

PRIDE & PREJUDICE:

A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA



TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

A VIDEO FROM KNOWLEDGE UNLIMITED, INC.



TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

for

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE:

A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

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Student activity sheets may be duplicated for classroom use.





INTRODUCTION

Unlike every other immigrant group that came to the United States, the different peoples of Africa who were brought here as slaves were stripped of their freedom and deprived of everything that gave them a sense of their cultural identities. They were seen as people defined only by race — that is, by the color of their skin.

What would such a people do? How would they respond to such treatment? That is the central question explored in the video *Pride & Prejudice: A History of Black Culture in America*. The video begins by describing the ways in which the special forms of oppression endured by blacks affected their ability to create a social and cultural identity in the United States.

After defining culture briefly, the video looks at several distinct problems or challenges that African Americans have faced in developing their own cultural practices and expressing their beliefs and values here in America. First, blacks have had to borrow many cultural forms from the dominant society that was oppressing them. Secondly, they often had to keep their most strongly felt beliefs disguised or hidden. They had to rely on already strong oral traditions to compensate for the educational restrictions placed on them. And, finally, blacks had to contend with stereotypes that portrayed them in negative ways.

The video includes several quotations from famous African American authors and a number of interview segments that present the views of award-winning author Clifton Taulbert and two African American scholars at the University of Wisconsin — Guy Michael Fultz, a professor of history and education, and Sandra Adell, a professor of African American literature.

Toward the end of the program, we examine a famous quote from W.E.B. Du Bois. It poses the problem of what Du Bois termed the “double consciousness” that African Americans experience. The video closes with some final thoughts and comments about the rich diversity of views and artistic styles developed and expressed by African Americans.





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THE TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

The guide consists of the following:

- 1) A brief introduction, stating goals and objectives.
- 2) A readiness activity to be completed before viewing the video.
- 3) Four follow-up lessons to be completed after viewing the video. A reproducible activity sheet accompanies each lesson.*
- 4) The complete script of the video *Pride & Prejudice: A History of Black Culture in America*.
- 5) A brief bibliography.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the video and completing the activities in this guide, students should:

1. Better understand the unique cultural and intellectual challenges faced by African Americans as opposed to other groups of immigrants to the United States.
2. Be able to identify some of the key contributions African Americans have made to American society and culture in music, literature, and the arts, in particular.
3. Have a greater appreciation of the past contributions of outstanding African American writers, artists, musicians, and scholars.
4. Be able to debate and make judgments about current issues having to do with contemporary African American culture.

*The Readiness Activity and Lessons 1 and 2 are appropriate for younger students as well as for those in high school. Lessons 3 and 4 are more difficult. However, younger students should be able to do these as well, if you adapt the activities to their needs or provide them with some additional information.



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A READINESS ACTIVITY

(Do this activity before viewing the video.)

Objective: Students will be better able to appreciate the video as a result of having identified key personalities and events in it.

Use the Readiness Activity Sheet (opposite page).

1. Split your class into four smaller groups.
2. Reproduce copies of the Readiness Activity Sheet and hand them out. This sheet contains a list of names and other terms.
3. Tell the class members that they will be viewing a video on the impact of African American culture on our society, and that the video will make use of and expand on the terms on the activity sheet.
4. Assign each group three of the names or events on the sheet. Give each group about 10 minutes to discuss their three items and agree on definitions for them. Ask one person in each group to record the group's definitions in one or two sentences each.
5. Have each group read its definitions to the whole class. Discuss the names and other terms, and try to supply more complete information where necessary.

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READINESS ACTIVITY SHEET

In a small group, discuss the three names or other terms you have been assigned from the list below. Have one member of the group record an agreed-upon definition or description for each of these names or terms.

Louis Armstrong

Langston Hughes

minstrel shows

W.E.B. Du Bois

Ralph Ellison

The Harlem Renaissance

James Baldwin

Scott Joplin

“Jim Crow”

Toni Morrison

Zora Neale Hurston

stereotype



PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

LESSON 1

*Bulletin Board Display on Contemporary
African American Culture.*

Objective: To help students better appreciate the rich variety within African American culture and its widespread impact on the larger society today.

