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Langston Hughes**

Revolutionary Poetry

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## **Dedication**

Praise and thanks to the Almighty God Who helped me in finishing this dissertation.

I dedicate this work to my father Amrani Mohamed Al Amin and my mother Sersoubi Dalila who never let me down, protected me, and filled me with all kinds of love.

To my protective angels Ayat, Asma, and Nabila my sisters who stand with me in my happiness and my sadness. I want to thank you for being an incredible friends and sisters to me and being there to support me always.

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**Table of Contents:**

Dedication:..... I

Acknowledgment: ..... II

Table of Contents ..... 4

The General Introduction: ..... 11

**Chapter One: The Theoretical Part**

**Part One: Langston Hughes's Phase**

Introduction: ..... 16

I-Langston Hughes personal life: ..... 16

I.1-His Childhood:..... 16

I.2- Friendships and Relationships: ..... 17

I.1.2.1 -Family: ..... 17

I .2.2- Friends:..... 19

I.3-Jobs:..... 19

I.4-Education: ..... 20

I.4.1-Elementary school: ..... 20

I.4.2 -High School:..... 20

I.4.3-Columbia University:..... 21

I.4.4- Lincoln University:..... 21

I.5-Life Inspiration: ..... 22

II-Literary Background: .....	23
II.1-Class Poet: .....	23
II.2-School Newspaper: .....	23
II.3-Early Publication .....	23
II.4-Works: .....	24
II.4.1-Novels: .....	24
II.4.2-Plays (Drama): .....	24
II.4.3-Short Stories: .....	24
II.4.-Essays: .....	25
II.4.5-poetry: .....	25
II.5-Themes Exploration: .....	25
II.5.1-Prid and The Quest of Identity .....	25
II.5.3- Double Consciousness: .....	27
II.5.2- The Oppression and Racism: .....	28
II.5.4- the American Dream: .....	29
III-Historical Background: .....	30
III.1-Racial Climate in the United States: .....	30
III.1.1-Jim Crow Era: .....	30
III.1.2The Lynching: .....	30
III.2-The Great Migration: .....	31

III.3-The Harlem Renaissance: .....	31
III.4- The Role of Langston Hughes in the Harlem Renaissance: .....	32
III.5-The Contribution with other writers: .....	34
III.6-The Great Depression: .....	34
Conclusion: .....	35

**Part Two: Claude McKay's Phase**

Introduction: .....	37
I-Claude McKay Personal Life: .....	37
I.1-His Childhood:.....	37
I .2-Relationships and Family: .....	38
I 2.1-Family: .....	38
I.2.2-Friends: .....	39
I.3-Constabulary:.....	40
I.4-Education.....	41
I.4.1- A Local School: .....	41
I.4.2-Tuskegee Institutions and Kansas State College: .....	41
I.6-Travlling: .....	42
II -Literary Background: .....	44
II .1-Early publication:.....	44
II. 2-Major Works:.....	44

II.2.1- Novels: .....	44
II.2.2- Short Stories: .....	44
II.2.3- Autobiography: .....	44
II.2.4-Poetry:.....	45
II 3- Themes Exploration: .....	45
II. 3.1- Pride and Identity: .....	45
II.3.2- Oppression and Resistance: .....	46
II.2.3- Celebrating Nature: .....	46
II3.4-Alienation: .....	47
III- Historical Background: .....	49
III.1-British Colonialism in Jamaica: .....	49
III.2-The Impact of the British Colonial on Jamaica:.....	49
III.3-Claude McKay Under the British Colonial:.....	50
III.4-Claude McKay in the United States: .....	51
III.5- The Red Summer:.....	52
III.6-Claude McKay Role in the Harlem Renaissance: .....	52
III .7-The Great Depression: .....	53
Conclusion: .....	53
The Introduction: .....	56

## Chapter Two: The practical Part

1-Developing a Comparative Understanding: .....	56
2-Crafting Distinct Forms and Structures .....	57
3-Contrasting Language Choices .....	61
4-Contrasting Tones and Moods in their Poetry .....	63
4.1-Exploring the Tone .....	63
4.2-Exploring the Mood.....	65
5-The Representation of the African American Experience .....	69
6-Symbolic Significance: Decoding Hidden Meanings .....	71
6.1Geographical symbols.....	71
6.2-Romantic Symbols .....	73
7-Imagery Unveiled: Painting Pictures with Words .....	74
8-Unveiling the Core Themes.....	76
8.1- The Theme of Freedom .....	76
8.2-The Theme of Resistance.....	77
8.3- The Theme of Oppression.....	78
8.4-Racism and Discrimination.....	79
Conclusion: .....	80
The General Conclusion: .....	82
Abstract: .....	85



ملخص.....	86
Résumé : .....	87
Works Cited.....	88

# **The General Introduction**

### **The General Introduction:**

In the realm of Literature The Afro-American and Jamaican literature two prominent periods that shape the culture and heritage of the black race. Considering this, The Harlem Renaissance, the heart of the African and Jamaican literary works, is where Langston Hughes and Claude McKay stand as a key figure who's their literary work contribution serve the cultural revolution and the resistance at that time.

The Harlem Renaissance is an intellectual and cultural iconic movement in the history of blacks. it began around the 1910s and reached its peak during the 1920s. This era encounters the flowering of the creativity that has been suppressed for centuries and the revival of the African American dance, art, Fashion and the bold existing form of black music. Such as, jazz, folk, spiritual and blues that became a central part in Harlem. Also, it experiences the burgeoning of literature and the rise of various poets like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay.

Langston Hughes one of the central figures in the Harlem Renaissance a profile artist who wrote a poem that picture the image of racism and injustice. He, deliberately, adds his personal experience to his works using an artistic poetic language and a mosaic element like the blues and Jazz.

Claude McKay is a Jamaican America writer and poet. Also, another key figure in the Harlem Renaissance. He fights against the segregation and support the equal rights for the black community. Otherwise, he is well-known of his poetic literary techniques and melodious works that are worthy of praise.

Within the realm of the black identity. This research centred on exploring the different dimensions of the black identity and unravelling the distinct paths that forged in the poetry of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay and navigating the thematic and the stylistic elements in

their selected works. To explore this further, this study offers the multifaceted dimensions of the black identity delving into the social and cultural narrative during the era of the Harlem Renaissance.

This research aims to study the differences and similarities in a selected poems by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay.

The objective of this study is to Explore the stylistic choices used by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay that serve the implementation of the black identity.

To examine the culture, resistance, oppression and the black identity that are portrayed in their works.

Compare between Langston Hughes and Claude McKay through a selected poem to conduct the contrasts and correspondence.

The Questions of this study are:

- What are the key similarities and differences in the ways Hughes and McKay depict cultural pride and resilience in their poetry?
- In what ways do Hughes and McKay's poetic styles contribute to their portrayal of the Black experience?
- To what extent Langston Hughes and Claude McKay portray the complexities of the black identity and affect the socio-cultural abroad by challenge the social norms in their works?

This study shed lights on the different types of the black identity and how two existing bodies challenge the negative stereotype over the black identity through the lens of the postcolonial narrative during the era of the Harlem Renaissance. Furthermore, Enhancing a deep understanding of their cultural, artistic, thematic utilization and the Complexities within the black identity narrative in their works.

This dissertation is a comparative study that will shed light on the differences and similarities between Claude McKay and Langston Hughes, and to investigate how and why their stylistic choice of language and their thematic expression serve the portrayal of the black identity in their selected poems. Langston Hughes *The weary blues*, *The theme for English B* and *Let America be America again*, and Claude McKay *Enslaved*, *The Lynching* and *America* in the lenses of the postcolonial theory.

As with any other study there's always this gap or a limit that is faced while writing any dissertation, in the case of this research there was a lack of finding some sources especially books which the information of this study mostly gathered from different articles and magazines and it is because the poets have less attention in the field of literature.

The structure of this dissertation will be defined in two chapters. The first chapter which is the theoretical part which going to be divided into two parts one for Langston Hughes and the other for Claude McKay. where the historical background, the literary background and the life of the two poets will be detailed. On the other hand, the second chapter which is the practical part will be concerned with the analysis of the selected poems by the poets to gather the differences and the similarities found in their poems. indeed, This study will be analysed with the use of qualitative research in the lenses of post-colonial theory.

**The Theoretical Part: Personal Life,  
Literary and Historical Background**

*Part One: Langston Hughes*

## **Introduction:**

The African American history is filled with the stories of the blacks who had been repressed, persecuted and humiliate by the white community for many years. As a reflection of this, numerous black poets come to defend their blackness, culture, and history. Langston Hughes is one of the most victorious Poets who reclaimed his agency and fight against the dynamic powers and challenged the negative stereotype over the blacks for years. This chapter will introduce the life of Langston Hughes and the most important events in his life and the period of the Harlem Renaissance and how it reflects his writing. Also, his literary background that will tackle his major works and themes that he uses that serve to spread his voice against the colonial narrative.

