

Topic 2 : Into the Art of Darkness

Axis 3 : Art and Power

Key question : *How has art been a powerful tool for African Americans ?*

How can art be a powerful tool in the fight for African American recognition ?

CHANGING MENTALITIES

I- Changing Mentalities: African Americans and the Film Industry

Document 1 : « BlackKklansman »

Activity 1 : Speaking

1- Present and describe the document.

2- Read the caption. The 1st video is entitled « The day when I infiltrated the KKK ». Point out the difficulty Ron Stallworth will probably come across.

Activity 2 : Listening (video 11)



BlackKklansman, Spike Lee, 2018.

CULTURE TIPS

- **BlackKklansman** (2018) is a movie directed by Spike Lee. It is based on a true story.
- **Ron Stallworth** was the first African American police detective in Colorado Springs police force.



▲ Ron Stallworth, played by John David Washington.

Listen and mind the stress. (audio 25)

Watch the video and take notes.

1- Define the situation : the place and the people.

2- Say who is speaking to whom on the phone.

3- Pick out the stressed words. In pairs, explain what the conversation is about.

4- Comment on the attitudes of the « spectators ».

Activity 3 : Listening (video 12)

Listen and take notes about :

1- Identify the orator (you hear in video 11)

2- Pick out the stressed words. In pairs, sum up what he says.

3- Talk about the situation. Say how it relates to the title of the video.

4- Guess why Ron Stallworth is not in the assembly.

5- Try and guess who the « new Ron Stallworth » under his hood is.

Activity 4 : Speaking

1- What shows that this movie is not a propaganda movie ?

2- Explain what Spike Lee wants to do.

Activity 5 : Listening : Interview of Spike Lee

1- Listen to the interview and give the journalist's opinion on the film.

2- Comment on the viewer's reaction.

3- Focus on the structure : « I'm sorry, I apologize, I apologize ». How does it insist on the viewer's feelings ?

4- Why do you think the cinema can be a powerful tool to change mentalities ?

Document 2 : **A cultural moment in American History**

As a cultural moment, when I look back on Black history, and consider some of the most important turning points, some of the most important breakthroughs, some of the most essential moments, 4–5 events come to mind.

Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery.

Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream Speech.”

The birth of hip hop.

Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” becoming the best selling album of all-time.

The election of Barack Obama as our first Black President.

Colin Kaepernick taking a knee to protest police brutality and injustice in America.

I put Black Panther in that space. I’m not kidding. Culturally, I really do think it’s that important. It means that much.

Give me a moment to explain myself. [...]

Nothing like it has ever been done before. Not just with a Black superhero, but with several Black superheroes. Black Panther had a whole cast of beautiful Black brilliance. Black scientists. Black Presidents. The style. The technology. The color.

But it’s even deeper than that. There is a movement we call Afro-Futurism, where we imagine a Black way of life free of white supremacy and bigotry¹. Black Panther, I think, is the first blockbuster film centered in the ethos² of Afro-Futurism, where the writers, and directors, and makeup and wardrobe team all imagined a beautiful, thriving³ Black Africa without colonialism.

Wakanda⁴ showed us our families in one piece. No war on drugs. No mass incarceration. No KKK. No lynching. No racial profiling. No police brutality. [...]

Our traditions and culture have not been destroyed. We have beautiful rituals and rites of passage.

And even though it’s 2018, and we’re all getting older, nothing like this has ever been done before in this country — nothing. I found myself fighting back tears several times throughout the film and moments that I don’t think were even supposed to be emotional. It was just so damn beautiful.

Listen, go see it again. I’m going to go once just with my wife and even go back again with my whole family. Let’s make this moment last.

¹ intolerance ² philosophy ³ prospère ⁴ the name of the kingdom in the movie

Shaun KING, *medium.com*, 2018

1- **Present** the document.

2- **Pick out** four examples of exceptional moments in African-American culture.

3- **Identify** and **explain** the positive assets of the film.

4- **Give your opinion** : Why has the director chosen not to include any negative African-American experience in the film ?

5- « Nothing like this has ever been done. » **Comment on** the journalist’s choice of passive voice.

6- **Comment on** the journalist’s tone at the end of the article.

II- Changing mentalities : Changing Mentalities: African Americans in Street Art

A) Color is not a crime: New York's Black Lives Matter street art

Across the US, artists have responded to the death of George Floyd and the ensuing protests with impactful and urgent work. In New York, artworks have appeared supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, and remembering the deaths of, among others, Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain and George Floyd.

Document 1 : Mural by Celos, Broadway, Los Angeles, 2020



1- Present and describe the document : Type of document / setting / What can you see in this image? What is written on the wall?

2-What colors are mainly used, and what mood do they create?

3- What emotions does the mural express?

4- What message do you think the mural is trying to communicate?

5- Why do you think the artist chose these words and symbols?

6- What does the raised fist represent, in your opinion?

7 What's the aim, the function of the mural

Factfile : **Black Lives Matter** (BLM), international social movement, formed in the United States in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. It is dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence, especially in the form of police brutality.

Oral training :

- 1- Present and describe this document.
- 2- Compare and contrast this document and the previous one..



CULTURE SPOT

Martin Luther King Jr
Was an American pacifist and preacher. In August, he delivered his famous « I Have a Dream speech » in which he called for the end of segregation and equal opportunities for all American.

Doc. 1 - Mural of Martin Luther King Jr's speech, Philadelphia.