, which became the manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance, or as some critics prefer to call it, the New Negro Movement. In the essay provided here Locke captures the hope and optimism of a people who have discovered "a new vision of opportunity."

In the last decade something beyond the watch and guard of statistics has happened in the life of the American Negro and the three norms who have traditionally presided over the Negro problem have a changeling in their laps. The Sociologist, The Philanthropist, the Race-leader are not unaware of the New Negro, but they are at a loss to account for him. He simply cannot be swathed in their formulae. For the younger generation is vibrant with a new psychology; the new spirit is awake in the masses, and under the very eyes of the professional observers is transforming what has been a perennial problem into the progressive phases of contemporary Negro life.

Could such a metamorphosis have taken place as suddenly as it has appeared to? The answer is no; not because the New Negro is not here, but because the Old Negro had long become more of a myth than a man. The Old Negro, we must remember, was a creature of moral debate and historical controversy. His has been a stock figure perpetuated as an historical fiction partly in innocent sentimentalism, partly in deliberate reactionism. The Negro himself has contributed his share to this through a sort of protective social mimicry forced upon him by the adverse circumstances of dependence. So for generations in the mind of America, the Negro has been more of a formula than a human being – a something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be “kept down,” or “in his place,” or “helped up,” to be worried with or worried over, harassed or patronized, a social bogey or a social burden.

The thinking Negro even has been induced to share this same general attitude, to focus his attention on controversial issues, to see himself in the distorted perspective of a social problem. His shadow, so to speak, has been more real to him than his personality. Through having had to appeal from the unjust stereotypes of his oppressors and traducers to those of his liberators, friends and benefactors he has subscribed to the traditional positions from which his case has been viewed. Little true social or self-understanding has or could come from such a situation.

But while the minds of most of us, black and white, have thus burrowed in the trenches of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the actual march of development has simply flanked these positions, necessitating a sudden reorientation of view. We have not been watching in the right direction; set North and South on a sectional axis, we have not noticed the East till the sun has us blinking.

Recall how suddenly the Negro spirituals revealed themselves; suppressed for generations under the stereotypes of Wesleyan hymn harmony, secretive, half-ashamed, until the courage of being natural brought them out – and behold, there was folk-music. Similarly the mind of the Negro seems suddenly to have slipped from under the tyranny of social intimidation and to be shaking off the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority. By shedding the old chrysalis of the Negro problem we are achieving something like a spiritual emancipation. Until recently, lacking self-understanding, we have been almost as much of a problem to ourselves as we still are to others. But the decade that found us with a problem has left us with only a task. The multitude perhaps feels as yet only a strange relief and a new vague urge, but the thinking few know that in the reaction the vital inner grip of prejudice has been broken.

With this renewed self-respect and self-dependence, the life of the Negro community is bound to enter a new dynamic phase, the buoyancy from within compensating for whatever pressure there may be of conditions from without. The migrant masses, shifting from countryside to city, hurdle several generations of experience at a leap, but more important, the same thing happens spiritually in the lifeattitudes and self-expression of the Young Negro, in his poetry, his art, his education and his new outlook, with the additional advantage, of course, of the poise and greater certainty of knowing what it is all about.

First we must observe some of the changes which since the traditional lines of opinion were drawn have rendered these quite obsolete. A main change has been, of course, that shifting of the Negro population which has made the Negro problem no longer exclusively or even predominantly Southern. Why should our minds remain sectionalized, when the problem itself no longer is? Then the trend of migration has not only been toward the North and the Central Midwest, but city-ward and to the great centres of industry – the problems

of adjustment are new, practical, local and not peculiarly racial. Rather they are an integral part of the large industrial and social problems of our present-day democracy. And finally, with the Negro rapidly in process of class differentiation, if it ever was warrantable to regard and treat the Negro en masse, it is becoming with every day less possible, more unjust and more ridiculous.

The Negro, too, for his part, has idols of the tribe to smash. If on the one hand the white man has erred in making the Negro appear to be that which would excuse or extenuate his treatment of him, the Negro, in turn, has too often unnecessarily excused himself because of the way he has been treated. The intelligent Negro of today is resolved not to make discrimination an extenuation for his shortcomings in performance, individual or collective; he is trying to hold himself at par, neither inflated by sentimental allowances nor depreciated by current social discounts. For this he must know himself and be known for precisely what he is, and for that reason he welcomes the new scientific rather than the old sentimental interest.

Sentimental interest in the Negro has ebbed. We used to lament this as the falling off of our friends; now we rejoice and pray to be delivered both from self-pity and condescension. The mind of each racial group has had a bitter weaning, apathy or hatred on one side matching disillusionment or resentment on the other; but they face each other today with the possibility at least of entirely new mutual attitudes.

It does not follow that if the Negro were better known, he would be better liked or better treated. But mutual understanding is basic for any subsequent cooperation and adjustment. The effort toward this will at least have the effect of remedying in large part what has been the most unsatisfactory feature of our present state of race relationships in America, namely the fact that the more intelligent and representative elements of the two race groups have at so many points got quite out of vital touch with one another.

The fiction is that the life of the races is separate, and increasingly so. The fact is that they have touched too closely at the unfavourable and too lightly at the favourable levels. While inter-racial councils have sprung up in the South, drawing on forward elements of both races, in the Northern cities manual laborers may brush elbows in their everyday work, but the community and business leaders have experienced no such interplay or far too little of it.

These segments must achieve contact or the race situation in America becomes desperate. Fortunately this is happening. There is a growing realization that in social effort the cooperative basis must supplant long-distance philanthropy, and that the only safeguard for mass relations in the future must be provided in the carefully maintained contacts of the enlightened minorities of both race groups. In the intellectual realm a renewed and keen curiosity is replacing the recent apathy; the Negro is being carefully studied, not just talked about and discussed. In art and letters, instead of being wholly caricatured, he is being seriously portrayed and painted.

To all of this the New Negro is keenly responsive as an augury of a new democracy in American culture. He is contributing his share to the new social understanding. But the desire to be understood would never in itself have been sufficient to have opened so completely the protectively closed portals of the thinking Negro's mind. There is still too much possibility of being snubbed or patronized for that.

It was rather the necessity for fuller, truer, self-expression, the realization of the unwisdom of allowing social discrimination to segregate him mentally, and a counter-attitude to cramp and fetter his own living – and so the "spite-wall" that the intellectuals built over the "colour-line" has happily been taken down.

Much of this reopening of intellectual contacts has centred in New York and has been richly fruitful not merely in the enlarging of personal experience, but in the definite enrichment of American art and letters and in the clarifying of our common vision of the social tasks ahead.

The particular significance in the reestablishment of contact between the more advanced and representative classes is that it promises to offset some of the unfavourable reactions of the past, or at least to re-surface race contacts somewhat for the future. Subtly the conditions that are moulding a New Negro are moulding a new American attitude. However, this new phase of things is delicate; it will call for less charity but more justice; less help, but infinitely closer understanding. This is indeed a critical stage of race relationships because of the likelihood, if the new temper is not understood, of engendering sharp group antagonism and a second crop of

more calculated prejudice. In some quarters, it has already done so. Having weaned the Negro, public opinion cannot continue to paternalize.

The Negro today is inevitably moving forward under the control largely of his own objectives. What are these objectives? Those of his outer life are happily already well and finally formulated, for they are none other than the ideals of American institutions and democracy. Those of his inner life are yet in process of formation, for the new psychology at present is more of a consensus of feeling than of opinion, of attitude rather than of program. Still some points seem to have crystallized.

UP to the present one may adequately describe the Negro's "inner objectives" as an attempt to repair a damaged group psychology and reshape a warped social perspective. Their realisation has required a new mentality for the American Negro. And as it matures we begin to see its effects; at first, negative, iconoclastic, and then positive and constructive.

In this new group psychology we note the lapse of sentimental appeal, then the development of a more positive self-respect and self-reliance; the repudiation of social dependence, and then the gradual recovery from hyper-sensitiveness and "touchy" nerves, the repudiation of the double standard of judgment with its special philanthropic allowances and then the sturdier desire for objective and scientific appraisal; and finally the rise from social disillusionment to race pride, from the sense of social debt to the responsibilities of social contribution, and off-setting the necessary working and common sense acceptance of restricted conditions, the belief in ultimate esteem and recognition.

Therefore, the Negro today wishes to be known for what he is, even in his faults and shortcomings, and scorns a craven and precarious survival at the price of seeming to be what he is not. He resents being spoken for as a social ward or minor, even by his own, and to being regarded a chronic patient for the sociological clinic, the sick man of American Democracy. For the same reasons, he himself is through with those social nostrums and panaceas, the so-called "solutions" of his "problem," with which he and the country have been so liberally dosed in the past. Religion, freedom, education, money – in turn, he has ardently hoped for and peculiarly trusted these things; he still believes in them, but not in blind trust that they alone will solve his life-problem.

Each generation, however, will have its creed and that of the present is the belief in the efficacy of collective efforts in race cooperation. This deep feeling of race is at present the mainspring of Negro life. It seems to be the outcome of the reaction to proscription and prejudice; an attempt, fairly successful on the whole, to convert a defensive into an offensive position, a handicap into an incentive. It is radical in tone, but not in purpose and only the most stupid forms of opposition, misunderstanding or persecution could make it otherwise. Of course, the thinking Negro has shifted a little toward the left with the worldtrend, and there is an increasing group who affiliate with radical and liberal movements.

But fundamentally for the present the Negro is radical on race matters, conservative on others, in other words, a "forced radical," a social protestant rather than a genuine radical. Yet under further pressure and injustice iconoclastic thought and motives will inevitably increase. Harlem's quixotic radicalisms call for their ounce of democracy today lest tomorrow they be beyond cure. The Negro mind reaches out as yet to nothing but American wants, American ideas. But this forced attempt to build his Americanism on race values is a unique social experiment, and its ultimate success is impossible except through the fullest sharing of American culture and institutions.

There should be no delusion about this. American nerves in sections unstrung with race hysteria are often fed the opiate that the trend of Negro advance is wholly separatist, and that the effect of its operation will be to encyst the Negro as a benign foreign body in the body politic. This cannot be – even if it were desirable. The racialism of the Negro is no limitation or reservation with respect to American life; it is only a constructive effort to build the obstructions in the stream of his progress into an efficient dam of social energy and power. Democracy itself is obstructed and stagnated to the extent that any of its channels are closed. Indeed they cannot be selectively closed. So the choice is not between one way for the Negro and another way for the rest, but between American institutions frustrated on the one hand and American ideals progressively fulfilled and realised on the other.

There is, of course, a warrantably comfortable feeling in being on the right side of the country's professed ideals. We realize that we cannot be undone without America's undoing. It is within the gamut of this attitude that the thinking Negro faces America, but the variations of mood in connection with it are if anything more significant than the attitude itself.

More and more, however, an intelligent realisation of the great discrepancy between the American social creed and the American social practice forces upon the Negro the taking of the moral advantage that is his. Only the steadying and sobering effect of a truly characteristic gentleness of spirit prevents the rapid rise of a definite cynicism and counter-hate and a defiant superiority feeling. Human as this reaction would be, the majority still deprecate its advent, and would gladly see it forestalled by the speedy amelioration of its causes. We wish our race pride to be a healthier, more positive achievement than a feeling based upon a realization of the shortcomings of others. But all paths toward the attainment of a sound social attitude have been difficult; only a relatively few enlightened minds have been able as the phrase puts it "to rise above" prejudice.

The ordinary man has had until recently only a hard choice between the alternatives of supine and humiliating submission and stimulating but hurtful counterprejudice. Fortunately from some inner, desperate resourcefulness has recently sprung up the simple expedient of fighting prejudice by mental passive resistance, in other words by trying to ignore it. For the few, this manna may perhaps be effective, but the masses cannot thrive on it.

There are constructive channels opening out into which the balked social feelings of the American Negro can flow freely. Without them there would be much more pressure and danger than there is. These compensating interests are racial but in a new and enlarged way. One is the consciousness of acting as the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization; the other, the sense of a mission of rehabilitating the race in world esteem from that loss of prestige for which the fate and conditions of slavery have so largely been responsible. Harlem, as we shall see, is the centre of both these movements; she is the home of the Negro's "Zionism." The pulse of the Negro world has begun to beat in Harlem.

A Negro newspaper carrying news material in English, French and Spanish, gathered from all quarters of America, the West Indies and Africa has maintained itself in Harlem for over five years. Two important magazines, both edited from New York, maintain their news and circulation consistently on a cosmopolitan scale.

As a world phenomenon this wider race consciousness is a different thing from the much asserted rising tide of colour. Its inevitable causes are not of our making. The consequences are not necessarily damaging to the best interests of civilization. Whether it actually brings into being new Armadas of conflict or argosies of cultural exchange and enlightenment can only be decided by the attitude of the dominant races in an era of critical change. With the American Negro his new internationalism is primarily an effort to recapture contact with the scattered peoples of African derivation. Garveyism may be a transient, if spectacular, phenomenon, but the possible role of the American Negro in the future development of Africa is one of the most constructive and universally helpful missions that any modern people can lay claim to. Constructive participation in such causes cannot help giving the Negro valuable group incentives, as well as increased prestige at home and abroad.

Our greatest rehabilitation may possibly come through such channels, but for the present, more immediate hope rests in the revaluation by white and black alike of the Negro in terms of his artistic endowments and cultural contributions, past and prospective. It must be increasingly recognized that the Negro has already made very substantial contributions, not only in his folk-art, music especially, which has always found appreciation, but in larger, though humbler and less acknowledged ways.

For generations the Negro has been the peasant matrix of that section of America which has most undervalued him, and here he has contributed not only materially in labour and in social patience, but spiritually as well.

The South has unconsciously absorbed the gift of his folk-temperament. In less than half a generation it will be easier to recognize this, but the fact remains that a leaven of humour, sentiment, imagination and tropic nonchalance has gone into the making of the South from a humble, unacknowledged source. A second crop of the Negro's gifts promises still more largely.

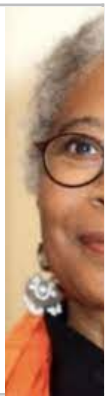
He now becomes a conscious contributor and lays aside the status of a beneficiary and ward for that of a collaborator and participant in American civilization. The great social gain in this is the releasing of our talented group from the arid fields of controversy and debate to the productive fields of creative expression. The especially cultural recognition they win should in turn prove the key to that revaluation of the Negro which must precede or accompany any considerable further betterment of race relationships. But whatever the general effect, the present generation will have added the motives of self-expression and spiritual development to the old and still unfinished task of making material headway and progress. No one who understandingly faces the situation with its substantial accomplishment or views the new scene with its still more abundant promise can be entirely without hope. And certainly, if in our lifetime the Negro should not be able to celebrate his full initiation into American democracy, he can at least, on the warrant of these things, celebrate the attainment of a significant and satisfying new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual Coming of Age.

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Alice Malsenior Tallulah-Kate Walker (born February 9, 1944) is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which she was awarded for her novel *The Color Purple*.

Over the span of her career, Walker has published seventeen novels and short story collections, twelve non-fiction works, and collections of essays and poetry.

Zora Neale Hurston's embrace of black culture and language was an inspiration to Alice Walker. "I realised that unless I came out with everything I had supporting her, there was every chance that she would slip back into obscurity," Walker says of the Harlem Renaissance writer and anthropologist.



***Looking for Zora* by Alice Walker**

*This article is a fascinating account of the way in which Walker uncovered the past of Hurston and how she was perceived by those she knew in the areas in which she lived.*

The revival of interest in the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston is largely due to the efforts of Alice Walker. She chronicled her search for Hurston's unmarked grave in her essay "Looking for Zora," first published in Ms. magazine. 01975 by Alice Walker.

> On January 16, 1959, Zora Neale Hurston, suffering from the effects of a stroke and writing painfully in longhand, composed a letter to the "editorial department" of Harper & Brothers inquiring if they would be interested in seeing "the book I am laboring upon at present—a life of Herod the Great." One year and twelve days later, Zora Neale Hurston died without funds to provide for her burial, a resident of the St. Lucie County, Florida, Welfare Home. She lies today in an unmarked grave in a segregated cemetery in Fort Pierce, Florida, a resting place generally symbolic of the black writer's fate in America.
>
> Zora Neale Hurston is one of the most significant unread authors in America, the author of two minor classics and four other major books.
>
> Robert Hemenway, 'Zora Hurston and the Eatonville Anthropolou', *The Harlem Renaissance, Remembered*

On August 15, 1973, I wake up just as the plane is lowering over Sanford, Florida, which means I am also looking down on Eatonville, Zora Neale Hurston's birthplace. I recognize it from Zora's description in Mules and Men: "the city of five lakes, three croquet courts, three hundred brown skins, three hundred good swimmers, plenty guavas, two schools, and no jailhouse." Of course I cannot see the guavas, but the five lakes are still there, and it is the lakes I count as the plane prepares to land in Orlando.

From the air, Florida looks completely flat, and as we near the ground this impression does not change. This is the first time I have seen the interior of the state, which Zora wrote about so well, but there are the acres of orange groves, the sand, mangrove trees, and scrub pine that I know from her books. Getting off the plane I walk through the humid air of midday into the tacky but air-conditioned airport. I search for Charlotte Hunt, my companion on the Zora Hurston expedition. She

lives in Winter Park, Florida, very near Eatonville, and is writing her graduate dissertation on Zora. I see her waving—a large, pleasant faced white woman in dark glasses. We have written to each other for several weeks, swapping our latest finds (mostly hers) on Zora, and trying to make sense out of the mass of information obtained (often erroneous or simply confusing) from Zora herself—through her stories and autobiography—and from people who wrote about her.

Eatonville has lived for such a long time in my imagination that I can hardly believe it will be found existing in its own right. But after twenty minutes on the expressway, Charlotte turns off and I see a small settlement of houses and stores set with no particular pattern in the sandy soil off the road. We stop in front of a neat gray building that has two fascinating signs: EATONVILLE POST OFFICE and EATONVILLE CITY HALL.

Inside the Eatonville City Hall half of the building, a slender, dark-brown-skin woman sits looking through letters on a

desk. When she hears we are searching for anyone who might have known Zora Neale

Hurston, she leans back in thought. Because I don't wish to inspire foot-dragging in people who might know something about Zora they're not sure they should tell, I have decided on a simple, but I feel profoundly useful, lie.

“I am Miss Hurston's niece,” I prompt the young woman, who brings her head down with a smile.

“I think Mrs. Moseley is about the only one still living who might remember her,” she says.

“Do you mean *Mathilda* Moseley, the woman who tells those 'woman-is-smarter-than-man' lies in Zora's book?”

‘Yes,’ says the young woman. ‘Mrs. Moseley is real old now, of course. But this time of day, she should be at home.’

I stand at the counter looking down on her, the first Eatonville resident I have spoken to. Because of Zora's books, I feel I know something about her; at least [ know what the town she grew up in was like years before she was born.

‘Tell me something,’ I say. ‘Do the schools teach Zora's books here?’

‘No,’ she says, ‘they don't. I don't think most people know anything about Zora Neale Hurston, or know about any of the great things she did. She was a fine lady. I've read all of her books myself, but I don't think many other folks in Eatonville have.’

‘Many of the church people around here, as I understand it,’ says Charlotte in a murmured aside, “thought Zora was pretty loose. I don't think they appreciated her writing about them.”

“Well,” I say to the young woman, “thank you for your help.” She clarifies her directions to Mrs. Moseley's house and smiles as Charlotte and I turn to go.

> The letter to Harper's does not expose a publisher's rejection of an unknown masterpiece, but it does reveal how the bright promise of the Harlem Renaissance deteriorated for many of the writers who shared in its exuberance. It also indicates the personal tragedy of Zora Neale Hurston: Barnard graduate, author of four novels, two books of folklore, one volume of autobiography, the most important collector of Afro-American folklore in America, reduced by poverty and circumstance to seek a publisher by unsolicited mail.
>
> Robert Hemenway

> Zora Hurston was born in 1901, 1902, or 1903—depending on how old she felt herself to be at the time someone asked.
>
> Librarian, Beinecke Library, Yale University

The Moseley house is small and white and snug, its tiny yard nearly swallowed up by oleanders and hibiscus bushes. Charlotte and [ knock on the door. I call out. But there is no answer. This strikes us as peculiar. We have had time to figure out an age for Mrs. Moseley—not dates or a number, just old. I am thinking of a quivery, bedridden invalid when we hear the car. We look behind us to see an old black-and-white Buick—paint peeling and grillwork rusty pulling into the drive. A neat old lady in a purple dress and with white hair is straining at the wheel. She is frowning because Charlotte's car is in the way.

Mrs. Moseley looks at us suspiciously. “Yes, I knew Zora Neale,” she says, unsmilingly and with a rather cold stare at Charlotte (who, I imagine, feels very white at that moment), “but that was a long time ago, and I don't want to talk about it.”

“Yes, ma'am,” I murmur, bringing all my sympathy to bear on the situation.

“Not only that,” Mrs. Moseley continues, “I've been sick. Been in the hospital for an operation. Ruptured artery. The doctors didn't believe I was going to live, but you see me alive, don't you?”

Looking well, too,” I comment.

Mrs. Moseley is out of her car. A thin, sprightly woman with nice gold-studded false teeth, uppers and lowers. I like her because she stands there straight beside her car, with a hand on her hip and her straw pocketbook on her arm. She wears white T-strap shoes with heels that show off her well-shaped legs.

“I'm eighty-two years old, you know,” she says. “And I just can't remember things the way I used to. Anyhow, Zora Neale left here to go to school and she never really came back to live. She'd come here for material for her books, but that was all. She spent most of her time down in South Florida.”

“You know, Mrs. Moseley, I saw your name in one of Zora's books.”

“You did?” She looks at me with only slightly more interest. “I read some of her books a long time ago, but then people got to borrowing and borrowing and they borrowed them all away.”

“I could send you a copy of everything that's been reprinted,” I offer. “Would you like me to do that?”

“No,” says Mrs. Moseley promptly. “I don't read much any more. Besides, all of that was so long ago . . .”

Charlotte and I settle back against the car in the sun. Mrs. Moseley tells us at length and with exact recall every step in her recent operation, ending with: “What those doctors didn't know—when they were expecting me to die (and they didn't even think I'd live long enough for them to have to take out my stitches!)—is that Jesus is the best doctor, and if He says for you to get well, that's all that counts.”

With this philosophy, Charlotte and I murmur quick assent: being Southerners and church bred, we have heard that belief before. But what we learn from Mrs. Moseley is that she does not remember much beyond the year 1938. She shows us a picture of her father and mother and says that her father was Joe Clarke's brother. Joe Clarke, as every Zora Hurston reader knows, was the first mayor of Eatonville; his fictional counterpart is Jody Starks of Their Eyes Were Watching God. We also get directions to where Joe Clarke's store was—where Club Eaton is now. Club Eaton, a long orange-beige nightspot we had seen on the main road, is apparently famous for the good times in it regularly had by all. It is, perhaps, the modern equivalent of the store porch, where all the men of Zora's childhood came to tell “lies,” that -is, black folk tales, that were “made and used on the spot,” to take a line from Zora. As for Zora's exact birthplace, Mrs. Moseley has no idea.

After I have commented on the healthy growth of her hibiscus bushes, she becomes more talkative. She mentions how much she loved to dance, when she was a young woman, and talks about how good her husband was. When he was alive, she says, she was completely happy because he allowed her to be completely free. “I was so free I had to pinch myself sometimes to tell if I was a married woman.”

Relaxed now, she tells us about going to school with Zora. “Zora and I went to the same school. It's called Hungerford High now. It was only to the eighth grade. But our teachers were so good that by the time

you left you knew college subjects. When I went to Morris Brown in Atlanta, the teachers there were just teaching me the same things I had already learned right in Eatonville. I wrote Mama and told her I was going to come home and help her with her babies. I wasn't learning anything new.”

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Maya Angelou (April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014) was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received dozens of awards and more than 50 honorary degrees.

Angelou is best known for her series of seven autobiographies, which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences. The first, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969), tells of her life up to the age of 17 and brought her international recognition and acclaim.

The extract below provides a stirring, disturbing moment in which Joe Louis wins his boxing match but black individuals seek shelter afterwards, fearful of racially motivated reprisals. This shadow of racism hangs over Hurston's novel and it is important that students recognise the reality in which Hurston and Angelou were living and writing.

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,* Chapter 19 - Maya Angelou**

The last inch of space was filled, yet people continued to wedge themselves along the walls of the Store. Uncle Willie had turned the radio up to its last notch so that youngsters on the porch wouldn't miss a word. Women sat on kitchen chairs, dining-room chairs, stools and upturned wooden boxes. Small children and babies perched on every lap available and men leaned on the shelves or on each other.

The apprehensive mood was shot through with shafts of gaiety, as a black sky is streaked with lightning.

"I ain't worried 'bout this fight. Joe's gonna whip that cracker like it's open season."

"He gone whip him till that white boy call him Momma."

At last the talking was finished and the string-along songs about razor blades were over and the fight began.

"A quick jab to the head." In the Store the crowd grunted. "A left to the head and a right and another left." One of the listeners cackled like a hen and was quieted.

"They're in a clench, Louis is trying to fight his way out."

Some bitter comedian on the porch said, "That white man don't mind hugging that niggah now, I betcha."

"The referee is moving in to break them up, but Louis finally pushed the contender away and it's an uppercut to the chin. The contender is hanging on, now he's backing away. Louis catches him with a short left to the jaw."

A tide of murmuring assent poured out the doors and into the yard.

"Another left and another left. Louis is saving that mighty right . . ." The mutter in the Store had grown into a baby roar and it was pierced by the clang of a bell and the announcer's "That's the bell for round three, ladies and gentlemen."

As I pushed my way into the Store I wondered if the announcer gave any thought to the fact that he was addressing as 'ladies and gentlemen' all the Negroes around the world who sat sweating and praying, glued to their 'master's voice.'

There were only a few calls for R. C. Colas, Dr. Peppers, and Hire's root beer. The real festivities would begin after the fight. Then even the old Christian ladies who taught their children and tried themselves to practice turning the other cheek would buy soft drinks, and if the Brown Bomber's victory was a particularly bloody one they would order peanut patties and Baby Ruths also.

Bailey and I lay the coins on top of the cash register. Uncle Willie didn't allow us to ring up sales during a fight. It was too noisy and might shake up the atmosphere. When the gong rang for the next round we pushed through the near-sacred quiet to the herd of children outside.

"He's got Louis against the ropes and now it's a left to the body and a right to the ribs. Another right to the body, it looks like it was low . . . Yes, ladies and gentlemen, the referee is signalling but the contender keeps raining the blows on Louis. It's another to the body, and it looks like Louis is going down."

My race groaned. It was our people falling. It was another lynching, yet another Black man hanging on a tree. One more woman ambushed and raped. A Black boy whipped and maimed. It was hounds on the trail of a man running through slimy swamps. It was a white woman slapping her maid for being forgetful.

The men in the Store stood away from the walls and at attention. Women greedily clutched the babes on their laps while on the porch the shufflings and smiles, flirtings and pinching of a few minutes before were gone. This might be the end of the world. If Joe lost we were back in slavery and beyond help. It would all be true, the accusations that we were lower types of human beings. Only a little higher than the apes. True that we were stupid and ugly and lazy and dirty and, unlucky and worst of all, that God Himself hated us and ordained us to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, forever and ever, world without end.

We didn't breathe. We didn't hope. We waited.

"He's off the ropes, ladies and gentlemen. He's moving towards the centre of the ring." There was no time to be relieved. The worst might still happen.

"And now it looks like Joe is mad. He's caught Carnera with a left hook to the head and a right to the head. It's a left jab to the body and another left to the head. There's a left cross and a right to the head. The contender's right eye is bleeding and he can't seem to keep his block up. Louis is penetrating every block. The referee is moving in, but Louis sends a left to the body and it's the uppercut to the chin and the contender is dropping. He's on the canvas, ladies and gentlemen."

Babies slid to the floor as women stood up and men leaned toward the radio.

"Here's the referee. He's counting. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven ... Is the contender trying to get up again?"

All the men in the store shouted, "NO."

" — eight, nine, ten." There were a few sounds from the audience, but they seemed to be holding themselves in against tremendous pressure.

"The fight is all over, ladies and gentlemen. Let's get the microphone over to the referee . . . Here he is. He's got the Brown Bomber's hand, he's holding it up . . . Here he is . .."

