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Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road*

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Declaration

We hereby declared that this dissertation entitled: *Ambiguities of The Self in Zora Neale Hurston's Dust Tracks on a Road* submitted to Mohammed Boudiaf University of “M’sila”. For the award of the Master Degree of English Literature and Civilization is a record of original work done by us. And the information derived has been duly acknowledged in the text along with list of references provided.

Signature

Date

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It is with genuine gratitude and warm regard that I dedicate this work to my family and loved ones without whom this work would ever have been completed

*My precious **mother Fatiha** who believed in me and pushed me forward. Thank you for your support and your endless love. She encouraged me to pursue my dreams. My dear **father Mabrouk** who always meet my needs. He never hesitate to provide me with emotional, spiritual support. He taught of me value hard work, he always has been the source of my strength.*

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To all who love me and knows me.

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*I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents for their endless love,
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List of Abbreviations

NAACP: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

DTR: *Dust Tracks on Road*

Abstract

This project is about Zora Neale Hurston's construction of multiple self and her stance from the racial issues in her ambiguous autobiography *Dust Tracks on Road*. It also sheds light on the reality of African Americans in the United States, and women's sufferance in a racist society. Hurston's work is an imaginative and creative summary of her rise from the rural south to a prominent position among leading writers and intellectuals. *Dust Tracks* is considered a highly regarded work as well as controversial for its refusal to investigate the effects of racism or segregation. Throughout the autobiography, Hurston maintains a positive, invincible attitude. White readers seemed to appreciate her lack of commentary on racial issues; black critics, on the other hand, found this unconscionable and accused her of pandering to whites. In order to reveal the ambiguity of this work, Hurston's autobiography will be thoroughly examined and interpreted by relying on Black criticism. This thesis is divided into two main chapters: the first is a discussion of the socio-historical context of the autobiography, which provides a better understanding of the issues discussed, and the second chapter is an analysis of issues such as identity and race, also to define the style that Zora employs when writing about issues that are extremely important to her and her race. **Key words:** African American literature. The Harlem Renaissance. Race. Self

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General

Introduction

African American literature is a body of work written by African Americans. Who have engaged in a constructive, if often controversial discourse with American letters since the pre-Revolutionary War period. As a result, a literature rich in expressive nuance and social insight has emerged, providing insightful analyses of American identities and history. Even though African American literature has received considerable critical acclaim since, 1970. It has been recognized internationally as well as nationally since the late eighteenth century.

African American slave narratives and autobiographies have been extremely valuable not only historically, but also in depicting minority feelings and opinions. It is critical to leave account material, which differs from the standard history teller supremacist viewpoint, because it aids in knowing the truth behind a country that has mishandled its authority. As a result of colored people demanding for their quest and recovery of identity and customs, white people eventually recognized Africans and accepted their distinctions.

Over the years writers such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, W.E.B du Bois and Zora Neale Hurston have contributed to the growth of this new genre of literature, in which they write about their pains, fears, desires and to express freely that there are talented authors among the African Americans. In addition, they have led the Afro-Americans literature to be universally taught in great universities around the world especially in its thriving periods in the history of Black people as Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance witnessed the flourishing of culture, especially in the arts, the most significant literary movement. Artists used literary, musical, theatrical, and visual arts to reimaging "the Negro" in a way that was free of the white preconceptions that had shaped Black people's relationship to their ancestry and each other. They also wanted to break free from Victorian moral norms and bourgeois embarrassment about aspects of their lives that could support racist beliefs in the eyes of whites. The movement, which was never controlled by a single school of thought but rather marked by heated debate, provided the foundation for all subsequent African American literature and had a huge impact on succeeding Black literature and consciousness worldwide.

One of Harlem Renaissance's most well –known female characters is Zora Neale Hurston, who is regarded as one of the most important and influential African American writers, the most prominent and productive black folklorist on the continent; Hurston wrote a remarkable number of books, her works merit serious consideration and current literary theory offers new and different ways to appreciate them especially her autobiography.

Dust Tracks on a Road was controversial because it refused to investigate the effect racism and segregation. It has perplexed critics and scholars since its publication. Throughout this book, Hurston maintains a bright invincible attitude; white readers seemed to like her lack of remark on racial issues; black critics, on the other hand, considered this immoral and accused her of playing up to whites.

Therefore, this research aims to shed light on Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography; the findings of this study will lift the veil on the ambiguities of the self

and reveal the truth of black folks by exploring racial politics in this work, in addition, the investigation will reveal the reality of the non-white in America.

Hurston's autobiography was a source of curiosity for many researchers as countless recent articles have been written and arguing comments on this topic. Among the researchers who attempted to deal with the multiple self of Zora Neale Hurston in her autobiography are Pierre walker in his article *Zora Neale Hurston and the post-modern self in Dust Tracks*. The study declared that this autobiography was featured by complexity in representation; he argues that Zora Neale Hurston does not present the real Zora truthfully in her own autobiography, that she played the role of the trickery; he added that *Dust Tracks on a Road* violates the common convention of autobiographical writing. In addition, Maya Angelou claimed that the real Zora cannot be reached yet and it is an impossible mission.

Furthermore, Amy M. Elliot in his article: *What a character: Zora Neale Hurston's autobiographies* (2001), claimed that *Dust Tracks on a Road's* authenticity was questioned and that it was an ambiguous work because it shared certain similarities with James Weldon Johnson's autobiography of *an EX-Colored Man*. Both narratives share various similarities according to her, particularly the controversial dealing with racial issues because Hurston preached one viewpoint while practicing another.

We were extremely curious about Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography, like several other researchers, and the ambiguity of this work is what motivated us to undertake this research because scholars considered this work as never consistent with itself, not with the conventions of autobiography in general or those of African

American autobiography, nor with the facts of Zora Neale Hurston's life and her work.

Therefore, this research is going to analyze and interpret Zora Neale Hurston's construction of multiple selves and racial politics in her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*. This study will apply the critical race theory which focuses on the idea that race is a socially constructed categorization that is used to oppress and exploit people of color, rather than an inherent, biologically grounded trait of physically diverse groupings of human beings.

At the end of this study the following major questions will be answered:

1. How does Zora Neale Hurston construct her multiple selves in her autobiography *Dust Tracks on Road*?
2. What is her racial politics in *Dust Tracks on a Road*?
3. How far did the African American women suffer in a racist society?

With the presentation of this study, it seems appropriate to provide a brief overview of how this dissertation will be organized; the work will be divided into two main chapters, each chapter will be divided into sections and subsections. The first chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the historical background, focusing on the African American literature and its history. Second, the chapter will provide an overview of the historical period in which Zora Neale Hurston lived, the Harlem Renaissances, as literary movement with its main origins, Harmelites and its groups. The second chapter is devoted to a deep analysis of Hurston's autobiography relying

It is hoped that what might emerge from shedding light on Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road* would lift the veil on the different

concerns of African American women writings in general and Zora Neale Hurston in particular. In addition, it would raise the mystification on this work and author especially her stance on the race issue. The importance of this work lies in the fact that it contributes to the reader's understanding of the race problem through another perspective because of the distinctiveness of the selected novel.

Chapter One

The Socio-historical context of *Dust Tracks*

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of African-American literature. To gain a better understanding, it is necessary to contextualize the reader by providing an overview of Black autobiography, as this is the literary genre in which the novel is set. Furthermore, the research shed light on the Harlem Renaissance decade, which is useful as a socio-historical context for comprehending the various circumstances surrounding the novel's writing. The thesis seeks to understand the theme of the Harlem Renaissance and Zora Neale Hurston's role in it primarily through the lens of literary history. To begin, we will present its main group, and then we will attempt to outline the main Harlemites Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Alain Locke. Most importantly, Then there's the author and her autobiography. Finally, the chapter concludes with Critical Reception of *Dust Tracks*.

1. Overview of African American literature

African American literature is literature written by and about the African American initially, it was a cry of anguish from thousand people in plantations in the south America the story of the African American , in particular ,constructs the scope and awareness of his/ her presence and identity in the United States of America. In generally, there is no consensus on its origins, but it is widely assumed that it dates back to first group of slaves brought to the new world. As Bois writes "the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self"(Dubois9). It is universally accepted that African-American history has been a paradox of astounding triumph in the face of enormous human tragedy (Taylor 10).

In the same context, the African poet Phillis Wheatley wrote poetry in 1773 *On Being Brought from Africa to America* to describe their journey, which was a

forced migration Without their arrival to the American territories, we cannot discuss the African American literature which based on their experiences there; they contribute to the emergence of new types of minority literature. It provides a unique experience that cannot be replicated by literature from other continents .It arose as a result of historical and social events that they are exposed to, such as violent organizations and aggressive laws. Beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing to the present, African American literary production reflect the evolution of Black people.

Toni Morrison claims that we've always imagined ourselves to be the subjects of our own stories, both witnesses and participants in our own lives. We are not the other. (Morrison 208) Similarly to literature from other parts of the world, African American literature has had a significant impact on how African Americans have historically perceived themselves and have been viewed by the rest of the world. In this vein, African American literature has defined itself and reached a kind golden age. As result literature plays an important role in the lives of Black people. Generally according to Hughes, an African –American writer needs to direct his work toward the establishment of purely ethnic culture. There is without a doubt, a vast field of unused material ready for the American Negro artist who can avoid the constraints imposed by the more advanced members of his own group.(Hughes3)

Furthermore, African American authors have had a similar burden of trying to represent not only oneself but also the African American ethnic origins. These stories not only erase the zero-image of Black people in human history, but also in society today, and they tell Black people that they can look forward to the future. These narratives about black slavery depict the past, present, or future.(Blauwbloeme 59)Hence Black authors write to address serious issues such as uplifting the black

culture and the living conditions, limiting racial inequality, portraying the African American character, which includes correcting negative stereotype and meanings regarding their skin color, in which they always represent "blackness as symbol of vice, Depravity, inferiority, lower position and the physical ugliness ".Fanon continues "Negroes are savages, brutes, illiterates " .(Fanon 127)In reality, they are writing at first to inform the reader about the violent slave system which devalues their worth as human beings deserving of the some worth as their white colleagues and redraw their self image as they are. According to Hughes "since it is agreed that is abnormal for the Negro to reach the field of literature and arts. A black man writing poetry! How strange! ".Thought the Negroes could occupy a lesser position" or a clown How amusing! Ambiguous! "(Hughes 4).Because of this, white Americans disliked being roughly equivalent with marginalized groups"The old subconscious "white is best"(Hughes 5) rules applies here, to the point that they referred African Americans Blacks and only blacks, in addition to the physical restrictions and rules enforced racial segregation, the belief that they dominant race while African Americans were inferior and weak, to the point they were ashamed for their race. However, authors who are the voice of their community such as Hughes Langton in his famous pottery *I too sing America* express their opposition. "We, the younger generation of Black artists intend to express our unique dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. We are pleased if white people are pleased .it makes no difference if they are not. (Hughes 5)

As result no one ever imagined that African Americans would be able to create their own literature that would become universal and triumphant. As an initial goal was simply to" make myself known" in front of white audience.(Fanon,126) As stated by Hájková the first two African American poetry lucky terry Bars fight and

Jupiter Hammonan *Evening Thought Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries.*(Hájková13) They appear to be the first attempt their initiative aims to transform primitive people up from brutal to appropriate people to be as the white race.

