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**His Eyes Were Watching Her****Papa Franz Boas, Zora Neale Hurston, and Anthropology**

Frank A. Salamone

Zora Neale Hurston studied with Franz Boas from 1925 to the mid-1930s. Despite his urging she did not complete her dissertation. However, she had completed a number of ethnographic and folkloric works which clearly reveal his influence. Under Boas's watchful influence, Hurston began to make changes in both anthropology and literature, anticipating and influencing future developments. Boas was generally reluctant to write prefaces for books. However, he did so for Hurston's "Mules and Men" ([1935] 1990) displaying his encouragement and approval of her work. Under his influence she helped bring a more subjective and novelistic style to ethnographic work and a more ethnographic tone to literature. Her work has influenced a number of anthropologists, directly and indirectly, including Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, and George Marcus, as well as literary figures such as Alice Walker, Tony Morrison, and Maya Angelou. She anticipated a more reflexive and subjective anthropology in which the narrator was no longer privileged and the subject allowed to speak for her or himself.

**Introduction**

Zora Neale Hurston's role in American literature has been acknowledged and no longer is it possible to see her as a lost or forgotten figure. Alice Walker, Tony Morrison, and Maya Angelou, not to mention Oprah Winfrey, have rediscovered her and made her work known to a wider American public. The Library of America has published a complete collection of her works. However, her significance to anthropology has ironically gone largely unacknowledged.

There are, of course, works which focus on her contributions. As early as 1980 Robert Hemenway noted her contribution to anthropology and its influence on her work in his seminal "Zora Neale Hurston. A Literary Biography." Other works have followed building on his work. Indeed about one-hundred other books cite his work. The question remains, then, why is her work not given the place in anthropological studies which it deserves?

This article seeks to examine reasons for her long neglect within anthropology as well as her direct

and indirect influence in the latter twentieth century, especially on more subjective developments in the field; such as reflexivity and postmodernism and earlier linguistically based developments, including ethnoscience. Hurston's methodology was based on total immersion, more participation than observation. This was, as Boas noted, part of her style even before she entered anthropology. There is no doubt that Boas was moving increasingly in that direction and had a major influence on Hurston's intellectual and methodological development.

Certainly, Boas's historical particularistic views are reflected in Hurston's "Mules and Men." Equally clearly, Hurston had her own influence, directly or indirectly, on Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, and George Marcus, among other anthropologists. Her insistence on what Geertz later termed "thick description" has become a major characteristic of much modern anthropology. Similarly, taking and presenting the perspective of those whom we study has become the ideal norm in many works as has a more humanistic perspective. Although few anthropologists have Hurston's literary gifts, there is a greater attention given to narratives, something she routinely constructed. Subjectivity, in sum, is no longer a universally "dirty word."

Indeed, one can argue that attention to what Geertz terms "mixed genres" is but a continuation of much of what Hurston did in her own work. Hurston fostered an anthropology which embraced every aspect of human life. She also knew that poetic or literary truth revealed a good deal about human culture and ways of behavior. Therefore, she did not clearly delineate between one form of capturing human culture and another. It is an attitude deeply embedded in Creole culture, what Robert Farris Thompson terms a "this and that too" perspective, a view traceable to West Africa and certainly to Yoruba cultural ways of knowing.

This work traces these various influences on Hurston's work as well as the impact of her work on anthropology and literature. Reasons for her neglect, especially in anthropology will be examined and the cultural and social implications analyzed. Finally, the implications of the mixture of literary and anthropological modes of knowing are made explicit.

## Boas

Franz Boas was keenly aware of the importance of using indigenous people in his work and, consequently, he sought to recruit people from all ethnic groups and continents into anthropology. Af-

rican-Americans were no exception to his policy. Zora Neale Hurston, for example, provided Boas with valuable material on African-American folklore and an "insider" who was able to interpret what she discovered.

