AN ANALYSIS OF RACIAL ISSUES IN SOME LANGSTON HUGHES’ POEMS

A THESIS

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ABSTRACTS

In this thesis, I analyze some of Langston Hughes’ poems which concern to the negatively racial discriminations that happened to the Black people, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation. In his poems entitled Theme for English B and Democracy have the meaning of Discrimination. Other poems entitled I, Too and Merry Go-Round have meaning of Racial Segregation. Hughes also wrote a poem entitles As I Grew Older that means Skin Color. Besides, he wrote poems entitle Dinner Guest: Me have the meaning of Prejudice, while Argument and Cross have the meaning of Stereotypes. I also explain shortly about poem, its history and the kinds.

I use the descriptive qualitative method because it provides an overview of analysis result published in a related analysis of research result in data collection using the library method. In writing this thesis, I hope this analysis can provide knowledge to the reader of poetry, especially the significant discrimination based on poems written by Langston Hughes.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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My special thanks are also due to all my friends for being my great friends and giving me support to complete this thesis.
Finally, I realize that this thesis is still far from being perfect. Therefore, advice, constructive criticism and suggestion aimed at this thesis will be warmly welcome and highly appreciated.

Medan, December, 2009

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Analysis

Literature, the product of imagination, yet draws on life for its subjects. It touches life in the real world at all points. It is concerned with all aspects of human life and the universe in their entirety, surely every work of literatures is about something, and the more of a person reads, the better stocked will his mind be with knowledge. Literature refers to compositions that tell stories, dramatize situation, express emotions, and analyze and advocate ideas (see Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing. 1987). There are mainly three important branches of literature, such as: prose, poetry, and drama.

The word ‘poetry’ is derived from the Greek word, Poiein which means to make or to construct. Ralp Waldo Emerson, a well-w says that poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which cause it to be existed. For it is not meter, but a meter making argument (idea) that, make a poem. (Pardede: 2008). Poem is a composition in verse that is characterized by a highly developed artistic form, the use of rhythm, and the employment of heightened language to express an imaginative interpretation of a situation or idea. Verse is single line of poetry or regular metric line.

Racialism is an emphasis on race or racial considerations. Racism refers to beliefs, practices, and institutions that negatively discriminate against people
based on their perceived or ascribed race. Racism is usually directed against a minority population, but may also be directed against a majority population. Racism may be expressed individually and consciously, through explicit thoughts, feelings, or acts, or socially and unconsciously, through institutions that promote inequalities among "races". (Accessed http://knowledgerush.com /kr /encyclopedia/Racialism/).

The general kinds of negative racialism are Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation.

Skin Color is racism among Blacks, based on skin-tone, exemplified in terms such as "high yellow" (sometimes written and/or pronounced as "high yaller") as well as the brown paper bag test. There seems to be an implicit calculus behind this belief that makes the goodness of the individual inversely related to the darkness of his/her skin. Prejudice is a pre-judgment in the sense that it is judgment concerning objects and persons not based upon knowledge or experience. The most elemental manifestation of prejudice in this broad meaning of the word is to be found in the personal likes and dislike and preferences and antipathies which everyone exhibits in regard to food, clothes, and the art as well as persons (see Franklin Frazier. The Negro in the United States. 1949. pp. 665).

Discrimination is an action that treats people unfairly because of their membership in a particular social group. Discriminatory behaviors take many forms, but they all involve some form of exclusion or rejection. Stereotypes assume that everyone in a group the same characteristics, leading people to falsely believe that "they" are all alike. Stereotypes assume that everyone in a group the
same characteristics, leading people to falsely believe that "they" are all alike. Even when the stereotype suggests positive traits (for example, that women are nurturing), everyone is hurt because these images leave no room for individual differences. Segregation is the foundation of prejudice. Segregation is the act or practice of separating people or different races, classes, or ethnic group in daily life, such as in school, housing, and public or commercial facilities.

Langston Hughes was an American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. He was a Black man who was born in Joplin, Missouri, the second child of school teacher Carrie (Caroline) Mercer Langston and James Nathaniel Hughes (1871-1934). Both parents were mixed-race, and Langston Hughes was of African American, European American and Native American descent. He grew up in the African-American community.

In his life, as a Black man, Hughes experienced racial action from White people in his around life. He was unashamedly Black at a time when blackness was unlikely condition as he explored the Black human condition in a variety of depths. His main concern was the uplift of his people, of whom he judged himself the adequate appreciator, and whose strengths, resiliency, courage, and humor he wanted to record as part of the general American experience. Thus, his poetry and fiction centered generally on insightful views of the working class lives of Blacks in America, lives he portrayed as full of struggle, joy, laughter, and music. Therefore, in his works he confronted racial stereotypes, protested social conditions, and expanded African America’s image of itself; a “people’s poet”

1.2 The Problem of The Analysis

In accordance with the title of this thesis, there are some questions are raised to motivate me to do this analysis that are

- What are the negatively racial issues, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation that happened to the Black people in America?
- What are the racial issues—Skin Color, prejudice, discrimination, stereotype, and racial segregation—in As I grew older, Dinner Guest: Me, Theme for English B, Democracy, Argument, Cross, I Too, Merry Go-Round poems by Langston Hughes?

1.3 The Objective of The Analysis

The objectives of the thesis are:

- To analyze the negatively racial discriminations that happened to the Black people, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation.
- To analyze the racial issues—Skin Color, prejudice, discrimination, stereotype, and racial segregation—in As I grew older, Dinner Guest: Me, Theme for English B, Democracy, Argument, Cross, I Too, Merry Go-Round poems by Langston Hughes.
1.4 The Scope of The Analysis

I focus on some negatively racial discrimination that happened to the Black people, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation as it is portrayed in Langston Hughes’ poems.

1.5 The Significances of The Analysis

I believe that this thesis would give significant advantages either for theoretical or practical use. Theoretically this thesis will be useful as the reference for readers who want to analyze racial discrimination. From the theory used in this thesis, the readers will come to a new understanding what Langston Hughes’ feeling toward racialism as it is portrayed in some of his poems. Practically, the reader will have better knowledge about racialism.

1.6 The Review of Related Literature

*The Negro in the United States* by Franklin Frazier, Ph. D (1949). Frazier has succeeded in depicting with clarity and understanding the adjustment if the Negro as a racial and culture group to the life of the larger society and the responses that society has made to his presence.

*Selected Poems Of Langston Hughes* by E. McKnight Kauffer (1969). The book contains a selection of Langston Hughes’ poems chosen by Kauffer. So, the writer took the primary data of Langston Hughes’ poems from this book.
An Introduction to Reading and Writing by Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs (1987). In this book, the writers described in detail what the literature is and the types, that consist of Prose (fiction), Drama and poetry. They also add some examples and exercises, so it may be founded incentives for understanding and writing about literature through examples and exercises.

Racial Consciousness viewed from Langston Hughes’ Selected Poems (2004) by Christina Sinurat, (USU: Medan). In the thesis, she analyzes about racial consciousness, which means the awareness towards the race or the pride towards the certain race. In the analysis, the racial consciousness is conveyed to the Negroes or Black Americans race. In the thesis, she said that Black Americans who were brought to the United States were treated as slaves. They were capture and sold like a cattle. These Black Americans who lived in slavery have felt many bad treatment and suffering and lost their rights as human beings. Langston Hughes wants to picture that his people should be proud of their race because they are also human are equal. So according to Sinurat, through Langston Hughes’ poems, he conveys his feeling and his persons' feeling as the Black American.

Opposing Ideas of Racial Discrimination in Graham Greene’s Novel Journey Without Maps (2008) by Hasan Achari Harahap, (USU-Medan). In his thesis, he has discussed some moral values which are closely related to the racial discrimination. Firstly, he concludes that the novel Journey without Maps by Graham Green not only talk about narrator’s experiences in his long journey in dense jungle of Liberia, but it also tells about people’s behavior. In the analysis, Harahap find several good features of how Black people—the villagers and the
carries—put on the good attention to other people. They all have some common features, such as; loyal, hospitable, and honest although they show these traits in different ways.

The Effect of Race Discrimination in America reflected on Harper Lee’s Novel “to Kill a Mocking Bird” (2007) by Eli Hayati Nasution (USU: Medan). By the analyzing of the thesis, Nasution proved that Black American suffer six effects of race discrimination in America. The first effects can be seen from the discussion among Mr. Raymond and Jem about education. The second effects can be seen from the discussion among Mr. Raymond, Jem and Dill about mixed-marriage and the Aunt Alexandra’s prohibition to Jem to play with Black Americans’ child. The third effects can be seen from Aunt Alexandra’ statement who forbids Scout to go to Calpurnia’s house. The fourth can be seen from attitude of Miss Eula May who does not want to give her phone to Calpurnia because she is Black Woman and she does not believe her. The fifth effects can be seen from the attitude of Lula who gets angry with Calpurnia who brings Jem to Black American’s church. And the sixth effect can be seen from the decision of Mr. Tate who gives punishment to tom Robinson although he is not fault. Nasution said that the existence of Black Americans still cannot be accepted by White Americans since they feel that they are better than Black Americans.
CHAPTER II
OVERVIEW OF POETRY AND RACIALISM

2.1 An Overview of Poetry

2.1.1 The Meaning of Poetry

Literature is concerned with all aspects of human life and the universe in their entirety, surely every work of literatures is about something, and the more of a person reads, the better stocked will his mind be with knowledge. According to Wellek, Literature is the criterion is either aesthetic worth alone or aesthetic worth in combination with general intellectual distinction. Within lyric poetry, drama, and fiction, the greatest works are selected on aesthetic grounds; other books are picked for their reputation or intellectual eminence together with aesthetic value of a rather narrow kind: style, composition, general force of presentations is the usual characteristics singled out.