Besides, after acknowledging the origins of African American literature, it is necessary to become acquainted with its main issues highlighted .Because African American literature is inextricably linked to African American history; it has become relatively simple to understand people's histories in order to arrive at themes in their literature. Slavery is widely regarded as the founding act of African American writing and reflecting their suffering and desire for freedom The African-American literary tradition implies that African-American culture is a suppressed people's culture. Slavery has a long history in African-American history. (Miniotaité 5)

Study of African-American literature and culture ,in general , should begin with an examination of the African-American oral tradition (which includes work songs, Rhymes, Jokes and riddles, spirituals, blues, legends, folk tales).The African Americans touchstone are orally transmitted traditions song, blues, folktales, that are unique to them. Writers ensure that their history is not erased, that their speech patterns are preserved, that life of African American life appears to mean storing in their experiences, that they are observed a distinct race, there no doubt that sermon by Henry Mc Neal Turner *How long How long O Heaven-* considered the earliest aspect of oral traditions, due to its emphasis on racial oppression of black in the south.

Going through, African American literature history, one can see that it includes wide range writing from colonial period to the present day. Begin with the colonial period when the issue of slavery compelled slaves to write their daily lives under the evil of slavery in the form libratory narratives or slaves narratives which

considered as primary sources that African American used to recorder their life and expression as salve unique and single to African American heritage. It began in nineteenth century, and the authors of salve narrative are Africans who escaped slavery. In early African Americans Literature Slave narrative is a crucial detail. Slaves had learned to conceal their true feelings about their hard living conditions beneath masters“Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from the wild beast of Slavery, northerners consent to act the part of bloodhounds”.(Jacobs39)

Slave narratives told the stories of antebellum afro-Americans who escaped slavery and immigrated to the north. They are personal records of former-slaves. Overall, it is about former slaves exposing the slave establishment's wrongdoings. They are numerous examples including :*Henry Bibb's Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself*,and Harriet Jacob's (Linda Brent's) *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Herself*.Following the abolition of slavery, many African American writers continued to write non-fiction writing about the lives of the Black people in America. *the President`s Daughter* written by William Wells Brown, was the first complete novel .The body of literature during the reconstruction era introduced professional writers and figures such as T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*. The process emancipation African American, writers, artist and musicians contributed significantly to the enhancement Blackness during Harlem renaissances, which are considered to a golden age in African American literature, as they enticed white supremacists to view their work, brought the black experience to forefront of universal cultural history.African American authors have progressed from discussing racial inequalities and persecution to other important issues in American society such

as development and technology, and they play an essential role in African American literately position.

2. Black Autobiography

Among the diverse types of African American literature, the autobiography takes precedence. This assumption could explained by the fact that it is not only one of the oldest forms of literary expression by African Americans, but it has also managed to remain a genre that powerfully chooses to speak of the common man over the years . Gates argue:” Of the various genres that comprise the African-American literary tradition, none has played a role as central as has black autobiography (gates 3)In *.Bearing Witness: election from African American Autobiography in the Twentieth Century* Edited by H.L gates notes that at the same time that black autobiographers worked to uplift their communities ,they embraced and celebrated their blackness .Despite their general opposition to colonization ,many blacks made pilgrimages to Africa .they were inspired by what they discovered .They extolled their forefather's virtues .They boasted about role in ancient civilization. Gates have been added for many of America's early Black writers the autobiography served as a springboard to literary fame .It is was as if black could only enter the world of letters once they had accepted their existence, viewed their personal experiences objectively, and shared them with other .Many black whether poets, dramatist and novelist began their literary careers by writing autobiographies.

It is clear that the African American autobiographical heritage includes the narrative structure of African Americans' shared past, the portrayal of the state of economic and political and social matters among many African Americans, and the presentation of an imperfect self. There is long history African American

autobiography. The genre also had told effective life anecdotes and compiled the history of African American race in America over time. (McKay96)

African American autobiographers strive to describe their community's shared experiences. William L. Andrews notes that: Perhaps more than any other form of literary form in black American letters, autobiography has been recognized and celebrated since its inception as a powerful means of addressing and altering sociopolitical ,as well as cultural realities in the United States. (*Critical Essays* 1)A set of characteristics that have made African American, through their work, community representatives

In addition to using personal experience to discuss the political and social condition of the African-American community, another author lists the following additional distinct characteristics of the African-American autobiography: "Journey through chaos (oppression, racial discrimination, and displacement); description of the instability of blacks' relationships with American institutions (such as slavery, and an oppressive government); erosion of faith in the American Dream, and a sense of negativity concerning the quality of black life in America." (Kent166)

The central themes running through these autobiographies is the need for recognition of black manhood while sold into slavery, forbidden by law and imprisoned in a life marked by hardship, humiliation and disempowerment. The loads he shared did not deconstruct the black autobiography. Instead of being born servitude, they overcome poverty, enslavement, and mistreatment. In fact, autobiography was meditative for both the writers and the readers because it allowed the blacks to express themselves without being influenced by whites. Furthermore, Black autobiography is commonly regarded as writing more about writer's personal experiences Butterfield claim that the self of black autobiography is a soldier in a long historic march toward Canaan, not an individual with a private career, but the self is envisioned as a member of an oppressed social group, with ties and responsibilities to other members. It is a conscious political entity that draws on the group's previous

experience. Bressler continues establishes new ideologies, racial boundaries, and racial prejudice it also acknowledges and incorporates past African American literary works, major historical movements that have influenced African American writings, and previous and contemporary attitudes toward African Americans.(Bressler244)

Black autobiography filled with such demands, and glorifications of Africa and blackness, the autobiographies were important sources of inspiration and pride for literate blacks. The autobiographies were full of hope to racial equality .Authors as from Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X, to Richard Wright; Gustavus Vassa to H. Rap Brown, William Wells Brown, and their central theme has been always the same: they all demand for freedom.

As result of African American autobiography depict memorable moments of Africa's glorious history. Despite living in a nation where a black man had no privileges that a white man was morally obliged to respect, the autobiographers continued to survive healthy lives, their childhood experiences were as happy as most children's, and despite the fact that slavery and economic discrimination nearly tortured many of people, they were impressively able to promote family life, instilling moral standards in their children, and trying to educate and offering them optimism for the world. Men and women of color were harshly realistic, self-reliant, and prideful. Because they were filled with such requests and romanticized notions of Africa and Blacks pride for educated blacks. Many Negroes were encouraged by starting to read the autobiographies because they were so optimistic, so dedicated to racial superiority.

Paul John Eakin describe another aspect of African American Autobiography .this is its rejection of the traditional autobiographical traditions of finished self and a

description of a model life, using Malcolm X's Autobiography as an example " (Eakin160)

3. The Origins of Africans American Autobiography

African Americans history is frequently divided into four periods: The following section will look at and categories African American autobiographies into four historical periods.

3.1. Slavery

According to Loggins personal memoirs have made most valuable contributions to American literature have been in the form of. (Loggins41). Slave narratives written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be traced back to the origins of African American autobiography. The slave narratives were written by fugitive slaves and graphically depicted the brutalities of slave ownership. The quest for fairness and justice was recurring themes in these narratives were; while surviving in a racist society Since 1661, when they were sentenced to slavery in a land sold on liberty, African Americans have had compelling life stories to tell. They have created a long series of narratives detailing their fortunes. (Williams2)

Using various literary genres, black American writers recount the days of slavery and describe the dehumanization of black slaves. Oral histories, poetry, and autobiographies are examples of works that provided moral lessons and demonstrated that the black tongue is not broken (Samuels 04). As shown by Gustavus and Venture Smith, in their slave narratives, they describe the beauty of their motherland as well as brutality of the Middle Passage.

The antebellum slave narrative is one of most popular and long lasting common black autobiographies many of these fugitives daring escapes, as well as their records of their pain and misery were so compelling among northern white, they aimed to "calculated to exert a very wide influence on public opinion" (Dubey566) that narrators commonly become greatest sellers of the abolitionist movement. The slave narratives were written to affirm former slaves' humanity and to show that they too could be reliable chroniclers of Southern life and black folk character "The narratives written by former, sometimes fugitive slaves, present individual and group history as well as arguments against slavery itself".(Dixon 30)*The Interesting Life and Narrative of Olaudah Equiano a Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture*. Slave narratives are utterly irrational and harsh relationship between white slaveholders and oppressed black in the United State during the time of slavery.

3.2. The Reconstruction Era

During that time, autobiography was less concerned with depicting the horrors of slavery and more involved with the adaptations of the new life of former slaves in North America they faced the difficult task of assimilating into American society as during Reconstruction Era. For the first several years after 1865, African Americans had unparalleled rights and liberties, such as legal citizenship, the ability to vote, and the right to run for political office. Autobiographical writings were published during this time period. This period in African-American autobiographical literature is best demonstrated by Booker T. Washington autobiography, *Up from Slavery* along with the *Souls of Black Folk* by Du Bois. The writers of post bellum black autobiography mentioned paved above the way for the new generation of Afro-American writers, particularly Black women writers, who faced greater repression

although most remarkable writers of Black autobiography in post bellum era were men, women writers such as Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou and others Afro-American women struggle to represent their self.

3.3. The Civil Rights

At the turn of the twentieth century, a significant literary movements emerged the Harlem Renaissance, where an increase in the publication of African American poetry, fiction, drama, and essays. A substantial number of these works were submitted in *The Crisis*, the influential NAACP journal edited by W.E.B. Dubois. In this regard works of literature during this era mostly autobiography emphasized the sufferings of African Americans in the country, demanded civil and political rights, and asserted African Americans' black identity. After all it is clear that Africa came to the forefront in these autobiographical texts. While most African states gained its independence from their former colonies. As a result, they provided inspiration to African Americans who were fighting for human and civil rights. They provided significant depictions of black life in America and made urgent calls for reform and fairness are most well texts accepted for publication at the decade's end Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, and James Weldon Johnson were among the most renowned artists of this movement. Among the most well-known autobiographies written by African Americans were published. Here are few some examples *Dust Tracks on the Road* by Zora Neale Hurston, and *A Long Way from Home* by Claude McKay.

There were many writers who wrote about the oppression of Blacks and its social consequences. Famous examples include Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Neo-slave narratives can offer a chance to atone for wrongs committed against African-

American women, romance, and sexuality, because the genre can provide readers with accounts of aspects of slavery that antebellum slave narratives could not" .(Robinson 55)

3.4. The Present Period

Within last four decades, innumerable African American has writing autobiographies such as *Dreams from My Father: a Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama. *The Truths We Hold: an American Journey* by Kamala Harris; and *Becoming* by Michelle .The authors concentrate on how Africa has aided in their quest for identity .They also discuss their socioeconomic and political difficulties, including such war and corruption.

4. What Is Harlem Renaissance?

The Harlem Renaissance was an important social revolution that did occur among both 1920 and 1930 subsequent the Great Migration in America .It represents a turning point for black Americans because before this time, literary production by African Americans were mainly read by only black people, however with the renaissance African American literature, black fine arts, literature and performances starts to be soaked up into the mainstream culture, through mirroring the experience and background of African American. The Harlem Renaissance "what a complex and conflicted aura the term evokes! People can scarcely agree on what it means. A vogue. A blossoming a failure. A foundation. A few stars!". (Hutchinson1)

It is a rare and intriguing moment when a people decide that they are the instruments of history-making and race-building. It is common enough to think of oneself as part of some larger meaning in the sweep of history, a part of some grand design. But to presume to be an actor and creator in the special

occurrence of a people's birth (or rebirth) require a singular self-consciousness (Hugging3).

According to Hutchinson what is commonly known as the Harlem Renaissance today was known as the Negro Renaissance in its own time." Negro is a proud word with strong vowels and a capital N. The thick diagonal took a step forward and planted its foot. Most people no longer associate the term "Negro" with what it did in the early to mid-twentieth century. (Hutchinson1)The Harlem Renaissances fostered black cultural identity after centuries of oppression and the fight for abolition, which resulted in the elimination of enslavement "The Harlem Renaissance, the "rediscovery" of Black culture seemed to promise a celebration of the folktales Blacks had inherited from Reconstruction and slavery". (Diepeveen2)

Instead of just simply imitating the styles of Europeans and white Americans, African-American artists and intellectuals celebrate black pride and creativity, asserting their liberty to speak themselves and exploring their identities as black Americans and ultimately. It was a movement of black self-expression in opposition to white supremacy.(Hutchinson1) Many African Americans are proud of the Harlem Renaissance's literary cultural flowering.