### **I-Langston Hughes personal life:**

#### **I.1-His Childhood:**

After the birth of Langston his mother and his father had divorced in February ,1,1902. However, He was similar to a passed-around boy, because He spend his time passing by between his mother Carrie who was looking for work, and his grandmother. (Boyd-jones, 7). He used to hear his mother and grandmother talking about his father who study hard to become a lawyer, but he failed. otherwise, Langston missed not his father around him. (Boyd-jones 8).

Although Langston Hughes was often looks happy, He grows up as disowned from his white father, and starving for affection and care. (Rampersad 3) It was his grandmother Marry Sampson Patterson who taught him about the stories of the African American resistance and their tradition which appears later in his works. alone with no siblings Hughes was travelling between his family, and his mother who disliked his father. (Bloom 166). Langston had a tough childhood as a passed



around boy. what add insult to injury he was a black. consequently, he was facing a discrimination. also, starving for affection.

this passage States how the childhood of Langston Hughes reflects his writing, and how his relationships and the major period of his life shaped his identity as a black man that has a strong connection to his identity, yet he fights, later, against the colonized, which is the white community who oppressed the black people and try to humiliate, harmed and persecuting the African American people.

## **I.2- Friendships and Relationships:**

### **I.1.2.1 -Family:**

#### **I.2.1.1-Grandmother:**

Langston 's grandmother saturated him with the stories of the successes and the glories of the blacks against racism, when he was shuttled from home to another, so he spends his days in Lawrence, Kansas with his grandmother, while she was paying for living by renting her house and sometimes in the requirements of all of it. (Tolson 83).

Thus, the period that Langston Hughes spend with his grandmother was filled with the prideful stories about the black and how they have been discriminated. Subsequently, she builds a strong foundation for Langston about his race, and she taught him how to love his heritage, culture and himself as a black American individual. Also, she opened his eyes on the importance of the storytelling. Nevertheless, he, eventually, write about the experience of the African American, their legacy and heritage to show the world the ways in which they have been discriminated and how much they are valued and outstanding. He is considered as the people's poet.

Langston was afraid of losing their home due the bad financial situation they go through. At their worst days they ate salt pork and wild deadline. (Boyd-jones 13). Although she struggles financially in the payment and foods, in Langston memories his grandmother was always confident and devout. (Summer 166). Langston Hughes witnessed the struggles of his grandmother. this period he passes with her reflect his writing. He tries to picture the life of the black people and their struggling. The next parts will explain how he deals with that on his poetry.

### **I.2.1.2-Stepfather:**

In his twelfth his mother remarried again and get birth, where he continued living with her and his stepfather, Subsequent to the death of his grandmother. Homer Clark was a diligent worker who had many jobs and won the love of Langston Hughes.

### **I.2.1.3- His Father:**

When Hughes and his father first meet in his 17. while he was talking to him, he insulted his son by saying ‘just like niggers ... Always moving’ with a harsh tone. As the misapprehension between them. Hughes pictures his father as ineffective in his paternal duties. Moreover, for him he was a hero while his father a villain (Tara20- 22). Therefore, this consider as significant chapter in Langston Hughes life which is his father, yet it was a poor son and father relationship.

Hughes hated his father. Besides, He used to be proud of his blackness, but his father gave him the wrong impression. Hughes felt insulted by him. When Hughes asked his father to study in the United States to become a writer to join the Harlem experience. Especially it was the only way to finish his education was his father. Hughes’s father argued his decision and refuse to give him the money to study. (Summer 168).

## **I .2.2- Friends:**

### **I.2.2.1- The Reeds:**

The Reeds had their own house since no one came to ask for rent payment. Langston lived with them after the death of his grandmother. He called them Aunt and Uncle Reed. They ate together nice food from the garden and cows that Aunt Reed took care of them. While Uncle Reed dug ditches and laid sewers. (Boyd-Jones 14).

Auntie Reed was pious and devoted to the church. She took Langston with her vigorously where he noticed a different life. He experienced spirituality and applauded his hands with the rhythm, and he listened to the acclamation of men in the corner where the worshiper raised his voice by the moving spirit in the church. A students and civic-minded folk read and listened to the music and argued about the public events that touched the black community. These conversations were his authentic foundation for “the race” and what he calls black people. (Boyd-jones 15)

Hughes spends his marvellous days with Aunt and Uncle Reed. they were so nice and welcoming. aunt Reed took Langston Hughes to the church. his experience of attending the church provide him with a sense of belonging to the community. Furthermore, he practices the African American heritage, culture and culture that later influenced his own writing.

### **I.3-Jobs:**

Langston Hughes had a several jobs. such us: assistant cook, launderer, a busboy and a seaman. Furthermore, He travelled to New York City and Washington. He liked listening to the jazz music in clubs and write poetry. In New York City when he worked as a busboy at a hotel. He meets Vachel Lindsay famous literary critic who liked the poems that Langston gave him and published

them, yet he becomes widely famous and published his first book. (Marsh 2,3). The jobs that Langston Hughes had in his life was the chance for him to the popularity and building his dream as a writer.

#### **I.4-Education:**

##### **I.4.1-Elementary school:**

When Langston become little old his mother does her best so he could attend a school of white people, where he sat at the end of the row. Even though, they should follow alphabetical order. His teacher chased him with a hate comments. Also, she told his friends to stay away from him. Nevertheless, some of his classmates defend on him. this image gave Langston a hope that people could live together with no colour discrimination. (Boyd-jones 10). Although his teacher bullied him. the young Hughes were impressed by his classmates that stand for him. his expectation rise from that scene. and his hope for living together with the white and black American has changed.

##### **I.4.2 -High School:**

In high school most of the students were foreigner. Langston loved it, because they didn't pay attention to his colour. He makes a lot of friends, who invited him and call him 'Lang'. (Haugen 31). the high school period of Langston was the best for him. he did not face any kind of discrimination. there were no kind of stereotype that showcased him as a superior or inferior he was just human with many other friends from different race. this period shaped Hughes future dream. now he wants America to be place for everyone that make all the races equal.

#### **I.4.3-Columbia University:**

He started his education in New York City at Columbia university, after he refused his father decision to study engineering. Although, for Hughes Harlem was influential and booming. Columbia university was the opposite, due to the discrimination that forbid him to have a dormitory room. Hughes overwhelmed by his classmate's racism, even though his supreme excretion on the newspaper student's staff. Nevertheless, He was both bored and lonely by his classes. On his first year he quits and continue his formal studies a year after. (Brown 254).

Unlike his high school, Hughes face a harsh racism in Columbia university. especially by his colleagues. However, he enjoyed the burgeoning of the Harlem and the intellectual setting there, which give him the opportunity to present his artistic, community engagement and achieving his development as a crucial figure in Harlem.

#### **I.4.4- Lincoln University:**

Hughes decided to finish his college in Lincoln university and not in Harvard as he planned, he joins a black people like him for the first time. Although he liked it. Lincoln's student was very poor and the college were dilapidated and overcrowded. But still her students endure Lincoln university. (Wallace 38). Therefore, Hughes, for the first time, feels belonging since all the places he has go in for his education were mixed between black and whites, and sometimes it was only him the black person. he basically felt alienated. meanwhile he had a strong connection with his black fellow and classmates. Regardless that the university was overcrowded and poor. the feeling of connecting make the experience worthy.

### **I.5-Life Inspiration:**

According to Galeano's and Rukeyser our writing is truthfully a mirror to ourselves. Parallely, Langston Hughes poetries is a oneseif reflection to his soul and self that add identical expression by telling the condition of the black people after and before the recession Hughes translate the bad experience into poems. (Alonso 75)

As a black American citizen Hughes reflects his life first, his experienced and his suffering than the life of the black people. he turned his negative experience into a word that can challenge the discrimination, the negative stereotype and the oppression of the white people. he utilizes the words to create a story of himself and the people that he tenths with.

## **II-Literary Background:**

### **II.1-Class Poet:**

When the school year end, at the graduation event. Hughes narrate the poem he had written for his friends. He also gets elected as a class poet (Rummel 5). Hughes, in this regard, reclaim his thought as: “I was a victim of stereotype. There was only two of us Negro kids in the whole class and our English teacher always stressing the importance of rhythm in poetry. well, everyone knows, expect us, that all Negroes have rhythm, so they elected me as class poet.” (Johnson 138). In Hughes opinion they choose him, because of the stereotype that says the blacks are able to stress the rhythm, and they are known of the importance of the rhythm. Indeed, he is still not certain his abilities as a great poet.

### **II .2-School Newspaper:**

Langston Hughes Start his writing in the Newspaper of the Cleveland, Ohio, high school. His primary work of jazz was *When Sue Wears Red* was written during his period of High school. In the course of detecting his cherish to books. Langston become an influencer in an ahead of time by the poet Paul Lawrence, Dunbar and Carl Sandburg. (Johnson 138). Therefore, the high school newspaper gives Langston a chance for discovering his talent as poet and writer. Indeed, he gathers a wide attraction by an important poet.

