DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE
AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE PROGRAM
MASTER'S THESIS

THE EMERSONIAN TRADITION IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

Hamza DURMAZOĞLU

Supervisor
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Yeşim BAŞARIR

IZMIR-2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled "The Emersonian Tradition in the Poetry of Langston Hughes" has been written by myself in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resourses in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

Hamza DURMAZOĞLU

ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

The Emersonian Tradition in the Poetry of Langston Hughes

Hamza DURMAZOĞLU

Dokuz Eylül University

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of American Culture and Literature

American Culture and Literature Program

Langston Hughes, one of the most prominent African-American intellectuals of the 20th century, is best known throughout the world for his poetry. As a poet, Hughes was influenced by earlier poets such as Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. This study offers a discursive reading of Hughes's poetry to discover race, gender, and class relations by redefining Hughes's poetry in American literary history and showing that his exploration and application of jazz and blues is merely one aspect of the protest power of his work. The other involves his recognition of the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Hughes's poems are filled with philosophical and ethical concerns as well as specific moral lessons. This study claims that Hughes's poems are written in the framework of the Emersonian tradition. We can see the deep impact of Emerson's worldview, ideas, essays, and lectures on Hughes's poetry. The background philosophy of the poems studied in each chapter demonstrate different aspects of Emerson's worldview. This study frames Hughes as an Emersonian poet as well as an Emersonian scholar. Hughes's contribution to literature is to provide a black perspective for African-Americans who had been misrepresented and ignored for years in art and

literature. He imagined an ideal black community which stands equal to that of the white in all segments of life. In his poetic vision, blacks and whites can live peacefully in spite of painful past experiences.

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Langston Hughes'un Şiirlerinde Emerson Geleneği

Hamza DURMAZOĞLU

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Programı

20. yüzyılın en bilinen Afro-Amerikalı entelektüellerinden biri olan Langston Hughes, dünya genelinde özellikle şiirleriyle ün kazanmıştır. Bir şair olarak Hughes, Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg ve Paul Laurence Dunbar gibi kendinden önce gelen şairlerin etkisinde kalmıştır. Bu çalışma, çoğunlukla ve yaygın olarak caz ve blues şiirleri olarak okunan Hughes şiirini Amerikan edebiyat tarihinde yeniden tanımlayarak ırk, cinsiyet ve sınıf endişelerini keşfetme yoluyla Hughes'un şiirinin söylemsel bir okumasını sunmaktadır. Harlem Rönesans döneminde başlayan Hughes'un sanatsal kariyeri "Siyah Sanat Hareketi"'ne de tanıklık etmiştir. Hughes'un şiirleri, felsefi ve etik kaygılarla bezenmiştir ve ahlaki dersleri okuyucularıyla paylaşmaktadır. Bu çalışma Hughes'un şiirlerinin Emerson geleneği çerçevesinde yazıldığını iddia etmektedir. Ralph Waldo Emerson'un dünya görüşünün, fikirlerinin, makalelerinin ve nutuklarının Hughes'un şiirleri üzerinde büyük etkisini görebiliriz. Çalışma, her bölümde incelenen şiirlerin arka plan felsefesinin Emerson'un farklı yönlerini taşıdıklarını ortaya koyuyor. Çalışma Hughes'u bir Emersoncu şair ve aynı zamanda bir Emersoncu bilgin olarak ele alıyor. Hughes'un edebiyata katkısı, sanatta ve edebiyatta uzun yıllar yanlış temsil edilen Afro-Amerikalılar için yeni siyahi bir perspektif sağlamaktır. Hayalinde beyaz topluma eşit ideal bir siyah topluluk oluşturma vardı. Hughes'un şiirsel

vizyonunda, siyahlar ve beyazlar, acı verici deneyimlere rağmen, barış içinde yaşayabilmektedirler.

THE EMERSONIAN TRADITION IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

CONTENTS

DECLARATION iii
ABSTRACT iv
ÖZET vi
CONTENTS viii
INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE

AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: HARLEM RENAISSANCE 10

CHAPTER TWO

THE AMERICAN DREAM OR AMERICAN DELUSION 25

CHAPTER THREE

POETICS OF BLACKNESS

3.1. UNDERSTANDING EMERSON 32
3.2. EMBRACING BLACK IDENTITY 36
3.3. THE PAST AS A REFERENCE POINT 44
3.4. AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND BLACK IDENTITY 49

CHAPTER FOUR

BLACK WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES 61

4.1. WISE WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES 66
4.2. WORKING WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES 72
4.3. SUBMISSIVE WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES 77
4.4. BLACK BEAUTIES OF LANGSTON HUGHES 80

CHAPTER FIVE

SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AND AWARENESS OF SOCIAL CLASS IN LANGSTON HUGHES 85

5.1. THE BLACK WORKING CLASS 88
5.2. THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS 95
5.3. HUGHES'S RADICAL IDEAS 102

CONCLUSION 106
REFERENCES 111

INTRODUCTION

Langston Hughes, one of the most prominent African-American intellectuals of the 20th century, is best known throughout the world with his poetry. Beginning the writing of poems during his high school years, Hughes started to gain fame in literary magazines such as *The Crisis* in the beginning of the 1920s, and his literary career ripened during the Harlem Renaissance period. In 1921, Hughes arrived in the city of his dreams, Harlem, which was then called "the Negro City"; by the time of Hughes's arrival, it had already become a cultural center for blacks (Leach, 2004: 15). He then traveled around the world from Latin America to the Soviet Union and Japan, and the accumulation of such experiences made it possible for him to compare the lives of blacks in the United States with blacks from the rest of the world, including Africa. This is significant when we consider that he dedicated his poetry to the lives of those blacks in America along with their experiences, dreams and disillusionments.

Christopher Beach categorizes African American poetry of the 20th century into three "generational moments": the Harlem Renaissance (1920s and early 1930s), post-Renaissance (1940s and 1950s), and the Black Arts movement (1960s and 1970s) (Beach, 2003: 114). Although Hughes published poems in all of these periods, this study focuses on Hughes's Harlem Renaissance poems. This study offers a discursive reading of Hughes's poetry by discovering race, gender, and class concerns and by repositioning Hughes's poetry, which is most commonly read in the tradition of jazz and blues. As Hughes wrote on diverse subjects, I felt compelled to cover as many poems as the scope of the study allowed in order to offer a cross-section of Hughes's work. Sterling Brown argues that black authors should reveal the exploitation, oppression, struggle and dreams in the lives of African Americans (Brown, 2004: 205). One can find all of these elements in Hughes's poetry, and that is why he stands as a leading figure in black literature.

As a poet, Hughes was influenced by earlier poets like Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. Their influence was mostly on the style and themes that are studied and covered in academia. Hughes's singing and his celebration of diversity was mostly affected by Whitman, a writer who "embraced

America" and "envisioned the possibilities of American continent and spirit" (Tracy, 2004a: 6). Jonathan Scott situates Hughes in American literary studies as "the very sign of racial blackness: he sings of America *as a black man*, just as Whitman sang of America as the universal ("white") man" (48). What makes Hughes a great artist is his philosophy of "all us" rather than creating factions among his readers (Tracy, 2004: 5). As Whitman includes all people to his American vision and accepts them from the lowest to the highest, Hughes attempts to include all, and especially blacks, who were marginalized in the United States after the Civil War and emancipation. Hughes wrote for them because they were often excluded from the American scene. According to Lorenzo Thomas, Hughes established the definition of everyman of 20th century-blacks and modeled it effectively through his life and poems (181). Hughes's poems are filled with philosophical, ethical, and moral concerns, and also share specific lessons. This study argues that Hughes's poems are written in the frameworks of the Emersonian tradition. We can see the great influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson's worldview, ideas, essays, and lectures on Hughes's poetry. The study does not suggest that Hughes extensively read and applied Emerson's writings on his poetry, but rather that his poems follow the legacy of Emersonian thought. Throughout the study, I categorize Hughes's poems into three different parts: race-based, gender-based, and class-based poems. This study maintains that the background philosophy of the poems presented in this study carry different aspects of Emerson's worldview. This study also aims to show similar lifestyles and approaches to the problems of the two eras (Hughes's and Emerson's) and to find connections between them.

The study considers Hughes as an Emersonian poet in the sense of Emerson's own words: "A moody child and wildly wise / Pursued the game with joyful eyes / Which chose, like meteors, their way, / And rived the dark with private ray: / They overleapt the horizon's edge, / Searched with Apollo's privilege; / Through man, and woman, and sea, and star, / Saw the dance of nature forward far; / Through worlds, and races, and terms, and times, / Saw musical order, and pairing rhymes." ("The Poet," 65). As one Emersonian scholar has stated, "In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or,

still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking" ("The American Scholar," 150). It is "Man Thinking" in Emerson's conception that provides justification for the equality of all individuals (Patterson, 1997:140). And we should consider Hughes as an Emersonian-representative man, "The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage, piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues" ("The Divinity School Address," 109-10). Emerson identifies the characteristic of a scholar in those three essays. The study argues that Hughes represents these qualities in his poetry.

In order to understand Emerson's effect on Hughes's poetry, we initially need to know the life and the significance of Emerson. Emerson was a philosopher, a lecturer, a public speaker, and a reformist. Bloom asserts that "Emerson is the mind of our climate, the principal source of the American difference in poetry, criticism, and pragmatic post-philosophy" (Bloom, 2007: 1). Bloom aimed to draw attention to the originality of Emerson. Likewise, Emerson originated American thought, which inspired later generations, as well as his own. As Emerson is "the inescapable theorist of all subsequent American writing," many American authors followed his tradition (Bloom, 2007: 1). Emerson has had great influence over American philosophy, social thought, and literature (Buell, 2003:7-8). The importance of Emerson on American authors, intellectuals, and artists is unquestionable. By 1844, Emerson "had become a leading citizen of his town and the leading intellectual of his region, if not of the nation. He had become the spokesman for American idealism. Many of his fellow citizens expected his guiding voice and opinions on subjects of importance to the community and the nation" (Collison, 2000: 189).

While Emerson is known for his essays, he also played a significant role during the bustling, foundational years of the United States. According to Len Gougeon, Emerson was aware of three significant social unrests: the subordination of women, the mistreatment of Native Americans, and reality of slavery (2007: 3). During his lifetime, Emerson met with Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth in Europe, and he visited Ireland, England, and Scotland. Those meetings and visits affected his mindset to a great extent.

Emerson was touched by the inequalities he observed in his country, and he did not remain insensitive. "During the early 1840s, Emerson attacked the inequities of property and class. Starting in 1844, he openly fought for abolition, or the equality of race. And, in 1855, he turned publicly to support feminism, or gender equality. Many leading feminists were friends of Emerson, and he had frequently argued in his journals that women ought to have full and equal rights" (Sacks, 2008: xxviii). He publicly supported the rights of black people and women. Listing the imperfections of several countries, Emerson states, "Africa has its malformation; England has its Ireland; Germany its hatred of classes; France its love of gunpowder; Italy, its Pope; and America, the most prosperous country in the universe, has the greatest calamity in the universe, negro slavery" ("Address to the Citizens of Concord," 138). Emerson handles the black problem as a calamity that must be solved in the shortest time. There are several examples of Emerson's participation in antislavery campaigns in his lectures and addresses on the Fugitive Slave Act, Bleeding Kansas, slavery, and John Brown, and in poems that eulogize the black soldiers of the Massachusetts 54th Regiments. He also helped to raise money for hosting abolitionists and activists (Field 2001).

We said that Emerson influences people, but how far his influence goes should be noted. Gougeon describes how Emerson urges people: "Ralph Waldo Emerson was able, and is still able, to influence such diverse minds not only because his own thinking was so eclectic and diverse, but also because he constantly provokes thoughtful people to explore their own inner regions in order to mine the treasures that are to be found there" (2007: 197). Similar to Emerson, we will see how Hughes attempts to provoke the black audience with his poetry. He pushes them to cross boundaries and discover their own power and voices.

At this point, we need to describe Emerson more deeply for our study. In "Experience, Antislavery, and the Crisis of Emersonianism," Donald E. Pease puts forward the ongoing contestation among his critics and interpreters over whether Emerson the Transcendentalist or Emerson the Social Reformer should predominate scholarship (Pease 2007). As can be seen, Emerson's work is analyzed from different perspectives. Our study takes Emerson as the Social Reformer. With his brave

discourse, suggestions, and opinions, Emerson aimed at reforming society by reforming individuals. Such an attempt was also made by Hughes, who wanted to reform black individuals and their society. We see that Hughes indoctrinates Emersonian self-reliance in accordance with the black masses. In "Self-Reliance," "everyone has self-transformative capacity" (Buell, 2003: 62). Hughes develops this principle by arguing that every black citizen has the capacity to develop himself/herself. Buell notes how Emerson emancipated the minds of individuals: "At best, however, he opened up the prospect of a much more profound sense of the nature, challenge, and promise of mental emancipation, whatever one's race, sex, or nation might be. That is the Emerson most worth preserving" (Buell, 2003: 5).

On the other hand, Emerson's essays are forceful, powerful, and cogent in a way that elicits psychological transformations on individual readers (Fuller, 2007: 3). Scholars on Emerson tend to ground and delimit him to a variety of philosophical idealism, however Emerson was also obsessed with history, culture, cultural forces and values, and we see him criticizing his society and attacking certain values and beliefs of American culture (Worley, 2001: vii).

Having noted important aspects from Emerson's life and worldview, we can now look at the life and ideas of Hughes. The era into which Hughes was born was a period of uncertainty for the black Americans as Reconstruction failed to provide its promises and left them legally unprotected (Tidwell and Ragar, 2007: 2). It did not take Hughes long to meet with the reality of racism. For example, in the seventh grade, he was exposed to segregation by a racist teacher who made the black students sit in a separate row from the rest of the class; Hughes protested, which led to his expulsion from the school, although he was later re-accepted (Leach, 2004: 4).

Hughes's life was shaped mostly by moving, traveling, changing places, and meeting people in schools, towns, or groups, most of whom he never saw again (*I Wonder*, 2003: 122). This diversity of experience positively affected his writing for in terms of theme and cultural diversity. Experiences of dislocation and geographical difference provided him settings for his poems. One of Hughes's aims in foreign travel was, according to Christopher De Santis, an escape (even be it for a

comparatively short time) from the racial burdens and limitations of the United States (290).

In addition to world travel, he also visited Southern cities to read his poetry, facing many obstacles along the way; for instance, conference halls were closed to him on several occasions. His speeches were often blocked. His opponents' efforts to shut him out of public discourse stands as evidence of how effective Hughes had become in his cause to awaken both blacks who needed racial pride and whites who needed an understanding of brotherhood and integration. He believed that literature provided the necessary grounds to persuade American audiences and readers to accept black contributions in building and advancing the American nation (Leach, 2004: 143).

Although Hughes was productive in almost every genre of literature (novel, drama, biography etc.) he considered himself a poet (Rampersad 5). His famous poetry collections are *The Weary Blues* (1926), *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942), *Fields of Wonder* (1947), *One-Way Ticket* (1949), *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), *Ask Your Mama* (1961), and *The Panther and the Lash* (1967). The last one was published posthumously. Hughes produced a huge amount of poetry throughout his life. His poems vary both in terms of form and content, however they can be categorized in the way Arnold Rampersad suggested: "Some poems protest the social conditions of blacks specifically; some are boldly declarative of the beauty and dignity of the race" (Rampersad 6). We can see these features in the poems analyzed in this study. While race and class poems present protest explicitly, his poems on gender display beauty and dignity.

Hughes was a poet who found his life through writing. He reveals how he feels when he writes: "when I felt bad, writing kept me from feeling worse; it put my inner emotions into exterior form, and gave me an outlet for words that never came in conversation" (*I Wonder*, 2003: 39). Keeping in mind that Hughes wrote mostly on racial issues, this confession underlines the background of Hughes's artistic output. His racial poems and stories stem from his discontentment with the negative conditions of blacks in general and his personal encounters with racial politics.

Moreover, he refers to writing as an act of relaxation and liberation from racial strain.

The Harlem Renaissance was a milestone for African-American cultural expression. Hughes's artistic career, which started during the Harlem Renaissance, also encompassed the Black Art Movement. Hughes's contact with Harlem artists such as Aaron Douglass, Arna Bontemps, Wallace Thurman, Bruce Nugent, Noel Sullivian, and Zora Neale Hurston, a "brilliant circle of young stars," affected dramatically his artistic and aesthetic career (Rampersad 11). His early poems are generally reflections of jazz and blues, the music of the black experience throughout the 1920s and the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes's attention to this music as poetic forms can be regarded as "his most important poetic innovation" (Sanders, 2007: 108). Racial and class inequities stand among the most inspiring themes in Hughes's poetry. He devoted most of his writing to the suffering of lower-class African-Americans.

Hughes, the New Negro Modernist, blended the elements of American humor, local color regionalism, and dialect poetry (Tracy, 2004b: 89) in order to convey the standards and sorrows of the black experience. He successfully combined realistic pictures of folkloric elements with colorful collages of regionalism and dialect poetry, and thus his work enabled him to express the dreams of the black masses sometimes humorously and sometimes satirically. In Hughes's artistic aesthetic, according to Steven Tracy, the heritage of folk culture and its wisdom, passion, energy, and directness possess extensive value and substantial significance (10). Leach sees Hughes as an innovator who combined African-American vernacular and cultural traditions in his poetry (xiii).

In terms of the short stories he wrote at Carmel, Hughes acknowledges that they are rooted in real situations he was involved in or heard about (*I Wonder*, 2003: 281). The same is true for other genres, especially for his poems, which reflect the actual conditions of blacks; Hughes utilized the events he witnessed and heard to construct his texts. He grounded his poetry on the deferred dreams of America, but was far beyond being merely a poet. His messages were strong, direct, and reflected Emersonian traits. Hughes's greatest contribution to literature was to provide a black

perspective for African-Americans who had been misrepresented or ignored for a long period of history. Charles Johnson evaluates Hughes's poetry as follows: "Always there is, in his writing, a wistful undertone, a quiet sadness. That is why, perhaps, he could speak so tenderly of the broken lives of prostitutes, the inner weariness of painted 'jazz-hounds' and the tragic emptiness beneath the glamour and noise of Harlem cabarets" (171). Hughes makes it clear that the sources for his poetry arise from everyday life: "Most of my own poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from the life I know. In many of them I try to grasp and hold some of the meanings and rhythms of jazz" ("The Negro Artist").

The rights of black people have been ignored in differing degrees at different times. "In the tradition of liberal nationalism, rights have been defined as entailing obligations that bind individuals together as a political community, a community that is—in theory, but often not in practice—infinitely permeable and expansive because any person who meets the qualifications for citizenship can join" (Patterson, 1997:3). Binding individuals together is crucial in a democratic state. Individuals, however, should not be considered merely for their differences (such as race, class, and gender) but for their humanity. Hughes's struggle shows that the protection of rights should not happen just in theory, but must be carried into practice through the achievement of equality. Then not only do individuals connect, but are bound to their government because the struggle increases their sense of belonging and creates links and ties among the peoples of a nation. We can see how Hughes is attached to his country in one of his essays: "This is my land America. Naturally, I love it—it is home—and I am vitally concerned about it mores, its democracy, and its wellbeing. I try now to look at it with clear, unprejudiced eyes. My ancestry goes back at least four generations on American soil—and, through Indian blood, many centuries more" ("My America"). The very first sentence points out a sense of belonging as well as possessiveness. He feels connected to the land as much as white citizens do, and perhaps more so. He shows his loyalty to his country and nation. This statement signifies a sense of equivalence shared by the inhabitants of the same country. He continues by expressing an emotional link to the country. This feeling of connectedness, despite a long history of racial injustices, is depicted through his physical ties to the soil. Noting his ideas towards about what it means to be an

American, we can begin to understand how he sees himself as an artist: “The road for the serious black artist, then, who would produce a racial art is most certainly rocky and the mountain is high. Until recently he received almost no encouragement for his work from either white or colored people” (“The Negro Artist”).

Emerson’s influence on Hughes’s poetry is obvious. We cannot think Hughes as a poet apart from the movement he represents. It was the Harlem Renaissance, and more than that, his unending struggle on behalf of black Americans and people of color worldwide. Before studying his poems, we need to know more about the period in which most of his poems were written. As Hughes referred to the American Dream quite often, we should also excavate that concept and its meaning for the black race, black women, and workers.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Harlem Renaissance is a versatile movement of the black people in Harlem district, New York around 1920s. It was a watershed not only for the African Americans but also for the worldwide blacks especially for those who were colonized. As George Hutchinson emphasized; it was "A vogue. A blossoming… A movement of black self-assertion against white supremacy" (1). It is valuable because it was the "the first significant literary and cultural movement" in African American history, in which blackness is celebrated (Bernard, 2007: 28). It came out of a need for equality for the blacks in all segments of life - economic, politic, education, cultural and social. Maria Balshaw points out in *Looking for Harlem: Urban Aesthetics in African-American Literature* that Harlem was seen as a place of attraction for an "African American national imaginary" in the literature and history of twentieth century of black Americans (1). Briefly, it lured artists, intellectuals and writers in great extents.

The Renaissance can be defined as a journey towards self-discovery of the black society (Perry, 2004: 13). This can be grasped when it is compared to American Renaissance of the 1830s which enabled self-definition for the scholars and the writers of the era such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. What made the period a "Renaissance" was that it was a clear break from the European traditions in art and finding their own voices and discourses. Likewise, Harlem Renaissance gave chance to the African Americans to make a self-definition and self-discovery after long years of slavery and discrimination in the United States.

Historically, Harlem Renaissance was not nurtured only by the Reconstruction period, Civil War, and slavery; rather, the inspirations date back to earlier African days of the ancestors of the African Americans. In fact, it was mostly folk tradition that was transported from Africa with the blacks. Sanders emphasizes on this tradition and its common usage both during and after the Harlem

Renaissance: “It was the Harlem Renaissance that radically relocated the folk, indeed reinvented an African American literary vocabulary based on folk forms, idioms, and patterns of speech; and in doing so, the Harlem Renaissance bequeathed a legacy that would shape African American literature throughout the twentieth century and up to the present day” (96). So, the folk traditions were widely accepted by writers as roots, origins, and a cultural background for their productions. The intellectuals emphasized their roots in their work in order to claim that they were not “cultural orphan[s]” (Birch, 2004: 118).

There was an increase in racial confidence, as well as protest and assertiveness during the Harlem Renaissance (Hull, 2004: 68). It bestowed numerous successful, energetic, and self-confident artists to the world of literature including Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Jessie Fauset, Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, Rudolph Fisher, Gwendolyn Bennett, Arna Bontemps, and Zora Neale Hurston. Moreover, throughout the period, cultural and artistic events alongside publications flourished. Blacks had “a constellation of … radical journals, mass political movements and organizing efforts in the postwar era” as well as hosting “international conferences and conventions such as W.E.B. Du Bois’ Pan - African Congresses” (Stephens, 2010: 214). One of the significant outcomes of such events and magazines was to present the black life to American audiences and readers in addition to show the “richness of the humanity of black lives” (Sanders, 2007: 97).

In spite of its first use in 1895, the concept of “New Negro” was popularized in Harlem Renaissance. It refers to a new African American class for whom education and money was available, and it emphasizes racial pride and self-reliance for the blacks along with stressing the full rights of citizenship (Beach, 2003: 114).

Harlem Renaissance did not make an abrupt start in history. Several events, phenomenon, factors, cases, and conditions prepared for the Renaissance. Until that time, a load of literary work was produced that also paved way to the period. Initially, we should look at the black history in America and how African American identity emerged and developed. The problem of identity has been among the most complicated and controversial issues for the black Americans. Their ethnic identities in homeland were transformed into a new one in the new continent. The slave trade

had shaped their identity as Vincent Carretta argues: "The transatlantic slave trade during the eighteenth century in effect created an *African* identity in the Americas for the millions of enslaved people who suffered the social death of the various ethnic identities they had while living in Africa" (12). They were rejected by the white population as citizens until the Emancipation. After the end of slavery with Emancipation, the full integration of the blacks had not become possible. So, the black were in between for most of the time. As William Du Bois theorized, they felt dual consciousness. They were neither African nor American in full terms.

