

How it feels to be colored me

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Zora Hurston, author of *How It Feels to Be Colored Me*, takes readers on a journey through her personal experience on racism and self-identity. The beginning of her life takes place in Florida in the 1920s during segregation. Hurston did not know about race until she moved to Jacksonville where there were not many African Americans. Jacksonville, is where she learned she had an identity change and knew she was colored. As one piece of evidence, Hurston states, “ I left Eatonville, the town of the oleanders, as Zora.

When I disembarked from the river-boat at Jacksonville, she was no more”.... “ I was not Zora... I was a little colored girl” (Hurston 186). She goes on to state that she looked in the mirror and saw she was colored. Despite the fact she is discriminated against, she does not identify herself as being colored and points out that although people look different on the outside we are all the same on the inside. This is emphasized when she was relating different colored paper bags in which if they were emptied in a pile and stuffed back into those bags, the contents would remain the same: But in the main, I feel like a brown paper bag of miscellany propped up against a wall.

Against a wall in company with other bags, white red, and yellow... On the ground before you is the jumble it held-so much like the jumble in the bags, could they be emptied, that all might be dumped in a single heap and the bags refilled without altering the content of any greatly. (Hurston 188-189)

Sensory detail is an important factor in this story because it allows one to experience the same sensations and visuals as the character. It is used to “ show” instead of “ tell” and help visualize the action in the mind.

For example, when Hurston quoted in her essay, “ My face was painted red and yellow and my body painted blue” one could visualize the scene richly as well as her pulse throbbing like a war drum (Hurston, 188). You can feel the rush she is getting from the music, as if you were there. She describes how wild the scene may look. Being at an orchestra listening to the music makes her remember the identity of Zora again, which is similar to dancing the parse-me-la wild and free (Hurston 186) as if she did when she were young living in Eatonville.

As she describes in her text, “ I danced wildy inside myself; I yell within.... ” (Hurston 188). Although someone was always reminding Hurston that she was the granddaughter of slaves, she refused to let that hinder her or make her feel less of herself. She confirmed that she did not let it register depression with her (Hurston 187). She convinces the reader several times in her essay that she has self-pride and does not look as pride as one’s race. This is apparent when Hurston quotes “ At certain times I have no race, I am me.... ” I belong to no race nor time.

I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads (188). In conclusion, Hurston says she does not weep at the world-she’s too busy sharpening her oyster knife (186), similarly means she does not worry about what other people may think of her and she does not focus on the past of her ancestors. She will play with the hand she is dealt in life and deal with the fact that she is colored. She will focus on being herself, making herself a better person and not be a product of her race. She is confident and identifies whom she is. Zora from Orange County (Hurston 186).