The Harlem Renaissance was commonly linked with the new Negro movement, which was a way to clarify what it signified African American writings by African Americans themselves. A fundamentally historical milestone in African American literature at the outset of the Harlem Renaissance years was the publishing of the *new Negro* by Alain Locke. Gates points:

"The Harlem or New Negro Renaissance was born through the midwifery of Locke, who edited a special issue of Survey Graphic magazine entitled "Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro" in March of 1925, which was followed by the 446-page anthology *The New Negro: An Interpretation*". (Gates4)

The Negro renaissance dismissed the proposal of the old Negro, and his self-hatred, negative perception of black people was being modified by good ones. A New Negro for the Twenty-First Century.(Gates 4)The elites of the Harlem Renaissance assumed in the future of new negroes, in democratic change, and in the strength of literature and art, to consequence these shifts .The Negro author's most important task was to demolish the stereotype that the white man had formed about him and that the Negro himself had presumed so as to move in and out of the white world with safety and profit.(Huggins 261)

Most Harlem intellectuals desired high culture over popular culture, which they wished to mine for novels, poems, plays, and symphonies. They saw art and letters as a way to bridge the racial divide. They believed that artists of both races were more largely free of superstitious nonsense, prejudice, and fear than ordinary men.(Hugging 40)

The leaders of the Harlem Renaissance were youthful, intelligent artists and authors of the new generation who altered to enter college and obtain a diploma education are aware of their origins and desire to show their positive attributes and admit of the bride of someone being black As one commentator, Austrian writer Else Feldmann, pointed out, these writings of poetry demonstrated how African Americans are really no longer reliant on somebody white supposed to come and representing' them. They' savages' sing their own lives, and they sing them no less gorgeously than the finest whites. (Wipplinger5)The period of Harlem Renaissances is thought to be the great era "blossoming of Negro literature." on the surface of the Harlem renaissance represented both a black artistic emergence and white realization of Black artists.

Harlem formed a large basis for African American population, with a significant portion of African Americans coming and going from the United States' largest city". "Harlem was like a great magnet for the Negro intellectual, pulling him from everywhere". (Hughes240)

The 1920 s was indeed a period of black music, which had a significant impact not only on authors but also on the notion of the United States, which later spread around the world. Blues and jazz breathed new life into literature Howes illustrate During the Harlem Renaissance, the young musical form of jazz experienced rapid growth. Meanwhile, a closely related style of music known as blues was developing. Blues music, like jazz, has its roots in the African heritage of the black person who invented it. The Harlem Renaissance and its literature reflect blue-jazz traditions, which have piqued the interest of academics and critics interested in the movement's musical influences. (Howes 92)

Even today, the literary and musical contributions of Harlem Renaissance serve as inspiration for artists. The Harlem Renaissance is regarded as a heroic period in American history; with its ultimate of granting African Americans the same citizenship rights as white African Americans Despite the fact that the Harlem Renaissance typically ends with emergence of the Great Depression, it was and still an significant period for black creativity in that African-American artists established favorable and enduring standards in all art forms.

The Harlem Renaissance ceased with the height of the Great Depression in the early 1930s"we therefore take the period 1918 to 1937 to reasonably encompass the Harlem Renaissance, while recognizing that periodization is always artificial and approximate."(Hutchinson7)

4.1. Its Groups

According to Addison Gayle, the Harlem writers were divided into two groups: the first represented by Jessie Fauset, George .S. Schuyler and James Weldon Johnson, advocated for conservative approach, arguing that the Black culture experience should be subordinated the overall American on the other hand more radical group led by Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Zora Neale Hurston who saw the Black as "caretaker" of the cultural heritage". (Inge, Duke172)

As stated by PRĂCE in his thesis *In Search of Afro-American Identity: Zora Neale Hurston and Race Politics of the Harlem Renaissance* The African American intellectual leaders like Alain Locke or James Weldon Johnson present distinctive Afro - American voice ,was synonymous with the values of the "mature" sophisticated white man. They agreed that developing black art would be the most appropriate manifestation of racial and civic equality, on one hand, they wanted to liberate the black man from white America stereotypes, but on the other, they were confirming the superiority of white standards by allowing them to direct their art.

According to PRACE, Fauset' novel presented the image of the Negro as exceptional within the context of conventional morality. She tells several stories about persons of the respectable Black middle class. As with her most popular novel, *There Is Confusion*, the protagonists in her novels are great personalities who resolve the usual barrier of race Plum *Bun: A Novel without Moral* another novel of the middle class exemplifies the efforts of the light-skinned black female protagonist to transfer for white.

On the other side, another group went to look into the stereotypes that had previously labeled them as limited and found positive benefit in them. As a result, their African American great grandfathers' "primitivism," and sentimental spontaneity

became a main element for trying to rebuild their identity. Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, and others attempted similar things.

There was Hurston and Hughes, who both had the same patron: Mrs. Charlotte Mason. They also agreed on the importance of basing Black art on black folklore, with a focus on Black vernacular speech "Hughes, Hurston, and others like them represented a phase of the renaissance that refused to worship at the altar of arts and letters as a means to the end of improving racial conditions."Wing, Frinkelman say in their encycoperdia that both Black authors rejected the strategy of "sanitizing" black life by always putting one's best foot forward and attempting to demonstrate how well black people could mimic the image of (elite) white people. Instead, as they struggled to combat self-hatred in the black psyche and within the black community, they outlined the importance of self. (Wing, Frinkelman495)

Additionally, unlike Black assimilationists, Hurston declared African American folklore to be the country's biggest cultural richness. Hurston loud and proud emphasized characteristics that distinguished black culture as a distinguishable phenomenon. She made the decision to examine African American folk culture through the lens of language, the one mode of cultural expression through which afro-Americans were evaluated insufficient and criticized as culturally inferior "Hurston's way to stick close to the common folk was through their folk art. As a writer, she visited communities and became part of them. Her position was not that of a distant observer but a lively member of the community".(Mgr. Magdalena 61)When assessing Hurston's distinct identity in her essays and novels, such considerations about the divided self seem out of place in her work, which publicly glorifies Afro-American heritage. She believed that recognizing Negro folklore would benefit both

blacks and whites similarly. Figuring and admitting her personal culture was a way to describe one's black identity. People's dignity would rise once there was something they could think back on appreciate, and respect. Hurston assisted to perpetuate the myth that blacks seemed to have no heritage of their own by publishing the largest selection of Black folklore ever written.

According Mgr. Magdalena Hughes goal was to bring poetry to the masses, so he organized tours to the South and West where he read his poems in churches and schools. His very faith in the ordinary citizen , just like Hurston's optimistic With black culture, they linked warmth, love and joy, as opposed to white culture ,whose values they saw as rather cold and sterile Hughes compared himself to the blues singer who finds inspiration in folk songs. His poems are melodious, with simple word choice and frequently a refrain. They are analogous to folklore, in which stories are managed to pass down through generations.

Hughes' famous poem "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*" discusses the black soul. Hughes claims that the poetry's authenticity stems from its deep connection to normal human experience. As a result, the poet really shouldn't start writing from above and from any advantageous position, but instead as a member of the common people. It was the first clear opportunity for black artists to start exploring; they would want to liberate the black man from white America's stereotypes. The Harlem Renaissance was the very first ideological movement of Black Americans, a collaborative act of people claiming to be considered literally as a group by the others as well as by themselves.

4.2. Harlemites

In the early part of twentieth century down into the great depression in the 1930s Black intellectuals in Harlem had exactly such a consciousness. These Harlemites were so persuaded that they believed they were trying to evoke their folk into a renaissance. They “Did more to encourage and develop Negro writers during the 1920’s than anyone else in America.” (Hughes 218) They were in an era when almost no blacks went to college; an elite group of African-American intellectuals was making significant contributions to American literature, music, and arts. They were also redefining race relations in a still virulently racist American society (Lewis 2), with their gradual assumptions Harlem intellectuals had seen their self as being the most possible to create this demonstration that they are on the verge of a new day.

4.2.1. Zora Neale Hurston

Samuels in her book *encyclopedia of African American* claim that Hurston always introduced herself as a performer, folk character, and writer with strong roots in Black oral as well as published culture traditions. Many regard her as the literary foremother of the twentieth century African American and women's literary traditions. She celebrated as actress, preacher, trickster and literary artist. Zora Neale Hurston left behind a significant body of work in American writings, which include poetry, drama, short stories, and essays, is hugely great. Autobiography, folklore, novels, and recordings are among the genres covered. Hurston wrote various creative works that demonstrated the complexity and diversity of African Americans during the Great Awakening, a movement that promoted African American music, literature, and theater. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s coincided with Zora Neale Hurston's prolific writer and successes.

The Eatonville Anthology, a collection of stories published in 1926. It was one of Hurston's significant contributions to the Harlem Renaissance, a noteworthy party performances; It is a combination of fiction, biography, full of vernacular. So many Hurston's subsequent themes and characters are introduced. Black writer Zora Neale Hurston's short fiction drew a huge amount of attention during the 1920s. These stories show vivid depictions of black life as well as the author's distinctively rendered dialect, which she learned while researching her great deal of interest in African American folklore (Howes72)

After arriving to New York, Hurston had become a part of the Harlem Renaissance, and she's one of a group of college artists who launched the magazine *Fire!* To convey their discontent with her play not being recognized. *Color Struck* appeared on the scene. Zora's inspiration and the progress of the Harlem Renaissance were aided by Charles S. Johnson. He founded the eponymous *civic club* in Harlem for Black artists to participate in commercial art, as well as the *stylus*, a black journal in which Zora wrote her first short story "*John Redding Goes to Sea*" and her second project tale "*Drenched in Light*", alongside Alain Locke. According to Wing, Frinkelman in their encyclopedia mentioned that Zora Neale Hurston was an member of the Harlem Renaissance's in the third phase She jokingly referred to white supporters and allies of the civil rights movement and the renaissance as 'Negrotarians', while writers ,artists as 'niggerati'. She was inspired by the rural south's folklore.

Hurston wanted to show that black literary creativity was not based on borrowed White literature. She sought to clarify what makes African-American literature so special. Zora Neale Hurston is among the few Harlem Renaissance writers who were able to catch the true essence of black vernacular in her writing.

"*Characteristics of Negro Expression*," her articles. Despite her adoption of the Harlem Renaissance's principles and style, she maintained an anthropologist's curiosity with culture and folklore, which informs her writing. Hurston used a black vernacular that was specific to each field of study. Through her ethnographic written style, she aimed to illustrate specific vocal communication inside the black community. "*Mules and Men*" Hurston's folklore collection, is by far the most rich in black dialect Hurston's incorporation of people from all social classes and African-American languages, on the other hand, presents a rich depiction of African-American culture and heritage to her readers. Zora Neale Hurston was an innovator in integrating African-American folklore and religion into popular culture. she is best known for *Their Eyes Were Watching God* 1937(Howes47).