Then the voice, husky and familiar, came to wash over us: "The winnah, and still heavyweight champeen of the world . . . Joe Louis."

Champion of the world. A Black boy. Some Black mother's son. He was the strongest man in the world. People drank Coca-Colas like ambrosia and ate candy bars like Christmas. Some of the men went behind the Store and

poured white lightning in their soft-drink bottles, and a few of the bigger boys followed them. Those who were not chased away came back blowing their breath in front of themselves like proud smokers.

It would take an hour or more before the people would leave the Store and head for home. Those who lived too far had made arrangements to stay in town. It wouldn't do for a Black man and his family to be caught on a lonely country road on a night when Joe Louis had proved that we were the strongest people in the world.

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Martin Luther King Jr. was a social activist and Baptist minister who played a key role in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. King sought equality and human rights for African Americans, the economically disadvantaged and all victims of injustice through peaceful protest.

King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and is remembered each year on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a U.S. federal holiday since 1986.

Martin Luther King Jr: Quotes, Assassination & Facts – HISTORY
The following speech was delivered on 28th August 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honouring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvellous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."2

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

**Opportunity for revision of Ethos, Logos and Pathos**

**How does Martin Luther King Jnr use Ethos, Logos and Pathos in his famous speech?**

**Ethos** – what areas of factual detail and information are be used in support of his arguments?

**Logos** – what logical arguments are utilised in support of his arguments?

**Pathos** – what emotive arguments are utilised in support of his arguments?

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Harvey Bernard Milk (May 22, 1930 – November 27, 1978) was an American politician and the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California, as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.
Milk served almost eleven months in office, during which he sponsored a bill banning discrimination in public accommodations, housing, and employment on the basis of sexual orientation. The Supervisors passed the bill by a vote of 11–1, and it was signed into law by Mayor George Moscone. On November 27, 1978, Milk and Moscone were assassinated by Dan White, a disgruntled former city supervisor who cast the sole vote against Milk's bill.

In 2002, Milk was called "the most famous and most significant openly LGBT official ever elected in the United States". Anne Kronenberg, his final campaign manager, wrote of him: "What set Harvey apart from you or me was that he was a visionary. He imagined a righteous world inside his head and then he set about to create it for real, for all of us." Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

**This extract is included to stimulate discussion as to the ways in which different groups in society are marginalised, subjugated and abused by those in power and authority.**

**HARVEY MILK | 25 JUNE 1978**

*This is an edited version of the speech made at San Francisco's Gay Freedom Day Parade. Milk was assassinated in November of the same year.*

About six months ago, Anita Bryant in her speaking to God said that the drought in California was because of the gay people. On November 9, the day after I got elected, it started to rain. On the day I got sworn in, we walked to City Hall and it was kind of nice, and as soon as I said the word "I do," it started to rain again. It's been raining since then and the people of San Francisco figure the only way to stop it is to do a recall petition.

So much for that. Why are we here? Why are gay people here? And what's happening?

Let's look at 1977. In 1977, gay people had their rights taken away from them in Miami. But you must remember that in the week before Miami and the week after that, the word homosexual or gay appeared in every single newspaper in this nation in articles both pro and con. In every radio station, in every TV station and every household. For the first time in the history of the world, everybody was talking about it, good or bad. Unless you have dialogue, unless you open the walls of dialogue, you can never reach to change people's opinion. Once you have dialogue starting, you know you can break down prejudice. In 1977 we saw a dialogue start. In 1977, we saw a gay person elected in San Francisco.

What that is, is a record of what happened last year. What we must do is make sure that 1978 continues the movement.

I know we are pressed for time so I'm going to cover just one more little point. That is to understand why it is important that gay people run for office and that gay people get elected. I know there are many people in this room who are running for central committee who are gay. I encourage you. There's a major reason why. If my non-gay friends and supporters in this room understand it, they'll probably understand why I've run so often before I finally made it.

You see there is a major difference – and it remains a vital difference – between a friend and a gay person, a friend in office and a gay person in office. Gay people have been slandered nationwide. We've been tarred and we've been brushed with the picture of pornography. In Dade County, we were accused of child molestation. It's not enough anymore just to have friends represent us. No matter how good that friend may be.

The black community made up its mind to that a long time ago. That the myths against blacks can only be dispelled by electing black leaders, so the black community could be judged by the leaders and not by the myths or black criminals. The Spanish community must not be judged by Latin criminals or myths. The Asian community must not be judged by Asian criminals or myths. The Italian community must not be judged by the mafia, myths. And the time has come when the gay community must not be judged by our criminals and myths.

Like every other group, we must be judged by our leaders and by those who are themselves gay, those who are visible. For invisible, we remain in limbo - a myth, a person with no parents, no brothers, no sisters, no friends who are straight, no important positions in employment. A tenth of the nation supposedly composed of stereotypes and would-be seducers of children – and no offense meant to the stereotypes. But today, the black community is not judged by its friends, but by its black legislators and leaders. And we must give people the chance to judge us by our leaders and legislators. A gay person in office can set a tone, can command respect not only from the larger community, but from the young people in our own community who need both examples and hope.

The first gay people we elect must be strong. They must not be content to sit in the back of the bus. They must not be content to accept pabulum. They must be above wheeling and dealing. They must be – for the good of all of us – independent, unbought. The anger and the frustrations that some of us feel is because we are misunderstood, and friends can't feel the anger and frustration. They can sense it in us, but they can't feel it. Because a friend has never gone through what is known as coming out. I will never forget what it was like coming out and having nobody to look up toward. I remember the lack of hope - and our friends can't fulfil it.

I can't forget the looks on faces of people who've lost hope. Be they gay, be they seniors, be they blacks looking for an almost-impossible job, be they Latins trying to explain their problems and aspirations in a tongue that's foreign to them. I personally will never forget that people are more important than buildings. I use the word "I" because I'm proud. I stand here tonight in front of my gay sisters, brothers and friends because I'm proud of you. I think it's time that we have many legislators who are gay and proud of that fact and do not have to remain in the closet. I think that a gay person, up-front, will not walk away from a responsibility and be afraid

of being tossed out of office. After Dade County, I walked among the angry and the frustrated night after night and I looked at their faces. And in San Francisco, three days before Gay Pride Day, a person was killed just because he was gay. And that night, I walked among the sad and the frustrated at City Hall in San Francisco and later that night as they lit candles on Castro Street and stood in silence, reaching out for some symbolic thing that would give them hope. These were strong people, whose faces I knew from the shop, the streets, meetings and people who I never saw before but I knew. They were strong, but even they needed hope.

And the young gay people who are coming out and hear Anita Bryant on television and her story. The only thing they have to look forward to is hope. And you have to give them hope. Hope for a better world, hope for a better tomorrow, hope for a better place to come to if the pressures at home are too great. Hope that all will be all right. Without hope, not only gays, but the blacks, the seniors, the handicapped, the us'es, the us'es will give up. And if you help elect to the central committee and other offices, more gay people, that gives a green light to all who feel disenfranchised, a green light to move forward. It means hope to a nation that has given up, because if a gay person makes it, the doors are open to everyone.

So if there is a message I have to give, it is that I've found one overriding thing about my personal election, it's the fact that if a gay person can be elected, it's a green light. And you and you and you, you have to give people hope.

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Reading Fluency Texts

Ta-Nehisi Coates is an award-winning author and journalist. He is the author of the bestselling books *The Beautiful Struggle*, *We Were Eight Years in Power*, *The Water Dancer*, and *Between The World And Me*, which won the National Book Award in 2015. His first novel, *The Water Dancer*, was released in September 2019. He was a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship that same year.

Ta-Nehisi also enjoyed a successful run writing Marvel's *Black Panther* (2016-2021) and *Captain America* (2018-2021) comics series.

In the following foreword to *Between the World And Me*, he addresses his son and argues that the American Dream cannot exist without racial inequalities and that the very body he inhabits is a locus for racial inequality.

Son,

Last Sunday the host of a popular news show asked me what it meant to lose my body. The host was broadcasting from Washington, D.C., and I was seated in a remote studio on the far west side of Manhattan. A satellite closed the miles between us, but no machinery could close the gap between her world and the world for which I had been summoned to speak.

When the host asked me about my body, her face faded from the screen, and was replaced by a scroll of words, written by me earlier that week. The host read these words for the audience, and when she finished she turned to the subject of my body, although she did not mention it specifically.

But by now I am accustomed to intelligent people asking about the condition of my body without realizing the nature of their request. Specifically, the host wished to know why I felt that white America's progress, or rather the progress of those Americans who believe that they are white, was built on looting and violence. Hearing this, I felt an old and indistinct sadness well up in me. The answer to this question is the record of the believers themselves.

The answer is American history.

There is nothing extreme in this statement. Americans deify democracy in a way that allows for a dim awareness that they have, from time to time, stood in defiance of their God. But democracy is a forgiving God and America's heresies-torture, theft, enslavement-are so common among individuals and nations that none can declare themselves immune.

In fact, Americans, in a real sense, have never betrayed their God. When Abraham Lincoln declared, in 1863, that the battle of Gettysburg must ensure "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," he was not merely being aspirational; at the onset of the Civil War, the United States of America had one of the highest rates of suffrage in the world. The question is not whether Lincoln truly meant "government of the people" but what our country has, throughout its history, taken the political term "people" to actually mean.

In 1863 it did not mean your mother or your grandmother, and it did not mean you and me. Thus America's problem is not its betrayal of "government of the people," but the means by which "the people" acquired their names. This leads us to another equally important ideal, one BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME that Americans implicitly accept but to which they make no conscious claim.

Americans believe in the reality of "race" as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism-the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them inevitably follows from this inalterable condition.

In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother ' Nature, and one is left to deplore the Middle Passage or the Trail of Tears the way one deplores an earthquake, a tornado, or any other phenomenon that can be cast as beyond the handiwork of men. But race is the child of racism, not the father.

And the process of naming "the people" has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of hierarchy. Difference in hue and hair is old. But the belief in the pre-eminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize a society and that they signify deeper attributes, which are indelible-this is the new idea at the heart of these new people who have been brought up hopelessly, tragically, deceitfully, to believe that they are white.

These new people are, like us, a modern invention. But unlike us, their new name has no real meaning divorced from the machinery of criminal power. The new people were something else before they were white-Catholic, Corsican, Welsh, Mennonite, Jewish-and if all our national hopes have any fulfilment, then they will have to be something else again. Perhaps they will truly become American and create a nobler basis for their myths.

I cannot call it. As for now, it must be said that the process of washing the disparate tribes white, the elevation of the belief in being white, was not achieved through wine tastings and ice cream socials, but rather through the pillaging of life, liberty, labour, and land; through the flaying of backs; the chaining of limbs; the strangling of dissidents; the destruction of families; the rape of mothers; the sale of children; and various other acts meant, first and foremost, to deny you and me the right to secure and govern our own bodies.

The new people are not original in this. Perhaps there has been, at some point in history, some great power whose elevation was exempt from the violent exploitation of other human bodies. If there has been, I have yet to discover it. But this banality of violence can never excuse America, because America makes no claim to the banal. America believes itself exceptional, the greatest and noblest nation ever to exist, a lone champion standing between the white city of democracy and the terrorists, despots, barbarians, and other enemies of civilization.

One cannot, at once, claim to be superhuman and then plead mortal error. I propose to take our countrymen's claims of American exceptionalism seriously, which is to say I propose subjecting our country to an exceptional moral standard. This is difficult because there exists, all around us, an apparatus urging us to accept American innocence at face value and not to inquire too much. And it is so easy to look away, to live with the fruits of our history and to ignore the great evil done in all of our names.

But you and I have never truly had that luxury. I think you know. I write you in your fifteenth year. I am writing you because this was the year you saw Eric Garner choked to death for selling cigarettes; because you know now that Renisha McBride was shot for seeking help, that John Crawford was shot down for browsing in a department store. And you have seen men in uniform drive by and murder Tamir Rice, a twelve-year-old child whom they were oath-bound to protect. And you have seen men in the same uniforms pummel Marlene Pinnock , someone's grandmother, on the side of a road.

And you know now, if you did not before, that the police departments of your country have been endowed with the authority to destroy your body. It does not matter if the destruction is the result of an unfortunate overreaction. It does not matter if it originates in a misunderstanding. It does not matter if the destruction springs from a foolish policy.

Sell cigarettes without the proper authority and your body can be destroyed. Resent the people trying to entrap your body and it can be destroyed. Turn into a dark stairwell and your body can be destroyed. T he destroyers will rarely be held accountable. Mostly they will receive pensions. And destruction is merely the superlative form of a dominion whose prerogatives include frisking’s, detaining’s, beatings, and humiliations. All of this is common to black people. And all of this is old for black people. No one is held responsible.

There is nothing uniquely evil in these destroyers or even in this moment. The destroyers are merely men enforcing the whims of our country, correctly interpreting its heritage and legacy . It is hard to face this. But all our phrasing-race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy-serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth.

You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body.

That Sunday, with that host, on that news show, I tried to explain this as best I could within the time allotted. But at the end of the segment, the host flashed a widely shared picture of an eleven-year-old black boy tearfully hugging a white police officer. Then she asked me about "hope." And I knew then that I had failed. And I remembered that I had expected to fail. And I wondered again at the indistinct sadness welling up in me.

Why exactly was I sad? I came out of the studio and walked for a while. It was a calm December day. Families, believing themselves white, were out on the streets. Infants, raised to be white, were bundled in strollers. And I was sad for these people, much as I was sad for the host and sad for all the people out there watching and revelling in a specious hope. I realised then why I was sad. When the journalist asked me about my body, it was like she was asking me to awaken her from the most gorgeous dream.

I have seen that dream all my life.

It is perfect houses with nice lawns. It is Memorial Day cookouts, block associations, and driveways. The Dream is treehouses and the Cub Scouts. The Dream smells like peppermint but tastes like strawberry shortcake. And for so long I have wanted to escape into the Dream, to fold my country over my head like a blanket. But this has never been an option because the Dream rests on our backs, the bedding made from our bodies. And knowing this, knowing that the Dream persists by warring with the known world, I was sad for the host, I was sad for all those families, I was sad for my country, but above all, in that moment, I was sad for you.

That was the week you learned that the killers of Michael Brown would go free. The men who had left his body in the street like some awesome declaration of their inviolable power would never be punished. It was not my expectation that anyone would ever be punished. But you were young and still believed. You stayed up till 11 P.M. that night, waiting for the announcement of an indictment, and when instead it was announced that there was none you said, "I've got to go," and you went into your room, and I heard you crying. I came in five minutes after, and I didn't hug you, and I didn't comfort you, because I thought it would be wrong to comfort you. I did not tell you that it would be okay, because I have never believed it would be okay.

What I told you is what your grandparents tried to tell me: that this is your country; that this is your world, that this is your body, and you must find some way to live within the all of it. I tell you now that the question of how one should live within a black body, within a country lost in the Dream, is the question of my life, and the pursuit of this question, I have found, ultimately answers itself. This must seem strange to you. We live in a "goal oriented" era. Our media vocabulary is full of hot takes, big ideas, and grand theories of everything.

But some time ago I rejected magic in all its forms.

This rejection was a gift from your grandparents, who never tried to console me with ideas of an afterlife and were sceptical of preordained American glory. In accepting both the chaos of history and the fact of my total end, I was freed to truly consider how I wished to live-specifically, how do I live free in this black body?

It is a profound question because America understands itself as God's handiwork, but the black body is the clearest evidence that America is the work of men. I have asked the question through my reading and writings, through the music of my youth, through arguments with your grandfather, with your mother, your aunt Janai, your uncle Ben. I have searched for answers in nationalist myth, in classrooms, out on the streets, and on other continents. The question is unanswerable, which is not to say futile. The greatest reward of this constant interrogation, of confrontation with the brutality of my country, is that it has freed me from ghosts and girded me against the sheer terror of disembodiment.

## Section 1: Hurston's Writing, the African – American Dialect and Context: Check your understanding

1) Which word follows 'Harlem' to describe the growth of African-American art and literature?
a) Growth
b) Redevelopment
c) Rebirth
**d) Renaissance**

2) Which word describes a society ruled by men?
   a) Matriarchy
   b) Oligarchy
   **c) Patriarchy**
   d) Plutocracy

3) Dialect is the word used to describe what?
   **a) A form of language from a specific place or social group**
   b) A conversation between people
   c) A regional accent from a specific place or social group
   d) The slang which people use

4) What is the tenor in the metaphor: 'She was a tower of strength'?
   a) The upright tower
   b) The degree of strength she had
   c) The past tense
   **d) The woman**

5) What is the vehicle in the metaphor: 'Life is a rollercoaster'?
   a) Life
   b) Is
   **c) Rollercoaster**
   d) Fairgrounds

6) Dialogue is the noun used to describe what?
   a) How characters are described when delivering their lines in plays and novels
   **b) The conversation between two or more characters in plays and novels**
   c) When countries discuss how to resolve a problem.
   d) When one person speaks directly to a reader or an audience

7) What is the meaning of the Greek root word from phonetic (phon)?
   a) Sight
   **b) Sound**
   c) Touch
   d) Smell

## Section 2: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 1 Janie's Childhood and Love

| Key questions | Core Knowledge | **Terminology & Vocabulary** | **Discussion, reading & writing** |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Big questions:**<br><br>How does Hurston explore the issue of identity in the symbolism of the photograph?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br><br>What is a first person narrative?<br><br>What is a second person narrative?<br><br>What is a third person narrative?<br><br>. | Hurston creates a cyclical narrative, the novel begins in the same space at which it concludes in a conversation between the lead character (Janie) and Pheoby Watson.<br><br>Hurston uses allusions and references to the natural world throughout the novel.<br><br>Hurston interweaves a third person omniscient narrator with the recollections of Janie's first person narration and it is these recollections which create a sense of unreliability in the narrator.<br><br>Hurston uses the pear tree as a metaphor for Janie's growing maturity.<br><br>**Texts**:<br><br>*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston<br><br>*We Wear The Mask* by Paul Dunbar<br><br>*Sympathy* by Paul Dunbar<br><br>*Ecrits* by Jacques Lacan<br><br>**Reading fluency:**<br>Chapters 1 and 2.<br>Extracts from Ecrits | **Terminology**<br><br>Frame narrative<br><br>Cyclical narrative<br><br>Narrative perspectives<br><br>Narratorial instability<br><br>Omniscient narrator<br><br>Metaphor<br><br>Subordinating and coordinating conjunctions<br><br>Otherness<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br><br>Dialect<br><br>Characterisation<br><br>Speech<br><br>Representation<br><br>Craft<br><br>Racism<br><br>Society<br><br>Gender<br><br>Patriarchy<br><br>Janie<br><br>Hurston | **Structured discussions**:<br><br>Why does Nanny want Janie to marry?<br><br>Why is Janie resistant to the idea of marriage?<br><br>What do you think the mule represents?<br><br>Is Hurston right to use the mule as symbolic of black women?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br><br>How does Hurston present Nanny?<br><br>How is marriage used to control Janie in Chapter 2? |

## Expert Knowledge

Janie undergoes a moment of recognition when she sees herself in the photograph. This "mirror stage" is a moment in which her identity, her psychological self is noticed for the first time. It is also the first time that she recognises she is "black" and "other". Jacques Lacan noted this "mirror stage" as the first time in which infants recognise their reflections as themselves (6-9 months in age) in his psychoanalytical criticism.
Hurston uses a metaphor to of a "mule" to explore the presentation of black women and their role in society. This is problematic, ugly and indicative of the time in which the text was produced.

Dunbar's poem *Sympathy* uses the oft repeated symbol of the caged bird to reflect the containment of the individual within society. For Dunbar and Janie, the containment is racial prejudice, class and misogyny. This is explored further in *We Wear The Mask*.

## Section 2: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 1 Janie's Childhood and Love: Annotated Texts

### Extracts from Chapter 1

The following extract is from the opening chapter and begins the construction of the frame narrative. Janie is introduced as the lead character through her subjugation at the hands of the on-lookers as they make judgment on the porch.

"What she doin' coming back here in dem overhalls? Can't she find no dress to put on?—Where's dat blue satin dress she left here in?—Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her?—What dat ole forty year ole 'oman doin' wid her hair swingin' down her back lak some young gal?—Where she left dat young lad of a boy she went off here wid?—Thought she was going to marry?—Where he left her?—What he done wid all her money?—Betcha he off wid some gal so young she ain't even got no hairs—why she don't stay in her class?—"

**Structured Discussion**

- What do we learn about Janie from these initial snippets of dialogue from the people watching her? What can we infer about their attitudes toward Janie?

Pheoby dilated all over with eagerness, "Tea Cake gone?"

"Yeah, Pheoby, Tea Cake is gone. And dat's de only reason you see me back here—cause Ah ain't got nothing to make me happy no more where Ah was at.

Down in the Everglades there, down on the muck."

"It's hard for me to understand what you mean, de way you tell it. And then again Ah'm hard of understandin' at times."

"Naw, 'tain't nothin' lak you might think. So 'tain't no use in me telling you somethin' unless Ah give you de understandin' to go 'long wid it. Unless you see de fur, a mink skin ain't no different from a coon hide. Looka heah, Pheoby, is Sam waitin' on you for his supper?"

"It's all ready and waitin'. If he ain't got sense enough to eat it, dat's his hard luck."

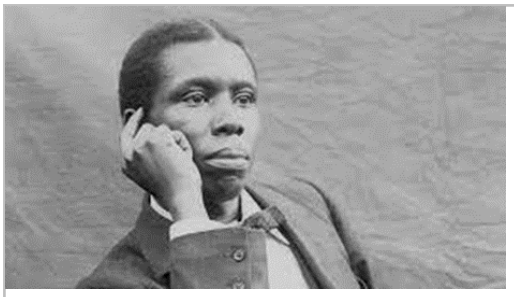
"Well then, we can set right where we is and talk. Ah got the house all opened up to let dis breeze get a little catchin'.

"Pheoby, we been kissin'-friends for twenty years, so Ah depend on you for a good thought. And Ah'm talking to you from dat standpoint."

Time makes everything old so the kissing, young darkness became a monstropolous old thing while Janie talked

**Structured Discussion**

- What can you infer from this section about Janie and Pheoby's relationship?



**Paul Laurence Dunbar** was born on June 27, 1872 to two formerly enslaved people from Kentucky. He became one of the first influential Black poets in American literature, and was internationally acclaimed for his dialectic verse in collections such as Majors and Minors (1895) and Lyrics of Lowly Life (1896).

The dialectic poems are only a small portion of Dunbar's canon, which is replete with novels, short stories, essays, and many poems in standard English. In its entirety, Dunbar's literary body is regarded as an impressive representation of Black life in turn-of-the-century America. (Paul Laurence Dunbar | Poetry Foundation)

***Sympathy* by Paul Dunbar**

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Check your understanding

- What is another name for the hyphen?
  - Dash
  - Caesura
  - Both
  - Neither
- The last two lines in each stanza rhyme. Are they:
  - Doublets?
  - Couplets or
  - Triplets?
- What term can also be used to describe a refrain?
  - Anaphora
  - Metaphor
  - Mirror phrase

- What do you think Dunbar is describing?
- Read it and consider it whilst you read Chapter 2.

***We Wear The Mask* by Paul Dunbar**

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

**Structured Discussion:**

Having read the Extract below from Chapter 2 and Janie's reaction, what mask do you think Dunbar is writing of in this poem?

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask

**Extracts from Chapter 2**

The following extracts from Chapter 2 capture the moment of recognition which occurs when Janie realises she is black, and different from the other children. The second extract explores the ways in which Janie is becoming a woman through the symbolism associated with the natural world.

"So when we looked at de picture and everybody got pointed out there wasn't nobody left except a real dark little girl with long hair standing by Eleanor. Dat's where Ah wuz s'posed to be, but Ah couldn't recognize dat dark chile as me. So Ah ast, 'where is me? Ah don't see me.'

"Everybody laughed, even Mr. Washburn. Miss Nellie, de Mama of de chillun who come back home after her husband dead, she pointed to de dark one and said:

'Dat's you, Alphabet, don't you know yo' ownself?'

"Dey all useter call me Alphabet 'cause so many people had done named me different names. Ah looked at de picture a long time and seen it was mah dress and mah hair so Ah said:

" 'Aw, aw! Ah'm coloured!'

**Structured Discussion:**

Why do you think it is important that Hurston uses the photograph in this way?
What do you think it might symbolise?

After a while she got up from where she was and went over the little garden field entire.

She was seeking confirmation of the voice and vision, and everywhere she found and acknowledged answers. A personal answer for all other creations except herself. She felt an answer seeking her, but where? When? How? She found herself at the kitchen door and stumbled inside.

In the air of the room were flies tumbling and singing, marrying and giving in marriage. When she reached the narrow hallway she was reminded that her grandmother was home with a sick headache. She was lying across the bed asleep so Janie tipped on out of the front door.[8]

Oh to be a pear tree—any tree in bloom! With kissing bees singing of the beginning of the world! She was sixteen. She had glossy leaves and bursting buds and she wanted to struggle with life but it seemed to elude her. Where were the singing bees for her? Nothing on the place nor in her grandma's house answered her. She searched as much of the world as she could from the top of the front steps and then went on down to the front gate and leaned over to gaze up and down the road. Looking, waiting, breathing short with impatience.

Waiting for the world to be made.

[8] Hurston here wanders into the realm of magic realism in this moment and the dreamscape in which Hurston presents is a precursor to Janie's adolescence and growing awareness of her sexuality. The overwhelming image of the flies 'marrying' provides a sense of captivity and nausea to the moment. Hurston is successful in creating a suffocating air of claustrophobia.

**Structured Discussion:**

Hurston here uses the natural world as a metaphor for Janie, why do you think she is trying to make between Janie and the natural world around her?

## Section 2: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 1 Janie's Childhood and Love: Reading Fluency Texts

Jacques Lacan was a Parisian psychiatrist who was born in 1901 and who died in 1981. He gained an international reputation as an original interpreter of Sigmund Freud's work. He visited the United State three times, twice in 1966 and once in 1975, where he lectured at a dozen American universities.

Lacan's written work and transcribed lectures are often difficult, if not impossible, for most American (and other) mental health professionals to comprehend. His ideas are novel and complex and many seem obscure and enigmatic. He is perceived by many as one of the great literary theorists in the realm of psychoanalysis of his generation.

Jacques Lacan Sheridan

U.K. London Will Norton ONE 1977

# The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience

Delivered at the 16th International Congress of Psychoanalysis, Zürich, July 17, 1949

The conception of the mirror stage that I introduced at our last congress, thirteen years ago, has since become more or less established in the practice of the French group. However, I think it worthwhile to bring it again to your attention, especially today, for the light it sheds on the formation of the *I* as we experience it in psychoanalysis. It is an experience that leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the *Cogito*.

Some of you may recall that this conception originated in a feature of human behaviour illuminated by a fact of comparative psychology. The child, at an age when he is for a time, however short, outdone by the chimpanzee in instrumental intelligence, can nevertheless already recognize as such his own image in a mirror. This recognition is indicated in the illuminative mimicry of the *Aha-Erlebnis*, which Köhler sees as the expression of situational apperception, an essential stage of the act of intelligence.

This act, far from exhausting itself, as in the case of the monkey, once the image has been mastered and found empty, immediately rebounds in the case of the child in a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates – the child's own body, and the persons and things, around him.

This event can take place, as we have known since Baldwin, from the age of six months, and its repetition has often made me reflect upon the startling spectacle of the infant in front of the mirror. Unable as yet to walk, or even to stand up, and held tightly as he is by some support, human or artificial (what, in France, we call a '*trotte-bébé*'), he nevertheless overcomes, in a flutter of jubilant activity, the obstructions of his support



and, fixing his attitude in a slightly leaning-forward position, in order to hold it in his gaze, brings back an instantaneous aspect of the image.

For me, this activity retains the meaning I have given it up to the age of eighteen months. This meaning discloses a libidinal dynamism, which has hitherto remained problematic, as well as an ontological structure of the human world that accords with my reflections on paranoiac knowledge.

We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*.

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.

This form would have to be called the Ideal-I,[1] if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register, in the sense that it will also be the source of secondary identifications, under which term I would place the functions of libidinal normalization. But the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being (*le devenir*) of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as *I* his discordance with his own reality.