Use Activity Sheet for Lesson 1 (opposite page).

1. Reproduce copies of Activity Sheet for Lesson 1 and hand them out. Ask students to read the instructions on the activity sheet carefully. Then answer any questions they have.
2. Provide students samples of articles like the ones they will have to find. Discuss some of these articles and suggest various sources for more of them — e.g., newspapers, weekly news magazines, magazines about movies, music, the arts, etc.
3. Give students about one week to find their three articles.
4. Assign one group of students the task of creating the bulletin board display. After the display is complete, have that group explain what they have included and why. Extend this discussion to enable others to explain the choices they made. Allow them to refer to and share their activity sheets during the discussion.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

ACTIVITY SHEET FOR LESSON 1

*Bulletin Board Display on Contemporary
African American Culture.*

Help create a bulletin board display showing how important African American culture is to our entire society today. The display should be made up of photos, information on black writers, musicians, actors, artists, etc. As part of the display, include articles from recent newspapers and magazines. For this assignment, find three articles you want to include, one each in three categories — Art & Literature, TV & Movies; Music & Dance.

Art & Literature

Summary of article:

Why you included it:

TV & Movies

Summary of article:

Why you included it:

Music & Dance

Summary of article:

Why you included it:



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LESSON 2

Stereotypes of African Americans Today

Objective: To apply critical thinking skills to better understand a medium already familiar to students, in this case television. Also, to better appreciate the subtle nature of the stereotyping that can affect the way we view various groups in our society.

Use Activity Sheet for Lesson 2 (opposite page).

1. Reproduce copies of Activity Sheet for Lesson 2 and hand them out. Ask students to read the instructions on the activity sheet carefully. Then answer any questions they have.
2. Conduct a general discussion about stereotyping. Define stereotyping as any general and too-simple view of a group.
3. Illustrate stereotyping by discussing older forms of stereotyping of blacks — e.g., happy servants, buffoons, etc. But do not limit the discussion to African Americans. Discuss stereotypes about other ethnic groups, women, Christian fundamentalists, older people, etc.
4. Suggest that some contemporary stereotypes of African Americans may be subtle, or quite different from those in the past. Here you might encourage a debate about rap music figures, the Cosby show, crime shows in general, etc.
5. Give students several days to choose and watch a show. Tell them to use the activity sheet to take notes during and just after the show.
6. Collect the activity sheets and reproduce those that will be most useful in a final discussion about stereotyping.

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ACTIVITY SHEET FOR LESSON 2

Stereotypes of African Americans Today

Over the decades, African Americans have often been stereotyped in harmful or insulting ways. Have these stereotypes disappeared? Or have they just changed and taken on new forms? Your task is to try to answer these questions by analyzing the portrayal of blacks in a single night on TV.

To do this assignment, watch one fictional TV show. The show must include some African American characters. As you watch the show, or immediately after it is over, fill out the checklist below. Use the checklists to conduct a group discussion about the issue of the stereotyping of African Americans on TV today.

1. How many of the main characters in the show were black?
2. What characters were portrayed mainly in a positive light?
3. Were these portrayals stereotypical or not? Explain.
4. What characters were portrayed mainly in a negative light?
5. Were these portrayals stereotypical or not? Explain.
6. Does this show help overcome harmful stereotypes about African Americans?
Why or why not?



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LESSON 3

Biography

Objective: To better understand the complex nature of the way individuals from various sub-groups in a culture adapt to the values, norms, and institutions of that larger culture. Also to learn in-depth how one talented African American coped with these complex pressures.

Use Activity Sheet for Lesson 3 (opposite page).