Regardless of the fact that she began writing during the Harlem Renaissance's, Hurston's views on race are vastly different from those of her contemporaries. Her unique perspective on African-American culture as a source of literary inspiration aided her becomes a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

4 .2.2.Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes: A Harlem Renaissance icon Langston Hughes is widely regarded as the most prominent and well –known Harlem figure Renaissance.”He was more interested in the exciting cultural happenings in Harlem than in his studies. Soon he became part of a group of young artists who were in the midst of producing some o the finest works of the Harlem Renaissance. (Howes58)

Hughes supported and motivated two generations of black writers, he stood up for the opportunities of Black art, and he influenced how the Harlem Renaissance would be remembered in his important essay, *The Negro Artist and the Racial*

Mountain, which defined black artists dismissing racial identity as the mountain obstacles in the way of any true Negro artist. This clarion call for the priority of advancing art from a black perspective was the ideology behind his work. Complacent Hughes' writing, they claimed, only served to reinforce white stereotypes about African American life. (Howes 59)

Hughes made a breakthrough in poetry when he began to write verse that integrated how black people spoke as well as jazz and blues music in his poetry collection. Hughes' poems in *The Weary Blues* were about everyday black people. They were well received by white readers, but not by numerous black readers and leaders (Cox, Tate 98). Which is considered one of his first productions in most of his poems, were about common people. Hughes' upcoming poetry collection, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* showcased black lives from outside the educated upper and middle classes. More specifically, more than any other Harlem Artist, Hughes used jazz and blues in his work to validate the uniqueness and value of African American vernacular heritage. "*The Rivers Speak to the Negro*." This poem has a narrator who speaks plainly but clearly.

In *The Big Sea*, his autobiography in the section titled Black Renaissance, Hughes offered a comprehensive description of the Harlem Renaissance, and his characterization of people, art, and things that are going on influenced how the movement was comprehended. He even helped, he to change the name of the era from Negro Renaissance to Harlem Renaissance.

Hughes not only made a name for himself in this artistic movement by forging ahead with his poetry, but he also ended up drawing on experiences. "Hughes set sail with a small group to film "Black and White," a Soviet-financed depiction of racism in the United States". (Wipplinger, 165) Hughes embarked on a small group

voyage to film "Black and White," a Soviet-financed depiction of racism. Numerous people regard Langston Hughes' work to be an antagonistic strand of the Harlem Renaissance .Hughes was a literary descendant of the turn-of-the-century writers who portrayed strong black figures. Hughes heavily criticized existing injustice in American society, as well as the underappreciated additions of African-American culture.

4.2.3. Alain Locke

In addition to the above mentioned figures , Alain Locke has been dubbed the father of Harlem Renaissance .He wrote about the goal of Harlem renaissance in his famous book *New Negro* as guide for the African American"We are, in a sense, memorializing Alain Locke, an important maker of history who is himself inadequately recorded".(Bloom 167)

According Wing Alain Locke was the promoter of Harlem Renaissance a Harvard graduate .As an editor Locke was in unique position to choose which authors and works to publish, as he edited the special edition of *Survey Graphic* and the anthology *the New Negro* .He is credited with advancing the careers of Countee Cullen. He broke down barriers for the African American community, making great strides nobody had decided to make before and encouraging others to convey and share their stories with the world, going to lead to the profound artistic revolution known as the Harlem Renaissance. A pivotal figure in Hurston's early career and a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

Most surprisingly, Locke did not confine the "Negro Renaissance" to black artists alone. While black artists had a unique role to play, Locke held that black culture had become material for all American artists, regardless of their race. He hope

to use culture political weapon as means to achieving better treatment and conditions for African American “Alain Locke proclaimed that African Americans’ “more immediate hope rests in the revaluation by white and black alike of the Negro in terms of his artistic endowments and cultural contributions, past and prospective.” .(Wing, Frinkelman 493)Furthermore, writers and artists discovered themselves going to act as the ahead of time guard of African peoples in their interaction with twentieth-century civilization.(Wing, Frinkelman 493)

The Negro Renaissance was not restricted to Harlem or the ten years of the 1920s. Locke took a much broader perspective. Similarly to how the European Renaissance spanned two centuries, the Negro Renaissance would encompass a broad cultural shift. In the special number of Survey Graphic Locke wrote: Harlem serves the same purpose for the New Negro as Dublin serves for the New Ireland or Prague serves for the New Czechoslovakia.(Wing, Frinkelman 342)

5. A Brief Overview about Zora Neale Hurston and her *Dust*

Tracks on a Road

5.1 Zora Neale Hurston's life and career

Zora Neale Hurston is one of the twentieth century’s most influential and prolific African American authors. She was born in NOTASULGA, ALBAMA, and a city in the eastern part of the state in1891. Her father is a traveling Baptist minister, and her mother is the Sunday school the superintendent. Hurston's life intersected with significant periods in the African American literary scene of the twentieth century, most notably the Harlem Renaissance; In fact, she was the most creative

black female author in America for many years, having published four novels, two folklore studies, various plays, short stories, essays and one autobiography.

Hurston claimed to have been born in Eatonville, Florida, in 1901, although she was actually ten years older and had just moved there with her family when she was a tiny girl; She went to school there until she was thirteen, in the country's first incorporated all-black municipality; Hurston's home life got increasingly tough after her mother died in 1904, so she joined a touring theatrical troupe at sixteen and ended up in New York City during the Harlem Renaissance; from 1921 until 1924, she attended Howard University before winning a scholarship to Barnard College, where she studied anthropology under Franz Boas¹, she graduated from Barnard in 1928 and went on to Columbia University to study anthropology for two years, she also carried out folklore research among African Americans in the South. Hurston and Langston Hughes were both patrons of folklorist Charlotte Mason, who supported her journeys. Hurston served as an amanuensis to novelist Fannie Hurst for a short time.

Hurston and Hughes collaborated on *Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life in Three Acts* in 1930, but it was never completed (published posthumously 1991). *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, her debut novel, was released in 1934 and got positive reviews from critics for portraying African American life without stock personalities or sentimentality, *Mules and Men*, a 1935 study of folkways among Florida's African American community, followed Her novels *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), *Tell My Horse* (1938), a blend of travel writing and anthropology based on her study of voodoo in Haiti, and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) cemented her reputation as a great writer.

Hurston taught at North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham for several years, she worked at the Library of Congress as well. The memoirs *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942) is also well-regarded, her most recent novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, was published in 1948. Despite her early potential, Hurston was scarcely known by the broad reading audience by the time of her death, but her work had a resurgence of interest in the late twentieth century.

Several other collections, in addition to *Mule Bone*, were published after her death, including *Spunk: the Selected Stories* (1985), *The Complete Stories* (1995), and *Every Tongue Got to Confess* (2001), a compilation of Southern folktales, her work was published in two volumes by the Library of America in its series in 1995. Additionally, *Barracoon: The Last "Black Cargo"* was published in 2018. Despite the fact that it was finished in 1931, the nonfiction book was first rejected by publishers due to its usage of vernacular, it chronicles the narrative of Cudjo Lewis, who was thought to be the last survivor of the last slave ship that arrived in America.

Zora Neale Hurston died in 1960, poverty stricken and in bad health, leaving behind a number of significant works that have recently received renewed attention.

5.2 About *Dust Tracks on a Road*

Dust Tracks on a Road, Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography, was the most controversial book at the time of its publication when Hurston was fifty one years old; the book was written in July 1941 and published in November 1942. In this work, Hurston takes on the role of the storyteller just as she does in her fictional works but this time she relates the story of her own life, it recounts her complicated relationships with her family, friends and colleagues as well as her difficult journey towards formal

education and the ups and downs of her working life. The mask Hurston wore in *Dust Tracks* was a sign of her work's evisceration; the road is a trail and Hurston the wanderer who aspires to recreate the path, the corridor is the African- American folkloric tradition.

Countless critics agree, reading the text's gaps, silences, and inconsistencies involving both content and form as evidence of Hurston's decision to cater to her white audience's expectations at all costs; in the text, Zora Neale Hurston lies about her age, conceals information about her marriages, her personal as well as public life in general, and unsuccessfully incorporates a traditional structuring device for the text. These judgments, together with the author's apparent refusal to directly confront the race issue, have dominated and shaped most critical responses to the autobiography.

Zora Neale Hurston's writing is significantly influenced by her childhood in Eatonville, Florida, one of the South's only all-black communities. Hurston proceeds north to Barnard College in New York, where she is a member of the Harlem Renaissance literary movement, and then returns to the South to perform anthropological work and to draw inspiration for her novels.

Dust Tracks on a Road reveals less about Hurston's life circumstances, and the tone with which she recounts events is significantly more mediated; it is counterintuitive that the medium of fiction allows Hurston to write in a tone that is less influenced by outside influences than autobiography, where she is expected to be the most honest and vulnerable.

6. Critical Receptions of *Dust Tracks on Road*

“... The force from somewhere in Space which commands you to write in the first place, gives you no choice. You take up the pen when you are told, and write what is commanded.”

Dust Tracks on a Road

As Hurston's book-length works emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, critical reception was so many cases—negative, despite her status as a Harlem Renaissance figure (West 20). Zora was One of the most well-known black strong ,willed and self reliant According toWest white critics generally Hurston mixed reviews while Black critics frequently saw her as a social climber who exploited Black culture for her own gain ,Too often ,white critics inadvertently revealed how racist commenter could use Hurston 'work to put their personal ideological agendas .

Released in 1942 *Dust Tracks on Road* is a memoir that documents Zora Neal Hurston's life and experiences .It vividly describe her growth as writer along with her several more migrations all the through the north and Caribbean .Hurston give the reader a glance into her thoughts and the many influence on her creative thinking encompassing her family, her physical surroundings and her relationship with others. *Dust Tracks* was widely ignored and rejected to examine the impact of racial oppression, it was a difficult task for Hurston because her personal life was indeed a taboo for reader .She made *Dust Tracks*, but although Hurston did not release many details regarding her private life, the book had both supporters and opponents.

Rayson in his article *Gender and ambition: Zora Neale Hurston in the Harlem Renaissance* claiming about *Dust Tract on Road* Zora 'autobiography "As a result of her heightened tone and style, her autobiography does indeed take on mythic proportions". Then He added "Hurston properly emphasizes the climactic events in

her life with special stories of cosmic import, like the one connected with her birth. Moreover, she believes in her revelations to the reader, convinced optimistically of her own uniqueness. (Rayson4)

Along with Trefzer "Hurstons paradoxical defense of the South in her journalistic writings, and her construction of black southern identity in her 1942 autobiography" (Trefzer2). Zora "autobiography *Dust Tracks on a road*" draws attention to the complex and conflicted positioning of the black female subject in the World War II South. By re-examining Hurston's autobiography in the context of her journalism in the 1940s, we can see that her defense of the South is an index for her constant slippage of subject positions." (Trefzer2) " Hurston's narrative shows that the segregated landscape of the South produces a conflict between regional, racial, and national identifications for black southern writers. The resulting paradoxical identification with multiple subjects." (Trefzer2)

According to the review of W. Edward Farrison in the journal of Negro history *Dust Track* the book can be divided into three main parts the first part include her childhood and its world .which appeared in the five first chapters the second one tackle the story of her struggle and achievements as researcher and author the last five chapter are the third part in which she describe her mature expression with people and her reaction and reflection on them, for the issue of race Farrison add that Hurston wrote" frankly and often amusingly, as she didin presenting matters of fact .But from such chapter as My people My people religion and looking thing over one can hardly miss getting the impression that she has left much to bethought over and said clearly in the future ."(Farrison) He continues To be sure, there some truth in her assertions about the race issue as there generally is on both sides of any contentious

issues Hurston writes in this book plays the role of the storyteller as in her fictional works, but here she tells the story of her own life.

