

# O. mcintosh

[History](#), [African American](#)



O. McIntosh Ap Language & composition December 2, 2012 How It Feels To Be Colored Me by Zora Neale Hurston Hurston refused to be defined by the stereotypes of her time and times long gone. She often pushed the boundaries of what was customarily done, thought or expected by people of "color". Hurston redefines and restructures the reality of being colored by the use of Satire, Imagery, and Personification. Hurston uses these strategies to lightheartedly yet emphatically refute the misconceptions that African Americans have of themselves and allow society to have of them. First, Hurston uses satire when she ridiculed the African Americans who used slavery as a crutch to bemoan the plight of their lives, when she said " I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it. " In this instance Hurston did not feel in the least bit Colored. But felt colored when she moved to Jacksonville where she was defined by society as a little colored girl and no longer as Zora from Orange County. Hurston then used imagery to describe her experiences at The New World Cabaret. She transported the reader to the plains of Africa by describing the Jazz Orchestra as a wild animal which grows rambunctious, " rears on its hind legs and attacks the tonal veil with primitive fury...to the jungle beyond. " She then continued to expand upon this image by relating herself to the " heathens". Simply put, jazz music made Hurston embrace being colored. She related the rhythm and beat of the music to her African roots, and noticed how her white friend sat motionless as he only heard what she felt. In that moment when they seemed worlds apart did she truly appreciate being " colored. " Hurston also uses Personification to describe all people including

herself as stuffed bags made up of " a jumble of small things priceless and worthless. " Hurston meant that regardless of the color of the bag, what defines us is what is in the bag: the bits and pieces, and that " a bit of colored glass" would not change who we are greatly. Through the use of Satire, Imagery, and Personification Zora Neal Hurston clarified to the reader the misconception that African Americans were held to, by stating that you don't have to be defined by what society thinks of you. But what or how you think of yourself.