

2022

Belonging to Harlem: Reading Zora Neale Hurston's Story in Slang

Rumi Collier-Takahashi

University at Albany, SUNY, rtakahashi@albany.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/liljournal>



Part of the [Language Interpretation and Translation Commons](#), [Literature in English, North America, Ethnic and Cultural Minority Commons](#), and the [Translation Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Collier-Takahashi, Rumi (2022) "Belonging to Harlem: Reading Zora Neale Hurston's Story in Slang," *Living in Languages*: Vol. 2, Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/liljournal/vol2/iss1/2>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Living in Languages* by an authorized editor of Scholars Archive.

Please see [Terms of Use](#). For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.

Belonging to Harlem: Reading Zora Neale Hurston's Story in Slang

RUMI COLLER-TAKAHASHI

Zora Neale Hurston is one of the writers closely associated with the Harlem Renaissance by critics as well as students of American literature. Robert E. Hemenway's biography begins with Hurston's arrival in New York in 1925, where she had published a short story in the *Opportunity* a month earlier. This publication in the magazine, which was edited by Charles S. Johnson, marks the beginning of Hurston's life as it is "her initial contribution to the cultural uprising that Johnson and others were calling a 'Harlem Renaissance'" (Hemenway 10). Since Hemenway's 1977 biography, the association between Hurston and the thriving of black culture in Harlem has been reproduced in both academic and popular materials.¹ Despite the widely recognized "contribution," however, Hurston's story set in Harlem have attracted little attention. Even though her "Story in Harlem Slang" features a unique lexicon in Harlem, critical works have marginalized the short story despite their tendency to emphasize the writer's general investment in the oral traditions informed by her anthropological work to collect folktales in the South. In this essay, I will focus on Hurston's "Story in Harlem Slang" to explore the ways in which it captures the peculiar dynamics of the community through its maneuvering of the distinct language of Harlem. Written in Harlemese, a vocabulary that uniquely developed in the culture of Harlem, the story contains the function of a dictionary, only to require the readers to experience the translation of the slang as a constant movement that crosses the linguistic border. Such a mode of reading eventually enables us to review the ways in which Harlem operates as a community that hinges not on its contained homogeneity but on its force driven by the suspension of the fixed positionality for the constituents.

The "Harlem Renaissance" in American literary traditions usually marks the locus as well as the period of thriving African American culture around the 1920s. Nevertheless, the seemingly regional and temporary aesthetic movement has been undergoing a critical review because of its connections with a broader time period and a larger geographical space.² What enables such a wide-reaching significance is the movement's central attention to constructing racial identity. The inception of the movement tends to be associated with the publication of *The New Negro* (1925), an anthology edited by Alain Locke for the purpose of staging new voices of black racial identity in response to historical violence and oppression. The fact that the response took a variety of forms marks the complexity of the Harlem Renaissance, as it involves interaction with as well as resistance to white perceptions of "blackness": the literary field was shaped not only by black writers but also wealthy white patrons' intervention and white writers' representation of black people. The complexity of the interracial relationships demands us to

1. For the detailed account of the association between Hurston and the Harlem Renaissance in both academic and popular materials, see Carla Kaplan, "'Betwixt and between': Zora Neale Hurston In—and Out—of Harlem."

2. *A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* published in 2015 collects scholarly essays for the purpose of extending the boundary of the Harlem Renaissance by situating the works associated with the movement in the global context as well as a timeframe that traces back to the end of the nineteenth century and extends to the late twentieth century. For the critical attention to the wider scope of the Harlem Renaissance, see also the introductions of *Harlem Renaissance Re-examined: A Revised and Expanded Edition*, edited by Victor A. Kramer and Robert A. Russ, Whitston Publishing Company, 1997; *Temples for Tomorrow: Looking Back at the Harlem Renaissance*, edited by Geneviève Fabre and Michel Feith, Indiana UP, 2001.

carefully examine what it means to represent black people's life and construct their racial identity, and such an attention eventually enhances the importance of the Harlem Renaissance.

