

**Racism as Child's Play:
The Half-Cast Nanny in Kay Boyle's "White as Snow" (1933)**

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Abstract

Kay Boyle (1902-1992) was a socially engaged, highly prolific writer of short stories. A member of the Modernist movement, her short story "White as Snow" combines style, childhood perspectives, and landscape to impress the pain of racist segregation upon readers for the few pages they live in her half-cast character's skin. A child narrator tells the tale of Adamic's long-awaited invitation to the cinema for herself, her sister, and their nanny Carrie, who is "[c]olored sweet and even like sarsaparilla." However, the outing is ruined by Jim Crow laws, as Carrie is not allowed to enter the cinema with the other three white characters. This analysis will demonstrate how Kay Boyle employs childhood narration and landscapes as a Modernist narrative strategy to denounce racism. The locations of childhood landscapes used as settings in the story will be specifically studied from a geocritical perspective. Then, three different layers of childhood juxtaposed by Boyle will be analyzed, causing pause for reflection regarding the racist experience in her story. Kay Boyle draws attention to this inequality, over thirty years prior to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by telling the story from a child narrator's perspective and depicting it through the child's play of vacation.

Keywords: *Kay Boyle, childhood landscapes, Modernism, racism, Jim Crow Laws*