

Why langston hughes should be part of the great western literary canon essay exam...

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THESIS: Langston Hughes, in his heyday, was one of the most influential and radical poets living in the 20th century, and thus deserves to be part of the Great Western Literary Canon

I. His revolutionary, leftist views, as presented through his poetry, made him a champion of civil rights and integration.

A. " A New Song" describes a call to action for blacks who have become disenfranchised

with the way the current system is running

B. His 1949 poem, " Democracy" Hughes states that democracy " will not come / Today,

this year / Nor ever / Through compromise and fear" (lines 1-4).

II. Hughes' prose is beautiful and incendiary at the same time, creating a unique and inimitable poetic voice.

A. His work ties his native roots with the modern black experience in American, providing a closer tie to the past, one which Hughes intends to resurrect and bolster.

B. " Ride, Red, Ride" perpetuates the motif of being " In the quarter of the Negroes," with a black-dominated world in place, following Santa Claus himself.

III. Hughes' life as a poet was conducted with conviction despite the threat of suppression by opposing conservative forces.

A. In 1953, Hughes was brought before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, the McCarthy-led initiative that searched for Communists holding important business, political and cultural positions in America.

B. Hughes, even after this blacklisting, criticizes the type of democracy that existed in America at the time, calling for more equal, shared responsibility and true choice.

Works Cited

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