

# Theme for english b

Literature, Poetry



Dwayne Thomas Thomas 1 11/19/2012 Composition II Figures of Speech  
Essay The Literary Working of Theme for English B Langston Hughes' instillation of metaphors throughout his poem accentuates the theme concerning the integration of schools which conveys America's ode to freedom and equality. In addition to the metaphors, irony is also displayed within the carefully crafted work of art, stressing the ridiculousness of society's digressing of unity and togetherness.

These literary devices are shown by the speaker's inquiry of the paper he is assigned by his white professor whom states, " let that page come out of you — then it will be true. " " I guess I'm what I feel and see and hear. Harlem, I hear you", says the speaker as he is expressing the beginning of his paper. The fact that he only hears Harlem implies that he has lost touch with the feeling and visual context of the African American culture due to the integration of schools. This does not necessarily expose a bad conception, for he still hears Harlem.

Therefore, the idea is that the mixing of races within schools creates a melting pot that disregards feeling different and having opposite perspectives, but maintains the knowledge of where you come from. This is Hughes' description of the American persona. The speaker extends this metaphor of the American persona even more by stating his enjoyment towards different styles of music, " I like... records - Bessie, bop, or Bach. " This ranging style of musicality proves that though he is black he is no different than other people of diverse ethnicity, providing another reasonable argument cooperating with the integration of public schools. Following the quote, the speaker explains, " I guess being colored doesn't

make me not like the same things other folks like who are other races. ” The double negative presented in this quote symbolizes the double standard the society of America used during that time period. Though many people regardless of race enjoyed the same music, it was noted that the people of other races were vastly different and could not identify with any other race accordingly.

With that, this quote further clarifies the similarity of diverse ethnicities. Hughes incorporates the paper the speaker writes, itself, as a metaphor as well. The physical paper itself represents, in a simplistic view, white people, as the words represent black people. Paper would not mean anything without words written on it, as words would be nothing without paper to put them on; referring to integration this simply means that the black schools and the white schools are two parts of one, and when put together they generate a meaning, an expression, a unified America.

This point is emphasized by the speaker’s epiphany that his paper will be a part of the instructor as he explains, “ You are white— yet a part of me, as I am a part of you. That’s American. ” The second to last stanza in the poem demonstrates the ludicrous and child-like behavior between the two races, “ you don’t want to be a part of me. Nor do I often want to be a part of you. But we are, that’s true! ” This quote, nonetheless, highlights the fact that all of the races are a part of each other no matter how much it is disliked. And that each person learns something from one another, though others were considered “ somewhat more free. In effect, this stanza thoroughly explicates the stressed meaning of the poem by exploiting the comparisons of every Thomas 3 race through humble scenarios. In addition, the last

stanza, “ This is my page for English B”, validates the speaker’s paper due to the professor’s claim that the page “ will be true” if it comes “ out of you”. Thus, Hughes cleverly rationalizes his agreement of integration. All in all, the poem is utilized as a gateway to express the theme of union between different races through integration of public schools.

In fact, the beginning of the poem rhymes as does the end, whilst the middle of the poem contains the persuading information. This may represent the two conflicting races being unified by the material discussing the principle of America, for at the beginning the professor speaks and the speaker speaks at the end (symbolizing the two races). Also, the main point within the poem is emphasized when the speaker lists the differing genres of music he likes, because they all begin with the letter “ b”, as does the title of the work. So at that particular point, the theme is best expressed.

Another impression is that the title names the letter “ b” as symbol of society’s current position in life. “ A” stands for America, and Hughes is attempting to state that we are not there yet, but rather a step below becoming true Americans because of the conflict between races straying us from unity. Through his employment of strong metaphors and a well use of irony, Hughes skillfully indicates his argument of a need for harmony within society by integrating schools – this being the central view as the “ American” way within poem.