As for literature, until the Emancipation, slave narratives provided insights of the black lives and examples of the institution of slavery. One of the most famous of such narratives is Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, the African. Written by Himself*. It "offered the first account from the victim's point of view of slavery in Africa, the West Indies, North America, and Britain, as well as of the Middle Passage" (Carretta, 2010: 18). Their narratives of the experiences played a significant role, because their own points of view helped them to disclose how they were subjugated. In a way, they claimed their story and suffering to be listened instead of listening those who oppressed them. There are also other writings by African Americans like Ignatius Sancho, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, as well as Phillis Wheatley, Venture Smith, and John Jea, which were mostly autobiographical (Sidbury, 2010: 26).

Equally as important, several leading figures and heroes emerged from the black community. One of such early leaders was Frederick Douglass (1818 – 1895), as he was among the first spokesmen of the Black Americans especially after the Civil War. He played a central role in abolitionist movements after escaping from slavery. He published also autobiographies such as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* and *My Bondage and My Freedom*.

A sense of unity was crucial among the African Americans. Black churches in a way provided such unity as well as enabled those literary works to reach a wider audience: "Black churches served as central organizational nodes for the conception, development, publication, and distribution of an early nineteenth-century African American literature" (Brooks and Mabry, 2010: 88).

After the Civil War, problems of blacks did not end with the abolition of slavery. Even though the result of the Civil War brought "liberty" to them, they could not become "normal citizens" or could not reach the level of the whites. Reconstruction period, (mid of 1860s – end of 1870s), "failed because members of an inferior race were granted any degree of authority (in political governance, education, and economic enterprise) over white men" (Ross, 2010:153). In this period, they witnessed injustices in every field of life. For more than 30 years they had tried to reconcile with the white society in the South and eventually migrated to other parts of the country. As Charles Johnson puts forward, Southern blacks in the Reconstruction period were exposed to many handicaps such as political disfranchisement, economic disinheritance, lack of educational opportunity, and cultural isolation; and so they found solution in migrations to achieve freedom (168). This period was marked with migrations of blacks from the South to the Northern cities like Detroit, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and of course Harlem. Blacks needed jobs and increased standards in their life, and this affected the routes of the migrations and demography of the black population in the whole U.S. In Great Migration, black people escaped from the legacy of slavery and Reconstruction of the South to progress in social and economic life in North by leaving old and painful memories behind (Tracy, 2004b: 98). These migrations occurred "in unprecedented numbers" and aimed "to benefit from North America's wartime economic prosperity" (Stephens, 2010: 214). Therefore, it would be hard to understand Harlem Renaissance without understanding the dynamics of the Great Migration.

In this era, the leading figure was Booker T. Washington (1856 – 1915) who said that "black social and economic improvement would come gradually and naturally through accommodation and compromise rather than self-assertion, and only if the blacks were educated" (Birch, 2004: 113). He is best known with his speech "Atlanta Compromise" and Tuskegee Institution. Their common point was education. According to Washington, the blacks only needed education to overcome racial problems and they would solve those problems step by step. He was severely criticized by another leader, William Du Bois, who was more radical than Washington. Washington had powerful racial and social tactical strategies in promoting the progress of the African Americans (Johnson 168).

In terms of literary achievements, we see two important writers: Paul Laurence Dunbar (1878 – 1906) and Charles Waddell Chesnutt (1858 – 1932). While Dunbar excelled in poetry, Chesnutt mostly produced novels and short stories. One can read in Charles Johnson's *The Negro Renaissance and Its Significance* about the Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry: "Dunbar caught the picture of the Negro in his pathetic and contagiously humorous moods and invested him with a new humanity" (169). They can be regarded as "racial uplift ideologues" for they had faith in "optimistic and romantic transition of African Americans from the "Old Negro" to the "New Negro" (Jarrett, 2010: 170). Especially Dunbar contributed the Renaissance indirectly by affecting his poet successors, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen: "In his incorporation of political themes and his use of local color and dialect, he was an important precursor of the Harlem Renaissance (Wintz and Finkelman, 2004: 319).

Just before the Harlem Renaissance, America witnessed several race riots in 1919, particularly in the cities like Chicago, Charleston, Longview, Norfolk, and Washington, DC which is called "Red Summer." These events hardened the life for both whites and blacks; because each part was quite nervous, uneasy, and restless. Blacks feared from the terror and violence from the whites while the whites feared that their opportunities for jobs lowered. On the contrary, Harlem was populated only by blacks in the 1920s which allowed a relatively stress-free environment. In this background in which fear and violence was widespread, Harlem cast its light on the blacks. Shortly after, Harlem fast became a center for the migrants from the rural South and for "foreign-born blacks" like the Caribbean, as well as for the artists, musicians, and intellectuals who had chance to meet and express themselves in a free environment "undisrupted by white America" (Beach, 2003: 116-17).

Generally, the 1920s encouraged and promoted the black writers into a progressive mindset in every possible aspects of the life. It functioned as an awakening force. As a district, Harlem attracted both urban and rural blacks from different classes, backgrounds, professions and intellectuals, and created a new understanding of identity among the blacks as well as it was the first African Americans city that blacks regarded as their own, and became a home to pan-African

sentiment which advocated a connection of Africans from all over the world (Kirschke, 2004: 184-88). Harlem was a city in which segregation did not exist.

James Weldon Johnson observes the value and significance of Harlem as the city for the blacks in *Black Manhattan*: "the Negro's situation in Harlem is without precedent in all his history in New York; never before has he been so securely anchored, never before has he owned the land, never before has he had so well established a community life" (151). Blacks struggled more than any other previous periods for social, cultural and economic rights in this time. Many black writers of the era were committed to this racial struggle. Furthermore, they were participants of American life rather than being mere observers. They realized that it was a high time to change white supremacy into a hackneyed institution. They used, applied, and utilized innovative techniques. They transformed the "black image" to black vision (Feith, 2004: 276). In other words, blacks were changed from "absence (of morality, intelligence, and other basic features of humanity) to presence" (Bernard, 2007: 29).

Harlem Renaissance provided new approaches, new orientations, new discourses and more freedom to African Americans. In time and context of modernism, Harlem Renaissance gave the black writers an inestimable chance to demolish the hindrances before them. Hokanson underlines that "other" voices are now available:

> *What seems in turn to have initiated the current revisioning of modernism is the way that the notion of barrier-crossing has also come to include breaking down racial and ethnic boundaries, challenging modernism's exclusive association with Euro-American writers and placing renewed emphasis on other voices, especially the African American writers of the Harlem Renaissance (113).*

Harlem Renaissance was not restricted into a small area and Harlem intellectuals were not isolated and alone. As Bernard puts it: "African American artists were concerned with what was being produced in other parts of the Diaspora as much as they were with the artistic flowering within their own borders" (31). As African Americans were interested in other parts of the black world, the black world was also curious about the new developments and progress in Harlem.

In this period, African Americans rejected "categorizations imposed from the outside" (Feith, 2004: 278). They defined themselves as the New Negro. Bernard elaborates the notion: "The New Negro was more than a persona; he was an idea, an ideological construction" (28). This New Negro concept symbolized a disassociation from and overcoming Old Negro stereotypes (Hutchinson, 2007: 3). It symbolized newness, modernity, mobility, progress, urbanity, and self-empowerment (Ross, 2010:157). This concept was also used to destroy the prejudice that the blacks were "sub-human." They reshaped the image of the black who had been misrepresented in literature and arts. "The *New Negro* focused on literature that heralded the social transition of people trying to escape racial stereotypes and proscriptions" (Foster and Green, 2010: 48). There were debates how the New Negro should be. But there was one common definition, "that the only way to defeat white supremacy is by raising up (or "uplifting") the race to its proper place in the United States society and in global culture" (Ross, 2010:151). White supremacy and fight against it constituted the New Negro mind.

On the other hand, Harlem was transforming into a popular nightlife destination especially for a particular segment of white society who took interest in black culture and art (Hutchinson 3). It became a kind of attraction point partly because the whites were curious about black life. Afro-American music like jazz and blues has reinforced the black artists. For instance, Hughes extensively benefitted from music which, according to James de Jongh, is a significant way of cultural expression for the blacks (83). Blacks find it important as it represents them as well as entertains. That is why Hughes deploys music in abundance in his poems. One can see descriptions and representations of jazz clubs in Hughes poetry: "The jazz cabaret in Hughes is carnivalesque, its atmosphere thick with constitutionally prohibited alcohol, frankly sexual dancing (with sex itself not too far in the background), interracial fraternization, and of course the insinuations of jazz itself" (Chinitz, 2008: 64). So, one can assert that music enabled blacks to express their energy, joy and excitement as well as their sorrow and suffering. It was their manifestation, they regarded it something belonged them and something expressed through them. They were producing and this made them feel that they were special.

What distinguishes Harlem era was the absence of a literary school that Harlem artists belonged. Instead, those writers and intellectuals were attracted by the "metropolitan charisma" of New York City for numerous reasons such as publishing houses, theatres, and Harlem itself (Hudlin, 2004: 5). They were almost individual artists and independent from each other in their perception and understanding of the era. Warrington Hudlin explains this situation: "There was no single literary philosophy guiding them, nor even a uniform perception of what phenomenon was taking place around them. They were linked together, however, by a common black experience" (5). What brought them together was their skin color which caused them to be exposed to a certain treatment by the leading white supremacy in the U.S. and around the world. Shared experiences help people to establish communities among themselves. Harlem Renaissance was an archetype of unity for Afro-Americans that would also lead to other movements in favor of the blacks. Akasha Gloria Hull asserts in *Color, Sex, and Poetry in the Harlem Renaissance* that "Color defined the Harlem Renaissance. Philosophically and practically, it was a racial movement whose overriding preoccupation can be seen in all of its aspects and manifestation" (80-81).

While some black writers preferred to write about the North, some others wrote about the South. Some of them talked about urban experiences while others talked more about rural life. But all contributed the cultural diversity of Afro-American art. When one looks at the big picture, s/he will see the whole America.

Efforts of the literary men and the philosophers to define the era were noteworthy. They showed their testimony of this unique era in African American history. They were enlightening black readers, listeners and audiences. Meanwhile, daily lives of black common folk filled the pages of black writing. The writers wrote the history of racial oppression and segregation in their works as well as constituting a collective resistance to racism and discrimination. Harlem writers, especially like Hughes, opposed to the approach which pictured blackness as a "minority discourse" while at the same time they showed black culture as central to American literature (Scott: 2006, 67).

One of the most significant figures in this period was Alain Locke, a black philosopher and "cultural authority", who "exerted a broad influence on African American arts, sociology, and education, among other areas." His *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925) was one of the masterpieces of the Harlem Renaissance which would be Locke's most lasting achievement in his career (Wintz and Finkelman, 2004: 738-39) According to Locke, the New Negro is "vibrant with a new psychology" and "the new spirit is awake in the masses" (161). These words herald a new turn in black history. When one considers the historical background of slavery, this new understanding bears hope for all blacks in the United States. One can understand that the new masses wanted to reconstruct a racial pride as opposed to racial submission. Locke presents the significance of revaluation of Negro in terms of "artistic endowment" and "cultural contributions" because he believes that Negro became a "conscious contributor and lays aside the status of a beneficiary and ward for that of a collaborator and participant in American civilization" (Locke 165). Alain Locke played a significant role in stimulating the black artists in the early years of their careers to express themselves freely (Perry, 2004: 14). Locke did not only encourage young writers and poets such as Jessie Fauset, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen, but also regarded them as "the legitimate heirs to a tradition that was ready to acquire new energy" (Kirschke, 2004: 183).

Similar to Locke, William Du Bois was also an influential voice expressing the ideology of the era. Du Bois believed in the necessity of progressive reforms and embraced the ideology of racial uplift in the African-American political spectrum as well as appreciating the black image (Gaines 1996). Du Bois' comment, after spending a year in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, with interviewing residents and observing social trends, is as follows: "It was a lack of opportunity, accompanied by severe environmental constraints, that afflicted the black community and not some natural inferiority" (Huddle, 2005: 450). Here, Du Bois refers to how African-Americans were kept back from reaching their dreams. He aimed to demolish the inferiority complex black people had.

William Du Bois was at the center of organizations of Pan-African Congresses which focus on the liberation of Africa, held successively in Paris, 1919

and Brussels, 1923. After the second Congress, Du Bois and Jessie Fauset, another leading African American intellectual, "mapped for their readers the political scope of the black world and the possibilities of its unification in first - person narratives that traveled through and across various black communities" (Stephens, 2010: 215).

James Weldon Johnson was also a forerunner for young talented writers. He contributed greatly to the advancement of the young writers. He valued black artistic creativity as he expressed in *Black Manhattan*:

> *The most outstanding phase of the development of the Negro in the United States during the past decade had been the recent literary and artistic emergence of the individual creative artist… The thing that has happened has been so marked that it does not have the appearance of a development; it seems rather like a sudden awakening, like an instantaneous change (260).*

Du Bois supported the idea of 'Negritude' that is "a celebration of the artistic and spiritual qualities of black Americans" and he did not embrace the approach which allows the portrayal of the blacks as "low" characters (Birch, 2004: 118). In fact, this was the case for many writers, critics and leaders from the old generation who opposed "the primitivist representation of the African-American" (Chinitz, 2008: 65). This situation caused some tension between the old generation and the new one. Hughes wrote poems about the blacks as they naturally were. We see complete "Negro" life in his poetry; both with its difficulties and positive sides.

The period also motivated black women writers. The outstanding women poets of the Renaissance are Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Anne Spencer, Angelina Weld Grimk´e, Helene Johnson, Gwendolyn Bennett, and Mae Cowdery were among those writers. They worked on versatile topics: "a strong racial identification, an anger at manifestations of racism and racial violence, a determination to fight social oppression, a rejection of white culture, and an attempt to reconstruct a sense of black heritage" and "awareness of gender oppression" (Beach, 2003: 124). The women writers of Harlem Renaissance, like Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston, had been challenged much more than the male writers. They did not have to fight only with racism but also with sexism. Maureen Honey explores the major themes in the writings of black women writers in *The Women Poets of the Harlem*

Renaissance: "Prejudice, lynching, stereotypes, white cultural imperialism, finding strength in one's ancestors and culture, the beauty of Blackness, and the assertion of rights were all popular subjects during the decade for both men and women" (Honey, 2004: 224).

The first poetry book in the Renaissance since Dunbar was Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows* (Lewis, 2004: 125). McKay's poem "If We Must Die" was a significant literary expression in the very beginning of the movement. After McKay left America in 1922, Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes somehow raced against each other for the position as the "poet laureate" of Harlem (Beach, 2003: 119). When Raymond Smith argues that "Hughes's efforts to create a poetry that truly evoked the spirit of Black America involved a resolution of conflicts centering around the problem of identity" (Smith, 2004: 37), this covers the other poets of the era as well. Sterling A. Brown, another prominent poet, became famous with his first collection of poems *Southern Road* (1932). He was accepted as "a pioneering voice in New Negro poetics" by Locke, and he had also poems written in folk idioms and vernacular language that had materialized during his travel to the rural South around 1925s "listening and taking note of local speech patterns and modes of cultural expression" (Sanders, 2007: 104).

Locke and Du Bois were also active in shepherding many "novice playwrights to artistic maturity." Plays staged in Harlem during this period used the principles of the ''New Negro'' by portraying characters having "moral values, familial bonds, education, dignity, integrity, and work ethic." Du Bois, on the other hand, devised ''four fundamental principles'' of ''Negro Drama'' in 1926: about us, by us, for us, near us (Krasner, 2007: 57-60). These were the principals not only in drama, but also in other genres. There were no "funny" black characters that are laughed at for their stupid and naïve actions. Hughes appreciated the fact that colored people were not represented as clownish figures and subservient roles on the stage in the Soviet Union. They even told him that one of the most famous plays at the Moscow Children's Theater tells the story of a handsome black teenager sympathetically (*I Wonder*, 2003: 209). Caricaturized blacks were very common in Hollywood, and in other forms of art.

In this decade, African Americans published more than ever before (Singh, 2004: 25) which means that blacks started to grow intellectually and this was a great turning point for them. More books meant more access to education which was an indicator for progress of the black community. Growth of the black publications is even more meaningful in the age of Segregation with its harsh realities and "its proscriptions on the economic, social, and political life of black Americans" (Thompson, 2005: 476- 79). It can be asserted that black publications served to the cause of refuting the racial stereotypes.

There were significant black magazines which served the writers to circulate cultural and intellectual texts. For example, *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and *Opportunity: A Journalof Negro Life* contributed to the Harlem Renaissance especially in the beginning in terms of allotting "space to exhibition and review of the work of the Harlem artist" (Hudlin, 2004: 8). While Du Bois was the editor and founder of *The Crisis*, Charles S. Johnson was the editor of the latter. In 1925, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston were awarded by the help of *Opportunity*. These were the first literary awards. Another example can be given from the *Survey Graphic*. Paul Kellog, the editor of *Survey Graphic*, provided a special issue for blacks in March 1925. The chief editor was Alain Locke and the issue appeared with title of "Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro." Amy Helene Kirschke emphasizes the significance of the magazine: "It was the first comprehensive study devoted entirely to Harlem, and it contained the viewpoints of blacks and whites, women and men, scholars, sociologists, civil leaders, and poets. It explored every aspect of life there, including the opportunities and excitement and the disappointments and problems" (180).

Publishing, however, was excessively challenging and rough for an African American writer. Since writers usually cannot make a living from writing, the blacks were even more handicapped, as Sterling Brown says, mostly because of racial prejudices (200). He expressed how hard to publish for the blacks in a striking comparison: "Magazine offices, daily newspapers, publishers' offices are as tightly closed to us in America as if we were pure non-Aryans in Berlin" (202).

The writings of the era were chiefly autobiographical and made up of memories. Vernon Loggins says that black Americans contributed a great deal to the genre of memoir in the American literature (4). Personal experiences and racial attitudes determine the writings of the blacks. They prefer to share what they have been exposed to. They have different memories, experiences and traumas. Richard K. Barksdale comments that "the roots of the black autobiography syndrome lie deep in a soil fertilized by American racism and watered by the tears of the oppressed" (Barksdale, 2004: 100). Autobiography enabled blacks to create their own histories that include first-hand experiences and testimonies that have been rejected from the mainstream history of Western tradition (Barksdale, 2004: 100).

Some of the distinguished works of the era were Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923), Jessie Redmon Fauset's *There Is Confusion* (1924), Walter White's *Fire in the Flint* (1924), and *Flight* (1926), McKay's *Harlem Shadows* (1922), Countee Cullen's *Color* (1924), and Langston Hughes's *The Weary Blues* (1926) and *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* (1926), Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929). These works were among the most anthologized and referenced publishing and accomplishments of African American writers.

As it is seen, the leading philosophers helped a great deal to the new writers. Moreover, supports from the whites are also noteworthy. Those black writers also needed help from the whites as well as from black intellectuals to achieve their goals. To give an example, we can include names such as Waldo Frank, Carl Van Vechten, Victor F. Calverton (Singh, 2004: 25). White patrons had great roles in the prospering of Harlem Renaissance and their generous support passed beyond the borders of Harlem (Kellner, 2004: 53).

In 1924, Charles S. Johnson gave a party which brought together the blacks and whites. According to Warrington Hudlin, Harlem artists intended to access to publishing cycles via white intelligentsia. On the other hand, the whites met with the blacks who represented "the uninhibited man that they idealized", and "the noble savage, the carefree child of nature" (9). Van Vechten introduced black and white

world to each other and managed to draw attention to new emerging black musicians, writers, and performers (Perry, 2004: 18).

Bruce Kellner gives an example of white patronage in *"Refined Racism": White Patronage in the Harlem Renaissance* for Arthur and Joel Spingarn brothers:

> *They devoted their lives to racial equality as the leading twentieth-century abolitionists and constant supporters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and its interests, motivated by the indifference of the white race, the despair of the black race, and the driving need they felt for integration (59).*

Kellner defines the relationship between the white patrons and the black writers, and at the same time justifies its necessity. By this way, the other whites may be attracted and the despair of the blacks may be removed.

David Levering Lewis establishes in *Reading the Harlem Renaissance* how patrons were needed for the black writers no matter how talented they were: "Toomer, McKay, Hughes, and Cullen possessed the rare ability combined with personal eccentricity that defined the artist, but the Renaissance not only needed more like them but a large cast of supporters and extras" (133).

Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, like others, had a white patron. Hughes appreciated Charlotte Mason's encouragement for "black advancement" and "liberal causes" (Miller, 2004: 36), although he had conflict with her and broke from her in the end. He intensely supported that blacks have greater roles than she thought and rejected her reductive views on blacks (Miller, 2004: 36).White patrons played effective roles on black writers and promoted the black publishing and press. Without them, Harlem Renaissance would be a rather weak movement in scope. With the help of them, it reached masses not only in the United Sates but also throughout the world.

To sum up, Harlem Renaissance empowered the black creativity and enabled self-definition for the blacks, and it became a kind of "seed-bed" for the later generations of the black writers to come (Birch, 2004: 120). Harlem artists agreed and acknowledged that they could solve racial issues with their art and "cultural

acceptance" (Kirschke, 2004: 185). In contrast to the Lost Generation's isolated members like Gertrude Stein and F. Scott Fitzgerald, African-American writers transformed the social, economic and political reality of the black life into American art by functioning as cultural translators (Steward, 2007: 16).

It should be noted that Harlem Renaissance did not solve the economic problems and poverty for the blacks. Harlem riots of 1935 due to unemployment and racial politics ended the glory of the Renaissance which coincides with Hughes's revolutionary poems. The alert of such event was signaled by the Great Depression which affected the whole country. However, Harlem Renaissance proved and showed the blacks the importance of social unity. When they were united, they endured and coped with racial handicaps more easily; and resisted and opposed to rigid racism.

One of the consequences of the Renaissance was to lay out the foundation for the Civil Right Movement and The Black Arts movement which presented a more "militant attitude" toward American racism with the slogans such as "Black Power," "Black Pride" and "Black is Beautiful" (Beach, 2003: 130). The psychological and sociological groundwork of such movements were built in this period.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AMERICAN DREAM OR AMERICAN DELUSION

This chapter aims to define the concept of the American Dream along with its variations in meaning, perception, and presentation. There is no single description for the concept; rather it has multidimensional descriptions for different people, class, gender and race. What it means, for instance, for a white American man may not be the same what it means to an African-American woman. Furthermore, the chapter particularly deals with what the concept means for Langston Hughes.

First of all, American Dream has been a controversial notion in American culture and society. It refers to achieving a particular success in one's life through hard work: "Success goes to those who deserve it, those who have used their talents and seized their opportunities" (Musick and Wilson 1998). The underlying belief is that anyone may achieve to realize his dream. This was what attracted thousands of immigrants from all over the world to the "land of opportunity." Such a mindset caused evidently the perception that American Dream is mostly associated with opportunity. One can refer to the Declaration of Independence (and its most basic tenets: Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness) and Manifest Destiny (the spirit of westward expansion) for the historical context of the term which has been a utopic expectation and destination, a goal of life, and a target for specific time and for specific people. In spite of its inconsistency, contradictions, and backtracks, it has lead people into particular directions when one looks at the American history.

The concept of the American Dream has surpassed many prevailing ideologies and it has been integrated with the nation. Jim Cullen expresses how it becomes the part and core of the identity: "The term seems like the most lofty as well as the most immediate component of an American identity, a birthright far more meaningful and compelling than terms like "democracy," "Constitution," or even "the United States"" (Cullen, 2003: 5). What is more, the metaphor creates an impression that the concept is peculiar to this country and any citizen can benefit it. It evokes, in the first glance, a conception that it is a privilege for every American.

Nevertheless, when one is exposed to the real side of the story, the concept becomes not more than delusion and deception.