The word of poetry derived from the Greek word, Poiein means to make or to construct. According to S. T Coleridge, a well known writer, Poetry is the product of the poet’s imagination and the best words in the best order. Ralph Waldo Emerson, another well known writer, says that poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which cause it to be existed. For it is not meter, but a meter making argument (idea) that, make a poem. It may say that poetry is words which are arranged in a regular pattern of rhymed and accented lines or the art of writing of literary words in metrical form. (Understanding Poetry: 2008; 2). Poem is a
composition in verse that is characterized by a highly developed artistic form, the use of rhythm, and the employment of heightened language to express an imaginative interpretation of a situation or idea (Introduction to English Literature: 2007). Poetry is language with musical elements. Some experts maintain that poetry must contain such literary elements as metaphor and simile. Others stress rhythm and rhyme as the most essential parts of poetry.

Poetry was born of a basic human desire to communicate not just the meaning of words, but also the sense or feel of them. Writers use poetry to evoke a mood in the reader or listener, so that the experience can occur on multiple levels of the human psyche. Poetry takes on many forms. It may present the speech of imaginary characters or attempt to reproduce the poets’ own auditory experience. It can be written in the form of dramatic monologue or dialogue without being intended for the stage. One common type of poetry is rhyming couplets, in which each successive pair of lines is approximately the same length and rhyme with one another. In free-form poetry, rhyme and meter are loose, allowing for complex rhythms and greater contextual freedom. Poems can be long or short.

The aspects of poetry are sense, feeling, tone, and intention. Sense is the subject matter of the poem. Feeling is the attitude of the writer toward the subject matter. Tone is the attitude of the writer towards the reader, whether the writer in a good mood, pessimist or optimist, sad or happy. Intention, undoubtedly a poet writes a certain poem for he has a special intention. At least for him himself is to express his feeling.
2.1.2 The History of Poetry

It is impossible to trace poetry to a definite beginning, as it is likely as old as the human spoken word. The oldest recorded poetry is contained in the cuneiform tablets of ancient Mesopotamia circa 3,000 B.C. Classical Chinese poetry has its roots in the form of song lyrics dating to 1,000 B.C. Poetry appears in all the major religious canons, such as the Sanskrit Vedas, the Hebrew Tanakh and the Greek Bible. In the West, poetry has evolved from such ancient Greek masterpieces as Homer's "Odyssey" and "Iliad" circa 900 B.C., on into the Romantic poetry of Western Europe, and through the modern and postmodern periods to the present.

2.1.3 The Kinds of Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Kinds of poetry</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ode</td>
<td>A lyric adopted from Greek but altered greatly in form by various English poets. It tends to be rather formal and elevated and is often to a prominent person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Epic</td>
<td>The most ambitious kind of poetry deals with great heroes whose action determined the fate of their nation or of mankind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Elegy</td>
<td>Elegy is written to express felling of sorrow or loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Pastoral</td>
<td>The pastoral uses the fiction that all the character concerned shepherds and shepherdess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Satire</td>
<td>A form of ridicule and criticism, and it can be erected against many different objects universal human vices of follies, social evils or political short coming. It is often engendered by the desire to improve society, to right a wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Epigram</td>
<td>The brief form of all poems. It may be a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 An Overview of Racialism

2.2.1 The Meaning of Racialism

Racialism is an emphasis on race or racial considerations. Dunn and friends (1975:142) said “Race may be defined as a group whose members’ physical characteristics conform, on average, to those arbitrarily selected as differentials, and there will be overlapping between peoples: for instance, the lighter skinned individuals, in peoples classified as of the Black race, will on occasion be no more—or even less—pigmented than darkest skinned individuals in populations classified as White”. Racialism entails a belief in the existence and significance of racial categories, but not necessarily in a hierarchy between the races, or in any political or ideological position of racial supremacy. Sometimes the term is also used to describe the belief that race is the primary determinant of human capacities, or that individuals should be treated differently based on their ascribed race.

The concept of “race”, originating in recognition of obvious physical distinctions between different human groups, has been developed by anthropologists as a device for classifying populations. And, as often happens when a concept is extended beyond its original range, this development of the idea of race has produced many difficulties. Some anthropologists distinguish few short as two lines, indeed the shorter the more effective.
‘races’, others distinguish many; and it is hard to find two anthropologists who completely agree in their classifications. Moreover, the popular idea of racial classification is so out of touch with the biological facts of human variation that some people would prefer to abandon entirely the use of the word ‘race’ in connection with the human species.

There are generally some types of racialism. They are:

1. Skin Color

Skin Color is a form of discrimination in which human beings are accorded differing social and treatment based on skin color. The preference often gets translated into economic status because of opportunities for work. Skin Color can be found across the world. The term is generally used for the phenomenon of people discriminating within their own ethnic groups. It usually happens toward the Blacks, based on skin-tone by Whites. There seems to be an implicit calculus behind this belief that makes the goodness of the individual inversely related to the darkness of his/her skin. Blacks or Negroes are the peoples of the referred to as ‘Africans’. Members of this great group occur not only in Africa, but also (and quite apart from relatively recent population movements to America and elsewhere) in wide areas of Oceania and even in parts Mainland Asia. Then, as to skin color, they may range from virtually black to quite pale yellow-brown; while their eyes and hair are commonly brown and black. Members of this group often have a rather projecting mouth and a broad and low-bridge nose, but not in all cases. Generally, Negroes have very little body hair, while their head hair is
usually curly and rather thick in texture. Blacks are more likely to have negative relationships with the police, less likely to have higher education or income levels, and less likely to hold public office. They are also considered less intelligent, and are overall seen as a lesser people. White people tend to have higher social standing, more positive networks, and more opportunities to succeed than those of a Black persuasion. Racism among Blacks, based on skin-tone, exemplified in terms such as "high yellow" (sometimes written and/or pronounced as "high yaller") as well as the brown paper bag test. There seems to be an implicit calculus behind this belief that makes the goodness of the individual inversely related to the darkness of his/her skin.

2. Prejudice

Prejudice is a pre-judgment in the sense that it is judgment concerning objects and persons not based upon knowledge or experience. Prejudice, according to Brown in his book entitled Prejudice in Social Physiology, is a judgment or opinion formed before hand or without due examination. The most elemental manifestation of prejudice in this broad meaning of the word is to be found in the personal likes and dislike and preferences and antipathies which everyone exhibits in regard to food, clothes, and the art as well as persons (see Franklin Frazier. The Negro in the United States. 1949. pp. 665).

Prejudice is pre-formed personal opinions about individuals on the basis of their race. (E.g. John thinks that Mary will have bad attribute X solely because Mary is a member of race Y). Social groups have long been a part of human
history. Categorizing people into "us" and "them" helped humans develop tribes, clans, and other early social structures. Deciding who belonged and who didn't also lead to conflicts and fighting. "Us" and "them" thinking still continue. Like early humans, we tend to stick with people who are similar to us while avoiding people who are different. In many ways, this is understandable. It's often comfortable to be among people who are like us, and identifying by similar traits can provide a sense of belonging and community. But when we avoid others who are different, we tend not to learn about them. And when we don't really know what people are like, it's easy to make guesses, fill in the blanks, or make generalizations about "them" based on very limited knowledge. In short, we make judgments about others before we know the full story. These pre-judgments are called prejudices.

Prejudices often have two sides. If "they" are lazy and stupid, then "we" must be intelligent and hard-working. Whether it paints people favorably or not, prejudice is typically based on ignorance, misinformation, and/or and fear of differences.

Prejudice can lead people to make different evaluations of the same behaviors, depending on whether it is seen in members of their own group (in group) or of another group against which are prejudice (out-group).

Prejudice can result from ethnocentrism—the tendency to assume that one’s culture and way of life superior to all others. Ethnocentric people judge other culture by the standards of their own group, which leads quite easily to prejudice against cultures viewed as inferior. Both White and Black students
tended to characterize relations with the other group as “too distant”. The same was true for African American and Asian Americans. In general, African American were the most likely to describe interactions with the other groups as ‘separate and distant’. Hispanics were found to be least distant in their relationship with the other groups.

One important and widespread form of prejudice is racism, the belief that one race is supreme than others who are innately inferior. When racism prevails in a society, members of subordinate groups generally experience prejudice.

3. Discrimination

Discrimination is an action that treats people unfairly because of their membership in a particular social group. Berger said that Discrimination is a special act, a deliberate attempt to exclude some individuals from something desirable because they are presumed (correctly or incorrectly) to belong to a certain group. The groups are most often the objects of discrimination are identified by means of religion, national origin, color, language, and social class.

Discrimination is due to something that the individual did rather than to a person’s group membership. For instance, people who are caught cheating on their taxes suffer inequality in the form of punishment from their society, which is not inflicted upon those who are not caught cheating on their taxes. Discrimination is differences in treatment of people on the basis of characteristics which may be
classified as racial, including skin color, cultural heritage, and religion. (E.g. Mary refuses to hire John because he is of race Y.)

Discrimination may permit an individual to cat out a negative feeling toward a target group or people who are prevented fro getting an adequate education; in consequence, it will serve to confirm the stereotypes of them as stupid and uneducated.

