



American Genre Painting: Visual Representations of Slavery and Emancipation, 1850-1870

Curriculum Unit 14.01.02, published September 2014
by Tara Ann Carter

Overview

Upon initial consideration, one may ask, in a Eurocentric society, were there representations of African-Americans in art prior to Emancipation? The answer is yes. However, one must look closely and carefully. After finding these representations, one must check the manipulation of these depictions by the artist and their assumptions/prejudices that they bring into the work. This unit seeks to investigate the lives of African-Americans directly prior to, and following, the Civil War.

The bulk of visual representation of African-Americans during this period have been created by white artists, primarily because the oppressive nature of the chattel slavery system did not permit artistic expression by those held as slaves. Therefore, the paintings discussed in this unit are not by African-Americans for African-Americans, but rather produced by white artists for consumption by a predominantly white audience. These works position blacks within the white power structures that existed during the period. In our era, we can come to understand the social attitudes of the time period as represented and portrayed in the paintings suggested for use in this unit.

On a very simple level, visiting Europeans, in particular, gave treatment to black figures because "blacks were picturesque in the simplest meaning of the word – suitable for representation in art". ¹ It has also been remarked that these representations are in some ways more authentic because non-American artists, at least initially, took on the role of disinterested spectator. ² It is argued that Europeans were "occasionally struck by the scenes which native-born Americans had not recorded probably because they seemed either too commonplace to answer the demands of the public or too perturbing". ³ In other words, that which one lives amongst is that which one pays the least mind, thereby granting subjects of many of the artists suggested more analytical eye than the average American. It is important to add, however, a handful American painters did also themselves drawn to these figures as well.

Specifically, the genre paintings selected span the decades of 1850 to 1870, a tumultuous period of American History. From these works, students can glean some visual understanding of what life looked like for black people, while simultaneously unpacking the idealized historical commentary on antebellum and postbellum perceptions of slave and freedman life. By looking at a selection of twenty-five images between the specified

years, students can also find a thematic and visual vocabulary for understanding the structures of power in the US.

While these paintings have all been created by white artists, which may seem problematic, Alain Locke, writer, educator and philosopher, in his compendium published in 1940, *The Negro in Art*, succinctly explains: "To treat adequately, even in the barest outline, the art history of the Negro one should trace, in addition to the career of the Negro artist, the course of the Negro theme in art generally. As is becoming increasingly recognized, this, too, is a vital part of the Negro's cultural history and influence".⁴ Ergo, there is value in looking at representations of black persons painted by others, as long as that influence is discussed and validated within an appropriate theoretical framework. Specifically, "the fictions that whites built about the black people in their midst were very different from those they constructed about one another....most argued that the fundamental factor deterring African-Americans' place in the social order was that black were racially - that is *essentially* - different from whites as human beings."⁵

Historically, the decades 1850 to 1890 span the period leading up to through and directly after the Civil War. Prior to the south succeeding, the Compromise of 1850 signaled the increase in tensions between pro and anti-abolition political movements. This particular period progresses through the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation and into Reconstruction, including the passage of the 15th Amendment, granting newly freed slaves the right to vote.

Rationale

I have found that sharing pictures, music, letters, poems and sundry texts help students engage on a very personal level with the material. The more points of access and modalities of learning that, as an educator, I can appeal to, the more opportunities my students will have to find a connection and true affinity for the subject in a genuine way.

In high school, most students do not have a sense of how to approach a painting as text. It seems inherent in the creation and implementation of this curriculum that students need to be taught foundational strategies to approaching a piece of artwork. I believe it is crucial to provide students with the tools to think critically about these representations they will view and remark upon. To that point, I hope to find a means to translate a historical framework to literary theory and understanding to the field of art/image study. I would like to provide my students with a formulaic approach to applying this framework to any text.

This curriculum unit is a project of weaving narrative visualization throughout the history of African-Americans in some of the most turbulent decades of the sovereignty. I also wish to apply new techniques and strategies to integrate these images into the classroom in an authentic way, such as close analysis of artwork, as well as strategies for examining broader, more massive collections, in a meaningful way. I have found and enumerate visual resources for students to better grasp the way life looked and felt for slaves directly before and after the Civil War.

School Demographics

I am a dual-certified Secondary (7-12) Social Studies and English teacher at Hill-Freedman World Academy (HFWA), an International Baccalaureate Title I public magnet high school tucked away deep within the urban backdrop of Northwest Philadelphia. HFWA is a very small, but expanding school. The genesis of the high school model began only two years ago, as an answer to the a call from the middle school parents for a rigorous nearby neighborhood public-school option for their children to continue their secondary education. Student enrollment will reach 500, at the outset of the 2014-2015 school year, as the school currently serves on freshman and sophomores. The rising sophomores will be the inaugural graduating class from HFWA.