Secondly, many immigrants arrived to America with fresh hopes and dreams. It was a kind of "Promised Land" especially for the Jews and Puritans when the continent was becoming an allure for the "dreamers"; and even before the Puritans, the founders of the first colonies had a dream: "to get rich" (Cullen, 2003: 16-34). As it is seen, financial issue was also at the very center of the dream. The situation for African Americans, however, was not the same case with those immigrants. They did not go with their own wills; however, they were forcibly taken there. Therefore, the American Dream was not equivalent to black Americans as it was to the other Americans. Moreover, although the Dream may have made sense for them once they were freed, their full reconciliation with the concept was still problematic: "African Americans had to wait until the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1867, two hundred years after first arriving in North America, to become citizens, and wait another hundred years before they could exercise the rights of citizens everywhere in the nation" (Steward, 2007: 13). It took such long years for African Americans to have similar rights of other citizens. However, their social and economic status did not improve at once after those years. For the African American condition, we can say that it was mostly a quest for equality (Cullen, 2003: 8). That is to say, the demand of racial equality made up their dreams. After they were freed, their struggle consisted of getting the dream of racial equality which would enable freedom in the sense that white Americans enjoyed.

The variation of the concept, as it was already stressed, for various groups is explained in *Work, Race and the American Dream*: "The promise of opportunity contained in the American dream and its frequent and inevitable denial in reality affects not only social classes differently but also members of different racial groups" (Musick and Wilson 1998). We can conclude that African Americans were not only the group that was excluded when "all men are created equal" was declared. Women and Native Americans, for instance, were also denied equality as they were not "ideal citizens" ("Jefferson, for example, thought farmers with small holdings to be ideal citizens.") and lacked "virtue" that those people possessed (Cullen, 2003:

51). Those groups were not considered ideal citizens from the foundation of the country. Therefore, they lacked certain privileges throughout the history of the U.S.A.

The slavery and the mentality of liberty that the American Revolution brought about collided with each other and created a so-called hypocrisy. Abraham Lincoln was concerned deeply with this issue: "Lincoln saw himself as a patriotic conservative, a man seeking to defend an understanding of American identity that was now being actively challenged by slaveholders and their apologists" (Cullen, 2003: 98). He did not want American identity got harmed and ended slavery which started the period of Dreams for the blacks.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the first World War and its afterward opened a new phase for African Americans: "World War I was a time of rising power and consciousness for black Americans: they served under unconscionable segregated conditions; they helped to win a victory for "democracy" abroad, and yet were subjected to racial terrorism at home" (DuPlessis, 2001: 4). The ironies like mentioned above were clustered in the American Dream. While this unstable condition prevented the dream of good life; it forced to the way of the dream of equality. Furthermore, they understood that they could achieve it if they believed.

Thirdly, the American Dream has been employed in several literary texts with various interpretations exclusively in the 20th century. Benjamin Franklin, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, and many others handled the concept differently. Moreover, there were "tales of poor boys (and, later, girls) who, with nothing but pluck and ingenuity, created financial empires that towered over the national imagination (and in some cases towered over the national landscape as well) (Cullen, 2003: 60). Those stories were about from rags to rich. On other hand, Langston Hughes also heavily employed this concept in his poetry. His approach differs from other writers listed above for predominantly his experiences out of his *race*. He approached and analyzed the American Dream from a perspective which covers African American history and content. First of all, Hughes was conscious and so accordingly reflects in his poetry that his race was rejected a full participation in

the American dream (Smith, 2004: 48). Being aware of such repudiation lead Hughes to compare the blacks with the recent immigrants in *My America*:

> *Yet many Americans who cannot speak English – so recent is their arrival on our shores – may travel about the country at will securing food, hotel, and rail accommodations wherever they wish to purchase them. I may not. These Americans, once naturalized, may vote in Mississippi or Texas, if they live there. I may not. They may work at whatever job their skills command. But I may not. They may purchase tickets for concerts, theaters, lectures wherever they are sold throughout the United States. I may not. They may repeat the Oath of Allegiance with its ringing phrase of "liberty and justice for all," with a deep faith in its truth – as compared to the limitations and oppressions they have experienced in the Old World. I repeat the oath, too, but I know that the phrase about "liberty and justice" does not fully apply to me. I am an American – but I am a colored American (1943).*

Hughes's statements about the lack of basic rights of citizenship for the blacks which are presented to the new immigrants show the contradiction of the promises of the Dream. He never forgets the racial wall that is nearly impossible to climb.

Hughes's ideas were shaped in the time of High Modernists who are described as follows: "Emerging early in the twentieth century with their deep feelings of dislocation and discontinuity, they attempted to generate an aesthetic that reflected their feelings about their industrialized, materialistic, post–World War I world…" (Tracy, 2004a: 4). Hughes reflected such feelings of his race by taking aesthetic values into consideration. The specific post-war era had effects as well as racial experiences, because the time was economically challenging especially for the blacks. One of the pillars of the American Dream is upward mobility which is associated with economic and social advancement (Cullen, 2003: 8). Hughes advocated such mobility for his potential black readers.

Throughout his literary career, Hughes mostly preferred democracy and liberation related themes such as humanism, free speech, integration as well as sore realities of the black lives like racism and poverty (Miller, 2004: 57). When we look at Hughes's subject themes, hardships and joys, defeats and triumphs are penetrated together along with black energy and creativity and general disillusionment (Tracy,

2004b: 111). As it is seen, he travels between contradictions of the American society and hypocrisy. Steven Tracy suggests that: "His work is a profound and courageous embrace of American cultural ideals in the face of shameful sociopolitical actualities." (Tracy, 2004b: 86). On the one hand, one witnesses Hughes's optimism of all kind of equalities for all. For instance, his poetry, as Sander claimed, "asserted blacks as fully complex, fully human, and thus equals in the American democratic experiment" (107). On the other hand, Hughes's pessimism strikes that whatever blacks do in terms of struggle, they will gain nothing at the end. At this point, Hughes presents the deferred dreams of America. This kind of dilemma which leads people to empty expectations is what Hughes handles in poetry and in other genres.

Hughes's understanding and grasping of the Dream coincides and matches with Alain Locke's: "And certainly, if in our lifetime the Negro should not be able to celebrate his full initiation into American democracy, he can at least, on the warrant of these things, celebrate the attainment of a significant and satisfying new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual Coming of Age" (165). Their common belief was that although there existed no seemingly glimpse of opportunity, it will come one way or another. They did not lose their faith nor fell into complete despair. This can be seen in Hughes's "Dreams" in which the significance of the dream and recommendation for people holding fast them is penetrated:

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow. (32)

It can be interpreted that the fields are only productive with dreams. But the field, figuratively, is frozen for now for the blacks. They are waiting for the arrival of spring in which captivating snows will melt down and they will embrace the freedom. So, the metaphors composing of natural elements precisely show a hopeful expectation. The expectations are presented also in *My America* through various statements: "Here the voice of democracy is still heard", "majority opinion

condemns the Klan", "America is a country where Roland Hayes *can* come from a log cabin to wealth and fame" Lastly he expresses that:

> *But we know, on the other hand, that America is a land in transition. And we know it is within our power to help in its further change toward a finer and better democracy than any citizen has known before. The American Negro believes in democracy. We want to make it real, complete, workable, not only for ourselves – the thirteen million dark ones – but for all Americans all over the land (1943).*

These statements show the faith in the American democracy in spite of several racial obstacles and in the faith of end of violence. Hughes dreamt an equal land not only for African Americans but also for all oppressed groups, genders, and classes.

Hughes's father, James Hughes left America and his family as he had realized he would not fulfill his dreams in a country in which racial codes did not allow a change for successful living and practicing his job (Williams and Williams, 2007: 107). In other words, Hughes's father left the United States due to lack of opportunities. And he got success in Mexico that vindicated his previous assertions and claims. Hughes paid visits to him and realized that his father's anger is great to the blacks for they let the whites to exploit them. He also wanted Hughes to leave the States as he thought the latter could not make a living from writing because of his color. Of course, Hughes did not abandon the United States; however, he was seemingly, impressed that blacks must not let the whites exploit them. Once can see its traces and evident in Hughes's poetry.

The idea of leaving the United States for West Africa was an alternative option thought and planned by specific black Americans, like Marcus Garvey, as they understood they would not actualize their dreams. Therefore, they were in search of different choices. Hughes's visiting of Africa compensates his desire to see it firsthand because he feels connected to it so much and he managed to embrace "the inherent beauty of Africa"; there was no such darkness, when it is referenced to *The Hearth of Darkness by* Joseph Conrad, as Jeffrey A. Schwarz puts forward "rather than its darkness; perhaps the only "horror" he saw while in Africa was the prevalent

European colonialization that was taking place there" (128-34). Africa did not meet with Hughes's original expectations. He was completely alien to the culture and understood that he could not adapt there. He understood also that he was an American and part of her culture. So, he dived into the American dream and searched for his and other blacks' place in it. Smith argues the possibilities and ironies of the American Dream in Hughes's texts:

> *The basic themes regarding the American dream and its possibilities for the black man were always present in his poetry. The tension between the unrealized dream and the realities of the black experience in American provided the dynamic. This tension between material and theme laid the groundwork for the irony which characterized Hughes's work at its best (50).*

Consequently, considering these remarks about the origin of the American Dream, its place in African American contexts, and Hughes's point of view; this study presents the analysis of Hughes's poem in terms of race, gender, and class. The relationship between African Americans and the American Dream will be established in the next chapter. Later, the place of black women in the American Dream will be argued. Lastly, the American working class' familiarization and gradual acquaintance with the American Dream will be presented.

CHAPTER THREE

POETICS OF BLACKNESS

3.1. UNDERSTANDING EMERSON

Ralph Waldo Emerson constructs the definition, mission, and duty of a poet: "The poet has a new thought; he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune. For the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet" ("The Poet," 68). As many other African American artists of Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes's poetry was built up on race concerns and issues. Hughes wrote every aspect of blacks he witnessed, experienced, heard, and read. Hughes can be evaluated as a poet who has racial experiences to unfold as Emerson specifies. What makes Hughes significant for our study is that he did not clash with his identity; instead he internalizes his origin and blackness. Hughes rejected any kind of racist and segregation policies and he was one of the "outspoken critics" of such attitudes in the American society (Leach, 2004: xiii). The poems studied in this chapter reveal the desire of the poet to represent African Americans and to speak on behalf of them. Hughes's attempt in the poetry is in the similar line to Emerson's following remarks:

> *And further, I will not dissemble my hope, that each person whom I address has felt his own call to cast aside all evil customs, timidities, and limitations, and to be in his place a free and helpful man, a reformer, a benefactor, not content to slip along through the world like a footman or a spy, escaping by his nimbleness and apologies as many knocks as he can, but a brave and upright man, who must find or cut a straight road to everything excellent in the earth, and not only go honorably himself, but make it easier for all who follow him, to go in honor and with benefit ("Man the Reformer," 101-102).*

The passage can be read as an encouragement for anyone who is willing to be bold enough to face with limitations, barriers, and obstacles. In this respect, this

chapter aims to analyze Hughes's racial poems in terms of Emersonian understanding.

The poems show that Hughes claimed his African American identity and he was proud of it. Moreover, he believed in the progress and getting success with this identity. In this point, it is necessary to see how Emerson regards of being progressive: "It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive" ("Nature 1836," 26). In the Emersonian mindset; progress plays an important part for the development of both individuals and societies. Hughes believed in progress in black individual and Afro-American society. This belief is reflected explicitly in the poems. This was not only a belief, but a source of motivation.

In order to understand Hughes's role during the Harlem Renaissance, one can look at his poems and stance. Similarities can be drawn between Hughes and Emerson if we take into account their importance for the masses they addressed. For example; Emerson became a celebrated lecturer bespeaking "the spiritual and literary beliefs, values, and attitudes of many nineteenth-century Americans" (Fuller, 2007: 27, 28). Likewise, Hughes became a representative for the Afro-American community; and their beliefs and attitudes were covered in Hughes's poetry. Moreover, Emerson was able to "ignite in others an empowering sense of self-reliance" (Mott, 2000: 61-62). Hughes aimed to create a self-reliant society which had been subjected to discrimination for more than fifty years and showed a way of racial struggle through self-trust. Emerson gave importance to the racial struggle, too. Finseth argues for Emerson that "Drawing upon contemporary theories of race, history, and natural science, he developed an understanding of national destiny that envisioned racial struggle as integral to the ascent and inevitable union of the United States" (Finseth, 2005). Especially after the Civil War, Emerson insisted on the basic equality of all people (Field, 2001). In this part, we see how Hughes performed the racial struggle and emphasized on racial equality.

Hughes's artistic creativity flourished in 1920s, during the Harlem Renaissance. He was inside of the circle of the prominent writers. He had financial problems like many of his counterparts. He grumbles, for instance, at the very

beginning of his second autobiography *I Wonder as I Wander* from the scarcity of job availabilities (39). As a black writer, he had difficulty in finding job in magazines whereas the job was wide open to his white colleagues. Moreover, the magazines were not interested in "Negro themes" as Hughes argues (*I Wonder*, 2003: 40). White opportunity appears in Hughes's literary career by blocking him getting employed in editorial jobs and he confesses that they were accepted as they were whites and he was not as he was colored. He states the racial inequalities from his experiences and applies it to whole society. Due to lack of such privileges, he sought to travel to South by encouragement of Mary McLeod Bethune, the president of Bethune-Cookman College. She highly recommended Hughes that he made a poetry reading tour as she believed people needed poetry. She told Hughes that: "Thousands of Negro students would be proud and inspired by seeing you and hearing you. You are young, but you have already made a name for yourself in literary circles, and you can help black students to feel that a Negro youth can amount to something in this world in spite of our problems" (*I Wonder*, 2003: 41). So, Hughes slowly became a famous black poet who would inspire younger generations with his poetry and help them to run towards their dreams. In this point we should see the portrait of a man that Emerson praises that Hughes carries the features: "A man is a method, a progressive arrangement; a selecting principle, gathering his like to him wherever he goes" ("Spiritual Laws," 87).

Emerson supported the abolitionists and believed in the freedom of black man. However, his approach showed differences. In one of his journal entries, he writes that "But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element of a new & coming civilization, for the sake of that element no wrong nor strength nor circumstance can hurt him, he will survive & play his part" (Spring-Summer 1844-journal entry, qtd in Sacks, 127). We can infer that, Emerson had a confidence and trust for black man that he could achieve his freedom. In interpretation of Emerson's 1863 poem "Voluntaries", Peter S. Fields comments that: "Whites might take credit for 'freeing slaves,' but genuine freedom had to be self-made" (Field 2001). We can assert that Emerson believed in the blacks that they could acquire full freedom with self-reliance as well as he believed in white Americans. This is the approach Hughes

embraces in his poems. He pushes blacks to get their freedom themselves instead of waiting help from white Americans by instilling Emersonian self-reliance.

Hughes's most known poem is presumably "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." The poem shows how profound Hughes's thoughts on his race from the very young age; because, he wrote it when he was only 19 years old. The poem presents the strength of human spirituality from ancient times to the present days; and the rivers, the Congo, the Niger, and the Nile, remind the poet how slaves were carried and sold as well as Abraham Lincoln who spent great effort to end the slavery (Miller, 2004: 25-26). The poem suggests a long history of suffering, endurance, survival, and achievement (Leach, 2004: 12). In the poem, the narrator expresses: "My soul has grown deep like the rivers" (23). Deep refers to the history of his African ancestry and he includes himself and his race to the pages of history when they are denied as equals. It has a long history and Africa is believed where humanity started. It shows his existence on the stage of history. Deep also refers to wounds. Their history in America is the history of pain and suffers. The prolonged years of slavery, Segregation polices and lynching campaigns have deepened the wounds on the blacks. Hughes, in this poem, "joins affirmative blackness to a universal human quest, by putting into a global context the racial stresses and demands of the United States" (DuPlessis, 2001: 95). This poem can be handled as an excellent example of Hughes's race poems; it is a prototype of Hughes's racial poems.

Hughes shows his awareness to his race and he has command of his history in the poem. Emerson explains the doctrine of compensation: "The man is all. Everything has two sides, a good and an evil. Every advantage has its tax. I learn to be content. But the doctrine of compensation is not the doctrine of indifferency" ("Compensation," 145). This is the doctrine Hughes applies in this poem. On the other hand, Hughes represents the black history as an individual. This individuality can be read as Emersonian "One Man" expanded in "The American Scholar":

> *The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man,—present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier (150).*

This chapter is divided into three categories: in the first part, the poems that embrace the black race are studied. In the next part the poems that refer the specific historical facts are studied. In the third part, the poems that argue Americanization of blacks are studied. Through the chapter black individualism is focused. Meantime, Emerson advocated a doctrine of individualism (Buell, 2003:1). In Emersonian individualism; the individual man and mind is elevated, praised, and respected regardless of origin (ethnicity, religion, gender, race and class). This can be better understood if we look at "History" essay: "There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand" ("History," 1).

3.2. EMBRACING THE BLACK IDENTITY

For Langston Hughes, writing for color issues was unavoidable as he confronted color problem not only in his country but also in other countries he visited, like in South America. Hughes got astonished, for instance, with the triple color line in which "pure-blooded Negroes" are at the bottom while the mixed races were in the middle and pure whites and nearer whites are at the top in Cuba and this was a common practice to all West Indies (*I Wonder,* 2003: 45). He saw how there are sharp social divisions there. In Haiti, on the other hand, he would find out that people are divided according to the darkness or lightness of the skin (*I Wonder*, 2003: 59). That is why he developed an understanding of an overall perspective in which there is no racial lines and discrimination. Therefore, he wrote poems which show that blackness is not different from whiteness. Additionally, he did not get ashamed of blackness. So, here are the poems dedicated to the blacks who are at peace, reconciled, and compatible with his race and who designate a worldview and goals in their lives accordingly.

Hughes's discourses in these poems are constructed to reveal the truth. The truth can be handled in two ways: to show people that black is not inferior the same as white is not superior. He presents equality as truth. The other truth is to reflect

blackness with its nakedness. He does not attempt to exaggerate and hyperbole the reality of the blacks. This method recalls Emerson's statement about the relationship between telling the truth and the health of the community. He argues that: "Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society" ("Prudence," 68). It needs to tell the truth to the society. The proceeding of the lies corrupts the individual which causes later the corruption of the society in Emersonian understanding. We see that Hughes adopted this understanding as well.

Emerson's commitment to cultural awakening by energizing independent individuals (Buell, 2003:103) is similarly aimed in Hughes's poetry. By telling the truth, or revealing the hidden and unexpressed beliefs of the blacks, Hughes opened the path of an awakening which creates Emersonian self-reliance. The truth is presented in order to create a self, cultural, and communal awakening with the method of self-reliance.

Hughes reflects the bitter reality of his race briefly yet effectively in America in "Lament for Dark Peoples" which can be read as a critique of human advancement and the rise of the civilization. What is criticized is that while one part of the humanity benefits from the civilization, the other part suffers because of it. Gary Collison, in "Emerson and Antislavery", argues about Emerson's "placing the contemporary subject of slavery versus freedom in the context of the moral development of humankind and civilization" (Collison, 2000: 201). The poem powerfully presents the true realities from black eyes. In this context, Hughes tried to say that white Americans built their civilization on the land of Native Americans and on the works of African Americans. Throughout the poem, white people are drawn as "enemy" of both black and red men. The title is significant in terms of arousing particular feelings such as pity, mercy, and compassion. One can suppose that the choice of title runs in with Hughes's approach to the race. Emerson suggests that "Men of character like to hear of their faults; the other class do not like to hear of faults; they worship events; secure to them a fact, a connection, a certain chain of circumstances, and they will ask no more" (Character 52). Hughes talks about both minus and plus of Afro-American society. Positive and negative sides take place in

his poems. Black people were intimated, enslaved, tortured, and exploited; and these realities are critically explored in the poem.

In the first stanza, the narrator identifies himself/herself with victim of the New Land. In fact, this can be also Hughes's own ancestral background; because his maternal grandmother, Mary Langston, has both Indian and African blood:

I was a red man one time,
But the white men came.
I was a black man, too,
But the white men came (39).

The second stanza and the first two lines of the last stanza bare deeper meanings. First of all, it is a good observation as well as summarization of the American history. Second of all, the process of dispossession of those people was dramatized artfully. And finally, the narrator admits that they were entrapped in the system of the whites.

They drove me out of the forest.
They took me away from the jungles.
I lost my trees.
I lost my silver moons.

Now they've caged me
In the circus of civilization (39).

The most remarkable word in the poem is the circus which is apparently used as a metaphor for the slavery. Also, the term implies a kind of "the constructedness of the animal trope" (DuPlessis, 2001: 130). In this case, Hughes bravely confronts the perception of his race. An angry tone can be felt; partly because we sense no proper condition of dreaming of hopeful future. The chapter starts with this poem in order to show how the Afro-American condition is conceived in their history. We see the lack of any positive instances in the initial years of black history in the U.S.

In this poem, Hughes informs the readers the reality of slavery. The narration of slavery stands for a desire of liberty. Worley acknowledges that Emerson thinks that "The demise of slavery and the extension of liberty is a measure of civilization

and “the instinct of man to rise, and the instinct to love and help his brother” is a necessary movement built into the foundations of the state and the natural order” (Worley, 2001: 71). As we see in the poem, Hughes thinks similarly to Emerson. The rise and freedom of black man would help the American civilization positively.

Hughes continues to emphasize the historical reality with the narration of the process of taking Africans forcibly to Americas as dispossession. The issue of dispossession is elaborated with a metaphor of seed in “Black Seed” where blacks were:

Driven before an alien wind,
Scattered like seed
From far-off places (130).

Western forces are depicted as alien wind which took the blacks to the unknown lands and peculiar geographies; and blacks were “Cut by the shears / Of the white-faced gardeners-” (130) We can see a dramatic portrayal of forced scattering of African-rooted people all around the world. Here the truth can be conceived as an Emersonian self-discovery which Emerson elaborates in “Nature 1836”:

> *But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility (28).*

These two poems depict African Americans as a community who did not have control over themselves. They were kidnapped, made slaves, and forced to live in primitive conditions for long years. Later, we read a dream of departure from the lands where they did not find the “true happiness” in the poem “Our Land” which lists the features of an imaginary place for the blacks.

We should have a land of sun,
Of gorgeous sun, …
We should have a land of trees,
Of tall thick trees …
Ah, we should have a land of joy,
Of love and joy and wine and song,

And not this land where joy is wrong (33).

In this poem, there is a planning of future which arises from historical realities. Emerson argues that "In the thought of to-morrow there is a power to upheave all thy creed, all the creeds, all the literatures of the nations, and marshal thee to a heaven which no epic dream has yet depicted" ("Circles," 125). Here is goal setting for the black community and asking them to be loyal and faithful to it. Hughes makes a plan for the future at the moment of crisis by sustaining, energizing, and moralizing the masses; he creates a horizon with a depiction of a heaven after an ideal for tomorrow and coming days. He presents a hopeful waiting and believing. "Without dreams, there could be no vision of a better world" (Gougeon, 2007: 4). Gougeon's statement can be applied to this poem. We see the significance of dreams here. The vision of a better world is usually what we see in black literature. The poem sings for a better land and describes of a paradise, a Promised Land for the blacks. This dream of a heaven-like place refers to a hell-like life and treatment in the country they live, and dissatisfaction with the present situation. It offers collective hopes. The title signifies that "America does not accept us; we should have another land which will be ours." Emerson asserts that a man's wisdom can be judged by his hope ("Spiritual Laws," 84). Hopes reveal people's wisdom. Hughes refers to Afro-American hopes of better places in which they believe to live equally and freely.

It should be noted that the poem does not reflect Hughes's own ideas. Hughes did not want a separate land. His intention is, most probably, to reflect the feelings of certain black Americans who were fed up with socio-economic conditions and so in search of solutions. He must have reflected some public feelings or must have bluffed. Randall Fuller utters that "For Emerson, the literary would be an always fertile, sometimes communal, site where he might address and even mold perspectives, sympathies, and ideologies." And he continues as "As a practitioner of the literary, he aspired to provoke aesthetic transformation by summoning public feeling and mobilizing affect as well as thought" (Fuller, 2007: 7). It is important for Hughes to mobilize the thoughts of the black readers.