4. Stereotypes

Stereotypes assume that everyone in a group the same characteristics, leading people to falsely believe that "they" are all alike. Even when the stereotype suggests positive traits (for example, that women are nurturing), everyone is hurt because these images leave no room for individual differences. No one is born believing stereotypes -- they are learned from media, or parents, peers and many other sources. As these attitudes deepen over a person's lifetime, they are difficult to change.

5. Racial Segregation

Segregation is the foundation of prejudice. Segregation is the act or practice of separating people or different races, classes, or ethnic group in daily life, such as in school, housing, and public or commercial facilities, especially as a form if discrimination. Segregation affects people from all social classes. For example, sub-urban African Americans live in neighborhoods with many more
Whites than do poor, inner-city Blacks. But their neighborhoods are not the same as those of Whites having the same socioeconomic characteristics; and, in particular, middle-class Blacks tend to live with White neighbors who are less affluent than they are. While, in a significant sense, they are less segregated than poor Blacks, race still powerfully shapes their residential options. Racial segregation is most pronounced in housing. Although people of different races may work together, they are still very unlikely to live in integrated neighborhoods. This pattern differs only by degree in different metropolitan areas.

In the essay entitled “The Law That Changed America” by Jeannye Thornton-Hencke in Generation of Change, the Civil Rights Movement in America magazine mentioned that Blacks and Whites do not sit next to each other in movie theatre, especially not in the South. Blacks could not use public accommodation that Whites used. They could not eat restaurants or stay in motels. Blacks entertains were often refused rooms in the very hotels in which they were performing. Southern drinking fountains were separate and marked: “White Only” and “Colored Only”. So were room rests, although Whites generally had separate restrooms facilities for women and men, while “Colored” men and woman sometimes were forced to use the same one. Blacks could not swim in public pools—except in “Colored Only” ones, if they existed. Today, The U.S Supreme Court has ruled that racial segregation in public vehicles violates the Constitution. U.S courts have also declared racial zoning laws invalid. Nevertheless, segregation in some public facilities and in housing persists.
Considerable progress in eliminating this type of segregation is being made. Most cities in U.S abandoned the practice of segregation in public facilities.

7. **Afro centrism** - (not always considered racist); the belief that Black African cultures were historically more powerful and influential than is widely believed.

8. **Anti-Semitism** - usually, racism directed towards Jews, though Arabs are sometimes included as well.

9. **Apartheid** - a system of racism, now abolished, that once existed in South Africa; some refer to current Israeli policies towards Palestinians as apartheid as well.

10. **Black supremacy** - the belief that those of African descent are the superior race.

11. **Caste system** - (not always considered racist) is a system of social hierarchy among various social groups in India - each assigned a specific occupation and social role.

12. **Bumiputra** - (possibly a form of economic affirmative action?) is a system whereby Malays are accorded economic privileges not available to those of other races.

13. **Euro centrism** - the sometimes unconscious practice of historically and culturally focusing on White Europeans, to the exclusion of study, or even mention of, significant achievements of other groups of people.

14. **Islam phobia** - the manifestations of hatred and hostility towards Muslims and Arab people in general.
15. **Manifest Destiny** - a historical form of the racist belief that asserted that White Americans had the right and duty to colonize the west and "civilize" the Native American inhabitants.

16. **Nazism** - a historical form of political organization (called national socialism) coupled with extreme racism, that directed its energies against the Roma (the so-called Gypsies), Jews, Poles, Russians and Slavs, among other groups. Some adherents of Nazi ideology continue to exist today.

17. **Racial purity** - the belief that the various so-called races should be kept "pure" by not permitting interbreeding.

18. **White supremacy** - the belief that those whose skin color is what is commonly described as being "White" (but strangely not the similarly colored Ainu people of Japan or albino members of non-European stock) are the superior race, or 'master race'.

19. **Attitudes of suburb and gated community developers**, who are often accused of pandering to racist views by emphasizing "crime risk" in more racially diverse downtowns, especially in North America.

### 2.2.2 History of Racialism

One view of the origins of racism emphasizes stereotypes, which psychologists generally believe are formed by cultural factors. People generally respond to others differently based on what they know, which may include superficial characteristics such as are often associated with race. A "White" person walking after dark in a primarily "Black" neighborhood in an American
city might be anxious for a combination of reasons. A famous experiment in
cognitive psychology showed that the majority of Americans would remember a
lower-status "Black" man as having a knife in his hand, after viewing a picture
which in fact showed a "White" man in a suit with a knife facing this lower status
man.

In 19th century Europe and America, scientists developed various theories
about biological differences among races, and these theories were in turn used to
legitimize racist beliefs and practices. Much of the work that was done in the
name of science is now rejected as pseudoscience, but the fundamental problem
was the assumption that studying superficial differences between humans would
reveal categories with profound significance.

In the last part of the twentieth century, one of the scientific theories that
lent considerable weight to the idea that there is a biological basis for racial
classification is the multi-regional hypothesis of human origins. The hypothesis
has several variations, but, roughly speaking, if there were distinct regions of
human evolution, then one could call the original populations of these regions the
ancestral "races" of modern humans. The weight of evidence has gradually been
shifting away from this hypothesis, and many observers believe that most versions
of the hypothesis are no longer tenable in the light of findings published in 2001,
as described in the article on multi-regional origin; see also single-origin
hypothesis. Today there is a general consensus amongst scientists that "race", in
the general sense in which the term is used, is a social construct: the way in which
individuals are classified into racial groups varies from person to person, and from place to place, and from time to time. Furthermore, it is now understood why this is so: the superficial characteristics which are associated with racial groupings are poor predictors of genetic variability. There can be more genetic variation within a racial grouping than between two racial groupings. (Accessed on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racialism).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method of the Analysis

In completing this thesis, I am performing the descriptive qualitative method. The method is applied by describing the data and analyzing them, related to the focus of analysis. According to Bogdan and Biklen in their book entitled *Qualitative Research for Education: an Introduction to Theory and Method* (1982:2), Qualitative research may be used either as the primary strategy for data collection, or in conjunction with observation, document analysis or other techniques.

There are several steps in applying this method. The first step is collecting the books which relate to the racialism. The second step is reading the collected books, including journals, notes and relevant sources to the thesis, *Selected Poems*
of Langston Hughes book is treated as primary source. The third step is choosing Hughes’ poems that related to the racialism. The next step is quoting the data and describing them into the analysis. The analysis will be performed by explaining the negatively racial discriminations that happened to the Black people as it is portrayed in some Hughes’ poems.

3.2 Data Collecting Method of the Analysis

The beginning of thesis procedures is to collect the books related to the title of thesis. The focus of analysis is about racialism as portrayed in some Langston Hughes’ poems. The books are collected from several sources such as library, book store and internet.

The books which are collected contain vast information about analysis. Thus I try to select the relevant books to the analysis only, which is the study of racialism. One of the books that I used for data is Selected Poems of Langston Hughes (Kauffer, 1969) and The Negro in the United States (Franklin, 1957), and other books and thesis that can be used as source of the data about racialism. I also accessed some sites that related to the analysis.

3.3 Data Analyzing Method of the Analysis

This procedure is the process of describing the data and analyzing them into the thesis's analysis. The data are including the negatively racial discriminations, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation as it is portrayed in some of selected Langston Hughes’ poems concern about racial issues.

In accomplishing this thesis, I do several steps, they are:

1. Collecting the data about:
   a. Racialism that happened to the Black people.
   b. Some of Langston Hughes’ poems.

2. Selecting the data about:
   a. The negatively racial discriminations, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation.
   b. Some Langston Hughes’ Poems that concern of Racialism.

3. Describing the negatively racial discriminations, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation in aspect of meaning and the examples.

4. Analyzing the negatively racial discriminations, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation that it is portrayed in some of selected Langston Hughes’ poems.
CHAPTER IV
THE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL ISSUES IN SOME OF
LANGSTON HUGHES’ POEMS

4.1 Skin Color

Skin Color issue can be seen in Langston Hughes entitled *As I Grew Older*. This poem was published in 1925. The poem starts off pretty negative as Hughes describe the fact that the wall stands in the way of his dream and he gives up. In the first stanza, Hughes represents the birth of a goal or dream, and as the poem progresses Hughes showcases that the dream begins to diminish behind the walls of adulthood, as he grow older. Hughes says that he has a dream which at the time, he really wants to make it come true and was sure can do it. The word of ‘dream’ may mean as hope:
It was a long time ago.  
I have almost forgotten my dream.  
But it was there then,  
In front of me,  
Bright like a sun—  
My dream.

But in the second stanza, Hughes says that the dream is difficult to make it come true because of a ‘wall’ which can be assumed as Skin Color actions toward Blacks by Whites. The White people make Hughes almost gives up on his dream until he realizes he can not let them succeed and take away his pride.

And then the wall rose,  
Rose slowly,  
Slowly.  
Between me and my dream.  
Rose slowly, slowly,  
Dimming,  
Hiding,  
The light of my dream.  
Rose until it touched the sky—  
The wall.

Hughes then says that the ‘wall’ raises then dims and hides his dream because he is a Black man. The “wall” represents the hardship of the Black people and all the struggles they deal with before they can overcome their dreams. It pictured in the lines of stanza 3:

Shadow  
I am black

Although the ‘wall’ keeps him not to reach his dream, he has never given up reaching it. In the fourth stanza, Hughes may want to let the reader know that
through the racial of skin color, there is hope and that dreams can be fulfilled when one fights for their rights. So, he will make effort to reach it.