1. Reproduce copies of Activity Sheet for Lesson 3 and hand them out. Ask students to read the instructions on the activity sheet carefully. Then answer any questions they have.
2. Have students discuss the Ellison quote on the activity sheet. Try to encourage them to provide specific examples of African American cultural expressions that either support or contradict Ellison's point.
3. Briefly discuss each of the six famous African Americans listed on the activity sheet. Give students time to do some preliminary research of their own. Then ask them to choose one person to read more about.
4. Give students time to get a biography on one of these individuals and read it.
5. Have students complete the activity sheets and use them in giving the oral reports called for at the bottom of the activity sheet itself.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

ACTIVITY SHEET FOR LESSON 3

Biography

In the video *Pride & Prejudice: A History of Black Culture in America*, author Ralph Ellison is quoted as saying the following:

“I recognize no American culture which is not the partial creation of black people. I recognize no American style in literature, in dance, in music, even in the assembly-line process, which does not bear the mark of the American Negro.”

Read a biography about one of the following African Americans:

W.C. Handy

Langston Hughes

Marian Anderson

Alvin Ailey

Zora Neale Hurston

George Washington Carver

Now answer the following questions.

1. What were this African American's greatest accomplishments?
2. What special obstacles did this person face because of race?
3. In what ways was this person's African American heritage reflected in his or her accomplishments?
4. What lasting impact has this person had on the rest of American culture?

Use your answers to these questions to prepare a three- or four-minute oral report on this African American.



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LESSON 4

African Americans and the Problem of “Double Consciousness.”

Objective: To gain insight into the way close textual analysis of a single written passage can help expand its meaning and make reading a much more active and worthwhile pursuit.

Use Activity Sheet for Lesson 4 (opposite page).

1. Reproduce copies of Activity Sheet for Lesson 4 and hand them out. Ask students to read the instructions on the activity sheet carefully. Then answer any questions they have.
2. Replay the portion of the video that contains this passage from Du Bois on “double consciousness.” Then, make copies of the complete passage available. It can be found on pages 8 and 9 of Du Bois’s book *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage, 1990).
3. Ask students to react to and discuss this passage.
4. Have them complete the activity sheet. Use some of the more thoughtful responses in a discussion of the passage and of how a careful reading of a written work can often lead to real insights.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

ACTIVITY SHEET FOR LESSON 4

African Americans and the Problem of “Double Consciousness.”

The video *Pride & Prejudice: A History of Black Culture in America*, includes a long quote by W.E.B. Du Bois. It has become one of the most famous passages ever written by an African American. You can read the entire passage on pages 8 and 9 of Du Bois’s book *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Vintage, 1990).

After reading and thinking about this passage, write out answers to the following questions:

1. What do you think Du Bois means when he says the African American was born into a world “which yields to him no true self-consciousness”?

2. Du Bois also says African Americans have been “gifted with second sight in this American world.” What do you think he means by this? What well-known African Americans seem to be good examples of this? Why?

3. Du Bois says the African American longs “to merge his double self into a better and truer self.” Explain what he means? Is it possible for African Americans today to do this? Why or why not?

SCRIPT

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

NARRATOR

The people of Denmark, Ireland, Germany, Poland and Italy differ from one another in many ways — in language, customs, and beliefs. And most Americans of European heritage already know about and celebrate these differences. The rich diversity of Europe is still very real for many of these Americans.

But what if history had played a cruel trick on Europe? Suppose a powerful group of foreigners had arrived, and proceeded to kidnap or buy large numbers of Europeans, and sell them into slavery, shipping them to a distant land, and forcing them to abandon their languages, religions and cultural practices. What kind of people would have emerged from such a terrible ordeal?

This question is not as strange as you may think. While the diverse peoples of Europe were never enslaved in this way, many distinct peoples of West Africa certainly were. The Ibos, Yorubas and Ashanti peoples were as different from one another as Danes are from Italians, as Germans are from Poles. But starting in the 1600s, increasingly large numbers of these and other West African peoples were kidnapped, crowded into horrendous ships, and sold like cattle in the slave markets of the Caribbean and what would become the United States of America. And their masters forced upon them new names, a new language, new religions — and obliged them to abandon their old ways.

So unlike every other immigrant group that came to this country, these different peoples of West Africa came, not as immigrants, but in chains, violently stripped of both their freedom and their ethnic identities, and forced to live in a place that saw them as a people defined only by their race — by the color of their skin, and by their status as slaves.