The school demographic consists of 85% African American, 5% Asian, 5% Latino, with the remaining students self-identifying as white or other. As is typical of most Philadelphia public schools, over 75% of students are economically disadvantaged. HFWA also has the unique distinction of consisting of over half of the student body population being identified as Students with Exceptional Needs. While most of these students have Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) in a self-contained learning environment, the administration requires and stresses collaboration and cooperation with the general education population, with the requirement that each general education teacher work a minimum of two times throughout the school year in a joint unit where students are meant to intermingle and learn together.

Historical Background

Compromise of 1850

As the newly formed sovereignty began to organize and admit new territories, dispute over slavery and the balance of power in Congress came to a fever pitch. The resultant argument of the expansion of slavery was one that would eventually erode the harmony of the United States. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 also created a more draconian measure to attempt to control and contain slaves in states where slavery was recognized.

Civil War

The Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865, in which seven Southern states succeeded from the unified northern states because of the continued dispute between free and slave states. Particularly, as America expanded westward, the question of slavery became an increased point of contention.

Cotton was the economic cash crop of the South, which depended heavily on intensive slave labor for agricultural maintenance and harvest. For the Southern states, abolition meant the disbanding of their economy and the opulent lifestyles in which white plantation owners enjoyed. The war was eventually won by blockading and choking the supplies available to the South and destroying the infrastructure of the Southern states through Union General Sherman's infamous "March to the Sea", in which the railroads were systematically dismantled and military, industrial/commercial and civilian holdings were burned and confiscated in a risky and innovative martial tactic.

Emancipation

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863, freed all slaves in the states that had actively seceded from the Union, without compensation or further legal repercussion. The Emancipation Proclamation countered the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and allowed for any black individuals to join the Union Army, which was desperately in need of bodies as the Civil War continued. It is estimated that nearly three to four million enslaved persons were emancipated as a result of this declaration.

15th Amendment

In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified granting all men, including black men, the right to vote. While efforts by Southern whites were made to suppress black voters through the creation of literacy tests and poll taxes, this Amendment marked the end of a series of amendments seeking to rectify the re-enfranchise African-Americans as citizens of the United States, as opposed to property.

Minstrelsy

Minstrel shows and the overblown proliferation of stereotypes the character actors embodied served as a form of popular entertainment during this time period. Many American and European whites were influenced by the depiction of black people as stereotypes. White men in black painted faces (initially made by smearing wetted charred cork on the skin) with oversized grins and oversized patchwork clothing, typified trickster tropes and stereotypical portrayals of black people as uncivilized, ignorant and in need of white salvation. These caricatures generally spoke in dialect and created spectacle of the black body in their portrayals. These shows appealed to the middle-class taste of the time, as it created separatism between those who were slaves by race and those who were slaves to wage labor. This racial separation provided comfort in otherness for the average American worker. ⁶

Genre paintings sometimes work within the paradigm of minstrelsy, sometimes as truth and sometimes as commentary. As mentioned above, because the paintings selected for this until are entirely by white males, the contextualization of their understanding of the world must be considered when viewing their work. Therefore, working with the understanding of the social beliefs and attitudes of the time, the minstrel show and the typing of stereotypical black figures in popular media finds root in this time period.

Art Historical Background

Genre Painting

The painting suggested for classroom use fall under the categorical heading of Genre Painting. Genre painting proliferated between 1830 up to the Civil War and sought to show an idealized version of everyday life. It "drew on generalizations about social groups that developed during periods of intense change". ⁷ Genre painting used typing in order to create social constructions that paralleled the everyday life of average Americans. Typing is a natural and frequent act of human nature and specifically, in antebellum America these cultural constructions were formed to foster the fleshing out of status in the newly formed sovereignty. ⁸

Before and after the Civil War changes in the depiction of black people can be detected. ⁹ There is a shift from showing slaves in caricatured form, or only in subservience to whites. ¹⁰ Additionally, however, shortly after the Civil War, genre painting died off altogether. While this can partly be explained by changes in taste, with new forms of art entering the United States from France, it also reflects the fact that, because the North and South were so polarized, painters of black subjects were unsure how to portray life in a way that would be appealing to both audiences. ¹¹

These paintings are of particular use for this unit, as they effectively show a more utopian version of American life, particularly in relation to slavery, which must be deconstructed and unpacked to realize the actuality of the scene. One scholar provides the caveat: "Although genre painting appears to reproduce everyday life, in fact, it only renders a version of it shaped according to certain social, political or class imperatives...in other words, [it] employs a realistic style to create a fantasy of public and private life". ¹² Another critic remarks that the efforts of genre paintings as a vehicle to express African-Americans as a "serious examining [of them] as candidate, if not for suffrage, then at least for a place in the social constituency that was something other than explicitly marginal". ¹³ This is placed in opposition to Native Americans, who were not even shown in genre paintings, being outside of the pale of society all together.