I lie down in the shadow.  
No longer the light of my dream before me,  
Above me.  
Only the thick wall.  
Only the shadow.

Then, he emphasizes that he will reach the dream by breaking the ‘wall’ to the utmost of his strength. He also wants that other people will help him so they can reach the dream—the equality of race, as it pictured in the stanza 4 and 5:

My hands!  
My dark hands!  
Break through the wall  
Find my dream!  
Help me to shatter this darkness,  
To smash this night,  
To break this shadow  
Into a thousand lights of sun,  
Into a thousand whirling dreams of sun!

4.2 Prejudice

Prejudice issue can be found in Langston Hughes poems entitled “Dinner guest: me” (1965). In the poem, Hughes presents at the dinner table is a representation of the African American people as a whole and their place in society. The dinner table represents society, and Hughes sitting at this table exemplifies the efforts made to make Blacks feel equal, as it pictured in the lines of stanza 1:
I know I am
The Negro Problem
Being wined and dined,
Answering the usual questions
That come to White mind
Which seeks demurely
To Probe in polite way
The why and wherewithal
Of darkness U.S.A.--
Wondering how things got this way
In current democratic night,
Murmuring gently
Over fraises du bois,
"I'm so ashamed of being White."

The overall concept of “Dinner Guest: Me” refers to the definition of humanity. The poem does not give a formal definition of what an American person is, but it does give the grounds of which an American should not be judged, which is by their skin color.

4.3 Discrimination

Langston Hughes tries to convey about Discrimination in his poem entitled, Theme for English B. Langston Hughes is a Black man and the only colored student is his class when he studied and lived at the Y in Harlem. He had different background from his instructor who was White. When he studied in the university, the Black students were not accepted to live in the dormitories. He was a Colombia student, unsure, unknown and unwelcome but finally he had a room in the Hortly Hall although the universities yield it grudgingly. But even though he is Black he is still just like his White instructor in many ways. Hughes may
want to say that the Blacks also have the same position although different in skin color.

But Langston Hughes, like others, also likes to ‘eat, sleep, drink, and be in love’ and ‘work, read, learn, and understand life’. He also likes ‘Bessie, bop, or Bach’. The Bessie and Bop style of music are listened mostly by the Black people. However he also likes Bach, which is typically listened to mostly by the White people. In this poem, He may want to say that the music common to all races include the Blacks even the music common to the White people.

Langston Hughes also says that he does not want to be a part of White people and believes that his White instructor does not want to be a part of his people either. He said that he can learn from his instructor and hopes that his instructor can learn from him too although the instructor was older than Hughes. As it is pictured in these lines of stanza 4:

Sometimes perhaps you don’t want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that’s true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me—although you're older—and White—and somewhat more free.

Another example poem of Langston Hughes concerns about discrimination is “democracy” that published in 1949. Langston Hughes fells compelled to speak his mind for equality and his birthright freedom via poetry; he clearly addresses his point of views about democracy in of this poem. Democracy implies free and equal representation of people; in more concrete language, it implies free and
equal right of every single soul to participate in a system of government, which was nonexistent to Blacks at the juncture due to Jim Crow laws—were state and local laws in the United States enacted between 1876-1965, mandate de jure segregation in all public facilities, with supposedly “separate but equal” status for Black Americans.

In the poem, he obviously wants to change and gets equality in the present when he is alive, and not in the future because he thinks that for a dead man has no right to freedom. Appropriately, he had a pessimistic view of democracy because Blacks were treated badly and suffered greatly. He believes his rights should parallel those of White people, without compromising his dignity in any way. He declares he is an American and should have the rights to stand on his land, supported by lines 7 through 9 in the second stanza:

I have as much right  
As the other fellow has  
To stand  
On my two feet  
And own the land.

He does not want to wait for freedom; he wants to fight for freedom and make a change. Moreover, he is not too fond of passive individuals. Tomorrow is another day because the kind of attitude significance submission. As it pictured in the third stanza:

I tire so of hearing people say,  
Let things take their course.  
Tomorrow is another day.  
I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.  
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread
He indicates that everybody should have the right to exercise their freedom because that’s birthright, for Whites, Blacks, and whoever. There needs no interpretation because the clarity of what he wants is obvious. It can be seen in the last stanzas:

*Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.*

*I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you.*

### 4.4 Stereotypes

Stereotypes issue can be seen in Langston Hughes poem entitled “*Argument*”. In the poem, Hughes begins with praising the Whites and their goodness, he says contrast about the Blacks that they will get badness as they look like. Blacks have known as the minority class which has some values, such as: Unemployment, Uneducated, poor, unrespectable, broken-home, criminal, etc. Hughes asked Jack (he may be a Black man) whether he believes the values that adhere to the Blacks. It can be seen in these lines of stanza 1:

*White is right,
Yellow mellow,
Black, get black!*
Do you believe that, Jack?

In the next stanza, Hughes said that Jack will surely believe it and Jack is fool man because he has not a hope to change the values. According to Hughes, as the Black man, in God eyes everyone has the same right to do the good things. Therefore, everyone in the same race has not same characteristics. Blacks, like Whites are also fine. It can be seen in these lines of stanza 2:

Sure do!

Then you’re a dope
For which there ain’t no hope.
Black is fine!
And, God knows,
It’s mine!

“Cross” is another example poem of Langston Hughes that talks about Stereotype. In the first stanza, Langston Hughes begins telling that his father was a white man. He then follows with the information that his mother was a black woman. He then reports that he has curses his white old man, but now he wants to take his curses back. As it is pictured in these lines of stanza 1:

My Old man’s a white old man
And my old mother’s black.
If ever I cursed my white old man
I take my curses back.

In addition to cursing his father, Langston Hughes has cursed his mother and he also wish she were in hell. But now again, he wants to apologize for the “evil wish”, and he even wants to wish her well. Langston Hughes has changed
his point of view regarding his parents; he used to curse them, but now he writes he could rescind those curses. As it is pictured in these lines of stanza 2:

If I ever cursed my back old mother
And wished she were in hell,
I’m sorry for that evil wish
And now I wish her well.

In the stanza, Langston Hughes may say that he was probably not raised by both parents. His father died wealthy, symbolized by the “fine big house”, while his mother died poor, symbolized by the “shack”. But Langston Hughes’s true purpose in revealing his victim status may finally explored when he says that he wonder where he will die, and asks “being neither White nor Black?” He may reasons that White people always die in fine big houses, and Black people always died in shacks. As it is pictured in these lines of stanza 3:

My old man died in a fine big house.
My ma died in a shack.
I wonder where I’m gonna die,
Being neither white nor black?

4.5 Racial Segregation

Langston Hughes tries to convey about racial segregation issue in his poem entitled, I, Too. This poem was written when Langston Hughes in Genoa, Italy. The poem shows how Black people are treated unequally during the slavery. The “darker brother” (Black) is waiting for his opportunity to share the table of freedom with all Americans. The Blacks have black skin and it is used, as the sign
that make them became the law class in society. The Black man was often treated as although they were not human. The Black suffered when the White treated them as an inferior class. In American society, the Black has been kept in the bottom economic class in the bottom status group and in the most ineffectual power position. The example of Racial Segregation actions, such as: the Black must eat in different place from the White, the general facilities that provided by government are differentiated among Blacks and White.

But, there are the optimistic statements that they were increasing rapidly and they become a strong human although the Blacks get bad treatment. As it can be seen in the next lines of stanza 2:

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

In the next stanza, Hughes conveys the willing and the optimistic feeling of Black. One day, there will be no more racial segregation. Black and White will eat in the same place and get the same facilities. It can be seen in the next lines of stanza 3:

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.
Langston Hughes may also want to say that the White could not only see the aspect of Blacks’ badness but also their kindness. So, if the Whites know their kindness, they will be ashamed. It is stated in these lines of stanza 4:

\begin{quote}
Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--
I, too, am America.
\end{quote}

Langston Hughes poem entitled “Merry Go-round” also concerns of racial segregation issue. In the poem, Hughes tells about a Black child in a carnival. He wants to ride a horse of merry go-round but he does not know where his horse. He has mind set that Blacks and Whites can not sit side by side. As in Down South—his hometown, there is a place in a train named Jim Crow where it is back side of the train. The Blacks must sit at the place. So, the child is confused where he should sit. As we know, merry go-round shape is round—there is no front and back.

\textbf{CHAPTER V}

\textbf{CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS}

\textbf{5.1 Conclusions}

Langston Hughes is one of the first Black writer who could support himself by his writing. He is praised for his ability to say what was important to millions of Black people. He is famous for his description of Black American life. He used his works to praise his people and voice concerns about race and social injustice. He often writes about racial issues, describing his people in a realistic way. In this thesis, I analyze the negatively racial discriminations that happened to the Black
people, such as: Skin Color, Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Racial Segregation.

Skin Color issue can be seen in Langston Hughes entitled *As I Grew Older*. This poem was published in 1925. As I have mentioned in the chapter III, Skin Color is a form of discrimination in which human beings are accorded differing social and treatment based on skin color. “As I Grew Older” is the fact that the White people stand in the way of Black people’s dreams and almost make them give up. Besides, it is also very encouraging of letting Black people know if they have a dream, they can fight for it, and be happy within their skin.