What would such a people do? How would they respond to such treatment? This is the question we will be exploring in this program.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: A HISTORY OF BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

VOICE 1

“I recognize no American culture which is not the partial creation of black people. I recognize no American style in literature, in dance, in music, even in the assembly-line process, which does not bear the mark of the American Negro.”

NARRATOR

That was a quote from the great African American novelist Ralph Ellison. It certainly contrasts sharply with the idea of blacks as a people forcefully stripped of their culture. In Ellison’s view, they were not only undefeated by this history, but were able to achieve a major role in shaping the cultural heritage of all other Americans as well. But what do we mean here when we talk about culture and the impact of black culture on the rest of American society?

WHAT IS CULTURE?

NARRATOR

In its broadest sense, culture is the sum of all the things that make us who we are — our history, our ethnic roots, our language, our religion, and the way we express ourselves in music, art and literature. Let’s start with history.

HISTORY: OPPRESSION AND IDENTITY

NARRATOR

All forms of injustice attempt to crush the human spirit. And slavery was surely one of the most unjust of all arrangements humans have ever created. In the words of one historian, slavery is a form of “social death” — the total

denial of a place for the slave in the life of his or her society. And for African Americans, slavery was crushing beyond belief.

And slavery, which legally ended in the 1860's was only followed by new forms of injustice — ranging from the terror of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan to the constant insults of segregation laws that kept blacks and whites apart in nearly all areas of daily life.

Yet, in spite of all of this sorrow, Americans of African descent not only endured but were able to create a new and complex culture of their own.

ETHNICITY

NARRATOR

As we saw in our example at the beginning of this program, many Americans celebrate their ethnic backgrounds. Many have grandparents or great grand parents from the so-called “old country,” where the language, foods and traditions were a special source of pride and richness. These traditions give many of us an unbroken connection to our past.

But the Ibos, Yorubas, Oyos and Ashanti's, all with different languages and histories, were thrust together in chains, and forcefully fed a new language and new religions. English combined with some form of Christianity and intermarriage, would blur the clear distinctions between these very different peoples. But pieces would survive, bits of language, intact folk tales, customs, and some musical traditions. Robbed of their original identities, this newly created group of African Americans would forge a new culture out of the oppression that bound them together.

Through books, sermons, schools, newspapers, songs, and stories, African Americans strove to find meaning and make sense of the life forced upon them here in America.

We asked several people who specialize in African American issues to comment on the question of what defines African American identity and culture. Clifton Taulbert is the author of two best selling books on growing up in rural Mississippi under segregation. Sandra Adell is a professor of African American literature at the University of

Wisconsin in Madison, and Michael Fultz is a professor of History and Education at the University of Wisconsin.

TAULBERT

“It's like, we were gathered from Central Africa, packed hurriedly, without bringing any sense of our historical significance in antiquity, who we were, what we had done, what we had accomplished, who our parents were, the food that we ate. We were just hurriedly brought to Western Africa, where we were huddled together, placed in the belly of these ships, and sent to a place that we would eventually call home, America. Our ships were not loaded with our sense of self. Our cultural belongings did not come with us.

“But as with any people, we have memories and we have mental plans for the future. For most of our artifacts are first created in our minds and then they are made real with our hands and the materials that we get from the earth. So even though many of my ancestors were shackled together and had to leave behind them the physical and empirical evidence of their existence, yet they brought with them their mental world for the most part.”

ADELL

“The one thing that helped shape African American culture as we know it today, was the historical fact of slavery — and then its aftermath. I think that African Americans, as long as we've been here, have been trying in some way to respond to that historical fact. Or, we're reacting against it. It just seems to me that that's how I would define African American culture today, even — a reaction: against slavery, against segregation, and against the racism that persists in this culture today.”

FULTZ

“It's at first slavery and then desegregation that provide at least a strong part of the context for the development, the historical roots, of African American culture. And that's not a pretty context. That's a context of racism, that's a context of stringent discrimination. That's a context of violence. It's a context of deprivation of opportunities — sanctioned by the governments.”