The fact is that the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power is given to him only as *Gestalt*, that is to say, in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted, but in which it appears to him above all in a contrasting size (*un relief de stature*) that fixes it and in a symmetry that inverts it, in contrast with the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him. Thus, this *Gestalt* – whose pregnancy should be regarded as bound up with the species, though its motor style remains scarcely recognizable – by these two aspects of its appearance, symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination; it is still pregnant with the correspondences that unite the *I* with the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that

dominate him, or with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own making tends to find completion.

Indeed, for the *imagos* – whose veiled faces it is our privilege to see in outline in our daily experience and in the penumbra of symbolic efficacity[2] – the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world, if we go by the mirror disposition that the *imago of one's own body* presents in hallucinations or dreams, whether it concerns its individual features, or even its infirmities, or its object-projections; or if we observe the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the *double*, in which psychical realities, however heterogeneous, are manifested.

That a *Gestalt* should be capable of formative effects in the organism is attested by a piece of biological experimentation that is itself so alien to the idea of psychical causality that it cannot bring itself to formulate its results in these terms. It nevertheless recognizes that it is a necessary condition for the maturation of the gonad of the female pigeon that it should see another member of its species, of either sex; so sufficient in itself is this condition that the desired effect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of a mirror. Similarly, in the case of the migratory locust, the transition within a generation from the solitary to the gregarious form can be obtained by exposing the individual, at a certain stage, to the exclusively visual action of a similar image, provided it is animated by movements of a style sufficiently close to that characteristic of the species. Such facts are inscribed in an order of homeomorphic identification that would itself fall within the larger question of the meaning of beauty as both formative and erogenic.

But the facts of mimicry are no less instructive when conceived as cases of heteromorphic identification, in as much as they raise the problem of the signification of space for the living organism – psychological concepts hardly seem less appropriate for shedding light on these matters than ridiculous attempts to reduce them to the supposedly supreme law of adaptation. We have only to recall how Roger Caillois (who was then very young, and still fresh from his breach with the sociological school in which he was trained) illuminated the subject by using the term '*legendary psychasthenia*' to classify morphological mimicry as an obsession with space in its derealizing effect.

I have myself shown in the social dialectic that structures human knowledge as paranoiac[3] why human knowledge has greater autonomy than animal knowledge in relation to the field of force of desire, but also why human knowledge is determined in that 'little reality' (*ce peu de réalité*),

which the Surrealists, in their restless way, saw as its limitation. These reflections lead me to recognize in the spatial captation manifested in the mirror-stage, even before the social dialectic, the effect in man of an organic insufficiency in his natural reality – in so far as any meaning can be given to the word 'nature'.

I am led, therefore, to regard the function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the *imago*, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality – or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*.

In man, however, this relation to nature is altered by a certain dehiscence at the heart of the organism, a primordial Discord betrayed by the signs of uneasiness and motor unco-ordination of the neo-natal months. The objective notion of the anatomical incompleteness of the pyramidal system and likewise the presence of certain humoral residues of the maternal organism confirm the view I have formulated as the fact of a real *specific prematurity of birth* in man.

It is worth noting, incidentally, that this is a fact recognized as such by embryologists, by the term *foetalization*, which determines the prevalence of the so-called superior apparatus of the neurax, and especially of the cortex, which psycho-surgical operations lead us to regard as the intra-organic mirror.

This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history. The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego's verifications.

This fragmented body – which term I have also introduced into our system of theoretical references – usually manifests itself in dreams when the movement of the analysis encounters a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual. It then appears in the form of disjointed limbs, or of those organs represented in exoscopy, growing wings and taking up arms for intestinal persecutions – the very same that the visionary Hieronymus Bosch has fixed, for all time, in painting, in their ascent

from the fifteenth century to the imaginary zenith of modern man. But this form is even tangibly revealed at the organic level, in the lines of 'fragilization' that define the anatomy of phantasy, as exhibited in the schizoid and spasmodic symptoms of hysteria.

Correlatively, the formation of the *I* is symbolized in dreams by a fortress, or a stadium – its inner arena and enclosure, surrounded by marshes and rubbish-tips, dividing it into two opposed fields of contest where the subject flounders in quest of the lofty, remote inner castle whose form (sometimes juxtaposed in the same scenario) symbolizes the id in a quite startling way. Similarly, on the mental plane, we find realized the structures of fortified works, the metaphor of which arises spontaneously, as if issuing from the symptoms themselves, to designate the mechanisms of obsessional neurosis – inversion, isolation, reduplication, cancellation and displacement.

But if we were to build on these subjective givens alone – however little we free them from the condition of experience that makes us see them as partaking of the nature of a linguistic technique – our theoretical attempts would remain exposed to the charge of projecting themselves into the unthinkable of an absolute subject. This is why I have sought in the present hypothesis, grounded in a conjunction of objective data, the guiding grid for a *method of symbolic reduction*.

It establishes in the *defences of the ego* a genetic order, in accordance with the wish formulated by Miss Anna Freud, in the first part of her great work, and situates (as against a frequently expressed prejudice) hysterical repression and its returns at a more archaic stage than obsessional inversion and its isolating processes, and the latter in turn as preliminary to paranoic alienation, which dates from the deflection of the specular *I* into the social *I*.

This moment in which the mirror-stage comes to an end inaugurates, by the identification with the *imago* of the counterpart and the drama of primordial jealousy (so well brought out by the school of Charlotte Bühler in the phenomenon of infantile *transitivism*), the dialectic that will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborated situations.

It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into mediatization through the desire of the other, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence by the co-operation of others, and turns the I into that apparatus for which every instinctual thrust constitutes a danger, even though it should correspond to a natural maturation – the very normalization of this maturation being henceforth dependent, in

man, on a cultural mediation as exemplified, in the case of the sexual object, by the Oedipus complex.

In the light of this conception, the term primary narcissism, by which analytic doctrine designates the libidinal investment characteristic of that moment, reveals in those who invented it the most profound awareness of semantic latencies. But it also throws light on the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido, which the first analysts tried to define when they invoked destructive and, indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I*, the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in a relation involving the most Samaritan of aid.

In fact, they were encountering that existential negativity whose reality is so vigorously proclaimed by the contemporary philosophy of being and nothingness.

But unfortunately that philosophy grasps negativity only within the limits of a self-sufficiency of consciousness, which, as one of its premises, links to the *méconnaissances* that constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself. This flight of fancy, for all that it draws, to an unusual extent, on borrowings from psychoanalytic experience, culminates in the pretention of providing an existential psychoanalysis.

At the culmination of the historical effort of a society to refuse to recognize that it has any function other than the utilitarian one, and in the anxiety of the individual confronting the 'concentrational'[4] form of the social bond that seems to arise to crown this effort, existentialism must be judged by the explanations it gives of the subjective impasses that have indeed resulted from it; a freedom that is never more authentic than when it is within the walls of a prison; a demand for commitment, expressing the impotence of a pure consciousness to master any situation; a voyeuristic–sadistic idealization of the sexual relation; a personality that realizes itself only in suicide; a consciousness of the other than can be satisfied only by Hegelian murder.

These propositions are opposed by all our experience, in so far as it teaches us not to regard the ego as centred on the *perception–consciousness system*, or as organized by the 'reality principle' – a principle that is the expression of a scientific prejudice most hostile to the dialectic of knowledge. Our experience shows that we should start instead from the *function of méconnaissance* that characterizes the ego in all its structures, so markedly articulated by Miss Anna Freud. For, if the *Verneinung*

represents the patent form of that function, its effects will, for the most part, remain latent, so long as they are not illuminated by some light reflected on to the level of fatality, which is where the id manifests itself.

We can thus understand the inertia characteristic of the formations of the *I*, and find there the most extensive definition of neurosis – just as the captation of the subject by the situation gives us the most general formula for madness, not only the madness that lies behind the walls of asylums, but also the madness that deafens the world with its sound and fury.

The sufferings of neurosis and psychosis are for us a schooling in the passions of the soul, just as the beam of the psychoanalytic scales, when we calculate the tilt of its threat to entire communities, provides us with an indication of the deadening of the passions in society.

At this junction of nature and culture, so persistently examined by modern anthropology, psychoanalysis alone recognizes this knot of imaginary servitude that love must always undo again, or sever.

For such a task, we place no trust in altruistic feeling, we who lay bare the aggressivity that underlies the activity of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and even the reformer.

In the recourse of subject to subject that we preserve, psychoanalysis may accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the '*Thou art that*', in which is revealed to him the cipher of his mortal destiny, but it is not in our mere power as practitioners to bring him to that point where the real journey begins.

*Notes*

1. Throughout this article I leave in its peculiarity the translation I have adopted for Freud's *Ideal-Ich* [i.e., 'je-idéal'], without further comment, other than to say that I have not maintained it since.

2. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, Chapter X.

3. Cf. 'Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis', p. 8 and *Écrits*, p. 180.

4. '*Concentrationnaire*', an adjective coined after World War II (this article was written in 1949) to describe the life of the concentration-camp. In the hands of certain writers it became, by extension, applicable to many aspects of 'modern' life [Tr.].

## Section 2: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 1 Janie's Childhood and Love: Check your understanding

1) What does a frame narrative describe?
   a) When the narrator frames the beginning, middle and end of the story from the start.
   **b) When the narrator is used to tell a story within the main story.**
   c) When the narrator foreshadows who is guilty from the start of the story.
   d) When the narrator starts and ends the story in the same place and time.

2) Which sentence best describes a *cyclical narrative*?
   a) It keeps going round in circles.
   **b) It starts in the same place as it ends.**
   c) Everyone meets everyone else.
   d) Everything returns back to order by the end of the tragedy.

3) What term do we use when we cannot trust what the narrator tells us in a story?
   a) Narratorial stability
   b) Infallible narration
   c) Narratorial fracturing
   **d) Narratorial instability**

4) Paul Dunbar wrote: "I know why……."
   a) The caged bird calls
   b) The caged bird dies
   **c) The caged bird sings**
   d) The caged bird prays

5) How does Janie find out she is black?
   a) She sees herself in a picture drawn by a friend.
   b) She sees a reflection of herself in a mirror
   c) She catches a reflection of herself in a car window
   **d) She sees a photograph of herself**

## Section 3: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 2 Experience versus Idealised Love

| Key Questions | Core Knowledge | Terminology & vocabulary | Discusssion, reading & writing |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Big questions:**<br><br>What does the tree symbolise?<br><br>What is the most powerful metaphor in chapter 4? Why?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br><br>What is foreshadowing?<br><br>What vocabulary can reflect Janie's feelings on her marriage to Logan Killicks?<br><br>What is a lexical field?<br><br>What is a synonym? Antonym? | Hurston uses the tree in Chapter 3 to reflect and explore Janie's growing maturity and self-realisation. This coincides with Nanny's possessive determination to marry Janie "well", i.e. to an older, wealthy, established man.<br><br>Janie is alienated from her husband and realises that the marriage has caused the demise of her dream of marrying for romantic love.<br><br>Logan Killicks is an obvious (clumsy?) nomenclature – he kills off Janie's dream. He is the archetypal older husband and his attraction of independent wealth and security is lost on the young and impressionable Janie who is led by the physical and immediate.<br><br>**Texts**:<br><br>*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston *Chapters 3 and 4*<br><br>**Reading fluency**:<br><br>- Chapters 3 and 4.<br>- *Sympathy* by Paul Dunbar (revisit) | **Terminology**<br><br>Foreshadowing<br><br>Synonyms<br><br>Lexical fields<br><br>Antonyms<br><br>Extended metaphor<br><br>Tenor<br><br>Vehicle<br><br>Ground<br><br>Dialogue<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br><br>Characterisation<br><br>Representation<br><br>Racism<br><br>Society<br><br>Gender<br><br>Patriarchy<br><br>Janie<br><br>Hurston<br><br>Nanny<br><br>Logan<br><br>Joe Starks | **Structured discussions**:<br><br>How does Hurston use the two perspectives in Chapter 3 to explore the theme of marriage for African-American women?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br><br>How does Hurston present the death of Janie's dream?<br><br>How does Hurston use the image of the tree to reflect Janie's changing sense of identity? |

| Expert Knowledge |
|---|
| Hurston revisits her use of the mule metaphor in Chapter 4 and it is a problematic, disquieting, unsettling one. In moving to get another mule, Killicks is characterised as looking for another woman, away from Janie and her working on the land is synonymous with the labour of a mule: she is slowly being dehumanised by Killicks.<br>Hurston introduces Joe Starks as an emblem of urgency of African-American economic progress: he demands to earn, to be highly regarded and it is this romantic urgency that Janie is convinced by.<br>The "bee for for her bloom" is emblematic not only for Janie's romantic dreams of love but it echoes the tree of dreams that Hurston alluded to previously: the natural world is heavily relied upon in Hurston's use of metaphor.<br><br>Employ the subordinating conjunction + pattern of three to explore comparisons between Joe Starks and Logan Killicks. |

## Section 3: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 2 Experience versus Idealised Love: Annotated Texts

*The following extract from Chapter 3 presents Janie's reaction to the proposed marriage to Logan Killicks, the suitor that Nanny favours.*

" 'Cause Ah hates de way his head is so long one way and so flat on de sides and dat pone uh fat back uh his neck."

"He never made his own head. You talk so silly."

"Ah don't keer who made it, Ah don't like de job. His belly is too big too, now, and his toe-nails look lak mule foots. And 'tain't nothin' in de way of him washin' his feet every evenin' before he comes tuh bed. 'Tain't nothin' tuh hinder him 'cause Ah places de water for him. Ah'd ruther be shot wid tacks than tuh turn over in de bed and stir up de air whilst he is in dere. He don't even never mention nothin' pretty."

She began to cry.

"Ah wants things sweet wid mah marriage lak when you sit under a pear tree and think. Ah…"

" 'Tain't no use in you cryin', Janie. Grandma done been long uh few roads herself. But folks is meant to cry 'bout somethin' or other. Better leave things de way dey is. Youse young yet. No tellin' whut mout happen befo' you die. Wait awhile, baby. Yo' mind will change."

Nanny sent Janie along with a stern mien, but she dwindled all the rest of the day as she worked. And when she gained the privacy of her own little shack she stayed on her knees so long she forgot she was there herself. There is a basin in the mind where words float around on thought and thought on sound and sight. Then there is a depth of thought untouched by words, and deeper still a gulf of formless feelings untouched by thought. Nanny entered this infinity of conscious pain again on her old knees. Towards morning she muttered, "Lawd, you know mah heart. Ah done de best Ah could do. De rest is left to you." She scuffled up from her knees and fell heavily across the bed. A month later she was dead.

So Janie waited a bloom time, and a green time and an orange time. But when the pollen again gilded the sun and sifted down on the world she began to stand around the gate and expect things. What things? She didn't know exactly. Her breath was gusty and short. She knew things that nobody had ever told her. For instance, the words of the trees and the wind.[9]

She often spoke to falling seeds and said, "Ah hope you fall on soft ground," because she had heard seeds saying that to each other as they passed. She knew the world was a stallion rolling in the blue pasture of ether. She knew that God tore down the old world every evening and built a new one by sun-up. It was wonderful to see it take form with the sun and emerge from the gray dust of its making. The familiar people and things had failed her so she hung over the gate and looked up the road towards way off. She knew now that marriage did not make love. Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman.

[9] This is a particularly effective extract in that it shows how Hurston moves between the voices of her two characters and then moves "out" to provide a third person omniscience.

**Structured Discussion**

- Compare how Janie and Nanny feel about the marriage between Janie and Logan Killicks.
- Revisit the poem "Sympathy" to inform your thoughts on these extracts.

*The following extract from Chapter 4 presents the elopement of Janie with Joe Starks, leaving Logan Killicks.*

The morning road air was like a new dress. That made her feel the apron tied around her waist. She untied it and flung it on a low bush beside the road and walked on, picking flowers and making a bouquet. After that she came to where Joe Starks was waiting for her with a hired rig. He was very solemn and helped her to the seat beside him. With him on it, it sat like some high, ruling chair.

From now on until death she was going to have flower dust and springtime sprinkled over everything. A bee for her bloom. Her old thoughts were going to come in handy now, but new words would have to be made and said to fit them.

"Green Cove Springs," he told the driver. So they were married there before sundown, just like Joe had said. With new clothes of silk and wool. They sat on the boarding house porch and saw the sun plunge into the same crack in the earth from which the night emerged.

**Couch to 5K Writing**

- Hurston uses a range of metaphors in this ending to Chapter 4 as Janie leaves her marriage to Logan Killicks and sets off with Joe Starks.

- Identify the metaphors you can and evaluate which one you think is most powerful in reflecting Janie's thoughts and feelings. Start with a topic sentence which uses a subordinating conjunction.

- Return to the poem "Sympathy" and consider how Janie is now changing.

**Modelled Example:**

## Section 3: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 2 Experience versus Idealised Love: Check your understanding

1) Which word is not a synonym of beautiful?
   a) Glorious
   b) Stunning
   **c) Grotesque**
   d) Perfection

2) What does the term foreshadowing refer to?
   a) When a writer describes a character in the future
   b) When a writer uses a flashback to go back in time to a previous point in the story
   **c) When a writer uses events to hint at later ones**
   d) When a writer describes a character in the past

3) Which word is not an antonym of pure?
   **a) Untainted**
   b) Marred
   c) Sullied
   d) Polluted

4) Why is Logan Killicks an aptly named character?
   a) He kills the mule
   **b) He kills Janie's dream**
   c) He kills Janie's nanny
   d) He kills the tree which Janie loves

5) What is a group of similar meaning words called?
   a) A lexical bank
   **b) A lexical field**
   c) A semantic crop
   d) A semantic bank

6) "A bee for her bloom". This phrase is an example of:
   a) Alliteration
   b) Simile
   c) Fricative
   **d) Plosive alliteration**

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 3 Janie's Marriage to Joe Starks

| Key questions | Core knowledge | **Terminology & vocabulary** | **Discussion, reading & writing** |
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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Big questions:**<br><br>What does Janie's hair symbolise?<br><br>What relevance does it have whether it is tied up or not?<br><br>What does the argument in the store represent?<br><br>What relevance does the "kerchief" have for Janie and her identity (Ch 8)?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br><br>Think of a metaphor to describe Janie and Joe: explain how it works. | Janie's marriage to Joe is used to explore Hurston's fascination with broken dreams. Johnson's poetry contextualises Janie's voice in Hurston's characterisation.<br>Hurston uses pathetic fallacy in Chapter 5 in comparing the thriving town with the diminishing love between Joe and Janie.<br>The mule is used as a symbol of the slow death that Janie experiences in her marriage, side-lined by Joe in his mission as mayor.<br><br>Challenge the students to review their knowledge and understanding of the sonnet form which mirrors the structure of Janie's fading love for Joe.<br><br>In Chapter 7, Hurston explores the impact of time and ageing: revisit the 7 Ages of Man and make comparisons to how Janie begins to view Joe Starks.<br><br>Dylan Thomas' poem ("Do not go gentle..") raises its relevance in Chapter 8 when Hurston personifies "square toes" and Joe's fate is sealed after the visit by the doctor. Hurston and Janie raises the spectre of personification later on in the novel.<br><br>It should be noted that (however clumsily) there is a clear juxtaposition between Joe's beating of Janie and the terminal diagnosis of his kidney failure. Janie is freed from the bondage that her relationship with Joe had become.<br><br>Donne's sonnet *Death, Be Not Proud* is an excellent springboard to explore the personification of death which Hurston revisits freely.<br><br>**Texts**:<br><br>- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston *Chapters 5-8*<br>- *The Heart of a Woman* by Georgia Douglass Johnson<br>- *My Little Dreams* by Georgia Douglass Johnson<br>- *Visual Pleasure* by Laura Mulvey<br>- *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* by Dylan Thomas<br>- *Death, Be Not Proud* by John Donne<br>- *Sonnet 71* by William Shakespeare<br>- King James Bible *2 Samuel 6*<br>- *Tignon Law: Policing Black Women's Hair in the 18th Century* by Rediet Tadele | **Terminology**<br><br>Pathetic fallacy<br><br>Hierarchy<br><br>Metaphor<br><br>Tenor<br><br>Vehicle<br><br>Ground<br><br>Sonnet<br><br>The Male Gaze<br><br>Internal monologue<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br><br>Juxtaposition<br><br>Characterisation<br><br>Representation<br><br>Racism<br><br>Society<br><br>Gender<br><br>Patriarchy<br><br>Janie<br><br>Hurston<br><br>Joe Starks | **Structured discussions**:<br><br>What is an internal monologue?<br><br>How has Hurston used pathetic fallacy in Chapter 5?<br><br>What might the mule represent?<br><br>How is zoomorphism used in describing Janie and Joe in their marriage (Ch 8)?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br><br>"she had become a rut in the road" – what purpose is Hurston suggesting through this metaphor for Janie? In what ways does this illustrate Janie as a dynamic, or changing character?<br><br>Students to summarise the structure of the chapter in order to appreciate how it builds to the climax of Joe hitting Janie and running her out of the store.<br><br>The focus of the above should be based on the purpose and effect produced by the author. |
| Expert knowledge | | | |

Mulvey's essay examines the ways in which women in society are represented. Mulvey argues that the ways in which women are perceived, viewed and spoken to are symbolic of misogyny, of male ownership and societal oppression. In Chapter 6 for example, Janie is forced to remove herself from the escapist banter of the men's "porch talk". Secondly, Hurston allows the Male Gaze when she characterises Daisy Blunt and the reactions of the male characters in the episode.

There are many ways in which the representation of women through history has served the current dogma of the time. For example, 13th century editions of the Bible have the daughters of Lot presented with long loose hair indicative of their "loose" morality in having children with their father.

In chapter 7, Hurston enables Joe to gradually strip Janie of her identity. Psychoanalytical critics would argue he strips her of the different **signifieds** which contribute to her **signifier** (her identity of self)

There are links to be made between how Steinbeck portrays Curley's Wife in her marriage and how Janie is treated in hers: both characters are subjugated. The big difference however is that Steinbeck kills his character off whereas Hurston uses Janie's subjugation as a means to change her life in the future.

In Chapter 7 Hurston references the story of Saul's daughter and what she says to David in the Bible.

There is a large and disturbing history of the ways in which African – American women have had their hair controlled. In the late 18th century in New Orleans for example, African American women would wear their hair in elaborate styles, using feathers and jewels. However, in 1786, the Tignon Laws stipulated that Black women had to use scarves to cover their hair. The late 19th century saw moves to straighten hair in an attempt to look more euro-centrically "beautiful" and in the 1960's and 1970's during the civil rights movement, the "afro" became the hair style of choice.

*A member of the Harlem Renaissance, Georgia Douglas Johnson wrote plays, a syndicated newspaper column, and four collections of poetry: The Heart of a Woman (1918), Bronze (1922), An Autumn Love Cycle (1928), and Share My World (1962).*

*Johnson was born in Atlanta, Georgia, to parents of African American, Native American, and English descent. She graduated from Atlanta University Normal College and studied music at the Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland College of Music. After graduation, she taught and worked as an assistant principal. (Poetry Foundation)*

| ***My Little Dreams*** | ***The Heart of a Woman*** |
|---|---|
| I'm folding up my little dreams<br>Within my heart tonight,<br>And praying I may soon forget<br>The torture of their sight.<br><br>For time's deft fingers scroll my brow<br>With fell relentless art—<br>I'm folding up my little dreams<br>Tonight, within my heart.[10] | The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,<br>As a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on,<br>Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam<br>In the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.<br><br>The heart of a woman falls back with the night,<br>And enters some alien cage in its plight,<br>And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars<br>While it breaks, breaks, breaks on the sheltering bars.[11] |

## Structured Discussion

- Read the poems before reading Chapter 5.
  How has the idea of a dream influenced Janie in leaving with Joe?

- How have Janie's feelings changed toward Joe during chapter 5?

- What do you think might be occurring with Hurston's character? How might you be able to link Janie's development up to and including Chapter 5 with *The Heart of a Woman*?

**Extracts from Chapter 5**

*The following extracts from Chapter 5 capture the initial moments of distancing of Janie from Jody. Note the ways in which loneliness is introduced yet again by Hurston in the characterisation of Janie.*

[10] The internalisation of dreams in the poem is prescient for the exploration of Hurston's character Janie. Janie wields her dreams during her days in order to navigate through the disappointments and degradations that she undergoes with both Logan and Joe Starks.

[11] The personification of the woman's heart breaking as it does against the bars of a prison cell aptly record the ways in which Janie is metaphorically caged in the opening chapters of the novel. It is not until she meets Tea Cake that she is free to some extent.

Janie made her face laugh after a short pause, but it wasn't too easy. She had never thought of making a speech, and didn't know if she cared to make one at all. It must have been the way Joe spoke out without giving her a chance to say anything one way or another that took the bloom off of things. But anyway, she went down the road behind him that night feeling cold. He strode along invested with his new dignity, thought and planned out loud, un-conscious of her thoughts.[12]

…

When it was all over that night in bed Jody asked Janie, "Well, honey, how yuh lak bein' Mrs. Mayor?"

"It's all right Ah reckon, but don't yuh think it keeps us in uh kinda strain?"

"Strain? You mean de cookin' and waitin' on folks?"

"Naw, Jody, it jus' looks lak it keeps us in some way we ain't natural wid one 'nother.

You'se always off talkin' and fixin' things, and Ah feels lak Ah'm jus' markin' time. Hope it soon gits over."

"Over, Janie? I god, Ah ain't even started good. Ah told you in de very first beginnin' dat Ah aimed tuh be uh big voice. You oughta be glad, 'cause dat makes uh big woman outa you."

A feeling of coldness and fear took hold of her. She felt far away from things and lonely.

[12] Hurston is keen to introduce Jody in this phase of the novel as someone who has aspirations beyond his relationship with Janie. His ambition to elevate himself amongst the town and become someone of note, someone of authority is at odds with the wishes of Janie who simply wishes to be loved and to love in return. In this initial phase of their relationship, Hurston is clearly foreshadowing a distancing between them and a public silencing of Janie's voice. In a symbolic description, Janie trails behind Jody on the road, in silence and in ignominy.

**Structured Discussion:**

How has Hurston used pathetic fallacy in Chapter 5?

**Extracts from Chapter 6 – The symbol of the Mule**

*Hurston uses the following description of the taunted and ailing mule to **foreshadow** the **moribund** relationship between the aspirational Jody and the listless Janie. Within the chapter is a coruscating description of their relationship being one of a public display and that any romance or emotional connection in their marriage has long since dissipated.*

When the mule was in front of the store, Lum went out and tackled him. The brute jerked up his head, laid back his ears and rushed to the attack. Lum had to run for safety. Five or six more men left the porch and surrounded the fractious beast, goosing him in the sides and making him show his temper. But he had more spirit left than body. He was soon panting and heaving from the effort of spinning his old carcass about. Everybody was having fun at the mule-baiting. All but Janie.[13]

She snatched her head away from the spectacle and began muttering to herself. "They oughta be shamed uh theyselves! Teasin' dat poor brute beast lak they is! Done been worked tuh death; done had his disposition ruint wid mistreatment, and now they got tuh finish devilin' 'im tuh death. Wisht Ah had mah way wid 'em all."

…

Janie stood where he left her for unmeasured time and thought. She stood there until something fell off the shelf inside her. Then she went inside there to see what it was. It was her image of Jody tumbled down and shattered. But looking at it she saw that it never was the flesh and blood figure of her dreams. Just something she had grabbed up to drape her dreams over. In a way she turned her back upon the image where it lay and looked further.

She had no more blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be. She found that she had a host of thoughts she had never expressed to him, and numerous emotions she had never let Jody know about. Things packed up and put away in parts of her heart where he

[13] Hurston uses Janie's recognition as a sign of mutual understanding. She can empathise with being trapped, baited and taunted.

could never find them. **She was saving up feelings for some man she had never seen. She had an inside and an outside now and suddenly she knew how not to mix them.**

She bathed and put on a fresh dress and head kerchief and went on to the store before Jody had time to send for her. That was a bow to the outside of things.[14]

[14] The headkerchief is used here and elsewhere in the novel to contain Janie's hair: it is a symbol of control in the context of her relationship with Jody.

**Structured Discussion**

What do you think Hurston is communicating about her character Janie with the description in bold?

How has Hurston developed Janie's character during her relationship with Joe Starks?

Look closely at the extract above, it makes allusions to the natural world. Can you remember how this is similar or different to previous chapters when Hurston has used the natural world as a metaphor?