Prejudice issue can be found in Langston Hughes poems entitled “Dinner guest: Me”. This poem was published in 1965. Hughes may offer this poem as fodder for amassing to the Black people that have more than adequate amount wealth. The overall concept of “Dinner Guest: Me” refers to the definition of humanity.

Langston Hughes tries to convey about Discrimination in his poem entitled, *Theme for English B*. In this poem, Langston Hughes tells that as a Black man, he also accepts discriminated action in his school by his instructor (White man). By writing this poem, he may also want to say that the Blacks also have the same position although different in skin. Another example poem of Langston Hughes concerns about discrimination is “Democracy”. This poem was published in 1949. In the poem, he obviously wants to change and equality in the present when was alive, and not in the future, for a dead man has no right to freedom.
Stereotypes issue can be seen in Langston Hughes poem entitled “Argument”. By writing this poem, Langston Hughes may want to tell that everyone in the same race has not same characteristics. He thinks that Blacks, like Whites are also fine. Langston Hughes’s poem entitled “Cross” also offers a Stereotype of conflicted of being a “cross” between Black and White people. But the stereotype of the conflicted mixed race child overshadows the possibilities that Langston Hughes actually has.

Langston Hughes tries to convey about racial segregation issue in his poem entitled, I, Too. The poem shows how Black people are treated unequally during the slavery. At the end of the poem, he writes how one day Whites people made a mistake, and from that day on they will recognize the Black as an important part of the society. Langston Hughes’s poem entitled “Merry Go-round” also concerns about racial segregation issue. The poem symbolizes the rights that a normal black child has been deprived of during that time. It could also symbolize forward and becoming more racial tolerant since there is no a back in a merry ground.

So, through his poems Langston Hughes conveys his feeling and Black people’ feeling toward racialism issues. It can be said that the existence of Black people still cannot accepted by White people feel that they are better than Black people.
5.2 Suggestions

There are suggestions of the thesis:

1. Reading literature will enrich the literary knowledge of reader. Hopefully, by reading and understanding the message of this thesis, they will be valuable experience for readers. And for the best result, it is suggested for applying the message of some Langston Hughes’ poems that Blacks are also human beings and have the equal right as White.
2. It is also suggested for potential readers whom interest in a vast study of racialism to use more reliable sources to make a better analysis of racialism.

In this thesis, it would be useful for readers to give suggestion how to find the meaning of poems, they are:

1. Read through the entire poem. Before trying to take apart the poem, just take a minute to read it as the poet intended. Listen to how the words flow together. The readers may even want to read it out aloud in order to really hear the “sounds” of the poem.

2. Read each sentence by itself. Sometimes a sentence will flow over onto the next line. Instead of looking as it as the poem is written, read each sentence individually. The readers may be able to start piecing ideas together.

3. Consider the deeper meaning. Just as we use slang today to express different thoughts and ideas, so do poets use different expressions or words to mean different things. Don’t take everything at face value.

4. Understand the poet. Take sometimes to read a little about the poet in order to understand what kind of poetry they liked to write. If they seemed to be a romantic, then their poem may have more to do with love. If they seem to indulge in historical facts, they may have been trying to be satirical. The readers may also want to read some of their other poems just to get an idea of what kind of topics are common in their works.
5. Identify the time period. Poets tend to write about things that are happening around them. If they were alive during the World War II era, they may be writing about a whole different subject that if they were to write about our world as it is now. Knowing a little more about when the poem was written can definitely assist the readers in truly learning the meaning of the poem. it will be rewarded for their efforts.
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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1  Langston Hughes’s Poems

Merry-Go-Round

Colored child at carnival:

Where is the Jim Crow section
On this merry-go-round,
Mister, cause I want to ride?
Down South where I come from
White and colored
Can't sit side by side.
Down South on the train
There's a Jim Crow car.
On the bus we're put in the back—
But there ain't no back
To a merry-go-round!
Where's the horse
For a kid that's black?

I, Too
I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--
I, too, am America.
As I Grew Older

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright like a sun—
My dream.

And then the wall rose,
Rose slowly,
Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Rose slowly, slowly,
Dimming,
Hiding,
The light of my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky—
The wall.

Shadow
I am black

I lie down in the shadow.
No longer the light of my dream before me,
Above me.
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.

My hands!
My dark hands!
Break through the wall
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,

To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams of sun!
Argument

White is right,
Yellow mellow,
Black, get black!

Do you believe that, Jack?

Sure do!

Then you’re a dope
For which there ain’t no hope.
Black is fine!
And, God knows,
It’s mine!

Democracy

Democracy will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.

I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you.
Theme for English B

The instructor said,
Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you--
Then, it will be true.
I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:
It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:
hear you, hear me--we two--you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York, too.) Me--who?
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records--Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me not like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white--
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me--
although you're older--and white--
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.
Dinner Guest: Me

I know I am
The Negro Problem
Being wined and dined,
Answering the usual questions
That come to white mind
Which seeks demurely
To Probe in polite way
The why and wherewithal
Of darkness U.S.A.--
Wondering how things got this way
In current democratic night,
Murmuring gently
Over fraises du bois,
"I'm so ashamed of being white."

The lobster is delicious,
The wine divine,
And center of attention
At the damask table, mine.
To be a Problem on
Park Avenue at eight
Is not so bad.
Solutions to the Problem,
Of course, wait.

A black Pierrot
I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me,
So I crept away into the night
And the night was black, too.

I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me
Do I wept until the dawn
Dripped blood over the eastern hills
And my heart was bleeding, too.

I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me
So with my once gay-colored soul
Shrunken like a balloon without air,
I went forth in the morning
To see a new brown love.
Cross

My old man's a white old man
And my old mother's black.
If ever I cursed my white old man
I take my curses back.
If ever I cursed my black old mother
And wished she were in hell,
I'm sorry for that evil wish
And now I wish her well
My old man died in a fine big house.
My ma died in a shack.
I wonder were I'm going to die,
Being neither white nor black?

Afro-American Fragment

So long,
So far away,
Is Africa.
Not even memories alive
Save those that history books create,
Save those that those songs
Beat back into the blood—
Beat out of blood with words sad-sung
In strange un-Negro tongue—
So long,
So far away,
Is Africa.

Subdued and time lost
Are the drums—and yet
Through some vast mist of race
There comes this song
I do not understand,
This song of atavistic lost
Without a place—
So long,
So far away
Is Africa’s
Dark face.
The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I’ve known rivers:
The rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawn were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Negro

I am a Negro:
Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.

I’ve been a slave:
Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.
I brushed the boots of Washington.

I’ve been a worker:
Under my hand the pyramids arose.
I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.

I’ve been a singer:
All the way from Africa to Georgia
I carried my sorrow songs.
I made ragtime.

I’ve been a victim:
The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.
They lynch me still in Mississippi.

I am a Negro:
Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.
Me and the Mule

My old mule,
He’s got a grin on his face.
He’s been a mule so long
He’s forgot about his race.

I’m like that old mule—
Black—and don’t give a damn!
You got to take me
Like I am.

Daybreak in Alabama

When I get to be a composer
I’m gonna write me some music about Daybreak in Alabama
And I’m gonna put the purtiest songs in it
Rising out of the ground like a swamp mist
And falling out of heaven like soft dew.
I’m gonna put some tall tall trees in it
And the scent of pine needles
And the smell of red clay after rain
And long red necks
And poppy colored faces
And big brown arms
And the field daisy eyes
Of black and white black white black people
And I’m gonna put white hands
And black hands and brown and yellow hands
And red clay earth hands in it
Touching everybody with kind fingers
And touching each other natural as dew
In that dawn of music when I
Get to be a composer
And write about daybreak
In Alabama.
High to Low

God knows
We have our troubles, too—
One trouble is you;
You talk too loud,
Cuss too loud,
Look too black,
Don’t get anywhere,
And sometimes it seems
You don’t even care
They way you send your kids to school
Stocking down,
(not Ethical Culture)
The way you shout out loud in church,
(not St. Phillips)
And the way you lounge on doorsteps
Just as if you were down South,
(not at 409)
The way you clown—
The way, in other words,
You let me down—
Me, trying to uphold the race
And you—
Well, you can see,
We have our problems,
Too, with you.

Subway Rush Hour

Mingled
Breath dan smell
So close
Mingled
Black and white
So near
No room for fear.
My People

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

(page 13)

Dream Variations

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
Dark like me-
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening...
A tall, slim tree...
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.

The Negro Mother

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.
Look at my face -- dark as the night --
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.
I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.
I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave --
Children sold away from me, I'm husband sold, too.
No safety, no love, no respect was I due.

Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.
God put a dream like steel in my soul.
Now, through my children, I'm reaching the goal.

Now, through my children, young and free,
I realized the blessing deed to me.
I couldn't read then. I couldn't write.
I had nothing, back there in the night.
Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears,
But I kept trudging on through the lonely years.
Sometimes, the road was hot with the sun,
But I had to keep on till my work was done:
I had to keep on! No stopping for me --
I was the seed of the coming Free.

I nourished the dream that nothing could smother
Deep in my breast -- the Negro mother.
I had only hope then, but now through you,
Dark ones of today, my dreams must come true:
All you dark children in the world out there.
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair.
Remember my years, heavy with sorrow --
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow.

Make of my pass a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust.
Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver's track.
Remember how the strong in struggle and strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life --
But march ever forward, breaking down bars.

Look ever upward at the sun and the stars.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs --
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro Mother.
Children's Rhymes

By what sends
the white kids
I ain't sent:
I know I can't
be President.
What don't bug
them white kids
sure bugs me:
We know everybody
ain't free.

