

Reprise Editor's Note

NINA MORGAN

This issue's Reprise features two original essays from the 1950s by Zora Neale Hurston (accompanied by a wonderful introduction written by Ernest Julius Mitchell II, "Zora's Politics"), a short interview with James Baldwin (originally published in 1985, just two years before his death), and two essays, by Birgit M. Bauridl and Alex Lubin respectively, on transnational forms of affiliation.

In his introduction to reading Zora Neale Hurston's politics, Ernest Mitchell argues that contemporary scholarship has misread Hurston in significant ways, distorting Hurston's work and reputation to serve contesting political agendas; thus, in recent years, she has been associated with "a bewildering array of affiliations: republican, libertarian, radical democrat, reactionary conservative, black cultural nationalist, anti-authoritarian feminist, and woman-hating protofascist." Recuperating Hurston from this impossible political melee of labels, Mitchell argues, requires a careful reading of Hurston's work dating from her earliest pieces in the late 1920s, as well as surveying her many yet to be published manuscripts and letters; it requires recognition of the transnational and comparative lens through which she reported on political maneuvers and military histories, as well as reading not only her strong criticisms but also her silences, ironic phrasings, and nuanced critiques in her writings on global colonial enterprises. Mitchell's introduction to the two Hurston essays here reprinted, "I Saw Negro Votes Peddled" (1950) and "Why the Negro Won't Buy Communism" (1951)—courtesy of the very kind and amiable staff at the *American Legion Magazine*—is set in the larger frame of his assertion that Hurston's work should be read with a deep appreciation of her staunch anticolonialism. Tracing her political philosophy through her views of how race and religion are used to valorize an international culture of violence that serves imperialistic and colonial ends, Mitchell takes his reader on a tour of Hurston's transnational commentary—from the US occupation of Haiti, to the Spanish and British on the Florida peninsula; from Communist Russia and China, to election practices in the US—to set the stage for our encounters with these rarely read Hurston essays. Reading Mitchell's "Zora's Politics: A Brief Introduction," supported by his substantial endnotes (there are over a hundred) and bibliography, provides a firm foundation for a more complex

understanding of the impressive range of Zora Neale Hurston's political and literary oeuvre.

From Rosa Bobia's *The Critical Reception of James Baldwin in France* (Peter Lang, 1998; and a special note of thanks to editor Stephen Mazur), Reprise reprints Bobia's 1985 interview with Baldwin in Atlanta, shortly before his death in France in 1987. Here, as Bobia and Baldwin enter into a brief discussion of his perception of how he was received in France in the 1950s, Baldwin seems to embrace the fact that he was at that time in France largely unknown, an outsider: "I was a maverick." In light of the fact that in his later years Baldwin came to speak French with great ease and to live comfortably in his home in France, it may seem surprising that his tone in these pages seems to suggest a hint of disinterest in how French critics perceived him—or perhaps it is simply indicative of his deeper affiliations, just as his final burial in the US seems to indicate.

Birgit M. Bauridl's "'Rowing for Palestine,' Performing the Other: Suheir Hammad, Mark Gerban and Multiple Consciousness" and Alex Lubin's "'Fear of an Arab Planet': The Sounds and Rhythms of Afro-Arab Internationalism" cover similar terrain—both discussing the work of Suheir Hammad in their analyses, for example—but end up in different places intellectually. Originally published in Alfred Hornung and Martina Kohl's *Arab American Literature and Culture* (Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), Bauridl's essay offers a full discussion of a number of theoretical constructions regarding identity. In closely reading the words of both Hammad and Gerban, Bauridl challenges the simpler dualisms of bifurcated, Du Boisian approaches to identity, interpreting the complex reality of the "trans" in transnational identity, which seems more appropriately mobile and fluid and permeable, as are the experiences of "multiple consciousness" of those who try not to side with any specific racialized or politicized aspect of identity but to creatively negotiate all of them. Such complexities, from the perspective of Alex Lubin's analysis, become even more nuanced and yet more politicized in the idea of the identities and actions of communities that translate their politics and poetics into other discursive forms, seeking liberation. "Seriously" reading global hip-hop as a transnational linkage of the voices of the dispossessed and oppressed, Lubin argues that reading and understanding the new geography of liberation that such discursive communities create is also a way of recognizing how such spaces and forms of community—the borderless and refugee—are always already breaking out of fixed rhythms and identities to produce new belongings and beats.