In this context, Hurston's engagement with the movement enables us to examine the less static and contained understanding of the Harlem Renaissance and the complexity of racial identity emerging in the literary sphere inhabited by both black and white writers and audience. Born in Alabama and raised in Eatonville, Florida, Hurston came to New York, when the Harlem Renaissance was blooming in multiple genres. Recognized both for her captivating personality and writing, Hurston did participate in the cultural movement, while she did not stay in Harlem for long. In 1927, two years after her arrival in New York, she went to Alabama to interview Cudjo Lewis, a man who had been brought from Africa on the last slave ship, and worked on *Barracoon* that was posthumously published in 2018. The late 1920s are also the time when she collected folklores in the South, while she travelled to the Caribbean in the 1930s. Hurston came back to New York in the 1940s briefly, but still the total time spent in New York City is just a fraction of her life and her writerly career expands beyond the 1920s.³ Consequently, Hurston occupies a singular space in which she is invoked as one of the major figures in the Harlem Renaissance but as someone who did not engage with the representation of Harlem itself.⁴ Furthermore, the fact that her writing projects were supported by Charlotte Osgood Mason, a white patron who required her permission and control over the works she sponsored, places Hurston in an ambivalent position.

When critics focus on Hurston's work, they usually highlight her treatment of the South in her novels and collection of folk tales published in the 1930s, while briefly mentioning her contribution to the Harlem Renaissance through her early stories in the 1920s. Carla Kaplan, noting Hurston's geographically dynamic career and providing a corrective understanding of the writer's place in the Harlem Renaissance, draws our attention to her newly discovered stories set in Harlem, such as "The Book of Harlem" and "The Monkey Junk" written in the 1920s. Yet, according to Kaplan, these stories depict Harlem only as "background setting" with negative connotations and prove that the place did not capture Hurston's imagination sufficiently (240). Kaplan does suggest the importance of reading Hurston's work in association with Harlem: As a place of contradiction and conflicts with diverse discourses concerning the question of race or the evaluation of black art, Harlem "probably helped to influence" Hurston's "insistence on the freedom to be 'betwixt and between' or both/and, rather than either/or" (242). Although Kaplan provides an important foothold for us to read Hurston's work from the volatile aspect of the Harlem Renaissance, her argument does not fully engage the Harlem stories themselves and makes rather a speculative observation based on the writer's biographical facts. Examining how Hurston's story embodies the way of being "betwixt and between," I argue, provides us with a way of reconsidering the assumed boundary of the local cultural movement by foregrounding its dynamics among the constituents of the community. As a writer who was also deeply invested in oral traditions of folklore and the ways in which black people are perceived as a category by white people, Hurston stages Harlem as a space with a linguistic mode of belonging in "Story in

3. Cheryl A. Wall points out that this geographical distance from Harlem was shared among female writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance and thereby calls for a feminist revision of the movement (10). As a result, Wall's chapter on Hurston focuses on the writer's work on Southern folktales and her migrant career, whereas I aim to reexamine Hurston's relationship with Harlem through the story set in this particular Northern space.

4. For example, John Lowe briefly mentions "Story in Harlem Slang" as what is to "master" the treatment of Harlem materials (315), but he regards Hurston's Harlem stories more as an exception and focuses on her writing of the Southern landscape.

Harlem Slang.” The story thematizes what Kaplan characterizes as in-betweenness as a way of belonging to a community by paradoxically illustrating a sense of displacement felt by the characters. By examining the seemingly contradictory relationship with the community I will argue that the form as well as the content of “Story in Harlem Slang” embody the convoluted dynamics of the Harlem community and its force.