### **II.3-Early Publication**

The initial poetry collection of Langston Hughes was released in 1926 called “the weary blues”. Several poems in the collection have the rhythm that Langston adore. Hughes add the rhyme pattern, rhythm and repetition of blues and Jazz which become recognized as jazz poetry. (Anthony and Huligowski, M.A.T 16)

## **II.4-Works:**

### **II.4.1-Novels:**

During 1930 Langston Hughes released his initial novel *Not Without Laughter* which accounts as fictional autobiographical narrative. Also, in 1932 he companies his friend and released *Popo and Fifina* about Haiti for children. Additionally, he released *the big sea* as a second autobiographical work, and he finished *I wonder* 60 years later. (Brown 275).

### **II.4.2-Plays (Drama):**

In the 1960s Langston Hughes play an important role as a playwright and songwriter. He introduces a genre called ‘Gospel song-play’ and releases several plays such as: *Black Nativity* (1961), *The Gospel Glory* (1962), *Tambourines to Glory* (1963), “*Jericho Jim cow* (1964), *The prodigal* (1965). (Bloom 79) He also write a play for the political reasons *The Scott’s boy* and it is well known as agitprop drama written to assist the little black men that mistakenly had been raped in Alabama. (Bryer & Hartig 253).

### **II.4.3-Short Stories:**

From the beginning of his professional life Hughes write and released short stories and the favourite goes back to the fictional writer Guy De Maupassant who aid him that his life career would be for writing...In 1934 the publisher Alfred Knopf produce the collection of fourteen stories *the ways of white folks* as his initial significant announcement...During 1940s Hughes wrote several short stories not in the classical view of fictional stories. in Chicago Defender in his regular section introduce intelligent sample *Jesse B. Semple* or *Simple* ...While the focus on *simple* Hughes wrote several short stories and after 8 years from releasing *the ways of white folks* a new



collection appears *Laughing to keep Crying* which consist twenty-four stories in 1952 the story gathered a wide attention between the other stories. (Miller 1-6)

#### **II.4.-Essays:**

The *Negro Artist and The Racial Mountain* published in the nation 1926 an ideal work by Langston Hughes. He expressed the individual integrity of the black artist. (Trotman 4). Hughes motivates the black writers to maintain their authenticity and ignore the negative stereotype made by the white people. (McMillian and McCarthy 340).

#### **II.4.5-Poetry:**

He released his first poem looking for his real voice in 1920. Whereas, he had captivated the most unique creative poets. .by the 1921 he published *The Negro Speaks to The Rive* by Du Boise's Crisis magazine, his initial domestic publication. Hughes appeared that he is in the end deserve his poetic voice. (Rampersad 3 and 2).

*Montage of Dream Deferred* 1948 within the series of six poems capturing the Harlem life. Hughes offer the diversity of dream-postponement and that dreaming itself perhaps deliberate, if not slightly twisted. (Jarrawa 69). Later, in 1961 another chance come with *Ask Your Mama* collection that was a celebration of the African American heritage. (Norman 191).

#### **II.5-Themes Exploration:**

##### **II.5.1-Prid and The Quest of Identity**

*My people* are a poem by Langston Hughes discuss his attachment and pride of his heritage and rebellions against the white domination. He compares between black and the object to present the dignity and the brightness of their souls. Hughes is proud of himself and with his colour and for

him is a sense of inspiration to be resilient and vigorous. He says ‘why should I want to be white I am a negro and beautiful.’. He uses poetry to transmit his experience of the African descent. (Amir 58)

One of the elements Hughes used in his poems is the use of the colloquial language of the Negroes which is commonly called ‘Ebonic’ where some writers utilize to give a voice about the negro experience. Such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. Nevertheless, it is considered as racial identity and a cultural dimension apart from the white element like models and rules. Hughes add his experience firstly in Blues Jazz in the poem *Po-Boy Blues*:

When I was home de

Sunshine seemed like gold

When I was home de

Sunshine seemed like gold.

Since I come up North de

Whole damn world’s turned (Out and Ngwoko 282, 283).

The use of the vernacular language and everyday speech by Langston Hughes shows a sense of belonging to the community and society.

### II.5.3- Double Consciousness:

Du Bois argues in *The Souls of Black Folk* mainly to the high-class ideology of nationalism at the expense of the constitutive identity of the black and white sharing life. The African American has 'double consciousness' a 'twoness' where being black and American at the same time is 'two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being Torn asunder.'. Du Bois's concept formulates the identity of African Americans and the exploitation of black culture in the 19, which reconstructs the negative stereotype over blacks that they have no cultural background or consciousness yet they earn it from the white community. (Suwardho 22 and 23).

The dual identity is dilemma for the African Americans that time. they were between two options. either to become black and American citizen that face the oppression and slavery, or to become a white American citizen and delve into their culture, heritage and way of living. However, Langston Hughes show this duality of consciousness in his poetry. concurrently, he is calling for being himself as a human who is black coloured practicing his culture and a part of the American community.

In the *weary blues* Hughes manifest artfully the double consciousness by adding dual parenthetical expression of identity as an opening and concluding yet he named them "proem" and 'Epilogue its beginning indicate the dualities of consciousness that the poet situated his persona in *I am Negro* and *I too, sing America* Hughes proposes the mutual correlation between two identities in both the poems the phrase 'I am Negro' resonates as 'I am the darker brother' in the end of the poem between the American and the Negro Advocate the third identity of the poet himself As a solution to the dilemma of dual identity that Hughes recommend to himself. (Bloom 39)

## II.5.2- The Oppression and Racism:

The poems of Langston Hughes portrayed the difficult life of the African Americans since America brought them to serve them as slaves they were being persecuted, abused, harmed and treated like an animal...Hughes characterized the feeling of seclusion, vulnerability and despair within the poor slaves. In the poem "Me and Mule" the colour skin is proven as the main problem. The poem contained two stanzas describing the black Americans as an elderly person the first stanza describe the elderly person:

My old mule,

He's got a grin on his face.

He's been a mule so long

He's forgot about his race. (Sharma 25-26)

In *Too* line 3 and 13 the word 'eat in the kitchen.' Showcases as a mean of discrimination on the black people by sending them to eat in the kitchen and denying their identity. The word means that the blacks have no place of authority in the society. (44 Hutami)

This poem shapes a theme of discrimination where the African descent is shown as an inferior that deserve less. Unlike the white community who are superior. Hughes is reclaiming against the white authority who discriminate the African Americans by giving them voice through poetry. It, Additionally, explains how the black person will keep standing and working without tiredness or surrender.

#### **II.5.4- The American Dream:**

Dream is visionary incident that stand as an antidote for the white community discrimination and oppression, Hughes observe that the black people were muted suppressed and ignored by the society ... According to Wei Langston utilities the theme dream for racial justice. It plays a significant role in modelling the poem tone alongside with the black narrative. (Budhathoki 4-10)

The poem of *Harlem* or *Dream Deferred* was penned down during the period of The Harlem Renaissance depict the dream for justice, equality and freedom for the black race. The first line ‘what happened to the dream deferred?’ Illustrates the torment and distress conveyed by the poet and question the whites and the black people. (Amir 59). The theme of dream is permeated in Langston Hughes poem diversely...The American dream is beyond the capacity of achievement due the racial discrimination infiltrate in the American society. Hughes present in his poems how the American dream was frustrated. Additional sort is the dream of perfect love, adventure or spiritual emancipation which reflect the poet persona or mindset and not the political and social purpose. (Gale, Cengage Learning)

This poem explains the fears Hughes’s has over his dream. He is afraid that his dream will never come true, and he thinks that the black people should be free. Also, that the dream has been delayed and placed.

### **III-Historical Background:**

#### **III.1-Racial Climate in the United States:**

##### **III.1.1-Jim Crow Era:**

Jim crow act is a segregated legislative act made by jurists white. It is made to deprive the blacks to study, hospitalized, play and travel in the white schools, hospitals, playfield and their transportation. And what aggravate the situation is that the blacks were forbidden to marry with the whites. Jim crow coupled with the excitement of the white people in implementing the act. (Perumal and Natarajan 124). Jim crow act made the black people abandoning their dignity, rights and losing their freedom and equality within the aspect of life. Particularly, as a part of the United States society and as a human being. (Hutami 34).

*Jim crow funeral* is a short story by Langston Hughes that is reaction to the act of Jim crow: “If Jim Crow was only human, maybe Jim Crow would get sick, [...]. In fact, I would pay For Jim Crow’s funeral – even send flowers.” (Perumal and Natarajan 124).

Jim crow is a disease, cancer and a heart attack that threaten the life of the black American. Presently, Hughes expresses his refusal to the Jim crow act. Moreover, it is against his dream where African Americans and the whites are living together in one place.

##### **III.1.2The Lynching:**

One of the most violent suppressions against the black people in the United States was Lynching. (Zumoff 42). Langston Hughes wrote over thirty poems on the issue of lynching during his lifetime and professional. He occupied in lifelong national campaign in defiance of the

Lynching, while he tackles the subject of lynching in several poems during 1940s Exceeding the preceding of two decades. (Miller 32).

