

Critical Race-"Recitatif"

For many years, intellectual authors have dealt with racial issues and African American prejudices that affect the way they written, perceptions from public eye, and biases of literary history. African American literature deals with racism as a common literary record for the societal experience of African American people. Recitatif addresses the subject of racial prejudices. In this story the reader struggles with identity of the characters and the text's eternal conflict. Roberta and Twyla were never given a race in the story and this is an example of how people categorize others into race immediately and it shows the divisions of the American society. Rather than delving into the culture of African Americans, Morrison describes the divide between the races in today's culture is largely dependent on black and whites defining themselves in opposition to one another that sparks this idea of double consciousness in Recitatif. Double consciousness comes into play because the reader has their own opinion of which girl is white and which one is black but through the eyes of the character it's impossible to see one unified identity. One aspect of this in Recitatif is the challenging of stereotypes and how American literature has affected the way this ideology is perceived throughout texts because of the division that inherently affects the lives of Roberta and Twyla. Double Consciousness in this story is broken down by the influences of history, class, gender, and race. Morrison re-imagines the struggles and tribulations that black people had to go through during this time period to experience the social realities whilst creating a contemporary spin. She begs the question, Who and what is an American? This story shows that one of the characters had to separate her black identity from her American identity and then saw herself as a representation of what white people had prescribed for her. Identity in today's society is crucial because standing firm in what you believe in does not give anyone else the chance to change your mind and make lesser of you. I think this idea of double consciousness heightens the resolution of tension in identity

because it enacts people to truly find out the real you and to not let oppression, society, and other people dictate the way to live your life.