The poem can be more meaningful if one considers the comparison to other minorities from other countries. Hughes compares the position of the "Negroes" in the Unites States when he went abroad. For example in Japanese newspapers, he realized mentioning of Korean subjects of Japan is quite similar to the mentioning of the "Negroes" in the American press in terms of inclusion a racial identification tag especially in case of crime news. Also, there were not so much good news about them in media (*I Wonder*, 2003: 274). Therefore, it is easy to see which conditions lead Hughes to write this poem. The main argument of the poem is to achieve the dream of a better life in new geographies. This can be understood either as the migration of Southern blacks to Northern cities or as the desire of moving from the United States.

Harold Bloom asserts that Emerson's power stems from his self-deification (Bloom, 2007: 7). Even though the next poem is not necessarily a self-deification, it is at least Hughes's racial sublimation. So, "Negro" is the poem of acceptance of the poet of his race and his origin as well as justification of their present in history. The narrator in this poem uses simile to equate his skin to nature. His blackness is natural as the blackness of the night; in other words, his blackness is part of the nature. This poem includes references to African tradition and culture in which nature is one of the central elements. The narrator declares that there is peculiarity neither in his race nor in his color:

I am a Negro:
Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa. (24)

Hughes's employment natural elements to the poem can be viewed in Emerson's terms stated in "History":

> *What appears once in the atmosphere may appear often, and it was undoubtedly the archetype of that familiar ornament. I have seen in the sky a chain of summer lightning which at once showed to me that the Greeks drew from nature when they painted the thunderbolt in the hand of Jove. I have seen a snow-drift along the sides of the stone wall which obviously gave the idea of the common architectural scroll to abut a tower (8).*

Blending nature with the narration enriches significantly the effect of the poem. The poem establishes the statue of the blacks in the world history: they have been slave, worker, singer, and victim. This is not only what they have been; it also how they have been perceived. The poem also implies that that perception is constructed and imposed on the blacks. They were slaves in Caesar's and Washington's time; they were workers during the constructions of the pyramids and Woolworth Building; they were singers of sorrow songs in transatlantic slave trades.(This becomes a subject for another poem, "Afro-American Fragment" as distance in terms of time and space: "So long, / So far away / Is Africa."(129) Dead memories and old songs were the only things they possessed.) And finally, they were victims when their hands were cut off in the Congo by Belgians and they were lynched in Mississippi.

As it is seen, the poem is enriched through historical references. These references show how blacks were abused and exploited. However, more importantly they insinuate that "Negroes" were inside of the world civilization and helped it to raise it in various ways although they were generally in the background. But they were present in the course of the history. This poem is to convince the readers about the presence of the "Negroes". On the other hand, we do not see any positive images about "Negroes" in the poem. The narrator intends to show that their positions do not improve. They cannot and/or are not allowed to cross the imaginary line in any ways because of their races. On the other hand, the poem challenges thoughtfully those who were ashamed of their race. After expressing how Hughes criticized prejudice within the black race, German J. Bienvenu argues that *Mulatto*, 1935 play of Hughes, presents "the peculiar situation of blacks' harboring prejudices against fellow blacks" (23). Therefore, we can assert that Hughes does not only fight with whites' prejudices but also blacks', too.

After admitting the reality of the blacks and then revealing it, Hughes inserts enormously new ways of understanding of the struggle against those racial handicaps mentioned in above poems. Such a struggle fuels the progress of the black community. In "Compensation," Emerson presents the significance of marching forward: "The voice of the Almighty saith, "Up and onward for evermore!" We

cannot stay amid the ruins. Neither will we rely on the new; and so we walk ever with reverted eyes, like those monsters who look backwards" (148). Hughes masterfully uses that motivation in "Shadows", the poem of the collective struggle of the blacks for freedom. It is the understanding of the poet that they can realize their dreams. The poem whose tone is quite optimistic starts:

We run,
We run,
We cannot stand these shadows!
Give us the sun. (34)

The end is also impressive as it suggests a radical turning point:

We run!
We must break through these shadows,
We must find the sun. (34)

The transition is remarkable in the poem from "Give us the sun." to "We must find the sun." The beginning reveals that they were sentenced to shadows and "narrow space of stifling air." We understand that white hegemony is responsible from it. They tighten and squeeze them as well as oppress them. After explaining what they were exposed to, the narrator heralds a new page in their history by believing they can change their fate. The repetition of "We run" means both the acceleration of the struggle and a departure from their painful history. The so-called non-stop running stands for reaching the sun which can refer to getting rid of racial discrimination and burden of blackness; and embracing the sunshine and feeling the sunny days metaphorically.

Briefly, the studied poems manifest that Hughes valued his society and its values as much as he wanted to help it to rise and progress. These attempts make him an Emersonian man of character:

> *A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as the magnet arranges itself with the pole, so that he stands to all beholders like a transparent object between them and the sun, and whoso journeys towards the sun, journeys towards that person. He is thus the medium of the highest influence to all who are not on the same level. Thus men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong ("Character," 52).*

A Man of character is significant in a society, he speaks for them, gives important suggestions; and besides he consoles and comforts them. What is more, Hughes fought for equality promised in the American Dream. The American Dream for African Americans varied in "different *kinds* of equality: political equality (the rights of citizens in relation to the government), civil equality (the rights of citizens in the public sphere), and social equality (the rights of citizens in their personal dealings with each other)." (Cullen, 2003: 105). As long as such equalities are denied, their dreams will be deferred. Hughes's attempts can be regarded as demanding and struggling to reach such dreams of equalities.

Hughes's early poems are inclusive; in other words, he writes for a shared culture from the very beginning of his literary career and an identity from shared suffering (de Jongh, 2004: 68). He understands the problems of the community and writes accordingly to cure them and help them rise from the state of suffering to a state of welfare and equality. He embraces his own culture and he openly opposes those who are ashamed of the Afro-American identity. His poems propose a life of dignity and self-respect for the blacks. Instead of hiding their identity or trying to pass for white, Hughes shows the beauty of their race to the black Americans.

3.3. THE PAST AS A REFERENCE POINT

The poems analyzed in this part demonstrate the mental and physical states of the blacks. Realities of their social and economic conditions show parallelness with the past. The poet seeks improvements in the lives of the blacks. The black linguistic and musical forms enable Hughes to convey "a sense of the collective memory and voice of African Americans" (Hokanson, 2008: 131). In order to bring forward such collective memory, he needed to use common taste and appreciation which boosted his success and provided him to transport his messages. In this part, we see glances from the collective memories of the black Americans: "Subjected to white racism, disenfranchisement, violence, and exclusion, African Americans experienced "segregation from the "cradle to the grave." They strove for citizenship and respectability, but most recognized they needed shared goals and collective agency to achieve this, even just to survive" (McKinney, Jr. and Jones, 2005: 272).

Hughes offers an illuminated past in these poems. One of the purposes of poems set in the past is to show the black men's state of restlessness. The past is also useful in the way it sets examples for the future. Emerson praises Man Thinking in "The American Scholar": "Him the past instructs. Him the future invites" (150). Likewise, for Hughes the past should teach and shape the present and future. Hughes tells the stories of the old days in the poems. They do not stand only for tales and fables. They do not stand for agitation, either. They serve as instruction in present life. Emerson again highlights the function of the past: "The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past,—in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed" ("The American Scholar," 152). The past must be inseparable for an Emersonian scholar. As for Hughes; he always remembers and reminds the past. Again, he aimed to create awareness, to give directions to the readers and, to enlighten them. In "Nature 1844" Emerson develops the instruction of time from past to any time: "Every moment instructs, and every object; for wisdom is infused into every form. It has been poured into us as blood; it convulsed us as pain; it slid into us as pleasure; it enveloped us in dull, melancholy days, or in days of cheerful labor; we did not guess its essence until after a long time" (47). Past can sometime continue in the same way at present. Hughes experienced it himself in the South. For instance, At Meridian Hughes was warned by an old white gentleman that he should not read race-equality poems as there were folks who may not like them and so harm him (*I Wonder*, 2003: 81). Len Gougeon argues that in Emerson's age, corruption of particular institutions such as education, religion, and government limited or denied certain birthrights such as freedom, equality, and justice (2007: 18). Hughes's poem points out those limitations and denials.

On the other hand the past is a weakness for Afro-Americans. Emerson describes it more specifically:

> *Our strength grows out of our weakness. The indignation which arms itself with secret forces does not awaken until we are pricked and stung and sorely assailed. A great man is always willing to be little. Whilst he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the*

insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill. The wise man always throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point. The wound cicatrizes and falls off from him like a dead skin, and when they would triumph, lo! he has passed on invulnerable ("Compensation," 144).

Hughes's strategy to focus on past is to grow strength among the black society; and to take required lessons from it. Hughes acts just like the wise man Emerson exemplifies.

"Cross" puts forward the problems that mixed raced people encounter. In fact, such people are categorized for the portion of blackness in their parental background as mulatto, quadroon and, octoroon. This poem reveals the rape and sexual violence as well as inequality. The speaker is a mulatto child from a white father and a black mother. Historically, such children are especially in slavery time illegitimate and products of sexual assault. Throughout the poem, the mulatto narrator is in search of who is faulty and blameful in bringing him into this world because he does not know his aim, waiting for an uncertain future. For the inequality, while rich father was living in big house, the poor black mother was living in a cabin-like house:

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? (59)

This issue is later dealt in "Mulatto" in which the narrator boldly declares that he also belongs to white parent. "*I am your son, white man!*" (100) In this poem, the sense of belonging as well as politics and dilemmas of mulattos are questioned craftily. Hughes employs as much hatred speeches as he can to confront the sour reality of blackness such as: "A nigger night, / A nigger joy, / A little yellow / Bastard boy.", "*Naw, you ain't my brother.* / *Niggers ain't my brother.* / *Not ever.*" and "*Git on back there in the night,* / *You ain't white*." (100)

The identity crisis of colored people, in these two poems, is handled through the framework of Past. Hughes aimed to invite people to face with their past. Emerson acknowledges that: "But the moment the mind opens, and reveals the laws which traverse the universe and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What

is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched" ("The Divinity School Address," 103). In the poems, individual and social self-construction is traumatic. The sorrows remain almost unaltered. The questions asked by the protagonists raises inquires towards racial inequalities.

"Porter" clearly shows the hierarchy between whites and blacks. We do not know the age of the speaker in the poem. Regardless of his age, he calls "sir" to the person he serves:

I must say
Yes, sir,
To you all the time. (116)

This can be any poor black who has no property. The most basic theme of the poem is submission. The black race is represented as submissive to the white race who "owns the race" (116). The poem also shows who are powerful, ruler, law-maker, and owner in the country; there is a clear-cut comparison between the races. Later, there is a metaphor of mountain climbing. This represents the commonplace conditions of the African Americans in general:

All my days
Climbing up a great big mountain
Of yes, sirs! (116)

These lines remind us of the myth of Sisyphus who was cursed to carry a heavy stone to the mountaintop although he never accomplishes his duty. Likewise, the black Americans have a barrier before them hard to cross. The poem says that, like Sisyphus, an ordinary black has to work endlessly yet gaining nothing worthy at the end.

The first stanza of the poem "Workin' Man" is:

I works all day
Wid a pick an' a shovel.
Comes home at night,—
It ain't nothin' but a hovel. (119)

When we first read these lines, we remember the slavery days when the slaves used to work from the very early of the day till midnight. Hovel may be used

intentionally to refer to Uncle Tom and his cabin. Slaves had to live in primitive conditions. Hughes's aim is to show nothing changed for the behalf of the blacks. From working tools we can say that the worker is an agricultural worker. They are still engaged with the soil, but they did not yet own the land. The speaker's word choice underlines the severity of working conditions. However, in spite of hard working, there is no gain. Lastly, the circularity of time is detected; the purpose of its usage is to show there is no waiting for better days; the dreams are just deferred.

In these two poems the present condition of Afro-Americans reminds the poet of the Past. Hughes wanted advancement and progress, because in the Past, his race suffered deeply. According to Emerson, past can be power for the forward looking man: "The new position of the advancing man has all the powers of the old, yet has them all new. It carries in its bosom all the energies of the past, yet is itself an exhalation of the morning" ("Circles," 131).

In "Flight" we see a dramatic scene of an escaping black man in which the speaker tries to help him and commands him to run faster: "Plant your toes in the cool swamp mud. / Step and leave no track. / Hurry, sweating runner! / The hounds are at your back." (127) The running man is either a runaway slave fleeing from the white owners before the Civil War, or a free black man, who is accused of raping a white woman and is faced with lynching. Then we read the words of the running man:

No I didn't touch her
White flesh ain't for me. (127)

They can be what are in his mind while running, or repeating to himself in whispers, or shouting the men behind him to say that he is innocent. We see fear which is very associated with the black history in American context. He timidly tries to reject the acquisition if we take it as the second option.

Bosco remarks how Emerson become mouthpiece in Abolitionist movement from late 1840s and during 1850s and he adds that Emerson "adapted his moral conviction of "the infinitude of the private man" into denunciations of the inhumanity of slavery and spoke repeatedly against the infamous Fugitive Slave Law

after its passage in 1850" (31). Here we see that Hughes presented inhumanity towards a black individual that Emerson opposed and stood against. At the end of the poem:

Hurry! Black boy, hurry!
They'll swing you to a tree. (127)

The expected end for the running man is presented. Hughes defends in this poem that blacks are falsely accused. This poem can be applied to black life in the 1920s.

Hughes embarks on journey in the past to present race problems. The race problem in America is so rooted that it rest upon the superiority and inferiority. Anita Haya Patterson clarifies that: "In America, race was popularly defined as shared biological descent, and the widespread doctrine of racial inequality associated with this biological concept asserted the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race above all others" (4). Gougeon accounts for the way to renew a society in Emersonian tradition: "Through the practice of individual self-culture, Emerson believed, the entire society could be freed from the stagnation of the past and thus transformed and renewed" (145). Black society is freed in every possible means in Hughes's poetry. In fact, past is presented as something that must be get rid of but not forgotten. "Our discussion of self-reliance, heroism, and freedom has already shown that one of the essential functions of the hero is the liberation of humankind from the ravages of time and the tyranny of the past" (Gougeon, 2007: 147). So we can take Hughes as a hero who tried to redeem the pains of the past. He wanted black individual to get fully free from the strain of the past. However this does not mean to forget the past wholly. The past is always there to instruct and lead the way to the future.

3.4. AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND BLACK IDENTITY

This part presents the poems which reveal the practices of Americanized blacks, the events they are exposed to; and their reflection to the understanding of the American Dream. The poems are sequencing from the poetic attempts of getting through the American society to the belief of fully integration to it. Some of

Hughes's poems, according to Charles Johnson, symbolize "the new emancipation of the Negro mind" (171). Here the emancipation is presented through the cohesion of black society to white society. The American experience is expected, by the poet, to provide with some momentous gains. One of the gains can be listed as independence. In fact, for Emerson, achieving a total autonomy is quite essential (Bloom, 2007: 2). For the American experience; Hughes advocated autonomy of blacks. For the style of the poems; Hughes's language is strategic in a way that it is not only aimed to influence the African Americans but also to shape their perspective and mindset.

Anita Haya Patterson clarifies Emersonian self-reliance:

> *Less familiar than "trust," the concept of "reliance" was also commonly defined in nineteenth-century contract law as a potential source of liability, and referred to a relationship associated with the existence of a contract, whether implied or actual. Read in this context, Emerson's description of "self-reliance" not only designates, in the ordinary sense, dependence on one's own powers, judgment, and ability, it also represents a legal idea. The concept of "self-reliance" represents a privately reflexive but also social and contractual relationship—the self relying on itself—that the individual makes and authorizes as doctrine, society, and law to himself (90).*

This is what we read in Hughes's poetry; Hughes tries to legalize the black individualism as much as he can. For the self-reliance, Hughes contracts it with the white society. In a way, he demands a rightful entity. Therefore, the Americanized blacks needed self-reliance to deserve their places in the society. Because, they were ostracized community as it is seen in the first two poems below. The next poem, "I, Too" presumes being involved and included. The key to achieve it was through Emerson's famous motto, "Trust thyself" ("Self-Reliance," 20). Emerson also puts forward that "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, – that is genius" (Self-Reliance, 19). Emerson appears with a new understanding of truth: believing in yourself and in your race; and the belief of truth depends on your faith. Hughes's belief that black men are equal to white men becomes truth for him as well as for Afro-American society.

On the other hand, "Langston Hughes was a black internationalist, but much of his work was explicitly concerned with the struggle for black citizenship in the

United States, as well as with articulating the meaning and power of black cultural expression in the context of "Americanism" (Hutchinson, 2007: 4). Hughes embodies Americanism just as he embodies his "Negro" origin. They get along equally together in his identity and shape both his understanding and his stance. Hughes did not favor one to another; instead he dreamed of the blending of the two. But the discrimination was major block for any good intentions. Besides, Emersonian equality refers, according to Kerry Larson, to end of any kind of discrimination. Emerson reestablishes a "religion of democracy" in which equality becomes a means to connect each to all and this equality refers, according to Kerry Larson, to end any kind of discrimination of class, caste or tradition of rank which creates separatist groups in the society and dismember the society. Emersonian equality calls for things what can be related to individualism such as autonomy and self-realization (Larson, 2004).

Emerson contributes the conception of the significance of one's own ideas and truths:

> *The life of truth is cold and so far mournful; but it is not the slave of tears, contritions and perturbations. It does not attempt another's work, nor adopt another's facts. It is a main lesson of wisdom to know your own from another's. I have learned that I cannot dispose of other people's facts; but I possess such a key to my own, as persuades me, against all their denials, that they also have a key to theirs ("Experience," 99).*

Emerson urges people not to yield and surrender so easily but to fight for their own truths. In our case, Hughes takes the key Emerson mentions to unlock the door that stands before black Americans to integrate and unite.

"America" is a poem of great importance in respect to American experiences of the blacks as "outcasts". The role of Hughes's narrator is history writing and retelling stories from black point of view:

I am Crispus Attucks at the Boston Tea Party;
Jimmy Jones in the ranks of the last black troops
marching for democracy.
I am Sojourner Truth preaching and praying
for the goodness of this wide, wide land; (53)

These lines demand a rightful a place in the country for the blacks. The narrator justifies the existence of blacks in American history and democracy. This may have been written to make the black youth gain consciousness by encouraging tearing down the veil of disgrace. It tries to say "we can do it again as we did in the past." An individual is the measure of right, of truth, and of beauty in Emerson's view and he calls him/her that "you are the world" ("Spiritual Laws," 85). Therefore, self becomes the measure of everything which gives him/her a real freedom and self-judgment and others' critics on an individual do not matter.

Before Hughes went to Spanish Civil War as a war correspondent, Joe Louis became heavyweight champion of the world. Hughes says that "I do not believe Negro America has ever before or since had a national hero like Joe Louis… No one else in the United States has ever had such an effect on Negro emotions—or on mine. I marched and cheered and yelled and cried, too" (*I Wonder*, 2003: 307). This is one example of what success of a specific African American means for the rest. It can suggest that Hughes may match himself with Louis in terms of gaining a success in his field which can excite and energize the black masses. What black needed was national hero and Hughes aimed to create heroes among his readers. Moreover, we can get the impression from the example that friendship requires getting happy with friend's success. This can be applied to community to foster friendship and compassion among the members. It is vital when the community is constructing itself. The foundation, the substructure should be love and friendship. Emerson wrote for that principle: "I must feel pride in my friend's accomplishments as if they were mine, and a property in his virtues. I feel as warmly when he is praised, as the lover when he hears applause of his engaged maiden" ("Friendship," 41).

This is the poem of those who are isolated, alienated, denied opportunity, disinherited in America with the prototype of Black and Jew. In the very beginning of the poem, the narrator emphasizes that today's unwanted (like illegitimate) baby will be tomorrow's actor:

Little dark baby,
Little Jew baby,
Little outcast,
America is seeking the stars,

America is seeking tomorrow. (52)

The narrator asks himself somehow "What is America for me?" as a black citizen. The answer is the "dream, the vision, the star seeking I" (52). The comparison of past and present and future is so blatant in this poem. We, as the readers, are conducted to a poetic voyage from troublesome past to a hopeful future:

Out of yesterday
The chains of slavery;
Out of yesterday,
The ghettos of Europe;
Out of yesterday,
The poverty and pain of the old, old world,
The building and struggle of this new one, (52)

Here, the narrator takes two different races and put them into same category under the common and shared ordeal and pain. Sam McGuire Worley states that

> *Obviously, some catalyst was needed to help men reinterpret their society, to goad them into the re-creation of society in a way that more closely accorded with their deepest values and goals. But this guidance or goading had to be accomplished through persuasion and shared experience; almost by definition a more just social order could not be imposed upon society by an isolate individual or force (8).*

This passage can be applied to the struggles of Hughes's persona to form a society that have a unique dream and aim.

The narrator talks about building a new world. This can be achieved by demolishing the old one which reminds agony and bitterness. Here is call to everyone to bury the old world into the darkness of history and bring about a new understanding of brotherhood. The narrator's urge that "we should be the architects of peace" reflects Hughes's voice and wish within the American society. There is more guiding and leading like a highbrow into future than complaining about the past. For Emerson, Stephen E. Whicher claims that; "He stands outside his conventional society in the freedom and the solitude of outer space. The most he can do is to shake its security with occasional hints of his cherub scorn" (18). In this poem, similarly Hughes shakes those who accept the understanding of the separation.

Then the narrator lists what is associated with American Dream from the standpoint of African Americans:

America —
Hoping, praying
Fighting, dreaming (53)

These actions can be realized by any American as known in the concept of the American Dream. Hughes takes those actions and uses them in his poem to offer them to the outcasts.

Later, the lines "Knowing / There are stains / On the beauty of my democracy, / I want to be clean." (53) can be evaluated as an effort to make the country more beautiful and better for everyone. Here the tone is more being discontent with the present rather than rebellion. The expression of "I want to grovel / No longer in the mire." (53) stands for the conditions of the outcasts and desire to raise up. The next lines raise the question of identity:

Who am I?
I am the ghetto child,
I am the dark baby,
I am you
And the blond tomorrow (53)

They tell us the narrator puts himself in the American scene. And, the last stanza of the poem "America seeking the stars" (53) is the hopeful ending for the poem. John Patrick Leary argues Hughes's stance between his racial identity and his nationality in his essay comparing Hughes and Nicolás Guillén, a Cuban poet, and their acquaintances: "Hughes early on saw African American identity and American nationality as conflicting poles, and saw the former as constantly having to fight its exclusion from the latter" (Leary 2010). As seen in the poem, the narrator makes an effort to blend the identity and the nationality by Emersonian non-conformity: "It is much that he does not accept the conventional opinions and practices. That non-conformity will remain a goad and remembrancer, and every inquirer will have to dispose of him, in the first place" ("Character," 53). Hughes rejects the conventional perception of the segregation and proposes the mutual understanding for both parts.

The next poem "The South" is a well-articulated poem as it suggests the different dynamics of the South and North of America. Before analyzing the poem, we need to know that, Hughes presented his poetry in black schools such as Hampton and Howard through his Southern trip program which enabled him an extraordinary chance to interact with black students who needed courage and experience Southern discrimination by the first hand. He witnessed himself the Southern way of treatment to blacks and understood the core of the black-white relations in the society. At Hampton, he realized, for example, "ever-present danger" for the blacks in Jim Crow South. He heard from a student, Dorothy Maynor, two different tragic news about the fatal results of segregation and mob violence. A woman named Juliette Derricotte was injured in a car crash but she was not accepted to the nearest white hospital and died before she was taken to a black hospital far away. In the second incidence, a young coach was beaten to death by a white mob when he was going to see his team to play the first game of the season, for he had parked his car mistakenly in a white parking area (*I Wonder,* 2003: 73). However, there would not permit a protest meeting by declaring that: "We educate, not protest." by both black and white heads of the institutes (*I Wonder,* 2003: 74). He would have spoken if there had been a meeting. This is what distinguishes Hughes, he wanted to express and talk instead of get silenced and accept the inequalities. This is what he believed as the American dream.

