

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

N° :.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**Shaping the African American Dream through
Langston Hughes' Poems " I Too" and *Let
America Be America Again***

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Master Degree**

Prepared by: Samia FEREDJ and Soumia CHADDADI

Academic Year : 2016/2017

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Miss BERKANI Souad	University of M'SILA	Chairperson
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Academic Year : 2016/2017

Declaration

We hereby solemnly declare that the work we are going to present in this thesis; **Shaping the African American Dream through Langston Hughes' Poems "I Too" and *Let America Be America Again***, is our own and to the limits of our knowledge has not been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree and all sources that we have used and quoted from have been indicated by means of complete references. This work is to be carried out and completed at Mohamed Boudiaf M'sila, Algeria.

Name and Signature:

CHADDADI Soumia

FEREDJ Samia

Dedication

First and foremost, we thank Allah for his guidance, we dedicate this work to our families for their patience and help. To all our teachers from the beginning of our study until now, who enlightened our path by the knowledge and experience they presented and finally to all the friends who share with us happy moments at the university and outside.

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We are also thankful to all our teachers at the department of English and the members of the jury, Mr. Berbech and Miss Berkani. We extend special thanks to all the students and teachers who helped us to collect much of the data. Without their help and participation this study could not have been done.

Abstract

This dissertation is intended to examine the concept of the American Dream which is prevalent in the body of Langston Hughes poetry. It analyses the historical background about the relationship between the American Dream and the African American Dream. Moreover, this study attempts to analyze Hughes two poems " I Too" and " Let America Be America Again" focusing on the different issues that faced African American people when fighting to fulfill the American Dream; racism and inequality that divided the American society . In order to answer the research questions of this project, a New Historical approach in addition to Critical Race Theory are to be used. The results of this study show that Hughes is a representative of the twentieth century America as well as a brave spokesman of his African American culture. As a poet, Langston Hughes succeeded in shaping the African American Dream. This research however, attempts to prove that Hughes hope is to change America to the best and to revive the promised glories of liberty, life and the pursuit of happiness guaranteed by the American Dream.

Key words

The American Dream, Identity, Equality, Racism

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Introduction

Introduction

Throughout history, America was considered as the land of freedom, equality and the land of achieving individual's dream, therefore, the concept of the American Dream has been introduced to describe it. This notion had attracted and encouraged people from all over the world to migrate to this new world that would help them to make their dreams of freedom and equal rights come true. After that, America became a Melting Pot with the coming of these new groups who brought with them their own traditions and cultures. Now, no other place in the world has such vast and diverse population than America.

The Afro-Americans, the largest minority in America, were brought by force to America as slaves from their hometowns to work in the whites' plantations. They were known by different terms, including Colored and Negro which were no longer accepted in English language because they were seen as detrimental words. Thus recently, scholars and professors use the concept of African Americans instead.

Those blacks however, faced many hardships of segregation and racism within the American society many centuries. Gradually, their dream or appeal became very simple which was being part of the American identity. They did not ask for more rights because of the harsh reality of the American Dream, that was for them a myth which would never be realized.

During the Civil War, the African Americans fought to obtain their freedom because they were still considered as a property in the south. A lot of them lost their lives for the sake of equality. By the end of the Civil War, racism was not over yet, it spread more and more especially with the drafting of the Jim Crow laws that created divisions within the American society and segregated the blacks.

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It was due to literature that those blacks dare to raise their voices calling for freedom and equal opportunities just like their white counterparts who were living in good conditions .From 1920s to 1940s, the Harlem Renaissance literature was flourishing with an African American creativity. It reflected the difficulties and the discrimination African Americans faced with a great advance in their art, music, and literature. The black gifted writers of that era declared their freedom to explore their identities as black Americans and to celebrate their black culture too .

Langston Hughes was one of the main figures of this artistic movement, his poetry however, expressed the hard experience and oppression felt by the African Americans. He believed that one day those blacks would rich out their dreams despite the racism and inequality they are facing.

The result of this study is expected to contribute to the development of literary study by giving a useful reference for those who are interested in Langston Hughes poetry. This study is intended to give a review about the American Dream, the social and political problems that faced the afro-Americans during different times(from 17thC to 20th C), such as slavery, racial segregation, and the black's struggle over the American identity as portrayed in Hughes poems in addition to his contribution in shaping the African American dream.

Many current studies have been carried out in this field, which have a relation with the present research topic. Lilis Lestari Wilujeng ,in his book, *Langston Hughes's Poems Manifesting Racial Protest*, intended to examine how the poems of Langston Hughes reflect the reality of racial segregation faced by the African Americans before and during Harlem Renaissance. He illustrated how the discrimination practiced by the Americans was seen as a shameful conduct of humanity because of its bad effects on their psychological status.

In a recent research about the Harlem Renaissance poetry, Jean Wagner's *Black Poets of the United States* analyzes social, political and psychological backgrounds of the Harlem

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Renaissance and examines the interrelationship of religious and racial feeling in the poets. He noticed that those poets were divided into two groups: a group which used some form of religion as a tool to describe the black poets' problems in America (Cullen, Toomer, McKay) whereas the other group (Johnson, Sterling Brown, Hughes) opposed the first group and excluded religion, it wanted to defend the black race as a whole.

Added to Wagner's review, The critic Donald B. Gibson in his introduction to *Modern Black Poets*, asserted that Langston Hughes is different from the other black poets, he noted that his poetry is addressed to the black people specifically, his language and themes are clear and familiar to anyone who can read.

As seen in *Socialist Joy in the Writing of Langston Hughes*, Jonathan Scott investigated the creative and intellectual method of Hughes and its relation to social activism. In addition, he examined his involvement in the socialist movements of the 1920s and 1930s.

More than that, Št pán Bo ek conducted a study on *Racial issues in Langston Hughes poetry*, in which he concentrated on issues that the afro-American had to face (racial segregation) during the slavery and the Jim Crow era. He reflected their position in the American society and analyzed Hughes poems in order to determine his opinion towards racial segregation.

Another thesis entitled the Poetic *Theory and Practice of Langston Hughes* done by Philip M. Royster also has tackled and portrayed the relationship existing between Langston Hughes' theoretical statements concerning writing poetry and his actual practice of the craft as a poet.

The works cited so far discuss and evaluate Langston Hughes poetry, its main themes, and its Impact on the African American people. The present work, however, will examine the

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contribution of Langston Hughes to depict and shape the dream of the blacks to be part of the American nation.

