

Questions for Class #3, Jan. 25, 2022

Linda's Questions for Session #1: Thematic context: Africa in African American Poetry

1. As you were growing up, when and what did you learn about Africa? As an adult, has that knowledge of Africa changed? When, how, and why? Based on your own experience, what is the general impression many Americans have of Africa's history and culture?
2. What images of Africa do you see and hear in these poems?
3. How important is the portrayal of one's ancestral origins to one's sense of self?
4. What relationships do you hear expressed between the speakers of these poems and Africa?
5. Which poems were particularly impactful for you?

Karen's Questions for Session #2 – two poems:

"Heritage" by Countee Cullen (See our class website to download this poem.)

1. What are the speaker's sources of information about Africa?
2. What is the speaker's attitude toward Africa?
3. What are some poetic devices in the poem?
4. If you were compiling an anthology, would you include this poem? Why?

"125th St" and Abomey By Audre Lode

1. What aspects of Africa are most important for the poem's speaker?
2. What contrast is implied between New York and Africa?
3. What are the poetic devices in this poem?
4. What is the poem's tone?

Compare and contrast "Heritage" and "125th St and Abomey"

5. How would you compare the settings of the 2 poems?
6. How would you compare the tones of the poems?
7. What are the speakers' attitudes toward religion?
8. What questions does Africa appear to raise and / or answer in the 2 poems?
9. Would you include either / both of these poems in your anthology? Why or why not?

Chris's questions about "My Father's Geography" by Aafa M. Weaver

1. From what standpoint or POV is the speaker coming and in what ways is that so different from that of his father, especially regarding Africa?
2. What is his father's POV or geography? Might the differences have to do with their different generations?
3. Can you hear the difference in language between father and son? How does Harriet's talk last week help us with that?
4. There are several oppositions in the poem, starting with father-son. What are the other oppositions? How do these contribute to the impact and themes of the poem?