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English Comp. I
Betty Gilson
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Summary of “How It
Feels to Be Colored Me”
Comparison/Contrast Essay
Revision

In her comparison essay, Zora Neale Hurston talks about the different stages in her life, and how they compare to the way she felt about being colored.

As a little girl, she wasn't aware of the fact that she was “colored.” She viewed herself as a normal kid in a normal world where people weren't black or white.

When she was thirteen, she was sent to school in Jacksonville. That was the moment when she realized that she was “colored.”

Unlike most black people, Zora doesn't mind being black. She is a person with a strong character that is determined to be who she wants to be and not be limited by labels people use to categorize other people.

There are moments when she forgets that she is “colored.” Some other times, she is proud of being “colored,” especially when her black heritage gives her an advantage over the way white people understand black music. They only “heard what I feel,” she remarks (101).

There are moments when she belongs to “no race nor time.” She is the “eternal feminine with its string of beads” (102).

Despite all the different Zoras, she is also an American citizen who sometimes feels discriminated against—but not angry. “How can I deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It’s beyond me” (102).

Most of the time, she feels like a small piece of a big puzzle that creates a whole. Each part has its own purpose, even when its contribution is not fully appreciated. They bring color to an otherwise boring and mono-colored world. Zora’s essay teaches us also—in a very subtle way—a very important lesson about the danger of ethnocentrism.

Works Cited

Neale Hurston, Zora. "How It Feels to Be Colored Me." *Connections: A Multicultural Reader for Writers*. Editor Judith A. Stanford. California: Mayfield, 1997. 99-103.