

Lesson Plan: Oppression and Identity in 1920

Unit: Roaring 20s

Teacher: Jill Ferris (Mr. Hanson)

Course: 11 U.S. History Regents

Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2008

1. Content:
 - a. Unit goal: I want my students to understand the 1920s as a time of divergence, with great societal polarities such as Harlem Renaissance v. rise of Ku Klux Klan, loosening morals of the 'jazz age' v. prohibition, consumerism and prosperity v. farm and labor problems, changing cultural values (especially regarding women) v. tradition.
 - b. Lesson goal: I want my students to relate the achievement of the Harlem Renaissance to their own lives by writing a poem (or song) about part of their identity that they feel has been oppressed. As in the Harlem Renaissance, they may choose to consider the historical or contemporary ramifications of that oppression.
2. Framing:
 - a. Content context: The 1920s is full of tension between competing interests within the society. Yet, so much of the jazz culture is dependent on the development of the Harlem Renaissance, and the rise of the KKK can be viewed as emblematic of developing conservative and nativist sentiments.
 - b. Classroom context: We are beginning our unit on the Roaring 20s today. We have most recently studied American global expansion and
 - c. Big Picture: People have different interests and act in response to the interests of others around them, but deep down, they are driven by their own experience.
3. Objective(s): The student will be able to create their own piece of poetry about their own identity in a style similar to that of a poet from the Harlem Renaissance.
4. Instructional Procedures: (35-50 min.)
 - a. Framing: contradictions of the 1920s. Focus today on one – KKK v. Harlem Renaissance (5 min.)
 - b. Rise of the KKK: mini-lecture and as a class, look at primary source document. Why this resurgence? What are the implications? (10 min.)
 - c. Mini-lecture: Great migration. (7 min.)
 - d. Harlem Renaissance: Look at several examples of poetry. What do you think of when you hear 'Harlem'? What is the purpose of these works? What is this in response to? Introduce homework assignment. How have you faced oppression in your past or present? What part of your identity could be soothed or explored through poetry, as in the Harlem Renaissance?
 - e. BOCES students leave. Class works independently on poetry assignment (15 min.)

5. Materials/Equipment: worksheets, primary source documents (http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/clash/Imm_KKK/antiimmigrationKKK-index.htm#KKKDoc), HR poems, Great migration maps and figures
6. Assessment/Evaluation: students will turn in a personal poem based on their Harlem Renaissance poetry.
7. End Framing:
 - a. Homework: Finish personal poem.

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I Too Sing America
Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

Mulatto
Claude McKay

Because I am the white man's son—his own,
Bearing his bastard birth-mark on my face,
I will dispute his title to his throne,
Forever fighting him for my rightful place.
There is a searing hate within my soul,
A hate that only kin can feel for kin,
A hate that makes me vigorous and whole,
And spurs me on to increasingly win.
Because I am my cruel father's child,
My love of justice stirs me up to hate,
A warring Ishamelite, unreconciled,
When falls the hour I shall not hesitate
Into my father's heart to plunge the knife
To gain the utmost freedom that is life.

Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem

Helene Johnson

You are disdainful and magnificent—
Your perfect body and your pompous gait,
Your dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate,
Small wonder that you are incompetent
To imitate those whom you so despise—
Your shoulders towering high above the throng,
Your head thrown back in rich, barbaric song,
Palm trees and mangoes stretched before your eyes.
Let others toil and sweat for labor's sake
And wring from grasping hands their meed of gold.
Why urge ahead your supercilious feet?
Scorn will efface each footprint that you make.
I love your laughter arrogant and bold.
You are too splendid for this city street.

Hurt

Langston Hughes

Who cares
About the hurt in your heart?

Make a song like this
For a jazz band to play:

Nobody cares.
Nobody cares.

Make a song like that
From your lips.

Nobody cares.

The Banjo Player

Fenton Johnson

There is a music in me, the music of a peasant people.
I wander through the levee, picking my banjo and signing my songs of the cabin and the
field. At the Last Chance Saloon I am as welcome as the violets in March; there is
always food and drink for me there, and the dimes of those who love honest music.
Behind the railroad tracks the little children clap their hands and love me as they love
Kris Kringle.
But I fear that I am a failure. Last night a woman called me a troubadour.
What is a troubadour?