Hurston had worked with Herskovits on his physical measurements of African-American populations. She had come from a poor background with a driving will to succeed. Hurston had a knack for finding powerful Whites to sponsor her, with all the benefits and deficits attached to that strategy. She became a luminary of the Harlem Renaissance. Her work in anthropology, moreover, was valuable, although she never was able to finish her PhD, a fact that pained both her and Boas.<sup>1</sup> Hurston, however, used the results of her fieldwork in her various publications, including her folklore collections and novels. She noted that there were still a large number of stories found in the 1920s, but literacy had decreased their number. Radio and movies had done their share as well. Moreover, the phonograph "and its 'blues'" were taking their toll.

Hurston discovered changes in the type of tale that people told. Although animal tales were still told, attention "has veered from animal tale to the exaggeration tale, wherein stupendous feats of strength or quickness are performed. These are usually quite brief, sometimes no more than four or five sentences in length." Tales can be told at almost any time, however, the summer months when there is "little to do" witness a surge in tale-telling. Stoops and store porches are the scenes for the telling of tales. People drift into these tales. The person who believes he or she can tell the biggest lie usually starts them. Late afternoon and summer evenings are the prime times for these events. Hurston acknowledges the part these tales have in socialization. There are some stories that are told primarily to children. However, children are also present when stories are told among adults. These stories are told in the assembly and children are not barred from hearing them. The "Old Massa" tale was still popular at the time. Sometimes master was the hero,

1 Hurston's patrons included the novelist Fannie Hurst, whose secretary she was for a time. Boas kept after Hurston to finish her degree. She used her usual method of dealing with unpleasanties, avoiding them whenever possible. She put Boas off for some time. Later she thanked him for his interest and asked him to write the dedication for "Mules and Men," which he did. Boas had long refused to write dedications for nonacademic works. For Hurston who felt strong affection for him and whose affection he reciprocated, Boas made an exception. Papa Franz felt close to most of his students and endeavored to aid them whenever possible. Gwendolyn Mikell (1999) has presented an intriguing view of Zora Neale Hurston and her role in anthropology.

and sometimes the slave. In common with the still present animal tales, quickness of wit was stressed. Interestingly, Hurston related that most tales lack a kick line. The “moral” was obvious and people could supply their own kick lines. The tales, additionally, were dramatized. Other tales told of “cold strolling,” where “cold” was the superlative. Strolling referred to running away.

The most important tales were those that had to do with the preservation of the individual and the race. However, the next most important class of tales is those that outsiders did not suspect and would not be able to discover. These were tales that dealt with “conjure or hoodoo.” Many people denied their existence, even to Hurston. It took a great deal of work on her part to ascertain their existence. People do not want to be thought ignorant, and “educated” people have stressed the ignorance of these beliefs. It is not an obvious fact. Many will deny it until they know you. They are afraid of being though ignorant.

Hurston concluded that the “hoodoo man takes the place of the priest, medical man, and lawyer” She listed various beliefs found in her Florida study of African-Americans and links them to “hoodoo,” another way of tying them to Africa. Among these beliefs are those concerning pregnancy, death, love, and marriage, among a large number of things. She states, somewhat prophetically, “A careful study of Negro churches by Negroes will show that the Negro is not a Christian but is still a pagan.” By which she means that at the core of “Negro” culture, there is a great measure of African culture remaining that has hidden behind the syncretic veneer of Euro-American culture. Although hidden politely behind her careful wording, there is no denying that Hurston, along with Boas, realized that until African-Americans studied themselves there would be great distortion in the anthropological record.<sup>2</sup>

### His Eyes Were Watching Her:

#### Boas and the Matter of Hurston’s Florida Fieldwork

The correspondence between Boas and Hurston during her 1927 fieldwork in Florida sheds light on their relationship and Hurston’s problems. Thus, Boas writes on March 24, 1927, “I have not heard from you since your first brief letter after you arrived” (APAL/WSC). Boas was concerned because

he had received a letter from the Investment Securities Corp of Jacksonville stating that Hurston wanted to borrow \$ 260 payable in 8 monthly installments. Boas wanted to know what the money was for. He felt responsible for his students and needed to know if there were any problems with her arrangements. Before answering the bank’s letter, he wanted clarification.