The black American face a various genre of exploitation and suppression. However, the lynching is the most detrimental act in the period of Langston Hughes. Indeed, he is one of the crucial poets who stand against this act of violence who took the peace and the dignity of the black Americans.

### **III.2-The Great Migration:**

The civil war and the injustice law made the life of the previous enslaves difficult. Several blacks choose to migrate from the north to the south for their liberty. This great movement is recognized as the great migration 1865-1970. Where the migrants settle in New York City. Harlem. It witnesses the burgeoning of the African American culture, artist and writers, who pictures with expressiveness the enthusiasm of the music, visual art and literature. The great migration continued from the world war I until the decline. (Anthony and Huligowski, M.A.T 4). The great migration paved the way to the flowering of the Harlem renaissance. It has a huge diver socially and statistically. It witnessed increasing in the political and social activism and awareness in various aspects of life for the African American citizen.

### **III.3-The Harlem Renaissance:**

The Harlem Renaissance denote a cultural flowering of the black American culture and it witnesses an exceptional rise to the traditional African music. such us, the spiritual, the blues, Jazz and much more. That had been repressed and prevailing by the white community in America. This African American rebirth placed in Harlem exactly in the New York City during 1919 to 1930s. (Emezue et al 30).

The Harlem Renaissance was a chance for the black writers to bring a new spirit, pride, social consciousness and a new commitment. It had a great significance over the African American culture. Therefore, it comes to remind them about who they are and their worth by challenging the dynamic powers and the stereotypes imposed by the white community. It represents a resistance and solidarity of a marginalized community. Further, asserting about their identities as a black American citizen facing the white authority.

#### **III.4- The Role of Langston Hughes in the Harlem Renaissance:**

During 1920s Langston Hughes is one of the poets that emerge as a key figure and the most victorious writer in the period of the Harlem Renaissance to the depression where Mary McLeod Bethune inspired him to do a public speaking career through extensive tour in south. He announced in his autobiography 'Propelled by the backwash of the 'Harlem Renaissance' of the early 'twenties, I had been drifting along pleasantly on the delightful rewards of my poems which seemed to please the fancy of kind-hearted New York ladies with money to help young writers.... There was one other dilemma-how to make a living from the kind of writing I wanted to do.... I wanted to write seriously and as well as I knew how about the Negro people, and make that kind of writing earn me a living.' (Bloom 36).

Hughes's hard work to write a poem that brings the black American's soul was a solution to the problems that centred around the black identity issues...Hughes saw that the poets carry a responsibility by the diligence of maintaining his objectivity and artistic detachment. Parallely, He calls about the enthusiasm by selecting the method himself. Hughes before in a talk offered by American society African culture 1960. He encouraged his black writer's colleagues to develop their handling with blackness specifically 'Advice to Negro writers: Step outside yourself, then



look back- and you will see how human, yet how beautiful and black you are. How very black-even when you're integrated.' (Bloom 37-38).

The work of Langston Hughes did not stand only on the facing the social norms, but also, he trained the young poets about how to advocate their blackness in their works, and to love themselves as a black Negro. After much thought, Hughes revolution was by leaving behind him a group of writers that celebrate the black culture and heritage. And the main reason for that is the continuity of their ethnicity as a free citizen in America, who have their own rights without discrimination. Also, to fight the dominant powers of the white community.

During 1926 the African Americans were describing as 'the other'. Meanwhile, Hughes wanted to aid the African Americans by loving their blackness and ethnicity and putting an end to racism. Moreover, Hughes argues that the blacks were always ashamed about their colour. They said 'don't be like a Nigger'. He wanted them to respect themselves and to know that they 'are beautiful'. Additionally, the good artist should assess by the quality of his works not by his skin colour. Besides, he discusses that the younger artist assists to represent their black skin fearlessly and shamelessly and declare his perspective as 'I want to be a poet not a Negro poet.' (Hashemipour 18).

Hughes first step was to remind the blacks how beautiful they are to love themselves and respect it. He celebrated the African American beauty, tradition, culture and heritage in his literary works to remind his people about their legacy and uniqueness. Therefore, his poetry, Eventually, challenge the social norms countering a colonial narrative of inferiority by rejecting the assimilationist ideologies that undervalues the Blackness.

### **III.5-The Contribution with other writers:**

One of the most fruitful collaborations of Langston Hughes during the Harlem Renaissance was with the key figures and the most extensively documented partnership and professional relationship encompass: Arna Bon temps, Zora Neale Hurston, and Carl Beachten. (Brown 225).

Hughes and Arna Bontemps made a significant contribution to American artisanal history by editing the collection African American Poetry in 1949. They also edited Poetry of the Negro from 1746 to 1949, a document encapsulating the development of African American poetry. It presents the works of known and unknown writers during the Harlem Renaissance these among writers Gwendolyn Bennett, Sterling Brown, Joseph Cotter, SR Clarissa Scoott Delany, Jessie Fauset, Georgia Douglas Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, Effie Newsome, and Jean Toomer. (Brown 225).

Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes had a vigorous alliance formed with a trusted friendship and frequent correspond like Hurston and Alain lock. (Brown 225). *Mule Bone* was a cooperation between Hughes and Hurston ... who was obliged to write a play rooted on folktale. (Drama for students). Van Vechten was a purposeful person more than wealthy benefactors of permissive individuals. He shares with Hughes a productive, long time and above doomed contracts with Mrs. Massor. (Jones 27).

### **III.6-The Great Depression:**

The great depression 1929 a period of stock market crash, marked by the financial disaster among the nation that left the African American struggling. Regardless to their artistic accomplishment. They remained inadequate. (short stories for students). The period impacted

widely on the Harlem Renaissance. All the African American suffered from misemployment. Especially, in Harlem five times more than any other place in New York. Even the workers were not protected from the suffering. (Brown 197). Hughes portray blackness as insufficiency and whiteness as materialism, immoral behaviour, and middle-class strivings. *Why, You Reckon* by Langston despite the fact that it deals with the subject of marriage. it examines the economic disparity that effect the identity of the blacks and whites' characters in New York. (Dunbar and Hardison 40) The great depression effects the Harlem Renaissance widely, due the hard circumstance the blacks go on. the people start focusing in their situation more than poetry. Yet some writers like Langston Hughes turn their focus on the issues of poverty and injustice.

### **Conclusion:**

As a conclusion, this chapter highlights the most important aspect in the life of Langston Hughes, his childhood, the people that influence him, his education a, his career. yet it emphasizes the factors that shape the identity of Langston Hughes that build a strong foundation for his literary efforts.

The literary background of Langston Hughes delves into his substantial works that is formed his path as a writer. Further, it delves into the study of his themes that he utilizes in his works which has a remarkable contribution by delivering his voice to face the white colonizer.

The historical background draws the most important events that he faced in the life of Langston. Furthermore, his donation to his people as a poet before, during and after the Harlem Renaissance period.

***Part Two: Claud McKay***

## **Introduction:**

From the African American literature to the Jamaican literature which closely associated with the slavery and the discrimination upon the colours. Claude McKay arises as distinctive character and writer who confront the segregation and the injustice over the black people in Jamaica and in America. He calls for the revolution and fighting back the violence and the humiliation of the white community. This chapter will discuss the Life of Claude McKay and the major events in his life. Also, it will discuss the literary background of the poet and the most important events during his lifetime.

### **I-Claude McKay Personal Life:**

#### **I.1-His Childhood:**

15 September 1899 marks Claude McKay birthday by Thomas Francis Mackay and Ann Elizabeth Edward with eleven siblings. Mackay family were peasant proprietor (Brown 340). His father was genuine black bloodline from the west Ashanti of West Africa, whereas his mother is mixed between black and white. Claude explains it as 'very brown'. Claude McKay wasn't in the end authentic African as Max Eastman and Walter Jekyll argues, he didn't just transmit the black skin but the Africans dignity that was a tradition in his family (Wagner 198). His parents were sticklers to the Jamaican standards. Claude McKay experienced a joyful childhood in the mountain's rivulet and watercourse. (Ramesh and Rani 14) Nevertheless, He always refers to himself as the Jamaican farmer son. His family position goes higher after the left of McKay the island. (James 11).

Claud McKay spends his best Childhood between his big family in Jamaica. Despite the fact that Jamaica was under the British colonial at that time. Their position as farmer was higher.

Consequently, all this aspect in his childhood makes him connect to Jamaica the land of his birth that later influence his writing as a black Jamaican writer. All the details will be discussed in this part.