Langston Hughes was one of the most important poets of the twentieth century and Harlem Renaissance era, an African American critic of racism and segregationist policies. Through his poetry, he spoke to the black people while still making a living from his writing. This study, therefore, will explore the role of Langston Hughes in shaping the African American Dream. It will equally deal with the following questions of how did Harlem Renaissance reflect the black American experience as slaves? And to what extent does Langston Hughes poems “I Too Sing America” and *Let America Be America Again* contribute to shape the African American dream?.

The proposed approach in this case is the New Historicism theory that studies and relates the poems of Langston Hughes to their socio-historical context, besides the Critical Race Theory (CRT) that intends to detect the struggles of racism and injustice that African American people went through to maintain their identity and to achieve the American Dream. Added to the use of Langston Hughes two poems “I Too Sing America” and *Let America Be America Again* as primary sources, other secondary sources that could serve this study are gathered either from libraries or internet.

Thus, this work will be divided into two main chapters; the first chapter would be devoted to the theoretical framework of this study including the New Historicism and the Critical Race theories, historical and social backgrounds of the slavery and the Jim Crow Laws periods, shedding light on Langston Hughes as the well-known poet of Harlem Renaissance and discussing precisely his position as a human rights defender in the American literary canon. However, the second chapter would be a practical one in which the two poems of Hughes “I Too” and *Let America Be America Again* are to be analyzed on account of the two theories stated before.

Chapter one:

A theoretical and Socio-historical Context of The study

To be able to understand the use of African American dream and identity in Hughes' poetry it is necessary to return back to the historical context in which Hughes wrote his poems. This chapter is mainly devoted to investigate the history of the African Americans during the period of the Jim Crow Laws and how they fought to gain equal opportunities as their contemporaries, taking into consideration the promises of the American Dream. The study of this background has three directions.

First, a theoretical context of the study; in which the background and some definitions of New Historicism and Critical Race Theories are provided . The second direction is a socio-historical account of Hughes' poetry; this part will portray the periods of Jim Crow laws and the Harlem Renaissance which pushed Hughes to write prolifically and gave him a chance to be a professional and a well known poet. Also this part is concerned with the American Dream which was regarded as a myth for the blacks.

The third direction however would be a personnel account of Langston Hughes, it sheds light on his life and his career as a defender of human rights, this part shows that Hughes was a socialist writer whose works were almost in touch with the daily lives of all the minorities especially the black Americans .Hughes depicted the problems of racism and inequality that made the American Dream hard to achieve. In addition to this, the current study provides a sight on his principles and beliefs of the free Afro-American man that shaped his view of America as a democratic nation.

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1.The Theoretical Context of The Study

The theoretical framework demonstrates an understanding of the theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of this research paper, and relates them to broader areas of knowledge being considered. Hence, with the development of science, many definitions emerged to illustrate what a theory means and when it is used.

“Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists”. (Abend. 173–199); (Swanson)

This study focus on using two main theories New Historicism Theory in which the historical context of Langston Hughes’ poems is discussed and the Critical Race Theory is applied as a result of being a race-based work.

1-1.New Historicism Theory

New Historicism is considered as a super influential school. The fact of the matter is that the New Historicists transformed the way that literary criticism was done. They made it legit for literary critics to talk about politics, class, power and to take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature. So, the New Historicists aim to do two things: first, they want to study how a work of literature reflects its historical and socio cultural context. Second, they want to understand how a literary work comments on and relates to its context(Sharma 1-10).

No one can speak about New Historicism without stating Greenblatt. His 1980 book, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, is the book that kick-started the New Historicism craze. Greenblatt insisted that we can’t understand English Renaissance writers like William

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Shakespeare and Christopher Marlow without understanding the historical context that shaped them and their work (324-328). Early New Historicists like Greenblatt and Gallagher were inspired by three theorists: Michel Foucault, Clifford Geertz and Raymond Williams.

However, Foucault was a bald, bespectacled French theorist who wrote a lot about “discourse” and all the different things it could mean and ways it was related to power. Clifford Geertz was an anthropologist who spent a lot of time in cool places like Bali, Indonesia studying cockfights (and no doubt also hanging out on the beach). Geertz’s big idea was that culture should be analyzed like a text, and Raymond Williams was a Marxist critic who was one of the first to look really closely at the relationship between literature and broader socio-economic issues like class and politics. According to New historicism theory, this study have to relate and analyze the literary texts of Langston Hughes with historical and cultural consciousness.

1.2 The Critical race theory (CRT)

As this study is about a race- based work, no one can ignore the CRT theory as an essential guide to work with. *The New York Amsterdam News* argued that “A fundamental reference guide to any serious work on race.” Besides, Toni Morrison confirmed : “As of the publication of *Critical Race Theory* it will be unwise, if not impossible, to do any serious work on race without referencing this splendid collection.”Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework in the social sciences focused upon the application of critical theory, a critical examination of society and culture, to the intersection of race, law, and power.

Moreover, Critical Race Theory began as a theoretical movement within US law schools in the mid- to late 1980s as a reaction to critical legal studies and is loosely unified by two common themes. First, it proposes that white supremacy and racial power are maintained over time, and in particular, that the law may play a role in this process. Second, CRT work

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has investigated the possibility of transforming the relationship between law and racial power, and more broadly, pursues a project of achieving racial emancipation and anti-subordination.

2. The Socio-historical context of the study

Socio-historical context (SHC) relates to and involves social history or a combination of social and historical factors and the circumstances during the time leading up to and surrounding any event .

2.1 Segregation Era and Jim Crow Laws.

For more than a century after the Civil War, a system of laws and practices denied full freedom and citizenship to African Americans, segregating nearly all aspects of public life. In the wake of Reconstruction, southern state governments enacted Jim Crow laws, which segregated virtually all public spaces.

Following the Civil War, whites denied African Americans their dreams of owning land and obtaining their political and civil rights. Whites subjected blacks to disfranchisement and segregation enforced by law, as well as lynchings, beatings and burnings. African Americans responded by creating opportunities for themselves — politically, economically and educationally.

Jim Crow, or segregation, laws of the late 19th and early 20th centuries effectively divided the American South into black and white in almost every aspect of public life. Here are some examples of segregation policies in the South:

“ In South Carolina, a code required that black and white workers in textile factories labor in different rooms, using different water fountains and toilets as well as different stairways and pay windows. In Atlanta, an ordinance banned amateur baseball games within two blocks of each other if the players were of different races. In New Orleans, ferries and public libraries

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were segregated. For a time, public education for African American children was eliminated past the fifth grade. On streetcars, there was a movable screen that black riders had to sit behind".(Digital History Online)

2.2 Harlem Renaissance.

When considering essential movements in American poetry, no conversation would be complete without a discussion of the Harlem Renaissance. With a lyricism seated in the popular blues and jazz music of the time, an awareness of black life in America, its assertion of an independent African American identity, and its innovation in form and structure, the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance is unmistakable.

