

“More than Black and White” and “Hope for the Immigrant Family” focused on the lives of both Italian foreign immigrants and middle-class African Americans in the 1920s. A closer look by the students allows the observer to see aspects of the images that convey the status of the two minority ethnic groups at the time. Several conclusions can be drawn by analyzing these images. Each student does a fine job in coming to conclusions concerning the pictures and looking into the perceptual intentions of the photographer. However, some points were missed in examining these photos.

In “Hope for the Immigrant Family,” there were a few mistakes made when regarding the Italians’ economic status. It was mentioned that “Immigrant families worked very menial jobs that paid very little” as if all immigrants had low paying jobs. Not all immigrants had menial jobs. In fact, some Italian immigrants found success as entrepreneurs. Still, Italians were among the lowest paid immigrants. The author neglected to acknowledge this fact which would have added to the meaning behind the picture. Also, the author stated that “The immigrants had no one, other than immigrants from their old country who were experiencing the same hardships and nowhere to turn to” which is not totally true due to the fact that there were immigrant networks that would help people coming fresh off boats from foreign countries. Lastly I drew a different conclusion by observing the photograph. I didn’t see hope in “each of the family members eyes.” Instead, I saw distress in the children’s’ face and struggle in the father’s eyes with the mother displaying the only sense of optimism. To the student observer, the photo means that immigrants tried their best to make it in the U.S. They fought to overcome such poor conditions to live the ideal American life.

“More than Black and White” examined the photo of African American spouses in James Van Der Zee’s “couple.” The only thing that was missed in the analysis of the picture was the

correct interpretation of the message that Van der Zee was trying to deliver through his work. The author stated that the photographer's craft linked to the Harlem renaissance only because it was strictly "an upbringing of art and music." On the contrary, the Harlem Renaissance was an effort to increase African's American socioeconomic status. Van Der Zee was a part of that movement and his work expressed that by trying to convey blacks as equals to white Americans. Through the student observer's eyes, the photo conveys a meaning of visual façade. The observer knows of the unequal socioeconomic status, yet he sees a black couple that mirrors a white couple that was of high economic status.

Although some points were missed in these two articles, the authors did a good job in analyzing their respective photos. I came to a different conclusion from what the author of "Hope for the Immigrant Family" had drawn from her photo, but that is the beauty of photo analysis. Varying interpretations can be taken from the photographs in hopes to come closer to what the photographer was actually trying to capture in that moment in history.

"Hope for the Immigrant Family," *Silvered on Both Sides*, accessed May 9, 2016,

<https://silvered.omeka.net/items/show/10>.

"More than Black and White," *Silvered on Both Sides*, accessed May 9, 2016,

<https://silvered.omeka.net/items/show/2>.