Hurston answered him on March 29, 1927, stating to “My dear Dr. Boas,” that she was not borrowing money. She was hoping to buy a used car for \$ 300 and she had used Boas as a reference. She states that she needs a car to get around since the places she should conduct her fieldwork in are far. She then notes that she is “sending under separate cover all of the material that I have transcribed into ink.” Hurston notes that it is fortunate that she collected it now, “for a great many people say, ‘I used to know some of that old stuff, but I done forgot it all.’ You see, the Negro is not living his lore to the extent of the Indian. He is not on a reservation being kept pure. His negroeness is being rubbed off by close contact with white culture.” This is a cleverly worded statement, for at once Hurston is telling what she has gathered and how difficult her work is compared with Boas’s other students who do their work on reservations where separation from White culture has allowed them to cling to old ways. She continues:

I have a “hand,” a powerful piece of conjure for the museum, and I have bargained for two more pieces, from a still more powerful “doctor.” By the way, I found in Fernandina, a man seventy years old, who is a most marvelous wood-carver. Born a slave, unable to read or write. The interior of his house is all carved, every inch! His doors and casements are of such wondrous beauty, that, in my opinion, they compare favorably with the best that has come out of Africa. He is doing a 2 foot square piece for you to see.

Hurston concludes her letter in a conciliatory tone, familiar to many anthropologists who have gone through the ritual of fieldwork and dissertation guidance. She writes, “I am sorry that I have kept you waiting. I have a great deal of material in pencil, and I am transcribing it in odd moments. The reason that it is not typed is that it is hard for me to lug a machine along country roads in addition to my bag. That was one of the first things, in addition to the fatigue, that made me think of getting the used car. I knew that there was not enough – that I could not get a car furnished me, so I decided to do as Dr. Teichard had done – and buy an old one cheaply. I can sell it again when I am through.” She ends on a practical note. Not only is the car useful to her

2 Zora Neale Hurston the Florida Expedition, Franz Boas Collection of American Indian Linguistics in the American Philosophical Society collection provides the basis for this section. These notes deserve publication to make them readily available to scholars.

fieldwork but she can recoup most of the money she borrows by selling it. In a concluding note in pen she states that a Dr. Woodson can get a recording machine if it costs \$ 100 or less. She wants to know whether it is difficult to operate. She is eager to learn how to use it in her work.

On May 3, 1927, Boas shows another aspect of his guidance style. He peppers Hurston with questions and suggestions. Thus, he wishes to know the form of diction, movements, and other details which go with the folktales Hurston has collected. He wants to know whether the content of the material she has sent him is rep of what has already been collected. He then advises her "to stress current superstitions and collect as many as you can." Moreover, she should compare the superstitions of English-speaking Negroes with French- and Spanish-speaking Negroes. Boas then advises Hurston to report practices relating to birth, death, marriage, and other important life events. Boas is convinced "that the methods of dancing, the habitual movements in telling tales and even in ordinary communication would be essentially new." He notes,

We ought to remember that in transmission from Africa to America most of the contents of the culture have been adopted from the surrounding peoples ["tribes" is crossed out] while the mannerisms have, to a great extent, been retained. For instance, when you compare Negro singing and the singing of white people, it is not so much the musical notation that is different but rather the manner of rendition. There is a very peculiar problem involved in the question of transmission of European tales, proverbs, riddles, games, and songs because the planters certainly did not bring along much of it and the question is who the Europeans were from whom all this material was obtained. I do not know whether it is possible to solve all these questions by present day inquiry, but it is a matter that ought to be borne in mind.

In closing, Boas asks Hurston to "try to pay particular attention to the points being mentioned?" The manner of his phrasing says much about both Boas and Hurston. Boas expected his students to heed his advice but Hurston tended to go her own way as pleasantly as she could as a later letter makes clear. Boas had not heard from Hurston for some time. When he received oranges from her he thanked her, saying "Thanks for delicious oranges. Please write so I know what you are doing" (December 18, 1928).

