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FIQWS- Self and Other in Literature

Prof. Crohn

Living with sadness while being a musician

“The Weary Blues” a poem by Langston Hughes, is known for his insightful, colorful representation of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties, and who was important in shaping the artistic contributions of the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes showed us several things through this poem, about the pianist and its surroundings and how it all comes together. I would like to describe how the words, and literary devices in this poem makes me feel, and how it's well structured in order to make us see what the speaker and pianist are living throughout this poem.

The poem begins with the speaker telling someone about a pianist he heard a couple of nights ago, “I heard a Negro play. Down on Lenox Avenue the other night”. Throughout the poem we can see how much passion the pianist had for his music, “He made that poor piano moan with melody. O Blues!”. The pianist had this laid back, soulful style of singing and when he was playing a slow blues song you can feel that he's playing it with his body and soul. Based on my secondary source the pianist is “expressing his loneliness, displeasure, and uncertainty about his present and future.” and from the poem “ I’s gwine to quit ma frownin’ And put my troubles on the shelf.” (Hughes, 21-22). This explains that the pianist’s music shows us how even though he's not in a good place and feels miserable he's gonna try to put all his worries aside and sing his song. Then the speaker lets us know where all of this is

happening. In Lenox Avenue which is the heart of Harlem in Manhattan, back in the day this was the spot for the best bars and dance halls. I instantly knew where this was located and I could imagine how this was all playing out in the point of view of the speaker.

There were also moments where the poet uses simile throughout this poem, “He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.” (Hughes,13). This line uses “like” and shows how the musician can play the piano like a fool that's also similar to a court jester.

There was also another line that contains simile, “He slept like a rock or a man that’s dead.” (Hughes,35). This means that he's in such a deep sleep that he isn't even moving, it's almost as if he were dead and that shows us the dark ending to the poem.

“The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes, shows us that there are two voices, the speaker and the pianist. The speaker made sure to set the mood in which the pianist was in and described the events that showed us the pain that he was in, which made it easy and intriguing to see how it would all end. The pianist kept singing about himself being alone and not having anyone in the world besides him. But, in reality his music, and piano were there with him all along and that's why he plays with such passion. I believe that he finally made his piano his soulmate and that's what keeps him going, so that he can play his piano with all his soul and sing his blues.

Works Cited

Hughes, Langston. "The Weary Blues"

"The Weary Blues - The Poem" Critical Guide to Poetry for Students Ed. Philip K. Jason.

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<<http://www.enotes.com/topics/weary-blues/in-depth#in-depth-the-poem>>