***In your addition to the discussion, use a subordinating conjunction to ensure you speak of a literal meaning on a superficial level and then introduce a metaphorical reading as an alternative interpretation.***

**Extracts from Chapter 7 – The impact of the relationship on Janie and the ageing of Joe**

*Hurston moves quickly in this chapter to chart the deterioration of the relationship. As Janie ages gracefully, Hurston provides a caustic rebuttal of Jody's observations through the ways in which Janie begins to view her ageing and increasingly unattractive husband. Having studied 'As You Like It', students may well have echoes of Jacques famous 'Seven Ages of Man' speech. The humiliation at the end of the chapter is not Janie's, despite Jody's superficial, cowardly and very public attack.*

The years took all the fight out of Janie's face. For a while she thought it was gone from her soul. No matter what Jody did, she said nothing. She had learned how to talk some and leave some. She was a rut in the road[15]. Plenty of life beneath the surface but it was kept beaten down by the wheels. Sometimes she stuck out into the future, imagining her life different from what it was. But mostly she lived between her hat and her heels, with her emotional disturbances like shade patterns in the woods—come and gone with the sun. She got nothing from Jody except what money could buy, and she was giving away what she didn't value.

[15] This metaphor identifies Janie as both an obstacle for Jody but also something of an irritant, something that refuses to be levelled by the traffic that continually rides over it, the weight of cars threatening to push it down further into the ground.

## Couch to 5k Writing

**"she had become a rut in the road" – what purpose is Hurston suggesting through this metaphor for Janie? In what ways does this illustrate Janie as a dynamic, or changing character?**

**Modelled Example:**

*The following extracts from Chapter 7 concern a moment in which Janie upbraids the critical Jody. Tired of his public jibes against her, critical of the way she cuts tobacco and the manner with which she mixes with others in the town and upset with him running her down in front of others, attempting to elevate himself at her expense, Janie breaks. She counters and accuses Jody of changing and ageing far more than she.*

*He is humiliated at the very point at which he seemed powerful, echoing the public humiliation of King David in front of his wife Mihal in 2 Samuel 6 which Hurston references at the end of the Chapter.*

One day she noticed that Joe didn't sit down. He just stood in front of a chair and fell in it.
That made her look at him all over. Joe wasn't so young as he used to be. There was already something dead about him. He didn't rear back in his knees any longer. He squatted over his ankles when he walked. That stillness at the back of his neck. His prosperous-looking belly that used to thrust out so pugnaciously and intimidate folks, sagged like a load suspended from his loins. It didn't seem to be a part of him anymore. Eyes a little absent too.

Jody must have noticed it too. Maybe, he had seen it long before Janie did, and had been fearing for her to see. Because he began to talk about her age all the time, as if he didn't want her to stay young while he grew old. It was always "You oughta throw somethin' over yo' shoulders befo' you go outside. You ain't no young pullet no mo'. You'se uh ole hen now."

One day he called her off the croquet grounds. "Dat's somethin' for de young folks, Janie, you out dere jumpin' round and won't be able tuh git out de bed tuhmorrer." If he thought to deceive her, he was wrong. For the first time she could see a man's head naked of its skull. Saw the cunning thoughts race in and out through the caves and promontories of his mind long before they darted out of the tunnel of his mouth. She saw he was hurting inside so she let it pass without talking. She just measured out a little time for him and set it aside to wait.

…

**"Naw, Ah ain't no young gal no mo' but den Ah ain't no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah'm uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat's uh whole lot more'n you kin say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but 'tain't nothin' to it but yo' big voice. Humph! Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life."**

"Great God from Zion!" Sam Watson gasped. "Y'all really playin' de dozens tuhnight."

"Wha—whut's dat you said?" Joe challenged, hoping his ears had fooled him.

"You heard her, you ain't blind," Walter taunted.

…

Then Joe Starks realised all the meanings and his vanity bled like a flood. Janie had robbed him of his illusion of irresistible maleness that all men cherish, which was terrible. The thing that Saul's daughter had done to David. But Janie had done worse, she had cast down his empty armour before men and they had laughed, would keep on laughing. When he paraded his possessions hereafter, they would not consider the two together. They'd look with envy at the things and pity the man that owned them.

When he sat in judgement it would be the same. Good-for-nothing's like Dave and Lum and Jim wouldn't change place with him. For what can excuse a man in the eyes of other men for lack of strength? Raggedy-behind squirts of sixteen and seventeen would be giving him their merciless pity out of their eyes while their mouths said something humble. There was nothing to do in life anymore. Ambition was useless. And the cruel deceit of Janie! Making all that show of humbleness and scorning him all the time! Laughing at him, and now putting the town up to do the same. Joe Starks didn't know the words for all this, but he knew the feeling. So he struck Janie with all his might and drove her from the store.

### Structured Discussion

How might you link the following speech from Jacques in *As You Like It* to Hurston's Joe Starks?

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then, the whining school-boy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then, a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with a good capon lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,

And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans[16] teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

[16] Sans = without

(Act 2 Sc 7)

## Extracts from Chapter 8 – The looming spectre and personification of Death ("square toes")

*Hurston introduces the reader to Death for the first time in the novel. She personifies him and this representation is repeated in the novel, becoming an unwelcome visitor for Janie.*
*The reader will begin to appreciate the foreshadowing used in previous chapters with Jody's changing and ageing physicality. Despite the lack of intimacy between the two characters, there is a pity borne from a deep connection from Janie's character toward Jody.*

So Janie began to think of Death. Death, that strange being with the huge square toes[17] who lived way in the West. The great one who lived in the straight house like a platform without sides to it, and without a roof. What need has Death for a cover, and what winds can blow against him? He stands in his high house that overlooks the world. Stands watchful and motionless all day with his sword drawn back, waiting for the messenger to bid him come.

Been standing there before there was a where or a when or a then. She was liable to find a feather from his wings lying in her yard any day now. She was sad and afraid too. Poor Jody!

He ought not to have to wrassle[18] in there by himself. She sent Sam in to suggest a visit, but Jody said No. These medical doctors wuz all right with the Godly sick, but they didn't know a thing about a case like his. He'd be all right just as soon as the two-headed man found what had been buried against him. He wasn't going to die at all. That was what he thought. But Sam told her different, so she knew. And then if he hadn't, the next morning she was bound to know, for people began to gather in the big yard under the palm and china-berry trees. People who would not have dared to foot the place before crept in and did not come to the house. Just squatted under the trees and waited. Rumour, that wingless bird, had shadowed over the town.

[17] The personification of Death as having "square toes" suggests that he is presented as being somewhat "old fashioned". There are few other allusions as to why Hurston chose to have Death as being "square toed".
[18] An infrequently used term, deriving from "wrestle".

**Structured Discussion:**

Read the two poems which follow and explore what you think the different attitudes are towards death.
In the extract above, Hurston personifies Death.
What attitude toward Death do you think is shown in the extract? Which of the two poems that follow do you think it links to most effectively?

*Born in Swansea, Wales,* ***Dylan Thomas*** *is famous for his acutely lyrical and emotional poetry, as well as his turbulent personal life. The originality of his work makes categorization difficult. In his life he avoided becoming involved with literary groups or movements, and unlike other prominent writers of the 1930s—such as W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender, for example—he had little use for socialistic ideas in his art.*

*Considered to be one of the greatest Welsh poets of all time, Thomas is largely known for his imaginative use of language and vivid imagery in his poems. Poetry Foundation*

***Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*** **by Dylan Thomas**

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Thomas' poem is a **villanelle**.

5 Stanzas of three lines (tercets) followed by a single stanza of four lines (quatrain) for a total of nineteen lines.

The first line of the first stanza serves as the last line of the second and fourth stanzas and the third line of the first stanza serves as the last line of the third and fifth stanzas.

Line 16 is a problematic one for the overall meaning of the poem. The 'father' is placed at the moment between life and death, torn between the physical pull and spiritual release which Thomas wishes to rage against.

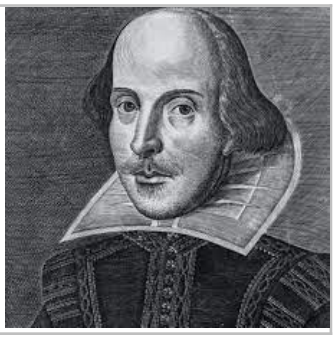
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

***William Shakespeare*** *was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616.*

*Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre. Shakespeare's plays are perhaps his most enduring legacy, but they are not all he wrote. Shakespeare's poems also remain popular to this day*

*https://www.shakespeare.org.uk*



**Sonnet 71 by William Shakespeare**[19]

[19] Sonnet 71 is one of 154 sonnets written by the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare. It's a member of the Fair Youth sequence, in which the poet expresses his love towards a young man. It focuses on the speaker's aging and impending death in relation to his young lover. In this sonnet, the speaker is now concentrating on his own death and how the youth is to mourn him after he is deceased. The speaker tells the youth not to mourn for him when he is dead, and that the youth should only think about him for as long as it takes to tell the world of his death.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell;
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

*The English writer and Anglican cleric **John Donne** is considered now to be the preeminent metaphysical poet of his time. He was born in 1572 to Roman Catholic parents, when practicing that religion was illegal in England. His work is distinguished by its emotional and sonic intensity and its capacity to plumb the paradoxes of faith, human and divine love, and the possibility of salvation.*

*Donne often employs conceits, or extended metaphors, to yoke together "heterogenous ideas," in the words of Samuel Johnson, thus generating the powerful ambiguity for which his work is famous. After a resurgence in his popularity in the early 20th century, Donne's standing as a great English poet, and one of the greatest writers of English prose, is now assured.*

***Death, Be Not Proud by John Donne***[20]

[20] *Holy Sonnet 10*, often referred to as *Death, Be Not Proud*, was written by Donne in 1609 and first published in 1633. The poem is a direct address to death, arguing that it is powerless because it acts merely as a "short sleep" between earthly living and the eternal afterlife—in essence, death is nothing to fear and should not believe itself to all powerful or something to provoke fear or terror in people.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

### Structured Discussion

In what ways do you think the poems reflect the attitude that Janie has about the impending death of Jody?

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 3 Janie's Marriage to Joe Starks: Fluency Texts

**Laura Mulvey** *was born in Oxford on 15 August 1941. After studying history at St. Hilda's, Oxford University, she came to prominence in the early 1970s as a film theorist, writing for periodicals such as* Spare Rib *and* Seven Days*. Much of her early critical work investigated questions of spectatorial identification and its relationship to the male gaze, and her writings, particularly the 1975 essay* Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, helped establish feminist film theory as a legitimate field of study.*

*Laura Mulvey is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.*

The premise of Mulvey's essay is that images, characters, plots and stories, and dialogues used in films are inadvertently but certainly built on the ideal of patriarchies, both within and beyond sexual contexts.

The representation of women on screen is achieved through a "male

# LAURA MULVEY
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itude and memory of lack. Both are posited on nature (or on anatomy in Freud's famous phrase). Woman's desire is subjected to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound, she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. She turns her child into the signifier of her own desire to possess a penis (the condition, she imagines, of entry into the symbolic). Either she must gracefully give way to the word, the Name of the Father and the Law, or else struggle to keep her child down with her in the half-light of the imaginary. Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.

There is an obvious interest in this analysis for feminists, a beauty in its exact rendering of the frustration experienced under the phallocentric order. It gets us nearer to the roots of our oppression, it brings an articulation of the problem closer, it faces us with the ultimate challenge: how to fight the unconscious structured like a language (formed critically at the moment of arrival of language) while still caught within the language of the patriarchy. There is no way in which we an produce an alternative out of the blue, but we can begin to make a break by examining patriarchy with the tools it provides, of which psychoanalysis is not the only but an important one. We are still separated by a great gap from important issues for the female unconscious which are scarcely relevant to phallocentric theory: the sexing of the female infant and her relationship to the symbolic, the sexually mature woman as non-mother, maternity outside the signification of the phallus, the vagina. . . . But, at this point, psychoanalytic theory as it now stands can at least advance our understanding of the status quo, of the patriarchal order in which we are caught.

### *B. Destruction of Pleasure is a Radical Weapon*

As an advanced representation system, the cinema poses questions of the ways the unconscious (formed by the dominant order) structure ways of seeing and pleasure in looking. Cinema has changed over the last few decades. It is no longer the monolithic system based on large capital investment exemplified at its best by Hollywood in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. Technological advances (16mm, etc.) have changed the economic conditions of cinematic production, which can now be artisanal as well as capitalist. Thus it has been possible for an alternative cinema to develop. However self-conscious and ironic Hollywood managed to be, it always restricted itself to a formal mise-en-scène reflecting the dominant ideological concept of the cinema. The alternative cinema provides a space for a cinema to be born which is radical in both a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film. This is not to reject the latter moralistically, but to highlight the ways in which its formal preoccupations reflect the psychical obsessions of the society which produced it, and, further, to stress that the alternative cinema must start specifically by reacting against these obsessions and assumptions. A politically and aesthetically avant-garde cinema is now possible, but it can still only exist as a counterpoint.

The magic of the Hollywood style at its best (and of all the cinema which fell



within its sphere of influence) arose, not exclusively, but in one important aspect, from its skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure. Unchallenged, mainstream film coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order. In the highly developed Hollywood cinema it was only through these codes that the alienated subject, torn in his imaginary memory by a sense of loss, by the terror of potential lack in phantasy, came near to finding a glimpse of satisfaction: through its formal beauty and its play on his own formative obsessions. This article will discuss the interweaving of that erotic pleasure in film, its meaning, and in particular the central place of the image of woman. It is said that analysing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it. That is the intention of this article. The satisfaction and reinforcement of the ego that represent the high point of film history hitherto must be attacked. Not in favour of a reconstructed new pleasure, which cannot exist in the abstract, nor of intellectualised unpleasure, but to make way for a total negation of the ease and plenitude of the narrative fiction film. The alternative is the thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without rejecting it, transcending outworn or oppressive forms, or daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire.

## II. PLEASURE IN LOOKING/FASCINATION WITH THE HUMAN FORM

A. The cinema offers a number of possible pleasures. One is scopophilia. There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure, just as, in the reverse formation, there is pleasure in being looked at. Originally, in his *Three Essays on Sexuality*, Freud isolated scopophilia as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones. At this point he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze. His particular examples centre around the voyeuristic activities of children, their desire to see and make sure of the private and the forbidden (curiosity about other people's genital and bodily functions, about the presence or absence of the penis and, retrospectively, about the primal scene). In this analysis scopophilia is essentially active. (Later, in *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, Freud developed his theory of scopophilia further, attaching it initially to pregenital auto-eroticism, after which the pleasure of the look is transferred to others by analogy. There is a close working here of the relationship between the active instinct and its further development in a narcissistic form.) Although the instinct is modified by other factors, in particular the constitution of the ego, it continues to exist as the erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as object. At the extreme, it can become fixated into a perversion, producing obsessive voyeurs and Peeping Toms, whose only sexual satisfaction can come from watching, in an active controlling sense, an objectified other.

At first glance, the cinema would seem to be remote from the undercover world of the surreptitious observation of an unknowing and unwilling victim. What is seen of the screen is so manifestly shown. But the mass of mainstream film, and the conventions within which it has consciously evolved, portray a hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, pro-

ducing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic phantasy. Moreover, the extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) and the brilliance of the shifting patterns of light and shade on the screen helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation. Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world. Among other things, the position of the spectators in the cinema is blatantly one of repression of their exhibitionism and projection of the repressed desire on to the performer.

B. The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world. Jacques Lacan has described how the moment when a child recognises its own image in the mirror is crucial for the constitution of the ego. Several aspects of this analysis are relevant here. The mirror phase occurs at a time when the child's physical ambitions outstrip his motor capacity, with the result that his recognition of himself is joyous in that he imagines his mirror image to be more complete, more perfect than he experiences his own body. Recognition is thus overlaid with mis-recognition: the image recognised is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego, the alienated subject, which, re-introjected as an ego ideal, gives rise to the future generation of identification with others. This mirror-moment predates language for the child.

Important for this article is the fact that it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the "I," of subjectivity. This is a moment when an older fascination with looking (at the mother's face, for an obvious example) collides with the initial inklings of self-awareness. Hence it is the birth of the long love affair/despair between image and self-image which has found such intensity of expression in film and such joyous recognition in the cinema audience. Quite apart from the extraneous similarities between screen and mirror (the framing of the human form in its surroundings, for instance), the cinema has structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing the ego. The sense of forgetting the world as the ego has subsequently come to perceive it (I forgot who I am and where I was) is nostalgically reminiscent of that pre-subjective moment of image recognition. At the same time the cinema has distinguished itself in the production of ego ideals as expressed in particular in the star system, the stars centering both screen presence and screen story as they act out a complex proccess of likeness and difference (the glamorous impersonates the ordinary).

C. Sections II. A and B have set out two contradictory aspects of the pleasurable structures of looking in the conventional cinematic situation. The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight. The second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen. Thus, in film terms, one implies a separation of the erotic identity of the subject from the object on the screen (active scopophilia), the other demands identification of the ego with the object on the screen through the spectator's fascination with and recognition of his like. The first is a function of the sexual instincts, the second of ego libido. This dichotomy was crucial for Freud. Although he saw the two as interacting and overlaying each other, the tension between instinctual drives and self-preservation continues to be a dramatic polarisation in terms of pleasure. Both are formative structures, mechanisms not meaning. In themselves they have no signification, they have to be attached to an idealisation. Both pursue aims in indifference to perceptual reality, creating the imagised, eroticised concept of the world that forms the perception of the subject and makes a mockery of empirical objectivity.

During its history, the cinema seems to have evolved a particular illusion of reality in which this contradiction between libido and ego has found a beautifully complementary phantasy world. In *reality* the phantasy world of the screen is subject to the law which produces it. Sexual instincts and identification processes have a meaning within the symbolic order which articulates desire. Desire, born with language, allows the possibility of transcending the instinctual and the imaginary, but its point of reference continually returns to the traumatic moment of its birth: the castration complex. Hence the look, pleasurable in form, can be threatening in content, and it is woman as representation/image that crystallises this paradox.

## III. WOMAN AS IMAGE, MAN AS BEARER OF THE LOOK

A. In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the leit-motiff of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. Mainstream film neatly combined spectacle and narrative. (Note, however, how in the musical song-and-dance numbers break the flow of the diegesis.) The presence of woman is an indispensible element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation. This alien presence then has to be integrated into cohesion with the narrative. As Budd Boetticher has put it:

> What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance.

(A recent tendency in narrative film has been to dispense with this problem altogether; hence the development of what Molly Haskell has called the "buddy movie,"

in which the active homosexual eroticism of the central male figures can carry the story without distraction.) Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen. For instance, the device of the show-girl allows the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in the diegesis. A woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude. For a moment the sexual impact of the performing woman takes the film into a no-man's-land outside its own time and space. Thus Marilyn Monroe's first appearance in *The River of No Return* and Lauren Bacall's songs in *To Have or Have Not*. Similarly, conventional close-ups of legs (Dietrich, for instance) or a face (Garbo) integrate into the narrative a different mode of eroticism. One part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative, it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen.

B. An active/passive heterosexual division of labour has similarly controlled narrative structure. According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like. Hence the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man's role as the active one of forwarding the story, making things happen. The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extra-diegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle. This is made possible through the processes set in motion by structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify. As the spectator identifies with the main male* protagonist, he projects his look on to that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamourous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror. The character in the story can make things happen and control events better than the subject/spectator, just as the image in the mirror was more in control of motor coordination. In contrast to woman as icon, the active male figure (the ego ideal of the identification process) demands a three-dimensional space corresonding to that of the mirror-recognition in which the alienated subject internalised his own representation of this imaginary existence. He is a figure in a landscape. Here the function of film is to reproduce as accurately as possible the so-called natural conditions of human perception. Camera technology (as exemplified by deep focus in particular) and camera movements (determined by the action of the protagonist), combined with invisible editing (demanded by realism) all tend to blur the limits of screen space. The male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action.

C.1 Sections III. A and B have set out a tension between a mode of representation of woman in film and conventions surrounding the diegesis. Each is associated with a look: that of the spectator in direct scopophilic contact with the female form displayed for his enjoyment (connoting male phantasy) and that of the spectator fascinated with the image of his like set in an illusion of natural space, and through him gaining control and possession of the woman within the diegesis. (This tension

*There are films with a woman as main protagonist, of course. To analyse this phenomenon seriously here would take me too far afield. Pam Cook and Claire Johnston's study of *The Revolt of Mamie Stover* in Phil Hardy, ed.: *Raoul Walsh*, Edinburgh 1974, shows in a striking case how the strength of this female protagonist is more apparent than real.

Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum in a publicity shot from *River of No Return* (1954) "As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look on to that o his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls event coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipo tence" (MULVEY, page 838).

and the shift from one pole to the other can structure a single text. Thus both in *Only Angels Have Wings* and in *To Have and Have Not*, the film opens with the woman as object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists in the film. She is isolated, glamourous, on display, sexualised. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalised sexuality, her show-girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone. By means of identification with him, through participation in his power, the spectator can indirectly possess her too.)

But in psychoanalytic terms, the female figure poses a deeper problem. She also connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows: her lack of penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure. Ultimately, the meaning of woman is sexual difference, the absence of the penis as visually ascertainable, the material evidence on which is based the castration complex essential for the organisation of entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father. Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified. The male unconscious has two avenues of escape from this castration anxiety: preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery), counterbalanced by the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object (an avenue typified by the concerns of the *film noir*); or else complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous (hence over-valuation, the cult of the female star). This second avenue, fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself. The first avenue, voyeurism, on the contrary, has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjecting the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness. This sadistic side fits in well with narrative. Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end. Fetishistic scopophilia, on the other hand, can exist outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focussed on the look alone. These contradictions and ambiguities can be illustrated more simply by using works by Hitchcock and Sternberg, both of whom take the look almost as the content or subject matter of many of their films. Hitchcock is the more complex, as he uses both mechanisms. Sternberg's work, on the other hand, provides many pure examples of fetishistic scopophilia.

C.2 It is well known that Sternberg once said he would welcome his films being projected upside down so that story and character involvement would not interfere with the specator's undiluted appreciation of the screen image. This statement is revealing but ingenuous. Ingenuous in that his films do demand that the figure of the woman (Dietrich, in the cycle of films with her, as the ultimate example) should be identifiable. But revealing in that it emphasises the fact that for him the pictorial space enclosed by the frame is paramount rather than narrative or identification processes. While Hitchcock goes into the investigative side of voyeurism, Sternberg produces the ultimate fetish, taking it to the point where the powerful look of the male protagonist (characteristic of traditional narrative film) is broken in favour of the image in direct erotic rapport with the spectator. The beauty of the woman as object and the screen space coalesce; she is no longer the bearer of guilt but a perfect product, whose body, stylised and fragmented by close-ups, is the content of the film, and the direct recipient of the spectator's look. Sternberg plays down the illusion of screen depth; his screen tends to be one-dimensional, as light and shade, lace, steam, foliage, net, streamers, etc, reduce the visual field. There is little or no mediation of the look through the eyes of the main male protagonist. On the contrary, shadowy presences like La Bessière in *Morocco* act as surrogates for the director, detached as they are from audience identification. Despite Sternberg's insistence that his stories are irrelevant, it is significant that they are concerned with situation, not suspense, and cyclical rather than linear time, while plot complications revolve around misunderstanding rather than conflict. The most important absence is that of the controlling male gaze within the screen scene. The high point of emotional drama in the most typical Dietrich films, her supreme moments of erotic meaning, take place in the absence of the man she loves in the fiction. There are other witnesses, other spectators watching her on the screen, their gaze is one with, not standing in for, that of the audience. At the end of *Morocco*, Tom Brown has already disappeared into the desert when Amy Jolly kicks off her gold sandals and walks after him. At the end of *Dishonoured*, Kranau is indifferent to the fate of Magda. In both cases, the erotic impact, sanctified by death, is displayed as a spectacle for the audience. The male hero misunderstands and, above all, does not see.

In Hitchcock, by contrast, the male hero does see precisely what the audience sees. However, in the films I shall discuss here, he takes fascination with an image through scopophilic eroticism as the subject of the film. Moreover, in these cases the hero portrays the contradictions and tensions experienced by the spectator. In *Vertigo* in particular, but also in *Marnie* and *Rear Window*, the look is central to the plot, oscillating between voyeruism and fetishistic fascination. As a twist, a further manipulation of the normal viewing process which in some sense reveals it, Hitchcock uses the process of identification normally associated with ideological correctness and the recognition of established morality and shows up its perverted side. Hitchcock has never concealed his interest in voyeurism, cinematic and non-cinematic. His heroes are exemplary of the symbolic order and the law—a policeman (*Vertigo*), a dominant male possessing money and power (*Marnie*)—but their erotic drives lead them into compromised situations. The power to subject another person to the will sadistically or to the gaze voyeuristically is turned on to the woman as the object of both. Power is backed by a certainty of legal right and the established guilt of the woman (evoking castration, psychoanalytically speaking). True perversion is barely concealed under a shallow mask of ideological correctness—the man is on the right side of the law, the woman on the wrong. Hitchcock's skilful use of identification processes and liberal use of subjective camera from the point of view of the male protagonist draw the spectators deeply into his position, making them share his uneasy gaze. The audience is absorbed into a voyeuristic situa-

tion within the screen scene and diegesis which parodies his own in the cinema. In his analysis of *Rear Window*, Douchet takes the film as a metaphor for the cinema. Jeffries is the audience, the events in the apartment block opposite correspond to the screen. As he watches, an erotic dimension is added to his look, a central image to the drama. His girlfriend Lisa had been of little sexual interest to him, more or less a drag, so long as she remained on the spectator side. When she crosses the barrier between his room and the block opposite, their relationship is re-born erotically. He does not merely watch her through his lens, as a distant meaningful image, he also sees her as a guilty intruder exposed by a dangerous man threatening her with punishment, and thus finally saves her. Lisa's exhibitionism has already been established by her obsessive interest in dress and style, in being a passive image of visual perfection: Jeffries' voyeurism and activity have also been established through his work as a photo-journalist, a maker of stories and captor of images. However, his enforced inactivity, binding him to his seat as a spectator, puts him squarely in the phantasy position of the cinema audience.

In *Vertigo*, subjective camera predominates. apart from one flash-back from Judy's point of view, the narrative is woven around what Scottie sees or fails to see. The audience follows the growth of his erotic obsession and subsequent despair precisely from his point of view. Scottie's voyeurism is blatant: he falls in love with a woman he follows and spies on without speaking to. Its sadistic side is equally blatant: he has chosen (and freely chosen, for he had been a successful lawyer) to be a policeman, with all the attendant possibilities of pursuit and investigation. As a result, he follows, watches and falls in love with a perfect image of female beauty and mystery. Once he actually confronts her, his erotic drive is to break her down and force her to tell by persistent cross-questioning. Then, in the second part of the film, he re-enacts his obsessive involvement with the image he loved to watch secretly. He reconstructs Judy as Madeleine, forces her to conform in every detail to the actual physical appearance of his fetish. Her exhibitionism, her masochism, make her an ideal passive counterpart to Scottie's active sadistic voyeurism. She knows her part is to perform, and only by playing it through and then replaying it can she keep Scottie's erotic interest. But in the repetition he does break her down and succeeds in exposing her guilt. His curiosity wins through and she is punished. In *Vertigo*, erotic involvement with the look is disorientating: the spectator's fascination is turned against him as the narrative carries him through and entwines him with the processes that he is himself exercising. The Hitchcock hero here is firmly placed within the symbolic order, in narrative terms. He has all the attributes of the patriarchal super-ego. Hence the spectator, lulled into a false sense of security by the apparent legality of his surrogate, sees through his look and finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking. Far from being simply an aside on the perversion of the police, *Vertigo* focuses on the implications of the active/looking, passive/looked-at split in terms of sexual difference and the power of the male symbolic encapsulated in the hero. Marnie, too, performs for Mark Rutland's gaze and masquerades as the perfect to-be-looked-at image. He, too, is on the side of the law until, drawn in by obsession with her guilt, her secret, he longs to see her in the act of committing a crime, make her confess and thus save her. So he, too, becomes complicit as he acts out the implications of his power. He controls money and words, he can have his cake and eat it.