"The South" presents the personifications of both the South and the North: they are two different women. On the other hand, the black speaker tries to be with the North after being rejected by the South. The description of the South continues: "The magnolia-scented South. / Beautiful, like a woman, / Seductive as a dark-eyed whore, / Passionate, cruel, / Honey-lipped, syphilitic — / That is the South." (27) These tell a woman hard to convince to get married. "The lazy, laughing South / With blood on its mouth." (26) These lines refers to cruelty of the common practices of slavery. We imagine the images of whipped and killed slaves.

And I, who am black, would love her
But she spits in my face.
And I, who am black,
Would give her many rare gifts
But she turns her back upon me. (27)

Although he wants to be with the South and stay there, he is mercilessly rejected; the South does not accept and embrace him. The lack of means and despair of the narrator is implied here. So, this man should seek love in somewhere else. Once he realizes the fact of the North, he goes to her unwillingly:

So now I seek the North —
The cold-faced North,
For she, they say,
Is a kinder mistress,
And in her house my children
May escape the spell of the South. (27)

It symbolizes a relatively hopeful voyage of a poetic character and his dream of a better life in the bosom of the North who is "a kinder mistress." Hughes had a deep historical conscious that passes through the lines of the poem. This is the poem of the blacks who were not allowed to live peacefully in the South in the Reconstruction Period and who were subjected to Great Migration in order to search happiness and dreams in other places. They were the blacks whose dreams were deferred.

Langston Hughes showed the way of ethnic equality and pluralism to Americans and helped people to unify (Miller, 2004: 23). He also believed in all kind of equality in social and economic life of the people and supported a nascent equality among the centuries-long oppressed Afro-Americans. Experiencing and witnessing himself Southern Segregation, he advocated pluralism and a shared peaceful life among the American citizens regardless of their race, color and class. He advocated a way of life in which there is no Segregation in Emersonian understanding: "whilst the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man" ("The Divinity School Address," 106).

"I, Too" is a direct response to Walt Whitman and his poetic legacy. We can see a poetical acclaim: writing like Whitman, and showing directly his influence on him. Hughes could not find a berth on a ship bound for the USA and this inspired to "I, Too" (Leach, 2004: 27).

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table

When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then (46).

Here tomorrow signifies more than hope; it is a belief. The narrator presents his faith in the end of discrimination and segregation for the future full-heartedly. This imaginary house stands for America where the narrator is also brother in this country but for then he was not in part with the family: "I am the darker brother. / They send me to eat in the kitchen." (46).

The last line "I, too, am America." establishes the conditions of the blacks. Here, we clearly see Hughes's desire of integration with the white society in full terms. There is no idea of separation from the mainstream which is the reflection of the dream. Emersonian individualism is more than the mere hope (Bloom, 2007: 12). As well, we see Hughes left mere hoping in constructing the black individualism. George Kateb argues that Emerson's sentences are a declaration of faith (Kateb, 2007: 171). We can assert that Hughes's poems declare the similar faith. In this poem, the black individual is treated compassionately. He has an existence and he represents Emersonian singular person. Black is accepted as peer and companion individual in Hughes's poem. The black is as much individual as white is. Hughes treats the black as sovereign.

Hughes also creates a voice for those blacks who were silenced for long years. Emerson declares that:

> *Human character evermore publishes itself. The most fugitive deed and word, the mere air of doing a thing, the intimated purpose, expresses character. If you act you show character; if you sit still, if you sleep, you show it. You think because you have spoken nothing when others spoke, and have given no opinion on the times, on the church, on slavery, on marriage, on socialism, on secret societies, on the college, on parties and persons, that your verdict is still expected with curiosity as a reserved wisdom. Far otherwise; your silence answers very loud. You have no oracle to utter, and your fellow-men have learned that you cannot help them; for oracles speak. Doth not Wisdom cry and Understanding put forth her voice?" ("Spiritual Laws," 92).*

Silenced blacks now speak; and, they have oracles like Hughes who is willing to speak for them. Hughes helps the formation of black community which had no or a very low voice.

Tension of the state of both being ""free" (no longer a racially enslaved lifetime bond-laborer) and unfree (still racially oppressed)" is reflected in Hughes's poetry (Scott, 2006: 115). This tension is a reflection of African American mind, identity, and experience. "Let America Be America Again" is relatively a long poem of which prevailing theme is hope. The first stanza reveals the core of the dream: freedom.

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. (189).

(America never was America to me.) (189) this is line is repeated shows the deferred dreams. His American dream is summarized:

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. (190).

Life should be free for everyone. Opportunity must not be blocked. And equality must be felt. "Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men" ("Nature 1836," 11).

Then we have multi narrators, or one narrator speaks for all: poor white, Negro, red man, and immigrant. What can be inferred is that for Hughes there is no difference of race and class for the oppressed and exploited. He disregards discrimination by putting the subjects into the same category. This is very vital in the American context. He played an integrationist and inclusionary role for all Americans.

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.
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!
I am the man who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years (190).

Near the end of the poem:

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath —
America will be! (191).

The striking point in the poem is that Hughes speaks on behalf of the thousands. The "I" persona stands for the "we," a community. According to Emerson:

> *Culture, the height of culture, highest behavior consist in the identification of the Ego with the universe, so that when a man says, I think, I hope, I found,—he might properly say, the human race thinks, hopes, & finds,—he states a fact which commands the understandings & affections of all the company, and yet, at the same time, he shall be able continually to keep sight of his biographical ego (qtd in Bosco, 2000: 36).*

Hughes uses the dichotomy of I/We in Emersonian sense. In the poem, Hughes forces Afro-Americans to question their position in the American society, to push the boundaries and to define high standards for them.

One of the results of this chapter is to present that Hughes constructed an independent, emancipated black individual. "It is true, as we have seen, that in Emerson's early writings (1836–1844) there is a strong and even pervasive emphasis on personal renewal through the discovery of one's own inner divinity" (Gougeon, 2007: 158). Emerson's method was used in the poems analyzed in this chapter. Hughes referred the inner divinity. The fundamental aim of the chapter is to track the transition from individual to society. Hughes travelled between the black self and the black community in the previous poems.

To shape, to inform, and to lead a society must not be an easy task. It requires, first of all, a love. Emerson remarks that: "No institution will be better than the institutor. I knew an amiable and accomplished person who undertook a practical reform, yet I was never able to find in him the enterprise of love he took in hand. He adopted it by ear and by the understanding from the books he had been reading. All his action was tentative" ("Character," 54). An institutor must have love towards himself, his society, and his country. And we can conclude that Hughes really loved and embraced his blackness, his race, and his country in spite of all back draws. Anatol remarks Hughes's motivation in writing poems as "to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the larger American society without being naive as to the racial and class discrimination they had suffered" (242). Blacks are also the part of American mosaic. We should also underline that Hughes had a self-imposed mission to serve and uplift the race (Leach, 2004: 3). In order to uplift the race; it required mobility and liveliness. As Emerson states, "His life is a progress, and not a station" ("Compensation," 146). The community that Hughes tried to create based on mutual helping. People need each other; they need to be firmly clasped together. They are strong when they come together. The importance of solidarity and interdependence are shown in the poems.

Another result of this chapter is to present Hughes's historical conscious in the poems. Hughes aimed to prepare the necessary grounds for racial actions by recalling the sorrow of the past as well as to have responsive and sensitive readers. It is significant to know one's history in Hughes's poetry; because the state of continuum of the old memoires and sufferings and their remnants means deferred dreams. So, we see how these poems were written when the poet kept these issues in his mind in the context of American experience. He unburdens his heart with these poems; he tells what he kept inside of his heart and uncovers his inner feelings and emotions. He dreamed a world in which his race and skin color is accepted in his country. Lastly, we see that it needs both political and social commitment to nonconformity for every citizen which is revealed through self-reliant thinking (Patterson, 1997:81). Hughes advocated an independent way of thinking; an autonomy for black lives.

CHAPTER FOUR

BLACK WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

The Harlem Renaissance was mostly male-dominated movement. African Americans played significant roles in this era; however the majority of the actors were males. Therefore the subjects of the literature of the period tended to be male-oriented, too. There were, of course, female writers and poets, yet their numbers were limited to a few names. Langton Hughes's poetry, on other hand, can be evaluated as an attempt to fulfill a gap ignored by many Harlem artists. Hughes believed gender equality as much he believed race equality. He wrote poems about the issues concerning African American women which are sometimes passed over in academic studies.

As Hughes frequently referred to American Dream, we cannot ignore the relevance of the concept in this chapter. It should be noted that, for the context of American Dream, the circumstances of (black) women were not pleasant in Hughes's time. There was also a huge gap in terms of opportunities for men and women. Jim Cullen explains the relation between American women and American Dream: "Inequalities of opportunity *and* condition have been central features of the American experience for women, and while this has changed to some degree in modern times, the American Dream remains problematic. It has largely been a male dream, though one hopes that it does not have to be - will not always be - so" (119).

Emerson's and Hughes's perception of women shows similarity. Ralph Waldo Emerson's contributions to the cause of women's rights are little known as Len Gougeon argues in "Emerson and the Woman Question: The Evolution of His Thought." He played comparatively a substantial role for the liberation of the women during 1950s. Gougeon states that "Emerson's involvement with the women's movement, although initiated at a later date, approximates the trajectory of his experience with the antislavery movement" (Gougeon, 1998). We can add that Emerson extended his concern to marginalized groups of his time, including women (Gougeon, 2007: 141).

The statues of (black) women in American society disturbed both Emerson and Hughes in their own times. “After first experiencing the benefits of organization through their involvement in the antislavery movement” American women started to assemble in order to secure their own rights in the late 1840s (Gougeon, 1998). In that period when any support was crucial and critical for the benefit of the woman organization, Emerson sympathized for the movement. For the statue of women in any society Emerson declares that “And something like that position, in all low society, is the position of woman; because, as before remarked, she is herself its civilizer. With the advancements of society the position and influence of woman bring her strength or her faults into light” (“Woman,” 162). The reason why Emerson addresses to low society is to contrast the situation of American society. He must have indented to say that if the women’s position is low in low societies and if America boosts with being a high society, then we should raise the position of American women. “Emerson, then, took women’s issues very seriously and spent a great deal of time studying and contemplating the roles, rights, and responsibilities of women” (Gilbert, 2000: 245).

As clearly shown above, women wanted social reforms for their right, properties, and positions in Emerson’s time and Emerson supported women’s struggles and endorsed them in great extent. He states that “Any remarkable opinion or movement shared by women will be the first sign of revolution” (qtd in Gilbert, 2000: 216). Emerson includes women into social reforms which have been mostly conducted by men throughout the history. “He sought a comprehensive reform of American society and this, he felt, could be accomplished only if individuals thoroughly reformed themselves” (Gougeon, 1998). So, the individuals must reform themselves so that the society can be reformed. What is striking here is that there is no gender discrimination for reformation. All individuals are expected to join the reform regardless of their gender, race, and class. In this reform, women demanded their inalienable rights; and Emerson declared that “Their rights must not be refused” (“Woman,” 165). We said that Emerson urged the blacks to gain their freedom themselves. Likewise, he urged women to take their own rights. Those rights should not be presented as gifts to women by men: “Emerson’s was thus a very progressive opinion even for the 1850s, especially in anticipating contemporary feminism’s

emphasis that women not ask men for rights, thereby implying that those rights were men's property to give to women as a gift, but rather that women should grasp their rights for themselves" (Gilbert, 2000: 233).

According to Emerson, women are part of the divinity and they have equal rights to men's. "Emerson … insisted that all Americans, regardless of race or gender, had an inalienable right to freedom, equality, and justice" (Gougeon, 2007: 169). These expressions were very brave for the time they were uttered. In that time, in the American society, the rights of the women were not articulated by politicians, rulers and common men. Emerson even adopts the idea that the education should be available for all: "Let the public donations for education be equally shared by them, let them enter a school as freely as a church" ("Woman," 166).

In this point, it needs to mention specific women who had impact on the development of Emerson's ideas, opinions, and views towards women issues and organizations. Gougeon lists the major women that affected Emerson in the women's cause:

> *Emerson was personally aware of women's special contributions to the antislavery movement. He considered Lucretia Mott a "noble woman," and he had a high regard for Harriet Martineau, the British social reformer and antislavery advocate. His own wife, mother, and, eventually, daughters were early activists in the Women's Anti-slavery Society established in Concord in 1835, and when the Grimké sisters, Angelina and Sarah, lectured on antislavery in Concord, they stayed at the Emersons' home. Emerson's Aunt Mary Moody Emerson, a significant intellectual influence throughout his life, was also an early convert to the cause and encouraged her nephew to make similar commitment. These women, along with Henry Thoreau's mother and sisters, also members of the Concord Women's Anti-slavery Society, eventually persuaded Emerson to compose his first significant abolition address, "Emancipation in the British West Indies," delivered in Concord on 1 August 1844 (1998).*

Margaret Fuller had also a good relationship with Emerson and both of them affected their thoughts and ideas. Fuller's influence on Emerson was mostly about woman issues. "Fuller's ideas, transmitted to Emerson through their frequent conversations and correspondence, came to form the core of his thinking on women" (Gilbert, 2000: 211).

On the other hand, one can look at the relationship between Langston Hughes and his mother, Carrie, to understand his motives in writing poetry for black women. Regennia N. Williams and Carmaletta M. Williams conclude, after scrutinizing texts about Hughes, that "Carrie is presented all too often as the vagabond traveling mother who put her own interests ahead of her son's in her effort to "find herself" and a better life (107). She was in pursuit of her own dream which took her several states including Ohio, New York, Kansas, Missouri and Cleveland. Although Hughes may felt a distance towards his mother, he must have been affected by her self-reliance; and hence dedicated some of his poems to her free spirit.

Therefore, black woman figure dominates in Hughes's numerous poems. Joyce A. Joyce establishes how Hughes treats women in *Hughes and Twentieth-Century Genderracial Issues* and categorizes approaches thematically. According to her classification, there are:

> *the black woman prototype, which manifest sin the strong black woman with Christian ethic, the black woman who internalizes negative social norms, Hughes's condemnation of the black male's mistreatment and exploitation of black women, Hughes's nonjudgment of prostitution and other societal taboos, Hughes's empathy with black women's shortcomings, and his romanticization of black women (123).*

Joyce's classification scrutinizes the female characters in the poetry of Langston Hughes. Hughes used lots of black women prototypes in his poems. Therefore, this chapter is divided according to the four main black women prototypes in order to see Hughes's approach to the problems of the black women in his time.

Socially and culturally, "The lives of Afro-American women have always been determined as much by their gender as by their race" (Hull, 2004: 84). So, this was the case in the Harlem period. The popularity of the notion, New Negro, during the Harlem Renaissance was elaborated in the beginning of the study. While defining the concept, Steward acknowledges the New Negro as living "in the present with the echoes of past crimes" (19). Black women were in the group that was affected mostly from the past crimes. There were crimes, yet no punishment. The feelings out of

these experiences must be kept in mind while reading the poems in this chapter. Moreover, Ross states the identity relation between the New Negro and gender:

> *In addition to the class and regionalist dimensions, New Negro identity was shaped by assumptions of gender roles and sexual conduct. The New Negro is often implicitly gendered masculine and often presumes a heteronormative conduct of manly vocation and recreation, marital obligation, masterly leadership in civil governance, and devotion to fraternal organizations and rituals (152).*

Hughes was quite aware that "Black women carry the dual stigma of being female and black in a society that devalues both" (Myers, 1980: 8). This reality was expressed by Aldridge as follows: "In relation to social change, the African American woman is also part of American society" (Aldridge, 2005: 395). Therefore, Hughes aimed to make the readers to question the position of the black women. "While both African American and women's history reflect the complexities of being part of American history, the intersection of the two is culturally unique, and of separate consciousness" (McKinney, Jr. and Jones, 2005: 274).

One can imagine how these poems are significant in the course of black women's social struggle. Hughes reveals that there existed a black woman question in post-slavery period. In exploring liberatory discourses in modernism, DuPlessis describes the New Woman as having "claims for suffrage and for sexual and professional independence" (DuPlessis, 2001: 2). A parallel point can be made between her statement and Hughes's ideas about black women in terms of independence. Larson remarks that "In Emerson's essays, getting people to change their opinion about themselves often bound up with getting them to change their views on what means to interpret the world around them: ethical reform and methodological reform go hand in hand" (Larson, 2001). We can argue that Hughes's poems have the similar effects on the readers; they are designated to change the minds of the black women. Hughes interprets the conditions of the women in a way that the female readers are expected to reform themselves by seeing their powerful aspects.

4.1. WISE WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES

The poems in this part are the portrayal of a so-called confrontation between black female and white culture and civilization. Historically, such confrontations did not create positive results for the former. Gould remarks the historical and literary fact about blacks' families and their separation: "Nineteenth - century readers of antislavery literature, particularly the slave narrative, became familiar, for example, with the powerful literary trope of the slave auction. A major convention of the slave narrative, this scene, where the African American family is mercilessly separated, is premised on the affective reality of the racial family" (Gould, 2010: 90). These events affected black women mostly spiritually and psychologically. The effects of such events on those women can be intuited in the following poems. The legacy of the past was transformed through their narrations.

We read the stories of beautiful women in this part; a kind of beauty that Emerson defines: "Beauty is the form under which the intellect prefers to study the world. All privilege is that of beauty; for there are many beauties; as, of general nature, of the human face and form, of manners, of brain, or method, moral beauty, or beauty of the soul" ("Beauty," 110). The black women selected for the poems reflect the moral beauty and beauty of the soul of Afro-Americans. They are spiritually powerful and enlightened women because of the experiences they got through. Hughes chose wise woman figures who convey racial education to later generations. This is the Emersonian thinking that Hughes internalizes in constructing such women characters in the next two poems. "Clearly, Emerson had transcended the Victorian valuing of women solely for their ornamental role, to appreciate them on the same grounds by which he did men—for their intelligence" (Gilbert, 2000: 237). Herein is why we compare Hughes to Emerson for writing women issues. Hughes appreciated the intelligence of black women as well as he respected them. For the primary roles of women, Emerson speaks in 1869 as:

> *They are the educators in all our society. Through their sympathy and quickness they are the proper mediators between those who have knowledge and those who want it; but what I would say is that in this movement an important part of the history of woman is the history of the Quakers, and then*

> *of the Shakers, who gave an equal part of their power the elderess and the elder, and so made active and instructed work- men and workwomen in social and public affairs… She asks for … her share in all the institutions of society, for her half of the whole world; and to this she is entitled (qtd in (Gougeon, 1998).*

As it is seen, in Emersonian conception, women plays significant roles in the society; a role that cannot be fulfilled by men. Lack of any women involvement may damage the basis and essential parts of social, cultural, and communal activities and events. As Emerson asks for equal shares for women, Hughes wants to give equal parts to black women in the rise of the black culture. Therefore, these poems can be read, at least, as contributions of black women to the course of African American development and advancement. Their contributions were more spiritually and morally than mundanely. They provide the necessary moral values to the next generations and civilizations in terms of what Emerson declares: "Women are, by this and their social influence, the civilizers of mankind. What is civilization? I answer, the power of good women" ("Woman," 159).

"Aunt Sue's Stories" is a poem of racial education as well as raising awareness and consciousness. The first two lines are the manifestation of the embodiment of the memories and stories from the old days:

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.
Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories. (23)

The narrator uses "head" and "heart" deliberately to indicate how those stories are embellished in African American lives. Firstly, they cannot forget them. Secondly, they still feel about them. These lines can be read as "I live them with my whole body and my emotions are still alive." The protagonist of the poem, Aunt Sue, is apparently a representative of common ex-slave black women. She may have raped by the owner, she may have lost her children, or she may have to clean the "master's" house. She may have been one of those women exposed to the white patriarchal force which "relies on a form of violence particularly sexual in character and realized most completely in the act of rape" (Millett, 1971: 44). When it comes to stories in the poem, he sounds mythical:

Black slaves
Working in the hot sun,
And black slaves
Walking in the dewy night,
And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river (23).

The first striking impression is "black slaves". The slaves were already black. The use of black emphasizes that slavery may have ended but the blackness continues and stresses the circularity of the experiences. Sorrow songs on the banks of a river must have sung by women after a runaway husband, father, son or daughter; for the kids were sold and carried through the Mississippi river. We have the image of crying black woman throughout the poem for the stories she tells. The black kid is careful:

And the dark-faced child, listening,
Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories. (23)

Here, the poet imposes education for his readers by reminding them the wrath of the old days. The dark-faced child in the poem and his peers in real life learn their history and get consciousness. The aim of the poem is that they may decide to do something for the blacks to improve their conditions. Such messages could be carried out by women protagonist, as they convey them emotionally more easily than men. Lastly, the aunt in the story may be Hughes's own grandmother who used to tell him stories when he was away from his parents. By this way, Hughes attempted to present how he realized his mission in the life: uplift the black society.

The listening kid may represent a common black orphan kid. The separation of black families was carried into the poem. Steven Tracy relates the particular music with the song of separated families:

> *The African American vernacular music tradition so important to the spirit and style of Langston Hughes's art is replete with references to the isolated, abandoned, orphaned child, very likely a legacy of the kidnapping of the slave trade, the brutal separation of family members on the auction block, and the harsh conditions during and after slavery that made maintaining family ties particularly difficult (166).*

Although “Mother to Son” is similar to “Aunt Sue’s Stories”, it has major different messages. We can divide the poem into two parts. The first part can be evaluated as deep disappointments of a black mother and her admirable and noble struggles against interferences, handicaps, and obstructions. What is remarkable is a non-stop struggle; it never ends, because life is presented as an eternal competition for her and her society.

Unlike the previous poem, the woman is the speaker. She is a tender, affectionate and caring mother prototype who had bitter experiences. She tells her own story not only to her child, but also to all black children:

Well, son, I’ll tell you:
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
It’s had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor
Bare.
But all the time
I’se been a-climbin’ on,
And reachin’ landin’s,
And turnin’ corners,
And sometimes goin’ in the dark
Where there ain’t been no light (30)

The obstacles like tacks and splinters are seemingly human-made obstacles referring the white hegemony and supremacy in addition to racial oppression and discrimination. The attentive word choice through the narration enabled Hughes to create a complex character. “In the language of a poor long-suffering black woman, Hughes delivers a persona far removed from the limitations of humor and pathos; the poem in fact presents a fully realized black subject replete with complex dimensions including tenacity, endurance, sorrow, love, pride, and a compelling sense of hope for her son” (Sanders, 2007: 110).

The so-called second part of the poem is more than just a recommendation of a mother; it is rather a preaching, it is like a spiritual talk urging not “to give up” in spite of everything:

So boy, don't you turn back.

Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se stil goin', honey,
I'se stil climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair. (30)

Stair is a metaphor for deferred dreams of African Americans. They are in the act of climbing to reach their Promised Land. As one realizes, "climbing" is Hughes's one of favorite expressions. He attempted to use it in several poems and essays. His message is not ambiguous or unclear. The direct address is to create eagerness and enthusiasm to overcome intimidation and demoralizing. Emerson also used the stair metaphor to render the possible directions in the life "We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us, which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight" ("Experience," 83). As it is seen, the stair can both help and obstruct. The important thing is to utilize the stairs and the use them as a vehicle to make people reach their goals. Emerson perceives woman as a teacher in one of his essays as follows: "They heal us of awkwardness by their words and looks. We observe their intellectual influence on the most serious student. They refine and clear his mind; teach him to put a pleasing method into what is dry and difficult" ("Beauty," 115). The mother figure used by Hughes in this poem reminds us the woman prototype Emerson describes above.

Giselle Liza Anatol argues the importance of children's literature for the black kids: "children of color need works that mirror their own family structures, lifestyles, and cultures. They can then develop a proud and healthy self-image and sense of their own identities within the world in which they live" (238). Being proud from one's his childhood is seen quite essential in constructing the African-American identity. Referring to Nancy D. Tolson, a black children's literature scholar, Anatol lists Carter G. Woodson, Arna Bontemps, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes for writing children's literature. Hughes's poems address and appeal to all kind of blacks: young, old, woman, man, singer, prostitute, worker, ignorant, intellectuals. When the poems are scrutinized, one can see how they are crucial especially for the black kids in terms of pushing them to have goals and dreams in their lives.