As Dr. Barringer has aptly pointed out, painting is fiction, not fact. Painting is in fact ideology, not historical record, and therefore, often portrays human elements, as the artist believes they should be, not necessary how they are truly. The artist leaves clues for the viewer to uncover in order to uncover the reality behind the work. This type of analysis charges the educator with the task of creating a framework for students to understand and apply these ideological perceptions to the historical reality. The method and framework for this type of reading is provided in the Strategies section below.

Strategies

Forming Effective Questions and the Observational Discussion Method

The foundation of this unit lies in the ability of the instructor to formulate a line of questioning that direct students to remark upon, analyze and subsequently, apply historical context to selection paintings, as a group and individually. This method is primarily derived from careful observation of Dr. Tim Barringer's seminar, Paul Mellon Professor of History of Art at Yale University.

This method begins with simple observation, weaving biographical and historical context throughout as students make comments. Often, the beginning question sets are as simple as, "What is going on here?," "What do you see?" or "What do you notice?". Ideally, the teacher will move students up the ladder of Bloom's taxonomy to such questions as "How does the author feel about his/her subjects?" or "What can this work tell us about the time period?". For further explication on forming effective questions and scaffolded questioning techniques, see the three resources listed in the Bibliography for Teachers.

It is important to be positive in the reception of student comments, gently ignoring or discounting those that are not valid, as well as, providing an appropriate amount of time for students to respond. Pausing for several seconds (ten to fifteen is suggested) and allowing for silence and think time is a skill that every teacher must learn to master, albeit a difficult and, sometimes, awkward task.

The teacher should be well versed in the critical reception of the pieces selected for use. In the section entitled Suggested Paintings, a brief synopsis is provided for each work. However, it is highly recommended that any educator using this method spend a fair amount of time researching the history of the artist and the painting, in anticipation of any and all questions from students.

A Framework for Looking at Art

Triangles and Rectangles

More often than not, genre paintings of the nineteenth century use a "visual encoding of hierarchy and exclusion".¹⁴ Richard Caton Woodville's *War News from Mexico* (Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, 1848) provides excellent fodder for this type of discussion and is suggested as a beginning image to use for students to engage in the Observational Discussion Method. Woodville's work superimposes a series of rectangles seated inside one another (rectangular newspaper, inside porch, inside frame), as well as the triangulation of subject, in which those at the tip of the pyramid (white males) are visually higher than the black and female characters, relegated to the outer edges of the work.

Furthermore, the white female is presented at a window listening in, whereas the African-Americans are seated outside, demonstrating the ostracism of the race deemed by the whites at the center of the painted have placed upon them. In her study on American genre paintings, Elizabeth Jones asserts: "It seems to accurate to say that genre pictures in the antebellum United States encouraged viewers to invest in social hierarchies, in their convictions that certain 'others' in the community were or should be revealed as deficient"¹⁵. This is very clearly laid out in Woodville's painting.

Tracing the Gaze

A second way that artists encode their work is by connecting characters through demonstrative gazes. For instance, in Eyre Crowe's *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Richmond, Virginia* (Private Collection, 1861), one notices many of the figures gaze out the door, anxiously awaiting word from the white men standing in the doorway, presumably to call them to after purchase. The mother with the child in her lap gazes down, demonstrating a mixture of pride and, perhaps, fear that she may be separated from her offspring. The white men do not look at the slaves waiting, as if demonstrate their lack of acknowledgement of the personhood of their captives. Lastly, the woman with the red scarf wrapped around her head looks upwardly proudly, demonstrating either the lifting of the eyes to Providence, her own willful pride or some combination therein.

Spheres of Male and Female

Additionally, in Crowe's painting, mentioned directly above, the men and women are relegated to separate roles. The women sit on a bench with the children, whereas, the only black male sit alone, separate from the other. This mirrors the social hierarchy of the time in which men and women were thought to inhabit separate spheres, not to intermingle with one another. Women's work, as it were is the arena of the housekeeping, cooking and child rearing, whereas men were expected to work outside and complete strenuous physical labor. Of course, it is well documented that slave women were also sent to work in the field quite often, but as remarked earlier, genre painting worked to reinforce the ideals of the time period more so than the realities.