"While the book is autobiographical, some of the material in the text is not true. The most obvious example is in the first chapter, "My Birthplace," in which she cites Eatonville, Florida as her place of birth despite the fact she was born in Notasulga, Alabama. She did, however, spend much of her childhood in Eatonville". It is unclear whether this misstatement was intentional, but if that was, Hurston could be said to rewrite her own personal history in order to generate a particular persona and assert the status of being from an all-black town as birthright (Jones 28)

Also, Jones claims that : " As an African-American female, Hurston may have been constrained in what she could write, Considering the obstacles she faced, and this may have had an effect on what view points Or perspectives she represented. "(Jones 28)

Furthermore, her peer Maya Angelou presents her review in a preface to the autobiography stating explicitly that Hurston manages to combine fiction and history to generate her own story Zora Neale Hurston chose. In *Dust Tracks on a Road*. Hurston' imagery decided to reveals that the author was birthed to explore ,listen and tell Varsity of stories .Her energetic interest led her throughout the south ,where she collected the felling and sayings of her people as a conscientious famer gathers eggs "This puzzling book was written during 1940 and 1941 but for the most part deals with the early part of the twentieth century. Hurston, who claimed to have been born in 1901, but whose records show her birth year was a decade earlier, she almost witnessed the race riots and other atrocities of her time."(Angelou-Foreword)However, she does not mention even one unpleasant racial incident in *Dust Tracks on a Road*. The southern air around her most assuredly crackled with the

flames of Ku Klux Klan raiders, but Ms. Hurston does not allude to any ugly incident".(Angelou Foreword) She added while the autobiography is characterized by sense of royal humor According Angelou *Dust Tracks on a Road* is written with royal humor and an imperious creativity. However not all t all creativity is imperious, and Zora Neale Hurston was definitely creative.

Conclusion

Finally, African American literature aims to change the reality of its people through the use of various genres, most notably Black autobiography. Things begin to change with the Harlem Renaissance at the turn of the century. It was both the first official gathering of Afro-American intellectuals and the first official act of shaking off the vestiges of slavery. The goal of rediscovering Black cultural heritage and creating new Negro art was to revitalize racial pride while also enhancing communal spirit and a sense of group solidarity. The Negro was to declare to the world and himself that he is as valid a human being as anyone else by eradicating the stereotypes that white people had created about black people in order to maintain their sense of racial superiority .The Harlem Renaissance is characterized by optimism, progress, and hope. Authors such as Zora Neale Hurston participated in the movement and helped to strengthen their cultural hierarchy through her autobiography. The study then deals with Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography by first providing an overview of the author and her memoire, which, unlike most of her contemporaries, did not include any racial events, causing her work to receive a lot of criticism.

Chapter Two

Self's Ambiguities in *Dust Tracks on a Road*

Introduction

Among the several types of African American literature, the African American autobiography takes precedence. This genre powerfully speaks of shared and authentic experiences as well as identity among African Americans; the second chapter of this study therefore will focus deeply on the autobiography of Zora Neale Hurston and tackles the different important issues. To begin with, mediating a dual readership (Black and White audiences) in this work, because Hurston's autobiography was generally well-received by most white critics, but it was heavily criticized by many black critics. Then it going to analyze *Dust Tracks on a Road* as an important example of black autobiography, by discussing 'auto ethnography' and the religious traditions such as the folk preacher and folk sermon form in this autobiography. Lastly, it provides the truth about Hurston policy in the different issues of race and identity, using the Black Criticism perspectives.

1. Mediating a Dual readership (Black and White Audiences)

"I tried to be natural and not pander to the folks who expect a clown and a villain in every Negro. Neither did I want to pander to those 'race' people who see nothing but perfection in all of us"

Dust tracks on road

Hurston's vague relationship with white patrons and publishers was one of many things for which her Harlem contemporaries criticized her. Zora Neale Hurston is a historical figure, who is largely misunderstood. Even though She loyally documented c black life particularly the lives of working black women and men, in the rural South, Hurston black peers, beginning to feel deceived by her rejection to address the issue of race usually wrote that Hurston had succumbed to the white patronage that she has received .They frequently portrayed Hurston as stereotypical believing that her writing does not help the cause of the Harlem renaissance ,in which black. Artists sought an outlet to showcase their strengths to the white literary society .For them, Zora was similar to the white authors.

Lionnet admits Hurston's endeavors to write about race issues other than race "So, if Hurston sometimes seems to be aspiring toward some kind of "race less ideal," it is not because she is interested in the "universality" of human experiences".(119) He contends that Hurston intended to investigate of the details of daily life and how each instance affects readers that, everyone is some, but rather that is unique, obscuring the concepts racial harmony. "The race consciousness that spoils so much Negro literature is completely absent here. Miss Hurston is less impressed by her own color than most Aryan redheads. She gives one chapter to "My People"-perhaps the most sensible passage on the subject that has ever been written". (Strong 12)

Certainly, Hurston's Black critics claimed that her lack of care to racial ideas was due to her white patronage .Nevertheless *Dust track on Road* involved her easy the *pet negro system* and chapter named My people, My people the manuscript no longer captured the easy and many other comments relating to Hurston's expressions on race .And via her easy *what white publisher wont print* Hurston defend her position quite freely than just as no other author of race less books in the easy. he

specifically addresses the need for diversity in getting published since that requires white acceptance ,as well as asserted that publisher do not favor writer who write about race ,discrimination since the mainstream audiences are interest in the life of negro“ I have been amazed by the Anglo-Saxon's lack of curiosity about the internal lives and emotions of Negroes ”.(Hurston) She explained that there isn't“ demand for incisive and full dress stories around Negroes above the servant class” Hurston stated that “publishers will sponsor anything that they believe sell .they shy away from romantic stories about Negroes and Jews because they feel that they know the public indifferences to such works unless the story or play involved racial tension it can be offered as study in sociology, with romantic side subdued“.(Hurston)

Regarding the original dust tracks on road “ second, recognizing and analyzing the many more changes in “People” provides an answer that dispels both the idea that Hurston is pandering to the white nation and the idea that Hurston is smoldering with anger towards her patrons.“Davis discusses her relationship with her customers Hurston belief her customers exemplifies in “mutual dependency” between the races.“The changes made in the chapter of “Love” are few, and the deletions refer to Hurston’s self-revelation. The quotations question the idea that Hurston was intentionally hiding her self-revelation. It is noteworthy to contrast the modification in the chapter “My People, My People,” along with the chapter “Love.” “In this chapter there are only thirteen changes. Most of these small edits are strike-through, a few minor added details that explain Hurston’s timeline, and a few word order changes. These changes appear to be in Hurston’s hand and change very little in regards to content.” (Davis, B.A44) Most likely based on publisher’s reasons, the largest deletion within the chapter of “Love” and "my people "occurred. All across her life, Hurston remained loyal to white publisher Lippincott with whom she maintained good

relations, despite the fact that she frequently had to modify her original manuscript to Lippincott's' requirements .her autobiography as the great example. Hurston expressed strong displeasure with oppression against nonwhite people that she linked to racism; due to editorial suggestion her voice seems to be less raised viewing public. Hurston work demonstrates that she did not dismiss the issues of race that controlled African American literature. In order for her works to be accepted for publication, she had obscure such ideas to with ambiguity, so that not cause offence editors, - this dilemma of double audiences which all Negroes writers had to face.

2. Dust Tracks on a Road as a Black Autobiography

2.1 Autoethnography in Dust Tracks on a Road

Dust Tracks on a Road, Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography, is an in-depth analysis of her personal journey from a black girl born in EATONVILLE to a proficient anthropologist and published writer. Hurston's autobiography is written in the voice of an ethnographer who records the spoken words of her anthropological subject it also alternates between personal and ethnographic, thus the term “autoethnography”.

This memoire has been referred to as an autoethnography by some scholars because of Hurston's unique building of scenery that discloses information about herself and provides important context about her cultural background; In order to reveal her personal tale, she develops a detailed history of her hometown and her parents, Francoise Lionnet mentioned: “it may be perhaps be more useful tore consider *Dust Tracks on a Road* not as autobiography but rather as self-portrait”. (98)Hurston's anthropological training enabled her to evaluate her personal-cultural self through the lens of her ethnographic self, with both selves complementing one another; in other words, knowing one helped her understand the other and vice versa.

To ensure an outsider's viewpoint in their anthropological study, ethnographers must be conscious of how they portray themselves when going to represent these investigated cultures, In his article *The Ethnographic Self and the Personal Self*, Edward Bruner analyzes the evolution of ethnographers' portrayals of themselves in their writings:

“Until the past few decades the majority decision was to sharply segment the ethnographic self from the personal self.... Any work that inserted the self in the account of the other deviated from the standard realist mode and was considered inappropriate” (3).

He further explains that the traditional dichotomy between the personal and ethnographic selves was also a split between anthropology and poetics, and that such division led to a rupturing of the discipline.

Anthropology has recently based on innovative articulating ethnographic experience with the use of explanatory writing style. Despite the fact that these postmodern approaches are novel, there are outstanding examples of multi-vocality and genre mixing in early ethnographic writing, one such writer was Zora Neale Hurston, she was an African American who studied rural blacks. In her novels and ethnographies, she rebuilt the lifestyles and folklore of people from the South, Haiti, Jamaica, and her place of birth of Eatonville, Florida; the Consideration of Hurston's life and work has led to questioning the differences between literature and ethnography, The more audiences read and think about Zora Neale Hurston, the more blurred the lines between these genres become, What is ethnography? What is fiction/narrative? Is it style of writing or is it content? Or is it both? Perhaps the distinctions have always been blurred and the distinctions themselves are false. When considering these issues, keep in mind that Hurston was researching her own "culture," so her viewpoint is very subjective; her ethnographic and literary portrayals of people reflect an empathic understanding of the problem.

Given her anthropological studies, Hurston exhibits a commitment to understanding herself as a product of African American society in her memoirs. *Dust Tracks*, unlike any African American autobiography, is a complicated interplay between the introspective personal engagement required of an autobiography and self-effacement expected of ethnographic cultural descriptions and explications.

Hurston was supposed to go into the field after being trained by Boas in order just to save her own 'vanishing' Negro culture. In her official role as isolated, objective interpreter and translator, her fundamental liminality being both a participant and an observer of her culture would bring home to her the distorting effects of that problematic shift from orality to fixed, rigid textuality, reinforcing her skepticism about the anthropological project. Hurston could not adopt the nostalgic pose common in Western ethnographies that implicitly lament the loss of an Edenic and preindustrial past because she had grown up in Eatonville. Instead, her skepticism about the writing of culture would permeate the writing of the self, the autobiography, transforming it into an allegory of an ethnographic project that moves from the general (Eatonville's history) to the particular (Hurston's life, friends and family) then back to the general (culture, religion...). *Dust Tracks on a Road* is a highly archaic work, not anchored in any unique and originating story of sexual or racial difference, unlike black spiritual autobiographies, which demonstrate a similar three-fold pattern of death, conversion, rebirth, and also a strong feeling of ultimate purpose.

The autobiography's tone and its rhetorical technique of exaggeration bring attention to its style rather than what it directly indicates. For example, the statement 'There were no discreet nuances of life on Joe Clarke's porch. There was open kindnesses, anger, hate, love envy and its kinfolks, but all emotions were naked, and

nakedly arrived at' (44) outlines the men's reactions to cases of infidelity, but it also has historical implications regarding the pioneer spirit in general, as the following sentence demonstrates: 'This was the spirit of what whole new part of the state at the time, as it always is where men settle new lands' (ibid). Similarly, when Zora speaks of her sad love affaire, she uses powerful imagery to express the universality of misery rather than her own particular despair: 'I freely admit that everywhere I set my feet down, there were tracks of blood. Blood from the very middle of my heart' (177)

Dust Tracks obviously does not point to a consistent tradition of introspective self-examination mixed with soul-baring displays of emotion. Surprisingly, despite its rich cultural content, the work does not permit unrestricted use of culturally based interpretations. It is an orphan text that tries to build its own genealogy by appealing to and debunking the cultural traditions it helps to reinterpret at the same time

2.2 The folk Preacher and folk Sermon form in *Dust Tracks on a Road*

"I tumbled right into the Missionary Baptist church when I was born; I saw the preachers and the pulpits, the people and the pews."

