

# The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man

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English Per. 4A

## AP READING BOOK QUESTIONS

How is the author using characterization to reveal the theme? The protagonist meets many people, and as these characters go in and out of his life, he experiences different phases of his life. These phases translate to theme by showing how the protagonist reacts to different situations in his life. (i.e. he no longer pursues life as an African American)

What is the point of view and how does it affect the narration? 1st POV; the narration is more personal and inner thoughts are revealed; autobiography

How does the author use figurative language (simile, metaphor, symbolism, personification, etc.)? The narrative has limited descriptive language, but when figurative language is used, the reader understands that the scene being described is significant.

What is the climax? The climax of the story is when an African American man is burned alive for supposedly committing a crime. The protagonist realizes he does not want to be part of the "Negro race" and becomes ashamed of his heritage.

Who is the protagonist? not named; narrator; part white, part African American; plays piano

Who is the antagonist? <sup>(racist)</sup> Society, protagonist: (his own interpretation of society makes himself afraid and ashamed to continue living as an African American citizen)

Who are the minor characters? Protagonist's mother and father, millionaire friend, "Red Head," "Shiny," Pullman car porter friend, <sup>Cuban</sup> regalia workman, ragtime player at "Club," "Widow" from "Club," big colored man (passenger), John Brown, "Singing Johnson," man burned alive, protagonist's sister, wife, and children

What is your opinion of the book? Why? I enjoyed the book. It provided a different insight of life at a different time. I learned what it was like to be in a certain situation/place (i.e. France, jobless, etc.). It was interesting to read also because I play the piano as well. It made me want to travel to Europe even more. (ragtime)

How does it connect to other works you have read? I have read "How to Kill a Mockingbird," and African American people are disrespected in both stories. Although "The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man" goes deeper into the "race question," both novels explore a time period in the US that has an abundance of racism against African Americans.

Why do you think this book is on the AP reading list? This book is well written. It illustrates the general view of society, clearly to the reader. The author uses advanced English (good grammar/diction) years ago.

# Jenny