

Langston hughes paper



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Self Worth and Pride in Langston Hughes' Poems Self worth and pride show up in the poems of Langston Hughes in vague, but important ways.

In his poems Hughes talks about the role of African Americans in society today and how it misleadingly reflects on their part in building and keeping America strong. He also talks a lot about dreams and ambitions and never to let the ideas of self worth and pride stand in the way. Thirdly Hughes refers to the illusion of worthlessness and how you need to stand by your beliefs in order to reach your dream. In many of Langston Hughes poems he talks about the roles of African Americans in society during that time, and how it poorly reflects on how important of a role blacks played in building America. Many of Hughes poems have references of slavery and hard work for blacks and how that played into their self worth and pride.

In the poem Mother to Son Hughes says " Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. Its 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. So, boy, don't you turn back. " In many of his poems Hughes talks about the struggles blacks have to take and if they can learn use pride as a strong suite, than they can go far.

One important aspect that Hughes talks about that directly plays into self worth is how blacks ultimately where a key factor in the building of America and they are still mistreated, used and never acknowledged for how important they were. In the poem Let America Be America Again this shows up and directly ties into self worth. " And torn Black Africa's strand I came to

build a "homeland of the free." The free? Who said the free? Not me." This poem explains how without slavery and African Americans, America would be a very different place and perhaps not as powerful. Hughes talks about dreams and ambitions and never to let the ideas of self worth and pride stand in your way.

Dreams and ambitions show up in many of Hughes poems and a direct factor in reaching those dreams is not letting how you are treated or the hard road you go down affect you reaching that dream. The poem Still Here is an example of how pride and self worth can be so strong. "I been scared and battered. My hopes the wind done scattered. Snow has friz me, Sun has baked me, looks like between 'em they done tried to make me stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin' - But I don't care! I'm still here.

This is a very strong example of how suffering and a hard life does not define who you are as a person, and does not have to stop you from reaching your dreams, or at least passing them on to the next generation. Hughes also talks about how your dreams and ambitions can grow stronger through pride in the poem I, too, Sing America. "I am the darker brother, they send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes, but I laugh, and eat well, and grow strong. Tomorrow I'll be at the table when company comes nobody'll dare say to me "eat in the kitchen" then. Besides they'll see how beautiful I am and be ashamed." This is a direct example of how, through pride and positive self worth, you can take something meant to be negative, and grow strong from it.

This was a huge factor in Hughes poems, because many African Americans believed they could grow strong from their struggles and soon reach their dreams. Thirdly Hughes refers to the illusion of worthlessness and how you need to stand by your beliefs in order to reach your dreams. African Americans were treated very poorly and thought of as property this could easily make it hard to feel self worth, which is what Hughes talks about in many of his poems. One example is out of the poem The Negro Mother.

Children, I come back today to tell you a story of the long dark way that I had to climb, that I had to know in order that the race might live and grow. Look at my face—dark as the night – Yet shining like the sun with love’s true light. ” It is in poems like this one where Hughes refers to the hard and long journey it is to be a black man or woman in this time. There are many things that could make one feel worthless, as shown in the second half of this same poem. “ I am the woman who worked in the field bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.

I am the one who labored as a slave, beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave. Hughes is trying to explain that even through the toughest times, if you keep in sight your ambitions and knowledge of your true self, than you can pass that hope and faith on to your children, just as the woman is doing in this poem. Langston Hughes, in his poems, brings up the idea of self worth and pride many times, including in abstract and metaphoric ways. The main point he talks about in his poems related to self worth and pride is that you cannot let your struggles bring you down, but through pride, use those same struggles to lift you up, so that you can make it through the next struggle and that much closer to reaching your dream.