



JACOB LAWRENCE

THE MIGRATION OF THE NIGRO, PANEL 1

Brun Carolina

ANALYSIS

- TITLE : The Migration of the Nigro
- DATING: 1941
- STYLE: Expressionism, Social Realism
- GENRE: History painting
- TECHNIQUE: Casein tempera

Lawrence opens his sixty-panel series with this image of a chaotic crowd in a train station pushing toward three ticket windows marked CHICAGO, NEW YORK, and ST. LOUIS. Black people are the protagonists in his panels, they are usually represented as stylised persons without a face. Images of train stations, railroad cars, waiting rooms, and passengers weighed down by bags recur throughout the Migration Series. Each of this trio of cities is the subject of a chapter of the book "Negro Migration during the War" written by Emmet J. Scott in 1920. "They left as if they were fleeing some curse," he writes. Negro Migration during the War was one of the essential books that Lawrence read in his extensive preparatory research for his series at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library in Harlem. He returned to Scott's study over and over, often drawing from the author's research to create his pieces.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The three cities named in this panel were key destinations for the hundreds of thousands of black southerners who left their homes in search of greater economic opportunity and social equality in the North. This mass exodus, known as the Great Migration, led to one of the greatest demographic transformations in American history. Between the beginning of the twentieth century and 1970, more than six million African Americans moved from the rural South to the cities of the North, West, and Midwest. Thus, the nation's profile was fundamentally altered, as were the composition of its cities, political priorities, and cultural expressions, from music to literature to food.

- Chicago

Besides New York, Chicago received the most migrants and subsequently became a center of African-American culture. At the beginning of the twentieth century, black residents were less than two percent of the population, but between 1910 and 1920 their numbers grew up by one hundred and fifty percent. Many of the new arrivals moved to a part of the city's South Side later named Bronzeville.

- St.Louis

St. Louis, Missouri, was the endpoint of several railroad lines from Mississippi, making it a stopping point for many migrants and one of the first cities to be dramatically altered by the Migration. Racial tension, owing to white resentment over competition for jobs, quickly raised there and in East St. Louis, located directly across the river in Illinois. More than three hundred homes and buildings in black neighborhoods were burned, and the National Association of Colored People estimated that between one hundred and two hundred African Americans were killed.

-New York

A major flourishing of the arts followed the initial influx of migrants to New York. By 1920, two-thirds of the city's African-American population lived in Harlem, where native New Yorkers mixed with European and Caribbean immigrants and new arrivals from the South. A new generation of writers, artists, and activists shone in what is known as the Harlem Renaissance.

CONCLUSION:

I analyzed this document because it concerns one of the greatest migrations in history. All of the migrations in the world had caused big changes but particularly this transformed a whole nation changing the economic, social and cultural profile of the USA which became one of the most multicultural and multiethnic countries in the world.

SITOGRAPHY:

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