These same assertions can be observed in Woodville's *War News From Mexico*, where the woman sit safely inside, while the men are carousing outside on the porch. It is well documented that the black peoples of America "had no acknowledged participatory voice in American constituency, but they had an economic role

and social presence that demanded attention from those who did...women, too, of all social classes, both black and white were an 'other'." ¹⁶

Use of Light and Illumination

Similarly, light and illumination within painting are used to assert hierarchies and demonstrate social position. Again, in reference to *War News From Mexico*, the woman sits inside, her face shaded and darker than the men on the porch. Upon first glance, she is hardly visible in the work. Additionally, the African-Americans have shadow cast upon them as well, sitting in the margins of the painting. The men's faces are brightly illuminated, with the standing man, presumably reading the paper at the forefront and well lit clearly showing him as the dominant figure in the rendering. Boime extensively discusses the dichotomy of black versus white in the opening chapter of his book, *The Art of Exclusion*. He argues and illustrates this with numerous examples in which "artists' contribution in the nineteenth century to the racial mythologies built around differences in skin color and physical features of subordinate peoples". This is definitively the case in many of the genre paintings suggested for use in this unit.

Collaborative Group Work

At several points throughout the unit, students will be invited to work with one another during classroom activities. A prominent idea behind collaborative student learning allows for students to interact on a peer-to-peer level and potentially communicate ideas about the subject of study in a manner different from that of the teacher. For low-level learners the benefit lies in direct and specific feedback that is sustainably longer and more intense than a teacher could give any single student in a normal period. For higher-level learners, understanding and synthesis is encouraged when they are "teaching" another student information that they have comprehended. Teaching someone else is the number one activity that encourages thought synthesis and idea analysis.

Jigsaws take information, split it up in three to ten groups and require the students in each group to become experts on their bit of knowledge and teach it back to the class. Students who are watching each presentation take notes or fill out a worksheet to retain and record all of the "pieces" with the idea that when students have all information the puzzle will become clear. Jigsaws are useful in a variety of settings.

Another variation of a grouping or "information chunking" activity that require collaboration amongst students is the more traditional station rotation. In this exercise, student groupings travel between multiple stations, each with a piece or specific topic of information related to the whole. The exercise is summarized by individually answering a writing prompt which ties together the elements of the different stations to gauge student understanding and mastery of the material.

Integrating 21st Century Skills

There is no denying the desperate need for schools and their curricula to adapt to the ever-changing proliferation of technological devices, applications and services. Any educator would be remiss to deny the legitimacy of communication modes that are becoming integral parts of the society that students will enter into a few short years. Integrating high technology skills into the curriculum is of dire necessity. One way to integrate these skills is through the use of Twitter, explained below.

The takeaway here is the importance and necessity to engage with students in a way that will reach them, but also will prepare them for the world ahead of them, which is becoming run by demands of social networks and

immediate user-feedback models. Any educator unwilling to embrace and mold these new and versatile avenues to the needs of the classroom is performing a disservice to their students. Teaching students how to gain (correct and accurate) knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself.

The Case for Twitter in the Classroom

Historically, cell phones have been banished from the classroom and Internet censorship abounds in public high schools. Instead, I propose that students are not only allowed to use cell phones in class, they are encouraged and trained to do so. This strategy is a bit subversive but definitely worthy of consideration to create real appeal to the learners. Progressive schools and teachers are beginning to use Twitter to post homework assignments, communicate test dates and other pertinent or interesting information that benefits the student population. In a world that is more and more wired, it crucial to give explicit instruction about positive and safe online persona building. Twitter provides a place to do this work as well.

On the surface, Twitter may seem as if it is simply another social media outlet. However, upon closer examination there are practical applications that lend legitimacy to education. For instance, when writing on Twitter (called "tweeting") one is bound to 140 per message. This constraint forces students to focus on brevity and concision in their writing. Hashtags ("#") are used as summary and key word tags for the tweet; this helps students to focus their writing by focusing them to summarize and direct the main intentions of their tweet. To add, 21st Century Learning is about multiple literacies and the ability between the different types. Students can use Twitter to gain confidence in their own literacy without a doubt.

While authentic real-time interaction is the general aim of this strategy, some teachers may find the idea of setting students free into cyberspace as an anxiety-inducing unrealistic consideration. Students can create private, school-only accounts if the teacher fears students personal Internet usage habits and connection following them to school. If technology is limited or not democratically distributed, students may complete a hardcopy tweet on a scrap piece of paper, indicating their name, creative "@" handle, message and summary hashtag(s). The idea is to engage and check for student learning and the only given is that the form this takes in each classroom will be unique.