Zora Neale Hurston

Zora Neale Hurston was one of the first black writers to incorporate black folk tradition and religion into modern literature. She narrated, in her works, especially in plays and fiction. Hurston is best known for her studies of black folklore and her works of fiction about black life. In her youngsters, she was impressed by folklore

from all over the world, and she was offered writings by some white teachers getting passed through. It helped her form an image of the ideal person. The strength of this folk literature is its willingness to dream of the utter and total limits of human possibility; unfortunately for Hurston and others, this resulted in severe isolation“ I enjoyed collecting the folk-tales and I believe the people from whom I collected them enjoyed the telling of them, just as much as I did the hearing“(*DTR*139)

Zora Neale Hurston was highly influenced by the Afro American Southern Baptist religious tradition, many aspects of that tradition particularly the folk preacher and the folk sermon appeared in Hurston's fiction and non-fiction narratives, as well as in her autobiography. Deborah G. plant confirmed: "The persona in *Dust Tracks on a Road* is akin to the folk preacher, and the narrative is comparable to the folk sermon". (07) Hurston's knowledge and comprehension of the sermon are perhaps expected. However, it is important to note that her use of sermonic form and rhetoric was not limited to her fiction or academic discussions of the preacher, but was also used to organize her own ideas and inform her own socio-political writings.

Generally speaking, the folk preacher who is usually a man is a member of the folk community, whose ideology he has assimilated, he must have oratorical qualities that came from within the community. In *Dust Tracks on a Road* Hurston uses a variety of instances of oratory from the community, and 'like a folk preacher, she recounts stories, folktales, and jokes as well as gives renditions of prayers and sermons. These examples of oratory are frequently dramatized, settings are described, characters speak in dialogue, and the dialogue drives much of the action, her renditions are nothing short of "performances."

In addition, Hurston believes that humour is an important part of the folk community and any representative of the community must be amusing as does the folk preacher, therefore, her lore in *Dust Tracks* is actually humorous as Maya Angelou mentioned: "Dust Tracks on a Road is written with royal humour and an imperious creativity"(DTR/ Foreword). The features that are associated with the folk preacher and with Hurston could be applied to any leader in the folk group; oratorical abilities, such as a good strained voice, histrionics, and humour, are not restricted to ministers; the folk preacher's authority to lead is derived from God and is acknowledged or denied by the church, which is one major distinction between him and the municipal leader. He also needs to hear "the call," which is a supernatural summon

The narration in *Dust Tracks* like most folk preacher also receives the divine call after Hurston fleeing the yard in order to avoid being punished for a stupid prank; she states that went to a deserted house where she had a vision:

"I had not thought of stopping there when I set out ... and soon I was asleep in a strange way, like clear-cut stereopticon slides, I saw twelve scenes flash before me, each one held until I had seen it well in every detail, and then be replaced by another... I knew they were all true; a preview of things to come and my soul writhed in agony and shrunk away. But I knew that there was no shrinking. These things had to be. I did not wake up when the last one flickered and vanished, I merely sat up and saw the Methodist church, the line of moss-draped oaks and our strawberry patch stretching off to the left."(DTR 41)

Many of Hurston's motifs are similar to those found in religious tradition: unusual fruit, falling asleep, panoramic views of events, spiritually symbolic numerals, and so on. The twelve sights that flashed by could represent the twelve disciples or the city's twelve gates. "I had been pitched head foremost into the Baptist

Church when I was born. I had heard the singing the preaching and prayers. They were a part of me” (*DTR* 206–207).

Religious tradition includes affirming the vision's validity, withdrawing from it, and returning from the extraordinary to the mundane, the call and the visions that accompany it occur when the individual is alone, usually in a remote location, as in mystical literature traditions. These encounters typically begin in childhood, Hurston writes, "I don't know when the visions began", "Certainly I was not more than seven years old, but I remember the first coming very distinctly" (*DTR*41), her visions lasted for quite some time, she like the preacher, resisted the "call" implicit in them. Furthermore, Zora Neale Hurston claims to be inspired by God, similar to the Biblical writers who claim to have been inspired by God “You take up the pen when you are told, and write what is commanded” (*DTR*148), *Dust Tracks* is a religious text, a sermon, in that sense any of Hurston's works could be regarded "holy" on this basis.

Dust Track on the other hand, is a unique situation in that, unlike Biblical scriptures, it is not intended as fiction but as "reality"; whatever the reality about the events in *Dust Tracks* may be, the story portrays the author as someone who, like the Biblical prophets, was summoned by God and whose experiences parallel those of the Biblical prophets.

Some of the elements of *Dust Tracks on a Road* are similar to those of a folk sermon; *Dust Tracks'* narrative contains the sermonic framework and other distinguishing traits, Hurston's life, as that of a chosen prophet, is an implied text, an actualization of God's Work. Chapters one through eleven provides the context, which explains and describes that life, the philosophy derived from those chapters and applied to ordinary life is "preached" in the autobiography's more contentious

chapters twelve through fifteen, the final chapter. However is a respite from the passion of the other chapters, as well as a testament to personal redemption and community.

When comparing *Dust Tracks* to the folk sermon, it is important to keep in mind that it does not follow the folk sermon form in every detail, nor that it was intended to. Some of the characteristics that distinguish the folk sermon are purposefully put into the story, while others appear to be the result of psycholinguistic processes in which internalized language structures are revealed in the speaker's performance. Although it is unlikely that Hurston intended to write a sermon, the narrative has so many sermonic elements that it is clear that the author's internalization of religious practice, particularly the sermon, influenced the structure and tone of the autobiography.

Some of the language characteristics of *Dust Tracks* are suggestive of how the folk sermon informs the tale, such as ecclesiastical and Biblical diction; These features are particularly prominent in the chapter of religion, but they can be found throughout the story; The ecclesiastical vocabulary that dominates the work includes terms like "God," "Old Maker," "Devil," "congregations," and "multitudes", There are also many phrases and sentences with Biblical diction and allusion: "Strange things must have looked out of my eyes like Lazarus after his resurrection" (DTR78), "He could not sing like Peter, and he could not preach like Paul"(DTR186).Even though folk sermons are generally based on a Biblical text and may include extended Biblical passages to support the preacher's explanation or interpretation of the opening text, the complex syntax and grammar of the Bible are not typical of the sermon as a whole. The folk sermon is simple in syntax, grammar, and vocabulary, Dust Track is

similarly uncomplicated stylistically-on the surface; it is written in the folk language, Hurston addresses her audience in colloquial terms, and the metaphors, similes, aphorisms, and proverbs that make folk expressions poetic and folk sermons dynamic are an important part of the story. They make it possible to write lyrical sentences like this one:

The Master-Maker in His making had made Old Death. Made him with big feet and square toes. Made him with a face that neither reflects the face of all things, but neither changes itself, nor is mirrored anywhere. Made the body of Death out of infinite hunger. Made a weapon for his hand to satisfy his needs. This was the morning of the day of the beginning of things (59).

This text sets up a picture of God, the creator, ironically creating death, rather than life, on the first day, using Biblical expression, imagery, allusion, and rhetoric. When the two work together, the poetic quality is amplified. The narrative examples give a story concerning death's inception. The dramatic exempla list the descriptions and responsibilities of death, enhancing the narrative and dramatic effect. Both the narrative and dramatic exempla form a rhetorical schema that, on the one hand, allows the preacher to be more creative in his storytelling and buys him time to think about his next lines. On the other hand, it enables the preacher to create lyrical patterns and establish a basic rhythm, allowing him to chant his speech. The drama provided by such sermonic stylistics is heightened by the Old Testament's aggressive action; *Dust tracks on a road* have also an affinity for Old Testament action and assertiveness, according to Hurston, she prefers the Old Testament to the New. She discovered the type of action she desired in the Old Testament and admired the Biblical David, who represented that action. When she was locked in her mother's room after "a licking one afternoon," she turned to the Bible, "the only thing in there for me to read."

I happened to open to the place where David was doing some mighty smiting, and I got interested. David went here and he went there, and no matter where

he went, he smote 'em hip and thigh. Then he sung songs to his harp awhile, and went out and smote some more. Not one time did David stop and preach about sins and things. All David wanted to know from God was who to kill and when. He took care of the other details himself. Never a quiet moment. I liked him a lot. (40)

Hurston influenced by her childhood's old White man, who is depicted in the style of an Old Testament prophet, to "tell the truth and then if you have to... fight." She, like David, is always ready to "stand and fight." (DTR 32, 20). "*Dust Tracks* has been described as rambling, roving, erratic, confused, and chaotic...adjectives often used to describe folk sermons"(Plant21), whether considered as an autobiographical narrative or an autobiographical sermon, this autobiography, like the sermon, is a coherent work with a united voice, independent of the author's conscious and unconscious narrative choices. It is the author's coherent point of view and her concentrated effort to achieve it: a point of view that promotes disobedience, self determination, and self-empowerment.

3. Race and Identity

3.1 constructing an Identity

There is almost no divisive figure in American literature than Zora Neale Hurston, only the most widely accepted details, which most people can easily determine, have been interpreted in different ways or have stayed unresolved problems in her case: What year was she birthed? Was her surname Neal, Neale, or Neil? What man did she marry? How several marriages did she have? What occurred once she scribbled *Seraph on the Suwanee*? Even her complexion, which is extremely evident, raises eyebrows. Hurston story starts with a query: where and when was she born? She liked it when people had concerns about her. This was her personality. She

absolutely loved collecting evidence and piecing together puzzles. Then why not keep everyone going to guess about her “So you will have to know something about the time and place where I came from, in order that you may interpret the incidents and directions of my life”.

3-1-1 Zora Neale Hurston as an African American Female Writer

Women who wrote during the Harlem Renaissance arrived from all over the country and also had a wide range of perspectives, plenty of them had attended college and had travelled and pursue higher education, and some were descended from slaves while others were from important families for whom the members were always free. Regardless of background, these women shared a vision of remaking black women; they affirmed the authenticity and power of black women through their literature and serves as a means for other women to reshape themselves; therefore, they have asked several times themselves; Zora Neale Hurston was one of the few prominent black female writers who did not let racial and gender discrimination stops her from achieving her goal of being one of the most renowned African American authors; during this period of time, the position of women in the American society was appalling, they were oppressed and regarded inferior by the authorities particularly by men. In American society, being a woman was challenging, and being a black woman meant you were at the bottom of the social ladder.

Hurston was a powerful female character in the Harlem Renaissance and African American literature in general, who tried so hard to address gender prejudice and discrimination as well as racial issues in her works. She intended to portray strong female characters in her writings, giving each of them some of her personality

attributes, such as the capacity to combat the environment's continuous prejudices against black women by remaining rational while keeping her eyes on the prize.

Writings by contemporary black women are primarily about what it means to be a woman, particularly a black woman. However, the group of female writers from 1920s appears to be more concerned with becoming black than with becoming female in their works of literature. They have asked several times themselves "How does a black woman deal with the assertions to be both a black woman and a woman?" The answer depends on the person. In addition, some women see themselves as black first, and others see themselves as white first, many black women have been using writing to explore or affirm their identities.

This section is about Zora Neale Hurston, a Harlem Renaissance author who saw her writing as a search for identity. When Hurston was attempting to establish black identity, she made the decision to reproduce Negro ancestry in order to expose her people's rich cultural wealth. True, white academics collected mostly black folklore, but as Hemingway points out, "their eccentric collecting techniques led to artificial contexts for the lore" (87). Whites used black folklore to reinforce their racist stereotypes of black people. Hurston displays a strong sense of autonomy and self in her autobiography, as well as in her essays and articles.