Lies written down
for white folks
ain't for us a-tall:
*Liberty And Justice--*
Huh!--*For All?*

A black Pierrot

I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me,
So I crept away into the night
And the night was black, too.

I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me
Do I wept until the dawn
Dripped blood over the eastern hills
And my heart was bleeding, too.

I am a black Pierrot;
She did not love me
So with my once gay-colored soul
Shrunken like a balloon without air,
I went forth in the morning
To see a new brown love.
Appendix 2  Langston Hughes’s Bibliography

BIOGRAPHY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

James Mercer Langston Hughes, (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967) was an American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. He was one of the earliest innovators of the new literary art form jazz poetry. Hughes is best-known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance.

A. Ancestry and childhood

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, the second child of school teacher Carrie (Caroline) Mercer Langston and her husband James Nathaniel Hughes (1871-1934). Both parents were mixed-race, and Langston Hughes was of African American, European American and Native American descent. He grew up in the African-American community. Both his father's grandmothers were African American, and both his father's grandfathers were white: one of Scottish and one of Jewish descent.

Hughes was named after both his father and his great-uncle, John Mercer Langston who, in 1888, became the first black to be elected to the United States Congress from Virginia. Hughes' maternal grandmother Mary Patterson was of African, French, English and Native American descent. One of the first women to attend Oberlin College, she first married Lewis Sheridan Leary, also of mixed race. He joined the men in John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859 and died from his wounds.

In 1869 Mary Patterson Leary married again, into the elite, politically active Langston family. Her second husband was Charles Henry Langston, of African, American Indian and Euro-American ancestry. He and his younger brother John Mercer Langston worked for the abolitionist cause and helped lead the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society in 1858. Charles Langston later moved to Kansas where he was active as an educator and activist for voting and rights for black Americans. Charles and Mary's daughter Caroline Mercer Langston was the mother of Langston Hughes.
Hughes' father left his family and later divorced Carrie. He went to Cuba, and then Mexico, seeking to escape the enduring racism in the United States. After the separation of his parents, while his mother traveled seeking employment, young Langston was raised mainly by his maternal grandmother Mary Patterson Langston in Kansas. Through the black American oral tradition and drawing from the activist experiences of her generation, Mary Langston instilled in the young Langston Hughes a lasting sense of racial pride. He spent most of childhood in Lawrence, Kansas. After the death of his grandmother, he went to live with family friends, James and Mary Reed, for two years. Because of the unstable early life, his childhood was not an entirely happy one, but it was one that heavily influenced the poet he would become. Later, Hughes lived again with his mother Carrie in Lincoln, Illinois, who had remarried when he was still an adolescent, and eventually in Cleveland, Ohio, where he attended high school.

While in grammar school in Lincoln, Illinois, Hughes was elected class poet. Hughes stated in retrospect he thought it was because of the stereotype that African Americans have rhythm. "I was a victim of a stereotype. There were only two of us Negro kids in the whole class and our English teacher was always stressing the importance of rhythm in poetry. Well, everyone knows — except us — that all Negroes have rhythm, so they elected me as class poet. "During high school in Cleveland, Ohio, he wrote for the school newspaper, edited the yearbook, and began to write his first short stories, poetry, and dramatic plays. His first piece of jazz poetry, "When Sue Wears Red", was written while he was still in high school. It was during this time that he discovered his love of books. From this early period in his life, Hughes would cite as influences on his poetry the American poets Paul Laurence Dunbar and Carl Sandburg.

B. Relationship with father and Columbia

Hughes lived with his father in Mexico for a brief period in 1919. The relationship between the two was strained and unhappy, causing Langston to attempt suicide multiple times. Upon graduating from high school in June 1920, Hughes returned to live with his father, hoping to convince him to provide money to attend Columbia University. Hughes later said that, prior to arriving in Mexico again:

"I had been thinking about my father and his strange dislike of his own people. I didn't understand it, because I was a Negro, and I liked Negroes very much."
Initially, his father had hoped for Hughes to attend a university abroad, and to study for a career in engineering. On these grounds, he was willing to provide financial assistance to his son. James Hughes did not support his son’s desire to be a writer. Eventually, Langston and his father came to a compromise. Langston would study engineering, so long as he could attend Columbia. His tuition provided, Hughes left his father after more than a year of living with him. While at Columbia in 1921, Hughes managed to maintain a B+ grade average. He left in 1922 because of racial prejudice within the institution, and his interests revolved more around the neighborhood of Harlem than his studies, though he continued writing poetry.

C. Adulthood

Hughes worked various odd jobs, before serving a brief tenure as a crewman aboard the S.S. Malone in 1923, spending six months traveling to West Africa and Europe. In Europe, Hughes left the S.S. Malone for a temporary stay in Paris.

During his time in Paris in the early 1920s, Hughes became part of the black expatriate community. In November 1924, Hughes returned to the U. S. to live with his mother in Washington, D.C. Hughes again found work doing various odd jobs before gaining white-collar employment in 1925 as a personal assistant to the historian Carter G. Woodson at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Not satisfied with the demands of the work and its time constraints that limited his writing, Hughes quit to work as a busboy in a hotel. It was while working as a busboy that Hughes would encounter the poet Vachel Lindsay. Impressed with the poems Hughes showed him, Lindsay publicized his discovery of a new black poet. By this time, Hughes’ earlier work had already been published in magazines and was about to be collected into his first book of poetry.

The following year, Hughes enrolled in Lincoln University, a historically black university in Chester County, Pennsylvania. There he became a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the second black fraternal organization founded at a historically black college and university. Thurgood Marshall, who later became an Associate Justice of the
Supreme Court of the United States, was an alumnus and classmate of Langston Hughes during his undergraduate studies at Lincoln University.

Hughes while attending Lincoln University.

Hughes earned a B.A. degree from Lincoln University in 1929. He then moved to New York. Except for travels to areas that included parts of the Caribbean, Hughes lived in Harlem as his primary home for the remainder of his life.

Academics and biographers today believe that Hughes was a homosexual and included homosexual codes in many of his poems, similar in manner to Walt Whitman, whose work Hughes cited as another influence on his poetry. Hughes' story "Blessed Assurance" deals with a father's anger over his son's effeminacy and queerness. To retain the respect and support of black churches and organizations and avoid exacerbating his precarious financial situation, Hughes remained closeted. Arnold Rampersad, the primary biographer of Hughes, determined that Hughes exhibited a preference for other African-American men in his work and life. This love of black men is evidenced in a number of reported unpublished poems to a black male lover.

D. Death

On May 22, 1967, Langston Hughes died from complications after abdominal surgery, related to prostate cancer, at the age of 65. His ashes are interred beneath a floor medallion in the middle of the foyer leading to the auditorium named for him within the Arthur Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. The design on the floor covering his cremated remains is an African cosmogram titled Rivers. The title is taken from the poem The Negro Speaks of Rivers by Hughes. Within the center of the cosmogram and precisely above the ashes of Hughes are the words My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

The Langston Hughes Memorial Library on the campus of Lincoln University, as well as at the James Weldon Johnson Collection within the Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

E. Career

• 1920s

First published in The Crisis in 1921, the verse that would become Hughes's signature poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", appeared in his first book of poetry The Weary Blues in 1926:

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.  
I've known rivers:  
Ancient, dusky rivers.  

*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*

Hughes' life and work were enormously influential during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s alongside those of his contemporaries, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Richard Bruce Nugent, and Aaron Douglas, who, collectively (with the exception of McKay), created the short-lived magazine *Fire!!Devoted to Younger Negro Artists.*

Hughes and his contemporaries were often in conflict with the goals and aspirations of the black middle class, and of those considered to be the midwives of the Harlem Renaissance, W. E. B. Du Bois, Jessie Redmon Fauset, and Alain LeRoy Locke, whom they accused of being overly fulsome in accommodating and assimilating Eurocentric values and culture for social equality. A primary expression of this conflict was the former's depiction of the "low-life", that is, the real lives of blacks in the lower social-economic strata and the superficial divisions and prejudices based on skin color within the black community. Hughes wrote what would be considered the manifesto for him and his contemporaries published in *The Nation* in 1926, *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*:

The younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame.  
If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly, too.  
The tom-tom cries, and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain free within ourselves.

Hughes was unashamedly black at a time when blackness was démodé, and he didn't go much beyond the themes of *black is beautiful* as he explored the black human condition in a variety of depths. His main concern was the uplift of his people, of whom he judged himself the adequate appreciator, and whose strengths, resiliency, courage, and humor he wanted to record as part of the general American experience. Thus, his poetry and fiction centered generally on
insightful views of the working class lives of blacks in America, lives he portrayed as full of struggle, joy, laughter, and music. Permeating his work is pride in the African American identity and its diverse culture. "My seeking has been to explain and illuminate the Negro condition in America and obliquely that of all human kind," Hughes is quoted as saying. Therefore, in his work he confronted racial stereotypes, protested social conditions, and expanded African America’s image of itself; a “people’s poet” who sought to reeducate both audience and artist by lifting the theory of the black aesthetic into reality. An expression of this is the poem *My People*:

Langston Hughes, Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, Rudolph Fisher, & Hubert Delany. African American writers influenced the Négritude movement in France. Hughes, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Claude McKay were the most influential.

The night is beautiful,  
So the faces of *my people*.  
The stars are beautiful,  
So the eyes of *my people*  
Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
Beautiful, also, are the souls of *my people*.