## **I .2-Relationships and Family:**

### **I 2.1-Family:**

#### **I 2.1.1- Mother and Father:**

Mackay's father was Ashanti origins. He narrates several folk stories about the African tribes for children that later influence Mackay on the African tradition. Although, Thomas was admiring the Anglo-Saxon law system. Also, he was an important member in the local church. (Ramesh and Rani 15). In his childhood Claude picture, his father as rigid. His discipline and strictness led to a detached between him and his father. Their relationship represents the traditional Victorian paternal bond. unlike his mother who was caring and loving. (Summers 158) After the death of his mother Claude lived in sorrow independently and collectively. When his mother left him, she took his happy childhood with her. (Paquet 108)

Despite the fact that, The father of Claud McKay is known of his rigidity, discipling and strictness. Surprisingly, all these characteristics affects Claud McKay principles and work ethic. he also filled him with the thoughts of independents and rebellious spirit which it is shown later in his works that challenge violently, the social norms and convention. Although, Claud hates his father coldness and distant emotional feelings towards his children. However, he admired his stoicism and independent way of thinking.

Between all the rigidity in his life. Claud's mother was a refuge of tenderness. she provided him with the emotional support he needed at that time in his life. unfortunately, she didn't last for

long, and her absence affect Claud's psyche deeply. Later, Claud McKay utilizes his mother as an inspirational character of the warmth female character

### **I 2.1.2-His Brother:**

In his early adolescence, Claude moved to the environs of Montego with his brother U'theo the teacher and his wife. (Paquet 158). Claude's brother taught him about the socialized system and liberated by questioning God and the traditional rules. (Lisa and Kranz 275).

U'theo the brother of Claud McKay is a free thinker, who has a valuable contribution in teaching Claud the aspects of the intellectual thinking. For the reason that, the education system in Jamaica was limited, because of the British colonizer. Yet he encourages him to think out of the context, and questioning everything. Furthermore, he teaches him about the Jamaican culture, heritage including music, folklore and spirituality that shapes Claude McKay identity and aspiration. As a results, they share a strong bond as a brother of him and a compassionate relationship.

### **I.2.2-Friends:**

#### **I.2.2.1- Walter Jekyll:**

Jekyll and McKay, Coincidentally, met in 1907, and they grow a friendship instantly. Jekyll aid McKay in writing his first poem and paid for his studying in the United States. (Hathaway et al 66). He noticed a difference on McKay. His flawless standard English in writing and speaking. Jekyll argued him to dismiss the English standard and start writing in the Jamaican dialect at least a one paper. (North 100).

Jekyll was impressed by Claud McKay writing, where he offered him later to be his mentor and a supervisor for his literary works. Furthermore, he has a substantial contribution in introducing Claud McKay into the world of litterateur from novels, poetry and storytelling. Additionally, it was him who offered him to start writing in the Jamaican dialect, because he was impressed by his pride on the Jamaican heritage and culture. Hopefully, Jekyll intellectual nourishment to the English litterateur and the excellent skills of Claud McKay besides his strong identity provided him a broad knowledge in writing the litterateur.

#### **I.2.1.4- Marriage:**

In New York 30 July 1914 Mackay get married with his fellow Eulalie Imelda Lewars. Later, they were gifted with a daughter. (Aberjhani and west 214) Their marriage lasted for 3 months. Then, she left to Jamaica alone to get her birth with Rhue Hope Edwards or Hope Mackay. Afterward, Hope joined Columbia Teachers college in New York. Before the death of Claude McKay, they maintained communication but he perished before they met due cardiac inefficiency. (Brown 341).

#### **I.3-Constabulary:**

Claude McKay attends the force police in 1911. Spanish Town. Jamaica. He witnessed a racial discrimination. Tyrone Tillery stated in Claude McKay: A Black Poet's Struggle for Identity, McKay 'was pained by the daily injustices he witnessed,' a year after Claude quite his post. Meanwhile, his supervisor Walter Jekyll motivated him to write poetry in the Jamaican dialect. (Gale, Cengage Learning)



The constabulary was one of the worst periods in Claud McKay journey. He faced a harsh treatment from injustice and oppression there. He could not handle the life in the force police. Therefore, he talks about his experience in his first collection of poetry and his autobiography.

#### **I.4-Education**

##### **I.4.1- A Local School:**

In a very young age Claude McKay joined a local school under the British system of education that was intertwined with the British propaganda over all the classes, levels and races. Alongside with their colonial rule they propose a good dominant education...In McKay's elementary text books: 'In our elementary school books we read stories of English, German and Dutch children playing in the snow. I especially remember the pictures of the Dutch children in their colored scarves and wooden shoes; but we never really had a correct idea of what snow was'... Mackay reclaim that British system was led until they embrace themselves as a black little Britons. (Ramesh and Rani 15).

The local school system in Jamaica during the time of Claud McKay were imposed by the British colonialization propaganda. They were taught about subject they did not even know in their real life. The British occupation tries to integrate its ideologies into the Jamaican citizen, until they forget about their original culture and heritage. Especially, the English language which was important to learn by everyone. Meanwhile, the Jamaican dialect was considered as vulgar.

##### **I.4.2-Tuskegee Institutions and Kansas State College:**

In the age of twenty-three 1912 McKay attend Tuskegee institute to study agriculture in the United States, there he already builds his credibility as a poet ... soon after McKay explained his existence in Tuskegee as 'Semi Military, machine -like existence.'. (Cooper 298-299). Later, He

transformed to Kansas state college Aspiring for more broader education in Manhattan Kansas, but in the age of 24 McKay come to the awareness that the wisdom is coming from his free wills not the university. Especially, that his works are already presented in Jamaica and England. (Horse 54).

Tuskegee institution did not provide Claud McKay with the framework of the liberal thinking. He explains his existing there as a semi military because of the strict system they follow there. The ideology of this university is to already prepare the student to take their roles in the society based on its social norms. That's why he went to the Kansas state college there he understands that university is not the place that he will gain wisdom from. If he wants to become more popular as a writer, he has to discover the world more.

### **I.6-Travelling:**

Between 1920 to 1934 when McKay leave the United States and reappear. He goes into a sequence of migration that marked in his first period of his life from Europe to Africa. Initially, McKay travelled to Russia to join the fourth congress of the third Comintern, not as a part of the communist party, who, typically of the drifter, claim ownership. Merely 'the dominant urge to go.' Functioning as the informal representative at the convention. Although, He did not, Utterly, participate. However, he exceedingly become, In demand with the Russian public. As by his own understanding, 'black ikon in the flesh.' (Hathaway 52).

MacKay's visit to Russia allowed him to experience the social movement. there he attended several political and social events like attending the fourth congress. Consequently, this period provides him with different insight in the political and the social views that later effects his writing in litterateur and his understanding to the social phenomenon and its implications.

McKay travelled into a various European country. For instance, Holland, Belgium and England in 1919, and he stayed in London a one year where he released a set of poems, *Spring in New Hampshire* which has a delegate title that can be read with gratitude. The poem has been appended later in *the Harlem shadow* collection. (Smith 271).

He relocates once again, tour from Germany to Franc. He gets attached with a white American migrant in Paris. However, he felt alienated due the discrimination of colour he witnessed. Claude argus in his autobiography *A long Way from Home*: 'Color-consciousness was the fundamental of my restlessness. And it was something with which my white fellow-expatriates could sympathize but which they could not altogether understand.'. (Hathaway 52). The journey of Claud McKay in Europe, Generally, helped him in discovering a varied ideologies that he presents in his works of litterateur. However, the feeling of unbelonging there with messing his own land kept following him.

## **II -Literary Background:**

### **II .1-Early publication:**

In 1912 McKay released *songs of Jamaica* and *constable ballad* as an assortment of dialect poetry. Walter Jekyll his supervisor was a superb supporter that had a crucial part in facilitating in the production of the introduction of *Song of Jamaica*. (Brown 340).

### **II. 2-Major Works:**

#### **II.2.1- Novels:**

Claude McKay depicts the real life in his novels as an essential topic. 1928 *home to Harlem* focus on the night life. 1929 *Banjo* talk about the wild and lively seaside district of Marseilles. In *Banana bottom* 1933 he introduces the life of the peasant Jamaican and the good side in their life. (Greenberg 237).

#### **II.2.2- Short Stories:**

*Gingertown* a collection of McKay short tales that offers a different insight of the experience of a black woman in America and Jamaica. McKay shifts from one dimensional hero in his prior book *Banjo* and instead present female lead where lively spirit and resilience relegated their male counterparts to supporting roles. (Lowrie-chin 77).

#### **II.2.3- Autobiography:**

In 1937 when McKay approaches his fifty. He released his autobiography *long way home*. He presents his association intricateness with the Harlem Renaissance, and other autobiography *Negro Metropolis* 1940 and *my green hills of Jamaica* 1979 which had a great influence on the cultural, political and intellectual field to his profession. (McKay18).

## II.2.4-Poetry:

Since 1912 McKay wrote 200 poems in two assortments. The initial poet that utilities the Jamaican dialect. McKay celebrate the black indigent Jamaican, their power and unlikeable wisdom.” (McKay 10). The first collection is already mentioned in the Early production that is named as *songs of Jamaica* and *constable ballad*.