Appealing to Multiple Modalities

This unit seeks to appeal to the multiple learning modalities within a classroom. This is important as it gives students who learn from one modality more readily than the other will have equal moments of access to engage with the paintings presented. To add, the Internet is a cache of all types of clips, sound bytes and videos related to content, easily accessible within a few keystrokes, which will appeal simultaneously to visual and auditory learners.

For the visual learners in the classroom, this unit abounds with work to look at and observe. Additionally, the summative assessment described below appeals to the visual and artistic, as students must demonstrate their understanding through photographic recreation of a painting. As a bonus, this is helpful in a classroom environment, as busy hands are hands that are out of trouble. Additionally, in terms of collaborative work, many students who are disruptive will find themselves cooperating and focused when events where they can participate in a tangible way is present.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment, in opposition to summative, or final, assessment, is a way to check for student

understanding. Formative assessments widely vary in type and formality. Some can be as simple as posing questions or statements to the group of students asking them to respond with thumbs up/thumbs down (agree/disagree) or rank their opinion or response in the "Fist of Five" style, in which the pupils hold up a corresponding number of fingers (one is lowest; five is highest) to gauge interest, understanding or express opinions. More formal formative assessment can vary from a brief exit ticket to a longer more structured written constructed response.

Inquiry Based Approach Book acquired to read and summarize. Distill into one paragraph.

Project Based Learning Book acquired to read and summarize. Distill into one paragraph.

Classroom Activities

These classroom activities illustrate a learning cycle in which students will work in a whole class setting, with a partner and in collaborative groups after perfecting their ability to look at art through the Observation Discussion Method, described above. After students have developed their visual vocabularies and ability to read a painting, the lessons provided below create a three-step process in which they can demonstrate their understanding and level of skill.

Lesson One: 90-Word Summaries

After mastering the craft of looking at art and analyzing genre painting as a class through the Observational Discussion Method, students will work with a partner to create a ninety-word summary of a specified painting. The partners will decide what is important about the work, what is worth noticing and remarking upon, and what historical connections should be drawn about the artist and their society.

This task asks for a ninety-word description because this is typical length of description for a piece of art on display, either on the wall panel or in the exhibition catalog. This type of constraint-based writing makes students focus on economy and precision of language in a deliberate method.

The number of summaries and the paintings used are at the discretion of the educator and students skill level. A list of Suggested Paintings is provided below, however, this activity can be used with any movement in art in any time period after the foundation skills have been taught to the students.

Lesson Two: Text-Context-Subtext Inquiry Case Studies

In this activity students will work in collaborative groups to research, connect and analyze the history and biography of one of four genre painters (Eastman Johnson, William Sidney Mount, Thomas Waterman Wood and Frank Buscher), all of who painted African-Americans during their lifetime.

If students are not already well versed in the Observational Discussion Method outlined, this must first be taught and practiced. Accordingly, students will then practice this strategy with their partner in a one-on-one setting with lessened teacher direction.

Presuming internet access and reference library access is available, students will collect information about

each of the painters, examine several of their paintings in which African-Americans are features and examine the subtext of their painting by applying their historical and biographical understandings to the painting. From this, students will then create a summary, written collaboratively, to include their new understandings of the subtext in a ninety-word summary.

If Internet is not readily available in the classroom, the teacher can simply create a paper database by researching and printing out a variety of articles and resources for students to explore. If students are not familiar with the application of Text-Context-Subtext analysis strategies, or are in need of a refresher, a mini-lesson may need to be implemented prior to asking students to do the work on their own.

Three: Final Project - Photographic Re-Appropriation of Genre Painting

The teacher will introduce students to Yinka Shonibare's *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* either by projector or printouts and provide the comparative engravings from Hogarth to demonstrate the movement of narrative through multiple still scenes. This may take up to one full hour, as students will get lost in observing and making connections between the pieces of art.

After students have had ample time to absorb the art they have been given as model, the instructor will set students out into groups to create a appropriation of at least three of the genre paintings that have been viewed during the unit. Changes to settings, time periods, genders and other details are left to the student's discretion. Students will use their photographic reenactments to make commentary on issues surrounding depiction of race in genre painting, the art and representation presently, racial topics of the present or any other multitude of interpretations that can be imagined.

The end results can be published via classroom website, printed and displayed in the classroom or distributed electronically, depending on access to resources.

This activity is suggested for high school students only, as some images depict excessive drinking and vice. Additionally, the final photograph in Shonibare's *Dandy*, entitled 0.300 hours is probably to risqué for many secondary institutions.