When Hurston does reply to him, she does so in a mysterious manner. She writes from New Orleans, not Florida, and tells him she is "[p]roud to hear from you." She then notes that she promised her benefactor that she would write no one until her work for them was over. She will show Boas what

she has collected but only after she returns from her fieldwork. Additionally, she has many interesting things and teases Boas with a hint of what she has learned and her certainty that earlier writers have erred, in which conclusion she is correct, and that she has collected much folklore, material on sympathetic magic, and religious expression. She asks that Boas continue his guidance while telling him she has had little time to collect much material on the Creole but that she knows where and how to look for it.

Finally, Hurston wrote on April 21, 1929, from Eau Gallie, Florida, "I am through collecting and I am sitting down to write up. I have more than 95,000 words of story materials, a collection of children's games, conjure material, and religious material with a great number of photographs." She promises to send carbon copies as soon as typing is done. Hurston then asks Boas a series of questions:

Is it safe for me to say that baptism is an extension of water worship as a part of pantheism just as the sacrament is an extension of cannibalism? Isn't the use of candles in the Catholic church a relic of fire worship? Are not all the uses of fire upon the altars the same thing? Is not the Christian ritual rather one of attenuated nature-worship, in the fire, water, and blood? Might not the frequently mentioned fire of the Holy Ghost not be an unconscious fire worship? May it not be a deification of fire? May I say that the decoration in clothing is an extension of the primitive application of paint (coloring) to the body? May I say that all primitive music originated about the drum, and that singing was an attenuation of the drum-beat. Finally the music (the singers) reaches that stage where they can maintain the attenuation independently of, and unconscious of the drum. Such is the European grand opera. There is unrhythmic attenuation. I mean by attenuation, the listener to the drum will fill the space between beats and will think up devices to fill those spaces. The between-beat becomes more and more complicated until the music is all between-beat and the consciousness of the dependence upon the drum is lost.

Once through with this comprehensive list of questions, she complains about the difficulty of getting a typist (Oh for a New York typist!) and promises Boas material in a week or ten days.

On April 24, 1929, Boas answers Hurston. He tells her that he is leaving for Europe on May 18 and plans to be back around October 1. He hopes to hear from Hurston soon. He states that he cannot answer all her questions because there is a good deal of debate on them, a gentle hint for her to go beyond speculation. He does tell her that she is wrong on her theory of music because it cannot explain the origin of intervals.

On May 17, 1929, however, Boas begins to an-



swer her questions in some detail and to provide specific direction for her work. He advises Hurston to investigate various groups on the mental characteristics of those groups. "The plan," he says, "is to try to establish certain psychological tests which are particularly well fitted to different cultural groups. One of the things in which we are interested is to develop a test of music in which the special ability of the Negroes in this direction might play an important role and we want to find a place where a great deal of singing is still going on and where we may get information in regard to the individual attitudes towards music, interest in music, and musical ability. I am sure you know places of this kind and I want to ask you whether you might be willing to take part in the work. He concludes by asking her where her paper is? Then repeats his offer of four months at most of work on the music project for which he will pay \$ 150. It was an offer Hurston did not take.

On Oct. 20, 1929, Hurston wrote to Boas after returning from working in the Bahamas. "Now I find that there is a new birth of creative singing among Negroes. The old songs are not sung so much. New ones are flooding everywhere. New Orleans is the womb of cults and there I find the Protestant churches being as individual as one can imagine. Pagan. I know that you and Dr. Kleinberg will be delighted with what you will find. I know of other places where there is some good singing, but it is sort of hit and miss so therefore not so reliable as New Orleans. Mobile is one of those places."

She then mentions the commercial work she has been doing while working on her doctoral dissertation. She will have one volume for the stories, and one each for conjure and religion. This latter work is unfinished. She expresses her hope for Boas's being able to read the material soon. She kept to the exact dialect as closely as possible. She states that she had the storyteller tell the tale to her word for word as she wrote it. "This after it has been told to me off hand until I know it myself. But the writing down from the lips is to insure the correct dialect and wording so that I shall not let myself creep in unconsciously."

She notes that the Bahamas might interest Boas. They are more African than the American South. People know their tribal origins, and some still speak African languages. She again attacks those who have distorted the material through tearing it out of context. In closing, she promises to be in New Orleans before the first.