Published in 1942 in the *American Mercury*, “Story in Harlem Slang” enables us to understand the long-lasting impact of the Harlem community on the public imagination. Although scholars seem to agree that the movement ended by the 1940s, the story stems from not so much the dwindling cultural impetus as the ongoing fascination with the linguistic vibrance of Harlem. Cab Calloway, a popular bandleader in Harlem, published a lexicon used by musicians in the community as *Cab Calloway’s Cat-Ologue: Hepster’s Dictionary* in 1938. As an official reference book at the New York Public Library, it went through six editions by 1944. The demand and recognition of the Harlesemese dictionary suggests that Hurston’s story was published amid the continuing interest in the distinct culture of Harlem. The editors’ note embedded in the beginning of the story foregrounds Harlem’s significance as the largest black community in the nation, while capturing its spatial uniqueness: “a city within a city,” whose slang “has enriched the American vocabulary” (Hurston, “Story” 84). The explicit attention to Harlem as a culturally unique space within New York City frames the fictional story as a form of dictionary, as the main narrative is followed by a three-page glossary of the Harlem slang at the end. Furthermore, inserted throughout the main narrative are illustrations of several vernacular words. Albert Hirschfeld, a caricaturist known for his drawings of Broadway celebrities, published *Harlem as Seen by Hirschfeld* in 1941, which collected his illustrations of the people in the community. His drawings, some from the collection and others produced for the *American Mercury*, appear on several pages of Hurston’s story and provide it with a function of a picture dictionary. The readers see, for instance, an illustration of a black man reading a book with the glasses, along with the caption “Conk Buster.” In the glossary at the end of the story, we can find an entry that explains the phrase means “an intellectual Negro” (Hurston, “Story” 94).

The mixture of text and illustrations, however, raises a question as to what kind of reading experience it produces, since the inserted illustrations are not always related to the story’s main narrative. In fact, some illustrated words are not used in the story or do not even appear in the glossary. For example, a drawing of a woman and child is captioned with “Chippie and Child,” but there are no such characters in the story and the glossary does not list any entry for the term “chippie,” suggesting it is a more generic term used to indicate a prostitute. In this way, the illustrations are not so much helping the readers to understand the story’s slang as diverting their attention from the narrative by populating the pages with anonymous figures and dislocated words. Consequently, the act of reading goes through a non-linear, back-and-forth movement that involves the main narrative, illustrations, and glossary: reading the story leads to the glossary, while the illustrations also separately guide the reader to the glossary, whether there is an answer or not.

Such a structure of the story is closely intertwined with our understanding of the characters as well. The following passage introduces Jelly, a male prostitute whom the story centers around, but it also directs the readers unfamiliar with the slang to the glossary, while an illustration on the same page provides another unrelated man:

So Jelly got into his *zoot suit with the reet pleats* and got out to skivver around and do himself some good. At 132nd Street, he spied one of his colleagues on the opposite sidewalk, standing in front of a café. Jelly figured that if he *bull-skated* just right, he might confidence Sweet Back out of *a thousand on a plate*. Maybe a shot of *scrap-iron* or a *reefer*. (Hurston, “Story” 85; italics mine)

The italicized words are listed in the glossary and without knowing their meanings, it is difficult to fully understand the relational dynamics between Jelly and Sweet Back, another male prostitute. Meanwhile, the same page shows an illustration of a man with a cigar and top hat, captioned “Blow Top.” The phrase is not used on this page, and Jelly is not clearly the illustrated man; Jelly is described as someone who stayed in bed until noon so that he does not need to eat or who checks his shoe soles to see if the leather is not coming off. When the readers refer to the glossary, they find an entry for the expression: “Blowing your top—getting very angry; occasionally used to mean, ‘He’s doing fine!’” (94). Presumably used for the second meaning, the illustration inserts a man who seemingly stands opposite to Jelly’s social status. It is also notable that the glossary does not directly explain the illustration, since the entry also includes the meaning of “getting very angry.” Thus, reading the story with the aid of the glossary entails the act of translating not so much for understanding the story as for being aware of the linguistic boundary that needs to be crossed several times so that the readers can determine the meaning of the word. Such a movement between different sections of the story is already symbolized by the name of the protagonist. “Jelly,” as the narrator explains in the beginning, is not his real name. Naming himself “Jelly,” instead of using his birth name Marvel, he literally joins the linguistic community of Harlem, as the glossary lists “Jelly” as a word meaning “sex” (95). Although “Sweet Back” does not appear in the glossary, an earlier version of the story, which exists as an unpublished manuscript titled “Harlemese Slanguage,” also lists “Sweet Back” and defines its meaning as a “pimp.” The ways in which the characters traverse the glossary and main narrative bring into relief the story’s structure that hinges on the movement between the formal boundaries.