Though the exact dates of the movement are debatable, most consider its beginnings to be rooted in the end of the Reconstruction era, when legal segregation made living conditions for African Americans in the South unbearable. The lack of economic opportunities, and, more importantly, the prevalence of prejudice, lynching, and segregation in public spaces all contributed to the intolerable conditions of African Americans.

When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, jobs previously held by white males suddenly became available, and industrial expansion in the North provided opportunities for African Americans to seek a new lifestyle. They settled in various northern cities during this Great Migration, though New York City was the most popular, particularly the district of Harlem.

African Americans of all social classes joined together in Harlem, which became the focal point of a growing interest in African American culture: jazz, blues, dance, theater, art, fiction, and poetry. Harlem and New York also became the home of many seminal African American institutions, like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,

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the National Urban League, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Crisis*, and more.

The Harlem Renaissance ushered in a time of many renewed firsts for African Americans in publishing: Langston Hughes, a central figure of the movement, published his first poem, "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*," in the June 1921 of *The Crisis*; two years later, Jean Toomer's *Cane* was the first book of fiction (though it is more accurate to deem it a hybrid text, as it also contains dramatic dialogue and poetry) by an African American writer to appear from a New York publisher since Charles Chestnutt's *The Colonel's Dream* (Doubleday, Page, 1905); and Countee Cullen's first poetry collection, *Color* (Harper & Brothers, 1925), was the first book of poetry written by an African American to be published by a major American publisher since Dodd, Mead published Paul Laurence Dunbar.

The most well-known poet in the history of black-American literature, Hughes wrote novels, plays and short stories, but it is his emotional, heartfelt poems that expressed the common experiences of the culture of black people for which he is most remembered. His poems captured their suffering as well as their laughter. His literary works helped shape American literature and politics. Hughes, like others active in the Harlem Renaissance, had a strong sense of racial pride. By his works he promoted equality, condemned racism and injustice, and celebrated African American culture, humor, and spirituality.

3. Langston Hughes: A Defender of Human Rights

In the early times, the pilgrims came to America primarily seeking religious and political freedom, escaping the tyranny of the church. They planned to establish a peaceful relationship with the natives in order to survive initiating the principles of liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness, that would govern their way of living. However, for the African American minority, the freedom's premise, developed by the founding fathers in the

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Declaration of Independence, did not touch them, it concerned only the whites who took everything from the natives, their lands, their freedom and even their dreams.

Without a doubt, Langston Hughes was one the most popular names in the history of American poetry and a leading figure in Harlem renaissance which was an African American artistic movement that celebrated black culture. A poet, novelist, playwright, and story writer, Hughes is said to be “the poet laureate of Harlem” (Van Vechten).His creativity started during his life in Harlem ,New York city, when he published a variety of genres including poetry, essays, autobiographies, novels, plays, and short stories. Hughes was innovative in that he integrated jazz and blues rhythms into his poetry and used vernacular to celebrate the African heritage and culture unlike other poets of his time who were engaged in the traditional forms of literature.

Langston Hughes was born on February 01,1902 in Joplin, Missouri, the son of Caroline Mercer Langston, a school teacher and James Nathaniel Hughes. His father wished to become a lawyer but he could not because he was black and that what led him to become an abolitionist later (Rummel.10).He divorced his mother and traveled to Cuba and Mexico escaping the brutality of racism practiced in the United States of America. When his mother also left him later searching for a job, young Langston Hughes was raised in Lawrence, Kansas, by his grandmother, Mary Patterson Langston, who taught him the oral traditions of black Americans and embedded in him the sense of racial pride.

In his writings, for instance, he wrote about his sadness, loneliness, while living with his poor grandmother, and feeling of rejection especially after the separation of his parents . To overcome these feelings, he found company and entertainment in the world of books which fuelled his desire to be a writer for his people. He became a frequent visitor to Lawrence library. “The silence...the big chairs, and long tables, and the fact that the library was always

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there and did not have... any sort of insecurity about it- all made me love it,” Langston said. He added: “ I believed in books more than people.”(46)

Subsequently, in 1909, Langston Hughes attended a white elementary school in Kansas despite the Jim Crow Laws restrictions on the blacks. He suffered a lot in this school because of his color, his teacher was usually mocking at him by her bad comments and humiliating him in front of his colleagues, she pushed him to seat at the end of the last row, in The Jim Crow row as he described it, although all the students were managed to seat in an alphabetic order. Few of Langston’s classmates defended and supported him, their love and generosity made him feel that people could be tolerant and kind regardless of their color of skin. (Boyd Jones.10).

Hughes' writing talent was discovered by his teachers of high school. Because of his talent of writing poetry, he was elected as the class poet. Hughes was introduced to great poets such as Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg who influenced his earlier works. When Hughes graduated from high school, he went to Mexico to convince his father to support his education at Columbia university but he refused, because he wanted Hughes to study engineering but later they arrived to a compromise.

In 1921, Hughes attended Columbia university in New York to study engineering but this did not last longer as soon as he left it in the following year because of racial prejudice. Though he left his studies, Hughes continued to write. While traveling alone on his way to Mexico where his father was living, he wrote his first poem "The Negro Speaks Of Rivers" and he was just 19 years old, which was collected later in his first volume of poetry ,The Weary Blues,1926.He worked in different jobs and travelled to several countries in Europe, Asia and Africa in a long-term voyage.

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Moreover, he received a scholarship to Lincoln university in 1925, Pennsylvania. He published many poems and articles in the Crisis; a magazine for the voice of the blacks founded by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1910, in addition to his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, which was somehow criticized for its characters. In 1934, he published *The Ways of White Folks*, his first collection of stories and a play, *Mulatto*, beside other works which made him a well-known writer in the history of the African American literature.

Hughes was considered and accepted by people all over the world, especially the blacks, as one of their best fluent spokesperson during his time. He has written many collections of poetry, nine books for children, six novels, two autobiographies, short stories, plays, essays, and operas. Almost all this works tackled racial and polemic themes and championed the black rights depicting the people's lives of his race in a realistic way. Through his creation of the "Negro Literature", which became a central part of the Harlem Renaissance, he was able to satisfy both the white and the negro audience's general needs of 1920's and 30's. Hughes called for the blacks' engagement in the American politics opposing all sorts of segregation and racism.

