

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction  
[e20fic14.blogs.rutgers.edu](http://e20fic14.blogs.rutgers.edu)

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(Murray 019, Mondays 2:30–4:30)  
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(36 Union St. 217, Wednesdays 12:00–2:00)

November 17, 2014. Anand, concluded; Hurston (1).

event today

Professor Steven Salaita (formerly UIUC)

**Silencing Dissent:  
The University vs. Academic Freedom**

Reception at 4 p.m.

Lecture at 4:30 p.m.

Department Women's and Gender Studies  
162 Ryders Lane

Co-sponsored by: Rutgers AAUP-AFT • Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) • AMESALL: African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures: • Program in Comparative Literature • Department of Journalism and Media Studies • Institute for Research on Women • Center for Women's Global Leadership • Students for Justice in Palestine—New Brunswick • Department of English • Center for African Studies • Contexts Magazine

## for Thursday

- ▶ bring *three copies* of your draft introduction
- ▶ if you are sick: turn intro in via Sakai Drop Box

## debate form

'In order to emancipate themselves they have to purify themselves. They have to rid themselves of evil habits, like drinking liquor and eating carrion.'

But now, now the Mahatma is blaming us, Bakha felt. 'That is not fair!' He wanted to forget the last passages that he had heard. (148)

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M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj, or, Indian Home Rule*  
(1908 Gujarati; 1910 English)

## interior life

He stood lost for a moment, confused in the shimmering rays, feeling as though there were nothing but the sun, the sun, everywhere, in him, on him, before him and behind him....As he emerged from the world of that rare, translucent lustre into which he had been lifted, he stumbled over a stone and muttered a curse. (34)

His wealth of unconscious experience, however, was extraordinary. It was a kind of crude sense of the world, in the round, such as the peasant has who can do the job while the laboratory agriculturalist is scratching his head. (94)

## collective subject?

A superb specimen of humanity he seemed whenever he made the high resolve to say something, to go and do something, his fine form rising like a tiger at bay. (65)

A murderer might have advanced like that, one confident in his consummate mastery of the art of killing. (58)

# Zora Neale Hurston



- 1891 b. Alabama
- 1919 Howard University
- 1924 first publication
- 1925 Barnard; studies anthro. under Boas
- 1925 appears in *New Negro*
- 1926 *Fire!!* (w/ Hughes and Thurman)
- 1927 folklore research in Florida
- 1931 "Hoodoo in America," *J. Am. Folklore*
- 1931 theatre and concert work
- 1934 *Jonah's Gourd Vine*
- 1935 *Mules and Men* (folk stories)
- 1937 *Their Eyes*  
(written in Haiti on a Guggenheim)
- 1942 *Dust Tracks on a Road* (memoir)
- 1950 increasing poverty and obscurity
- 1960 d. Florida
- 1975 revival

## Renaissance

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,  
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,  
I heard a Negro play.

Down on Lenox Avenue the other night  
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light  
He did a lazy sway....  
He did a lazy sway....

To the tune o' those Weary Blues.  
With his ebony hands on each ivory key  
He made that poor piano moan with melody.  
O Blues!

Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool  
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.  
Sweet Blues!

Coming from a black man's soul.  
O Blues!

(Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues" [1926])

## “our individual dark-skinned selves”

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasures doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

(Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” [1926])

## writing back

The answer lies in what we may call THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF UN-NATURAL HISTORY. This is an intangible built on folk belief. It is assumed that all non-Anglo-Saxons are uncomplicated stereotypes.... They are lay figures mounted in the museum where all may take them in at a glance. They are made of bent wires without insides at all. So how could anybody write a book about the non-existent?

(Hurstun, "What White Publishers Won't Print" [1950])

The American Negro exhibit is a group of two. Both of these mechanical toys are built so that their feet eternally shuffle, and their eyes pop and roll. Shuffling feet and those popping, rolling eyes denote the Negro, and no characterization is genuine without this monotony. One is seated on a stump picking away on his banjo and singing and laughing. The other is a most amoral character before a share-cropper's shack mumbling about injustice. Doing this makes him out to be a Negro "intellectual." It is as simple as all that.

(ibid.)

## dialect anew

“What she doin coming back here in dem overalls? 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?—” (2)

whose speech?

“Nanny...got de land and everything and then Mis’ Washburn helped out uh whole heap wid things.” Pheoby’s hungry listening helped Janie to tell her story....

It was a spring afternoon in West Florida. Janie had spent most of the day under a blossoming pear tree in the back-yard....It stirred her tremendously. How? Why? It was like a flute song forgotten in another existence and remembered again. What? How? Why? This singing she heard that had nothing to do with ears. (10)

## discussion

They sat there in the fresh young darkness close together....

Time makes everything old so the kissing, young darkness became a monstrous old thing while Janie talked. (7)

On this last page of the first chapter, what is the relation between the narrative idiom and the characters' idioms? Compare your commonplace entries to think about whether this relation is uniform across the novel.

## Quick search results

No dictionary entries found for 'monstropolous'.

Check your search and try again.

Widen search? Find 'monstropolous' in: [» phrases \(0\)](#) [» definitions \(0\)](#) [» etymologies \(0\)](#) [» quotations \(0\)](#) [» full text \(0\)](#)

Nearest matches: the closest dictionary entries to 'monstropolous' alphabetically are—

1. **monstriferous**, *adj.*

...Producing or bearing monsters...

## language and power

“Mouth-Almighty is still sittin’ in de same place.” (5)

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“Mouth-Almighty is still sittin’ in de same place.” (5)

“Folkses, de sun is goin’ down. De Sun-maker brings it up in de mornin’, and de Sun-maker sends it tuh bed at night. Us poor weak humans can’t do nothin’ tuh hurry it up nor to slow it down. All we can do, if we want any light after de settin’ or befo’ de resin’, is tuh make some light ourselves. So dat’s how come lamps was made.” (45)

## language makes language

Davis chanted a traditional-prayer poem with his own variations....

Mrs. Bogle's alto burst out in:

*We'll walk in de light, de beautiful light  
Come where the dew drops of mercy shine bright  
Shine all around us by day and by night  
Jesus, the light of the world*

They, all of them, all of the people took it up and sung it over and over until it was wrung dry, and no further innovations of tone and tempo were conceivable. (45–46)

next

- ▶ keep reading Hurston
- ▶ introduction, three copies