In 1921 Claude produces his supreme assortment of poem *the Harlem shadow*. (Smith 271). The collection unveils the complexity and profundity of McKay poetic fluctuation inside and outside. Situated him as a radical poet of dissent: political, racial, sexual and all points in between. (Tuggle 66).

## II 3- Themes Exploration:

### II. 3.1- Pride and Identity:

*Home to Harlem* is a novel written by Claud McKay ... He utilizes the Black colour as a sign of recapturing the identity in his protagonist throughout the pride of the black .... Furthermore, he highlights to assess the black heritage by relating the colour to an object. For instance, lemon, chocolate, nut brown and olive referring to their identity. (Karthikeyan and Prakash 8).

Hence, The referring of the black colour into objects into his works. For example, when he uses the word chocolate. It emphasizes of how black is Beautiful and sweet. Also, the use of Lemon is to reclaim how the black people are suffering and their life is sour like lemon. Yet he shows the pride and the bitterness in one works

### **II.3.2- Oppression and Resistance:**

*If we must die* the Shakespearean sonnet by Claude McKay advocate for oppression and resilience with dignity. It deals with the sanctuary and racial injustice toward the black people in America. (Vargas 1). He calls for replying the violence with violence. He demands a revolution with violence to gain independence and freedom. (Ezz El Din and Abd Allah 244). It means that Claud McKay fought against the oppression and exploitation over the black community that has been imposed by the white community and he is calling for the resilience by fighting back.

### **II.2.3- Celebrating Nature:**

Claude McKay found the enthusiasm in writing about the nature of his land due the long absence that has an influence in his mentality. (Akassi). His romanticism appears in various ways especially his writing and daily life. His literary production was customary. Claude McKay's favourite style is sonnets but some of his poems were written in freer style. For instance, celebrating nature in his combination Jamaican remembrance in *flame heart*:

So much I have forgotten in ten years,

So much in ten brief years! I have forgot

What time the purple apples come to juice,

And what month brings the shy forget-me-not.

I have forgot the special, startling season

Of the pimento's flowering and fruiting:

What time of year the ground doves drown the fields

And fill the noonday with their curious fluting.

I have forgotten much, but still remember

The poinsettia's red, blood-red, in warm December. (LeSeur 301)

The peasant life of McKay in Jamaica never left his imagination. He celebrates the peasant life and the Caribbean heritage. Hence, He celebrates nature in most of his poems where he finds joy and happiness with.

#### **II3.4-Alienation:**

*Outcast* by Claude McKay describe the hardship of living within the western culture mixed by the picture of the African that he has never lived, while tormenting for alienation of the land of his birth. (Griffin 196). Claude is Bemoaning in his expression regarding his heritage African and the acknowledgment that he may loss his sight permanently:

For the dim regions whence, my father's came

My spirit, bandaged by the body, longs

Words felt, but never heard, my lips would frame

My souls would sing forgotten jungle songs (Lines 1 -4).

Also, the persona is forced to enhance alien gods and culture:

And I may never hope for full release (Bolawale and Idowu 17).

When Claud McKay was in the United States. He felt displaced. He is not American, and he is not part of the African heritage. He is a Jamaican. Whenever he uses this feeling of alienation in his poetry to express about his sadness and unbelonging to this place and heritage.



### **III- Historical Background:**

#### **III.1-British Colonialism in Jamaica:**

In 1955 the British empire find it's root in Jamaica. The sugar can, slavery and the colonial exploration were its primary objective. The British colonial paradigm encompasses absolute dominance over land, people and commodities through the utilization of divide and rule policies, land, ethnocentrism, religious suppression, education and language, native inferiority, depolarization, loss livelihood and sustenance and trauma and inward violence. this suppressive system faced resistance. (Lemonius 83-84). Therefor. The British occupation imposed a harsh ideology in Jamaica based on Slavery. Unfortunately, the Jamaica face a rigorous time under this oppressive and injustice system. basically, this strategy divides the solidarity of the black Jamaican and marginalized their heritage and culture by the system of rule and divide.

#### **III.2-The Impact of the British Colonial on Jamaica:**

The impact that the British colonial had on the Jamaican people and its generation was destructive. The white superior and the black inferior were the identical system by the colonial. Authenticated and fortified this partial reality through nationalism and the privilege associated with whiteness. Simultaneously, alienating, suppressing and marginalizing blackness. (Lemonius 93).

The ideology of the black is inferior and white is superior is an indirect strategy imposed in Jamaica by the British colonialization that helps to maintain a colonial power over the land. Moreover, control over the black rebellion and resilience by exploiting them. Furthermore, it promotes for the British culture to dominate and control over the Jamaican citizen, and it plays as

justification for the exploitation and suppression because they already seen themselves as less than the white British settlers.

### **III.3-Claude McKay Under the British Colonial:**

Claude McKay life and career navigating through the most tumultuous period in history of black ethnicity was conflicting with all the demonstration to white exploitation colonialism, brutal racism and negation of identity. As a colonial subject, He conflicted over the embedded colonial ideology that restricted him and locked him up in the British culture.” (Ramesh and Rani 14). Which means, Claud McKay cannot run from the British ideology. Yet his land was owned by the British colonialization. Also, he studied under their curriculum and lived under their system of the British occupation.

Jekyll’s curiosity over Claude McKay was like ‘a literate phenomenon among the illiterate peasantry.’ He became more observing to the intellectual thinking of McKay and his authentic poetry.” (James 43). Claud McKay intellectual thinking and skill impresses Jekyll. Nevertheless, he was something unusual between the Jamaican people who was basic and illiterate.

Claud McKay stated in his autobiography *My Green Hills of Jamaica*:

He read my poetry, then he laughed a lot, and I became angry at the laughing because I thought he was laughing at me. All these poems that I gave him to read had been done in straight English [...]. Now is your chance as a native boy [to] put the Jamaica dialect into literary language. I am sure that your poems will sell. (66)

Because of the system of education imposed by the occupation. Most of the writing of Claud McKay were in the standard English. and due the negative stereotype shows the Jamaican dialect

as an inferior and vulgar. Claud thought that Jekyll was making fun of him, but he, quite the opposite, offers him to write in the Jamaican dialect. Yet he will notice a wide interest and attention socially and politically. Therefore, McKay Feedback was logical: 'Was not very enthusiastic about this statement, because to us who were getting an education in the English schools the Jamaican dialect was considered a vulgar tongue. It was the language of the peasants. All cultivated people spoke English, straight English.' (McKay 67).

Claud McKay strong identity and his intellectual thinking makes him different. He stands over this discrimination in Jamaica. Where everyone was writing in English, he chooses to write in the dialect which is the peasant's language

#### **III.4-Claude McKay in the United States:**

Claude McKay argues about the United States 'it was the first time I had ever come face to face with such manifest, implacable hatred of my race, and my feelings were indescribable.' In spite of, He perceived before about the discrimination in America. He never imagines it will be fiercely acrimonious. (Harrison 32).

Although Jamaica was under the discrimination of colours. Claude McKay notice that America is even worse. the humiliation and oppression imposed there were horrible. Despite the fact that America is the land of racism and racial discrimination. He loved the intellectual and literary vibrance during the Harlem renaissance

Claud McKay blames about the vicious act that consider as one of the cruel acts over the fighting back for the brutal deed. It is an illegal execution, especially by hanging or shooting

directed at blacks. It happened in the United States during 1960s towards the end of the 19 centuries. (Ezz El Din and Abd Allah 249).

### **III.5- The Red Summer:**

The red was a response to the riots in the United States. Yet it refers to the blood was shed in this period. what make this period different is because the black Americans responded harshly to the violence of the riots and lynching. McKay has the chance to capture this image of resistance in his poem *if we must die* the famous sonnets when he wrote 'like a man we'll face the murderous, crowdedly pack/pressed to the wall dying, but fighting back!'. (Asante and Mazama 412).

Claud McKay in The Red Summer is the leading voice to the American citizen. This period inspired him to write his most famous sonnets *if we must die, which* led to his biggest success as a famous writer from that time until now.

### **III.6-Claude McKay Role in the Harlem Renaissance:**

A prolific figure in the Harlem Renaissance. He considers as a magnificent figure in the Afro-American literature. He is the initial revolutionary poet that negotiate, successfully, about the anger and the rebellion of if the African American. He, extremely, refuse the oppression, discrimination and humiliation of the white community, and he emphasized about the celebration of the black identity and racial pride. (Ezz El Din and Abd Allah 263-264)

McKay consider as the voice of the black awakening of the catastrophic effects by the racism in the white American society. Chauhan describe McKay's poetry as 'radical' due his aggressive poetic voice. A statement of negritude and as a part of protest literature during 1920s. Maxwell as well, declare that James Weldon Johnson explain that McKay as 'the most powerful voice in post-

war black poetry and one of the principal forces in bringing about the Negro literary Awakening.’.  
(Ezz El Din and Abd Allah 244).

