

The negro artist and the racial mountain

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you: hear you, hear me---we two--- you, me, talk on this page.” In one of Langston Hughes’ essays, “ The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” he deliberates attention to Black American artists who do not wish to be identified by the color of their skin through their writings but aspire to continue on as poets of no ethnic persuasion. This conflict is deeply instituted in “ The Theme for English B.” It is a young man’s internal conflict between his foremost desire to write and dilemma of what to write and the internal voice that compels him to confer his roots and identity. The poem journeys into his contemplation as young, Black student in the midst of a relatively Caucasian educational institution and the contention of the equality between him and his professor.

The persona of the poem speaks of how he perceives himself as the same as of any other individual his age or otherwise. He starts with the fact of his cognizance of his aesthetic difference and how he is apart from all the others around him, being the only Black student in his class. It paints of the picture of the school and its close proximity but otherwise vague disconnect with Harlem. But with the college’s discord amplifying his intimacy with the place and how it represents him, and how he must represent it.

It ropes in the simple intricacies that add up and defines us as who we are as human beings. Mundane things the poetic persona expresses like ‘ to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love’ How these are the same for him as it is for all the others around him, including his professor, this in his mind makes all of them equal, regardless of the color of their skin.

The perception of the polar opposition between the white paper and the black ink gives much of the vivid detail that makes the poem as refine in the

rendering of the underlying tone that it extends. He is what and who he is, and being so, the negation of what his paper will not be leads to his realization of what it is. In the course of his reflection he discerned the reality of being. The veritable connections that make the student and the professor equal, that constitutes why they are one and the same. And that is the fact that they are both Americans.

Known for his political dynamism through his literary works, Hughes wrote the poem during a time when American history was at the threshold of a landmark revolution that ultimately led to the realization of the Civil Rights Movement. A developmental change that he has in many ways has become an integral part of. His works include contentious political tones that articulate race associations. He considers it a responsibility for African-American writers to speak of their race through their writings (www. poets.org).

Like Walt Whitman, Hughes believes in the capacity of poetry to influence history and shares the view of former in relation to the advancement of American democracy and an undeviating optimism for the culture of America. His poetry exemplifies misleadingly uncomplicated style yet unravels subtle complexities that are particular of his socioeconomic individuality. One of the forerunners of the Harlem Renaissance, he speaks vastly of the call for racial justice (Kimmelman 226).

The Kurosawa code goes that to be an artist denotes that one should never avert one's eyes (Lyman par. 3). This is especially true to all the black writers in the 1950's and the 1960's. One cannot dismiss one's color in his writings. It would be the same for example to a woman writer in a female

oppressing country, political inclinations become inevitable. A recognition and subsequent referencing to these matters will sometimes be almost a given.

Works Cited

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