According to Emerson every child should be inspired ("Prudence," 65). The inspiration of black kids is vital in these two poems. Hughes wants them to be self-reliant individuals by knowing the bitter old stories and by realizing that obstacles can carry them forward, too. For instance, Emerson says that "A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition, as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he" ("Self-Reliance," 22). So, Hughes aimed that the black kids should know their past and act accordingly.

Williams and Williams draw parallelness between the mother character and Hughes's grandmother: "Mother to Son" represents millions of Afro-American mothers who push their son to success in "pre depression America" which establishes the relationship between the poet and "his proud but very poor grandmother", Mary Leary Langston from whom "most of the lessons Langston learned early in his life about striving for survival" (106).

This view reveals Hughes's motif: to show how to sustain and survive in a segregated society. Hughes's faith that blacks can achieve the success was laid as a background of the poem. Emerson argues that we find no end in nature because every end means another beginning; a circle can be drawn around another circle ("Circles," 123). This statement can be read as a natural circularity occurring perpetually. However, it can be understood as not to give up, surrender nor leave off the life struggle from sociological and psychological context. It can mean to stand up after every defeat and to continue one's fight. Emerson emphasizes the importance of the struggle.

Aunt Sue and the unnamed mother function as counter the stereotypes of black women in the American society. They are presented as wise, sapiential, and experienced women. They are drawn as someone who deserves respect as they are source of inspiration for ordinary African Americans. Hughes tries to enforce an idea of progress in these poems and encourages his readers not to surrender through the female characters. In spite of the explicit sad tones of the poems, Hughes is, indeed, optimistic; in the way Emerson was: "Although he occasionally skirted skepticism as he encountered illustrations of the dark side of human nature and experience during his time, Emerson was steadfastly optimistic that all particular negatives were

capable of being eventually rectified by an enlightened race" (Bosco, 2000: 48). Being optimistic is conditional: the black community must be enlightened, and for this, education is necessary. Hughes's optimism stems from his belief in education that can be conveyed by the black women.

4.2. WORKING WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES

When Hughes went to a cotton plantation in Alabama to give fruit to poor black workers with the Red Cross, he visited the cabins of the black workers. He talked to people and saw how they were exhausted and weary; and one woman told him that she had not been to town for four years and Hughes started to contemplate about the poor blacks working in the big plantations of rich whites:

> *A broken-down bed, a stove, and a few chairs were all she had in her house. Her children were among those stretching out their arms to us for fruit. Yet the man who owned this big plantation lived in a great house with white pillars. His children went to private schools in the North, I was told, and his oldest girl traveled abroad. Black hands working in white cotton created the wealth that built his fine house and supported his children in their travels. A woman who couldn't travel fifteen miles to town was helping to send somebody else's child on a trip to Paris (I Wonder, 2003: 187).*

In this part, we read Hughes's poems in which black women survive so many problems. The general features of these women are that they are ordinary, unimportant, undervalued women who do not have voices or representations. Although they are to perform multitasks, they are invisible. Emerson draws attentions to the situations of such women: "There are plenty of people who believe women to be incapable of anything but to cook, incapable of interest in affairs" ("Woman," 163). Emerson's statement is exemplified in Hughes's poems through miserable black women characters. However, Hughes is in the pursuit of setting them free. On the other hand, Emerson constitutes what seems to be an ideal American national system which "preserves the equality and individual autonomy implicit in the liberal concept of "rights"" (Patterson, 1997:140). The implicit messages of the poems studied in this part are to create equality and to preserve it.

"A Song to a Negro Wash-woman" is an excellent example of how an ordinary black woman can be a subject of Hughes's poetry. A black wash-woman is not only a subject of the poem, she is much respected character in the poem when one compares from the real life where such women are ignored. So, Hughes elevates the situation of even a worker woman to admirable level that attracts the attention of the majority. Otherwise, they are minor even in the black society. The poem starts as:

Oh, wash-woman,
Arms elbow-deep in white suds,
Soul washed clean,
Clothes washed clean,—
I have many songs to sing you
Could I but find the words (41)

The last two lines are recited both in the beginning and at the end of the poem. They stand against the materialization of African American woman workers. By the way, the fourth stanza is a great poetic manifestation and bare influences from Whitman. We see the repetition of "I know" in the beginning of the lines. They present the witness and testimony of the narrator. He is aware of a woman who is esteemed the "lowest level" in the black society; no one cares her, no one appreciates her contribution and no one knows what she means for her society. Exactly, in this point, the poet cries the significance of this woman and calls her into framework of American dream:

Yes, I know you, wash-woman.
I know how you send your children to school, and high school, and even college.
I know how you work and help your man when times are hard.
I know how you build your house up from the wash-tub and call it home.
And how you raise your churches from white suds for the service of the Holy God.
(41)

This black woman gives importance of the education of her kids. So, she contributes the future of the black community. Emerson suggests that: "The world exists for the education of each man. There is no age or state of society or mode of action in history to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life" ("History," 3). The progress and improvement of African American society depend on the education. However, the education of women is not neglected in Hughes's mindset. On the contrary, its significance is narrated in these poems. Hughes thought and advocated the education of black women. In the poem, the black woman works

hard to send her children to school. She contributes to the budget of her home. She is there when her husband fails to earn enough money. By this way, she helps her family to stay together otherwise would be separated because of poverty. In the poem, to be in effort, to be in action and to be active through working is valued. According to Millet; "In a society where status is dependent upon the economic, social, and educational circumstances of class, it is possible for certain females to appear to stand higher than some males" (36). Wash-woman here appears to be superior to her husband. She is also active in religious issues which keep the black society together. The significance of the black churches and religion in the lives of the blacks were elaborated in the introduction part. These are the realities ignored by the society. Hughes felt the need of reminding them. Hughes seems also to suggest that multiple roles tires woman and man does not understand or appreciate it.

"Troubled Woman", on the other hand, offers insights of a black woman for whom the dreams are deferred. This poem is a mirror for the ordinary African American woman. We can infer the causes of pain and weariness in her life. Hughes creates an image of a woman, as if narrating a sculpture from Renaissance:

She stands
In the quiet darkness,
This troubled woman
Bowed by
Weariness and pain
Like an
Autumn flower
In the frozen rain,
Like a
Wind-blown autumn flower
That never lifts its head
Again. (42)

This black woman is surrendered to the hardness of racial presuppositions American life. Although we do not know anything about her background and past, as there are no evidences or references, we assume some basic facts about her life. The similes concrete a worn out black female. This can be better understood with another poem: "Ruby Brown". We have some information about the life of the protagonist Ruby Brown. This girl is also depicted as beautiful. However, the first stanza establishes the contrast between her beauty and her faith:

She was young and beautiful
And golden like the sunshine
That warmed her body.
And because she was colored
Mayville had no place to offer her,
Nor fuel for the clean flame of joy
That tried to burn within her soul. (73)

Here, the segregation for a black girl is presented with its full nakedness. Her beauty does not help her to find a place in Mayville, and the reason is her skin color. The second stanza presents an enlightened moment in her life. She realizes something wrong:

One day,
Sitting on old Mrs. Latham's back porch
Polishing the silver,
She asked herself two questions
And they ran something like this:
What can a colored girl do
On the money from a white woman's kitchen?
*And ain't there any joy in this town? (*73)

She cannot earn enough livelihoods; and happiness and joy are deferred for her. In Hughes's poems, women are not happy. Emerson defines cultivated men who influence and address to other people: "Cultivated men always feel and speak so, as if a great fortune, the achievement of a civil or social measure, great personal influence, a graceful and commanding address, had their value as proofs of the energy of the spirit" ("Prudence," 62). Hughes's aim is to help the community to rise and stand up against hard and segregated politics and attitudes; to manipulate black people and to encourage them to do good deeds.

"Freedom Seeker" tells the story of a caged woman: "I see a woman with wings / Trying to escape from a cage" (110). The metaphor is used to describe how African American woman lacks of liberty and freedom.

And the cage door
Has fallen on her wings.
They are long wings
Which drag on the ground
When she stands up,
But she hasn't enough strength

To pull them away
From the weight of the cage door,
She is caught and held by her wings. (110)

The wings are racial and gendered oppressions that prevent her to go free lands. This is a creative and brilliant poem about miserable and pitiful situations of black women. As Len Gougeon states, the liberty and equality of women was raised by Emerson, "The desire for liberty is a natural instinct and, like American slaves, American women had been consistently denied freedom, equality, and social justice. They had been left outside the divine circle of human equality" (179). With a similar motif, Hughes attracts our attentions to the captivity of women, because the poem gives a clear idea about the life standards of black women. They are not as free as black men. The dependence of women still predominated in the era when the poem was written.

The poem also conveys the impression that black women suffer economically as much as they suffered from racial problems. According to Emerson, the power of women depends on economic power, too: "Equally serious was the problem of economic powerlessness. Emerson often responded with strong sympathy to the plight of impoverished women" (Gilbert, 2000: 222). Two important tragedies for black women can be listed: education and money (to be able to earn it). Hughes dealt with these problems in the previous poems. Gilbert offers the essential aspects of Emersonian viewpoint on women liberation: "If they believed that political and social equality was necessary to their spiritual development, his responsibility was to support them in their struggle" (Gilbert, 2000: 237). The passage before us shares the similar problems raised by Hughes who also points out that black woman should gain power in several areas of life. In fact, Emerson put wings to women metaphorically; the wings that cannot be pulled away by the black women, as Hughes imposes.

In order to grasp fully how women saw Emerson; and his effect and power we can look at the 1855 invitation of Paulina Davis who asked Emerson to participate in the Second Annual New England Women's Rights Convention: "From your well known antecedents we have taken it for granted that your heart is with us, and that you have a message which will aid, cheer, and strengthen us in progress toward perfect freedom and the highest right." (Pauline Wright Davis to Emerson, 7

June 1855, qtd. in Gougeon, 1998). The reason why we see this note here is that; we can suggest that Hughes aimed to create similar impressions on black women.

Emerson suggests that "The poet is the person … who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and its representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart" ("The Poet," 66-67). Black women also need to be emancipated, waiting for a long time. It can be an allusion to historical context. Slavery may have finished for the black, yet for the black women slavery continues and they are still in the Uncle Tom's cabin. The cage is a representation of hovel where black women struggle to gain their independence. Women are incapable to reach freedom. They do not have enough power to escape from the boundaries and chains to their dreams. Shortly, the poem emancipates the captive black woman.

The women in these poems do not struggle to overcome their problems and troubles. But Hughes teaches black women to fight for their freedom and happiness. The portrayal of mournful characters shows the conditions of particular women. Hughes tried to affect such unhappy women to change their destiny and to prepare a happy living for themselves; and aimed at encouraging the women to struggle.

4.3. SUBMISSIVE WOMEN OF LANGSTON HUGHES

In the first part, we see wise and intelligent women against white society. In the second part we see working and captivated unhappy women. In this part we will see the relationship between black man and black woman. The relationships studied in the poems are problematic and tragic for the latter. Hughes exhibits realistic depictions of the black women's terrible positions such as terror, abuse, and violence. James Smethurst comments on Hughes's stories that they are "suffused with feelings of alienation, fragmented identity, and failed attempts to constitute or reconstitute family and community" (142). Such failures were caused by the lack of family culture which can be stem from slavery and its aftermath.

Emerson viewed the condition of women and compared them to those of slaves. "Emerson realized, women suffered as much as under slavery; both were

systems based in a materialistic worldview… Woman was not, as the common wisdom insisted, a "homme manqué," an incomplete man, but a complete and self-sufficing being" (Gilbert, 2000: 220). The second sentence emphasizes that equality of man and woman is unquestionable for Emerson. He ends the gender discrimination and liberates woman for his contemporary readers. However, Emerson saw women's position often pathetic in American civilization and that is why his efforts were on behalf of women's empowerment, education, and equality; moreover he declared that "Man can never tell woman what her duties are" (Gilbert, 2000: 223-237). In spite of the social milieu he lived in, Emerson explicitly told that men cannot rule over women and he justified women's rights.

In "Lover's Return" the inner voice of a girl, when her man suddenly comes home, tells many hidden feelings of thousands of African American women:

Oh, men treats women
Just like a pair o shoes—
You kicks 'em round and
Does 'em like you choose. (125)

The power of men justifies their treatment to women, as it is apparent in the poem. The women are evaluated as senseless objects. So, they hide their emotions and cannot express what they feel. Their dreams are captured by the men around them: lover, husband, or father. Men can enter or leave the lives of the women whenever they want. However, the woman has to wait the men no matter how they feel. Their feelings are not considered important. For example, in "Suicide", a black girl wants to kill herself for she was forsaken by her lover:

Ma sweet good man has
Packed his trunk and left.
Nobody to love me:
I'm gonna kill ma self. (81)

In "Black Gal" there is a working girl as speaker who was abandoned by her lover, Albert Johnson and who elegizes upon him:

Yet it seems like always
Men takes all they can from me
Then they goes an' finds a yaller gal

An' lets me be. (121)

Hughes touches upon a serious subject in this poem: black girls are deserted for lighter ones. There is also discrimination among the blacks and Hughes shows how he feels discomfort and irritated:

Yet I ain'tn ever been no bad one.
Can't help it cause I'm black.
I hates them rinney yaller gals
An' I wants ma Albert back.
Ma little, short, sweet, brown skin boy,—
Oh, God, I wants him back! (121)

The girl wants him back in a naïve tone. This is a sign of being desperateness and destituteness of black woman. They did not have enough power to survive in their own. Hughes supported the freedom of black woman both socially and economically. We have also chance to trace the psychology of black women in depth. Hughes just implies the feelings of women, yet the discourses he uses reveal more than the text explicitly offers. Power and gender relationship can be found in these poems. The constructed gender of black females determines their power. In fact, they do not have a power enough to survive individually. They are depicted as independent to the opposite gender. In the poem we see what Millett argues: "The female is continually obliged to seek survival or advancement through the approval of males as those who hold power" (44). As Steven C. Tracy acknowledges we can see loneliness, isolation, frustration as references to the blues (23-24). In these poems one can see frequently references to the blues.

Emerson thinks that "Worst, when this sensualism intrudes into the education of young women, and withers the hope and affection of human nature, by teaching that marriage signifies nothing but a housewife's thrift, and that woman's life has no other aim" ("Love," 103). Woman is valuable and equal to man in Emersonian worldview.

"Evil Woman" displays explicitly abuse of black woman and violent as ever present threat in their daily lives. The first two stanzas of the poem is:

I ain't gonna mistreat ma
Good gal any more.

I'm just gonna kill her
Next time she makes me sore.

I treats her kind but
She don't do me right.
She fights an' quarrels most
Ever night. (120)

The black woman is objectified in the poem that deserves to be "beaten" and even to be "killed". We can feel the terror atmosphere at home where the woman has no protection. The speaker is a macho black man through whom Hughes severely criticized such types of men in the society. The last stanza shows how the woman lacks the right of speech:

I brought her from de South
An' she's goin' on back
Else I'll use her head
For a carpet tack. (120)

She can be brought and sent back without her will. Black woman is exposed to male oppression in this poem. Hughes opposes and protests such treatments. What makes Emerson a great American thinker is that he "offered vital answers to his society's most pressing moral and social problems" (Gougeon, 2007: 2). Similarly, as seen in this poem, Hughes tried to offer answers to black community's social and moral issues. Hughes presents gender inequality as the difficulties African American women had to stand against for a long time in addition to racial inequalities. Such inequality causes discrimination which Hughes indirectly criticizes by employing narrator using a masculinized language. Buell remarks that "Yet from an early age Emerson was more responsive to intellectual women than were most nineteenth-century men. As Fuller immediately saw, his "model of personal transformation" "opened the door toward female liberation"" (88). Emerson and Hughes openly supported the liberation of the women in their communities.

4.4. BLACK BEAUTIES OF LANGSTON HUGHES

These poems are prone to be read as idealization of African American women, because, they show that not all of Hughes's female characters are unhappy,

desolated, and helpless. Emerson states an approach to the relationship between man and woman. “In the particular society of his mate, he attains a clearer sight of any spot, any taint, which her beauty has contracted from this world, and is able to point it out, and this with mutual joy that they are now able, without offence, to indicate blemishes and hindrances in each other, and give to each all help and comfort in curing the same” (“Love,” 103). We read poems about such kind of positive relationship of black women.

“Fascination” is celebration of the black body as well as declaring the beauty of African American woman. Although it seems a love poem, its underlying meaning is more than a simple love story. It is approval and acceptance of female black body which has been often ignored, exploited, or maltreated.

Her teeth are as white as the meat of an apple,
Her lips are like dark ripe plums.
I love her.
Her hair is a midnight mass, a dusky aurora.
I love her.
And because her skin is the brown of an oak leaf in autumn, but a softer color,
I want to kiss her. (39)

It is noteworthy that while the girl is Afro-American, the race of the speaker is not clear. We can read it as a raceless approach to black beauty. The speaker can be a white American, too. The use of similes helps the poet to convey his message that draws parallels between nature and blackness. Moreover, the title arouses a sexual connation and desire towards black woman. This poem is, in a way, challenging against racial and sexist stereotypes. Emerson argues that: “A beautiful woman is a practical poet, taming her savage mate, planting tenderness, hope, and eloquence, in all whom she approaches” (“Beauty,” 114). Emerson’s description of beautiful woman is carried to Hughes’s poem.

“Poem [4]: To the Black Beloved” is consisted of three stanza and each starts with the expression: “Ah, / My black one, / Thou art not beautiful” (58). Unlike the previous poem, the black woman here is not so beautiful and adorable. However, the stanzas continue like this: “Yet thou hast / A loveliness / Surpassing beauty.”, Yet thou hast / A purity / Surpassing goodness.”, and “Yet an altar of jewels, / An altar of shimmering jewels,” (58) respectively.

This poem aims to attract the attention on another subject: the beauty is not only reference for a black woman. She is described as having loveliness and purity which are more valuable for some than the mere beauty. This poem declares that black girls and females are worth to be loved. The poet shows that a common black girl deserves to be written a poem for, too. Again, this is more than a love poem. It is more celebration of black woman. Although some men do not find such a woman lovely, she is still lovable according to black point of view. Emerson says that,

> *The introduction to this felicity is in a private and tender relation of one to one, which is the enchantment of human life; which, like a certain divine rage and enthusiasm, seizes on man at one period and works a revolution in his mind and body; unites him to his race, pledges him to the domestic and civic relations, carries him with new sympathy into nature, enhances the power of the senses, opens the imagination, adds to his character heroic and sacred attributes, establishes marriage and gives permanence to human society ("Love," 97).*

There is no pity or pathetic situations for the black women in these two poems. Their inner and outer beauties are celebrated. Hughes's desire is to raise the black woman at least in this level in which they are not beaten, abused or forced to work too hard. They show that a black woman is also beautiful as much as a white woman is.

As a conclusion of the chapter; Hughes proved that black women had dreams, too, just like black men had. He valued them, and demonstrated they had souls. There is an effort of a poet who wanted to integrate the woman into the society by including them into his poetry; and to create awareness by uttering their basic and most common troubles and problems. The emphasis on gender segregation as well as racial segregation can be detected when it is looked at the poems carefully. Hughes unmasks bravely the sexist discrimination in African American community. There are several types of black female figures. In some of the poems, for instance, the woman usually lacks the power to stand alone. These powerless black women are dependent to their men in order to survive. These poems undermine directly the prevailing attitudes of black men.

In the context of American Dream, we see that the dreams of black women are deferred in Hughes's poems. Cullen argues that: "The American Dream is in

many ways a story of omissions, and few omissions have been more glaring than that of the place of women in society" (119). So, the stories of omissions are quite apparent in the poems above.

Gilbert argues that "This awareness of the result of women's socioeconomic powerlessness and especially of the plight of working-class women was relatively rare even in the woman's movement, as recent histories of the British and American suffrage movements have made clear. For Emerson to display it this early was evidence of how much deep and serious thought he had given the question" (Gilbert, 2000: 223). That is why Emerson's efforts are priceless. The significant thing is to talk a subject when it is not commonplace; or it is dangerous to talk about it. Silence is easy; but to claim and to protect a nascent movement is bravery. This is Emerson's magnitude. Anne R. Hornsby argues that "Spurred, no doubt by the feminist and womanist movements in the Civil Rights and post-Civil Rights era, there has been a growing focus on the cultural and economic role of women in the origins, development, and growth of African American entrepreneurship" (Hornsby, 2005: 328). Similarly, Hughes pioneered the black woman liberation although it is ignored in academic studies.

Emerson conceptualizes the human life as a self-evolving circle: "The key to every man is his thought. Sturdy and defying though he look, he has a helm which he obeys, which is the idea after which all his facts are classified. He can only be reformed by showing him a new idea 'which commands his own" ("Circles," 124). Men can be trained and his ideas and thoughts are changeable and convertible. New ideas must be generated to overcome obstinate and rigid minds. Hughes aimed to reform the black man in his perspective towards women.

We also need to keep in mind that gender equality was among Emerson's standard of values: "Thus are we put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom" ("Love," 105-106). Gilbert argues that "To Emerson, a "real man" was one who actively advocated women's rights and equality; in today's terms, to be a real man was to be a feminist" (232). Emerson includes other men into the cause; make man feel similarly. So we can assert that Hughes was a feminist

poet. Emerson enlists women in the antagonism to Slavery which gave “Woman a feeling of public duty and an added self-respect” (“Woman,” 162). Hughes’s perspective on woman resembles to Emerson’s in all these aspects. Hughes carried these concerns and problems into his poetry.

CHAPTER FIVE

SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AND AWARENESS OF SOCIAL CLASS IN LANGSTON HUGHES

Langston Hughes's focus on poetry in 1930s changed dramatically in terms of the subject points of the poems. While the racial issues predominate in his 1920s' poetry, his poetry of the next decade deals with what caused racial oppression – "an exploitative economic structure" (Young, 2007: 141). Initially, we see that Hughes's visits of abroad boosted in great extent in this decade. In many places and cities he went, he met with various artists from different cultures that enormously broadened his vision. Jonathan Scott acknowledges that Hughes's internationality in his work is nurtured from four main aspects: the fight against the nascent racism in Europe, struggles of decolonization in Latin America and Caribbean, the emergence of socialism in Russia and striving to end racism and white hegemony in the United States (2-3).

Similarly, Emerson "engaged in complex personal and intellectual relationships with many persons in America and abroad, who had something to say about every important religious and philosophical controversy, political and social event, and scientific discovery that came to his attention between the 1820s and the late 1870s" (Bosco, 2000: 9). Emerson was in contact with many publicly known people and he got interaction with them:

> *Toward the end of the decade, Emerson traveled to England for a lecture tour (1847–48) and, while in Europe, witnessed the "Revolutions of 1848" firsthand. He was impressed with this apparently spontaneous eruption of the spirit of liberty throughout the Continent, and he felt that a better day was dawning in the Western world. Subsequently, he returned to his country with renewed confidence that social amelioration was inevitable (Gougeon, 2007: 171).*

Later, we have chance to observe "Emerson's transition from agonized observer of social activism to enthusiastic participant" (Sacks, 2008: xxv). We can conclude that visiting other countries and meeting with several people affected the

thoughts of Emerson and Hughes. Such experiences gave them excellent chance to develop different perspective towards the problems at home.