Claud McKay had a strong and powerful voice during the period of the Harlem renaissances which was, often, a miracle. He uses his poetic voice to defend the negative stereotype that says the black are less than the white. He also calls for the resistance against the oppression. Claud McKay role was to be the voice for those who were voiceless

### **III .7-The Great Depression:**

*Harlem runs wild* an essay of fiction buy Claud McKay portrayed the element of anger and frustration in Harlem due the economic hardship in the north. they suffer from the of education, unemployment and substandard housing. (Dunbar and Hardison 42). Claud McKay tries to picture the struggling of the black community in the period of the great depression. He draws the image of the intersectionality between the poverty and oppression.

### **Conclusion:**

As a result, this chapter encounters the life of Claud McKay in Jamaica as a peasant child and the most important people in his life. It shed the light on his journey from Jamaica into American. and the significant issues that helped in shaping his identity and his career as a writer.

It, Also, shed the light on the literary background of the writer his works and his theme that centred around the Jamaican heritage and their culture. Yet he never forgets his land of birth and had a various image about it in his poetry even though he was a long away from home.

The historical background showcased how the British colonialism effected the life of the Jamaican people and their ideologies. Furthermore, how did Claud McKay deals with this

occupation system. Moreover, it tackles the events that he witnessed in the United States and his contribution as black person during that time.

# **The Practical Part**

## **The Introduction:**

During the Harlem Renaissance, many poets try to represent their cultural black identity through the revolution of the litterateur against the dominant powers in America. Both Langston Hughes and Claud McKay are one of these poets who believed in their black identity and fight for their race. This chapter will provide a literary analysis of the corpus by giving a deep comprehension of the structure of the poems, the tone, mood and how each poet presents the African American experience in his poetry. Moreover, This chapter will explain the themes are used in their poem like resistance, dream and racial injustice. Also, the use of symbols and imagery in their works and giving a deep interpretation to each author.

## **1-Developing a Comparative Understanding:**

Since 1900s the comparative study has a various direction in the field of social science and humanities, So what do we mean by comparison and what is its aim? Ultimately, other problems like its role in construction, generalization, and the focus on what is particular which is a critical matter. Through time the comparison deals with different themes and comprehensive insight in understanding the complexities of social scientists. However, the field of comparative gained a different interest with the rise of the historical consciousness in societies, cultures and political entities. Due to the emergence of the national histories which primarily question their own narrative and not only the national histories, but also challenged conventional assumptions inside the social science disciplines such as anthropology, that tend to compare more in literature, critical theories and critical studies. (Yengoyan 1-6)

Traditionally, comparison requires the idea that what is compared is related in space and time giving a more powerful finding, additionally what is shown usually looks different and less similar.



The comparative studies of histories discuss different kinds of topics. Such as gender relations, slavery, migration and immigration. comparing a certain case that leads to deconstruct the old matter and questioning it. This issue leads to the understanding why some cases have this feature and others do not have it, what gives a deep understanding through a different context. (Yengoyan 8-11) This chapter will discuss how the issue of slavery emerged in the poems of Claude McKay and Langston Hughes and how each one of them is different and similar based on their own experience.

## **2-Crafting Distinct Forms and Structures**

The poem *Let America be America Again (1935)* by Langston Hughes is about the American dream and hopes for the once who seeks freedom and equality but never receive it. The poem is divided into 80 lines separated into seventeen stanzas which three are single lines and two are couplets with no set pattern. The lines length depicts the variety of the subjects in the poem to highlight the unfulfilled commitments and the marginalized community in America. It considers a form of resistance and challenging to the dominant narrative of power shaped by the colonial canon by using the non-traditional form of poetry.

Note with standing, The poem is written in a free verse style. For example, in the first stanza ‘again, be, plain, free, me’ and in the second stanza ‘dreamed, love, scheme, above, me’ the rhyme is not regular which explores the idea of freedom and new life. Hughes tries to deconstruct the ideologies utilized by the colonial powers to liberate himself and his people from their rules.

Besides, It is shown by the use of the first personal pronoun ‘I’ in the poem. Such as in the eight stanza second line: ‘I am the Negro bearing slavery’s scars.’ Hughes use the term Negro to refer to the African American who metaphorically describe their deep lasting wounds as ‘slavery

scars' which shape the African American experience. Again, in the eleventh stanza the third line 'I am the Negro, servant to you all.' Which Highlight the system of oppression in America and express the reality of how the blacks has been exploited and used. Therefore, the use of the 'I' in the poem refers to the African American descent whose Langston Hughes is speaking by their voice through the use of the pronoun I to convey his message about freedom and injustice.

On the other side, both *Enslaved (1889 –1948)* and *America (1921)* by Claud McKay are a Shakespearean sonnet combined in fourteen lines, usually the form consists of one stanza split into three quatrains and a couplet. "According to Ron Padgett in Handbook of Poetic Forms, sonnets represent a particular way of thinking, characterized by the gradual unfolding then develop it throughout the poem. which, ultimately, leads to a conclusion." (Denize and Newlin 100). The sonnets by Claud McKay are a way to express the black suffering under the racist system and the injustice act followed by making social commentary, for he asks his people to stand against this social discrimination towards the African Americans. Also, it reflects his negotiation between the colonial influence and his own heritage.

Nevertheless, The rhyme scheme in *America (1921)* is ABABCDCDCECECC with an iambic pentameter. The rhyming expresses the shift between the feeling of disappointment and the persistent challenging by the author which we can see it clearly in these words. 'bitterness and confess' the word confess could refer to the admission of something. Additionally, bitterness could be a harmful feeling that needs to be confessed or it may harm the person feelings. The results of withheld this confession leads to unresolved of the issues that need to be taken into consideration. Also, the words 'blood and flood' these words could refer to the feeling of overwhelming by the writer. The choice of the word blood refers to passion or intense emotion that the author explains this passion as overwhelming like flood.

Parallely, *Enslaved (1889 –1948)* rhyme scheme is ABAB-CDCD-EFEF-GG iambic pentameter. The change in the rhyme scheme depicts the transition in the feeling of the author through the poem from contemplation and exploitation ‘race, oppressed, place, the Christian West’, the inheritance ‘disinherited, birth, lead, earth’, sorrow and sickness ‘I cry, to consume utterly, womb’ and passing the sorrow ‘smoke, yoke’.

The poem *The Weary Blues (1925)* is about a black singer in the bar of Harlem which the speaker observes his body movement, tone and his voice. The poem is divided into Two stanzas. The first stanza is 22 lines begin from ‘Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,’ until ‘And put ma troubles on the shelf.’ in other hand the second stanza has 12 lines begin from ‘Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.’ Until ‘He slept like a rock or a man that’s dead.’. organized into a set of quoted lyrics with no a specific form. The author tries to reject the European poetic form by the whites like the Shakespearean sonnets, so he allows himself to create his own form of poetry that came from the African American tradition.

However, the poem is created with the rhythm of blues music by using the sound devices. For instance, alliteration such as ‘Droning a drowsy’ the sound D in the first line create a sense of weariness and heaviness by the speaker before the pianist start singing. and an onomatopoeia like ‘Thump, thump, thump,’ in the first line second stanza. which is a sound that imitate his foot-tapping on the floor. Also, a repetition “‘Ain’t got nobody in all this world, Ain’t got nobody but ma self.’ The repetition of the sentence ‘Ain’t got nobody’ highlights the deep emotions of loneliness by the pianist. This sounds devices play a significant role on the musical elements of the poem, which reflects the sadness and the melancholic rhythm of the poem.

Along in the same line, Langston Hughes wrote the poem *The weary Blues (1925)* with a free verse style in the pianist part which depicts the feeling of the improvisational and the creativity of musicality. The rhyme scheme like 'died, no mo', frownin', satisfied' highlights the desire of the speaker for freedom and satisfaction due the feeling of oppression and exploitation. In addition, This poem uses a rhyming couplet to the speaker which is two lines ends with a word that share the same rhyme each two rhyming couplet has a meaning. Such as, 'tune, croon' melodic expression as the poem is written in blues music, and 'light, night' refers to the feelings of hope and guidance in the presence of darkness. The rhyme emphasizes the speaker reaction to the music and highlights the cultural and the black American experience with the African music.

The poem *The theme of English B (1901-1967)* is a dramatic monologue with its conversational style about 22-year-old black student who's given to write an assignment by his white instructor. the poem consist 41 lines divided into five stanzas with no set pattern. The conversational style reflects the internal monologue and draw directly the feeling and the emotions by the poet and allowing to the portrayal of a real experience by the African Americans. This monologue helps in shaping the complexities of identity through this work.

In the same vein, *The theme of English B (1901-1967)* does not follow a regular rhyme scheme. Such as 'me, what, you, page., who, love, life.,' This rhyme allows the author to express himself and exploring his identity throughout the poem freely. It also helps in establishing a conversational style.

Alongside, *The Lynching (1922)* is about a black man hanged unjustly by the white mob. The poem adopts the form of the Shakespearean sonnet divided into 14 lines composed three quatrains and final rhyming couplet. The poem follows ABBA CDDC EFFE GG which depicts the

Petrarchan sonnets type. The use of this type highlights a universal significant of the issues of lynching. It also gives a sense of continuity and cohesion, such as 'heaven, unforgiven' gives divine feeling about a sin that is still unforgiven, 'again, pain' explains the continuity of the pain they feel under the vicious act of lynching.

