

ADVANCED READING

PASSAGE 1

There is substantial evidence that by 1926, with the publication of *The Weary Blues*, Langston Hughes had broken with two well-established traditions in African American literature. In *The Weary Blues*, Hughes chose to modify the traditions that decreed that African American literature must promote racial acceptance and integration, and that, in order to do so, it must reflect an understanding and mastery of Western European literary techniques and styles. Necessarily excluded by this decree, linguistically and thematically, was the vast amount of secular folk material in the oral tradition that had been created by Black people in the years of slavery and after. It might be pointed out that even the spirituals or “sorrow songs” of the slaves—as distinct from their secular songs and stories—had been Europeanized to make them acceptable within these African American traditions after the Civil War. In 1862 northern White writers had commented favorably on the unique and provocative melodies of these “sorrow songs” when they first heard them sung by slaves in the Carolina sea islands. But by 1916, ten years before the publication of *The Weary Blues*, Hurry T. Burleigh, the Black baritone soloist at New York’s ultrafashionable Saint George’s Episcopal Church, had published *Jubilee Songs of the United States*, with every spiritual arranged so that a concert singer could sing it “in the manner of an art song.” Clearly, the artistic work of Black people could be used to promote racial acceptance and integration only on the condition that it became Europeanized. Even more than his rebellion against this restrictive tradition in African American art, Hughes’s expression of the vibrant folk culture of Black people established his writing as a landmark in the history of African American literature. Most of his folk poems have the distinctive marks of this folk culture’s oral tradition: they contain many instances of naming and enumeration, considerable hyperbole and understatement, and a strong infusion of street-talk rhyming. There is a deceptive veil of artlessness in these poems. Hughes prided himself on being an impromptu and impressionistic writer of poetry. His, he insisted, was not an artfully constructed poetry. Yet an analysis of his dramatic monologues and other poems reveals that his poetry was carefully and artfully crafted. In his folk poetry we find features common to all folk literature, such as dramatic ellipsis, narrative compression, rhythmic repetition, and monosyllabic emphasis. The peculiar mixture of irony and humor we find in his writing is a distinguishing feature of his folk poetry. Together, these aspects of Hughes’s writing helped to modify the previous restrictions on the techniques and subject matter of Black writers and consequently to broaden the linguistic and thematic range of African American literature.

PASSAGE 2

Historians generally agree that, of the great modern innovations, the railroad had the most far-reaching impact on major events in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly on the Industrial Revolution. There is, however, considerable disagreement among cultural historians regarding public attitudes toward the railroad, both at its inception in the 1830s and during the half century between 1880 and 1930, when the national rail system was completed and reached the zenith of its popularity in the United States. In a recent book, John Stilgoe has addressed this issue by arguing that the “romantic-era distrust” of the railroad that he claims was present during the 1830s vanished in the decades after 1880. But the argument he provides in support of this position is unconvincing. What Stilgoe calls “romantic-era distrust” was in fact the reaction of a minority of writers, artistes, and intellectuals who distrusted the railroad not so much for what it was as for what it signified. Thoreau and Hawthorne appreciated, even admired, an improved means of moving things and people from one place to another. What these writers and others were concerned about was not the new machinery as such, but the new kind of economy, social order, and culture that it prefigured. In addition, Stilgoe is wrong to imply that the critical attitude of these writers was typical of the period: their distrust was largely a reaction against the prevailing attitude in the 1830s that the railroad was an unqualified improvement. Stilgoe’s assertion that the ambivalence toward the railroad exhibited by writers like Hawthorne and Thoreau disappeared after the 1880s is also misleading. In support of this thesis, Stilgoe has unearthed an impressive volume of material, the work of hitherto unknown illustrators, journalists, and novelists, all devotees of the railroad; but it is not clear what this new material proves except perhaps that the works of popular culture greatly expanded at the time. The volume of the material proves nothing if Stilgoe’s point is that the earlier distrust of a minority of intellectuals did not endure beyond the 1880s, and, oddly, much of Stilgoe’s other evidence indicates that it did. When he glances at the treatment of railroads by writers like Henry James, Sinclair Lewis, or F. Scott Fitzgerald, what comes through in spite of Stilgoe’s analysis is remarkably like Thoreau’s feeling of contrariety and ambivalence. (Had he looked at the work of Frank Norris, Eugene O’Neill, or Henry Adams, Stilgoe’s case would have been much stronger.) The point is that the sharp contrast between the enthusiastic supporters of the railroad in the 1830s and the minority of intellectual dissenters during that period extended into the 1880s and beyond.