According to Washington, Hurston "always saw herself as a self-made success" (Walker 22); Undoubtedly, her life exemplifies the American "self-made man", she left her family just at age of twenty one and assisted herself through numerous positions, her drive and determination helped her obtain a high school diploma and later a college diploma. Zora Neale Hurston claims that a simple definition of autobiography is that it constructs private self for public use (2008), this

construction of private self for public use emphasizes certain aspects of an author's life and the irony is that attempts to countermand other views necessarily result in the suppression of other selves contained in the narrating voice; The 'I' at the centre of autobiography is individualistic and at the same time projects collective identities, whereas The 'I' in self-narrative may attempt to command a coherent narrative of the self but there are potential other selves outside the I 'that can be in contradiction with the original voice of the self that claims a singular truth; This Paradox encourages a re-reading of the concept of double consciousness in the context of the ever changing images of blackness created by African-American authors. In the slave narratives of African American women, double consciousness demonstrates instability memories and the up for this purpose of alternative moral communities.

Autobiographical narratives of areas, personal and group challenges are entirely splintered and reconstructed as recounted fragmented stories that confirm, but substantially depart from, the perspective of double consciousness as simply having to register as ultimate but combinational identity; Women's autobiographies discuss not only their fame and success, but also they really have to be independent of physical harassment and mothers. Slave narratives and autobiographies are two important sites where African Americans have practiced processes of memorizing their disembowelled different identities.

I maintain that I have been a Negro three times- a Negro baby, a Negro girl and a Negro woman. Still, if you have received no clear cut impression of what the Negro in America is like, then you are in the same place with me. There is no The Negro here. Our lives are so diversified, internal attitudes so varied, appearances and capabilities so different, that there is no possible classification so catholic that it will cover us all except My people! My people! (162)

Hurston Announcing that she has been a Negro three times, as a Negro baby, a Negro girl, and a Negro woman, not only expresses and displays her acceptance of who she was, but also conveys and displays her immense trust in who and what she is. Although she admits that she has no idea what it is like to be a black person in this country, she acknowledges that black people are so diversified in their lives and perceptions that it is hard to characterize them.

This polarization among African Americans might also make overcoming the barriers of racial discrimination, self-hatred, and other outcomes of racism more difficult. A few Negroes like being white, some just want to live like white people, some are so hopeless and impoverished that they don't know which is black women in fiction are generally portrayed as either emasculating, tongue lashing matriarchs or as docile, oppressed, and submissive women; These stereotypical images are inextricably tied to female oppositional identities entrenched in a dichotomy with the male gender; In this oppositional context, black women are characterized from the vantage point of either their helplessness or their power-rending ability to weaken men in patriarchal settings. Some black women writers, however, are dismantling these stereotypes by constructing the heroines of their novels with more positive, multidimensional qualities. In Du Bois' understanding, double consciousness refers to a condition of being black and American in which one ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings (Du Bois⁵).

Similarly, Hurston's own career, and arguably her personal identity, was tied to three distinct fields of work, molding her into a multi-faceted and complex scientist, folklorist, writer, and woman, who was deeply moved by human experiences and desperately wanted to convey those experiences to her readers. Hurston had

always been a curious child, which aided her career as an artist during the Vogue era of the 1920s. According to her autobiography she refuses to acknowledge her completely accurate birthplace for the reasons mentioned: to separate her from the time of slavery and the reality that her father has been birthed a slave, and to relate her also with mythology of the formation of an all-black town in the South Part of Eatonville, Florida.

Furthermore, one of the main goals of the Harlem Renaissance was to revive Black identity; Zora Neale Hurston was one of the most prominent advocates among black writers, emphasizing the significance of renewing and promoting Black identity in her works; The fundamental motive for this was a desire to battle racism, which is still the largest "disease" in American society's history. Hurston lacked the authority to write about the "Negro experience" because she was born and raised in a wealthy family and lived in an all-black town where she was never segregated. In Eatonville, she was isolated from the rest of the Southern Blacks who had been oppressed for so long; it is possible that she had no idea racism existed until she left her hometown; However, Zora was a pioneer in the field of African-American literature. She intended to bring awareness of a "disease" called racism that needed to be removed from American culture. She wanted to use her writing and her unique approach to help fight prejudice. The black dialect, subsequently known as African-American Vernacular English, played an important role in the Harlem Renaissance literary production. Writers highlighted the significance of recreating Black identity in order to oppose racism and segregation. The rebirth of Black identity was aided by the usage of black languages as a cultural trait of a whole race. It was crucial to her that this dialect be preserved as homage to all African-Americans who were brought to this country as slaves. She felt compelled to investigate all types of black vernacular,

particularly in the South; As an anthropologist and folklorist Hurston was up in Eatonville, an all-black town where she was immersed in a rich black culture, including the city's pure and original black accent; After that, when she leaves her birthplace and travels throughout the continent, she has the opportunity to meet and learn about diverse black dialects, which piqued her curiosity as an anthropologist. This substantially influenced her literary style, since she frequently incorporated Eatonville's black vernacular in her works, particularly in her poetry; She would blend into the community and study their verbal expression skills in order to understand the language of the residents of the specific regions she explored as authentically as possible, she employed dialect as a weapon in all of her works to express various ethnic experiences, including various "Negro experiences" "I will fight for my country ,but I will not lie for her" (217).

3.2 Race Matters

“I belong to no race nor time. I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads”

Zora Neale Hurston

This section will discuss racial indications in *Dust tracks on a Road*, how they relate to social structure and the conditions of a black woman writer's life, because there are various variables to consider in fully comprehending Hurston's definition of race.

Several interpretations and questions have been asked about Hurston's memoir, her race policy in *Dust Tracks* prompted thinkers such as Stephen Spencer to ask these questions:

“During a period when racial violence increased and racism continued to be reflected in both popular culture and official government policy; why did

Hurston steer away from the themes of resentment, anger and despair in the black community?” (17).

While African American writers and thinkers considered literature as an opportunity to challenge white American's racist practices, Zora Neale Hurston's works particularly her autobiography was out of this step. She believes that literature should convey the opinion of minorities, express their thoughts and explore their internal life that is not dominated by race as Stephen Spencer mentioned “Despite Hurston's associations with other African American artists during the Harlem Renaissance, her position on race ran counter to the view of the NAACP and many of her contemporaries” (17). Thus, in the interest of a positive analysis of black culture, Zora Neale Hurston’s autobiography suppresses the interracial conflicts that are common in the United States

However, the topic of race is noticeable in *Dust Tracks on a Road* and it clearly reflects Hurston’s experience as an American. At the beginning of the autobiography Hurston emphasizes the idea that the creation of the individual is linked to time and place, she adds that the understanding of the ‘self’ cannot be separated from larger ideas of history and society; she reconstructs her black Florida hometown of Eatonville in order to highlight the impact of this independent black community on the formation of her personality and race attitudes. Hurston’s portrayal of Eatonville as one of a kind experiment in self government equates to concepts of black power and larger society, she stresses black authority of Eatonville, implying a degree of social, political and economic self governance not found somewhere else in the Deep South “I was born in a Negro Town. I don’t mean by that the black-side of an average town. Eatonville, Florida, is, and was at the time of my birth, a pure Negro town”. (DTR10) In fact, Hurston found the shop of owned by Joe Clarke to be

incredibly valuable, as the tales she heard there planted the seedlings for her later work; this is recorded in her autobiography: “but I know that Joe Clarke’s store was the heart and spring of the town”, (DTR44) Hurston’s assumption in the uniquely American concept of self-reliance was strengthened by her positive experiences in Eatonville as well as her unrestricted personality.

In her autobiography, Hurston mentioned that going into any white person’s home with a sense of inviting, shows that people in Eatonville and Maitland had forgotten about the color line that divided blacks and whites in America, instead focusing on the fact that they are all equal humans. In addition, Hurston asserts that she could not get a piece of chocolate or a bag of crackers since she could go into a store in Jacksonville, demonstrating the inhumanity of racist whites. Having endured a great deal of persecution as a slave girl, Hurston discusses the advantages of owning a lighter skin in American society.

Hurston realized she was black and different, she asserts that she missed all the lovely things she had experienced when she started at the new school: “Jacksonville made me know that I was a little girl I was no longer among the white whose homes... I could barge into with a sure of welcome... I do not get piece of candy or bag of crackers just for going into a store in Jacksonville” (DTR63-64), being told that she was colored was an odd experience for her only because Negroes and white people co-existed in Maitland and Eatonville. As such Jacksonville was really one of some these towns in which racism was at its peak and black people were poorly received and subhuman does not only appear to suggest that she was separated, but that she was fully informed that she was distinctive and unwelcome.

One such example can be found in Hurston’s autobiography, where she expresses how, when she was eight years old, an old white man took her fishing and

gave her life changing advice. Hurston depicts herself as having had multiracial contact at a young age in the work. To start with, a white male is observable at her birth and even cuts her umbilical cord; afterward in Hurston's life, this man had an impact. There are also innumerable white women listed in this work, many of whom are charitable and appreciating of Zora as a child and an adult: "And Fannie Hurst offered me a job as her secretary, and Annie Nathan Meyer offered me a scholarship to Bernard" (DTR118). She also described her photograph: "Looking at a very serious photograph of me that Carl Van Vechten had made, he told me one night in a voice full of feeling that that was the way he wanted me to look all the time unless I was with him. I almost laughed out loud" (DTR175). Charlotte Mason was among the young black artists' enthusiastic white supporters to struggling artists who needed income to support and develop their skills. She emphasized on being addressed as "Godmother" which prompted an emotional response in *Dust Tracks*.

Furthermore, in *Dust Tracks on a Road* Hurston describes her success as being dependent on her white patrons, therefore and in response to the assistance she received, Hurston disguised herself as a white woman and wrote what she thought her white audience wanted to hear. what made her work the winner of the Race Relations Anisfield Award in 1943; some scholars however, arguing that she was either pandering to white nation or deceiving her audience; therefore, most white critics gave the book a positive reviews while many black critics rejected it, in other words *Dust Tracks on a Road* by Zora Neale Hurston rather has been left in order to collected on book shelves, or to overly criticize the white world would risk alienating powerful white figures who governed the publishing world and the patronage system.

Despite living during an era of racial violence and Ku Klux Klan occurrences, Hurston's autobiography is riddled with discrepancies therefore her stance on racial

issues leads to questioning because she preaches one point of view while practicing another one, as Elliot mentioned “Hurston's stance on the race issue, a preaching of one view while practicing another, leads to questioning”(1) this latter doesn't include any negative interactions or situations of discrimination; She on the other hand, explains how all of the white people she met as a youngster were the friendliest individuals she had ever met, treating her as an equal and inspiring her to fight against the racial injustice she would confront later in life, where she mentioned:

“Snidlits, don’t be a nigger,” he would say to me over and over.* “Niggers lie and lie! Any time you catch folks lying, they are skeered of something. Lying is dodging. People with guts don’t lie. They tell the truth and then if they have to, they fight it out. You lay yourself open by lying. The other fellow knows right off that you are skeered of him and he’s more’n apt to tackle you. If he doesn’t do anything, he starts to look down on you from then on. Truth is a letter from courage. I want you to grow guts as you go along. So don’t you let me hear of youlying? You’ll get ’long all right if you do like I tell you. Nothing can’t lick you if you never get skeered. (p8)

In addition, Hurston also claimed :

“The light-skinned children were always the angels, fairies and queens of school plays. The lighter the girl, the more money and prestige she was apt to marry. So on into high school years, I was asking myself questions. Were Negroes the great heroes I heard about from the plantation, or were they the ridiculous monkeys of every-day talk? Was it really honourable to be black? There was even talk that it was no use for Negro boys and girls to rub all the hair off of their heads against college walls. There was no place for them to go with it after they got all this education (185).