Despite his abundant production in other genres, Hughes was known mostly for his poetry. His writings were influential during Harlem Renaissance alongside other writers such as Countee Cullen, Zola Neal Hurston, Richard Bruce Nugent, and Aaron Douglas who altogether built their own lived magazine of "Fire". "The Hughes who comes across in these pages is a true poet of the people. Rooted in the black experience, his poems are driven by the same democratic urge that inspired Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and William Carlos Williams." Philadelphia Inquirer.

However, Hughes stated that he wrote "to explain and illuminate the Negro conditions in America" (Rampersad. 417) condemning racism and inequities against his people. He worked

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as a human rights defender trying to reveal the sorrowful emotions of his people who suffered from separation and isolation and called for the collaboration among all races. He added: “by taking my poetry, to my people. After all, I wrote about Negroes, and primarily for Negroes”(72).

Furthermore, Hughes noticed that whites in Hollywood were producing American movies that aimed to spread a negative image about the blacks as being inhuman and racist. Hughes described them as “crocodile art” evoking “crocodile tears” to trick people. Deploying such stereotypes would satisfy their feelings of superiority over the blacks (C.Tracy 77).

Ultimately, Hughes died on may 22,1967 in New York city because of a prostate cancer operation but he remained one of the most beloved and influential writers in America. He celebrated the African American culture and racial consciousness in his works, he captured the voices and experiences of the blacks and their attitudes towards the American Dream.

2.1 Langston Hughes, A believer in the American Dream

The concept of “The American Dream” has become an integral part of the American identity. Many Americans believed that to have a good life, one must work hard and think positively in order to achieve his dreams. James Truslaw Adams, in his book *The Epic of America*, defined The American Dream as: “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone with opportunity for each according ability or achievement”(410).According to him, everyone living in the American nation and working hard to achieve self-realization has equal opportunities and rights, no matter what is his race or color, all people are equal as stated by the founding fathers in the declaration of independence.

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As noted earlier, the origin of the “American Dream” is dated back to the puritans, who first came to New England in 1630 with a dream. In their homeland, they did not accept the practice of religion by the Anglican church the reason that made them leave England in a mission to build their own new lives in the new world and to ensure a better future for their children. This was the focus of the first American Dream. The puritans hoped that this New World would be a good image of the Old World. The American Dream meaning changed through time from freedom and equality to material happiness, i.e., as much one works hard, the more he would own money.

Parallel to the whites, African Americans too wished to have a better life, their dream was to live as they wanted and no one would intervene in their lives. Those blacks were brought to America as slaves at the 17th century and were considered as a second class citizens, suffering from oppression and discrimination, then they became poor workers. Slavery changed the American Dream to a nightmare for the blacks. Despite the rights that were given by the Declaration of Independence, the blacks were excluded and eliminated because of the color of their skin, and were not considered as part of the American Dream.

During the civil rights movement in the 1960’s , a lot of black voices were raised speaking on behalf of the African Americans. Martin Luther king. Jr for example, talked about his hopes in his speech “The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness 1960, he spoke about the dream of equality for people of all skin colors and races as promised in the Declaration of Independence excluding those acts of discrimination and suppression. He noticed that not only the laws would ensure equality for all people of different backgrounds but they need also to change their ways of thinking, He stated:

“I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream - a dream

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yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man's skin determines.”(507)

Langston Hughes and other writers simultaneously placed emphasis on race relations in America and the obstacles African Americans faced to achieve the American Dream. His poetry comes to describe The Jim Crow laws when it reached its peak of racism and discrimination. During this era, African Americans living in the south were segregated, treated unfairly, and suffered greatly. Although slavery was ended by the civil war, racism did not disappear yet, it spread gradually and took strong holds in the American society.

In contrast, the blacks were not allowed to sit with whites in the same theatre, restaurant, hotel, hospital or any other public service. These discriminatory laws were even applied on black children who were prevented from attending the same schools that the white children attend, they were not even considered as American citizens. Through these practices, the rights guaranteed after the civil war were violated, African Americans' rights of equality and justice were denied, and became for them a Dream that was far away and hard to achieve.

Hughes recognized that not all the American people enjoy the same opportunities of life in the so called nation of unlimited possibilities. All these struggles, ethnic discrimination and dreams of the blacks push Hughes to write and defend them. In his poems, he rejected racism, celebrated racial pride, and depicted the expectations and the dreams of the African American people. What made Langston Hughes different from other poets is that he was proud of being both an African American and an American citizen. He discussed the theme of the dream in his poem of “Dream Deferred”:

What happens to a dream deferred

Does it dry up

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Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore-
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over-
Like a syrupy sweet?(Hughes.1-8)

Hughes in this poem seems to wonder what would happen to one's dreams and wishes if they were ignored and put aside. He wanted society to consider the disappointment that may happen to human beings when denying their right of dreaming. He is trying to say that dreams can generate hope in times of bleakness. Hughes regularly shows that because of discrimination and inequality, the dreams of the African Americans have been deferred as he showed the bad results of their deferment.

In his view, dreams can be postponed but can not be stopped. He urged and encouraged people to be united in order to achieve their dreams. In the poem of "Dream of Freedom";however, Hughes asserts that through collective efforts, a dream that is postponed may be realized. In other words, he meant here freedom as a dream that could motivate people to fight and continue their march (Wei). In stanza three and four ,He wrote:

Unless shared in common
Like sunlight and like air,
The dream will die for lack
Of substance anywhere.
The dream knows no frontier or tongue,
The dream no class no race
The dream cannot be kept secure
In any one locked place (Hughes9-16).

2.2 Langston Hughes' Position in American Literature

Like Walt Whitman before him, Langston Hughes was considered by many scholars a poet of the people, because his poems picture the daily life struggles of the common people either men or women. His popularity among the black writers varied as his reputation increased worldwide. Unlike the other well known writers of both races, Hughes wrote about and for the welfare of his society. Therefore, he is still remembered as one of the greatest poets and a ground-breaking voice in the literature of America whose impact has got much attention of every common man. By the time of his death, many universities and institutions had ennobled him for his great achievements as a guiding flame of the black literature around the world.

