

Langston hughes poetry analysis

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“ Art is the illusion in which we see the truth”- Pablo Picasso Langston

Hughes clearly connects with a wide range of audiences through the simplicity that surrounds his poetry. The beauty of this manner in which he wrote his poetry, is that it grasp people by illustrating his narratives of the common lifestyles experienced by the current American generation.

His art form expresses certain questionable ideologies of life and exposes to the audience what it takes to fully comprehend what being an American truly means.

Each individual poem describes and illustrates the strength and hardships the African American community was experiencing. Through his literature art form of poetry, Hughes was able to convey the common assertions of spiritual faith and how society viewed the dichotomy of the American Dream culture in the United States. Langston Hughes’ poem Life is Fine is a perfect example that demonstrates the notion of hardships that one may encounter in life. Within the poem, we have a speaker that is experiencing the loss of a lover.

This loss alludes and questions the meaning of life and whether or not suicide or death is an option.

In analyzing and interpreting the poem, the reader is exposed to the changes of emotional phases that the speaker is going through. At first we realize that suicide appears to be the only outlet in which everything makes sense to the speaker. “ I went down to the river, I set down on the bank. I tried to think but couldn’t.

So I jumped in and sank. I came up once and hollered! I came up twice and cried! If that water hadn't been so cold, I might've sunk and died"(Conarroe pg 241, 1-8). This passage conveys the willingness of failing and accepting death as the only escape from reality.

It depicts the ultimate misery that he is currently experiencing, yet the element of reality sinks in, exposing the character to the nature of life. The mere that fact that the water was " cold" grasps the speaker and focuses him to realize the beauty of life. The poem cleverly correlates with the emotional aspects of everyday life with the emergence of nature and the acceptance of obstacles that is inflicted upon.

It is the idea of contrast that Hughes imposes on the reader. Hughes not only focuses on the negativity aspects of life, but through the negative elements is one able to see the positive outcomes.

It is the over all theme of overcoming these obstacles, that captures the audience. Towards the end of the last stanza of the poem, we, the audience, see a complete transformation of the speaker and his view on life. He now comprehends the extensity of his actions and views his emotions as a blinding element from reality. He does not have the need to commit suicide anymore, and now fully accepts the loss and embraces the lament.

" Though you may hear me holler, and you may see me cry- I'll be dogged, sweet baby, If you gonna see me die.

Life is fine! Fine as wine! Life is fine! (Conarroe pg 242, 27-33). With the passage, the reader is now aware of the transformation of the speaker. Life

is fine depicts an overall theme of sorrow that can ultimately lead to the constant pursuit of a higher meaning to life and happiness. This pursuit is an exemplification of the notion of American dream. Throughout his literature, Hughes constantly questions the ideology behind the American dream and critiques the fact that for some Americans, this “ American dream “ can seem unattainable.

The concept of the American dream can be seen as a facade hiding the true meaning behind the entire movement. To the African American culture, the American Dream seems to just reiterate the fact that struggle and hardships will only be obtained. Still here is a great example that illustrates these common assertions. “ I’ve 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 laughing, stop lovin’ stop livin’- But I don’t care! I’m still here! ” (Conarroe pg 242, 1-8).

It is through this poem that the audience can grasp the idea behind the strength and influence that Hughes bestows upon the reader. Hughes begins to illustrate to the reader the constant hardships and sorrow, but still, one has a sense of to hang on and overcome these battles. Using illusions and references to nature, he reflects the contrast of prevailing in life. Although his “ hopes” have vanishes along with the wind, he will stay and struggle to achieve the idea of happiness. Hughes also begins to critique the views of the white American culture has upon the black community.

In Share-Croppers, we are told a story of how the “ negroes” often provide most of the work, yet the white boss usually takes the money for their work.

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Within the narrative, Hughes expresses the complaints of the black community had. This poem gave insight to the harsh realities that most slaves were put upon. “ Leaves us hungry, ragged, As we were before. Year by year goes by, And we are nothing more.

” (Conarroe pg 245, 9-12). Although, suppose changed had occurred, Hughes uses the comparison of slavery to express the racism and treatment of the black population.

The line “ As we were before”, clearly conveys this notion of struggle and lack of change within the American culture. The fact that he inscribes the word “ before” in the narrative is very important. The word before can be translating into stating that repetition seems to be a common element. He clearly depicts these struggles and lack of unity was seen before represent of form of a cycle that shall be repeated.

The American dreams seem to welcome all culture but deem the African American community of acquiring it.

It is exactly why Hughes poses such questions of “ what happens to a dream deferred? ” in his poem Harlem. Within this question in mid, Hughes inquires exactly American culture and status and how it reflects within the African culture. It is a prime example in which he denies the common assertion of behind the American Dream. The fact that a dream can be deferred, states to the audience the possibilities of never being able to achieve the accomplishments and successes that America promises her people.

Clearly stating, the American dream just begins to fade and become a heavy load upon oneself.

This poem reflects the negativity that surround the American culture. The fact he begins to compare a dream to a raisin and sore, depicts the ambiguity that one can put themselves within this deferment. Not only does the dream ever fully escapes deferment, but Hughes chooses to end the poem with a open-ended question of whether or not, this deferment of a dream, will explode? With this questions Hughes, gives insight to he reader how spiritually, a dream cannot be attained. Langston Hughes personified and expressed the idea of persistence of happiness in life.

Although most of his literature, reflect the American culture and ideologies is a negative and melancholy manner, Hughes also impose upon his readers never to give up and strive for the better. Hughes creates works of art that all his people can connect with and understand. The fact that many of his work can be read as today as representation of modern day culture, Hughes has the ability to beautifully express his struggles and obstacles in life. Life is fine! Life is wine! Life is Fine! Works Cited Conarro, Joel. Six American Poets: An anthology.