The above paragraph affirms the assertion or perception of white as a color of supremacy and opportunity. The simple truth that light-skinned students were always been the angels, fairies, and princesses in school plays. The statement that educating Negroes is pointless because there is nowhere for them to go could be consistent with the fact that decent employment chances were reserved for whites regardless of how skilled a Negro was. Enrolling in college and receiving a degree as a black person indicates not only that black people are as intelligent as white people, but it also

demonstrates that black people have no place in America, this means that being educated as a black person in America means nothing, regardless of how motivated someone is to contribute to the growth of the American economy. Additionally, Hurston mentioned "The next day I received an Episcopal hymnbook bound in white leather with a golden cross stamped into the front cover, a copy of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and a book of fairy tales" "In that box was *Gulliver's Travels*, Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, *Dick Whittington*, *Greek and Roman Myths*, and best of all, *Norse Tales*. Why did the Norse tales strike so deeply into my soul?" (DTR38-39). She confirmed in this piece about a black man who is willing to get service at a hair salon but is denied because of the color of his skin; The reality, however, is more complicated, because Hurston admits she did not want him around at all anyway: it would have jeopardized her own economic living by keeping her other customers, or patrons, away. She contends that self-care is much more essential than showing help or encouraging words to this discriminatory practices victim. Her discourse illuminates the many difficulties and challenges of black civil rights concerns. In *Dust Tracks* Hurston states:

"I do not coyly admit to a touch of the tarbrush to my Indian and white ancestry. You can consider me Old Tar-Brush in person if you want to. I am a mixed blood, it is true, but I differ from the party line in that I neither consider it an honor nor a shame" (DTR278).

Hurston rejects color as a decisive factor characteristic of human character throughout her life; according to her "we are no race. We are just a collection of people who overslept our time and got caught in the draft (205). Boas has become the most influential character in her academic career, not only for his significant personal magnetism, but also because he identified her genius writes Ernest Hemingway.

Additionally, *Dust Tracks on a road* acknowledge the complex nature of Hurston's relation not only with readers but also with publishers and booksellers; As a black writer she may have been limited in what she could write due to the challenges she faced, what may have influenced the viewpoints she presented, in addition parts of her original manuscript of the 1942 edition were included in the library of America edition as were four chapters that have been left out of prior editions, one of those excised portions was "My people, My people" which related to race issues; therefore, when comparing the amounts of edits on Hurston's treatise on "My people, My people, her perception on race will be illustrated; as Natasha Tatiana Sanchez stated " topics of race, gender and sexuality, and imperialism are discussed in the deleted sections and chapters of *Dust Tracks*". She added "Race is deconstructed in relation to the white gaze in her revised chapter "My People, My People". (34)

At the beginning of chapter eleven she states: "what I wanted to tell was a story about a man, and from what I had read and heard, Negroes were supposed to write about the Race Problem. I was and am thoroughly sick of the subject. My interest lies in what makes a man or a woman do such-and-so, regardless of his color (145), Hurston is striving to convey in these few words that what she values in a person is individualism, regardless of race, gender, circumstance, language, or other factors; The fact that she appears to be attempting to discuss the Negro issue in the opposite way is impressive; What matters to her in a person is that they know that terrible moral law is independent of one's ethnic history or heritage, and that a decent demeanour and spirit are gained through one's own efforts rather than via race pride; She is a true liberal who prefers to seek people's individualism over social equality between sexes and races.

“Therefore, after straining every nerve to get an education, maintain an attractive home, dress decently, and otherwise conform, he is dismayed at the sight of other Negroes tearing down what he is trying to build up. It is said every day, And that good for nothing, trashy Negro is the one the white people judge us all by. They think we’re all just alike. My people! My people!” (159)

The very first line of the quote implies that no matter how great and attractive a person is that it will not be enough in reality, anything similar to white or not even to produce anything similar they are always all Negroes based on one negative idea done by one bad Negroes

Why should I be proud to be a Negro? Why should anybody be? Proud to be white? Or yellow? Or red? After all, the word “race” is a loose Classification of physical characteristics. It tells nothing about the insides of People. Pointing at achievements tells nothing either. Races have never done anything (DTR207).

Hurston rejected to depict black people as decided to abandon ,economic exploitation individuals or imitators of white of mainstream culture .she saw ordinary black people as vibrant and creative ,not even have to face the challenges of racial violence a as child in Eatonville was American first integrated black community ,that has its own set of laws and mayor .she was resolute to begun in writing regarding black life as it occurred apart from racism ,unfairness and Jim –crow where black people started laughing commemorated adored ,adored and struggled about white people and seemingly ignorant that they were problem “I see no reason to keep my eyes fixed on the dark years of slavery and the Reconstruction. I am three generations removed from it, and therefore have no experience of the thing . . . there seems to me to be nothing but futility in gazing backward (211).To put it in other words, because whites have done everything, blacks can progress up the social ladder while whites remain stuck. This optimism is echoed in Dust Tracks, where she highlights the passage of time that separates her from enslavement. Critics claim she is rejecting

enslavement and concealing herself in order to avoid divulging and exposing her vital self.

Hurston's divisive views on race are explored in the final chapters of her autobiography where she says “so none of the Race clichés meant anything anymore. I began to laugh at both white and black who claimed special blessings on the basis of race” (161), she speaks softly demonstrating her serenity “I have no race prejudice of any kind ... In my eyesight, you lose nothing by not looking just like me. I will remember you all in my good thoughts, and I ask you kindly to do the same for me” (194).

Hurston rejected the black-and-white as concept existed society she thinks that a man is too complicated to be limited to so polarities: "I see Negroes neither better nor worse than any other race" (207). She simply refuses to acknowledge radical blacks who simplify the black dilemma to the premise "black is good and white is evil." She even refuses to acknowledge the existence of a "Race Problem":

“ I heard the phrases "Race Problem", "Race Pride", "Race Man or Woman," "Race Solidarity," "Race Consciousness," "Race Leader" and the like ... mean nothing to me again. At least nothing that I want to feel” (207).

According to Hurston, all is a matter of individuality:

“When I have been made to suffer or when I have been made happy by others, I have known that individuals were responsible for that, and not races. All clumps of people turn out to be individuals on close inspection” (DTR207).

She really cannot assist but only be a sensitive to the color line, however it was different kind of sensitivity than usual that was never sour she was always appreciative to be black woman in her autobiography “My own circumference of everyday life is there ... everywhere I look” (194), she added :

“Must I not also go hang my head in shame when a member of my race does something execrable? If I glory, then the obligation is laid upon me to blush also. I do glory when a Negro does something fine, I gloat because he or she has done a fine thing, but not because he was a Negro” (DTR207).

Conclusion

Ultimately, from the previous analyses, one can conclude that *Dust Tracks on a Road* reveals that Zora Neale Hurston did not reject the race matters; instead she was more conscious that she had to suppress all the racial issues with ambiguity and wit, so that her work is accepted for printing also to ensure her financial and occupational future.

Furthermore, *Dust Tracks on a Road* presents the work of a master novelist. It recounts the story of Hurston’s most prominent character, the one she lived with on a daily basis, including all fictionalized elements. It is the autobiography of a character named Zora Neale Hurston.

General Conclusion

The current study has been an attempt to explore Hurston's racial policy and her construction of multiple self in her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*. This memoir is considered the most controversial and ambiguous work written by Hurston; throughout it Hurston suppressed her real self, in addition to her stance from the race matters, Maya Angelou mentioned: "It is difficult, if not possible, to find and touch the real Zora Neale Hurston"(DTR Foreword).

The first chapter of this dissertation provided an overview of literature on Kidnapped individuals. Beginning with slave narrative that depicts the history of black people in America as they struggled for representation as well as the most significant issues that blacks faced during their journey in America as an oppressed group. Europeans and Americans have shared negative stereotypes about the black people such as physical ugliness, illiteracy a lower social status. As a result African American intellectuals and artistic had to fight to achieve their goal, and they wrote a literary production to address it to all white people. The slave narratives genre developed over time and became more influential and aesthetic with the contemporary black autobiographies, Black autobiography is a popular genre among Black authors.

Then, the chapter provided a socio-historical foundation for the analysis of the chosen novel. It offered and clearly demonstrates that the cultural explosion known as the Harlem Renaissance is gradually improving race relations in America, and it had a tremendously positive influence on African American literature which implies that black people able to use art to express their dissatisfaction with the status quo. The Harlem Renaissance considered the most influential movement in African American literary history, as well as a flourishing of African American culture, notably in the

creative arts, Zora Neale Hurston and others at that time rose to write hundreds of works in responding to social imbalances and racial prejudice.

The second chapter has been devoted to concentrate mostly on the life of Zora Neale Hurston and to analyze her autobiographical novel *Dust Tracks on a Road*. That a proud and spirited woman who rose from humble beginnings to great heights .in her autobiography she stated: "I have been in Sorrow's kitchen and licked out all the pots. Then I have stood on the peaky mountain wrapped in rainbows with a harp and a sword in my hands" (227). In approaching the work with a black criticism perspective, it become more obvious that African Americans especially women suffered in their life, the bad torture and inhuman treatment, they never enjoy the full natural rights as citizens, they always marginalized, due to the color of their skin. Zora Neale Hurston is also suffered in her life, it is possible to conclude that she was a spectacular and remarkable black woman writer, endeavored to introduce black people and culture to whites, not through racial protests and superficial descriptions of blacks, unlike most of her contemporaries by focusing on expressing blacks' inner qualities. Despite the fact that Hurston's entire life had been difficult she never felt resentment or injustice; she gathered all her strength, and persevered in her effort. Hurston, as previously stated was a Harlemite who differed from her colleagues. Despite her gender, Hurston's personality and lifestyle were more revolutionary than her male contemporaries, due to its home town Eatonville then, Hurston was influenced by her teacher by Franz Boas on the issue of race, the anthropology was to be a keen observer of the community being studied, he should view the community through the lens of its own set of values .

Lastly, it can be said that Zora Neale Hurston in *Dust Tracks on a Road* decided to write her own version of life, also she did create considerable parts of herself, as a masquerader putting on a mask just as a character in her fictional stories; in this way, Hurston wrote herself and sought to rewrite in her works the 'self' of the 'race'.

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ملخص

يدور هذا المشروع حول بناء زورا نيل هرستن لذاتها المتعددة وموقفها من القضايا العرقية في سيرتها الذاتية الغامضة آثار الغبار على الطريق، كما يسلط الضوء على واقع الأمريكيين الأفارقة في الولايات المتحدة ومعاناة المرأة في مجتمع عنصري. هذا العمل عبارة عن ملخص خيالي وإبداعي لصعودها من الجنوب الريفي إلى مكانة بارزة بين الكتاب والمثقفين البارزين. تحظى آثار الغبار على الطريق بتقدير كبير إضافة إلى كونها مثيرة للجدل لرفضها التحقيق في آثار العنصرية أو التمييز العنصري. من خلال الكتاب تحافظ هرستن على موقف إيجابي وإبداعي هذا ما جعل القراء البيض يقدرون عدم تعليقها على القضايا العرقية، من ناحية أخرى وجد النقاد السود هذا غير معقول واتهموها بالتوسط للبيض. من أجل الكشف عن غموض هذا العمل سيتم تحليل سيرة هرستن الذاتية وتفسيرها بدقة. تنقسم هذه الأطروحة إلى فصلين أساسيين الأول هو مناقشة السياق الاجتماعي التاريخي للسيرة الذاتية الذي يوفر فهما أفضل للقضايا التي تم تناولها، الفصل الثاني هو عبارة عن تحليل لقضايا مثل الهوية والعرق وكذا تحديد الأسلوب الذي استخدمه زورا للكتابة عن المواضيع التي لها أهمية كبيرة لها ولعرقها وهذا باستخدام وجهات نظر النقد الأسود. الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب الإفريقي الأمريكي. نهضة هارلم. العرق. الذات.