## IV. SUMMARY

The psychoanalytic background that has been discussed in this article is relevant to the pleasure and unpleasure offered by traditional narrative film. The scopophilic instinct (pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object), and, in contradistinction, ego libido (forming identification processes) act as formations, mechanisms, which this cinema has played on. The image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further into the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by the ideology of the patriarchal order as it is worked out in its favourite cinematic form—illusionistic narrative film. The argument turns again to the psychoanalytic background in that woman as representation signifies castration, inducing voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent her threat. None of these interacting layers is intrinsic to film, but it is only in the film form that they can reach a perfect and beautiful contradiction, thanks to the possibility in the cinema of shifting the emphasis of the look. It is the place of the look that defines cinema, the possibility of varying it and exposing it. This is what makes cinema quite different in its voyeuristic potential from, say, strip-tease, theatre, shows, etc. Going far beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked at into the spectacle itself. Playing on the tension between film as controlling the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and film as controlling the dimension of space (changes in distance, editing), cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire. It is these cinematic codes and their relationship to formative external structures that must be broken down before mainstream film and the pleasure it provides can be challenged.

To begin with (as an ending), the voyeuristic-scopophilic look that is a crucial part of traditional filmic pleasure can itself be broken down. There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. Without these two absences (the material existence of the recording process, the critical reading of the spectator), fictional drama cannot achieve reality, obviousness and truth. Nevertheless, as this article has argued, the structure of looking in narrative fiction film contains a contradiction in its own premises: the female image as a castration threat constantly endangers the unity of the diegesis and bursts through the world of illusion as an intrusive, static, one-dimensional fetish. Thus the two looks materially present in time and space are obsessively subordinated to the neurotic needs of the male ego. The camera becomes the mechanism for producing an illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movements compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that revolves round the perception of the



subject; the camera's look is disavowed in order to create a convincing world in which the spectator's surrogate can perform with verisimilitude. Simultaneously, the look of the audience is denied an intrinsic force: as soon as fetishistic representation of the female image threatens to break the spell of illusion, and the erotic image on the screen appears directly (wthout mediation) to the spectator, the fact of fetishisation, concealing as it does castration fear, freezes the look, fixates the spectator and prevents him from acheiving any distance from the image in front of him.

This complex interaction of looks is specific to film. The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical film-makers) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics, passionate detachment. There is no doubt that this destroys the satisfaction, pleasure and privilege of the 'invisible guest', and highlights how film has depended on voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms. Women, whose image has continually been stolen and used for this end, cannot view the decline of the traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret.*

1975

**Tignon Law: Policing Black Women's Hair in the 18th Century – by Rediet Tadele**

During the 1970s in the United States, there was a movement among Black women and men to wear their hair in its natural form, celebrating every curl and kink. It was an expression of self-love, a rejection of the Eurocentric beauty standards that had policed black hair and deemed it as 'unattractive' or 'unprofessional'. The policing of black hair in the United States is not new, and an example of this is the Tignon Laws from the 1700s in Louisiana.

The Tignon Laws were passed in 1786 by Governor Esteban Rodriguez Miró and aimed to prohibit 'creole women of colour from displaying excessive attention to dress in the streets of New Orleans'.

The law stipulated that they must wear a tignon (a type of head covering) or scarf to cover up their hair. To understand how the tignon laws came to be, one must first understand the history and culture of Louisiana during the 18th century. Louisiana was a French colony from 1682 to 1763, then became a Spanish colony from 1763 to 1801.

When it became a Spanish colony, Spanish laws were put into place that drastically impacted the lives of the enslaved people in Louisiana. Under Spanish rule, enslaved people under 'coartacion' could buy back their freedom. While the majority of the slaves could not benefit from this, some enslaved people were able to buy their freedom. This led to the growth of the free Black population in Louisiana enabling them to build wealth. By 1800, the free Black population had grown to 1500, which in turn impacted the culture and society of Louisiana.

One of the ways it impacted society was that it led to a significant rise of interracial relationships. Furthermore, women of African descent during this period explored their style, adorning their hair with jewels and feathers. Their elaborate hairstyles were so enchanting and regal, it exuded the image of wealth. These changes in the culture and fabric of society were seen as a threat to the social order in Louisiana. Historian Virginia M. Gould notes in her book, "The Devil's Lane: Sex & Race in the Early South" that the governor was hoping that it would control women 'who had become too light skinned or who dressed too elegantly, or who competed too freely with white women for status and thus threatened the social order."

The Tignon Laws were not just in response to the elaborate styles but also because mixed race creole women were seen as creating a threat to the status of white women by attracting more white men. In Lisa Ze Winters book, "The Mulatta Concubine: Terror, Intimacy, Freedom, and Desire in the Black Transatlantic," Winters notes, 'scholars have also examined how the tignon bando and sumptuary laws across the Americas like it were not so much about the ostentatious vanity of free women of colour but rather about the problem of maintaining the racial economy of slavery.' Thus, the tignon laws were put into place.

Gould notes in her book, that "the tignon laws were intended to return the free women of colour, visibly and symbolically, to the subordinate and inferior status associated with slavery." The tignon laws, however, did not have the impact that governor Miró had hoped for. While they were meant to make free women of colour drab, and act as a class signifier, these women instead turned the tignons into statements, styling them also with jewels and feathers, and picking bright eye-catching fabrics. They were still expressing themselves in the way they wanted in resistance to the law.

The United States took control of Louisiana, and the Tignon Laws were abandoned but enslaved, and free women of African descent continued to wear them as a sign of resistance. The popularity of the tignon is seen with Marie Laveau, one of the most famous women from New Orleans, who in her time was known as 'the priestess of Voodoo' often wore headwraps.

This was not the only law that was put in place to restrict the clothing of free women of colour. In 1776, a law was passed in Saint-Domingue that prohibited free women of colour from wearing shoes. Like the tignon law, it did not have the impact that was intended. Free women of colour from Saint -Domingue instead started to

wear sandals and would put diamonds and jewels on their toes. They continued to do so even after the laws were not in place.

Head wraps and headdresses continue to be popular and worn by Black women to this day. It is an example of taking what was meant to diminish Black women and turning it into a powerful statement that is viewed as a symbol of resistance, of pride, and the celebration of culture.

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 3 Janie's Marriage to Joe Starks: Check your understanding

1) What does a pathetic fallacy typically mean in literature?
   a) When a writer uses a metaphor to show how weak a character is.
   b) When a writer uses a simile to show how weak one of them is.
   **c) When a writer uses a setting to reflect a character.**
   d) When a writer uses an anecdote to describe a character

2) Which of the following describes the 'male gaze'
   **a) The use of gender stereotypes to present women in literature and film.**
   b) The use of gender stereotypes to present men in literature and film.
   c) When a book is written, or film is directed by a male writer / director.
   d) When women are described in texts.

3) How many characters speak in an internal monologue?
   a) Two
   b) Four
   c) Three
   **d) One**

4) How does Hurston personify Death in her novel?
   a) Square eyes
   b) Square feet
   **c) Square toes**
   d) Square hands

5) The Tignon Laws (1786) stipulated that black women needed to do what?
   a) Cover their faces
   b) Cover their arms
   c) Cover their hands
   **d) Cover their hair**

6) What metaphor does Hurston use to describe what Janie has become in her second marriage?
   a) A bee for her bloom
   **b) A rut in the road**
   c) Their Eyes Were Watching God
   d) Rage against the dying of the light

7) "Death be not proud" was written by who?
   a) Dylan Thomas
   b) William Shakespeare

c) Edward Thomas
**d) John Donne**

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 4 The Emergence of Janie

| **Key questions** | Core knowledge | Terminology & vocabulary | **Discussion, reading & writing** |
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| | | | |
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| **Big questions:**<br><br>What does Janie learn about herself and her childhood after Joe's death?<br><br>In what ways is Tea Cake different from Joe?<br><br>How does Hurston use money in chapter 12?<br><br>To what extent does Tea Cake fulfil the stereotypes the local gossips had warned Janie about?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br><br>Compare the ways Hurston and Wyatt present the idea of courtship in Chapter 11 and "Whose List to Hunt".<br><br>Who has power in the relationship between Janie and Tea Cake? | In Chapter 9, Hurston internalises Janie's voice, reflecting on her childhood and her past. Hurston also has Janie discarding the kerchief (at the end of Chapter 8), the symbol of repression in this context, of control and of patriarchal ownership. In removing it, Janie begins the next phase of reasserting her own sense of identity.<br><br>Tea Cake uses the metaphor of the "candle" to explore how Janie's light is perceived by him in Chapter 11.<br><br>Tea Cake wishes to enable Janie to be more than she is: he wishes her to learn, to laugh and to be his equal / superior: the checkers game is a metaphor for equality. Joe would never have taught her how to be an equal to him.<br><br>Janie is understandably (initially) reluctant when faced with Tea Cakes advances and we are reminded of the end of Chapter 9 when she speaks of how much she values her freedom from bondage / relationships and is enjoying her independence.<br><br>Mrs Tyler is used by Hurston to explore the ways in which prejudice and class combine in a toxic fashion in the African-American community, combining to form *colourism*. Mrs Tyler favours the lighter skinned Janie and disapproves of her match with Tea Cake (a man with darker skin than either Mrs Tyler or Janie).<br><br>Hurston presents the realities of the American itinerant worker in Chapter 14 and there is mileage in comparing how Hurston describes it with how Steinbeck describes it in his seminal work *Of Mice and Men* in Chapter 2.<br><br>Explore the presentation of Jealousy through Browning's poem and Janie's jealousy. She is "blind" and this is linked by Hurston to the lack of available vision in the crop -filled fields.<br><br>**Texts**:<br>- TEWWGod *Chapters 9-17*<br>- *Whoso List To Hunt* by Thomas Wyatt<br>- *Sonnet 130* by William *Shakespeare*<br>- *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost.<br>- *The Laboratory* by Robert Browning<br>- Richard Wright's essay on Hurston<br>- *The toxic legacy of colorism \| Life and style \| The Guardian* | **Terminology**<br><br>Pathetic fallacy<br><br>Authorial purpose<br><br>Hierarchy<br><br>Foreshadowing<br><br>Narrative voice<br><br>Internal monologue<br><br>Colourism<br><br>Dynamic character<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br><br>Juxtaposition<br><br>Jealousy<br><br>Characterisation<br><br>Representation<br><br>Stereotypes<br><br>Subversion<br><br>Society<br><br>Gender<br><br>Janie<br><br>Hurston<br><br>Tea Cake<br><br>Mrs Turner | **Structured discussions**:<br><br>Do you trust Tea Cake?<br><br>Does Janie trust Tea Cake?<br><br>Does Mrs Tyler like Tea Cake?<br><br>Do you like Mrs Tyler?<br><br>Why does Tea Cake beat Janie?<br><br>Why is it important that Janie is not present in chapter 17?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br><br>How does the field symbolise Janie's jealousy? |
| **Expert knowledge** | | | |

Hurston uses the tropes of light and dark in Chapter 9 when Janie reflects on her newly discovered freedom during the quiet, still nights and in Chapter 10, this foreshadowed light is realised with the emergence of Tea Cake.

The issue of colourism demands to be attended to within the classroom. It is clear that Hurston was troubled by it, why else would such a grotesque character as Mrs Tyler be employed if not to illustrate the ignorance, hubris and ugliness of her prejudicial views?

Colourism however is not about race, or even about colour: it is a symptom of the need for those without power to exert it upon others either by dint of their wealth or their social class.

In this respect, colourism is the natural consequence of racist inequality: those who are subjugated seek to elevate themselves above those they are grouped with by the group above.

The issue of colourism in the novel bleeds into the trope of jealousy and Tea Cake's beating of Janie is an ugly, brutal reminder of the societal position women had. The beating is used by Hurston to explore how Tea Cake owns Janie, to ward away Mrs Turner's ill-matched suitor. The beating is not about race, it is about subjugation, ownership and the desire for control.

Be prepared to deal with it skilfully and with time within the classroom. The beating is beyond conversations of abuse: it is about the desire for a place within a hierarchy. Tea Cake's emotional detachment from the beating shows it is for show to others**:** *it is not at all about punishing Janie.*

*The following extract is taken from Chapter 8 in the moments after Jody dies. It is a pivotal moment in Hurston's novel, marking the end of Janie's loveless marriage and the commencement of a new journey for the character who is now financially independent and not bound to any man. The symbolic removal of the kerchief is the consequence of the conscious crafting by Hurston of a new phase of Janie's life.*

Maybe if she had known some other way to try, she might have made his face different. But what that other way could be, she had no idea. She thought back and forth about what had happened in the making of a voice out of a man. Then thought about herself.

Years ago, she had told her girl self to wait for her in the looking glass. It had been a long time since she had remembered. Perhaps she'd better look. She went over to the dresser and looked hard at her skin and features. The young girl was gone, but a handsome woman had taken her place.[21]

She tore off the kerchief from her head and let down her plentiful hair.[22] The weight, the length, the glory was there. She took careful stock of herself, then combed her hair and tied it back up again. Then she starched and ironed her face, forming it into just what people wanted to see[23], and opened up the window and cried, "Come heah people! Jody is dead. Mah husband is gone from me."[24]

[21] Hurston uses memory is interesting ways throughout the novel. Janie as narrator is unreliable at times and her story is told through memory to Pheoby. It might be an avenue worth pursuing to explore the ways that Hurston uses mirrors and images in the novel: she seems keen on the idea of recognition amidst the development of identity. For Janie, the character does not seek to identify herself through others (though this does appear in the photograph) but through a return to the image of herself.

[22] The dissonant verb "tore" indicates the way in which the kerchief has been perceived as a tome of control, of ownership and patriarchal silencing of Janie's identity.

[23] Note the insight that Janie displays. She has developed an awareness of societal expectations whilst maintaining a different, internal identity that they are not able to impress upon. It is this private identity that makes her such a well contrived character. The verbs "starched" and "ironed" are broad and strong terms to illustrate the degree to which she requires to play the role of grieving widow.

[24] It should be noted that in death, Jody becomes Janie's property which was not a distinction that she made clear whilst he was alive.

**Structured Discussion**

In the extract (from the end of Chapter 8), Janie removes the kerchief from her head.

Hurston has crafted her character to undertake this action for a reason.

What do you think the kerchief symbolised to Janie?
Why do you think she is keen to have it removed after Joe's death?
In what ways could you use the themes of freedom and containment in exploring what you think this episode represents?

*The following extract is from Chapter 10 and depicts the ways in which Tea Cake seeks to woo Janie through the playing of a game. Tea Cake teachers her to play and in this role, provides a degree of autonomy and power to Janie that she was prohibited from having with Jody. She was never an equal with Jody and yet, in this simple gesture, she is elevated by Tea Cake.*

"Dis is de last day for dat excuse. You got uh board round heah?"

"Yes indeed. De men folks treasures de game round heah. Ah just ain't never learnt how."

He set it up and began to show her and she found herself glowing inside. Somebody wanted her to play. Somebody thought it natural for her to play. That was even nice. She looked him over and got little thrills from every one of his good points. Those full, lazy eyes with the lashes curling sharply away like drawn scimitars. The lean, over-padded shoulders and narrow waist. Even nice![25]

He was jumping her king! She screamed in protest against losing the king she had had such a hard time acquiring. Before she knew it she had grabbed his hand to stop him. He struggled gallantly to free himself. That is he struggled, but not hard enough to wrench a lady's fingers.

"Ah got uh right tuh take it. You left it right in mah way."

"Yeah, but Ah wuz lookin' off when you went and stuck yo' men right up next tuh mine. No fair!"

"You ain't supposed tuh look off, Mis' Starks. It's de biggest part uh de game tuh watch out! Leave go mah hand."

"No suh! Not mah king. You kin take another one, but not dat one."

They scrambled and upset the board and laughed at that.

[25] Hurston uses the metaphor of the game to explore the courtship between Tea Cake and Janie. Tellingly, it is the teaching of the game that opens Janie's eyes to Tea Cake's physical attractiveness showing that Janie's character has evolved into wanting more than simply a partner to whom she is attracted.

### Structured Discussion

In this episode, how does Hurston create a character in Tea Cake who is very different from Joe Starks?

Why do you think this episode is important for Janie and her new life, potentially with Tea Cake?

At this moment in the novel, do you trust Tea Cake? Do you think Janie does? Why?

*In Sonnet 130 , William Shakespeare subverts the traditional literary tropes associated with the form and the epic blazons often seen in sonnets are mentioned to highlight how unrealistic they are.*

*Hurston seeks to achieve a similar effect in the representation of Tea Cake's relationship with Janie. The characters do not idealise each other, nor does Hurston idealise the relationship. There are jealousies between the two, there is violence and control, but the two characters are presented as having found a way to be happy together in their middle ages.*

**Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare**

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.[26]

Throughout the well – known sonnet, Shakespeare seeks to present his subject as beyond the tropes associated with romantic love, layered as they are with unrealistic hyperbole and expectations to which few, if any, can meet.

Instead, Shakespeare subverts the form to present his love as a constant, something that will endure beyond the superficial and that will age as he will.

[26] It might be effective at this juncture to ascertain what students can recall about Sonnets from their earlier unit. Ensuring they are confident with the form and rhyme scheme of this particular one might be an effective recall quiz which can be achieved quickly. If the class show that there are some gaps in knowledge, it would be worth pausing and reorientating the discussion, adapting the content as appropriate.

Look at the extract which follows from Chapter 11 in preparation for the discussion.

*The following extract from Chapter 11, of Tea Cake's attempt to woo Janie and her gentle upbraiding of this attempt mirrors the type of conflict that Shakespeare explores in his sonnet*.

"It's mine too. Ah ain't been sleepin' so good for more'n uh week cause Ah been wishin' so bad tuh git mah hands in yo' hair. It's so pretty. It feels jus' lak underneath uh dove's wing next to mah face."[27]

"Umph! You'se mighty easy satisfied. Ah been had dis same hair next tuh mah face ever since Ah cried de fust time, and 'tain't never gimme me no thrill."

"Ah tell you lak you told me—you'se mighty hard tuh satisfy. Ah betcha dem lips don't satisfy yuh neither."

"Dat's right, Tea Cake. They's dere and Ah make use of 'em whenever it's necessary, but nothin' special tuh me."

"Umph! umph! umph! Ah betcha you don't never go tuh de lookin' glass and enjoy yo' eyes yo'self. You lets other folks git all de enjoyment out of 'em 'thout takin' in any of it yo'self."

"Naw, Ah never gazes at 'em in de lookin' glass. If anybody else gits any pleasure out of 'em Ah ain't been told about it."

"See dat? You'se got de world in uh jug and make out you don't know it. But Ah'm glad tuh be de one tuh tell yuh."

[27] Hurston begins to apply the traditional modes of courtship through Tea Cake's exchange with Janie. The allusions to a 'dove's wing' are just the type which Shakespeare seems to subvert in his sonnet.

**Structured Discussion**

How does the Sonnet subvert traditional ideas about flattery and romantic love and how does this link to how Tea Cake looks to flatter and communicate his affection for Janie?

Janie gently evades Tea Cake's advances at this moment but, in refuting the comments about her eyes, hair and lips she ***is*** engaging with him.

***Sir Thomas Wyatt*** *(1503 – 11 October 1542) was a 16th-century English politician, ambassador, and lyric poet credited with introducing the sonnet to English literature. Thomas followed his father to court after his education at St John's College, Cambridge.*

*Entering the King's service, he was entrusted with many important diplomatic missions. In public life his principal patron was Thomas Cromwell, after whose death he was recalled from abroad and imprisoned (1541). Though subsequently acquitted and released, shortly thereafter he died.*

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
But as for me, *hélas*[28], I may no more.
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,
Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind[29].
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
As well as I may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about:

In this 14 line Petrarchan sonnet, (ABBAABBA CDECDE), Wyatt alters the final sestet so that it rhymes as CDDCEE.

Personifying the object of his affections as a "hind", Wyatt goes to "hunt" (pursue) her. However, he finds himself at the back of the list of suitors and she continues to provoke love in him, but she remains unobtainable as she is betrothed to another. She may seem "tame" and suited to love but in reality he is "wild".

[28] Alas.
[29] Attempting to woo her is like catching the wind in a net: a helpless cause.

*Noli me tangere*[30], for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

### Structured Discussion

How do Hurston and Wyatt present the idea of courtship in Chapter 11 and "Whose List to Hunt"?

*The following extract is from Chapter 12 and illustrates the choice that Janie is making in reference to her continuing relationship with Tea Cake. Hurston also explores the issue of her character openly taking a risk on Tea Cake as all do who get married.*

[30] Don't touch me for I belong to Caesar

“Folks seen you out in colours[31] and dey thinks you ain’t payin’ de right amount uh respect tuh yo’ dead husband.”

“Ah ain’t grievin’ so why do Ah hafta mourn? Tea Cake love me in blue, so Ah wears it.

Jody ain’t never in his life picked out no colour for me. De world picked out black and white for mournin’, Joe didn’t. So Ah wasn’t wearin’ it for him. Ah was wearin’ it for de rest of y’all.”

“But anyhow, watch yo’self, Janie, and don’t be took advantage of. You know how dese young men is wid older women. Most of de time dey’s after whut dey kin git, then dey’s gone lak uh turkey through de corn.”

“Tea Cake don’t talk dat way. He’s aimin’ tuh make hisself permanent wid me. We done made up our mind tuh marry.”

“Janie, you’se yo’ own woman, and Ah hope you know whut you doin’. Ah sho hope you ain’t lak uh possum—de older you gits, de less sense yuh got. Ah’d feel uh whole heap better

’bout yuh if you wuz marryin’ dat man up dere in Sanford. He got somethin’ tuh put long side uh whut you got and dat make it more better. He’s endurable.” “Still and all Ah’d ruther be wid Tea Cake.”
“Well, if yo’ mind is already made up, ’tain’t nothin’ nobody kin do. But you’se takin’ uh awful chance.”

“No mo’ than Ah took befo’ and no mo’ than anybody else takes when dey gits married. It always changes folks, and sometimes it brings out dirt and meanness dat
even de person didn’t know they had in ’em theyselves. You know dat. Maybe Tea Cake might turn out lak dat. Maybe not. Anyhow Ah’m ready and willin’ tuh try ’im.”

[31] Janie has ceased to wear the plain black associated with public displays of mourning, often used to signal to potential suitors not to approach due to the degree of time passed since the death of the spouse.

*Robert Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. His work was initially published in England before it was published in the United States. Known for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech, Frost frequently wrote about settings from rural life in New England in the early 20th century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes.*

*Frequently honoured during his lifetime, Frost is the only poet to receive four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry.*

***The Road Not Taken*** **by Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood[32],
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

**Structured Discussion**

Both of the texts concern choices. In Frost's poem, he uses the wood as a metaphor for life and the paths are used for decisions we make.

What decision does Janie take with Tea Cake and what resistance does she meet in the extract above? Do you think she should listen to this advice?

[32] The paths diverging is the central metaphor for choices we make in our life.

Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*The following extract is from Chapter 14 and presents Tea Cake and Janie making the decision to move to the Everglades for work. The idea of moving around from place to place in order to find work makes someone an "itinerant" worker.*

The very next day he burst into the room in high excitement. "Boss done bought out another man and want me down on de lake. He got houses fuh de first ones dat git dere. Less go!"

They **rattled** nine miles in a **borrowed** car to the quarters that **squatted** so close that only the dyke separated them from great, sprawling Okeechobee[33]. Janie fussed around the **shack** making a home while Tea Cake planted beans. After hours they fished. Every now and then they'd run across a party of Indians in their long,narrow dug-outs calmly winning their living in the trackless ways of the 'Glades. Finally the beans were in. Nothing much to do but wait to pick them. Tea Cake picked his box a great deal for Janie, but he still didn't have enough to do. No need of gambling yet. The people who were pouring in were broke. They didn't come bringing money, they were coming to make some.[34]

"Tell yuh whut, Janie, less buy us some shootin' tools and go huntin' round heah."

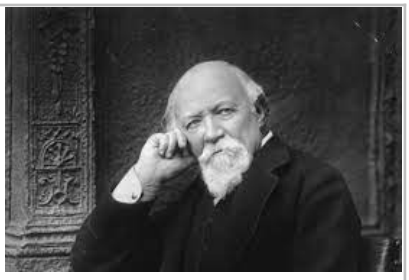
"Dat would be fine, Tea Cake, exceptin' you know Ah can't shoot. But Ah'd love tuh go wid you."

"Oh, you needs tuh learn how. 'Tain't no need uh you not knowin' how tuh handle shootin'tools. Even if you didn't never find no game, it's always some trashy rascal dat needs uh good killin'," he laughed. "Less go intuh Palm Beach and spend some of our money."

[33] A city in Florida, home of the second largest freshwater lake in the United States of America.
[34] Notice in this paragraph the choice of words from Hurston: "rattled", "borrowed", "squatted", "shack" and "broke". They all convey a sense that Janie and Tea Cake are at the beginning of a journey together.

**Structured Discussion**

- Having read Chapter 14 and looking closely at the extract above, in what ways in this life different from the one Janie had with Joe Starks?
- Recall the poems *Sympathy* and *My Little Dreams*, do you think that Hurston is presenting Janie's dreams as coming true or not?



***Robert Browning*** *(7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose dramatic monologues put him high among the Victorian poets.*
***The Laboratory*** *is a dramatic monologue narrated by a young woman in the presence of the unseen, silent figure of an apothecary who is preparing her a poison.*

*The Gothic horror plot is simple; she plans to use it to kill her rivals at a nearby royal court, believing that the women who have usurped her think she is defeated and grieving. She is instead plotting their murder. The poem is included here as it explores the theme of jealousy: the emotion that Janie suffers from in Chapter 15.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,<br>May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,<br>As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—<br>Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?<br><br>He is with her, and they know that I know<br>Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow<br>While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear<br>Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.<br><br>Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,<br>Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste! | Quick—is it finished? The colour's too grim!<br>Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?<br>Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,<br>And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!<br><br>What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me—<br>That's why she ensnared him: this never will free<br>The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, "no!"<br>To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.<br><br>For only last night, as they whispered, I brought<br>My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought<br>Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall, |

| | |
|---|---|
| Better sit thus and observe thy strange things,<br>Than go where men wait me and dance at the<br>King's.<br><br>That in the mortar—you call it a gum?<br>Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!<br>And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,<br>Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?<br><br>Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,<br>What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!<br>To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,<br>A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket!<br><br>Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give<br>And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!<br>But to light a pastile, and Elise, with her head<br>And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead! | Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!<br><br>Not that I bid you spare her the pain!<br>Let death be felt and the proof remain;<br>Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—<br>He is sure to remember her dying face!<br><br>Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;<br>It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:<br>The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee—<br>If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?<br><br>Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,<br>You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!<br>But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings<br>Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's! |

*The following extract is taken from Chapter 15. In it, Hurston explores how Janie experiences feelings of jealousy.*

*"O beware, my lord, of jealousy;*
*It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on."*
*(William Shakespeare's Othello Act 3 Sc III)*


Janie learned what it felt like to be jealous. A little chunky girl took to picking a play out of Tea Cake in the fields and in the quarters. If he said anything at all, she'd take the opposite side and hit him or shove him and run away to make him chase her. Janie knew what she was up to—luring him away from the crowd. It kept up for two or three weeks with Nunkie getting bolder all the time. She'd hit Tea Cake playfully and the minute he so much as tapped her with his finger she'd fall against him or fall on the ground and have to be picked up. She'd be almost helpless. It took a good deal of handling to set her on her feet again. And another thing, Tea Cake didn't seem to be able to fend her off as promptly as Janie thought he ought to. She began to be snappish a little. A little seed of fear was growing into a tree. Maybe someday Tea Cake would weaken. Maybe he had already given secret encouragement, and this was Nunkie's way of bragging about it. Other people began to notice too, and that put Janie more on a wonder.

**Structured Discussion**

- Why do you think Janie is jealous in this chapter?
- What does Janie plan to do about it? Is she as extreme as the speaker in Browning's poem?
- How does Hurston use the field as a metaphor for Janie's 'blind' jealousy?

*The following extract from Chapter 16 presents the character of Mrs Turner. Hurston uses the character to explore the issue of colourism in the novel. Mrs Turner takes a liking to Janie due to the lighter skin that Janie has and conversely does not like Tea Cake because of his darker skin.*

Mrs. Turner was a milky sort of a woman that belonged to child-bed. Her shoulders rounded a little, and she must have been conscious of her pelvis because she kept it stuck out in front of her so she could always see it. Tea Cake made a lot of fun about Mrs. Turner's shape behind her back. He claimed that she had been shaped up by a cow kicking her from behind.

She was an ironing board with things throwed at it. Then that same cow took and stepped in her mouth when she was a baby and left it wide and flat with her chin and nose almost meeting.