There then follows a series of letters in which Hurston says she cannot work on the music project with Boas because her patron will not allow her to

leave her work. Boas, in turn, is not happy with Hurston's dropping out of the music project and failing to work with others who have counted on her.

In an undated letter to Boas she discusses her trying situation but promises to help from a distance and in secret ways. She is unable to leave her patron because she needs the salary. She will continue in her work for her but hopes Boas will understand. She will help Dr. Kleinberg, and in fact she does so. She begs Boas to have faith in her. In subsequent letters, she mentions that her own work is progressing. Her book should be finished soon and she hopes Boas will write a preface for it. She has more songs and dances from the Bahamas.

It is clear from the letters that Hurston was in a bind, trying to get her PhD and hoping to keep her patron, Charlotte Osgood Mason, happy so she could finish her book. No wonder she noted she was "[w]orking furiously." However, Boas did not know that Hurston's contract with Mason prohibited her from publishing the work she had collected. On May 3, 1930, Boas and Hurston discuss Hurston's "patron saint" who is cold toward Hurston's getting the PhD but will put up money for further research not leading to her degree. Boas, as one would expect, counseled her on June 13, 1930, to do research under university supervision rather than on her own. However, she did not follow this advice.

Her neglect, however, did not stop her from writing to Boas on August 20, 1934,

I am full of tremors lest you decide that you do not want to write the introduction to my "Mules and Men." I want you to do it so very much. Also I want Dr. Benedict to read the ms and offer suggestions. Sort of edit it you know. Lippincott likes it and will push it. [The work] needs between story conversations. I couldn't get it published without it. Now three publishers want it. I am sorry. I hope it won't keep you from writing the introduction.

Boas wrote a rather cool reply on September 12, 1934, in which he notes that he never got full manuscript which Lippincott promised a couple of months ago. However, if the book is up to standards, he will write the introduction. He does not mention speaking with Benedict. However upset he may have been, Boas still kept his eyes on Hurston, making sure Melville Herskovits invited her to dinner in Chicago. Hurston wrote him of that dinner and said that her publisher had made her add revisions making the book more accessible to the general reader. Boas will get the manuscript soon.

Herskovits wrote Boas on December 14, 1934, that Hurston will return to school and use her scholarship award to do so. Mrs. Mason, her patron, will not pay for her training. Hurston wrote that she

knows that she needs rigorous discipline and routine. She has been on her own since 14 and went to high school, college, and has done “everything progressive that I have done because I wanted to, and not because I was being pushed? All of these things have been done under the most trying circumstances and I stuck. I had such a hard time getting the money to take my bachelor’s that I could appreciate what it meant to apply one’s self to study when there is no money to pay for food and lodging. I almost never explain these things when folks are asking me why don’t I do this and that. I have to make a living, and consequently I have to do the jobs that will support me. But oh, Dr. Boas, you don’t know how I have longed for a chance to stay at Columbia and study. Otherwise there would be no point to my using everything possible to get this scholarship.” However, Hurston does not use the Julius Rosenwald Scholarship to return to Columbia to finish her PhD.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Boas sought to recruit African-American doctoral students. Zora Neale Hurston and L. C. King, for example, studied with him at Columbia. Hurston was a student on and off in the department, working with Herskovits in his Harlem studies and conducting her own fieldwork in the South and the West Indies. Boas assisted Hurston in this by helping her get money from Parsons and others. Moreover, Boas demonstrated a personal interest in her, repeatedly writing her letters to come to his office whenever she withdrew from participation on the Columbia campus. Boas was well aware that Columbia was not a friendly place for African-Americans under the current administration. Hurston, unfortunately, never finished her doctoral work. She did, however, make significant contributions to folklore studies. So highly did Boas hold Hurston that he waived his rule about writing introductions for popular books to write one for her book.

One of the more poignant statements regarding the difficulty of African-Americans in anthropology comes from Hurston:

... it is hard to apply one’s self to study when there is no money to pay for food and lodging. I almost never explain these things when folks are asking me why don’t I do this and that.

