Major s of the harlem renaissance period essay example

Art & Culture, Artists

The term Harlem Renaissance has become so commonplace that the history student in any American class can easily give a detailed description of the events that characterized the movement. Among the people that best define the Harlem Renaissance are Langston Hughes and Rudolph Fisher. These two Harlem Renaissance authors produced the most influential pieces of literature describing the situation in Harlem during the 1920s. Fisher's short story The Caucasian Storms Harlem is as comparable to Hughes' When the Negro was in Vogue as it as it is distinguishable. In straightforward terms, the differences between the two stories are as many as the differences. Starting from the setting, to the main themes, the two stories draw a similar picture to the layman's eye – they describe the situation at Harlem with clipped precision as though they were together when the events were unfolding. This paper seeks to explain the extent to which Fisher's short story The Caucasian Storms Harlem is comparable to Hughes' When the Negro was in Vogue, in light of the main themes and especially the whites' fascination of Harlem in the 1920s.

Perhaps the most conspicuous similarity between the two books is the actuality that both are set in the 1920s. They both relate to the decade when white presence in the Harlem neighborhood and especially in the nightclubs was increasing at a disturbing rate. As a matter of fact, both stories are written by prominent Harlem Renaissance writers, who were well versed with the black culture that defined Harem. Both stories refer to exactly the same setting as both of them mention such clubs as The Cotton Club (Fisher pg. 1236). Similarly, Hughes speaks of " The Cotton Club on Lenox Avenue" (pg. 1325). Both writer give prominence to the fact that the whites were fast

replacing the blacks in such clubs as the Cotton Club. They point out that the blacks were growing rare in the clubs, except the celebrities such as Ethel waters (Fisher pg. 1237, Hughes pg. 1325). In addition to the fact that both authors mention Ethel, a prominent singer, they also mention other African artists such as Bojangles (Hughes pg. 1325) and Aubrey Lyles (Fisher pg. 1239). Summarily, both stories' similarities are summed by the irony that the whites were growing fonder of black clubs, they were fast replacing black patronage and black artists were making the headlines.

While the differences between the two stories appear insignificant, they are worth mentioning as well. Perhaps the most pronounced difference between the two stories is the scope and focus. Speaking of focus and scope, on page 1238, Fisher prominently focuses on the effects of the white presence on the new negro movement – a major force in Harlem, which Hughes does not mention. This is also seen in the fact that Fisher is more detailed on the information relating to the artists than is Hughes. Fisher gives descriptive information of such artists as Ethel waters and how the white invasion was affecting them. He gives a more intimate experience because he had been to the clubs in person (pg. 1236). On the contrary, Hughes gives the account of a Harlem resident who had not been to the club. He says, " But I was never there, because the Cotton Club was a Jim Crow club for gangsters and monied whites" (Hughes, pg. 1236). As mentioned earlier, the primary similarity is the actuality that both stories employ irony as a major tool. On the other hand, the main difference is that Fisher employs the use of flashback – something that Hughes brief story does not use. Summarily,

despite the few differences, the two stories are more similar than different.

Their themes and the writing styles are to a great extent similar.

Works Cited

Fisher, Rudolph " The Caucasian Storms Harlem". The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature, page 1236

Hughes, Langston. " When the Negro Was in Vogue" (excerpt from The Big Sea) (page 1325). The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature, page 1325