It is notable that the linguistic boundary seems to function as a way of forming a communal belonging for the characters, since the story is mainly driven by their vernacular conversations. Jelly and Sweet Back, as male prostitutes working on the street of Harlem, live with financial instability and thus suggest a relationship of rivalry. At the same time, their desire to impress each other by hiding their individual struggle leads to shared mannerism. For example, asked by Sweet Back how he is doing, Jelly says, “‘Oh, just like de bear—I ain’t nowhere. Like de bear’s brother, I ain’t no further. Like de bear’s daughter—ain’t got a quarter’” (Hurston, “Story” 86). As the glossary defines, “The bear” is “the confession of poverty” (96). Then, Jelly’s instant regret of being honest and Sweet Back’s sarcastic reply illustrate the tension around the ways in which they act in front of each other. Sweet Back immediately “talks down to” Jelly and points out that Jelly was bragging about how well he was doing the night before. In response, Jelly pretends he was joking about being poor and even challenges Sweet Back for a bet: he puts his hand in a pocket and pretends to pull out imaginary money. The interaction between these characters is mainly motivated by this kind of theatrical talk and posing. Moreover, their behavior mirrors each other, as Sweet Back also tries to pull non-existent money out of his pocket, and thereby emphasizes the identification between the characters living on the street in Harlem. Reading the narrative through the characters’ conversations and actions, the

readers learn the ways in which they belong to the community through the shared understanding of the particular ethos.

Yet such a sense of belonging turns out to be no less elusive than the structural movement of reading through the narrative, illustrations, and glossary. The phrase “my people” is used twice in the brief story, as if it symbolizes a connection among the people in the community, but it turns out to foreground its dissonant relationality. When a black woman passes by and says she is from Georgia, Sweet Back asks if she is from Delaware in Georgia. Jelly then says, “My people! My people! Free schools and dumb jigs! Man, how you going to put Delaware in Georgy? You ought to know dat’s in Maryland” (Hurstun, “Story” 91). The confused geographical sense suggests the closedness of the community, but the indiscriminate references to the states also represent Harlem as the place where people come from different parts of the nation as the result of the Great Migration. What this conversation leads to is the fact that Jelly himself came from Alabama. In this context, the label of “my people” is used to mark less the connection among the people than the distance Jelly keeps from “dumb jigs,” while he himself proves the shared ignorance about geography. His addressing “my people” thus revolves around an affective sense of distance from others where people move through different loci even though they physically stand together. The phrase is also used by Sweet Back later in the story to reiterate the sense of distance. The woman, who is well aware of these men’s purpose, eventually runs away, threatening that she would scream “like a pretty white woman,” if they try to touch her: “The boys were ready to flee, but she turned suddenly and rocked on off with her ear-rings snapping and her heels popping. ‘My people! My people!’ Sweet Back sighed” (92). As the passage centers on a repelling dynamic between the characters—the men try to “flee” and the woman runs away—the two men and the woman meeting on the street in Harlem are loosely connected as the “people,” alternately used by Jelly and Sweet Back. Nevertheless, the word paradoxically disturbs a harmonious sense of belonging, since it does not allow the characters to comfortably stay in each other’s presence.

The use of the phrase “my people” resonates with Hurstun’s own ambivalent relationship with other black people, which is shown through her autobiographical narrative. In *Dust Tracks on a Road*, published in 1942, she titles a chapter “My People! My People!” and explains that the phrase had been familiar to her for life as it is “forced outward by pity, scorn and hopeless resignation” (215). The chapter elaborates on Hurstun’s observation on the complexity surrounding the concept of “race” from a rather detached perspective, whereas the original, unpublished manuscript of the same chapter accentuates her own experience in New York in relation to the issue of who are “her” people. In the manuscript, Hurstun describes one moment when she took a subway in New York with a friend. Emphasizing their educational status as college graduates by naming them “Barnard” and “Yale” respectively, Hurstun observes “two scabby-looking Negroes” sitting next to them (Hurstun, *Dust Tracks* 292). The following passage explains how some people become highly self-conscious about the “forced grouping” with other uneducated or less refined black people from the perspective of white people (293). She explains that those who detest such a grouping say to themselves “My race but not My taste” or “My skinfolks but not my kinfolks,” but “sadly over all, they keep signing, ‘My People, My People!’” (294) Hurstun’s keen attention to the internal divide within the black community echoes her dilemma regarding racial justice in *Dust Tracks*, as she raises a question as to the conflict between a principle of racial solidarity and practical concern with one’s daily life. In one chapter, she witnesses a black man enter the barber shop where she is working and demand he be served