But Mrs. Turner's shape and features were entirely approved by Mrs. Turner. Her nose was slightly pointed and she was proud. Her thin lips were an ever delight to her eyes. Even her buttocks in bas-relief were a source of pride. To her way of thinking all these things set her aside from Negroes. That was why she sought out Janie to friend with. Janie's coffee-and-cream complexion and her luxurious hair made Mrs. Turner forgive her for wearing overalls like the other women who worked in the fields. She didn't forgive her for marrying a man as dark as Tea Cake, but she felt that she could remedy that. That was what her brother was born for.

She seldom stayed long when she found Tea Cake at home, but when she happened to drop in and catch Janie alone, she'd spend hours chatting away. Her disfavorite subject was Negroes.

**Structured Discussion**

- How does Hurston explore Mrs Turner's racism in the chapter?

*In this extract from Chapter 17, the reader does not hear Janie's voice because it is the only one in which Hurston does not include her perspective of events. In the following lines, Tea Cake describes the relationship he has with Janie.*

"Mah Janie is uh high time woman and useter things. Ah didn't git her outa de middle uh de road. Ah got her outa uh big fine house. Right now she got money enough in de bank tuh buy up dese ziggaboos[35] and give 'em away."

"Hush yo' mouf! And she down heah on de muck lak anybody else!"

"Janie is wherever Ah wants tuh be. Dat's de kind uh wife she is and Ah love her for it. Ah wouldn't be knockin' her around. Ah didn't wants to whup[36] her last night, but ol' Mis' Turner done sent for her brother tuh come tuh bait Janie in and take her way from me. Ah didn't whup Janie 'cause she done nothin'. Ah beat her tuh show dem Turners who is boss. Ah set in de kitchen one day and heard dat woman tell mah wife Ah'm too black fuh her[37]. She don't see how Janie can stand me."

[35] This is a derogatory term used to describe an African – American individual. In this context, Tea Cake is describing them as idiots and that Janie has enough money to buy them all out.
[36] Tea Cake describes that he did want to "whup" her, to beat her, but was forced to because of the pressure exerted by Mrs Tyler.
[37] Tea Cake realises that Mrs Tyler dislikes him due to how dark his skin is, compared with Janie's lighter skin.

**Structured Discussion**

- Consider the idea of power in relationships. Re-read the extract again and consider who you think is the most, and least powerful of the characters.
- Having read the chapter, rank the characters once more, justifying your ideas.

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 4 The Emergence of Janie: Reading Fluency Texts

*The following newspaper article was published in "The Guardian" in 2019 and was written by Kaitlyn Greenidge. It explores the theme of colourism.*

*Colourism is the existence of prejudice and discrimination **within** the black community. It can be seen in Hurston's novel with the attitudes and behaviours in the character of Mrs Tyler who is antagonistic toward Tea Cake due to his dark skin.*

**"Why black people discriminate among ourselves: the toxic legacy of colourism."**

**Published in "The Guardian" 9th April 2019, by Kaitlyn Greenidge.**

My grandmother was a great beauty. Everybody said so.

"Like a black Elizabeth Taylor," was the comment heard most often, because her eyes looked violet in some light. She had a perfect hourglass figure, large clear eyes, a tiny waist, long slim hands, a killer sense of dress and smooth dark skin.

The only trait I shared with her was her skin colour. My mother always spoke of this with pride. It was a treasure to be kept whole through diligent care – applications of thick, pasty Eucerin lotion, which used to come in a tub, worked into the skin as it melted down and made everything smooth and shiny. My

grandmother used the silkier Nivea instead – kept on the dresser in her all-white bedroom, applied throughout the day. The smell of it still reminds me of the elegance of her life.

That dark skin was the most beautiful was the logic of my family. Growing up, all my Barbies and baby dolls had skin as dark as mine. This was my mother's conscious choice. She stocked our bookshelves with black children's books, bought toys and games with black characters. She worked hard to make sure our home was a place where blackness was always celebrated. She was keenly aware, as the mother of three black girls, how the world would treat us, regardless of our varying shades.

Looking back, I think this probably had to do with her own skin colour – my mother was much lighter than my grandmother, with a spray of freckles across her nose. In my grandmother's house, my mother's high school portrait sat on the mantle – it was a photograph retouched with oil. The painter had lightened my mother's skin to an anaemic greyish yellow, given her green eyes, and thinned her nose. "He thought she was Italian," I remember my grandmother telling me, as explanation. My mother hated that picture, the erasure of her blackness. I haven't seen it since my grandmother died.

Growing up in the supportive environment my mother created for us, I assumed into early adulthood that colourism was a thing of the past. Colourism – the prejudice based on skin tone, usually with a marked preference for lighter-skinned people – was something I read about in novels. It seemed quaint, like pin curls or cellophane. There was a slight troubling when I would watch TV shows such as Martin or movies like Coming to America, and the love interest was always light and the girls my colour were shrews – too fast, too forward, too sarcastic to be loved. But at least these were movies with people who looked like me, and it hurt less to ignore my misgivings and just enjoy seeing a woman like myself on the screen, even if she was there only for the protagonist to screw his face up at in disgust.

For reassurance that these scenarios were just fiction, all I had to do was look at my grandparents' marriage – my grandmother as dark as me and my grandfather, who adored her, much lighter. It is a sad and sobering fact to realize that colour – how dark or light you are perceived as being by a prospective partner, who most likely is someone of your own race – sometimes determines who in our communities is deemed deserving of romance. The question of desirability, of who we believe is worthy of love, is what led me to read more about colourism.

In the last two years, I've been researching a novel about a young black woman living in 1870s New York City and Jacmel, Haiti, during Reconstruction. As I imagined her life, I realized how much colour would play into her experience. She is the dark-skinned daughter of a light-enough-to-pass bourgeois black woman, and the family's background ensures her a place in the emerging black middle class, but her complexion keeps her from ever feeling truly welcome there.

I went deeper into my colourism research, and what I found let me know that colourism is still alive and well. I started with the marriage market, and found out dark-skinned women are less likely to be married than lighter-skinned women. But colourism shows up in even starker ways: the difference in pay rates between darker-skinned and lighter-skinned men mirrors the differences in pay between whites and blacks. Darker-skinned women are given longer prison sentences than their light-skinned counterparts. And this discrimination starts young – if you are a dark-skinned girl, you are three times more likely to be suspended from school than your light skinned peers.

Even more insidious, colourism even affects how we are remembered. Lighter-skinned black people are perceived to be more intelligent. Educated black people, regardless of their actual skin colour, are remembered by job interviewers as having lighter skin.

The daily toll of living with colourism is inescapable. Darker-skinned people report higher experiences of microaggressions; heavier-set dark-skinned men report the highest levels of microaggressions. All of this affects our mental health and wellbeing. Darker-skinned black women report more physiological deterioration and

self-report worse health than lighter-skinned women. Taking all of this into account, I cannot help to think how the weight of history comes to bear on our daily living today.

Wage and punishment inequity and our skewed perception by the professional world make more sense to me, because they operate on the cold logic of white supremacy. They are describing interactions with a wider, non-black world and take into account how both white and black people view skin colour. But the facts around relationships and dating don't make any sense to me: given the relatively low rates of interracial marriage for black women in the US, we are talking about perceptions and prejudices within the black community – how we treat each other, our own internalized white supremacy.

To understand colourism, perhaps, we have to understand self-perception. Margaret Hunter, a sociologist who published her findings on colourism, marriage and dating in black and Hispanic communities in the 1990s, noted, "Different communities define it differently. There's no clear lines about those definitions. The best research tends to use colour palette to ask people how they see themselves. Because whether or not you say you're light skin or dark skin is relative to your social context and that varies by what kind of community you live in."

I began to realize the importance of distinguishing between colourism as practiced by white power structures like courts, schools and businesses, and colourism as practiced within the black community, evidenced when we talk about marriage statistics and measurements of colour.

The former seems easier for many black people to acknowledge. The latter is less explicitly talked about. To do so is to begin to unpack internalized white supremacy, something most people are unwilling to do because it can be so painful.

When the conversations do arise, they often get stuck on personal experiences – the proverbial light-skinned girl who claims all the girls hated her in junior high, or the dark-skinned girl who says the same. Rarely do we point to how these experiences are part of a long, complicated history. But if we can trace the origins of colourism we can perhaps begin to find a way to heal from it.

As long as colourism has existed in our communities, there has been a vested interest in denying its existence. The term does not appear until 1983. It is widely credited to Alice Walker, in her classic womanist text In Search of our Mothers' Gardens. Before that, black Americans used other terms, like "colourstruck" or "colorphobia". It is significant that an attempt to define this phenomenon came from black womanist theory, a field of scholarship that attempts to link the knotty legacies of race, gender, exploitation and self-actualization. And it makes sense that Walker would deem colourism worthy of study since its effect is keenly felt by black women due to its ties to perceived attractiveness, femininity and sexuality.

But what had kept black people from naming it for so long, and what keeps us from talking about it now? The history of this denial was a driving question for me.

Colourism is not just an American phenomenon. It's global. Skin bleaching cream is sold in majority-black or people of colour countries throughout the world. The most far-reaching conversations I've had about it have been with women of colour.

I am friends with the writers Tanaïs and Mira Jacob. Although they are not African American, their communities – Jacob identifies as Indian American, Tanaïs as Bangladeshi American – have their own versions of colourism. In text chains that started as check-ins about how to navigate life as writers, we talked about the expectations of performing gratitude and overworking, and we each began to link this to our experiences as dark-skinned women in our respective communities.

We talked about how it affected who we tried to date, how easily we were underestimated, how often we were expected to work for free, be grateful, be humble, and the intense backlash that we each experienced when we didn't act accordingly.

We talked about who was respected for their craft, who was deemed a literary darling, and who was not. "Have you ever noticed, the women of colour writers who are championed as ingenues or geniuses are almost always light-skinned?" A question I typed out into the thread, knowing it was a place to be able to unpack and figure out the complications around these feelings.

Recently, I wrote to them: "What makes this all so hard to talk about is the internalized white supremacy. If white people disappeared from the planet tomorrow, colourism would still exist in our communities, and that is maybe the most painful part. Why people would rather say it isn't real."

To try to answer this question, I began to research the roots of colourism in the US. As far as I can tell, it starts, like so much of our culture, in the system of chattel slavery. In the US, unlike in other systems of slavery in other time periods, to be a slave meant you were legally a nonperson – unable to enter into legal contracts like marriage or land ownership, and not considered a citizen. Whiteness meant that blackness meant a person was property. Slavery was inherited, and whether or not you were considered a slave was dependent on the status of your mother. This system ensured that white male slave owners who had children with the black women they enslaved contributed to their own wealth.

Under this system, proximity to whiteness could increase your chances for freedom. If you had a white father, and more importantly, if you "looked" white, the easier you could potentially claim some sort of freedom.

In the US, our current understanding of colourism, though, stems from the decades directly after slavery, when everyone was theoretically free and a citizen regardless of race. This meant the amount of color in skin, not just skin color, became paramount for whites to maintain social and economic control. The one-drop rule – that even one distant black relative meant a person was black, or at least, most definitely, "not white" – increasingly became a way to define people.

This is not to suggest that during slavery there was some sort of pan-racial understanding of colour. Only that before widespread emancipation, there was some leeway in defining mixed-race people's heritage. The most famous example of this is the history of the creole communities of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Charleston, South Carolina – spaces where the descendants of black enslaved women and white slave owners could establish their own communities as free people of colour. This leeway gradually disappeared in the latter half of the 19th century, as legalized segregation hardened into the daily realities of every American.

As more black people obtained freedom after the civil war, and began establishing newspapers – vibrant spaces to define and keep record of what it meant to be this new thing, a black citizen of the US – some of the African American newspapers struggled to call colourism exactly what it was.

In Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920, released in 2000, author Willard B Gatewood notes that darker-skinned reporters pointed out that black churches were often divided by colour and that political positions and government positions were won based on complexion. In contrast, those in the upper classes insisted that there was no preference at play, pointing to the existence of working-class and poor light-skinned people as proof that color did not directly correlate to an unfair advantage.

The debate, mired in frustration and denial, mirrors conversations around colourism and privilege today.

In the decades after emancipation, the debate shifted from how it felt to experience colourism (usually arguments made by darker-skinned, middle- and working-class writers) to whether or not it actually existed (a point usually made by upper-class writers, some of whom were able to "pass" as white).

Gatewood quotes Nannie H Burroughs, a dark-skinned civil rights activist and educator, remarked in a 1904 speech as saying: "Many Negroes have colorphobia as badly as the white folks have Negrophobia." She continued: "The white man who crosses the line and leaves an heir is doing a favour for some black man who would marry the most debased woman, whose only stock in trade is her colour, in preference for the most royal queen in ebony."

Compare this with one of Burroughs' contemporaries, the light-skinned Alice Dunbar Nelson. Both Burroughs and Nelson were schoolteachers, but Burroughs was denied a place in DC public schools because she was dark-skinned, while Nelson flourished.

Famous for marrying the much darker-skinned poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, Dunbar Nelson identified as both an African American author and activist and was deeply conflicted around the subject of colour.

he did attempt to write about her complicated feelings; in her essay Brass Ankles she described the persecution she believed she experienced from other children growing up and from dark-skinned teachers in her workplace. "To complain would be only to bring upon themselves another storm of abuse and fury," she wrote. But the essay was unpublished – Dunbar Nelson did not want to publish it under her own name and black journals refused to publish it under a pseudonym.

And so again, we fell into another silence.

I think about these two women – the outspokenness of Burroughs and Dunbar Nelson, obsessed with color but self-aware enough to avoid talking about it in public. I wonder where that shame originates, and trace it, for Americans back, to the origin of the variety of skin colours in our community. You cannot separate the often painful stereotypes of colourism from misogyny, in part because of the fundamental fact that light-skinned black people's heritage in the US stems from the practice of sexual slavery, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation inherent in American slavery.

This profound trauma explains, to me at least, why this discussion is suffused in so much denial.

I am not sure how we get free from the trap of colourism, but as with most things in life, I know it begins with being able to talk about it openly. When I was a child, the love and pride my grandmother took in her color, the assumption of dignity and elegance, was an unspoken guide to how to navigate the world.

But I think the time has come to be explicit in our strategies, to have the difficult conversations, to acknowledge when they make us uncomfortable, or remind us of our own individual pain. To have your life dictated by something you are not even allowed to name is a special kind of cruelty. The way to begin to combat it is to try to speak about it.

John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. (February 27, 1902 – December 20, 1968) was an American author and the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature winner. During his writing career, he authored 33 books, with one book coauthored alongside Edward Ricketts, including 16 novels, six non-fiction books, and two collections of short stories. He is widely known for the comic novels *Tortilla Flat* (1935) and *Cannery Row* (1945), the multi-generation epic *East of Eden* (1952), and the novellas *The Red Pony* (1933) and *Of Mice and Men* (1937).

In *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck explores the tragedies and loneliness experienced by those in middle-America during the Great Depression.
In the extract which follows, Steinbeck describes the 'bunkhouse', a setting where itenerant workers would stay after a day of working on the farm.

**Extract from Chapter 2 from Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men***

THE bunk house was a long, rectangular building. Inside, the walls were whitewashed and the floor unpainted. In three walls there were small, square windows, and in the fourth, a solid door with a wooden larch. Against the walls were eight bunks, five of them made up with blankets and the other three showing their burlap ticking. Over each bunk there was nailed an apple box with the opening forward so that it made two shelves for the personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk. And these shelves were loaded with little articles soap and talcum powder, razors and those Western magazines ranch men love to read and scoff at and secretly believe. And there were medicines on the shelves, and little vials, combs; and from nails on the box sides, a few neckties. Near one wall there was a black cast-iron stove, its stovepipe going straight up through the ceiling. In the middle of the room stood a big square table littered with playing cards, and around it were grouped boxes for the players to sit on.

At about ten o'clock in the morning the sun threw a bright dust-laden bar through one of the side windows, and in and out of the beam flies shot like rushing stars.

**Possible Structured Discussion**

What type of accommodation is this? What inferences can you make about how valued the workers were during the 1930's in America when this novel is set?

**[from "Between Laughter and Tears," a review by Richard Wright; The New Masses, 5 October 1937:]**

It is difficult to evaluate Waters Turpin's These Low Grounds and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. This is not because there is an esoteric meaning hidden or implied in either of the two novels; but rather because neither of the two novels has a basic idea or theme that lends itself to significant interpretation.

Miss Hurston seems to have no desire whatever to move in the direction of serious fiction. . . .*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is the story of Zora Neale Hurston's Janie who, at sixteen, married a grubbing farmer at the anxious instigation of her slave-born grandmother. The romantic Janie, in the highly-charged language of Miss Hurston, longed to be a pear tree in blossom and have a "dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace."

Restless, she fled from her farmer husband and married Jody, an up-and-coming Negro business man who, in the end, proved to be no better than her first husband. After twenty years of clerking for her self-made Jody, Janie found herself a frustrated widow of forty with a small fortune on her hands. Tea Cake, "from in and through Georgia," drifted along and, despite his youth, Janie took him. For more than two years they lived happily; but Tea Cake was bitten by a mad dog and was infected with rabies. One night in a canine rage Tea Cake tried to murder Janie, thereby forcing her to shoot the only man she had ever loved.

Miss Hurston can write, but her prose is cloaked in that facile sensuality that has dogged Negro expression since the days of Phillis Wheatley. Her dialogue manages to catch the psychological movements of the Negro folk-mind in their pure simplicity, but that's as far as it goes.Miss Hurston voluntarily continues in her novel the tradition which was forced upon the Negro in the theatre, that is, the minstrel technique that makes the "white folks" laugh.

Her characters eat and laugh and cry and work and kill; they swing like a pendulum eternally in that safe and narrow orbit in which America likes to see the Negro live: between laughter and tears.Turpin's faults as a writer are those of an honest man trying desperately to say something; but Zora Neale Hurston lacks even that excuse. The sensory sweep of her novel carries no theme, no message, no thought. In the main, her novel is not addressed to the Negro, but to a white audience whose chauvinistic tastes she knows how to satisfy. She exploits that phase of Negro life which is "quaint," the phase which evokes a piteous smile on the lips of the "superior" race.

## Section 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 4 The Emergence of Janie: Check your understanding

1) What is Colourism?
   a) Racism felt by the black community caused by those outside of the black community.
   b) Racism felt by those outside the black community caused by those from the black community.
   **c) Racism felt by the black community caused by those within the black community.**

2) What is the typical rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet form?
   **a) AB AB CD CD EF EF GG**
   b) AA BB CC DD EE FF GG
   c) ABA BCB CDC DED GG

3) How many speakers are there in a dramatic monologue?
   **a) ONE**
   b) TWO
   c) THREE

4) "The weight, the length, the glory was there." How does Janie release her hair?
   a) She takes the clips out that are holding it up.
   b) She unties the hair tie that keeps it up.
   **c) She takes the kerchief off from her head.**

5) An epic blazon is…..
   **a) An exaggerated physical description, praising beauty.**
   b) An exaggerated physical description, celebrating victory in war.
   c) An exaggerated physical description, praising the skills of rhetoric.

6) Who wrote of the 'green eyed monster, jealousy'?
   a) John Donne
   b) Andrew Marvell
   **c) William Shakespeare**
   d) Christopher Marlowe

7) An itinerant worker is someone who:
   **a) Travels around the country looking for work**
   b) Travels around the country as part of their work
   c) Travels around the country and works as part of their travelling.

## Section 4 Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 5 The Flood and Janie's Strength

| Key questions | Core knowledge | Terminology & vocabulary | Discussion, reading & writing |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Big questions:**<br>How has Hurston used the natural world in Chapter 18, and other chapters to chart Janie's life?<br><br>How effective is Hurston's use of the cyclical narrative? Is the structure itself a metaphor for what Janie learns?<br><br>**Key questions:**<br><br>Is Janie to blame for Tea Cake's death?<br><br>Should Janie go to prison? | During Chapter 18, Hurston intentionally raises the levels of tension as the storm gradually builds around Janie and the other itinerant workers.<br>Hurston uses structural shifts from the domestic setting within to the scene outside (zooming out) to contextualise and foreshadow the building threat.<br><br>The storm can be viewed as foreshadowing the next challenge / existential threat to Janie in the death of Tea Cake.<br><br>Remember that because of the frame narrative, the reader knows that Janie must survive, she is after all telling the story so there is a limit to the degree of tension the reader experiences.<br><br>Hurston returns to her square toed personification of Death in Chapter 19 and this allows the reader space to dwell on the sympathy for Janie in light of Tea Cake's death and the ensuing trial.<br><br>The metaphor that Hurston employs through the coffins is a painful one: even in death there is disparity, space which exists even for those with faith before God. It is ugly and because of the grotesqueness of it, is likely to be a correct summation of reality.<br><br>Chapter 20 undergoes many structural shifts from Hurston and concludes with Janie being comforted with the memories of her (loving) life with Tea Cake.<br><br>Students should be made aware of the ways in which the novel concludes with a chapter at the same point in time and place at which it began: with Janie in conversation with Pheoby. This cyclical narration aptly concludes the frame narrative.<br><br>**Texts**: -<br><br>- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston *Chapters 18-20*<br>- *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood by Irving Finkel – review \| History books \| The Guardian*<br>- *Critical Reception of Their Eyes Were Watching God* | **Terminology**<br><br>Pathetic fallacy<br><br>Personification<br><br>Authorial purpose<br><br>Foreshadowing<br><br>Narrative voice<br><br>Cyclical narratives<br><br>Structural shifts<br><br>Dynamic character<br><br>**Vocabulary**<br><br>Juxtaposition<br><br>The Flood myth<br><br>Characterisation<br><br>Representation<br><br>Gender<br><br>Janie<br><br>Hurston<br><br>Tea Cake | **Structured discussions**:<br><br>What moments can you remember when Hurston uses the natural world as a metaphor for Janie?<br><br>What do you think the title means?<br><br>How does Hurston use coffins as a metaphor for prejudice?<br><br>**Couch to 5 k writing**:<br><br>What do you think the title means? |
| Expert knowledge | | | |

Hurston uses the characterisation of Janie to explore the issue of temperance and constancy.
Bearing in mind the tumultuous nature of her life: the loveless marriage to Logan Killicks, the oppressive abusive relationship with Jody, the Flood and untimely death of Tea Cake it would not be a surprise to see Hurston portray a sense of sadness in Janie. However, she is presented as forward looking and determined to remain independent, happy in the memories of happiness that Tea Cake provided.

The imagery which concludes Janie's tale depicts her walking slowly around the empty house. The depiction of Janie's reflections have a cinematic quality and there is a strong sense of America being represented as a place of healing for Janie's trauma. This representation challenges aspects of the American Dream in that, typically the Dream was focussed on aspects of commercial competition and not the idea of the individual finding a place, and peace in society. In this aspect, Hurston represents the American Dream as a locus for the African – American community to find a place and within this place, economic security which does not rest upon the verisimilitude of the ruling patriarchy. It is no coincidence that Janie's life starts as a search for economic stability through an arranged marriage to Logan Killicks. It concludes however with no search for a white (or black) saviour.

For Hurston, Janie's concluding presentation – a confident, self-assured, independent if chastened woman by dint of her experience– is one which is uncommon in literature in the 1930's, especially for African-American women. Janie's narration – bold, colourful, filled with metaphor and lyricism – is itself a metaphor for the voices which Hurston clearly believes were being subsumed and consumed by a white dominated patriarchal society.

## Section 4 Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 5 The Flood and Janie's Strength: Annotated Texts

*The following extract is from Chapter 18 and is noteworthy for the inclusion of the title.*
*This is the moment at which the storm encroaches onto the itinerant workers' camp. Although many had left the camp, fearing the approaching storm, Tea Cake and Janie remain, believing themselves to be able to withstand it. It is an interesting moment in that Tea Cake finally realises how closely Janie is allied to him. The very moment he understands how much she loves him is the same moment at which he is to be taken away from her. Hurston's use of balance between love and fate in the episode is painfully exquisite and is a wonderful moment to explore with a class of students through structured discussion.*

"Thanky, Ma'am. But 'sposing you wuz tuh die, now. You wouldn't git mad at me for draggin' yuh heah?"

"Naw. We been tuhgether round two years. If you kin see de light at daybreak, you don't keer if you die at dusk. It's so many people never seen de light at all. Ahwuz fumblin' round and God opened de door."

He dropped to the floor and put his head in her lap. "Well then, Janie, you meant whut you didn't say, 'cause Ah never knowed you wuz so satisfied wid me lak dat. Ah kinda thought—"[38]

The wind came back with triple fury, and put out the light for the last time. They sat in company with the others in other shanties, their eyes straining against crude walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God.[39]

As soon as Tea Cake went out pushing wind in front of him, he saw that the wind and water had given life to lots of things that folks think of as dead and given death to so much that had been living things. Water everywhere. Stray fish swimming in the yard. Three inches more and the water would be in the house. Already in some. He decided to try to find a car to take them out of the 'Glades before worse things happened. He turned back to tell Janie about it so she could be ready to go.

[38] It is suggested that a pause occurs here to explore the connotations of Tea Cake laying his head on Janie's lap: as a child, as a vulnerable lover.
[39] Challenge the students to consider the impact of the comma placement here: it separates the awful sense of oblivion of the darkness from the embrace of love for those who have faith. What is also useful to consider is that the observers were unaware that they were watching God whilst staring into the darkness.

## Structured Discussion

"Their eyes were watching God" – what does this mean to you?

Janie says that God opened a door when Tea Cake came into her life, what does Hurston mean by this metaphor?

*The following extracts are from Chapter 19 and concern the fall out from the flooding. The chapter opens with the introduction of the personified Death and the others chart how the bodies were dealt with. The final moment is the conversation between Tea Cake, the doctor and Janie.*

And then again Him-with-the-square-toes[40] had gone back to his house. He stood once more and again in his high flat house without sides to it and without a roof with his soulless sword standing upright in his hand. His pale white horse had galloped over waters, and thundered over land. The time of dying was over. It was time to bury the dead.

…

"Shucks! Nobody can't tell nothin' 'bout some uh dese bodies, de shape dey's in. Can't tell whether dey's white or black." The guards had a long conference over that. After a while they came back and told the men, "Look at they hair, when you cain't tell no other way. And don't lemme ketch none uh y'all dumpin' white folks, and don't be wastin' no boxes on coloured. They's too hard tuh git holt of right now."[41]

…

"Dawg bit 'im, did you say?"

"Aw twudn't nothin' much, doctah. It wuz all healed over in two three days," Tea Cake said impatiently.

"Dat been over uh month ago, nohow. Dis is somethin' new, doctah. Ah figgers de water is yet bad. It's bound tuh be. Too many dead folks been in it fuh it tuh be good tuh drink fuh uh long time. Dat's de way Ah figgers it anyhow."

"All right, Tea Cake. Ah'll send you some medicine and tell Janie how tuh take care of you. Anyhow, Iwant you in a bed by yo'self until you hear from me. Just you keep Janie out of yo' bed for awhile, hear? Come on out to the car with me, Janie. I want to send Tea Cake some pills to take right away."

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[40] Hurston uses "square toes" throughout the novel to represent the personification of Death. In starting the chapter with his introduction, the reader understands the foreshadowing and the narrative concerns itself with how, rather than if Tea Cake will die.

[41] The casual racism in the reference in ensuring coffins are not "wasted" on black individuals is included as a way to normalise the institutional blockades and walls that were used by society to surround and contain the black community.

## Structured Discussion

- How does Hurston use coffins as a metaphor for racial prejudice in this chapter?
- Why does Hurston start the chapter with a detailed, personified description of death?

*The following extract is from Chapter 20 and presents the conclusion of the novel.*

Soon everything around downstairs was shut and fastened. Janie mounted the stairs with her lamp. The light in her hand was like a spark of sun-stuff washing her face in fire. Her shadow behind fell black and headlong down the stairs. Now, in her room, the place tasted fresh again. The wind through the open windows had broomed out all the fetid feeling of absence and nothingness. She closed in and sat down. Combing road-dust out of her hair.

Thinking.

The day of the gun, and the bloody body, and the courthouse came and commenced to sing a sobbing sigh out of every corner in the room; out of each and every chair and thing.

Commenced to sing, commenced to sob and sigh, singing and sobbing. Then Tea Cake came prancing around her where she was and the song of the sigh flew out of the window and lit in the top of the pine trees[42]. Tea Cake, with the sun for a shawl. Of course he wasn't dead. He could never be dead until she herself had finished feeling and thinking. The kiss of his memory made pictures of love and light against the wall. Here was peace. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see.