There is an emphasis on class more than on race; discussions of class inequalities mastered instead of racial injustices in Hughes's poetry in this period. He did not give up writing for racial issues completely (as we will see in the first part of the chapter); however, he concentrated on problems stemming from class differences. Therefore, 1930s shaped, undoubtedly, Hughes's poetry as the pathways of pageants and proletarian (Tidwell and Ragar, 2007: 6). Sanders categorizes Hughes's poetry of this period:

> *Hughes' poetry in the early 1930s remained in many respects divided into three strands: a more directly Dunbarian poetry of racial uplift primarily aimed at the black audiences he encountered on the reading tours to African American schools, churches, reading circles, and so on, that he began during this period; a less racially inflected, class-based revolutionary poetry aimed at a radical audience who read New Masses, The Harlem Liberator, The Anvil, and other journals of the left and the proletarian literature movement; and a more literary sort of verse aimed at readers of modern literature. Of course, these categories overlapped to a certain extent (123).*

The theme of the dreams of African Americans shifted into the dreams of American workers in the poems written in this decade. Musick and Wilson claim that "We agree that belief in the American dream is related to socioeconomic position" (1998). We can conclude that the impact of the Great Depression on the blacks and poor whites; and its outcome, economic crisis, canalized Hughes's views to the leftist politics and made him write revolutionary poems (Smethurst, 2004:144). The Great Depression was effective in changing Hughes's views; because, he may have realized that African Americans did not have to tackle only with racial problems; instead economic difficulties prevented their progress on a large scale. The significance of advancement and progress during the Harlem Renaissance was dealt again and again in the background of the study. Hughes may have acknowledged that intellectual and cultural development was insufficient for African Americans; so he saw the importance of the economic development, too. Realizing the fact that blacks were not powerful enough to handle with economic problems, Hughes established a new way of economic struggle by promoting a unique unity among black and white

workers. In fact, dream of such unity was a result of a dream of racial equality. He praised in other countries what his country lacked. In terms of racial egalitarianism, he really appreciated and wished they had had also in the States. His visit to Russia corresponds to post-Great Depression and poverty in the United States. Overall poverty meant job discrimination for the black Americans. So, what he found in Russia is somehow his dream of racial equality.

In this decade, Hughes appears to be an Emersonian Reformer: "What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Remaker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good, imitating that great Nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life?" ("Man the Reformer," 110). Hughes presents new efforts and brings about new approaches to the problems of the society. Hughes acts as an Emersonian poet, as stated in the introduction of the study: "The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage, but, as they act and think primarily, so he writes primarily what will and must be spoken, reckoning the others, though primaries also, yet, in respect to him, secondaries and servants; as sitters or models in the studio of a painter, or as assistants who bring building materials to an architect" ("The Poet," 67). Hughes writes his expectations from the decade in his poems, besides lecturing what must be done in order to overcome specific economic problems.

Hughes proposes quite radical actions which seems impossible for the reality of the milieu. Emerson argues that "Every man is an impossibility until he is born; every thing impossible, until we see a success" ("Experience," 93). This expression can be applied to Hughes's struggle. What he suggests is really hard to realize: uniting black and white people for the common cause, and bringing and applying a new regime inspired by the Soviet Russia. Here we can remember the duty of an Emersonian scholar: "They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in self-trust. The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances" ("The American Scholar," 157). The bold suggestions in Hughes's poems stem from the poet's self-trust. Similarly, Hughes aimed to lead the workers to the revolution he heralds.

The first part of the chapter is dedicated to the poems that specifically present the economic conditions of African American workers. In the second part, we analyze the poems in which Hughes advocated a union between the races and seek Hughes's motivation to write union poems when other black poets and writers did not. In the last part, we see the source and origin of his inspiration for such leftist poetry and the ideology he embraced to show the readers how they could realize their dreams.

5.1. BLACK WORKING CLASS

Langston Hughes owes his fame to be a poet of the poor and dispossessed (Anatol, 2007: 239). It was mostly because he liked to write about the ''low-down folks,'' which refers, in Hughes's terms, to the black working class (Bernard, 2007: 39). Hughes was not alone in depicting black workers: "The unassimilated proletarian became the authentic, the uncompromised man and woman in Jean Toomer's *Cane*, Langston Hughes's *The Weary Blues* and *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, Rudolph Fisher's *City of Refuge*, and Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*" (Steward, 2007: 16). The common focus of these literary pieces was on working class. Hughes's "unfailing commitment to represent common, everyday black people with reverence and respect, with simplicity and depth", according to John Edgar Tidwell and Cheryl R. Ragar, was his outstanding feature (Tidwell and Ragar 3). Hughes admits that "At least two-thirds of all blacks were lower-class—"even I myself, belong to that class." In any event, Hughes says that "I have a right to portray any side of Negro life I wish to" (Rampersad, 18).

Hughes showed his awareness about the economic problem of the blacks: "All over America, however, against the Negro there has been an economic color line of such severity that since the Civil War we have been kept most effectively, as a racial group, in the lowest economic brackets" ("My America" 1943). But we see a proud stand; a stand that Emerson designates: "Let us never bow and apologize more" ("Self-Reliance," 26). So Hughes fixes a rebellious mind. In fact, black writing seems rebellious; they rebel against what they had been imposed to. In this part we see that race and class inequalities are expressed by a rebellious mind. As a

matter of fact, Donald E. Pease states that ""Self-reliance" was the outcome of the speaker's expressions of resistance to the economic and moral causes with which he otherwise might have felt inclined to affiliate himself" (Pease 2007). In our case, Hughes's resistance to racial and economic causes in the poems stem from such a Self-reliance.

In 1840, Emerson utters in a lecture, Reform:

> *The labor of society ought to be shared by all and in a community where labor was the point of honor the vain and the idle would labor. What a mountain of chagrins, inconveniences, diseases, and sins would sink into the sea with the uprise of this one doctrine of labor. Domestic hired service would go over the dam. Slavery would fall into the pit (qtd in Patterson 82).*

Emerson's statement overlaps Hughes's realization in 1930s. The exploitation system can be exterminated through regulations in the labor system. "We honor the rich because they have externally the freedom, power, and grace which we feel to be proper to man, proper to us" ("History," 3). Emerson criticizes his society in this sentence. Emerson defends that such values belongs not only to rich but all humanity. These thoughts, which were expressed with soft sound, are radicalized in the following poems.

In the beginning we said that Emerson expressed his discomfort and uneasiness for the unequal distribution of the property and the exploitation systems. In "Compensation," he defends that the circumstances of inequalities may cause revolutions:

> *All the old abuses in society, universal and particular, all unjust accumulations of property and power, are avenged in the same manner. Fear is an instructor of great sagacity and the herald of all revolutions. One thing he teaches, that there is rottenness where he appears. He is a carrion crow, and though you see not well what he hovers for, there is death somewhere. Our property is timid, our laws are timid, our cultivated classes are timid. Fear for ages has boded and mowed and gibbered over government and property. That obscene bird is not there for nothing. He indicates great wrongs which must be revised (142).*

Here, we can link this passage to Hughes's radical ideas which guide people to revolution.

Firstly, we can see the real positions of black agricultural workers in Hughes's poems, such as "Share Croppers" in which Hughes sings the song of "Negro" workers. The labor history of African Americans was mostly rural labor, if it is remembered the slavery days. In this poem, one sees black agricultural workers working in harsh conditions. The poem consists of 4 stanzas and the first one describes how they are treated:

Just a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field,
Plowing, planting, hoeing,
To make the cotton yield. (185)

Interestingly, they are compared to animals that are driven to the fields in the old system. The poem tries to say that there is no difference between "Negro" workers and animals. "A herd of Negroes" is seemingly deliberately chosen to make such comparison. It gives the impression that black workers are equal to agricultural animals.

What is more, the working system is the same to that from slavery days. Socio-economic conditions of slavery continue on the guise of agricultural working system. If one looks at that period and literary texts, he sees that:

> *Time and again, antebellum slave narrators lament the brutality of the work on the Southern plantation, including the endless hours, back - breaking work, and impoverished conditions of a labor regime monitored more often than not by a barbaric overseer. But they also bemoan the fact they have been deprived of their "natural" right to the profits of their labor (Gould, 2010: 95-96).*

The practices of many injustices and brutal actions abounded in such texts. So, Hughes carried them into his poetry in order to show the deferred dreams of agricultural workers. In "Jim Crowed – Emancipation Betrayed: African Americans Confront the Veil", Charles W. McKinney, Jr and Rhonda Jones assert that "White domination limited African American employment opportunities to sharecropping, tenancy, unskilled manual labor, and domestic work. The tyranny of exploitative capitalism coupled with punitive vagrancy laws maintained a repressed system of labor that harked back to the days of enslavement." (McKinney, Jr. and Jones, 2005: 275)

The next two stanzas are presented as a poetic cry of inequality. While the black works, the boss takes the money. The dilemma of the workers in the poem that they are unable to get what they deserve casts a light upon the real conditions of the black workers. A pathetic situation is exhibited here to show the helplessness of black workers and to show how their dreams are deferred. They are still in the same system that exploits them:

When the cotton's picked
And the work is done
Boss man takes the money
And we get none,

Leaves us hungry, ragged
As we were before.
Year by year goes by
And we are nothing more (185)

The narrator is participant of the events who complains about the perpetuity of economic exploitation of the black workers. Emersonian public action necessitates a philosopher-poet who moves from his so-called foreign residence to residence in society (Patterson, 1997:97). He is expected to lead people as becoming one of them. The workers are exploited for not being blacks but for being workers. This poem is an example of Hughes's treatment to rural workers. He sympathizes them as well as he understands them. Scott remarks that: "African Americans suffered declines in employment in all classes of agricultural work during the depression" (120). We understand that during the Depression, the economic condition deteriorated worse.

Next, we can read a poem that prioritizes black urban working class, "Ballad of Roosevelt" which is a craftily written in a politically ironic tone. The first four stanzas imply the poverty, the lack of money, the lack of health care, and homelessness respectively. The families are waiting on Roosevelt, then the president of the United States.

But when the winter arrives in the fifth stanza, they get gradually aware how they were betrayed and deceived. It is the poem of poor families who are too hopeful from the politicians and their promises yet ending up great disappointments causing deferred dreams:

And a lot o' other folks
What's hungry and cold
Done stopped believin'
What they been told
By Roosevelt,
Roosevelt, Roosevelt- (179).

The family in the poem is apparently a working class family. Hughes presented the drama of the family. So, one can argue that Hughes successfully transported the real and true daily lives and yearnings of common working-class black society into his work (Thomas, 2007: 181).

The setting of the poem is 1930s, after the Great Depression. It stroked the whole country, and Hughes shows how the certain blacks were affected form its economic outcomes. It is also post-Harlem period, and Hughes tries to show deferred dreams of black urban working class in this poem.

These two poems present economically struggling people. They also provide honest visual representations of the blacks. The poems call attentions to the desperateness of black workers. Lack of social and economic advancement refers to deferred dreams. Now we can focus Hughes's broader perspective on black working class worldwide.

Apart from African American workers, Hughes also dealt with black workers from all over the world. "Always the Same", for example, provides an international insight and point of view to black workers from all over the world declaring the hatred out of same inequalities. The poem covers blacks from various geographies:

On the docks at Sierra Leone,
In the cotton fields of Alabama,
In the diamond mines of Kimberley,
On the coffee hills of Haiti,
The banana lands of Central America,
The streets of Harlem,
And the cities of Morocco and Tripoli. (165)

The narrator reveals that wherever a black works, the circumstances are always the same: the same attitudes, the same injustices and they are all "exploited, beaten and robbed, shot and killed." (165) When we look at the locales, we see that

there is no difference whether the worker is from rural or urban; from the Unites States or from other countries. Hughes aimed to become voice of the black workers not only in his country, in the United States; but also in other countries. He imposes a mission for himself to represent them in his poetry and to make their situation known and read. There are world blacks anymore; instead of specific American blacks.

The tone of the poem is wrath toward the rich exploiters (the force, the power and, the greed) that kill, rob and ignore. The dream in the poem relies on the blood of the black workers. The bloods are running towards Revolution and they are expected to make flags red. This is more than expectation; this is a strong belief of the speaker of the poem. Shortly, "Always the Same" illustrates "a panoramic view of the global exploitation of blacks by First World imperialists" (Dawahare 1998).

The speaker of the poem "A New Song" is the self-representative of the black masses: "I speak in the name of the black millions" (170). From the very beginning of the poem, he specifies and determines position as well as exposing and revealing the point he stands. Later he continues by invoking them:

Awakening to action.
Let all others keep silent a moment.
I have this word to bring,
This thing to say,
This song to sing: (170)

Here is a call for the black to the action. We can see a direct influence from "American Scholar" in which Emerson emphasizes the significance of the action:

> *Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not (155).*

Also, Emerson states "Words and deeds are quite indifferent modes of the divine energy. Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words" ("The Poet," 67). Hughes's words are set to create a collective conscious so that restlessness may rise among the exploited black workers.

When it comes to song in the poem: “Bitter was the day / When I bowed my back / Beneath the slaver's whip.” And that day is past according to the speaker and this is repeated for several times throughout the poem. That day was when slavery was legal and blacks were submissive. The choice of words appeals and invocates a radical stance and action for the new definition of the “Negro”. The past reminds the speaker whipping, lynching, hanging, uneducated kids, sexually abused women, voiceless men, and pitiless oppressors.

The speaker, towards to end, chooses to justify his existence and freedom by striking, effective, and impressive discourses:

I know full well now
Only my own hands,
Dark as the earth,
Can make my earth-dark body free.
O, thieves, exploiters, killers,
No longer shall you say
With arrogant eyes and scornful lips:
“You are my servant,
Black man —
I, the free!”

That day is past— (171)

The subversion of the past with new condition of the blacks is penetrated with Revolutionary ideas and impressions. He ends the poem similarly: “The past is done! / A new dream flames / Against the / Sun!” (172)

During the fugitive slave incidents, Emerson expressed his indignation in a brief letter: “At this moment it seems imperative, that every lover of human rights should, in every manner, singly or socially, in private and in public, by voice and by pen . . . enter his protest for humanity against the detestable statute of the last Congress” (qtd in Collison, 2000: 197-98). Here we see Emerson calling for protest, and action what he advocated in “The American Scholar”. He proves how he is a social reformist by standing against injustices in his society. He summons people to protest as well, and when one remembers how he was considerably affective in those years, the importance of his words can be understood better.

To conclude, this part of the study presents the analysis of four poems in order to establish the underlying elements in Hughes's perception of the economic circumstances of both national and international black working class. The gradual approach to the American Dream can be also scrutinized. In the beginning, one can see the deferred dreams for poor working class, before Hughes's awareness of the same situations for blacks in general. Eventually, Hughes achieved a radical standpoint along with serious dictions and careful word choices by confronting with those who are responsible of exploitation, oppression and timiditation of black workers and calling for protest and revolt at the end. Emerson states that: "Of persons, all have equal rights, in virtue of being identical in nature. This interest, of course, with its whole power demands a democracy" ("Politics," 117). Hughes points out the lack of rights in those poems. And finally, Hughes's poems indicates "the objective reality of African American racial oppression and economic exploitation" (Young, 2007: 137).

5.2. UNION OF AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

Anthony Dawahare establishes Langston Hughes's difference from other black artists of the era in this period: "Hughes's radical perspective is most apparent in his analysis of black oppression in the U.S. By 1932, he clearly was moving away from his nationalist perspective as a Harlem Renaissance writer and toward a view of class rather than race alone as the basis for economic racism and collective struggle" (Dawahare 1998). Hughes invites whites to unite with blacks in order to fight together against the economic exploitation. He must have realized that the collective struggle would help the both sides to actualize their dreams. Referring to the political theorist Hannah Arendt, Anita Haya Patterson concludes that for the social events isolation prevents action and therefore people must be in action so that they can create community and step into public life (Patterson, 1997:99). The initial stage of Hughes's approach is to leave the isolation behind and to forget the discrimination. Solidarity is sought as an urgent and immediate action. Hughes adopted what Emerson ascribed in Self-Reliance: "to include potentially everyone, in a democratized vision of the inherent equality and value of persons" (Buell, 2003:62-63). Hughes tries a new approach, by quitting the old system of struggle alone as

introduced by Emerson: “In one soul, in your soul, there are resources for the world. Wherever a man comes, there comes revolution. The old is for slaves. When a man comes, all books are legible, all things transparent, all religions are forms. He is religious. Man is the wonder-worker” (“The Divinity School Address,” 113).

Hughes internalizes a sense of Emersonian brotherhood: “The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother and my brother is me” (“Compensation,” 147). Gougeon explains the Emersonian reformer: “The goal of the reformer is to broaden the circle of society until all are included and no group or person remains, literally, marginalized” (Gougeon, 2007: 178). Before Hughes included whites, he included the marginalized groups like the Jews. Now he extends his hand to white workers to unite. According to Emerson, “We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE” (“The Over-soul,” 52). In the dichotomy of division and unity; people are unique, yet they are the same in connectedness of One. Hughes embraces this understanding in the following poems.

Hughes differed from other Harlem writers in this decade for his choice of subject term and contents of his poetry. It was a promotion of new idea of a sense of union among black and white workers that separated him from other artists. His optimism in uniting people against discrimination and his struggle for this cause through his writing should be noted. In an era of great misery among the blacks, Hughes usually tried to encourage the Afro-American race to go forward and integrate with the American society. His poignant stance against undemocratic applications towards the workers in this context increased Hughes’s acceptance among his readers.

There must be some reasons of Hughes’s motivation for such an idea of union. We can look at one of his talks to understand this well. For instance, in the Second International Writers Congress, Hughes declares that “We Negroes of America are tired of a world divided superficially on the basis of poverty and power—the rich over the poor, no matter what their color. We Negroes of America are tired of a world in which it is possible for any group of people to say to another:

‘You have no right to happiness, or freedom, or the joy of life’” (qtd in Thomas, 2007: 187). Hughes hoped that interracial collaboration between whites and blacks and good will may contribute especially the democracy (*I Wonder*, 2003: 77).

Moreover, a union would be significant for workers in terms of dreams. Depth and breadth of opportunity can differ according to economic and racial stratifications that raise distrust, doubt, and faithlessness in addition to skepticism towards American Dream (Cullen, 2003: 6). So, one can ask whether American Dream make sense to every class and race or whether the poor benefit from it as well as the rich. Such doubtful approaches may have lead Hughes such a way of handling union. Lastly, Hughes’s poetic language in this decade was filled with working class vernacular for his multiracial mass audience as well as it was “devoid of philosophical or political abstractions, like much proletarian poetry, in order to appeal to the average worker unschooled in Marxist theory” (Dawahare 1998).

“Union” is a groundbreaking poem for both Hughes and African American poetry; and beside it is a great achievement of understanding the importance of unity among the blacks and whites:

Not me alone —
I know now—
But all the whole oppressed
Poor world,
White and black,
Must put their hands with mine
To shake the pillars of those temples
Wherein the false gods dwell
And worn-out altars stand
Too well defended,
And the rule of greed's upheld —
That must be ended. (138)

The poem starts with the speaker’s realization that the fight between the poor and the rich cannot be fought alone; because it implies that all blacks and whites are equally exploited and economically oppressed. The metaphors related with false religion are important in terms of the necessity to break them down. To shake the pillars requires a unique unity in American history to end the sovereignty of the greedy ones. It gives the signal of destroying of any kingdom consisted of false gods

which means the keeper of power; and it is a radical invitation for poor Americans, by ignoring the present racial segregation in the country, to act against those who benefits from them. As Emerson puts forward, our universe is fluid and volatile in which ideas rise and disappear everlastingly; therefore the creation of new thought and new arts destroy the old ("Circles," 123-24). Emerson also remarks that,

> *Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man ("Nature 1836", 5).*

Here Emerson gives a moral lesson when we apply it to human life. It can be interpreted as solidarity, cooperation, mutual support, helping each other in-group. This philosophical concept is used in this poem. People can complete each other's short-comings, and Hughes realized that black and white can help each other in this way.

Hughes tries to establish the sense of unity by also giving historical references. The poem, "October 16: The Raid", serves for this purpose. It brings forward a white abolitionist John Brown and his sacrifices for the end of racial discrimination.

John Brown
Who took his gun,
Took twenty-one companions
White and black,
Went to shoot your way to freedom
Where two rivers meet
And the hills of the
North
And the hills of the
South
Look slow at one another—
And died
For your sake. (141)

Similarly, Hughes believed that economic discrimination could be ended trough a collaboration of the two races. In addition to narrating Brown's action, the

speaker adds that he died for his mission. Brown died for the liberty, which is very crucial for Afro-Americans. This is important as Hughes invites his reader to be brave and fight as much as they can for the economic freedom. Another purpose of the poem is to show the whites an example about how they can unite.

For John Brown, Emerson believed that elevated minds must feel sympathy with him (Collison, 2000: 203). He also gave a speech at a Meeting for the Relief of the Family of John Brown, at Tremont Temple, Boston, in November 18, 1859: "He believes in the Union of the States, and he conceives that the only obstruction to the Union is Slavery, and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition." (188)

"Open Letter to the South" is somehow Greetings from a black worker to the white workers of the South (Miners, Farmers, Mechanics, Mill hands, Shop girls, Railway men, Servants, Tobacco workers, Sharecroppers). It is realized that the lower class of the society is called to unite with black workers for a common aim.

Emerson conceives tenderness as an element of friendship. It is clear that he believes there is a connection between people in one way or another. We can call it Emersonian brotherhood: "We are holden to men by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, by fear, by hope, by lucre, by lust, by hate, by admiration, by every circumstance and badge and trifle; but we can scarce believe that so much character can subsist in another as to draw us by love" ("Friendship," 45). People should find somehow something to consociate and to hold together. Hughes uses the similar brotherhood when he introduces the revolutionary idea of union between the blacks and whites.

Hughes respected Booker T. Washington and his ideas, however, this poem challenges his motto "Separate as the fingers" as Hughes comprehended that separate workers would not accomplish their dreams of class equality. To reach such class equality, as we understand from the poem, it needed racial equality. However, it was not the case. He really believed in a compassionate brotherhood among the classes as well as races. What he revolutionized was to idealize a union regardless of race: "Let us become instead, you and I, / One single hand / That can united rise / To smash the

old dead dogmas of the past" (160). In this poem, past is regarded as a precious teacher that teaches the devil of segregation. So the poem continues to focus unity:

We did not know that we were brothers.
Now we know!
Out of that brotherhood
Let power grow!
We did not know
That we were strong.
Now we see
In union lies our strength.
Let union be
The force that breaks the time-clock,
Smashes misery,
Takes land,
Takes factories,
Takes office towers,
Takes tools and banks and mines.
Railroads, ships and dams,
Until the forces of the world
Are ours! (161)

These lines remind a reality that humans are brothers in a Whitmanesque tone. The invitation to brotherhood, which may be expected from a white voice, comes from a black narrator. Such invitation becomes meaningful because it is without waiting apologies from the other side that enslaved his ancestors; and this is a hint of generosity of the poet. The poem establishes that the power is needed to grow and it requires a strong unity. Factories, land, banks, and dams are the working places where both white and black workers are exploited. At the end of the poem the narrator stresses the solidarity: "Today, / We're Man to Man" (161)

Finally, the last two stanzas of "Song of the Revolution" herald an optimistic waiting out of dreamed union in a hopeful tone:

Breaking the bonds of the darker races,
Breaking the chains that have held for years,
Breaking the barriers dividing the people,
Smashing the gods of terror and tears,

Cutting, O flame of the Revolution,
Fear from the world like a surgeon's knife,
So that the children of all creation
Waken, at last, to the joy of life. (170)

African Americans would benefit from this revolution, because breaking the chains would free them physically, spiritually and intellectually. The country could go forward with the end of division among the nation. The poet's wish for a peaceful environment for those who are oppressed in any possible context is read in the line: "Smashing the gods of terror and tears". A unity is needed for happiness in Hughes's poetry. We can hear Whitman's voice also here. There is a dream of utopia livable for everyone. The poet presents joy to the world. The ideas presented in the poems reflect Emersonian thinking. Buell argues that "For Emerson, the key was to jolt individuals into realizing the untapped powers of energy, knowledge, and creativity of which all people, at least in principle, are capable. He too hated all systems of human oppression; but his central project, and the basis of his legacy, was to unchain individual minds" (Buell, 2003:9).

