



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1996 Volume III: Race and Representation in American Cinema

Using Film and Literature to Examine Uncle Remus: A Comparison and Analysis of the Film Song of the South

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.03.02
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The Race and Representation in American Cinema seminar developed the insights needed to diffuse the stereotype of the Uncle Remus figure. The design of my unit serves many purposes. First, the unit will provide an accurate account of slavery as opposed to the account featured in Disney's film *Song of the South*. Next, it will present students with a more enlightened view of the historical purposes of Black American Folktales and the importance of storytelling in the black communities on plantations by comparing and contrasting films and literature that meet the three intentions of black folktales: to create a relationship between the young and the old of the community, to instill social values in children, and to humorously depict the somber situations in the black community through the use of animation. Also, my unit will examine the stereotype of African Americans in the film as they pertain to Uncle Remus. A final purpose of my unit is to acknowledge the Uncle Remus figure as a storyteller who represents love and preservation of Black American folktales, while arguing against criticism that claims he represents a servile and loyal slave telling tales to improve his relationship with the plantation owners.

Through various reading strategies, my unit provides lessons that will aid in student comprehension for the content of the films as well as the literature used.

(Recommended for Literature/English, grade 6; and Self-Contained Classroom/Black History Month, grade 2-5)

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