Moreover, Hughes stressed the importance of a racial consciousness and cultural nationalism devoid of self-hate that united people of African descent and Africa across the globe and encouraged pride in their own diverse black folk culture and black aesthetic. Langston Hughes was one of the few black writers of any consequence to champion racial consciousness as a source of inspiration for black artists. His African-American race consciousness and cultural nationalism would influence many foreign black writers, such as Jacques Roumain, Nicolás Guillén, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Aimé Césaire. With Senghor and Césaire and other French-speaking writers of Africa and of African descent from the Caribbean like René Maran from Martinique and Léon Damas from French Guiana in South America, the works of Hughes helped to inspire the concept that became the Négritude movement in France where a radical black self-examination was emphasized in the face of European colonialism. Langston Hughes was not only a role model for his calls for black racial pride instead of assimilation, but the most important technical influence in his emphasis on folk and jazz rhythms as the basis of his poetry of racial pride.
\begin{itemize}
  \item **1930s**

  In 1930, his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, won the Harmon Gold Medal for literature. The protagonist of the story is a boy named Sandy whose family must deal with a variety of struggles imposed upon them due to their race and class in society in addition to relating to one another. Hughes's first collection of short stories came in 1934 with *The Ways of White Folks*. These stories provided a series of vignettes revealing the humorous and tragic interactions between whites and blacks. Overall, these stories are marked by a general pessimism about race relations, as well as a sardonic realism. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1935. In 1938, Hughes would establish the *Harlem Suitcase Theater* followed by the *New Negro Theater* in 1939 in Los Angeles, and the *Skyloft Players* in Chicago in 1942.

  \item **1940s**

  The same year Hughes established his theatre troupe in Los Angeles, his ambition to write for the movies materialized when he co-wrote the screenplay for *Way Down South*. Further hopes by Hughes to write for the lucrative movie trade were thwarted because of racial discrimination within the industry. Through the black publication *Chicago Defender*, Hughes in 1943 gave creative birth to *Jesse B. Semple*, often referred to and spelled *Simple*, the everyday black man in Harlem who offered musings on topical issues of the day. He received offers to teach at a number of colleges, but seldom did. In 1947, Hughes taught a semester at the predominantly black Atlanta University. Hughes, in 1949, spent three months at the integrated University of Chicago Laboratory Schools as a "Visiting Lecturer on Poetry." He wrote novels, short stories, plays, poetry, operas, essays, works for children, and, with the encouragement of his best friend and writer, Arna Bontemps, and patron and friend, Carl Van Vechten, two autobiographies, *The Big Sea* and *I Wonder as I Wander*, as well as translating several works of literature into English.

  \item **1950s and 1960s**

  Chinua Achebe was one of the many African American and African writers whom Hughes heavily influenced. Much of his writing was inspired by the rhythms and language of the black church, and, the blues and jazz of that era, the music he believed to be the true expression of the black spirit; an example is "Harlem" (sometimes called "Dream Deferred") from *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), from which a line was taken for the title of the play *A Raisin in the Sun*.

  What happens to a dream deferred?
  Does it dry up
  like a raisin in the sun?
  Or fester like a sore

\end{itemize}

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And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

During the mid-1950s and -1960s, Hughes' popularity among the younger generation of black writers varied as his reputation increased worldwide. With the gradual advancement toward racial integration, many black writers considered his writings of black pride and its corresponding subject matter out of date. They considered him a racial chauvinist. He in turn found a number of writers like James Baldwin lacking in this same pride, over intellectualizing in their work, and occasionally vulgar.

Hughes wanted young black writers to be objective about their race, but not to scorn it or flee it. He understood the main points of the Black Power movement of the 1960s, but believed that some of the younger black writers who supported it were too angry in their work. Hughes's posthumously published *Panther and the Lash* in 1967 was intended to show solidarity and understanding with these writers, but with more skill and devoid of the most virile anger and terse racial chauvinism some showed toward whites. Hughes still continued to have admirers among the larger younger generation of black writers, whom he often helped by offering advice and introducing them to other influential persons in the literature and publishing communities. This latter group, including Alice Walker, whom Hughes discovered, looked upon Hughes as a hero and an example to be emulated in degrees and tones within their own work. One of these young black writers observed of Hughes, "Langston set a tone, a standard of brotherhood and friendship and cooperation, for all of us to follow. You never got from him, 'I am the Negro writer,' but only 'I am a Negro writer.' He never stopped thinking about the rest of us."

**F. Recognition and honors**

1) In 1943, Lincoln University awarded Hughes an honorary Litt.D.
2) In 1960, the NAACP awarded Hughes the Spingarn Medal for distinguished achievements by an African American.
3) 1961 - Hughes was inducted into the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
4) 1963 - Howard University awarded Hughes an honorary doctorate.
5) In 1973, the first Langston Hughes Medal was awarded by the City College of New York.
6) In 1981, New York City Landmark status was given to the Harlem home of Langston Hughes at 20 East 127th Street by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and 127th St. was renamed *Langston Hughes Place.*
7) On February 1, 2002, The United States Postal Service added the image of Langston Hughes to its Black Heritage series of postage stamps to commemorate both the centennial of Hughes' birth and the 25th anniversary of the Black Heritage Series.
8) In 2002, scholar Molefi Kete Asante listed Langston Hughes on his list of 100 Greatest African Americans.

G. Political Views

Hughes, like many black writers and artists of his time, was drawn to the promise of Communism as an alternative to a segregated America. Many of his lesser-known political writings have been collected in two volumes published by the University of Missouri Press and reflect his attraction to Communism. An example is the poem "A New Song".

In 1932, Hughes became part of a group of blacks who went to the Soviet Union to make a film depicting the plight of African Americans in the United States. The film was never made, but Hughes was given the opportunity to travel extensively through the Soviet Union and to the Soviet-controlled regions in Central Asia, the latter parts usually closed to Westerners. In Turkmenistan, Hughes met and befriended the Hungarian polymath Arthur Koestler. Hughes also managed to travel to China and Japan before returning to the States.

Hughes' poetry was frequently published in the CPUSA newspaper and he was involved in initiatives supported by Communist organizations, such as the drive to free the Scottsboro Boys. Partly as a show of support for the Republican faction during the Spanish Civil War, in 1937 Hughes traveled to Spain as a correspondent for the Baltimore Afro-American and other various African-American newspapers. Hughes was also involved in other Communist-led organizations like the John Reed Clubs and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. He was more of a sympathizer than an active participant. He signed a statement in 1938 supporting Joseph Stalin's purges and joined the American Peace Mobilization in 1940 working to keep the U.S. from participating in World War II.

Hughes initially did not favor black American involvement in the war because of the persistence of discriminatory U.S. Jim Crow laws existing while blacks were encouraged to fight against Fascism and the Axis powers. He came to support the war effort and black American involvement in it after deciding that blacks would also be contributing to their struggle for civil rights at home.

Hughes was accused of being a Communist by many on the political right, but he always denied it. When asked why he never joined the Communist Party, he wrote "it was based on strict discipline and the acceptance of directives that I,
as a writer, did not wish to accept." In 1953, he was called before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations led by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Following his appearance, he distanced himself from Communism and was subsequently rebuked by some who had previously supported him on the Radical Left. Over time, Hughes would distance himself from his most radical poems. In 1959 his collection of Selected Poems was published. He excluded his most controversial work from this group of poems.

1) Theater and film

- Hughes' sexuality was the subject of plays by African-American playwrights: Hannibal of the Alps by Michael Dinwiddie and Paper Armor by Eisa Davis.
- In the 1989 film, Looking for Langston, British filmmaker Isaac Julien claimed Hughes as a black gay icon — Julien thought that Hughes' sexuality had historically been ignored or downplayed.
- In the film Get on the Bus, directed by Spike Lee, a black gay character, played by Isaiah Washington, invokes the name of Hughes and punches a homophobic character while commenting, "This is for James Baldwin and Langston Hughes."
- In 2003, Gary LeRoi Gray portrayed Hughes as a teenager in the short film Salvation, based on a portion of his autobiography The Big Sea.
- In the 2004 film Brother to Brother, the diminutive 5-foot-4-inch (1.63 m) Hughes was portrayed by 6-foot-1-inch (1.85 m) actor Daniel Sunjata.
- The New York Center for Visual History included Langston Hughes as part of its documentary Voices & Visions series of notable writers.
- Hughes' Dream Harlem by producer and director Jamal Joseph also addresses Hughes' steadfast racial pride and artistic independence.