Suggested Paintings

The section lists of twenty-five genre paintings, roughly spanning the decades 1850 to 1870, are provided below for use in the classroom. While this list is by no means exhaustive, it provides a wide range of social, political and domestic typed depictions of African-Americans in the years preceding and directly following the Civil War. All paintings are listed in chronological order. Though *War News From Mexico* was originally painted in 1848, it was widely distributed as an engraving in 1851, thus bringing into the fold of the years the unit considers.

1. Richard Caton Woodville, *War News From Mexico*, 1848, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art - Woodville depicts a man reading the newspaper on the porch of a local establishment with townspeople surrounding him.
2. Unknown, *Slave Market*, c. 1850, Carnegie Museum of Art - This painting shows white buyers and sellers

pawing at slaves at an auction. The artist of this work is unknown.

3. John Adam Houston, *The Fugitive Slave*, 1853, Private Collection - A black man crawls toward the brighter light of a new day, clearly having escaped trouble and capture. The remnants of his bed and campfire indicate he has made it through a tumultuous night.

4. William Sidney Mount, *The Bone Player*, 1856, Boston Museum of Fine Art - A strange portraiture of a black entertainer.

5. John Carlin, *After a Long Cruise (Salts Ashore)*, 1857, Metropolitan Museum of Art - An African-American woman is manhandled by a rowdy bunch of sailors in a port city in the mid-nineteenth century.

6. Eastman Johnson, *Negro Life at the South*, 1859, New York Historical Society - This painting combines a variety of scenes of urban domestic interaction of African-Americans. It is well documented that Johnson did not paint this from an exact place or location, but rather as a composite of his observation.

7. John Antrobus, *Plantation Burial*, 1860, Historical New Orleans Collection - Antrobus acts as outside observer capturing this intimate moment. This is one of the first instances where the intimate detail of the lives of African-American in the South is shown through a detached observational lens.

8. Thomas Waterman Wood, *A Southern Cornfield, Nashville, Tennessee*, 1861, Wood Art Gallery - This very ideological picture shows a white man, presumably the master, working among his African-American slaves. Wood's focus is on depicting what labor in the field looked like, however, his portrayal is not one how things really were, but rather how things ideally could be.

9. Eyre Crowe, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Richmond, Virginia*, 1861, Private Collection - Crowe's painting illustrates societal power structures in his depiction of slaves sitting in wait of their fate.

10. Thomas Moran, *Slave Hunt*, 1862, Philbrook Museum of Art - The eye is drawn to the lower corner of the painting; the hint of blood on the black male's knife is symbolic of the sacrifices he is willing to make for his and his family's freedom.

11. Eastman Johnson, *A Ride for Liberty — The Fugitive Slaves*, 1862, Brooklyn Museum - Johnson painting this work to garner sympathy of presumably Northern patrons to rally the abolitionist sentiments of the Union.

12. Eastman Johnson, *Negro Boy with Flute*, 1863, National Academy Museum - Johnson paints a young African-American in a complex posture, alluding perhaps to the spontaneity of youth, but also, more seriously suggesting the potentiality marginalized citizenship this young man will face in a few short years.

13. Winslow Homer, *The Bright Side*, 1865, Smithsonian Art Museum - Homer was interested in the intersection of the lives of whites and blacks during and after the Civil War. This painting shows three Union soldiers catching a rest on the sunny side of their tent. Some discussion should be devoted to the attitudes about the capability of black people in Homer's work.

14. Winslow Homer, *At The Cabin Door*, 1866, Newark Museum - An African-American woman stands at the threshold of a home, looking outward. What she is gazing at and how it will affect her is unknown.

15. Frank Buscher, *Black Legs of Washington*, 1866, Private Collection - Another of Buscher's works showing the leisure time of African-Americans. Buscher strives to paint the reality of the people he observed.