LANGUAGE AND ORAL TRADITION

NARRATOR

Language plays a key role in African American culture. Many West African traditions were passed from generation to generation through a rich oral tradition consisting of folktales, songs and stories. Whether spoken or sung, such folk tales and stories could convey the values and the history of a people. It was generally forbidden to teach African slaves to read. Given that fact, new forms of Africa's oral traditions thrived on the plantations of the old South — and they had a lasting impact on art, literature and especially on music, from blues to rock to rap.

As an oppressed minority living under slavery and under segregation, African Americans had to learn to express anger and a longing for freedom in ways that would not attract too much attention from those who dominated them. This led to some new and creative ways of using language. For example, workers in the fields often chanted work songs that told of their harsh treatment in humorous or concealed ways. Hidden sarcasm was common in song, dance and folktales, as was the “trickster” figure in folk tales — a small but wily animal or person who gets the better of larger, more powerful enemies.

RELIGION

NARRATOR

The slaves were more or less forced to adopt Christianity — but not in the way many slave owners hoped they would. One slave-owning minister, for example, said religion would teach the slaves, “respect and obedience [to] all those whom God in his providence has placed in authority over them.”

This was the response of one slave in Alabama:

VOICE

“Church was what they called it. But all that preacher talked about was for us slaves to obey our masters and not to lie and steal. Nothing about Jesus was ever said.”

NARRATOR

Instead of this, blacks developed forms of worship that allowed them to speak out against oppression and look forward to a day when they would be free. Often in the woods at night, black preachers presented this alternative view of salvation in secret sermons to their congregations. Call-and-response preaching styles involved the whole congregation actively. The church became a kind of miniature democratic community where equality and the individual were valued. Spirituals and sermons stressed Old Testament stories about the escape of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and the New Testament story of Jesus as a liberator who would one day end the suffering of the poor and downtrodden. In other words, through their adopted religious faiths, blacks voiced their pain and their longing for freedom in ways the larger society could neither see clearly nor easily prohibit.

African Americans had to use European traditions and institutions and adapt them to African American needs. This was as true in religion as it was in the arts. In music, for example, in New Orleans and other parts of the South, blacks mastered European instruments and musical notation — and yet came up with rhythmically rich and original new forms of music, from blues and gospel, to ragtime and jazz in all its many forms, to rhythm ‘n’ blues in the 1940s and ‘50s, to rock and to the rap music of today.

In painting, novels, poetry, and drama, black artists and authors have often adapted traditional forms of Western art and literature to their own needs.

Artists like Edward Bannister, whose paintings follow the French Barbizon school of landscape artists express almost no uniquely African or even African American perspective.

On the other hand, an artist like Lois M. Jones combines themes from African art to create a uniquely African American style of painting.

In literature there were writers like Phyllis Wheatley in the 1700s, who wrote poetry in the style of English writers such as John Milton or Alexander Pope.

Langston Hughes, on the other hand, merged standard Western literary forms with jazz or

blues rhythms and themes from black life in America.

Hughes was a part of the so-called “Harlem Renaissance.” In the 1920’s, in New York City’s Harlem, writers like Zora Neale Hurston, sculptors like Richmond Barthe, painters like Aaron Douglas, and musicians like Duke Ellington made Harlem a center for those seeking to use traditional Western art forms to express what was unique in the African American experience.

about double consciousness. One day when the children were all supposed to exchange valentine cards, he gave a valentine card to the a little girl who was a new person in the environment, in the area. She wouldn’t take it from him — because he was black. And when Du Bois describes this event years later, he talks about it in terms of a veil that comes down, that separates him from the other children or that separated him from the other children. Suddenly, he saw himself as different.”

IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

NARRATOR

Many African Americans have felt a strong set of conflicting feelings about being part of America, and at the same time being separate from America. This feeling is what the distinguished black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois called the “double consciousness”, in his book “The Souls of Black Folk,” written in the early 1900s.

VOICE

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others. ... One ever feels this twoness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts ... two warring ideals in one dark body. ... The history of the American Negro is a history of this strife, this longing ... to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging, he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. ... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.”