[42] Hurston combines a range of metaphors akin to poetry in the ways in which she presents Janie's new life and the ways in which the memories of Tea Cake are retained and live in her life.

## Structured Discussion

- Re-read the ending of the novel and re-examine the final four lines.
- What do you think the feeling, the tone of these final lines are?
- In what ways has Janie changed from when she spoke to her Nanny for the first time about marrying Logan Killicks?

## Section 4 Their Eyes Were Watching God – Unit 5 The Flood and Janie's Strength: Reading Fluency Texts

**The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood by Irving Finkel – review**

**The story of the ark, and animals 'two by two', is so much older than the Bible: why was the myth appropriated?**

**Tom Holland**

As Scott Franklin, producer of the forthcoming Russell Crowe epic Noah, has correctly pointed out, the story of the flood "is a very short section of the Bible with a lot of gaps". Unsurprisingly then, people have always been keen to fill them in. The rabbis laid claim to secret information that Noah had been kept so busy feeding the animals in his care that he didn't get to bed for a year. Bishop Ussher, in the 17th century, calculated that the flood had taken place in 2349 BC. Expeditions continue to be made to the slopes of Mount Ararat, in a perennially optimistic quest for the Ark's remains. Even Hollywood producers like to insist that their elaborations of Genesis are true to the original narrative. "We didn't really deviate from the Bible," Franklin has boasted, "despite the six-armed angels."

But was the story of the flood original to the Bible at all? We know that it was not. This first became apparent a century and a half ago, in a room above the secretary's office in the British Museum. It was there in 1872 that George Smith, a self-taught Assyriologist working among the thousands of ancient clay tablets brought back to Bloomsbury from Iraq, made a sensational discovery: a version of the flood story written in cuneiform. So overwhelmed was he by the implications of his find that he immediately leapt to his feet, ran around the room, and started taking off his clothes. His excitement, to the Christian elite of Victorian Britain, appeared only mildly overstated. When Smith presented his discovery at a public meeting shortly afterwards, both Gladstone, then prime minister, and the Archbishop of Canterbury were in the audience. Everybody listening to him understood that a thrilling – and, to the devout, faintly alarming – vista of research had been opened up. "I believe," as Gladstone observed with studied ambivalence, "we shall be permitted to know a great deal more than our forefathers in respect of the early history of mankind."

And so it has proved. Over the years, cuneiform flood tablets have continued to turn up. Three distinct Mesopotamian incarnations of the myth have now been identified, one recorded in Sumerian and two in Akkadian. It has become clear that the tale of a universal flood was widespread in Mesopotamia for an entire millennium and a half before the hapless Judaeans, defeated in the early 6th century BC by Nebuchadnezzar, were dragged away from their smoking cities into exile, there to weep beside the rivers of Babylon. Now, courtesy of Irving Finkel, the British Museum's eminence grise of cuneiform studies, there comes a further clinching piece of evidence: a tablet that actually describes animals entering an ark "two by two". Not only that, but it offers startlingly precise specifications on how best to construct one. An ark, so the tablet instructs us, should properly be circular in shape, have an area of 3,600 metres, and be fashioned out of plant fibre. All those living in the Somerset Levels may wish to take note.

Although, disappointingly, spontaneous stripteases do not seem to have been a feature of his own find, Finkel's account of how he came by the tablet – featuring as it does an enigmatic collector who once starred as Doughnut in the 1970s children's show Here Come the Double Deckers – is wryly and entertainingly told.

Even so, it does not take him long to broaden out his focus. The tablet, for much of the book, in effect plays the role of a MacGuffin. Finkel's real passion is less the story of the flood than the script in which it is written. "Cuneiform!" he declaims rhapsodically. "The world's oldest and hardest writing, older by far than any alphabet, written by long-dead Sumerians and Babylonians over more than 3,000 years, and as extinct by the time of the Romans as any dinosaur. What a challenge! What an adventure!"

Finkel's excitement is entirely understandable. As his own and Smith's examples both demonstrate, the ability to decipher cuneiform is one that gives to those rare few possessed of it a heady privilege: the prospect of making remarkable discoveries in texts that have been unread for millennia. Such is Finkel's desperation to convey to those unversed in Sumerian or Akkadian just how thrilling this can be that he reaches for metaphor after metaphor. An undeciphered clay-tablet is described by him as variously a potato waiting to be harvested, a sponge to be squeezed as tightly as possible and a bombshell that might go off at any minute. The great achievement of his book is to demonstrate not only how challenging he found it as a young man to master

cuneiform, but how richly rewarding the effort of his discipleship has been ever since. "I would go so far," he declares at one point, "to recommend Assyriology enthusiastically as a way of life". So might a rabbi enthuse about the Talmud.

Small wonder, then, that Finkel should confess to a strong sense of fellow-feeling with the ancient scribes whose tablets he has devoted his life to reading. Cuneiform, so he poetically declares, is "a magic bridge to a long-dead world populated by recognisable fellow humans". But it is hard not to wonder whether perhaps Finkel might be pushing the claims of kinship a bit far. "And those ancient peoples," he writes of the Babylonians, "writing their tablets, looking at their world, crawling between heaven and earth … like us." Well – up to a point. It is certainly the case, as Finkel points out, that Babylon was a metropolis with high-rises, bankers and immigrants; but it was at the same time very different from London or New York. Kingship was its heartbeat; fish-garbed priests played out cultic rituals in its streets; its scholars laid claim to a heritage that reached back to the first fashioning of the world out of mud. Above all, it was a city whose people consciously aimed to set the rest of mankind in their shadow. "They shall eat up your harvest and your food," as the prophet Jeremiah despairingly expresssed it. "They shall eat up your sons and your daughters; they shall eat up your flocks and your herds; they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; your fortified cities in which you trust they shall destroy with the sword."

No one transported to a city such as Babylon could possibly fail to feel provincial. This, surely, is the context that best explains the biblical appropriation of the Mesopotamian flood myth. Finkel, following the Book of Daniel, has various Judaean exiles being taught cuneiform after induction into a "three-year teaching programme" – which, while perfectly plausible, hardly gets to grips with the likely dynamics of the transmission. The Judaeans were not graduate students in some Ivy League college, but the bewildered and embittered victims of superpower aggression.

By plundering the heritage of Babylon, they were at once paying homage to its cultural prestige, and annexing it to their own ends. Just as Christians and Muslims would subsequently transform the biblical figure of Noah into a prefiguring of their own respective theodicies, so the Judaeans transformed the myths of their Babylonian overlords into something that would end up as Jewish. In Mesopotamia, where it was the custom to erect buildings over the remains of levelled ruins, the ancient past literally provided the foundations of new temples. In a similar manner, its legends were made to serve the self-mythologisation of the Jews. Some details of the flood tablet discovered by Finkel – the animals going in two by two, for instance – were cannibalised; others – the specifications of the ark's measurements, and the detail that the great ship had been round – were not. This, for me, is the real fascination of his find: the light it sheds on how a despised and defeated people won a victory over their conquerors so remarkable that it now gets to be commemorated by Russell Crowe.

## Structured Discussion

What texts can you recall have used a flood as part of its narrative?

How has the symbolism of the flood been used in Hurston’s novel? How is it similar to or different from other texts?

## Sample assessments

Example of low stakes quiz

*Circle the correct answer*

| Question | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| A metaphor is….? | A direct comparison which is not literally correct | A comparison using "like" or "as". | A four- line poem. |
| A bildungsroman is…? | A type of novel which describes the journey of a country over time. | A novel about Ancient Rome. | A type of novel which describes the journey of a character's life over time. |
| Foreshadowing is…? | When the author repeats a metaphor for effect in the same paragraph. | When the author prepares the reader for future events. | When the author ends the text with a symbol. |
| A volta is…? | The moment at the end of the chapter. | The half way point of a poem. | A dramatic change in thought and/or emotion. |
| An example of plosive alliteration is.? | She sold sea shells. | Billy barked at Bill. | Carl crushed his car. |
| An example of the fricative is…? | Fred threw the frisbee. | Facts are just that! | "Fly off now!" |
| Symbolism is…? | When the author describes the weather. | The use of pictures in settings. | The use of things to represent ideas. |
| An extended metaphor is…? | When the metaphor is developed over time. | When the metaphor becomes a simile. | When the metaphor compares two things. |
| A cyclical narrative is…? | When the author uses bikes as metaphors. | When the character goes on a physical journey. | When the novel ends where it begins. |
| A frame narrative is…? | When one character tells the story. | When a story is told and a further story is told within it, | When the beginning, middle and end are told to the reader at the start. |
| Personification is…? | When something is given human qualities. | When a human is given animal qualities. | When a human is given qualities of the natural world. |
| Pathetic fallacy is…? | When an author describes something badly. | When an author uses the setting to mirror feelings. | When the author is intentionally misleading or wrong. |
| Euphony is...? | A term used to describe harsh sounding, aggressive words. | A term used to describe Hell. | A term used to describe soft sounding words. |
| Dissonance is…? | A term used to describe soft sounding words. | A term used to describe Heaven. | A term used to describe harsh sounding, aggressive words. |
| Dialogue is…? | What the characters say to one another. | The description of what the characters say to one another. | How the characters say their words. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dialect is…? | The way everyone speaks. | The way all people in America speak. | The way certain groups speak. |

| Question | Task | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | So the beginning of this was a woman and she had come back from burying the dead.<br><br>Not the dead of sick and ailing with friends at the pillow and the feet. She had come back from the sodden and the bloated; the sudden dead, their eyes flung wide open in judgment.<br><br>The people all saw her come because it was sundown. The sun was gone, but he had left his footprints in the sky. It was the time for sitting on porches beside the road. It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless conveniences all day long.<br><br>Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so the skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths. They sat in judgment. Seeing the woman as she was made them remember the envy they had stored up from other times.<br><br>So they chewed up the back parts of their minds and swallowed with relish. They made burning statements with questions, and killing tools out of laughs. It was mass cruelty. A mood come alive.<br><br>Words walking without masters; walking altogether like harmony in a song.<br>"What she doin' coming back here in dem overhalls?<br>Can't she find no dress to put on?—Where's dat blue satin dress she left here in?—Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her?—What dat ole forty year ole 'oman doin' wid her hair swingin' down her back lak some young gal?—Where she left dat young lad of a boy she went off here wid?—Thought she was going to marry?—Where he left her?—What he done wid all her money?—Betcha he off wid some gal so young she ain't even got no hairs—why she don't stay in her class?—"<br><br>Answer the following questions about the extract:<br>a) Which phrase describes the victims of the flooding?<br>b) Which emotion do those on the porch feel toward Janie?<br>c) The book ends in the same place as it starts. What is this technique called? | 3 marks |
| 2 | Write down **three epithets** to correctly describe Janie | 1 mark |
| 3 | How does Jody Starks control Janie in their relationship?<br><br>a) Write a thesis statement which addresses this question.<br>b) Give two examples from your knowledge of the text to support your answer. | 3 marks |
| 4 | Use tenor and vehicle to analyse the following metaphor which is taken from the extract above:<br><br>They passed nations through their mouths. | 4 marks |
| 5 | Give definitions for the following terms:<br>a) Bildungsroman<br>b) Dialect | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | c) Dialogue<br>d) Frame narrative<br>e) Mirror Stage<br>f) Cyclical Structure<br>g) Pathetic fallacy<br>h) Foreshadowing<br>i) Simile<br>j) Personification | 1 mark each up to 10 marks |
| 6 | Suggest two epithets of the speaker in "The Laboratory" by Robert Browning | 2 marks |
| 7 | Write the correct definition for each of the words below:<br>a. What does colourism mean?<br>b. What does prejudice mean?<br>c. What does the male gaze mean? | 6 marks |
| 8. | Which myth does Hurston use towards the end of her novel? | 1 mark |
| 9 | Write a paragraph explaining how the title of the book creates meaning, include the context of when it is used in the novel.<br><br>Make sure you use<br>- Reference to tenor<br>- Reference to vehicle<br>- Reference to ground<br>- What you believe the moment in the book to be about<br>- What you believe the book to be about in reference to its title | 10 marks |

Total: _____ out of 40 marks

## Appendix

Rebecca S. Wheeler (ed.),
The Workings of Language
Westport CT: Praeger, 1999.

3

### African American Vernacular English Is Not Standard English with Mistakes

*Geoffrey K. Pullum*

It is unusual for a policy announcement at a city school-board meeting to trigger a worldwide media frenzy, but one California school-board meeting in December 1996 did exactly that. Within days of the announcement, school-board members could not leave their homes without being besieged by journalists. They were vilified, ridiculed, and attacked in newspapers and magazines around the entire world. What had happened?

The board had issued a statement to the effect that it was changing its educational policies with regard to one aspect of the local linguistic situation. They would pay more serious attention to the language spoken at home by most of the district's school students. Its status would be recognized, teachers would be trained to look at it objectively and appreciate its merits, and it would be used in the classroom as appropriate. This much was reported by the *New York Times* quite accurately and fairly. Yet opinion writers proceeded to fall upon the topic like starving dogs attacking a bone. They ridiculed, they sneered, they frothed, they flamed, they raged, they lived off the story for weeks. The talk-radio switchboards lit up, and intemperate opinions flared. What was going on?

The answer lies in the fact that the language being recognized by the school board was not Spanish or Polish or Russian or any such relatively uncontroversial language. The city was Oakland, a poor city on the east side of San Francisco Bay where half the population is African American, and the language was the one that linguists usually call African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

What makes AAVE so dramatically different as a political issue from, say, Spanish (also spoken in Oakland, by up to a quarter of the population) is its close relation to another language of much higher prestige. Most



speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is just a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, or worse than that, an unimportant and mostly abusive repertoire of street slang used by an ignorant urban underclass. An editorial in the *New York Times* a few days after the first news report said that the Oakland school board had "declared that black slang is a distinct language."

Let me begin by getting that myth out of the way. The *Times*'s statement about slang was completely untrue, and the writers should be ashamed of themselves. So should all the newspapers and magazines that followed them. The governing board of the Oakland Unified School District never mentioned slang and never intended to imply anything approving about it.

We call an expression slang when it represents a vivid, colloquial word or phrase associated with some subculture and not yet incorporated as part of the mainstream language. No subculture's slang could constitute a separate language. The mistake is like confusing a sprinkle of hot sauce with a dinner. Slang is by definition parasitic on some larger and more encompassing host language. It has no grammar of its own; it is a small array of words and phrases used under the aegis of some ordinary language and in accordance with its grammar. The majority of slang words and phrases are in the language already and are merely assigned new slang meanings by some subpopulation.

The Oakland school board was not endorsing the nonsensical idea that black slang should be recognized as a new language. The statement it released may have been wordy, diffuse, and filled with bad bureaucratese and pompous-sounding references to "African Language Systems," but the intent was clear enough: the board wanted to acknowledge that AAVE was distinct in certain respects from Standard English, and it proposed to be responsive to the educational implications.

Buried among the jargon of the announcement was a mention of a name for AAVE, suggested by a Black scholar in 1975 but never adopted by linguists: Ebonics. That word, concocted from *ebony* (a color term from the name of a dark-colored wood) and *phonics* (the name of a method for teaching reading), was destined to attach to the board as if chiseled into a block of granite and hung round their necks. They would never hear the end of it.

One problem with the name was that it lent itself irresistibly to stupid puns and jokes. The *Economist* picked it up and printed a brief story headed "The Ebonics virus," a tasteless reference to the then-recent outbreak of the horrible Ebola fever in Zaire (the subliminal link: nasty things out of Africa). People rapidly invented other *-onics* words to mock the idea of letting African Americans have their own claim to a language. Would Jewish people propose that their way of speaking English should be designated Hebonics? Could stupid people complain that they were vic-

tims of their native language, Moronics? Cartoonists seemed to find such possibilities endlessly amusing, and the jokes kept coming for more than a year.

But I will not be primarily concerned here with analysis of the politics and the rhetoric that the "Ebonics" story provoked. I will be concerned with AAVE itself, the everyday speech of millions of people in largely segregated African American districts. The majority of English speakers think that AAVE is just English with two added factors: some special slang terms and a lot of grammatical mistakes. They are simply wrong about this.

## LANGUAGES, DIALECTS, AND RULES

Let me begin by pointing out that there is obviously a difference between being an incorrect utterance of one language and being a correct utterance in another (perhaps only slightly different). This is obvious when the two languages are thoroughly different, like English and French. When a French speaker refers to the capital of the United Kingdom as *Londres*, it isn't a mistake; that's the correct French name for London. But the same is true when we are talking about two very closely related languages. There is a strong temptation, especially when one of the two has higher prestige, to take one to be the correct way to speak and the other to be incorrect. But it is not necessarily so.

I will consider a fairly subtle example involving a grammatical difference between two varieties of Standard English. Some speakers, but not all, use the word *whom* instead of *who* in some contexts. Those who do use *whom* always use it after a preposition ("a man in *whom* I have complete confidence") and may use it after a verb ("And after that you visited *whom*?"), and they may use it at the beginning of a sentence (though "*Whom* did you visit?" sounds rather stiff, and many would avoid it). But most people, even expert writers of English, will confess to scratching their heads a little about the following two cases:

(1) We are talking about a man who everyone seems to think will one day be king.

(2) We are talking about a man whom everyone seems to think will one day be king.

Which version is right? Dimly we may remember something from the grammar books about using *who* for subjects and *whom* for nonsubjects. Can't we just apply that? No, we can't. The rule "use *who* for subjects and *whom* for nonsubjects" is insufficiently explicit. These examples involve a relative clause that begins after the word *man*. The next word (*who* or *whom*) introduces the relative clause (*everyone seems to think* __ *will one day be king*). There are two things that "subject" might mean here: "subject of its clause," that is, subject of the clause that it logically belongs to, or "subject of the relative clause." The word *who* is logically the subject in a clause that has *will one day be king* as its predicate; if that allows it to count as a subject, then version (1) is correct. But the subject of the whole relative clause is not *who* but rather *everyone*. The word *who* is not the logical subject of that, but just of a piece of it. If that's what we mean by being a subject, then we should pick sentence (2).



Where do we turn to decide this point? We look in good manuals of English usage. And we immediately find something very interesting: there are clear examples of both types in literary works by the best authors. The *who* group—those whose writing suggests that they would plump for (1)—includes Arnold Bennett, Charles Dickens, Henry Fielding, and William Safire (the *New York Times*'s language pundit). Good company. But the *whom* group, whose usage shows they would select (2), includes early writers like William Caxton and Izaak Walton, famous novelists like Charles Kingsley and Rudyard Kipling, romantic poets like John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and at least some *New York Times* and *Publishers Weekly* writers, together with Charles Darwin and William Shakespeare. That, too, is a dream team.

What is going on? The answer is that there are two different rules involved. Some writers follow one, while others follow the other. The members of the *who* group tacitly assume that *who* has to be the subject of its clause; the members of the *whom* group tacitly assume that *who* has to be the subject of the relative clause.

What we have discovered is a division between two *syntactic dialects*—two sectors of the speech community that have very slightly different grammars. By assuming that speakers fall into these two dialect groups, you can explain both the consistencies of practice and the disagreements that occur. The disagreements do not become evident very often: only on the rare occasions when *who* occurs as the understood subject of a clause contained in a relative clause without being the subject of the relative clause as a whole.

It is crucially important to notice that people do not just flounder, as if they did not know *who* from *whom* any more. To describe either the *who* group or the *whom* group as people who are ignorant of the grammar of the language in which they are writing would be absurd. More specifically, it would predict quite falsely that you will find them blundering into sentences like the following (the asterisk prefix means that the string is not a sentence):

(3) a. *Whom wants to come and play tennis?
b. *I'm the one whom loves you.

(4) a. *He is a man for who I have the highest regard.
b. *To who do you refer?

Nobody writes things like this. So it is not true that "anything goes" regarding the use of *who* and *whom*. There are rules. But it is also not true that there is a single correct rule governing everything about *who* and *whom* and some people have failed to learn it. That does not predict the facts correctly. There is a better theory, and it is set out informally in (5):

(5) a. All English speakers use *who* when it is in subject position in a simple clause.
b. Those speakers who use *whom* can always use it as the direct object of a transitive verb and as the object of a preposition.
c. For *who* at the beginning of a relative clause there are two different rules, defining two bona fide syntactic dialects of the English language. They are the following:
(i) Use *whom* when it is the subject of the clause in which it logically belongs.
(ii) Use *who* when it is the subject of the relative clause.

Rules (i) and (ii) both agree that you should use *who* in "anyone who wants to leave" because there it is both the subject of its own clause and the subject of the relative clause (which are one and the same). But on other sentences the two rules decide things differently. The *who* group (Dickens, Safire, and company) assume (i) and thus regard example (1) as correct; the *whom* group (Shakespeare, Darwin, and company) assume rule (ii) and thus favor example (2). What this shows is that even within Standard English there is a difference between making mistakes and speaking a different variety correctly—a difference between marching out of time and marching to the beat of a different drum.

With these preliminaries out of the way, I now turn to AAVE, which turns out to be the most interestingly divergent dialect of modern English.

## THE AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR DIALECT OF ENGLISH

The Oakland school board suggested that AAVE had its own rules and structure. Opinionmongers displayed anger and contempt at this. They mocked, lampooned, and attacked the very idea. But a large amount of the ink they splattered was wasted on a pointless side issue: whether AAVE was really "a separate language" from English or whether it was "just a dialect." The Oakland school board made the mistake of insisting explicitly that it was a separate language. That is another red herring (like the slang issue).



Dialects and languages are in fact the same kinds of thing. "Dialect" does not mean a marginal, archaic, rustic, or degraded mode of speech. Linguists never say things like "That is just a dialect, not a language." Rather, they refer to one language as *a dialect of* another. The claim that Tosk is a dialect of Albanian is a classificatory claim, like saying that the white-tailed deer is a kind of deer. It is not some kind of put-down of Tosk speakers.

Of course, in practice, political considerations do tend to enter decisions about when one language should be called a dialect of another. Albania is currently one country, and Tosk and Gheg are treated as dialects of one Albanian language (even though it is hard to understand one if you only know the other); but in the wrecked ex-country of Yugoslavia, the language people used to call Serbo-Croat began during the 1990s to be deliberately split up into three separate languages, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, because the speakers had fallen out politically. No one would have said before that there were three languages here, even though the Croatian Yugoslavs talked a bit differently from the Serbian and Bosnian Yugoslavs. There was assumed to be one Serbo-Croat language (there is a book called *Teach Yourself Serbo-Croat*). This single language would have been described as having several different dialects—regional or ethnic variants of the same basic linguistic system. But once Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia separated, the differences among the three trivially differing languages had to be emphasized and accentuated. The Serbs, stressing their Eastern Orthodox religious roots, revived Old Church Slavonic words and mandated use of the Cyrillic (Russian) alphabet; the Croats stressed their Catholic roots, borrowed more words from Latin, and stuck with the Roman alphabet; and the Bosnian Muslims borrowed words from Turkish to emphasize their connections with the Islamic world. Linguistic boundary lines began to emerge to reinforce the ethnic boundary lines.

Reference works on the languages of the world take different views of how many linguistic boundaries to recognize. Reasonable scholars can differ on how coarse grained or fine grained a classification is appropriate (and on how much politics should be taken into account). So it is important that in classifying AAVE there is no dispute. For example, I keep near my desk two reference books on the languages of the world: Grimes's *Ethnologue* and the Voegelins' *Classification and Index of the World's Languages*. The *Ethnologue* recognizes more than fifteen separate Romance languages in Italy, while *Classification and Index* recognizes just three (Italian, Friulian, and Ladin). But both list AAVE as a dialect of English.

This is undoubtedly the right classification. Virtually all the words used in AAVE can be clearly identified in Standard English too, and most of AAVE grammar is the same as that of Standard English. The bits that are not are mostly paralleled in certain other dialects of English that are never

mistaken for other languages. As linguist John McWhorter has pointed out, there certainly are examples, in some parts of the world, of African languages that have kept their African syntax and simply replaced the words of the dictionary by English words (they are known as creole languages), and AAVE just is not like that.

This is not an insulting or demeaning thing to say about AAVE. It merely places it in a linguistic classification that unites the language of Shakespeare and the language of the Oakland ghetto very closely compared to languages in other families or in other parts of the Germanic family. It is no more insulting to call AAVE a variety (or dialect) of English than it is to say that African Americans are U.S. citizens.

It was not merely a matter of an incorrect classificatory claim when the Oakland school board made its wordy statements about how the district's black students used "African Language Systems" that did not constitute a dialect of English. It was also a major tactical error. It deflected virtually all the discussion into negative channels: journalists vied with each other to insist that AAVE should not be recognized as a language. What got lost was a much more sensible and reasonable point: AAVE as a dialect of English still deserves respect and acceptance. It has a degree of regularity and stability attributable to a set of rules of grammar and pronunciation, as with any language. It differs strikingly from Standard English, but there is no more reason for calling it bad Standard English than there is for dismissing Minnesota English as bad Virginia speech, or the reverse. Journalists did not get this; nearly everything they wrote about the purported errors that characterize AAVE was factually incorrect. It is worth devoting a little time to close analysis of some examples that demonstrate this.

## MYTHS ABOUT *BE*

There is a technical term for the auxiliary verb that takes the forms *be, been, being, am, are, is, was,* and *were*. It is called the *copula*. The most popular myth about AAVE is that it involves misuse of the copula: that it is carelessly omitted or is used in incorrect forms like *be* out of ignorance. Let me try to untangle the jumble of falsehoods that are commonly bruited about.

The AAVE copula can be omitted, but there are strict rules—surprisingly detailed and specific ones—about how and where. In the following summary, AAVE examples are italicized and translations into Standard English are in double quotation marks.

(i) If the copula bears accent (stress) for any reason, it is not omitted.
Example: the copula is obligatory in *There already is one!* with emphasized *is*.



(ii) As a special case of (i), auxiliary verbs at the end of a phrase are always accented, and so the copula is always retained at the end of a phrase.
Example: the copula is obligatory in *Couldn't nobody say what color he is* (which means "Nobody could say what color he is").

(iii) Perhaps as another special case of (i), there is a special *remote present perfect tense*, completely lacking in Standard English (in fact, few Standard English speakers are aware of its presence in AAVE), expressed with an accented form of the word *been*, represented here in small capitals, and this is not omitted.
Example: *She* BEEN married means "She is married and has been for some considerable time," and the BEEN is not omissible.

(iv) If the copula is negated, it is not omitted (the form *ain't* is never dropped).
Example: The copula is obligatory in *You ain't goin' to no heaven* ("You aren't going to any heaven") or in *I ain't no fool* ("I am not a fool").

(v) The copula is not omitted when it is infinitival and has the base form *be*.
Example: The copula is obligatory in *You got to be strong* or in an imperative like *Be careful*.

(vi) Perhaps as a special case of (v), the *be* that expresses *habitual aspect* is not omitted.
Example: *He be singin'* means "He usually or habitually sings" (not "He is singing"), and the *be* is obligatory.

(vii) The copula is not omitted when it is in the past tense (*was* or *were*).
Example: The copula is obligatory in *I was cool*.

(viii) The present-tense copula is not omitted when it is first-person singular (*am*).
Example: The copula is obligatory in *I'm all right*.

(ix) The present-tense copula is not omitted when it begins a clause.
Example: The copula is obligatory in an interrogative like *Is that you?*

(x) As a special case of (ix), when the copula occurs in a confirmatory tag on the end of a sentence, it is not omitted (because such tags have the grammar of elliptical interrogative clauses).
Example: the copula of the tag is obligatory in *I don't think you ready, are you?*

ıly when none of these conditions obtains—when the copula is present ıse, not first person, not accented, not negative, and not expressing the bitual or the remote present perfect—can it be omitted in AAVE speech. Most of this can be easily confirmed from the smattering of AAVE one ı pick up from popular culture—snatches of AAVE dialogue in movies, rican American popular songs, and so on. Almost every American knows ıt the Standard English greeting *How are you doing?* can be reduced

to *How you doin'?* in AAVE, but the AAVE greeting *What it is?* is never given in the form **What it?*; they know that in the line *I ain't lyin'* (in "I Put a Spell on You") you cannot leave out the *ain't*; that Otis Redding sings *I was born by a river* (in "It's Been a Long Time Coming"), and it could not be reduced to **I born by a river*; that song lines like *I'm your puppet* and *I'm a hog for you, baby* couldn't be reduced to **I your puppet* or **I a hog for you, baby*; and so on. So any general claim that AAVE speakers leave out the copula is clearly false.