there, even though the shop only accepts white customers. Noting that all the workers were black and nevertheless came together to expel the man from the store in fear of losing their patrons and jobs, Hurston contemplates on how the “racial thing” faces a challenge of the mundane demand for living (164). Living with other black people in the same geographical space, but not in the same educational, class, or ideological status, Hurston presents her dilemma in the autobiographical account. “Story in Harlem Slang” intensifies such a conflicting relationship further, as the phrase “my people” is used by both Jelly and Sweet Back and thereby disseminates the distancing gesture among the people who belong to the same class. After emphasizing the common ethos in which the two men are living through their language and mannerism, the story introduces the phrase “my people” not only as a way of responding to an externally imposed grouping but also as a mode of reimagining how the people belong to the supposedly homogenous community along with miscellaneous factors that can separate them from each other.

What “Story in Harlem Slang” brings into relief is that such a constant movement of distancing becomes a major driving force for the constituents to live within the community, as Jelly’s sense of nostalgia symbolizes at the end. Hazel Carby refers to the above-quoted passage about “my people” in *Dust Tracks* as an example that shows Hurston’s elitist gaze and displacement of “the dramatic transformations within black culture” (31-32). Whereas Carby’s interpretation stems from her argument that Hurston’s career as an anthropologist romanticizes the rural Southern black folk through a mediated, even colonial, representation in her fiction, “Story in Harlem Slang” instead incorporates the South as part of Harlem *because of* the displacing force that operates within the community. After the woman runs away, Sweet Back brags and says “Oh, let her go” “magnanimously,” whereas Jelly is not even engaged with him anymore:

[Sweet Back] glanced sidewise at Jelly to see if he was convincing. But Jelly’s thoughts were far away. He was remembering those full, hot meals he had left back in Alabama to seek wealth and splendor in Harlem without working. He had even forgotten to look cocky and rich. (Hurston, “Story” 92)

The obsessive acting and mirroring of each other are replaced with Jelly’s distance from Sweet Back, presented as his nostalgia for the place he left to come to Harlem. In this passage, the longing for the past life is channeled into the present desire for food and thus Jelly’s presence in Harlem is characterized with the mnemonic connection with what he had left outside the community.⁵ Jelly at once does and does not belong to Harlem, as he lives in accordance with the code on the street, while the pretense that enables him to live in this way can be dropped at any moment. The ending of the story even further enhances the sense of displacement, when the final illustration is inserted between the story and the glossary. Captioned “Stompin’ at the Savoy,” Hirschfeld’s one-page illustration captures people dancing at the Savoy Ballroom, which was

5. Dorothea Löbbermann uses Pierre Nora’s concept of *les lieux de mémoire* and argues that Harlem serves as one of such sites of memory, as the writers both in the 1920s and the late twentieth century used “a nostalgic view as well as a critical (re)interpretation of the place and era” to respond to the contradictory public images of Harlem as a thriving center of black culture and a symbol of inner-city problems (212). In her argument, Harlem thus becomes one of the sites “which connect the past to the present, the individual to the group, the real to the imaginary” (213). Jelly’s nostalgia, on the other hand, seems to emerge as an antithesis to such a mnemonic construction in that the sentiment tenaciously remains personal as a desire for food and does not guarantee his belonging to either group in Alabama or Harlem through his imaginative association with the places. Hurston’s story thus inserts the memory not as a force to construct a space for Jelly but as a moment that marks the suspension of his belonging to the past or present.

known as “The World’s Finest Ballroom.” As a depiction of the bustling nightlife at Harlem, the illustration follows Jelly’s nostalgia only to intensify the distance between him and the site of the lively and “rich” culture. The “people” in Harlem occupy the same urban space, only to invoke the community’s dynamic of repelling and attracting its constituents, as Jelly’s desire shows with its two directions, that is, the desire to belong and the desire for what is left outside, while the narrative and illustration once again make the readers cross the social boundaries within Harlem.⁶