Certainly, Langston Hughes began his career as a writer and poet during the Harlem Renaissance. His poetry is different, it was almost musical with a distinct rhythm and included the blacks' colloquial language. Hughes used literature to introduce the African American heritage to the world and to make people accept their racial identity and their culture. He has played an important role in the American literary canon as a political and cultural spokesman of the blacks in the twentieth century. By using simple words and expressive images, Hughes depicted America as very different from what readers used to know: a land of dreams and equality for every color. He inspired the readers to believe in a nation that supported equality as a universal human right and served also as an influential voice for the poor and downtrodden people.

Furthermore, Hughes spoke passionately for the America that he believed in, an America that many writers and even readers denied its existence, an America that ensured equality for all and its harvest is shared among all. Hughes spoke out against injustice and

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gave solutions to face and overcome these practices of discrimination. He described honestly the world into which he was born and where he spent his childhood, that which was prevailed by racial discrimination. He believed that the black was also beautiful as the white and they must be in parallel, putting into consideration that America is a melting pot and consists of many different heritages and cultures, each of which represents a great civilization. Thus, they must be proud of their race. (Rummel. 94-95)

Hughes was one of the most controversial poets of American literature. Throughout his career, he received mixed responses to his works. For African American critics, he is considered as their poet laureate and the most beloved writer of the poems that revealed the richness of the black culture and showed his affection for the African American people. To many readers who celebrate political and social equality, Hughes was considered as the most fluent American voice to describe the different problems caused by injustice and inequities. For other admirers, his poetry is such a touching lyric beauty far from the issues of race and segregation (Rampersad, 3); (Presley 380-86).

Initially, Critic Lindsay Patterson has portrayed Hughes as an honest and a faithful writer who best represented his people. He stated that: “Hughes more than any other black poet or writer recorded faithfully the nuances of black life and its frustration.”(Rummel and Wagner 94).Even after the death of Hughes, his works were still produced. Langston Hughes Reads and Talks About His Poetry for example, his spoken album which was released three years after, pushed the critic Clayton Riley to describe the ambitious and resilient Hughes who did not loose hope even after all what he and his race have suffered and endured. He wrote in New York Times:

“His poetry celebrated survival and endurance, those central ingredients of our experience; and he couched them in humor and irony, a frequently subtle but abiding passion, and finally, a certain sad awareness regarding the

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impossibility of being Hughes, the Black man, and Hughes, the American.”(Rummel. 94)

Then, Donald B. Gibson noticed the difference between Langston Hughes and the other poets of his time, declaring that Hughes spoke for his people, he wrote in his introduction to *Modern Black Poets*, “Hughes differed from most of his predecessors among black poets, and (until recently) from those who followed him as well, in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people.”(7)

In addition to being the best known and the most read poet who was largely praised, Hughes was also the most criticized poet either by the whites or the blacks. His second collection of poetry, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* for example, was a successful work for the white mainstream critics, but it was criticized by his black peers for his excessive focus on the dark side of the Negro life, depicting them as drunkards and prostitutes, he was accused of disseminating negative racial stereotypes of the blacks and considered the subject matter of his writings out of date.

On his side, Hughes responded to his critics that he strongly refuses to portray the higher selves of the people because he believed that the blacks had suffered a lot and passed through different stages to enhance their way of living. He found that some writers, James Baldwin as an example, sometimes vulgar lacking such racial pride.(Leach.39)

In conclusion, despite all these critics, Hughes’ position in American literature is still secure. He revealed to the black writers, such as Alice Walker and Amiri Baraka, the importance of fighting to get their racial freedom. Hughes made himself a permanent figure of the American literature, who earned his living from his writings, he wrote in his autobiography *I Wonder As I Wander* , 1964: “to make a living from the kind of writing I wanted to do. . . I wanted to write seriously and as well as I knew how about the Negro

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people, and make that kind of writing earn for me a living.” (Hughes.5). To do that, he produced works of different genres but he is best known for his poetry, when stating Hughes’ name, what comes to the minds of his readers is his poetry.

Shaping the African American Dream through Hughes' Poems of "I Too" and Let America Be America Again

Chapter two:

Shaping the African American Dream through Langston Hughes' Poems "I Too" and *Let America Be America Again*

At the outset, there is a need to emphasize the fact that Langston Hughes is truly a representative of the African American literature and heritage. He reflects all the events and circumstances that characterized the nineteenth century America. Hughes' poetry discussed the situation of the American people without exception of color or race and served as an influential voice for their rights.

Hughes' desire was to implement and bring to light the African American traditions and culture. His beliefs and hopes about changing America make him one of the America's greatest poets. The current chapter for instance, attempts at analyzing the concept of the American Dream and how it was perceived by the minorities especially the blacks.

The chapter focuses on the analysis of Hughes' two poems; "I Too" and *Let America Be America Again*, it is mainly divided into two parts: the first part deals with the poet's depiction of the African American man in the American society who was segregated and denied his right of the American citizenship. "I Too" serves as a response to Whitman's "I Hear America Singing" which demonstrates America as a unique mother of democracy.

Whereas the other part examines the reality of the American Dream that was considered by many as a big lie. Hughes in the poem of "Let America Be America Again" is calling for a

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new America that is based on the founding fathers' values of democracy, justice and freedom among all the races.

1. "I, Too Sing America" by Langston Hughes

Hughes wrote 'I, Too Sing America' in 1932. Historically, African Americans have been oppressed in America. In this era, there was strong racism in most of the country; many African-Americans lived in poverty and were beaten and abused. There was still a legal segregation of Blacks and Whites, and many Whites looked at Blacks as not being a part of America. Because of this, the feeling of freedom was limited in the Black community.

The poem "I, Too" is also known as "I, Too, Sing America," and was initially titled "Epilogue" when it appeared in *The Weary Blues*, the 1926 volume of Langston Hughes's poetry. It has been anthologized repeatedly and scholars have written about it many times. It is written in free verse and features short lines and simple language.

In this poem, Hughes creates the argument that although he is Black, he is still just as American as any other. The poem begins with the speaker being asked to leave the room: 'they send me to the kitchen / when company comes. The opening statement creates a setting common at the time: a Black individual working in a White household. This creates the feeling of division, oppression, and even discouragement.

But then he immediately says, But I laugh / and eat well / And grow strong. He does not let the actions of Whites create hatred for himself or his race. He does not allow himself to feel inferior or weak. Instead, he argues that he is growing stronger, that these moments create an urgency and a desire to be more than what America is allowing.