Jonathan Scott evaluates Hughes's poetry written in this era: "Hughes approached writing during the 1930s and 1940s from two angles simultaneously. Politically, he served as a black national advocate for international socialism, mainly through his poetry and his journalism. As an artist, he influenced American popular culture through the formation of consciously "reintegrated" tastes and preferences (189). Hughes is called as "Negro comrade" in Russia and people offered their seats to him in crowded buses or on queues they would say "Let the Negro comrade go forward" (*I Wonder*, 2003: 99). Coming from a country where he was not allowed to seat on the front seats, Hughes liked this politeness. It can be suggested that his idea of unity was born out of such experiences he came across throughout his travelling. In a luncheon in Japan, Hughes, after commenting that Japan should not try to colonize other countries, declared that: "How wonderful it would be if all the colonies and color lines in the world were wiped out" (*I Wonder*, 2003: 245). This wish and declaration clearly shows Hughes's commitment to end of any kind of exploitation and discrimination of people, countries, and nations. Hughes, who presented this faith in these poems, aimed to integrate the American society and wrote out of this understanding while he was writing, at the same time, for African American conditions. A kind of advancement for the black race was sought by Hughes as well as the same race was tried to be united with the hegemonic race.

5.3. HUGHES'S RADICAL IDEAS

According to Christopher Beach, "In the 1930s, Hughes' poetry became more explicitly political in content and more clearly ironic in tone as he emphasized the need for radical political and social action" (120). Anti-imperialist political consciousness, as Lorenzo puts forward, dominates Hughes's poetry of this decade (Thomas, 2007: 187). Hughes questions the stability of the political system and suggests a distrust towards it which is built on the exploitation of the workers. Hughes tries to shake the notion of authority. Emerson argues that "The faith that stands on authority is not faith. The reliance on authority measures the decline of religion, the withdrawal of the soul... Great is the soul, and plain. It is no flatterer, it is no follower; it never appea1s from itself. It believes in itself" ("The Over-soul," 63). The great soul, as Emerson regards, obeys no authority.

Emerson had harsh views on the oppressive systems. Buell compares Emerson's views with Karl Marx's:

> *For Marx, the path to social betterment was through collective resistance of the proletariat to the economic injustices of the capitalist system that produced such misshapenness and fragmentation. For Emerson, the key was to jolt individuals into realizing the untapped powers of energy, knowledge, and creativity of which all people, at least in principle, are capable. He too hated all systems of human oppression; but his central project, and the basis of his legacy, was to unchain individual minds (7-8).*

In the poems, we witness Hughes's efforts to affect people by changing their minds. So we can assert that Hughes followed Emerson's way. By the way, Emerson considers poetry to be equal to prudence and demands poets to be lawgivers: "the boldest lyric inspiration should not chide and insult, but should announce and lead the civil code and the day's work" ("Prudence," 65). Function of poetry is to instruct, to lead, to decide. Emerson praises the poet with kind and tender words. He declares himself guide by leading the poet and teach him valuable lessons. Hughes seems to have acquired those lessons.

Emerson advocated civil disobedience in case of unequal property in "Politics" (Sacks, 2008: xxv). Moreover, he also emphasized the freedom of people in case of bad government: "If the government is a terrific democracy, the pressure is resisted by an overcharge of energy in the citizen, and life glows with a fiercer flame. … Under the primeval despots of Egypt, history honestly confesses that man must have been as free as culture could make him" ("Compensation," 137).

Hughes was really affected from the Soviet Union. As Hutchinson remarks, "The Soviet Union, born of the Russian Revolution in the midst of the Great War, represented to many writers a more truly egalitarian social and political model than the capitalism of the western so-called "democracies," and it seemed more committed to ending racism" (Hutchinson 6). Hughes was one of those writers, as we see the evidences in the poems. Before going to the Soviet Russia, Hughes was thrilled with the utopic conceptualization of Russia in which there was no place for exploitation of the workers and racial discrimination (Leach, 2004: 71). He observed in Turkmenistan that all forms of minority discriminations ended with the coming of the Soviets. He exemplifies how Jews were treated before and with the Soviet regime. Heavy taxes, no schools and no participation in the official life were among the example how Jews were discriminated (*I Wonder*, 2003: 152). Seeing such alterations must have excited him as he wanted to see the end of black discrimination in the United States. Although he renunciated communism in 1940s and 1950s, Hughes was interested with the agenda of CPUSA, the Communist Party of the United Sates as he realized the party's anti-racist and democratic program that "could organize the stirring the masses" (Dawahare 1998). What Hughes is fascinated about communism in Russia is "apparent racial egalitarianism" although he came into contradictories within the ideology (McLaren, 2).

Hughes especially in 1930s met intellectuals abroad that affected his ideas and changed his vision towards to class problems in his country. Hughes became an important black figure thanks to his poems: "The sheer volume of his writings, his iconoclastic attitude toward black middle-class representation (and New Negro elites), and most importantly his concern for the lives and culture of poor and working-class blacks has made him the veritable icon of the Harlem Renaissance"

(Sanders, 2007: 107). For some of Hughes's poems in 1930s David L. Lewis argues that they were "irreverent, staccato offerings to the coming triumph of the proletariat" (145). But Hughes encouraged the coming of such triumph instead of just informing of the coming. He was the poet who set the fire of revolution. "Hughes grounds the American working-class struggle in a structure of feeling that has produced its own concept of self-emancipation and its own methods of communicating itself to the world" (Scott, 2006: 99).

Hughes insisted that fascism and segregation are two sides of a coin; they are great threats to equality and both of them should be destroyed. Hughes's efforts in calming racial tensions via radio programs during the riots of 1943 throughout the States are noteworthy (Leach, 2004: xviii). Isabel Soto says in her essay which is about Hughes's writings on the Spanish Civil War "Hughes's chronicling of his experiences together with the accounts of black American volunteers who joined the ranks of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades, make clear that the war presented an opportunity to oppose, literally to fight against racial othering" (2014). We see that Hughes evaluated any possibility to stand internationally against racism. Moreover, those of whites-only labor unions, racist foremen, lynch mobs, reactionary state legislators, KKK-affiliated judges and sheriffs, local landowners and storekeepers, overseers, prison guards, supervisors, and police all remind Afro-Americans being worker (Scott, 2006: 111-12). In such an environment, Hughes's attempts become more meaningful. What he designs as union would contribute the well-beings of the blacks.

The great idea of a unity between the black and white workers has Emersonian philosophical background as well. Emerson included all men into the divine unity:

> *[L]et us be lovers and servants of that which is just; and straightaway every man becomes a center of a holy and beneficent republic, which he sees to include all men in its law, like that of Plato, and of Christ. Before such a man the whole world becomes Fourierized or Christized or humanized, and in the obedience to his most private being, he finds himself, according to his presentiment, though against all sensuous probability, acting in strict conceit with all others who follow their private light (qtd in Worley 8).*

Emerson paved the way for new ideas in American thought. He welcomed every new idea. He cared new conscience and reformations.

In Langston Hughes's poetics, there is a huge emphasis on Emersonian action. Hughes believed that his radical thought can be realized with the action of the masses. "Step by step we scale this mysterious ladder; the steps are actions, the new prospect is power. Every several result is threatened and judged by that which follows. Every one seems to be contradicted by the new; it is only limited by the new. The new statement is always hated by the old, and, to those dwelling in the old, comes like an abyss of scepticism" ("Circles." 125). There is always a follower of the things. The old is doomed to lose in the fight of the new and the old. Hughes is optimistic in his fight with the old values; and so he puts forward brave views in the poems. We do not sense any fear in the poems written in this decade. As Emerson justifies; "In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, "without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution." Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance" ("The American Scholar," 159).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the philosophical background of the poems of Langston Hughes. Hughes was an eminent African American poet who began his career in the Harlem Renaissance. He was a major figure during the period. Hughes wrote a wide range of poems which provide realistic depictions of black life. The subjects of the poems vary from workers to prostitutes, from jazz cabaret dancers to hungry children. This study, however, analyzes Hughes's poems in three different categories: race, gender, and class, all of which are manifestations of a black poet against inequality and the subjugation of the oppressed in America—and the world. The influence of earlier poets such as Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and Paul Laurence Dunbar on Hughes is well known. However, this study claims that Hughes is indebted to Emersonian ideology more than anything else in the development of his poetics.

The study takes Ralph Waldo Emerson as a social reformist who aimed to reform the individual in order to reform society. In his poetry, Hughes sought to energize and transform both black individuals and black society in general. In "The American Scholar," Emerson "challenged America's future writers and professors to break with their dependence upon imitation of classical and European models in their own art and thought," and asserted that imitation kills the intellect (Bosco, 2000: 25). We see the importance of original ideas and independence in life, art, and thought in the Emersonian mindset. Taking Emersonian thought as his cue, Hughes wanted to put an end to imitation among members of the African-American community so that they could fully achieve their independence. Hughes urged the black community to realize that they could break their dependence on white society in every aspect of life. This should not be understood as hatred against the white population: Hughes talked in favor of brotherhood and unity between blacks and whites while rejecting all forms of prejudice against blacks. He imagined an ideal black community equal to the white in all segments of life. In his poetic vision, blacks and whites lived peacefully in spite of past painful experiences.

In his work, Emerson stressed that a nation cannot survive long by depending solely on foreign agents. Each nation should find its own original voice. Emerson

saw that "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests" ("The American Scholar," 149). My argument here is that Hughes's struggle to deal with the norms of white hegemony and its influence on African-American life and art can be interpreted best from an Emersonian perspective, and so became a spokesman of his period and a representative of Emerson's worldview. Emerson believed that each historical period must have its own discourse: "Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this" ("The American Scholar," 152). This is the underlying reason why this study focuses on the Harlem Renaissance, a period in which African Americans began to spread their voices. In "Circles," Emerson suggests that forging roads to new and better goals is only possible by being powerful and courageous ("Circles" 132). These words were a source of inspiration for the black community, a community that had been withdrawn, isolated and reclusive. It was the right time for black society to claim its own existence by taking new roads and adopting different goals compared to the post-Emancipation period. In this point, we can observe that Hughes's poetry is in harmony with this belief. Hughes showed new ways of understanding race, gender, and class problems, and awoke his readers into a new consciousness.

Hughes was an internationally acclaimed poet as shown in *I Wonder As I Wander*, and he influenced many young artists around the world. Lorenzo Thomas notes Hughes's ability "to create a poetic vocabulary and establish an Afrocentric point of view that would help to shape the work of two generations of poets in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa" (Thomas 182). He was not an ordinary poet; he had a huge audience from different nations. The significance of his poetry for black people is crucial. One of Hughes's main arguments in his poetry is the "affirmation of blackness" (Smith, 2004: 38). Blackness is treated positively in Hughes's poems, and is not something to be feared or ashamed of. His poems encouraged blacks to go forward. Black identity predominates in Hughes's poetry. He says that, "After all, I wrote about Negroes, and primarily *for* Negroes" (CW 14, 72). This claim suggests that Hughes's poetry is built upon the historical, social, and cultural values of African Americans. Hughes also corrects the negative stereotypes

imposed on blacks by transforming them into positive images, and he articulates their pride, beauty, and strength in his poetry (Tracy 96-98). In movies, theaters, and other forms or arts, blacks were caricaturized extensively. Artists like Hughes tried to change this misrepresentation with their art.

There are countless reasons why we can take Emersonian Transcendentalism as an inspiring movement for the black community. As Gougeon puts it,

> *With its emphasis on the dignity and divinity of all people, the supreme importance of the individual, and the obligation of all to work for the greater good, Transcendentalism helped to bring about an end to slavery and also promoted the rights of women, Native Americans, the poor and oppressed, immigrants, and all other marginalized people. It insisted on the sacred right of all Americans to share in the promise of freedom, equality, and justice, regardless of race, class, or gender. Emersonian Transcendentalism countered the distressing dehumanization of society by re-centering the world around humankind, both individually and collectively (Gougeon, 2007: 5).*

Transcendentalism encompasses certain humanitarian values. In Transcendentalism, everyone can find a place for himself/herself. This worldview is revived in Hughes's poetics. Like Whitman, Hughes offers an image of a country in which all people are welcomed, and becomes a voice not only for the blacks but for all marginalized individuals and communities. He wanted a country in which freedom, equality, and justice are attainable for all citizens. For Emerson, the individual is the center of the society regardless of his/her background; Hughes puts the black individual at the center of his vision.

This study presents similarities in the intellectual motivations of Emerson and Hughes. Emerson upheld the idea of progress, and individual struggle is fundamental in his work. In the race-based poems, we clearly see how Hughes embraces this individualistic tradition. Black people are presented in perpetual struggle on the way to progress. In these poems, we can observe the poet's desire to create a self-reliant community. He imagined black individuals as independent members of modern society. Moreover, while it was not as widespread as it is today, Emerson began discussing women's issues and gender equality. He was a pioneering voice for women's rights when they were not much discussed in public and intellectual circles.

He proposed brave ideas and supported women's demands. His speeches had great social value and his words were welcomed by his audiences. Emerson's belief in gender equality springs from his optimism and reflects respect towards women. Hughes's views on black women are similar. Emerson suggests that people should rely on their own powers ("Spiritual Laws" 85) while Hughes wanted to make African American women realize their own powers. He depicts both wise and powerful, and weak and silenced women characters in his poems. In Hughes's time, the problems of the black women were not articulated adequately, if at all, and Hughes, like Emerson, makes an effort to do so.

Emerson was a social reformer and thinker, and many of his speeches and essays are emblematic of this mission. He had a progressive mindset and affected audiences and readers in many positive ways. He sought to change the social order. Hughes puts forward reformist ideas in detailing the economic problems of both black and white societies during the Great Depression. Emersonian sentiment is dominant throughout the poems analyzed in this study—one should never feel himself defeated: "Never mind the ridicule, never mind the defeat; up again, old heart!—it seems to say,—there is victory yet for all justice; and the true romance which the world exists to realize, will be the transformation of genius into practical power" ("Experience" 101). Similarly, Hughes empathized with and described the constant struggle of all workers. Bosco explores Emerson's place in American thought as such: "Over the nearly half-century since his first appearance on the American scene as an original voice of national faith in individualism, optimism, nature, and social reform, his words had moved his countrymen to aspire to an ideal level of human thought and action unimaginable to earlier generations of Americans" (Bosco, 2000: 43). The study claims that Hughes aimed to achieve that "ideal level of human thought" throughout his poetry. We can see it very explicitly in "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain":

> *We 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.

Langston Hughes stands as a powerful, self-reliant voice of African Americans, and reflects his optimistic Emersonian worldview as following: “There can be no excess to love, none to knowledge, none to beauty, when these attributes are considered in the purest sense. The soul refuses limits, and always affirms an Optimism, never a Pessimism” (“Compensation” 146). As an ardent follower of Emerson, Hughes stood against all limitations imposed on blacks, women, and workers, and was the symbol of optimism for a better world for all.

REFERENCES

Aldridge, D. P. (2005). African American Women since the Second World War: Perspectives on Gender and Race. *A Companion to African American History* (pp. 395- 411). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Anatol, G. L. (2007). Langston Hughes and the Children's Literary Tradition. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp. 237-258). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Balshaw, M. (2000). *Looking for Harlem: Urban Aesthetics in African-American Literature*. London: Pluto Press.

Barksdale, R. K. (2004). Black Autobiography and the Comic Vision. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 99-112). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Beach, C. (2003). *The Cambridge Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Poetry*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bernard, E. (2007). The Renaissance and the Vogue. *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (pp. 28-40). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Birch, E. L. (2004). Harlem and the First Black Renaissance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 113-122). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Bloom, H. (Intro). (2007). *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp.1-13). New York: Infobase Publishing.

Bosco, R. A. (2000). Ralph Waldo Emerson - 1812-1892: A Brief Biography. *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (pp. 9-58). New York: Oxford University Press.

Brooks, J. and Mabry, T. (2010). Religion in Early African American Literature. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp.75- 89). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Brown, S. A. (2004). The Negro Author and His Publisher. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.195-206). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Buell, L. (2003). *Emerson.* Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Carretta, V. (2010). Back to the Future: Eighteenth-Century Transatlantic Black Authors. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 11-24). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Chinitz, D. (2008). Rejuvenation through Joy: Langston Hughes, Primitivism, and Jazz. *Langston Hughes: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp. 61-77). New York: Infobase Publishing.

De Santis, C. C. (2007). The Essayistic Vision of Langston Hughes. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp. 284-304). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Collison, G. (2000). Emerson and Antislavery. *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (pp. 179-209). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cullen, J. (2003). *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Dawahare, A. (1998). Langston Hughes's Radical Poetry and the "End of Race". MELUS. 23(3): 21-41.

DuPlessis, R. B. (2001). *Genders, Races, and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Emerson, R. W. (1993). *Self-Reliance and Other Essays.* New York: Dover Publications.

Emerson, R. W. (2009). *Nature and Other Essays.* New York: Dover Publications.

Feith, M. (2004). The Syncopated African. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.275-294). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Field, P. S. (2001). The Strange Career of Emerson and Race. *American Nineteenth Century History.* 2(1): 1-32.

Finseth, I. (2005). Evolution, Cosmopolitanism, and Emerson's Antislavery Politics. *American Literature.* 77(4): 729-760.

Foster, F. S. and Green, K. D. (2010). Ports of Call, Pulpits of Consultation: Rethinking the Origins of African American Literature. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 45-58). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Fuller, R. (2007). *Emerson's Ghosts: Literature, Politics, and the Making of Americanists.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Gilbert, A. (2000). Emerson in the Context of the Woman's Rights Movement. *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (pp. 211-249). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gougeon, L. (1998). Emerson and the Woman Question: The Evolution of His Thought. *The New England Quarterly.* 71(4): 570-592.

Gougeon, L. (2007). *Emerson and Eros: The Making of a Cultural Hero.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gould, P. (2010). The Economies of the Slave Narrative. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 90-102). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hokanson, R. O. (2008). Jazzing It Up: Th e Be-Bop Modernism of Langston Hughes. *Langston Hughes: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp. 113-133). New York: Infobase Publishing.

Honey, M. (2004). Survival and Song: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.223-242). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Hornsby, A. M. (2005). Gender and Class in Post-Emancipation Black Communities. *A Companion to African American History* (pp. 381- 394). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Huddle, M. A. (2005). Exodus from the South. *A Companion to African American History* (pp. 449- 462). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Hudlin, W. (2004). Harlem Renaissance Re-examined. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 5-12). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Hughes, L. (1926). The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain. *The Nation.*

Hughes, L. (1943). My America. *The Journal of Educational Sociology.* 16(6): 334-336

Hughes, L. (1994). *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes.* New York: Vinatge Books.

Hughes. L. (2003). Autobiography: I Wonder As I Wander. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Hull, A. G. (2004). Color, Sex, and Poetry in the Harlem Renaissance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 67-98). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Hutchinson, G. (Intro). (2007). The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Cambridge University Press.

de Jongh, J. (2004). The Poet Speaks of Places: A Close Reading of Langston Hughes's Literary Use of Place. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp.65-84). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jarrett, G. A. (2010). The Dialect of New Negro Literature. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 169-184). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Johnson, C. S. (2004). The Negro Renaissance and Its Significance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.167-178). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Johnson, J. W. (1940). *Black Manhattan.* New York: Knopf.

Joyce, J. A. (2004). Hughes and Twentieth-Century Genderracial Issues. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp. 119- 140). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kateb, G. (2007). Self-Reliance and the Life of the Mind. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp. 171-203). New York: Infobase Publishing.

Kellner, B. (2004). "Refined Racism": White Patronage in the Harlem Renaissance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 53-66). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Kirschke, A. H. (2004). The Pulse of the Negro World. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.179-194). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Krasner, D. (2007). Negro Drama and the Harlem Renaissance. *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (pp. 57-70). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Larson, K. (2004). Emerson's Strange Equality. *Nineteenth-Century Literature*. 59(3): 315-339.

Leach, L. F. (2004). *Langston Hughes: A Biography*. London: Greenwood Press.

Leary, J. P. (2010). Havana Reads the Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes, Nicolás Guillén, and the Dialectics of Transnational American Literature. *Comparative Literature Studies.* 47(2): 133-158.

Lewis, D. L. (2004). Reading the Harlem Renaissance. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.123-148). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Locke, A. (2004). The New Negro. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp.161-165). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Loggins, V. (1931). *The Negro Author: His Development in America to 1900.* New York: Columbia University Press.

McKinney, Jr, C. W and Jones, R. (2005). Jim Crowed – Emancipation Betrayed: African Americans Confront the Veil. *A Companion to African American History* (pp. 271- 282). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

McLaren, J. (Intro). (2003). *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Volume 14: Autobiography: I Wonder As I Wander.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Miller, R. B. (2004). Langston Hughes, 1902-1967: A Brief Biography. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp. 23- 62). New York: Oxford University Press.

Millett, K. (1971). *Sexual Politics.* London: Sphere Books Limited.

Mott, W. T. (2000). "The Age of the First Person Singular": Emerson and Individualism. *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (pp. 61-100). New York: Oxford University Press.

Musick, M. A. and Wilson, J. (1998). Work, Race and the American Dream. *Sociological Focus.* 31(1): 17-30.

Myers, L. W. (1980). *Black Women: Do They Cope Better?*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Patterson, A. H. (1997). *From Emerson to King: Democracy, Race, and the Politics of Protest.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Pease, D. E. (2007). "Experience," Antislavery, and the Crisis of Emersonianism. *boundary 2.* 34(2): 71-103.

Perry, M. (2004). Shape and Shapers of the Movement. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 13- 22). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Ross, M. B. (2010). Racial Uplift and the Literature of the New Negro. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 151-168). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Rampersad, Arnold. (Intro). (1994). *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes.* New York: Vinatge Books.

Sacks, K. (Ed.) (2008). *Emerson: Political Writings.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sanders, M. A. (2007). African American Folk Roots and Harlem Renaissance Poetry. *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (pp. 96-111). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schwarz, J. A. (2007). "Luani of the Jungles": Reimagining the Africa of Heart of Darkness. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp.127-134). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Scott, J. (2006). *Socialist Joy in the Writing of Langston Hughes.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Sidbury, J. (2010). Africa in Early African American Literature. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 25-44). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Singh, A. (2004). Black-White Symbiosis: Another Look at the Literary History of the 1920s. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 23- 34). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Smethurst, J. (2004). The Adventures of a Social Poet: Langston Hughes from the Popular Front to Black Power. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp. 141-168). New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, R. (2004). Langston Hughes: Evolution of the Poetic Persona. *The Harlem Renaissance: Bloom's Period Studies* (pp. 35- 51). Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers.

Soto, I. (2014). "I Knew that Spain Once Belonged to the Moors": Langston Hughes, Race, and the Spanish Civil War. Research in African Literature. 45(3): 130-146.

Stephens, M. A. (2010). The Harlem Renaissance: The New Negro at Home and Abroad. *A Companion to African American Literature* (pp. 212-226). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Stewart, J. C. (2007). The New Negro as Citizen. *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (pp. 13-27). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, L. (2007). "It Is the Same Everywhere for Me": Langston Hughes and the African Diaspora's Everyman. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp.181-194). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Thompson, J. E. (2005). Identity, Protest, and Outreach in the Arts. *A Companion to African American History* (pp. 476- 495). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Thurston, M. (2007). Montage of a Dream Destroyed: Langston Hughes in Spain. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp.181-194). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Tidwell, J. E. and Ragar, C. R. (2007). Langston Hughes Revisited and Revised: An Introduction. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp. 1-15). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Tracy, S. (2008). The Dream Keeper: Langston Hughes's Poetry, Fiction, and Non-Biographical Books for Children and Young Adults. *Langston Hughes: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp.165-182). New York: Infobase Publishing.

Tracy, S. C. (2004a). Introduction: Hughes in Our Time. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp.3-22). New York: Oxford University Press.

Tracy, S. C. (2004b). Langston Hughes and Afro-American Vernacular Music. *A Historical Guide to Langston Hughes* (pp.85-118). New York: Oxford University Press.

Whicher, S. E. (2007). The Question of Means. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Bloom's Modern Critical Views* (pp. 15-32). New York: Infobase Publishing.

Williams, R. N. and Williams, C. M. (2007). Mother to Son: The Letters from Carrie Hughes Clark to Langston Hughes, 1928–1938. *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp. 106-124). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Wintz, C. D. and Paul, P. (2004). *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance: Volume 1*. New York: Routledge.

Worley, S. M. (2001). *Emerson, Thoreau, and the Role of the Cultural Critic.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Young, R. (2007). Langston Hughes's Red Poetics and the Practice of "Disalienation". *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (pp.135-146). Columbia: University of Missouri Press.