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By Mercedes Aguirre, Benjamin Lempert

Macat International Limited, United Kingdom, 2017. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The racial prejudices of 1930s America were many, and included a common presumption that African American art was unoriginal - merely poorly copying white culture. African-American novelist, anthropologist and essayist Zora Neale Hurston crushingly evaluated such assumptions in her 1934 essay `Characteristics of Negro Expression. While Hurston s approach and premises seem in many ways dated to modern readers, the essay still shows an incisive mind carefully evaluating arguments and cutting them down to size. African-American art of the time did not - Hurston influentially argued - play by the same rules as white art, so it could not meaningfully be discussed by `white notions of aesthetic value. Where white European tradition views art as something fixed, Hurston saw African-American art works as a distinctive form of mimicry, reshaping and altering the original object until it became something new and novel. In this way, she contended, African-American creative expression is a process that generates its own form of originality - turning borrowed material into something original and unique. By carefully evaluating the relevance of previous arguments, Hurston showed African American artistic expression in an entirely...

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