ADELL

“What Du Bois is describing is the outcome of something specific, a specific event that happened in his life as a child growing up in Great Barrington. In his little environment, the environment that he grew up in, he saw himself as one of the other children. There was no difference between himself and the other kids in his class — until one day, and this is according to the narrative that he writes, from which we’ve taken the quote

FULTZ

“It’s a brilliant articulation of that struggle, of how can you be an American when many of the dominant elements in the society are seemingly so opposed to you — and opposed to your being a true American citizen. But this is after the experience of slavery, after enduring the context of segregation. This is our country too.”

NARRATOR

Many other African Americans share this feelings of conflict expressed so well by Du Bois. At the same time, it is important not to over-generalize about the African American experience, because in reality there is no single, African American identity. Nor is there any single authentic “black” point of view about any important matter. Like any other group of people, African Americans have cooperated, argued, disagreed, and responded creatively to their circumstances in a wide variety of ways. The responses have ranged all the way from complete accommodation to Western forms ... to separatist, black nationalist, or back-to-Africa points of view.

IDENTITY VS. STEREOTYPE

NARRATOR

Any attempt to generalize about any group invariably raises the issue of stereotypes. At times, whites took black contributions and transformed them in ways that stereotyped and demeaned blacks. The minstrel shows of the nineteenth century often consisted of white performers in black face imitating song and dance styles of blacks they had seen. It was a white minstrel performer, “Daddy” Dan Rice, who made up the famous Jim Crow

character in the early 1800s. The term “Jim Crow” in time came to be applied to all of the harsh and unjust segregation rules by which blacks were kept down.

In the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s, the radio and TV comedy show “Amos n’ Andy” portrayed blacks as foolish and gullible figures. Often in those years, the only roles available to blacks were as maids and servants, or as clownish and easily frightened buffoons. More recently, blacks have all too often been portrayed as drug dealers or violent thugs.

FULTZ

“I think the issue of stereotyping raises — and I should have been raising it, too — the issue of power. All people generalize about other people, rightly or not. That’s the way we get through our lives. We sort of pick up cues about different people. Stereotypes, I think, are interesting — and particularly negative stereotypes. And the many rampant negative stereotypes about African American people — men, women, issues of intelligence — because African American people do not share equitably in the power relationships of society, both in a political sense and through the media, for example, those generalizations become rigid, become reinforced.”

ADELL

“The question is: When does it become harmful? And it’s simply when that stereotype defines a whole group of people in a certain way, usually in a way that helps the dominant culture to maintain power over that people or that group of people.”

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPACT ON AMERICAN CULTURE

NARRATOR

With great eloquence, Clifton Taulbert helps us summarize the issue of the cultural impact of African Americans on the culture of this nation.

TAULBERT

“Slavery did not eradicate that mental sense of creativity. It stopped it, slowed it down, did

not give it a prominent place for growth and nurturing. But there’s something about creativity. It might be dammed at one end, but it will find its way through crevices and rocks. It will show up somewhere. And it has shown up in America. These multinational people, that were bound together by a system and a color, I think that perhaps the triumphant thing is that these, my ancestors, were resilient to the fact of having been melded as one nation even though they represented many nations. But from that, we get a collection, a mosaic of memories from the continent of Africa that have found themselves on the walls of America, on the mantles of America, and in the museums of America.”

NARRATOR

Slavery, segregation, and racism have created unique and terribly painful limits against which talented African Americans have had to fight to achieve greatness. Yet in spite of oppression, blacks did achieve greatness. And they did more than create a black culture within American society. They helped shape that society into something unique — through language, poetry, jazz, pop culture, science, invention, and especially through political ideas that stress the democratic ideals at the heart of American society. The uniqueness of this contribution is echoed in Ralph Ellison’s description of jazz, which he called “an art of individual assertion within and against the group.”

This faith in the individual is at the heart of our democratic traditions. We tend to admire the underdog. We honor the heroism of a lone figure struggling for justice against all odds. And it is exactly this theme that has run through so much of African American literature, music, folklore and art. Perhaps the highest contribution of African Americans to our larger culture and society can be found in this determination to express the true meaning of America’s democratic values.

VOICE

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.

— Langston Hughes





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