16. Eastman Johnson, *Fiddling His Way*, 1866, Chrysler Museum of Art - Another depiction of African-American as entertainer. The title suggests that the man depicted is collecting tips for his musical service to finance his travels.
17. Thomas Waterman Wood, *American Citizens (to the Polls)*, 1867, Wood Art Gallery - Four men illustrate the diversity of the men of the United States, upon whom the right to vote has been granted.
18. Theodore Kaufman, *On to Liberty*, 1867, Metropolitan Museum of Art - Kaufman considers the plight of the women and children, who were emancipated, in this scene that dramatically questioning the future. Many men are absent because they joined the Union forces as they swept through the south, leaving only the females and young babies at home.
19. Frank Buscher, *Black Youth Reading Newspaper on a Barrel*, 1867, Private Collection - Shows a young boy, feet propped up, looking over a newspaper. A tambourine lays discarded nearby. It would not be unreasonable to question the actual literacy of the young boy and the purpose of his posturing.
20. Frank Buscher, *Four Black Marble Players*, 1867, Private Collection - Four young boys are engaged in an average form of youthful entertainment.
21. Frank Buscher, *The Volunteer's Return*, 1867, Kunstmuseum Basel - Though dismissed as an outsider, Buscher's observation of the everyday politics of life immediately after the Civil War provides a fresh, seemingly less-biased portrayal. This painting shows his keen ability to observe the political shading of the American Landscape after the Civil War in African-American communities. This painting shows a volunteer regulating two other young men with tales of his time in the service.
22. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *John Brown's Blessing*, 1867, The New York Historical Society - Noble is known for painting histories related to slavery, this painting include. Here he depicts John Brown, abolitionist, interacting with members of the community on his way to be hanged. Some history of the Trial of John Brown may need to be provided.
23. William Sidney Mount, *Dawn of Day*, 1867, The Museums of at Stony Brook - A figure sleeps supine with a rooster on his chest. The symbolism of the rooster and a discussion of having dreams (both from sleep and the dreams of aspiration) may be useful here.
24. Frank Buscher, *The Song of Mary Blane*, 1870, Kunstmuseum Solothurn - The title is a reference to a minstrel song. Young men and women of various status sit around a singer, implicitly serenading them with the song popular during the period.
25. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *The Last Sale of the Slaves in St. Louis*, 1871, Missouri History Museum - The use of light and placement within this painting demonstrates the artist's ability to direct the viewers attention and make commentary on social interaction through painting.

Resources

Bibliography for Teachers

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

This slim volume considers the ideological values that underlay art in modern society. There is also a four-part BBC mini-series available by the same name. Though it is a bit dated in look, short segments may be useful for viewing to preface discussion of a piece of art.

Boime, Albert. *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990.

Boime examines the ways European artist created social histories of racial construction as demonstrated in painting and sculpture throughout the nineteenth century. The introductory chapters do an excellent job of providing close readings of racial attitudes and hierarchies asserted via height, scale and placement within a work of art.

Hills, Patricia. *The Genre Painting of Eastman Johnson: The Sources and Development of His Style and Themes*. PhD diss., New York University, 1973. New York: Garland Publishing, 1977.

Hills dissertation visits and examines each of Johnson's paintings in chronological order. Linking biography and historical events influence on Johnson's work, Hills illustrates the evidence of the effects of his surrounding environments on his work.

Honour, Hugh. *The Image of the Black in Western Art*. Vol. 4:1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

This volume, entitled *Slaves and Liberators*, collects all types of art from around the world to create a deep visual understanding of the ways in which black people were represented globally from the start of the transatlantic slave trade through the emancipation of US slaves. This volume is a worthwhile read for depth of knowledge.

Janofsky, Michael. "Philadelphia Mandates Black History for Graduation." *The New York Times*, June 24, 2005. Accessed August 14, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/25/education/25philly.html>.

Article explaining the mandated African-American History course provided by the School District of Philadelphia.

Johns, Elizabeth. *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Johns describes and analyzes the style known as Genre Painting that proliferated from the beginning of the 19th Century in the United States and Europe up through the Civil War in America.

Johnson, Stephen, ed. *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts, 2012. Print.

This text collects reflective essays on the history and "troublesome tradition" of blackface performance. The collection also includes essays connecting modern recurrences of blackface, many of which are unrealized by mass society, including the legacy of Mickey Mouse. This is without a doubt a scholarly text, but one that is still accessible and provides a great breadth on this strain within the complicated history of race in America.

Locke, Alain. *The Negro in Art*. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979.

Notable philosopher, writer, educator and activist Alain Locke created this compendium, consisting of both art by black artists, African art and art about black people. Each grouping of works is prefaced with a brief essay explicating the necessity of this angle of study. While somewhat dated in approach now, this is still a relevant text, particularly as a starting point to explore representations of black people in this history of art.

Miller, Angela L., Janet C. Berlo, Bryan J. Wolf, and Jennifer L. Roberts. *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008.

This comprehensive and lengthy text is illustrated with large color reproductions of the art discussed. Specifically, this collection examines American art through the birth and substantiation of the United States through the present era. Essentially a textbook, the thematic eras of each chapter are chunked into concise summaries of the hallmarks and highlights of each.

Young, Robert C. *White Mythologies*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

In this dense text, Young questions the origins and authenticity of history in a Eurocentric system. This exploration positions a decentered critical lens from which to consider history and art.

Reading List for Students

Hine, Darlene Clark, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. *African-American History*. New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006.

Classroom textbooks tracing the History of African people in American from the slave trade through the mid-twentieth century.