In an insightful statement, Willis wrote:

Black anthropologists have sometimes willingly acted as mere technicians in studying black folklore. Fauset and Hurston acceded to Boas and Parsons and concentrated on the accurate collection of this folklore. Also, they usually did not extend the sociocultural environment of black folklore beyond its immediate setting within the segregated black world to include the surrounding world of

white oppression. They excluded most theoretical possibilities. In addition to appeasing the intellectual arrogance of white anthropologists, they were ignoring black anger at white oppression and not expressing the black struggle for freedom and equality. The massive folklore collected by black student – and white students as well – awaits examination by contemporary folklorists utilizing the emerging radical perspectives to illuminate the developing ethnic identities of black people living under Jim Crow (WSC 1929, Black Anthropologists Series III).

In an interesting addition, however, Willis continued in a different vein. He noted that the accuracy of data collection was of “the highest importance for Boas, since folklore expressed directly the mental life of man and therefore was the surest route to the inner life.” Willis concedes that Boas and Parsons believed that special methodological problems existed in collection of Black folklore. Therefore, the use of Black collectors was needed because they were more efficient than White collectors. This efficiency increased as collections focused on “the less assimilated blacks of the southern United States or West Indies.” Additionally, African-Americans were superior in establishing rapport, Black collectors. Moreover, “regardless of class and color division,” Boas felt that they could enter less obtrusively into the world of depressed African-Americans. Boas and Parsons used southern Black educators, such as A. S. Parkins and Portia Smiley as well as Hurston to collect rapidly disappearing material. Their work was published in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Willis held that this use was at the least an unconscious racism but shows his own ambiguity by defending the work they did and generally siding with Boas.

## Conclusion

Behind the scenes Boas worked to advance the position of African-Americans, at one time writing to Andrew Carnegie for funds to set up an institute for African history and for the study of African-Americans, at other times working to create organizations like the later NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) that would work for civil rights. This commitment overrode Boas’s public admission in 1909 that he did “not believe that the Negro is, in physical or mental makeup, the same as the European. The anatomical differences are so great that corresponding mental differences are plausible,” he acknowledged. Nonetheless, Boas maintained a great interest in promoting the civil rights of African-Americans. Indeed, he advocated interracial marriage as solution to the racial prob-

lem, because he believed that only the lightening of the American population would end racial prejudice. The solution to America's racial problem, he believed, was in the end of racial identity itself.

Boas, therefore, was not a cultural pluralist. He held, for example, that there was a need to end Jewish identification via assimilation. As Boas began to develop his mature view of culture, he found biological and racist explanations even more reprehensible. As Lowie noted, "[i]n theory he may be described as an epistemologist rather than a metaphysician; he suspected traditional labels and catchwords, inquired into their empirical foundation, and often arrived at a new and illuminating re-classification of data" (1947: 6).

Zora Neale Hurston significantly worked to change the understanding of race and her work had a tremendous impact within anthropology. It fit within Boas's overall plan for the development of the field. For Boas race, class, and culture had become inextricably confused in the popular mind. This confusion was at the cost of reasonable behavior and to the detriment of democracy. Hurston's desire to research and reconstruct the folklore of her Florida and the Caribbean, with all the accretions built upon an African base demonstrated the creativity of African peoples as well as their adaptability. The merger of African-based stories with Euro-American elements reflected the experience of the people. Just as "pure races" merged until all that remained was the human race, a position Ruth Benedict ([1940] 1980) put forth most clearly, so, too, did their art forms and other cultural artifacts until they became the possession of all humankind.

Hurston's very presence, moreover, fit into Boas's desire to found an African-American program within anthropology. Certainly, the presence of outstanding African-American scholars would help give the program credibility. Furthermore, Hurston's writing skills and her ties to outstanding members of the Harlem Renaissance were additional factors in her favor within Boas's overall prospectus for anthropology. Boas already had strong ties with W. E. B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, E. Franklin Frazier, and others. He wished to continue to expand these ties and became quite active in early civil rights movements. Katherine Dunham was but one of his African-American students.

Hurston, however, was slated to be his prime hope for diversifying anthropology in the United States. Certainly, Boas knew that he faced great opposition within the anthropological field of his day. His antiracist views were quite unpopular. His view that anthropology should be an applied discipline to aid the oppressed met with elitist fury.

