



TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF BLACK LIFE IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore and analyze the Trials and Tribulations of Black Life in the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka. It also aims to explore in detail, the political, social, psychological and cultural aspects of racism. One of its aims will also be to understand how an oppressed group lifts itself to obtain independence in America. It is an endeavor to comprehend the human predicament in distinct human conditions as reflected in the poems of Langston Hughes. The closer reading of the selected poems of the selected poets reveals a feeling of exploitation of the black community in a racially segregated nation.

KEY POINTS

Trials and Tribulations, Black Life, Langston Hughes

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to explore and analyze the Trials and Tribulations of Black Life in the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka. It also aims to explore in detail, the political, social, psychological and cultural aspects of racism. One of its aims will also be to understand how an oppressed group lifts itself to obtain independence in America. It is an endeavor to comprehend the human predicament in distinct human conditions as reflected in the poems of Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka. The closer reading of the Selected Poems of the selected poets afflicts African Americans anxiety. Black in America. They were engaged into forced toil, battered, abused, disgraced what lies ahead. They apprehension research freedom through their constant revolts. The present will examine the pathetic plight of these humans and their realization of and uncertainty, pessimism and gloom, at and demoralized on the cotton fields and plantation where they were agony, and tried to survive hardship racially segregated nation, America. They lived in an environment where they reveals a feeling of estrangement and exploitation of the community in a compelled to work as slaves.

This thesis is an attempt to see the Trials and Tribulations of Black Life into the select poetry of Langston Hughes, and Amiri Baraka. The books selected are: Selected Poems of Langston Hughes and research involves the methodology of the textual study/formalistic approach in which the text will remain the main focus. The poets have been selected for research because of the following reasons: Firstly, both the poets are African Americans who have witnessed the harsh cruelty and brutality of the white American society on the slave Negroes. Secondly, the poets have witnessed the three most popular and radical movements of their times (social and 40 literary—Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Movement, and Black Arts Movement) for the emancipation the blacks from the clutches of slavery, exploitation and racial discrimination in America. Thirdly, one can find a wave of strife for equality which had begun in Langston Hughes' poetry.

NEED OF THE STUDY

There is always a question why one should study a particular genre. There are positive, 38 precise reasons that encourage the research. Firstly, 'racism' issues society and history, and African American studies recompense one with a deeper insight and understanding of this critical issue which cannot be fairly expected from a white writer's point of view. Secondly, the study provides varied perspectives to view the world of African Americans. Lastly, the reading of African American Literature provides a different standpoint where one can see distinctions of cultures, the ways people think, speak and behave. Moreover, in 1963, an editorial in the nationalist Liberator points out: "Why should we study Negro History week? Well, for one thing, when our ancestors were brought to this country as slaves ... their white masters attempted to condition them for

enslavement during a period of “breaking in—“ a calculated dehumanization. An essential part of this process was the violent uprooting of every trace of history and culture which would give a man dignity, self-respect and a will to resist” (Robinson 74). Accordingly, the present study is an attempt to focus on the trials and tribulations of black life into the poetry of Langston Hughes. The thesis on one hand draws illustrations in terms of the Black Culture, Black people and Black imagery. On the other hand, it demonstrates poets’ delineations of the hideous and shocking facts of the American society. The poetry of Langston Hughes reveals the anguish and aching image of Blacks. The focus of the thesis is on the racial issues explored in the poetic utterances of the selected poetry and how their poetry relates their own experiences of poverty, racism and prejudice in the dominant white culture. Despite highlighting various aspects of inequalities, their poetry provided a positive message of humanity and hope of harmony and accord. Being Black poets, Hughes and Baraka got inspiration from their own race. Langston Hughes was one of the exponents of Harlem Renaissance and explored the wretched condition of Negroes in racially segregated America.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Langston Hughes’ poetry is suffused with dreams and desires of Blacks that hold life. Dreams of oppressed are always deferred and if he/she gives up the dreams, they are equal to dead as stated by Hughes. The significance of dreams in his poetry has been presented through a number of poems. The poem, Beale Street (HSP 70), has depicted the pain in the Black life as his dream has been lost. The poems Deferred (HSP 252) and Dream Dust (HSP 75) depict the human limitations to see the dreams. The desires and ambitions are other modes of dreams to celebrate life happily. Numerous poems of Hughes have shown collective dreams of Blacks — their dream is to feel free to act; they want to earn money; they wish to seek good jobs and above all they want equality. These are the pragmatic dreams of the world which the American Blacks have always been deprived of. But finally, the time came when Blacks could see their dreams come true; the dream of a happy and prosperous life. Throughout his poetry, Langston Hughes has been faithful to his community. He has condemned the whites for their callousness, disparity and inhumanity. He opines that whites have been influential in the past, yet they have been made so by the cowardice of the poor, helpless Black Americans. His poetry reveals the transformation of Afro-Americans from underprivileged, subjugated Blacks to the revolutionized leaders of the community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the thesis would be the formalist approach for entering into the selected texts namely Selected Poems of Langston Hughes, and *Transbluesency*: Formal approach is the textual study which in American the 16 “conceives literary language to be self-focused, in that its function is not to convey information by making extrinsic references, but to offer the reader a mode of experience by drawing attention to its own “formal” features—that is, to the qualities and the internal relations of the linguistic signs themselves” (Abrams 103). The author becomes a non-entity and is of little importance, whereas the text becomes the focus. This provides literature only as a specialized mode of language.

SOURCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

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I am grateful to the Almighty to give me strength to complete this research and I really thank my family to encourage me. This study focuses on African American relations. The African Americans kept tolerating the cruelty and suffering, since there was no one to hear their voice. But there came a time for them when they started realizing the value of their freedom. They began expressing themselves through Negro spirituals which marked the beginning of the artistic expressions of the black emotion. The present research will examine the pathetic plight of the black.