PASSAGE 3

Three basic adaptive responses—regulatory, acclimatory, and developmental—may occur in organisms as they react to changing environmental conditions. In all three, adjustment of biological features (morphological adjustment) or of their use (functional adjustment) may occur. Regulatory responses involve rapid changes in the organism’s use of its physiological apparatus—increasing or decreasing the rates of various processes, for example. Acclimation involves morphological change—thickening of fur or red blood cell proliferation—which alters physiology itself. Such structural changes require more time than regulatory response changes. Regulatory and acclimatory responses are both reversible. Developmental responses, however, are usually permanent and irreversible: they become fixed in the course of the individual’s development in response to environmental conditions at the time the response occurs. One such response occurs in many kinds of water bugs. Most water-bug species inhabiting small lakes and ponds have two generations per year. The first hatches during the spring, reproduces during the summer, then dies. The eggs laid in the summer hatch and develop into adults in late summer. They live over the winter before breeding in early spring. Individuals in the second (overwintering) generation have fully developed wings and leave the water in autumn to overwinter in forests, returning in spring to small bodies of water to lay eggs. Their wings are absolutely necessary for this seasonal dispersal (: the act or result of dispersing; especially: the process or result of the spreading of organisms from one place to another). The summer (early) generation, in contrast, is usually dimorphic (a: DIMORPHOUS 1 b: occurring in two distinct forms “dimorphic leaves of emergent plants” “sexually dimorphic coloration in birds”)—some individuals have normal functional (macropterous) wings; others have much-reduced (micropterous) wings of no use for flight. The summer generation’s dimorphism is a compromise strategy, for these individuals usually do not leave the ponds and thus generally have no use for fully developed wings. But small ponds occasionally dry up during the summer, forcing the water bugs to search for new habitats, an eventuality (a possible event or outcome: POSSIBILITY) that macropterous individuals are well adapted to meet. The dimorphism of micropterous and macropterous individuals in the summer generation expresses developmental flexibility; it is not genetically determined. The individual’s wing form is environmentally determined by the temperature to which developing eggs are exposed prior to their being laid. Eggs maintained in a warm environment always produce bugs with normal wing, but exposure to cold produces micropterous individuals. Eggs producing the overwintering brood are all formed during the late summer’s warm temperatures. Hence, all individuals in the overwintering brood have normal wings. Eggs laid by the overwintering adults in the spring, which develop into the summer generation of adults, are formed in early autumn and early spring. Those eggs formed in autumn are exposed to cold winter temperatures, and thus produce micropterous adults in the summer generation. Those formed during the spring are never exposed to cold temperatures, and thus yield individuals with normal wing. Adult water bugs of the overwintering generation brought into the laboratory during the cold months and kept warm, produce only macropterous offspring.

PASSAGE 4

The Constitution of the United States does not explicitly define the extent of the President's authority to involve United States troops in conflicts with other nations in the absence of a declaration of war. Instead, the question of the President's authority in this matter falls in the hazy area of concurrent power, where authority is not expressly allocated to either the President or the Congress. The Constitution gives Congress the basic power to declare war, as well as the authority to raise and support armies and a navy, enact regulations for the control of the military, and provide for the common defense. The President, on the other hand, in addition to being obligated to execute the laws of the land, including commitments negotiated by defense treaties, is named commander in chief of the armed forces and is empowered to appoint envoys and make treaties with the consent of the Senate. Although this allocation of powers does not expressly address the use of armed forces short of a declared war, the spirit of the Constitution at least requires that Congress should be involved in the decision to deploy troops, and in passing the War Powers Resolution of 1973, Congress has at last reclaimed a role in such decisions. Historically, United States Presidents have not waited for the approval of Congress before involving United States troops in conflicts in which a state of war was not declared. One scholar has identified 199 military engagements that occurred without the consent of Congress, ranging from Jefferson's conflict with the Barbary pirates to Nixon's invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam conflict, which President Nixon argued was justified because his role as commander in chief allowed him almost unlimited discretion over the deployment of troops. However, the Vietnam conflict, never a declared war, represented a turning point in Congress's tolerance of presidential discretion in the deployment of troops in undeclared wars. Galvanized by the human and monetary cost of those hostilities and showing a new determination to fulfill its proper role, Congress enacted the War Powers Resolution of 1973, a statute designed to ensure that the collective judgment of both Congress and the President would be applied to the involvement of United States troops in foreign conflicts. The resolution required the President, in the absence of a declaration of war, to consult with Congress "in every possible instance" before introducing forces and to report to Congress within 48 hours after the forces have actually been deployed. Most important, the resolution allows Congress to veto the involvement once it begins, and requires the President, in most cases, to end the involvement within 60 days unless Congress specifically authorizes the military operation to continue. In its final section, by declaring the resolution is not intended to alter the constitutional authority of either Congress or the President, the resolution asserts that congressional involvement in decisions to use armed force is in accord with the intent and spirit of the Constitution.