2) Bibliography

**Poetry**

- The Weary Blues. Knopf, 1926
- Fine Clothes to the Jew. Knopf, 1927
- The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Recitations, 1931
- Dear Lovely Death, 1931
- The Dream Keeper and Other Poems. Knopf, 1932
- Scottsboro Limited: Four Poems and a Play. N.Y.: Golden Stair Press, 1932
- Shakespeare in Harlem. Knopf, 1942
- Freedom's Plow. 1943
- Fields of Wonder. Knopf, 1947
• One-Way Ticket. 1949
• Montage of a Dream Deferred. Holt, 1951
• Selected Poems of Langston Hughes. 1958
• Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz. Hill & Wang, 1961
• The Panther and the Lash: Poems of Our Times, 1967
• Let America Be America Again 2005
• "Spring" 2005

Fiction

• Not Without Laughter. Knopf, 1930
• The Ways of White Folks. Knopf, 1934
• Simple Speaks His Mind. 1950
• Laughing to Keep from Crying, Holt, 1952
• Simple Takes a Wife. 1953
• Sweet Flypaper of Life, photographs by Roy DeCarava. 1955
• Simple Stakes a Claim. 1957
• Tambourines to Glory (book), 1958
• The Best of Simple. 1961
• Simple's Uncle Sam. 1965
• Something in Common and Other Stories. Hill & Wang, 1963
• Short Stories of Langston Hughes. Hill & Wang, 1996

Non-fiction

• The Big Sea. New York: Knopf, 1940
• Famous American Negroes. 1954
• Marian Anderson: Famous Concert Singer. 1954
• I Wonder as I Wander. New York: Rinehart & Co., 1956
• A Pictorial History of the Negro in America, with Milton Meltzer. 1956
• Famous Negro Heroes of America. 1958
• Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP. 1962

Major plays

• Mule Bone, with Zora Neale Hurston. 1931
• Mulatto. 1935 (renamed The Barrier, an opera, in 1950)
• Troubled Island, with William Grant Still. 1936
• Little Ham. 1936
• Emperor of Haiti. 1936
• Don't You Want to be Free? 1938
• Street Scene, contributed lyrics. 1947
• Tambourines to Glory. 1956
• Simply Heavenly. 1957
• Black Nativity. 1961
• *Jericho-Jim Crow*. 1964

**Works for children**

• *Popo and Fifina, with Arna Bontemps*. 1932
• *The First Book of the Negroes*. 1952
• *The First Book of Jazz*. 1954
• *The First Book of Rhythms*. 1954
• *The First Book of the West Indies*. 1956
• *First Book of Africa*. 1964

**Other**


**Notes**

8. The poem *Aunt Sues's Stories* (1921) is an oblique tribute to his grandmother and his loving Auntie Mary Reed. Rampersad, vol.1, 1986, p.43
9. Imbued by his grandmother with a duty to help his race, Langston Hughes identified with neglected and downtrodden blacks all his life, and glorified them in his work. Brooks, Gwendolyn, (Oct. 12, 1986). "The Darker Brother". The New York Times

10. Langston Hughes Reads his poetry with commentary, audiotape from Caedmon Audio


12. Langston Hughes, The Big Sea (1940), pp.54-56

13. James Hughes, a wealthy lawyer and landowner and himself a black man, hated both the racism of the North and Negroes, whom he portrayed in crude racial caricature. Smith, Dinitia (Nov. 26, 1997). Child’s Tale About Race Has a Tale of Its Own. The New York Times

14. And the father, Hughes said, "hated Negroes. I think he hated himself, too, for being a Negro. He disliked all of his family because they were Negroes." James Hughes was tightfisted, uncharitable, cold. Brooks, Gwendolyn, (Oct. 12, 1986). The Darker Brother. The New York Times

15. Rampersad. vol.1, 1986, p.56

16. Poem or To. F.S. first appeared in The Crisis in May 1925, and was reprinted in The Weary Blues and The Dream Keeper. Hughes never publicly identified F.S., but it is conjectured he was Ferdinand Smith, a merchant seaman whom the poet first met in New York in the early 1920s. Nine years older than Hughes, Smith first influenced the poet to go to sea. Born in Jamaica in 1893, Smith spent most of his life as a ship steward and political activist at sea--and later in New York as a resident of Harlem. Smith was deported back to Jamaica for alleged Communist activities and illegal alien status in 1951. Hughes corresponded with Smith up until 1961, when Smith died. Berry, p.347

17. In 1926, a patron of Hughes, Amy Spingarn, wife of Joel Elias Spingarn, provided the funds ($300) for him to attend Lincoln University. Rampersad. vol.1, 1986,p.122-23

18. In November 1927, Charlotte Osgood Mason, ("Godmother" as she liked to be called), became Hughes' major patron. Rampersad. vol.1,1986,p.156


20. Yale Symposium, Was Langston Gay? commemorating the 100th birthday of Hughes in 2002

21. Schwarz, pp.68-88

22. Although Hughes was extremely closeted, some of his poems hint at his homosexuality. These include: Joy, Desire, Cafe: 3 A.M., Waterfront Streets, Young Sailor, Trumpet Player, Tell Me, F.S. and some poems in Montage of a Dream Deferred. Langston Hughes page[1] Retrieved January 10, 2007

23. ..Cafe 3 A.M. was against gay bashing by police, and Poem for F.S. which was about his friend Ferdinand Smith. Nero, Charles I. (1999), p.500
24. Jean Blackwell Hutson, former chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, said, “He was always eluding marriage. He said marriage and career didn’t work.....It wasn’t until his later years that I became convinced he was homosexual.” Hutson & Nelson. *Essence magazine*, February 1992. p.96
25. "Though there were infrequent and half-hearted affairs with women, most people considered Hughes asexual, insistent on a skittish, carefree 'innocence.' In fact, he was a closeted homosexual...." McClatchy, J.D. (2002). *Langston Hughes: Voice of the Poet*. New York: Random House Audio, p.12
27. "Referring to men of African descent, Rampersad writes "...Hughes found some young men, especially dark-skinned men, appealing and sexually fascinating. (Both in his various artistic representations, in fiction especially, and in his life, he appears to have found young white men of little sexual appeal.) Virile young men of very dark complexion fascinated him." Rampersad, vol.2,1988,p.336
28. Sandra West explicitly states: Hughes’ "apparent love for black men as evidenced through a series of unpublished poems he wrote to a black male lover named 'Beauty'." West,2003. p.162
31. Hughes "disdained the rigid class and color differences the 'best people' drew between themselves and Afro-Americans of darker complexion, of smaller means and lesser formal education. Berry, 1983 & 1992, p.60
32. "...but his tastes and selectivity were not always accurate, and pressures to survive as a black writer in a white society (and it was a miracle that he did for so long) extracted an enormous creative toll. Nevertheless, Hughes, more than any other black poet or writer, recorded faithfully the nuances of black life and its frustrations." Patterson, Lindsay (June 29, 1969). *Langston Hughes--The Most Abused Poet in America? The New York Times*
36. West. 2003, p.162

38. Rampersad.vol.2, 1988, p.297

39. Rampersad.vol.1, 1986, p. 91

40. Mercer Cook, African American scholar of French culture: "His (Langston Hughes) work had a lot to do with the famous concept of Négritude, of black soul and feeling, that they were beginning to develop." Rampersad.vol.1, 1986, p. 343

41. Rampersad.vol.1, 1986, p. 343

42. Charlotte Mason generously supported him (Hughes) for two years. She supervised the writing of his first novel, Not Without Laughter (1930). Her patronage of Hughes ended about the time the novel appeared. Rampersad. Langston Hughes. In The Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature, 2001, p.207

43. Noel Sullivan, after working out an agreement with Hughes, became a patron for him in 1933. Rampersad. vol.1, 1986, p.277

44. Sullivan provided Hughes with the opportunity to complete the The Ways of White Folks (1934) in Carmel, California. Hughes stayed a year in a cottage Sullivan provided for him to work in. Rampersad. Langston Hughes. In The Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature, 2001, p.207


47. Gwendolyn Brooks, who met Hughes when she was 16 says, "I met Langston Hughes when I was 16 years old, and saw enough of him in subsequent years to observe that, when subjected to offense and icy treatment because of his race, he was capable of jagged anger--and vengeance, instant or retroactive. And I have letters from him that reveal he could respond with real rage when he felt he was treated cruelly by other people. Brooks, Gwendolyn, (Oct. 12, 1986). The Darker Brother. The New York Times


50. Langston’s misgivings about the new black writing mainly concerned its emphasis on black criminality and on profanity. Rampersad, vol.2,p.207

51. Hughes said, "There are millions of blacks who never murder anyone, or rape or get raped or want to rape, who never lust after white bodies, or cringe before white stupidity, or Uncle Tom, or go crazy with race, or off-balance with frustration." Rampersad, p.119, vol.2
52. Langston eagerly looked to the day when the gifted young writers of his race would go beyond the clamor of civil rights and integration and take a genuine pride in being black...he found this latter quality starkly absent in even the best of them...Rampersad, vol. 2, p.310
54. "As for whites in general, Hughes did not like them...He felt he had been exploited and humiliated by them." Rampersad, 1988, vol.2,p.338
55. Hughes's advice on how to deal with racists was "'Always be polite to them...be over-polite. Kill them with kindness.' But, he insisted on recognizing that all whites are not racist, and definitely enjoyed the company of those who sought him out in friendship and with respect." Rampersad, 1988,vol.2,p.368
57. http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A32779164
60. *A New Song*: The end of the poem was substantially changed when it was included in *A New Song* (New York: International Workers Order, 1938). The first version, in *Opportunity* (Jan. 1933), p. 123, and *Crisis* (March 1933), p.59. reads after line 39:

    New words are formed,  
    Bitter  
    With the past 
    And sweet  
    with the dream. 
    Tense, silent, 
    Without a sound. 
    They fall unuttered-- 
    Yet heard everywhere:  
    *Take care!* 
    Black world 
    Against the wall, 
    Open your eyes-- 
    *The long white snake of greed has struck to kill!* 
    Be wary and 
    Be wise! 
    Before 
    The darker world 
    The future lies.

61. Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives
63. Irma Cayton, African American, said "He had told me that it wasn't our war, it wasn't our business, there was too much Jim Crow. But he had changed his mind about all that." Rampersad, 1988, vol.2, p.85
65. IMDb Retrieved November 4, 2006