Few English speakers are aware that Russian, Hungarian, Arabic, Swahili, and many other languages have rules for omitting the copula, under conditions that are of a quite similar sort though differing in details. In Arabic, for example, the copula may be omitted in the nonemphatic affirmative present tense. In Hungarian the copula *must* be omitted in the affirmative third-person-singular present tense (i.e., there is no such thing as an affirmative third-person present-tense copula form). In Russian the copula is optionally omitted in the nonemphatic affirmative present indicative when it is not expressing existence (as in *There is a god*).

Some languages, for example, Standard French, differ very clearly in that they always have a pronounced form of the copula in relevant sentence types and show no superficially verbless sentences. Standard English is a little closer to AAVE than to Standard French: it does not entirely omit the copula, but almost omits it, reducing it to a single consonant when unstressed and in the affirmative present tense (*I'm certainly interested, You're so kind, He's my brother,* and so on, but not **I certainly'm,* where *am* needs to be accented, or **He'sn't my brother,* where *is* has been negated). This is a pattern also seen in, for example, Turkish (an entirely unrelated language). These reductions are not random carelessness; they are the results of rules, and so is the omission of the copula in AAVE.

Notice that in many languages another part of the sentence is regularly omitted: languages like Russian, Swahili, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese omit nonemphatic subject pronouns nearly all the time when the context permits the meaning to be identified without difficulty. *Te amo* in Spanish means "I love you" despite the nonoccurrence of the word for *I*. (There is such a word—it is pronounced *yo*—but it is only used emphatically.) But AAVE does not permit omission of the subject pronoun. Even in the most careful Spanish you can say *¿Dónde estás?* for "Where are you?" (omitting the word for "you") or *Llegará esta noche* for "She will arrive tonight" (omitting the word for "she"), but you cannot say **Where are?* or **Will arrive tonight* in AAVE. Subject pronouns are never omitted except in imperatives and in very casual telegraphic usages that other dialects share (we can say *'S a mystery to me* instead of *It's a mystery to me* in very informal speech, or write *Will write more soon* to save words in a telegram or on a postcard). AAVE has a grammar that determines such things, just as Standard English does, and the grammar of the



two dialects agree on this point: subjects are obligatory in nearly all sentence types. AAVE speakers do not carelessly leave out subjects any more than Standard English speakers do.

## NEGATIVE CONCORD: DON'T WANT NO DOUBLE NEGATION

AAVE critics talk about something called "double negation" and treat it as an illogicality. The critics generally do not know what they are talking about. AAVE negates the same way other languages do: *You ain't ugly* is true if and only if *You ugly* is false, and conversely. What does differentiate AAVE from Standard English is that negation can be multiply marked: Standard English *I am not an ugly fellow* translates into AAVE as *I ain't no ugly dude*; Standard English *I haven't ever seen anything like it* corresponds to AAVE *I ain't never seen nothin' like it*; standard English *He did not see anything* is AAVE *He di'n't see nothin'*. The critics' claim about this is that logic tells us that two negatives make a positive: if he did *not* see *nothing*, that means he *did* see *something*, and it is illogical to use that form of words to mean the opposite.

I will make only a brief detour into logic (it is a technical business, and there is much more that could be said). It is certainly true that in formal logical languages such as the propositional calculus, under classical interpretations of negation, two negatives are equivalent to an affirmative (what a logician writes as $\sim \sim P$ means "it is *not* so that it is *not* so that *P*," where *P* is any statement you like; and it is equivalent to saying *P*). But there is little similarity between this mechanical logical system and the grammar of any natural language. Under the classical interpretation, any even number of consecutive negations is equivalent to none, and any odd number is equivalent to one. So three negatives are equivalent to a single negative in logic, which means that the critics have some explaining to do: what is supposed to be objectionable about *I ain't never seen nothin' like it*? It has three negative words (*ain't, never, nothin'*) and a negative meaning, and that ought to be fine if all that is important is for negative sentences to have an odd number of negative words.

The truth is that many of the people who grumble about AAVE being illogical do not know enough logic even to explain what they mean by their critique. They stress something completely irrelevant (the way inference is formalized in the invented languages of logic) while missing major complications concerning the interaction of negation with quantifiers (a topic that is beyond the scope of this chapter) and failing to see the crucially relevant fact about natural languages: that the grammar of negation is not the same in all languages.

Negation in Standard English, German, or Arabic is different from negation in, for example, Spanish or Russian or Italian. In Standard Italian, the way to say "Nobody telephoned" is *Non ha telefonato nessuno*, literally

"not has telephoned no one." The *non* at the beginning and the additional negativity of *nessuno* 'no one' are both required. Italian demands that a sentence like this be negated in a particular way that demands both a *non* and a *nessuno*.

To be slightly more precise about this, in those positions where indefinite words (words like *anybody*) would appear in a standard English negative clause, Italian requires their negative counterparts (words with meanings like *nobody*). This is a rule of the grammar, usually known to linguists as *negative concord*. Negative-concord languages *require* use of negative words instead of indefinite words. This is not an error; it is a demand of the grammar, rather like an agreement rule.

AAVE turns out to be like Italian with regard to negative concord, not like Standard English. The AAVE sentence *Ain't nobody called* shows exactly the same negative concord as the Italian *Non ha telefonato nessuno*: the negative element *ain't* requires that *nobody* be chosen just as the negative element *non* requires that *nessuno* be chosen. Neither AAVE nor Italian is illogical; it is just that their grammatical rules for expression of indefinites in negated clauses differ from the rules for Standard English.

AAVE is not alone as a dialect of English with negative concord. Cockney (a working-class dialect spoken in the East End of London, England) and numerous other working-class dialects in England (and America) also have it. For example, you can hear Pink Floyd sing "We don't need no education; we don't need no thought control" on their album *The Wall*; they are a white British band, and they are singing in working-class British English, not AAVE.

It is merely an accident that the negative-concord dialects of English today have a low-prestige class background. In Italy nothing of the sort is the case: people of noble birth and newspapers of the highest quality use negative concord. Pope John Paul II uses negative concord when he speaks in Italian. (Actually, he uses it when he speaks Polish, too, because Polish is like AAVE and Spanish and Italian, not like English and German and Arabic.)

## NEGATIVE INVERSION

Another key feature of AAVE (not shared by Cockney or other dialects) involves repositioning a negative auxiliary verb at the beginning of the sentence when the subject is indefinite. Thus we find *Ain't nobody gonna find out*, meaning "Nobody is going to find out."

In the Standard English version, negation is expressed purely on the subject. If you want to make a sentence that is true just in those circumstances where "Somebody is going to find out" is false, you simply replace *somebody* by *nobody*, and you get "Nobody is going to find out." In AAVE the clause has to be marked as negative by its auxiliary verb, so you use *ain't*,



and in addition (remember, AAVE is a negative-concord language), all words like *somebody* must be replaced by negative forms like *nobody* throughout the clause. Complying with these demands would yield *Nobody ain't gonna find out*. But that is not necessarily the most acceptable way of saying things; it is quite common for AAVE speakers to switch the order of the subject (*nobody*) and the auxiliary verb (*ain't*), yielding *Ain't nobody gonna find out*. In Standard English the auxiliary occurs before the subject in interrogatives (*Isn't anyone going to find out?*), but not in declaratives (except where, in rather formal style, a negative adverb occurs at the beginning of the sentence: *Never have I seen such a thing*). The AAVE *Ain't nobody gonna find out* is a declarative sentence (used for making a statement), not an interrogative sentence (used for asking a question), yet it has the auxiliary as the first word. This is another example of a syntactic difference between AAVE and Standard English.

There is a complication to this. Negative inversion in AAVE is not found with every type of subject noun phrase. For example, when the subject is a simple name like *Mary*, it is impossible, or at least extremely unlikely. We do not hear **Ain't Mary gonna find out*. Similarly, when the subject has the definite article *the* or a possessive article like *your*, we do not get negative inversion: **Ain't the teacher gonna find out*; **Ain't your mother gonna find out*.

So there is more to be said about the various conditions that encourage or discourage the use of negative inversion in particular sentences, but my point has been illustrated enough: negative inversion is a construction type that the standard dialect does not have. Again AAVE shows that it has certain regular syntactic principles of its own.

## DROPPING CONSONANTS RIGHT AND LEF'

AAVE also has special principles of pronunciation. One fairly clear one concerns consonant clusters at the ends of words. AAVE speakers say *res'* or 'rest', *lef'* for 'left', *respec'* for 'respect', *han'* for 'hand', and so on. A superficial glance might suggest that they leave consonants off the ends of words. But it is not that simple.

We will need a small amount of phonetic terminology at this point. The *stop consonants* of English are the ones normally represented by the letters *t, k, b, d*, and *g*, as found on the ends of the words *up, out, oak, rob, od*, and *log*. The *voiceless* consonants, quieter because they are pronounced with no vibration of the vocal cords, are the sounds for which *p*, and *k* are normally used. The other voiceless sounds in English include the ones heard at the ends of the words *off, miss*, and *fish*, which are called *icatives*. The *voiced stops*, which are produced with vocal-cord vibration, e *b, d*, and *g*. (Some consonant letters get doubled in English spellings, it this is not relevant to the pronunciation.) Other voiced sounds in Eng-

lish include the consonants heard at the ends of the words *of*, *Oz*, *ridge*, and *fill*. (Standard English also has *interdental* fricatives like those in the words *breath* and *breathe*, but these are replaced by stops in several dialects, of which AAVE is one: *they* is pronounced *dey*.)

With this terminology we can describe some rather intricate restrictions concerning which consonants can be left off and which have to be retained in AAVE. The basic principle involved is the one shown in (6).

(6) A stop consonant at the end of a word may be omitted (and usually is) if it is preceded by another consonant of the same voicing.

Note first that consonants are always pronounced when they follow a vowel. In words like *up*, *out*, *oak*, *rob*, *rod*, and *log*, no AAVE speaker leaves off the final consonant. In words like *dump*, *sink*, and *belt*, again all the consonants are pronounced. The consonants *p*, *t*, and *k* are voiceless stops, but the sounds represented by *m*, *n*, and *l* are voiced, so nothing gets dropped. Similarly, in words like *raps*, *rats*, or *racks*, the *s* is always pronounced, because although it is a consonant of the same voicing as *t*, it is not a stop, so it is retained. In words like *Dobbs*, *Dodds*, or *dogs*, we hear a voiced fricative *z* sound at the end, which is not dropped, because although it has a consonant of the same voicing before it, that consonant is not a stop. We therefore get consonants dropped only in cases like these:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (7) a. | *test*: | voiceless stop *t* dropped after voiceless *s* | *tes'* |
| b. | *desk*: | voiceless stop *k* dropped after voiceless *s* | *des'* |
| c. | *left*: | voiceless stop *t* dropped after voiceless *f* | *lef'* |
| d. | *respect*: | voiceless stop *t* dropped after voiceless *k* (spelled *c*) | *respec'* |
| e. | *stopped*: | voiceless stop *t* (spelled *-ed*) dropped after voiceless *p* | *stop'* |
| f. | *hand*: | voiced stop *d* dropped after voiceless *n* | *han'* |
| g. | *old*: | voiced stop *d* dropped after voiced *l* | *ol'* |

## SOMETHIN' 'BOUT NASALS

One might be tempted by the spelling to think that AAVE also leaves *g* off the end of words like *nothin'*, *somethin'*, and *singin'*, but this is not true either. In Standard English these words end in the *ng* sound of *sing* (phoneticians call this sound the *velar nasal*), but today in many dialects the *-ing* ending is frequently replaced by *-in*, often represented in writing as *-in'*. Nothing has been dropped, despite that apostrophe; rather, one sound has been replaced by another.

Or, at least, nothing has been dropped in recent times. But there is an interesting little historical wrinkle to this. Further back in the history of



English a consonant was in fact dropped from words like *sing*, but the careless culprits were the speakers of what we now flatter with the term "Standard" English. Dialects in the north of England have undergone fewer changes than the standard dialect, and those dialects still have the sound *g* (as in *egg*) on the end of word roots like *sing* and in derivatives of it like *singer*. In other words, *singer* rhymes with *finger* and *linger* in northern England. Some centuries ago the southern England dialects began to lose the *g* sound after a velar nasal at the end of a word root, so now *finger* and *singer* no longer rhyme in southern England. The *g* sound is heard in *finger*, a simple word containing a *g* following a velar nasal, but not in *singer*, a complex word in which the root *sing* ends in a velar nasal and the suffix *-er* follows.

No dialects in southern Britain (or America, which was settled from there) have a *g* after a velar nasal at the end of any word anymore. So it is true that in the speech of Queen Elizabeth II, the *g* sound that used to end *sing* has been lost. But no one calls the queen sloppy or mistaken in her speech. Why? Because there is a double standard here. When Standard Southern British English introduces a simplifying change in the rules of punctuation (like "do not pronounce the *g* sound after a velar nasal except in the middle of a word"), it is respected as the standard way to speak, but when AAVE introduces such a change (like "do not pronounce a stop at the end of a word after another consonant with the same voicing"), it is unfairly regarded as sloppiness.

## DIALECT SWITCHING

At this point I should make it clear that the features of AAVE I have discussed are characteristic of a rather "pure" AAVE, a version only minimally influenced by Standard English. But people are flexible, and even African Americans who have hardly any social contact with whites know an enormous amount of Standard English by the time they are adults. (It is 5-year-olds who have trouble on first confronting Standard English, perhaps in school, where they may take a while to latch onto the new way of speaking.) It is quite typical for speakers of AAVE to be able to switch back and forth between their dialect and one much closer to Standard English. The different features mentioned earlier—copula omission, negative concord, negative inversion, and others that could be cited—are options that can be called upon in one utterance and then not used in the next; a speaker can in effect switch between dialects at high speed.

This phenomenon is well known, of course. If two African Americans are chatting together privately in AAVE behind the counter in a store when a white customer enters and asks a question, the next utterance heard may have a dramatically different grammar from the last as the person who responds switches dialects.

Sometimes speakers may use both more AAVE-like and less AAVE-like ways of phrasing a sentence, for example, using *Nobody likes him* and *Don't nobody like him* interchangeably. But this happens in Standard English too. For example, although it was not mentioned in the discussion of *who* and *whom* earlier, there are writers who use either form of the pronoun in the contexts we considered (examples like *We are talking about a man who[m] everyone seems to think will one day be king*). Fine writers of English like James Boswell (the biographer of dictionary maker Samuel Johnson), Benjamin Franklin, John Galsworthy, and Oliver Goldsmith have all been found to use the when-it's-the-subject-of-its-clause rule or the when-it's-the-subject-of-the-relative-clause rule interchangeably. But they are not making mistakes; they are not blundering about confusing their *who* with their *whom*. We know that, because we know they never write **Whom are you?* or **To who was it addressed?* Languages have many rules and regularities of sentence structure, and speakers select from among the possibilities in ways that are highly complex. But that is a sign of having a sophisticated and flexible grasp of the possibilities in a rule system; it is not a sign of ignorance.

## NOT ALL AFRICAN AMERICANS KNOW AAVE

The grammar of AAVE—negative concord, copula omission, dropping of final consonants, and all the rest of it—has to be learned by anyone who wants to speak AAVE and be accepted linguistically in the AAVE-speaking community. Knowing AAVE does not come free with either knowing American English or having African American ethnicity. This point is beautifully (though unintentionally) illustrated by the mocking column on Ebonics that was published in the *Washington Post* on December 26, 1996, by the distinguished African American columnist Willam Raspberry.

Raspberry's column reported a fictional conversation between an imaginary Washington, D.C., cab driver and an imaginary alter ego of Raspberry himself. The cab driver speaks in AAVE: We get a total of just thirty-two words of Raspberry's made-up AAVE dialog in the piece. But Raspberry has a problem. He just does not know AAVE. The dialog he invents has grammatical errors.

First, he has the imaginary cabbie saying, "What you be talkin' 'bout, my man?" But as we saw earlier, the uninflected *be* of AAVE marks habitual aspect. The context makes clear that the cabbie means "What are you talking about right now?" not "What do you habitually talk about?" So we can be quite sure that the normal AAVE for that would be "What you talkin' 'bout?" with the zero copula (it is present tense, unemphasized, affirmative, and not first-person singular); it would not contain the uninflected *be*. (Strike one!)

The second error is in a highly contrived interchange where the fictional



cabbie, who is eating fish and chips when we come upon him, says "Sup?" meaning "What's up?" and the fictional Raspberry misunderstands this as short for "Do you wish to sup?" and replies that he has already dined (I did say it was contrived). The cabbie protests the misunderstanding and says, "I don't be offerin' you my grub." He clearly means "I am not offering you my food," so this should be *I ain't offerin' you my grub*. Again we need the present progressive, not the habitual. (Note the line from "I Put a Spell on You" mentioned earlier: we get *I ain't lyin'*, not **I don't be lyin'*, because the meaning is "I am not lying right now" rather than "I do not habitually lie.") For a more distinctively AAVE utterance Raspberry could have had the cabbie say "I ain't offerin' you no grub," with the multiple negation marking that is such a distinctive feature of AAVE, but does not occur at all in Raspberry's AAVE dialog. (Strike two!)

The third error Raspberry makes is also in the cabbie's response to the misunderstanding about his monosyllabic greeting. He explains what he meant by saying "Sup?" thus: "I be sayin' hello." He means "I am saying hello to you (right now)," not "I habitually say hello." *I be sayin'* is not the way to express this. (There is an utterance containing *they be sayin'* quoted from the speaker called Larry in William Labov's article "The Logic of Nonstandard English," and it is quite clearly habitual in meaning. But I have not encountered one in which the meaning is progressive.) Here, notice, the copula cannot be omitted: **I sayin' hello* would be ungrammatical, as we noted earlier. So the most likely form we would get for this meaning would be *I'm sayin' hello*. (Strike three!)

With three strikes against him, Raspberry is already out. But there are more errors to report. The fourth comes when the Raspberry alter ego switches into AAVE for the punchline, as he realizes that he could augment his columnist's salary by giving AAVE language lessons if the Ebonics thing catches on. Raspberry should not give up his job at the *Post*, because he does not know AAVE well enough to teach it. He says, "Maybe you be onto somethin' dere, my bruvah." But once more it is the immediate present he is referring to: he does not mean "Maybe you are habitually onto something there," but rather, "Maybe you are onto something there (right now)." The usual way of saying this in AAVE would be *Maybe you onto somethin' dere* (second person, nonemphatic, not negated, present tense, so this is another of the situations where we can get the zero copula).

There are further errors in the things Raspberry has his characters say about AAVE rather than in it. The cabbie cites his brother-in-law as claiming that in order to speak AAVE you have to "leave off final consonants." But from the cabbie's first word, *'Sup*, there isn't a single final consonant missing in any of Raspberry's AAVE dialog. (As noted earlier, words like *somethin'* are not missing a final consonant.) The dropping of consonants described earlier is not illustrated in Raspberry's dialogue at all. His imaginary cabbie's brother-in-law would have us believe that in

general, or at random, the last consonant of an AAVE word is (or may be) dropped. That simply is not true, as I explained earlier.

What does Raspberry's effort at humor teach us? That a Washington columnist can sometimes come up with rather lame stuff around Christmas time. But also this: AAVE should not be thought of as the language of Black people in America. Many African Americans neither speak it nor know much about it, as Raspberry demonstrates. But those who do speak AAVE are not just blundering; they have learned a complex set of rules that happens not to be the same as the complex set of rules that defines Standard English. They know a language that the highly educated Mr. Raspberry has not learned.

## WHAT OAKLAND'S CRITICS MISSED

Facts about the grammar of AAVE like the ones I have reviewed in this chapter have been known to American linguists for decades, largely because of the pioneering work of people like William Labov at the University of Pennsylvania and a significant number of AAVE specialists who originally trained with him like John Rickford of Stanford University. Knowing what they knew, the members of the American linguistics profession were dismayed at the ignorance betrayed by the media commentators' angry and offensive attacks on AAVE and the Oakland school board.

Confusing lexicon with syntax, accent with dialect, difference with deficiency, and grammar with morality, the commentators clarified little except the deep hostility and contempt whites feel for the way Blacks speak (the patois of America's meanest streets, columnist George Will called it, as if AAVE could only be spoken in slums) and the deep shame felt by Americans of African descent for speaking that way (former Black Panther party official Eldridge Cleaver published an article in the *Los Angeles Times* in which he compared acknowledging AAVE with condoning cannibalism). The saddest thing is that in their scramble to find words to evince their fury and contempt at AAVE, columnists both black and white ignored the genuine issues of educational policy that had motivated the Oakland school board.

One persistent confusion was perhaps stimulated by an ambiguity in English. The phrase "instruction in French" can be understood in two ways: it could mean instruction on how to speak French, or it could mean instruction given via the medium of French. The press never figured out the difference between these two. The Oakland board members talked about "imparting instruction to African-American students in their primary language"; but this was discussed in editorials as if the proposal had been to make AAVE a school subject. The school board's statement did not suggest to me that they even considered adding AAVE to the curriculum. The plan was to use AAVE as a medium of instruction, but not to hold classes on



how to speak AAVE. (The whole point, after all, is that no such classes are necessary, since the children arrive speaking it.) In addition, it was explicitly stated that in part this was "to facilitate . . . acquisition and mastery of English Language skills."

Lost from any of the press coverage that I saw was the fact that Oakland faced an issue very similar to the dilemma of Norwegian schools in which children from rural areas arrive speaking rural dialects of Norwegian very different from the standard language of Oslo. The difference is that the Norwegians love their nonstandard dialects and treat them as valued symbols of a traditional Norwegian identity. They have experimented with both total immersion, where the child is plunged into a Standard-Norwegian-only environment from day one, and techniques more reminiscent of bilingual education, where at first the rural dialect is used in the classroom and gradually the children are taught to move toward the standard language for public and official interaction and formal writing. There is some evidence that the latter works better. Teaching children to read first in their own dialects and then gradually introducing the standard language can speed and improve the acquisition of reading skills.

There is good evidence of a similar sort pertaining to African American students in the United States. College students in Chicago who received instruction concerning the contrasts between AAVE and Standard English grammar showed improved Standard English writing skills as compared to a control group. In Oakland itself, nearly twenty-five years before the great furor, it was found that teachers who condemned AAVE pronunciations and interpreted them as reading errors got the worst results in teaching AAVE-speaking children to read, while teachers who used AAVE creatively in the classroom got the best results. These and other results in the education literature suggest that the Oakland school board's policy decision had some clear motivation and scientific support.

But instead of a sympathetic consideration of the strategy they were suggesting and the evidence that supported it, the members of the Oakland school board suffered months of unrelenting ridicule, needling, and abuse from politicians, poets, and pundits in editorials, articles, talk shows, news programs, speeches, and government statements (the U.S. Department of Education pointedly announced that no federal bilingual education funds would be spent on AAVE). It was a sad spectacle.

The horror with which Americans react to the idea of using AAVE in the classroom has something to teach us about the prejudice still targeted on America's Black citizens, whose variety of English is decried as if it were some repellent disease (recall the *Economist* with its jokey headline about the Ebonics virus). Educational conservatives often deny that prejudice is involved, dismissing linguists' objective attitude toward nonstandard dialects as if it were just left-wing propaganda. But it is not. Even conservative linguists acknowledge the facts mentioned earlier. The Linguistic Society of

America's vote on a January 1997 resolution in support of the Oakland school board was actually unanimous.

Linguists will agree, of course, that Standard English has prestige and AAVE does not, and they are not trying to suggest that *Time* and *Newsweek* should start publishing articles in AAVE. They merely note that grammar in and of itself does not establish social distinctions or justify morally tinged condemnation of nonstandard dialects. AAVE has nothing inherently wrong with it as a language; it is only an accident of history that it is not the standard language of the United States. In the United States, the standard language lacks multiple negation marking, but has syllable-final consonant clusters and interdental fricative consonants. In Italy the facts are the reverse: the standard language of that country lacks syllable-final consonant clusters and interdental fricative consonants and does exhibit multiple negation marking, exactly the same combination (coincidentally) as AAVE happens to have.

The horror among the readers who witnessed the feeding frenzy in the press over the Oakland resolution got through to the parents in the city. They were alarmed enough that, fearing linguistic ghettoization of their children, they pressed the school board to reconsider. On January 15, 1997, the board did revise its statement, dropping the reference to imparting instruction in the primary language of many of its schoolchildren (while retaining, sadly, some of its misguided references to alleged African origins of AAVE). This seemed to me to be throwing out the baby of a rather sensible change in language policy while carefully saving the bathwater of Afrocentric nonsense about AAVE going back to West Africa.

Behind the statements, however, lay more than just rhetoric for public consumption. Behind the scenes, the Oakland school system was steadfast in its intent to use AAVE wherever it could assist the learning of Standard English or other subjects by its students. The board's rhetorical backdown did not mean that the policy had changed. This should not be surprising. Several other school districts in California and elsewhere have long operated programs involving AAVE in the classroom. Of course, teachers have some discretion, and many Oakland teachers speak AAVE natively; it would be impossible in practice to police classrooms tightly enough to prevent them from using their native tongue when speaking all day to children who share it.

There is thus little doubt that African American English will continue to be heard in Oakland's classrooms. It may improve the rapport in the classroom in ways that will be beneficial to learning. It is worth a try. But whatever the success of the new policy, I hope that one thing is clear: using AAVE in the classroom does not necessarily mean lowering standards or teaching things that are wrong. AAVE speakers use a different grammar, clearly and sharply distinguished from Standard English at a number of points (though massively similar to that of Standard English overall). AAVE



speakers need to learn Standard English. But anyone who thinks that AAVE users are merely speaking Standard English but making mistakes is wrong. They can try to make the case that speakers of AAVE are bad or stupid or nasty or racially inferior if they want to, but they will need arguments that do not depend on language, because linguistic study of AAVE makes one thing quite clear: AAVE is not Standard English with mistakes.

## NOTES AND FURTHER READING

The *New York Times* editorial that said Oakland wanted to recognize street slang was "Linguistic confusion," 24 December 1996, A12. For the article "The Ebonics virus" see *The Economist*, January 4, 1997, 26–7. The word *Ebonics* was coined by R. L. Williams in *Ebonics: The True Language of Black Folks* (Institute of Black Studies, St Louis, 1975). The *Ethnologue* is edited by Barbara F. Grimes (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1996). *Classification and index of the world's languages* is by C. F. and F. M. Voegelin (New York: Elsevier, 1977). John McWhorter's comments can be found in his book *The word on the street* (New York, NY: Plenum Press, 1998). Good examples of William Labov's work are "The logic of nonstandard English," reprinted in *Language and social context*, pp. 179–215, ed. by P. Giglioli (Penguin Books, 1972), and "The case of the missing copula," in *Language: An invitation to cognitive science*, 2nd ed. vol. 1, ed. by Lila R. Gleitman and Mark Y. Liberman, 25–54 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press). For a technical study of negative inversion see Peter Sells, John Rickford, and Thomas Wasow, "An optimality-theoretic approach to variation in negative inversion in African American Vernacular English," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 14 (1996) 591–627. John Rickford's work can be explored on his web site at *http://www.stanford.edu/~rickford*. George Will's reference to "the patois of America's meanest streets" was in "58 boys and the larger scheme of things," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 January 1997. Eldridge Cleaver compared recognizing AAVE to condoning cannibalism in a column in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1997. One study of teaching dialect speakers a standard language in Scandinavia can be found in T. Osterberg, *Bilingualism and the First School Language* (Umeå: Västerbottens Trycheri, 1961). Using AAVE in teaching black college students in Chicago was studied by Hanni Taylor in *Standard English, Black English, and bidialectalism* (Peter Lang, New York, 1989). The utility of AAVE in teaching Black first-graders in Oakland was studied by A. M. Piestrup, *Black dialect interference and accommodation of reading instruction in first grade* (Monographs of the Language Behavior Research Laboratory 4, University of California, Berkeley, 1973). William Raspberry's column "To throw in a lot of 'bes,' or not? A conversation on Ebonics" appeared in the *Washington Post* on December 26, 1996. I am deeply grateful to Barbara Scholz for extensive comments and invaluable suggestions, and to Rodney Huddleston, Bill Ladusaw, John Rickford, Rebecca Wheeler, and Arnold Zwicky for their help.