Strickland, Carol. *The Annotated Mona Lisa: A Crash Course in Art History From Prehistoric to Post-Modern*. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992.

This slim volume is perfect for classroom use. The subtitle of the book explains it all.

Zimmerman, Dwight Jon., and Wayne Vansant. *The Hammer and The Anvil: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and The End of Slavery in America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012.

A graphic novel that parallels the life of Fredrick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln from childhood through their adult lives as men of political and social action. This text is a useful resource for differentiation or for students who need additional knowledge or reinforcement of concepts concerning the political climate of the United States before, during and after the Civil War

Materials for Classroom Use

"Asking Questions to Improve Learning." The Teaching Center. 2009. Accessed July 11, 2014.

<http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/strategies/Pages/asking-questions.aspx>.

General informational for the educator on the ways to ask questions in the classroom to effectively direct student observation and discussion

"Everyone's a Critic." Institute of Play. September 01, 2013. Accessed January 12, 2014.
<http://www.instituteofplay.org/work/projects/everyones-a-critic-2/>.

This game is available for free use as a downloadable pdf. This game can be used for younger children, but can be updated for older students as well. This game is designed by the Institute of Play for the Modern Museum of Art in New York for use in the museum, but it is adaptable to any museum with any type of art. Students use the guide to discuss visual and artistic themes. This could also be adapted for use in the classroom for a gallery walk or electronic file of digital images.

"Questioning Strategies." Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. 2009. Accessed July 11, 2014.
<http://cte.illinois.edu/resources/topics/methods/strateg.html>.

A list of probing and directive suggested questions for classroom use. Easily adaptable for discussion of genre paintings used in this unit.

Shonibare, Yinka. "Diary of a Victorian Dandy." Past Exhibitions: National Museum of African Art. October 11, 2009. Accessed July 11, 2014. <http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/shonibare/dandy.html>.

High-quality images of Shonibare's photographic reworking of Hogarth's engravings are provided. These images can be presented in tandem with the engravings for Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*. Lesson described in detail in the Classroom Activities section above.

"Some Questioning Strategies." Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. Accessed July 13, 2014.
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/questioning.html>.

A list of probing and directive suggested questions for classroom use. Easily adaptable for discussion of genre paintings used in this unit.

Appendix

Appendix on Implementing District Standards and International Baccalaureate Assessment Objectives

In 2005, the School District of Philadelphia responded to an over forty year call from parents to decenter the Eurocentric perspective taught in the high school history curriculum.¹⁷ This spurred the creation and implementation of African-American History for ninth grade students in the School District of Philadelphia. Additionally, effective 2012-2013, Pennsylvania adopted the PA Common Core Standards, which require increased focus on primary source documents and informational texts. This unit satisfies these stipulations, as well as the Individuals and Societies Assessment Objectives for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Year Four. These three separate and distinct sets of requirements find collaborative potentiality here. At first glance this may seem cumbersome, however, the possibility of this endeavor comes into fruition

with careful planning and alignment.

Notes

1. Hugh Honour, *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, 214.
2. Ibid., 214.
3. Ibid., 214.
4. Alain Locke, "Foreward" in *The Negro in Art*, (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1940), 3.
5. Elizabeth Johns, "Standing Outside the Door" in *American Genre Painting*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 100
6. Stephen Johnson, *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).
7. Elizabeth Johns, "Ordering the Body Politic" in *American Genre Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 7.
8. Elizabeth Johns, "Introduction" in *American Genre Painting*, (Yale University Press: New Haven), xii-xiii.
9. Elizabeth Johns, "Standing Outside the Door" in *American Genre Painting*, (Yale University Press: New Haven), 103.
10. Ibid., 103. and Hugh Honor in "Two Major Themes: Slave Sales and Fugitives" in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA), 206.
11. Hugh Honour, "Negro Life" in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA), 222.
12. Angela L. Miller, Janet C. Berlo, Bryan Wolf and Jennifer L. Roberts, "The Cultural Work of Genre Painting" in *American Encounters*, (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Higher Education), 193.
13. Elizabeth Johns, "Standing Outside the Door" in *American Genre Painting*, (Yale University Press: New Haven), 108.
14. Albert Boime, "Triangular Trade and Triangular Composition" in *The Art of Exclusion*, (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, D.C.), 16.
15. Elizabeth Jones, "Introduction" in *American Genre Painting*, (Yale University Press: New Haven), xvii.
16. Elizabeth Jones, "Ordering the Body Politic" in *American Genre Painting*, (Yale University Press: New Haven), 11.
17. Michael Janofsky, "Philadelphia Mandates Black History for Graduation". *New York Times*, June 25, 2005.

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use