Shaping the African American Dream through Hughes' Poems of "I Too" and Let America Be America Again

1.1 Identity in "I, Too Sing America"

Hughes wrote "I, Too" from the perspective of an African American man either a slave, a free man in the Jim Crow South, or even a domestic servant. The lack of a concrete identity or historical context does not mitigate the poem's message; in fact, it confers on it a high degree of universality, for the situation Hughes describes in the poem reflects a common experience for many African Americans during his time.

Hughes begins by declaring that he too can "sing America" meaning that he is claiming his right to feel patriotic towards America, even though he is the "darker" brother who cannot sit at the table and must eat in the kitchen. This alludes to the common practice of racial segregation during the early 20th century, when African Americans faced discrimination in nearly every aspect of their lives. They were forced to live, work, eat and travel separately from their white counterparts, had few civil or legal rights, were often victims of racial violence, and faced economic marginalization in both the North and the South. One critic identifies the opening lines of the poem as illustrative of W.E.B. Du Bois's theory of "double consciousness":

The poet does not languish in despair, however. He proclaims that "tomorrow" he will join the others at the table and no one will dare send him back to the kitchen. Not only that, but the "others" will see "how beautiful" the speaker is and will therefore feel ashamed. This statement is extremely hopeful and optimistic. The poet demonstrates a heightened sense of self and proclaims his ambition to assert his legitimacy as a an American citizen and as a man.

Racial identity for Hughes is the key reason of discrimination but at the same time, he considered it as a source of spiritual pride. Unlike other writers who have repudiated their identity for the sake of earning fame and money, Hughes blames those poets " who would

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surrender racial pride in the name of a false integration"(Nicholas. 102). Hughes believes that identity is the most valuable thing for people that distinguishes them from the other abused (*Langston Hughes' Identity.2012*).

1.2 Langston Hughes echoes Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman (1816-1892) was a prominent poet during the 19th century. Walt Whitman's poem "I Hear America Singing" was one of the poems in his compilation book *Leaves of Grass*, which was published in July of 1855. This poem celebrates the hard-working blue-collar citizens of America.

When Whitman wrote "I Hear America Singing," he was writing about the unification of many types of people as Americans, but the problem with this poem was that most immigrants didn't associate with other people and kept to themselves, due to the reasons listed above. Also, not all groups of people were included in this poem because slavery had yet to be abolished in 1855. It was not until 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation that slavery was abolished.

The invocation of America is important, for Hughes is expressing his belief that African Americans are a valuable part of the country's population and that he foresees a racially equal society in the near future. Many critics believe that "I, Too" is an unofficial response to the great poet Walt Whitman's poem, "I Hear America Singing." This is likely given Hughes's expressed affinity for Whitman's work, as well as the similarity between the titles and choice of words. In Whitman's poem, a variety of Americans including a mechanic, carpenter, boatman, and mother sing joyfully about America. Hughes suggests that even though the circumstances are different for African Americans, they also deserve to experience patriotism.

Shaping the African American Dream through Hughes' Poems of "I Too" and Let America Be America Again

Both authors early works revolve around American idealism. While Whitman boldly asserts that America is an ideal nation for everyone, Hughes uses this arguably imagined idealism to fight for the rights of his fellow African Americans. Hughes's earlier work like "I Too" most obviously follows Whitman's poetic style and form because Hughes looked to Whitman as a leader in American poetry and truly believed in his democratic ideals.

2.3 Equality in "I, Too Sing America"

Along with a growing sense of identity as related to race, Hughes developed the wish, and eventually the demand, to be considered equal to others, specifically those others who could boast a white skin and gathered wealth while others starved. The notion of equality encompassed, according to Hughes, not only equality based on race but full equality on all possible grounds. This sentiment did not have as strong a presence in Hughes's early career as the need for an identity did.

In *The Weary Blues* there is very little reference to the wish to be equal. The recognition that African Americans were seen as second-rate citizens is present but Hughes only deals openly with the frustration of being considered less than white people in the very last poem in *The Weary Blues*. The speaker refers to himself as the darker brother who is unworthy of being seen by visitors. The second stanza speaks of hope and determination: Tomorrow, I'll sit at the table When company comes. Nobody'll dare Say to me, Eat in the kitchen . This second stanza shows how Hughes views the future that awaits African Americans. This is further confirmed by the closing line: I, too, am America. As early as 1926 Hughes was determined to be seen as equal and to have all those like him recognized as such.

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"I Too" is a protest poem that describes the injustices of racism against the blacks, it is very influential poem due to its genuine feelings and calls for equality and freedom. Hughes addresses his message clearly; the blacks should be equal and free as whites. He wants to generalize the idea of equality and justice for all people of America (*Words like Freedom. 2011*).

2. *Let America be America Again* by Langston Hughes

Let America Be America Again is a poem written by Langston Hughes in 1935, published in 1936, during the Great Depression and the era of Harlem Renaissance. The poem reveals the thoughts of Hughes about America and how it should be despite the fact that during that time, there was still inequality and racism prevailing. It represents not only the African-Americans, but also the economically disadvantaged, poor whites, red men, native Americans and the other minority groups as well(Dasharathe).

The poem discusses the reality of the American Dream that was never achieved either by the blacks or the other minorities. Besides criticizing injustice existing in America, the poem of Hughes, at last, shows some signs of hope about the existence of the American Dream in the near future (F.Leach 94).

For instance, Hughes in this poem sends a clear message to reveal how the America of his time contradicts the old one which was seen as heaven for those who came to it at the first time, seeking safety and religious freedom and which was supposed to be the land of dreams and opportunities for every one. This new America has neglected and marginalized those dreams and became a place where racism and materialism dominate every aspect of life instead of equality and freedom.

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Furthermore, *Let America be America Again* discusses various themes; most importantly, the failure of the American Dream of peace, equality, liberty and happiness. Hughes uses the American history of racism and persecution as a background to cover up this subject (graduateway.) Another apparent theme is corruption and its effects on the American Dream and the American Ideals . Hughes, at the beginning of his poem, claims that America has never lived up what it was supposed to be because its values with time did not seem to be real.

However, the tone of Hughes in this poem is angry and resentful, he asserted that the ideas of equality and universal liberty have never been true for America, they were just a delusion . This poem is an account of the American Dream that has never occurred, it represents the point of view of the several ethnic groups who came to America with great hopes but at last, none was realized and they became disappointed.

According to Hughes, *Let America be America Again* tackles the different issues that dominated America, portraying the conditions of the American society during that period. Hughes called for an America that it was once formed by the ideals and the values of the founding fathers; the one that it was considered by many people as a myth. The appeal of Hughes through his poem was to recreate a perfect America, a land of dreams that offers the African-Americans and everyone the life and the opportunities they were promised.