In the American Anthropological Association they censured him for speaking out against the employment of anthropologists as spies (Price 2000). Price notes that anti-Semitism had a role in the censuring. Boas pro-civil rights stance and his embrace of equality also played their part. Just as he proposed interracial marriage as a cure for racism so, too, he saw diversity within anthropology as a cure for its own ethnocentrism. Hurston was to be in Boas's plans a key factor in that diversity. Although she left professional anthropology to pursue a literary career, and then essentially dropped from the public view, we can see her influence in a number of ways within anthropology.

Perhaps, the clearest expression of her remaining influence on Boas is found in the chapter "Class Consciousness" in Boas (1945). After moving from a discussion of classless societies to those with class divisions, Boas begins to note disapproval of groups based on class markers. He then notes that these cultural and social differences are often attributed to a racial or biological basis. Finally, in cases of conquest even within the same society as among the patricians and plebeians of Rome or the aristocracy and commoners in Europe, intermarriage is generally forbidden. When the physical differences between groups are marked as between Spaniards and Native Americans or Europeans and Africans, then differences are exaggerated. Boas then explains the cultural significance of these class differences as they are transferred in the popular mind to biological ones.

We must remember in all these cases that the difference in descent is not the primary cause, and that the prejudice of one group against the other is merely emphasized and kept in force for a longer period, because the social difference is made more striking the ease with which a member of the socially inferior group is compelled to wear some kind of mark by which he can be recognized, such as the yellow band of the Jew, or by being forbidden to wear the costume of the socially superior group. It cannot be overemphasized that the contempt with which these groups are treated is primarily social, and only accidentally emphasized by difference in bodily form, and that the conclusion that the inferior group belongs to an inferior race is merely a rationalization of our behavior (Boas 1945: 15–19).

Boas's interest in the historical particular over the grand theories, which plagued anthropology at the time of his entrance and which served racism and elitism, led him to a more psychological view of the anthropological enterprise. It was one which Hurston embraced quite readily and personified. Certainly, Hurston's creative writing mixed with her anthropological work. This became much more prevalent in the 1980s and later with the great influ-



ence of deconstruction and postmodernism in anthropology as well as with the interpretive anthropology of people like Clifford Geertz and his mixed genres. Hurston at first accepted basic Boasian concepts. She accepted Boas's distinction between culture, race, and languages. Hurston worked in the Boasian tradition which looked for objective truth. However, to ignore the parallel subjective course running through Boas's work. Not surprisingly, this trend is most seen in his linguistic work, and Hurston dealt with language and its idiosyncratic usage. Moreover, Boas's insistence on fieldwork as the primary discovery method for anthropology held within itself the very breeding ground for subjectivity and blurred the border between science and art. Additionally, the Boasian insistence on the equality of cultures and the rejection of a hierarchal ordering of them from primitive through civilized further encouraged subjectivity and even romanticism in description and reporting.

Hurston embraced the duality of Boasian anthropology. She gloried in its ambivalence and ambiguity. She used its demand for objectivity as a means to permit her needed distance from her own circumstances. Conversely, she used the closeness of the fieldwork involvement to gain familiarity with the meaning of other people's lives, not only with their outer lives but with the deep psychology of their very souls (Krasner 2005). This stance has had a growing and profound influence on the development of anthropology. It certainly can be seen in Boas's own development and his increasing understanding of the inner life of people. It was a tendency always present. However, his students, including Hurston, helped bring this strand of his work more into public view.

This subjective or emic interpretation of cultures and the growing tendency to put people in conspicuous positions in ethnography has been part of Hurston's legacy. The combination of anthropology and fiction is but another of her influences. From the perspective of the twenty-first century these appear inevitable developments. There were certainly others who combined art and anthropology – Ruth Benedict, Laura Bohannan, Margaret Mead, Kirin Narayan, and others. It is not too far a stretch to say that none has reached the same heights as Zora Neale Hurston. In fine fashion. Anthropology received a great deal from Hurston and she in reciprocal fashion received much from Boas and anthropology.

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