Hurston’s 1942 story set in Harlem may not have gained enough critical attention because of the spatial and temporal anomaly compared to her other major works: it is too close to Harlem spatially among her archive that keeps drawing on the South, while it is too distant from the Harlem Renaissance temporally. On the contrary, “Story in Harlem Slang” was published in a close association with the Harlem culture that was still drawing people’s attention in the 1940s. More importantly, its use of the slang thematizes relational dynamics that resonate with Hurston’s (and critics’) consistent attention to how she represents “people” of various geographical spaces and identities gathering in one corner of the city. It does not mean that this story undermines the solidarity or cultural impact of Harlem; in fact, it emphasizes the force of the collective presence of the people in the community with the lively voice of the characters, even without the sense of stability that would allow them to be settled in the fixed locus. In other words, the constituents of the community may not fully situate themselves within the fixed boundary but realize their existence through the movement between belonging and displacement, through the suspension of their identification. The force of Hurston’s story lies in the fact that such a way of being present in the community is to be shared by the readers because of the use of the slang: the readers enter the linguistic community while they are also required to refer to the glossary outside the main narrative. In this way, the use of the slang in Hurston’s story literalizes the ways in which the local community opens its boundary to those who are attracted, but at the same time requires that boundary to be recognized time and again. Through the act of translating and reading between languages, Hurston’s story projects the way of effecting the constituents onto the readers’ experience and thereby shows the powerful dynamics of Harlem as an aesthetic mode of writing. “Story in Harlem Slang” thus enables us to understand how the constituents of the community live between places without tethering themselves to the fixed positionality. The “city within a city” may not appear often in Hurston’s works, but its vibrant linguistic culture emerges in “Story in Harlem Slang” as part of the writer’s consistent theme that revisits an assumed collectivity of the people by defying a simplified categorization based on geographical, racial, or occupational identities.

6. Before published as “Story in Harlem Slang” in the *American Mercury*, Hurston apparently wrote different versions, which are held at the Yale University library: one is “Harlem Slangage” that became the glossary in the published story and the other is titled “Now You Cookin’ with Gas.” In the latter, the narrative does not end with Jelly’s nostalgia and suggests an editorial decision to emphasize the sentiment in the published version. In the manuscript, Jelly’s contemplation of Alabama is followed by the descriptions of what defied his expectations in Harlem, such as the treatment from white people or the lack of opportunities to earn money easily. The narrative then brings back Jelly to Harlem where he retains his posing to Sweet Back by pretending to go and get his car bought by his “lady.” The narrator reveals that he in fact goes to a hairdresser to “mooch,” as she usually gives him small errands in return for some change (Hurston, “Now” 9). This version brings back Jelly from his nostalgia to the life in Harlem and dilutes the sense of displacement. The decision to publish the story without this ending—a decision made either by Hurston or editor—accentuates Jelly’s displaced presence that belongs at once to Alabama and Harlem, as illustrated by the desire of two directions.

Works Cited

- Carby, Hazel. "The Politics of Fiction, Anthropology, and the Folk: Zora Neale Hurston." *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, edited by Geneviève Fabre and Robert O'Meally, Oxford UP, 1994, pp. 28-44.
- Hemenway, Robert E. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*. U of Illinois P, 1977.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Dust Trucks on a Road*. 1942. 2nd ed., U of Illinois P, 1984.
- . "Now You Cookin' with Gas." *Zora Neale Hurston Collection*. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/16732234. Accessed 27 August 2022.
- . "Story in Harlem Slang." *American Mercury*, no. 22, July 1942, pp. 84-96.
- Kaplan, Carla. "'Betwixt and between': Zora Neale Hurston In—and Out—of Harlem." *A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance*, edited by Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2015, pp. 231-247. doi.org/10.1002/9781118494110. Accessed 27 August 2022.
- Löbbermann, Dorothea. "Harlem as a Memory Place: Reconstructing the Harlem Renaissance in Space." *Temples for Tomorrow: Looking Back at the Harlem Renaissance*, edited by Geneviève Fabre and Michel Feith, Indiana UP, 2001, pp. 210-221.
- Lowe, John. "Hurston, Humor, and the Harlem Renaissance." *Harlem Renaissance Re-examined: A Revised and Expanded Edition*, edited by Victor A. Kramer and Robert A. Russ, Whitston Publishing Company, 1997, pp. 305-331.
- Wall, Cheryl A. *Woman of the Harlem Renaissance*. Indiana UP, 1995.