2.1 Shaping the African American Dream through Hughes' eyes

It is evident that the narrator is calling for an America that was built up by the glories of equality and liberty, an America of dreams. In the beginning, Hughes provides an idea about the American Dream: a land for pioneers, where "opportunity is real...life is free, and equality is in the air we breathe" (13-14), but later, unknown voice meddles to contrast this

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idea that became an illusion for its people: "There's never been equality for me, Nor freedom is this *"homeland of the free"* (15-16), (The American Illusion 2014).

Hughes used the term "again" because he believes that this new America is no more a great country but a corrupted one. In addition, the sentence in parentheses is more important, "America was never America to me", by using it he alludes to the bitterness of the historical reality of America that does not match the ideal American Dream. He demonstrates his view about America that he does not believe in anymore, and shows that the glories stated above become not real : I am the black man bearing slavery's scars/ I am the red man driven from the land(20-21) (Langston Hughes' *Let America Be America Again*).

The poem contains different contrasting phrases that depict Hughes' ambitious desire for an ideal America against the one that has witnessed racism, inequality and discrimination, as if he is trying to make the reader aware of what surrounds him. Added to The use of dialogue as a literary device which appears at last with the the narrator's questions. At first, Hughes points out that America was a land of oppression and lies, his tone when portraying the cruel reality of it is angry but then turns to be optimistic. This reveals that Hughes is still hopeful and sticks to his dream of making America what was supposed to be (Dasharath).

It is worth noting that the poem of Hughes contains two different speakers; one who believes in the American Dream and who introduced it in a perfect way: Let it be that " great strong land of love"/ Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme (Hughes 7-8), he added: But opportunity is real, and life is free, / Equality is in the air we breathe (Hughes 13-14). Whereas the second speaker fully angry because he has being excluded from the American Dream(villarreal par. 3) . He later recognizes that he was raised in a false America; an America that witnessed poverty instead of happiness, slavery instead of freedom and inequality instead the promise of equal opportunities for all, he asserts:

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"I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak." (Hughes 19-24).

It is important to draw attention that the speaker uses all these identities; poor white, Negro, red man, immigrant, to reflect their experiences of inequality and oppression practised in the land of dreams. Hughes stated them on purpose, to show that not only the blacks who suffered persecution but also whites, natives, as well as immigrants. They are all victims of the otherness who had been segregated because they were not of a purely white Anglo- Saxon culture (Poulson par .4) .

Moreover, as it is stated before, the tone of *Let America Be America Again* shifted from a negative one to a more optimistic in which the poet still holds some rays of hope. Hughes' appeal for minorities is to believe in themselves first ,then, to call for their full citizenship as Americans (The Failed American Dream par.10).Hughes wrote :

I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath--
America will be !(76-79)

Hughes, in these lines, swears an oath that America one day will become the utopian land of dreams that he dreamt of and will turn to what was supposed to be (The American Illusion par.8) . He wanted to say that though the Americans were celebrating equality and

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freedom long years ago, their dreams did not come true, but this does not mean that they lose hope but they have to fight for their dreams to be true.

2.2 Corruption of the American Dream in Hughes' poem

When reading Hughes' poem *Let America Be America Again*, it becomes obvious that the inalienable rights promised by the American Dream have been denied to many people of different backgrounds. The ideal American Dream turned to be a myth and a nightmare for people because it becomes harder to obtain, only a selected class has access to it, while others are marginalized, segregated and their dreams are ignored.

For Hughes, the American Dream is a hope that is corrupted, it can not be real in a segregated and in an ethnically divided country, at each time he repeats: America was never America to me(05), he wants to say that this America is not the America of dreams that he used to dream, but instead, it becomes corrupted by people's greed, Hughes noticed that the concept of the American dream has been changed and violated over time.

It is noticeable that Hughes in his poem, *Let America Be America Again* wants to reveal that the perfect life of America has disappeared and the American Dream is just a misleading concept that was used to attract people all over the world to come to this new land and settle it. Freedom, life and the pursuit of happiness are no more real for America, they have been replaced by slavery, injustice and inequality. America was plagued by corruption and materialism.

Hughes is angry at this America, because he worked hard to achieve his dreams but he could never have access to it, he said: "I am the man who never got ahead,"(Hughes 37). By this line, Hughes demonstrates that he himself failed to obtain his dreams. He recognizes that

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immigrants, Negroes, natives and even poor whites were oppressed and their dreams were ignored. He uses the expression of Let America Be America Again (01) many times because he wanted all those people of different cultures to have equal opportunities to achieve the American Dream.

Consequently, Langston Hughes' purpose through this poem is to make readers aware of the reality of the American Dream that it was distorted in the past. He still hold the hope that this dream can be true in the future and America will become America again, he claims, America never was America to me,/And yet I swear this oath /America will be! (Hughes 76-78). He urged the people of his country to realize the promises of the American Dream as soon as possible.

2.3 Unification against Injustice in *Let America Be America Again*

Though the poem of *Let America Be America Again* was written years ago, it seems that it is of the 21st century. Its issues still exist even today, the frustrations, injustice and all the other forms of racism that the Americans confronted still take a part in today's American society(Bloom 67). The poet Hughes, through this poem, demonstrates his strong rejection to these bad behaviours of oppression and inequality.

The Americans suffered a lot in the land of freedom, they endured all forms of discrimination and racial injustice despite the fact that the American Dream is for every one. It promised liberty, life for all and the pursuit of happiness. For instance, Hughes spoke for justice in his poem, Let America Be America Again, he states;

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,

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But opportunity is real, and life is free,

Equality is in the air we breathe.(11-14)

In this lines however, Hughes referred to the statue of Liberty as a symbol of freedom but he wanted America to be a real free nation not only a symbol that is portrayed. For him, justice is an essential elements of survival, it is like the air that must exist.

Nevertheless, Hughes concludes his poem with a belief that America will come into existence again but this time with the promises of the Declaration of Independence. He encourages people to stand up and fight for their rights (Bardhan) and to be united either African-Americans, Natives, immigrants, or poor workers, he promotes the notion of unity of all these races to best achieve their freedom and equality.

2.4 The Idealization of America Vs its reality in *Let America Be America Again*

America of the twentieth century, in the vision of Hughes, is different from the one of the seventeenth century, he wrote about it in his poetry as well as his novels. Hughes believes that the beauty of a work is when to depict the ugly and bad side of the African American's life added to the good side. He intended to portray the reality of America as it is, either with its goodness or ugliness, therefore, he was different from the other poets of his culture (Ekanath).

