

Poem analysis: the negro speaks of rivers

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My life personally is exactly like a never ending river with the current of the stream changing each and everyday. Every river in the whole world is flowing towards a destination and they all have a starting point as well. Let's say that I'm that river! I was brought into this world as a newborn baby named Brandon Michael Roman and this is the start of my life, thus being the start of the river. I am now 20 years of age with thousands of different things that have occurred in my life each and everyday.

Each of those things that have been apart of my life is the transformation of my river. I started from a newborn baby and now am forming myself into a man, thus creating a long river. The poem 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers' by African-American poet Langston Hughes means that rivers, with their ancient paths and slow but constant movement toward something larger, are very much like humans' progress forward. Just like those individuals during the time period of the Harlem Renaissance, I too am constantly moving towards something larger in life to make my life as fulfilling as possible.

It shows the speaker's sense of racial pride, route to advanced civilizations, and of connection to life-giving, enduring forces in nature, thus being the African-Americans historical journey. Hughes goal was to capture the dominant oral and improvisatory traditions of black culture in written form and I think this poem is a prime example of it. In his poem ' The Negro Speaks of Rivers' things like perseverance, race, nostalgia, freedom, commitment, and cultural awareness all pop into my head after reading it.

Hughes chose to focus his work on modern, urban black life and wanted to express the immense challenges that black people face in their everyday

life's. This is why 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers' was written by him in the year of 1921. The main theme is that people of color have rich cultures and history, and this should be respected and admired. The line, "My soul has grown deep like the rivers," I believe refers more to the connection one might feel to their culture and heritage when they think of their ancestors.

Speaking for the African race, the "I" of this poem links people of African descent to an ancient, natural, life-giving force: rivers. By asserting that he has "known rivers ancient as the world," Hughes, and people of African descent, have an understanding of elemental forces in nature that precede civilization. Line 3 likens the human body to earth by comparing rivers to "human blood in human veins." Line 4 personalizes that comparison as the speaker compares the depth of his soul to the depth of rivers.

Rather than one human relationship to rivers emerging as true or primary, each of these associations intertwine. Line 5 lets the reader know that the "I" is no mortal human speaker, but timeless voice of a race. To have "bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young," the speaker must be millions of years old. Hughes establishes the race's ties to great, culturally rich civilizations along famous rivers in the Middle East and Africa.

Showing that African-Americans have very rich traditions and have been more places than you would think. Those rivers travel just like the African-Americans travel. Hughes is trying to get through that African-Americans are much deeper than what whites give them credit for. Whites just see them as very simple, but blacks show that they can do what whites can do just as

good. African-Americans and Hughes decide they are going to look at their own history and their own framework and be who they want to be.

The change may represent the improved status of African Americans after the Civil War, hope for future changes, or the power of the poet to transform reality through imaginative language. Hughes associates the the mighty river with the eternal endurance of African Americans. Lines 8 through 10 Hughes draws an analogy between the ancient rivers alongside which Africans founded civilizations, and the Mississippi, the river on which several American cities were built, including St. Louis (Hughes's birthplace) and New Orleans.

Views this transformation as " the angle of a poet's vision, which turns mud into gold. " The sun's transformation of muddy water to gold provides an image of change. The phrase " dusky rivers" refers literally to rivers that appear brown due to mud and cloudy skies. Figuratively, the phrase again likens rivers to peoples of African descent, whose skin is often called " dusky" or dark. Once again using a metaphor to compare African-Americans with the rivers. Thinking about my river once again, I am really on a journey to set out and do what I want to do with my life.

Just like the African-americans back during the Harlem Renaissance, they set out on their journey to try to find equality in life. The whites were not accepting the blacks, but that wasn't stopping them. Hughes expressed in an amazing way how African-Americans are going to keep with their rich traditions and don't let anything change them through poetry. Then and now, both of our rivers are flowing towards what we think is something great.

No matter how long it takes, our rivers are going to keep flowing in hope it can find it's destination.