

P R E F A C E

The thesis on the poetic art of Langston Hughes for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) is an exhaustive and almost detailed discussion regarding his poetic development, themes, his view of religion in the United States of America, and his novel poetic art, techniques and style. Langston Hughes was a poet of extraordinary poetic power. He is credited with bringing Afro-American poetry to the level of high art. He is praised for his techniques with which he decorated the design and pattern of his poems. He deserves the credit of equalizing Afro-American <sup>poetry</sup> with American one.

Langston Hughes was the Prometheus to the black Americans. He championed the causes of those colored masses who were oppressed and exploited by the white ones in America. He advocated freedom and democracy to be ensured to the oppressed class of people. He was touched to the quick to see the black ones, deprived of equality and rights-social, political and economic. They were reduced to slaves and looked upon as people of no consequence. They were made 'untouchables'. He touched upon in some of his poems the sensitive issues like hypocritical, commercialized religion. His view of religion was essentially non-sectarian. It's quite astonishing that Hughes transmuted the materials of folk life into high art, and he garnered up

Black Experience which he superbly transformed into pure gold of poetry. Besides racial discrimination, violence, brutality etc., which constitute the major theme of his poetry, he touched upon non-racial themes like love, life, death and nature in his poems, which have considerably broadened the range and scope of his poetry and enhanced his popular appeal. He did not hesitate nor was he afraid to flay the American racial and sparthied politics.

Although Langston Hughes affirmed his blackness and tried to preserve his black identity, he was a nationalist; he was also active in preserving black cultural unity, sanctity and distinctiveness, but we cannot allege that his double-consciousness (both a Negro and an American) has diluted his sense of being an American and his strong sense of patriotism. His appeal to all the black masses to reconstruct and rebuild America was essentially patriotic. What he did was to oppose the white people's policy to curb black people's freedom and deny their equal opportunity in every stage of black life. His advocacy for freedom, democracy, equality and justice was not racial but national and humanitarian. He tried as best he could to have these ensured to the white working class also. His dream was to transmute racial and authoritarian America into an ideal commonland where freedom, justice, equality and fraternity

would ever prevail. It will not be wrong to describe Hughes as a philanthropist in the land ruled by those lopsided misanthropists. Hughes was essentially a socialist.

Langston Hughes is a poet-artist. The merit of his poetic art is of high order. He possessed unusual power to transform his experiences and imagination into high poetry. His poetic language is simple and lucid. His sentences are short-winded and the phrases he used in his poetry are compact and concise. He was never vocal; he also maintained economy words and brevity of expressions. His poetic diction is quite artistic and praiseworthy. He wrote poems in free verse style and technique. His poetry is free from obscurity. He was always explicit and direct. The astonishing feature of his poetry is his use of black dialects and vocabulary. The use of syncopated words has facilitated the flow of poetry. He intentionally avoided conventional poetic form and made his language 'conversational'. His inventiveness of blues form adds a special feature to his poetic art.

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(iv)

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*Kalyan Pauley*