Undoubtedly, in his poem *Let America Be America Again*, Hughes wrote about an America that he believes in, he wanted America to be a land of peace where "where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme,"(7-8). He use the phrase *Let America Be America Again* many times in the poem to express his desire for a truly free America, a utopian society which rests on democracy and freedom (Hendricks) . Through this poem, he demonstrates to the

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world that America of that time is not the America that he aspires for, he shows its reality despite the values of justice and freedom that the country was built on.

Hughes explains his real hopes for America when he was interviewed in 1935, he said: "The day America experiences true freedom through equality and love of one another. Is the day I'll be a happy man, knowing I've done what this country needs." By those optimistic words, Hughes calls his people to look for their equal opportunities and freedom in the American society which is no more a democratic country.

Hughes seeks at revealing the real and harsh conditions of America that are unknown for its blind people. It demonstrates that the values of equality and liberty no longer exist but only poverty, pain, and injustice which have replaced these glories. Hughes wants to make people aware of the painful reality of this America that was built on great morals and values in the past.

At last, these two poems have many shared points in common, they both discuss the issues of slavery, racism, and inequality that the African American people fought to achieve the American Dream. These two poems try to illustrate the reality of the ideal American society celebrated by the early founding fathers, and give a sight about the African Americans struggles in this perfect community.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The present research has been an attempt to analyze the major concerns that were postulated at the beginning of this study. It provides a clear and brief summary to the main findings obtained from the previous analysis. More precisely, it presents an overview about the development of the American Dream concept through time and how it was seen by African Americans.

Significantly enough, the Harlem Renaissance has paved the way to great African American figures to emerge and take advantage of this periods to prove the existence of an African American culture. Langston Hughes was one of those talented writers who raised up his voice to defend not only his black people but the whole races of America. This work however , demonstrates the reality of America through Langston Hughes' vision.

Moreover, Hughes' poems "I Too" and "Let America Be America Again" reveal the effects of racism and injustice on the black people. It is important to draw attention that Hughes himself has experienced racism in his life in America. Throughout his writings, chiefly poetry, he spoke out against oppression and injustice that the blacks suffered, he portrayed the Jim Crow Laws' effects on the American society and protested against them (Royster 1974).

It is remarkable that Hughes tries to revive his buried racial identity because of the Jim Crow's stereotypes, he wants his people to liberate themselves from these false rumors. Hughes eloquently illustrates the hopes of African Americans for freedom and equality in America, thus, his poems served as a testimony on how the blacks endured discrimination because of their color and belonging (The Evolution of the Poet. Chap 1).

Conclusion

To prove the existence of the American Dream notion in Hughes' poetry, the analysis of two of his famous poems, "I Too" and "Let America Be America Again", was used. It is noticeable that both poems of Langston Hughes discuss the reality of the American Dream that changes and turns from the great democratic principles in which it was founded, equality, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness into a legendary nightmare. Thus, America which is depicted in these two poems has failed to interpret the American Dream.

Finally, this research came to a conclusion that Langston Hughes had and still has a lasting impact on readers. His poetry's language, style, and mainly themes are surprising even today. His eagerness to defend his black people and make them feel proud of their African culture and heritage is his best achievement as a man as well as a poet. Hughes used his poetry to sing and celebrate racial consciousness that encouraged all the minorities to call for liberty and justice. It could be a good initiative for those who do not know much about Langston Hughes to work on him in the future, it is sure that his legacy and influence will live forever.

Appendix

"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.

Appendix

Let America Be America Again

Let America be America again.

Let it be the dream it used to be.

Let it be the pioneer on the plain

Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—

Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme

That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty

Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,

But opportunity is real, and life is free,

Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,

Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

Appendix

Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?

And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,

I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.

I am the red man driven from the land,

I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—

And finding only the same old stupid plan

Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,

Tangled in that ancient endless chain

Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!

Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!

Of work the men! Of take the pay!

Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.

I am the worker sold to the machine.

I am the Negro, servant to you all.

I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—

Hungry yet today despite the dream.

Appendix

Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!

I am the man who never got ahead,

The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream

In the Old World while still a serf of kings,

Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,

That even yet its mighty daring sings

In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned

That's made America the land it has become.

O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas

In search of what I meant to be my home—

For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,

And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,

And torn from Black Africa's strand I came

To build a "homeland of the free."

The free? Who said the free? Not me?

Surely not me? The millions on relief today?

The millions shot down when we strike?

The millions who have nothing for our pay?

For all the dreams we've dreamed

Appendix

And all the songs we've sung

And all the hopes we've held

And all the flags we've hung,

The millions who have nothing for our pay—

Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—

The land that never has been yet—

And yet must be—the land where *every* man is free.

The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—

Who made America,

Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,

Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,

Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—

The steel of freedom does not stain.

From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,

We must take back our land again,

America!

O, yes,

Appendix

I say it plain,

America never was America to me,

And yet I swear this oath—

America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,

The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,

We, the people, must redeem

The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.

The mountains and the endless plain—

All, all the stretch of these great green states—

And make America again!

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تسعى هذه إلى فحص مفهوم الحلم الأمريكي الذي شاع في كثير من كتابات هيوز. تهدف أيضا إلى تزويد القارئ بخلفية تاريخية حول العلاقة بين الحلم الأمريكي و الحلم الأفروأمريكي. إضافة إلى ذلك، هذه الرسالة تحاول تحليل قصيد " I Too " " Let America Be America Again " مع التركيز على مختلف القضايا والمشاكل التي واجهت العنصريين وعدم المساواة بين التيشنت مجتمع أمريكا حلمها . إيجاد لهم لتحقيق هذا الحلم ؛ منها النظرية المطروحة في هذا البحث النظرية التاريخية الجديدة نظرية النقد العنصري. أظهرت نتائج هذه هيوز هو ممثل حقيقي لأمريكا القرن العشرينوناطق شجاع على لسانشعبه و ثقافتهم. هيوز نجح حقا في صياغة و تجسيد الحلم الأفروأمريكي على أرض الواقع. هذا البحث أظهر لانغستون حاول أن يغير أمريكا بالأفضل وإعادة إحياء وعودها المجيدة المتمثلة في الحرية، ملحقات الحياة الأخرى المذكورة في الحلم الأمريكي.

الكلمات المفتاحية :

الحلم الامريكي الهوية التمييز العنصري.