### **3-Contrasting Language Choices**

The language used by Langston Hughes in *Let America be America Again* (1935) is powerful and evocative. He uses a mix of straightforward language to convey his message on the American dream and establish his ideas about freedom and oppression. He also tends to use a normal modern language that makes the poem accessible and relatable. Such as, 'I am the negro bearing slavery's scars', 'I am the worker sold to the machine' and 'I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart'. Langston Hughes utilizes the normal modern language to amplify the poem on the different groups. He celebrates the creativity and strength of the marginalized community against the colonial legacies.

In contrast, McKay's poems are written in the English standard which is shown from the four first lines of the poems. For instance, in *America* (1921): 'Darkly I gaze', 'Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer', 'Her vigor flows'. Also, it appears in the poem *Enslaved* (1889–1948): 'My heart', 'Black Land disinherited', 'To liberate', 'wonders utterly:'.

The purposeful use of the English standard language is the direct challenging of the colonial through their own voice to criticize the injustice and oppression toward the black race. It also gives a worldwide voice since the use of the Jamaican dialect could be hard to understand. In contrast, the English is a well-known language.

*The weary Blues (1925)* is written with the vernacular language of the African American descent. such as, “Ain’t got- I have nothing”, “ma troubles – my troubles” and “I’s gwine to quit ma frownin’- I am going to quit my frowning” “I ain’t happy no mo – I am not happy anymore” the use of the vernacular language by Langston Hughes emphasizes a cultural identity. The author is reclaiming his agency through the use of the dialect language which challenge the colonial narrative and celebrating the black cultural identity.

*The theme of English B (1901-1967)* is written in a conversational style which means that he uses an everyday talk or a colloquial speech. For instance, in the second stanza:

I wonder if it’s that simple?

I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.

I went to school there, then Durham, then here

To this college on the hill above Harlem.

I am the only colored student in my class.

This line uses a direct language explaining the tone of the casual conversation as talking about his age, race and upbringing. The conversational style allows for an authentic experience and reality by the author. It can be also a way of subversion the dominant discourse imposed by the colonial.

The language used in the Poem *Lynching (1922)* is the language of the Christian faith about the participation of the ungodliness act of the lynching by giving a similar picture to the Christ on the cross ‘His father,’ ‘Had bidden him to his bosom once again’. The dead body is a captivation for the spectators, as the poem touches on how the black bodies are subjectifies. Also, the standard

formal English. Where he uses a powerful style to convey his message about brutality and oppression used by the act of lynching against the black. such as, “Hung pitifully”, “Danced round the dreadful” and ‘fiendish glee.’

#### **4-Contrasting Tones and Moods in their Poetry**

##### **4.1-Exploring the Tone**

Langston Hughes expressing his anger and resentment in *Let America be America Again* toward the shattered dream and the discrimination upon the colour through any kind of race. He certainly said in the first stanza “Let America be America Again. Let it be the dream it used to be.”. He capitalized the word ‘Let’ which emphasize the pleading and the harsh tone in asking for freedom and liberty in America the land who used to be land of freedom to everyone.

The end of the poem the tone shifted to be hopeful and resolute. The eleventh stanza last line ‘America will be!’ and in the twelfth stanza ‘And make America again!’. Hughes is using a direct and challenging tone that America will be the land of freedom and equality and it will become again the land it used to be where everyone is living in peace with no kind of prejudice.

In the interim, *America (1921)* has an ambivalence feeling between hate and love. The fourth line “I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.” Contains a two opposite words “love” which is a feeling that brings joy, connection and fulfilment. Meanwhile, “hell” represent the epitome of suffering, torment and negativity. That’s how Claude McKay see America as a place that brings him connection and torment at the same time. Also, in the sixth line “Giving me strength erect against her hate,” the word “strength” and “hate” which shows a strong opposing feeling toward America. he hates it, but also this racism and prejudice give him a strength. Claud McKay illustrates his ambivalent feeling about America where the dream of freedom, equality and

injustice go in the same time with the harsh life of the black Americans under the system of discrimination, because usually whenever there is a discriminated system, the people are not dreaming for freedom.

*Enslaved (1889 –1948)*, in other hand, has a tone of seriousness and thoughtfulness. The first line in the poem ‘Oh when I think of my long-suffering race,’ showcased the intellectual thoughts of Claud McKay about his lifelong and race. In the fifth line ‘And in the Black Land disinherited,’ the serious tone by the writer begins. he uses a strong word. Such as, disinherited, sick and hate. The poem expresses how the black people feel for a long time about the oppression and the white treatment for them, and how they have been denied in their own land.

The tone in *the weary blues (1925)* is sorrowful, melancholic and weariness. the author tries to describe the sadness of the speaker and his mournful melodies, which is shown in The first stanza the line ten ‘He made that poor piano moan with melody’ explain the power of the emotions of the pianist that made the piano itself expressing his sad melodies. In the line thirteen ‘He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool’ that convey a sense of despair in the performance of the musician ‘sad saggy tune’ depicts the sorrowful melody. In the second stanza the lines from six to nine. Also, explain how much the speaker is sad and depressed the much that he is wishing to die. He is neither happy nor satisfied about everything.

And I can't be satisfied.

Got the Weary Blues

I ain't happy no mo'

And I wish that I had died.”



The poem, generally, spotlight the struggles and disillusionment in the African American society and the effect of the colonialism in their psyche. the use of the blues music by the author is an element of enduring the pain and the resilience with hope within the corrupted legal system.

*The theme of English B (1901-1967)* adopts the tone of contemplative and pensive, because the poem deals with the issues of identity, race and belonging. it focusses on questioning the self, existence and the own conscience. 'But I guess I'm what' in the second stanza second line capture the uncertainty and complexity in the black student identity. By saying 'I guess' the author confess about his challenging in defining himself within the pressure his feels in a certain model and expectations. In the line seven and eight the fourth stanza 'Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me. Nor do I often want to be a part of you.' Emphasize the relation between the speaker and the other. their belonging and connection to them which create a sense of pensive tone. The author use 'perhaps' to show his uncertainty about his identity in the academic framework.

The poem *The Lynching (1922)* by Claude McKay tackles the tone of grave, anger and sombre. the poem has a sense of frightening that it tackles one of the vicious acts against the African American brutal act which is the lynching. the author in the eight lines 'Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.' Portray the black victims as helpless in the face of the overwhelming oppression. This violence system state how the backs are been objectified to the amusement of the white people. The first line 'His spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven' as the victim spirit depict as smoke ascended to heaven suggest a sombre atmosphere in the poem.

#### **4.2-Exploring the Mood**

The general mood in *Let America be America again (1935)* is between disillusionment and determination. it appears in the first stanza the fifth line '(America never was America to me.)'

also in the third stanza the fifth line where he said '(There's never been equality for me, Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")' this line shows how Langston is disappointed by the discrimination in America and how he never felt like he belongs to his own country or his home, but rather it was. The use of 'me' in this line create a feeling of mysteriousness Langston is referring not only to himself but also to his people.

Also, the poem presents the feelings of hope and determination. Which the first thing that attract the reader on the first reading. The seventh stanza shows how Hughes was a deterrent in the poem *Let America be America Again (1935)*

'Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream  
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,  
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,  
That even yet its mighty daring sings  
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned  
That's made America the land it has become.

These lines depict the strong feeling of determination by Langston Hughes against the oppressor. 'I'm the one who dream' he specifies himself with boldness to fight for his dream. The dream of which consider impossible to others. He illustrates that he is 'daring to sing' and his voice will be heard even in the bricks, stones and furrow tuned. Langston reclaims that he is going to be the voice of the African American who are being silenced and voiceless and his voice is going to be

heard by every human in every place. Also, he is hoping for his land America to be a free country for all the people living there.

The poem *America (1921)* by Claud McKay has the mood of bitterness and frustration on its lines. In the first line McKay explains that America feeds him the bread of bitterness 'Although she feeds me bread of bitterness' which means that he had experienced one of the harsh treatments in America. and it tasted like a bitter for him. Also, in the third line where he said: 'Stealing my breath of life' he illustrates that in America and due to the wild oppression the life has become lifeless because of the white authorities who robbed him and his soul.

*Enslaved (1889 –1948)* shows a Sombre, despair and lamenting mood. In the line seven 'My heart grows sick with hate,'. The author explains his feeling about the suffering and the oppression emotionally by being the enslaved individual. Additionally, in the line nine also 'Then from the dark depths of my soul I cry' express the deep feeling of sorrow and sadness towards the situation his country becomes. He cries so deeply about the suffering he had to face as a black citizen.

*the weary blues (1925)* by Langston Hughes invite the mood of gloom and despondency throughout the poem. the musical rhythm of the blues which is supposed to bring the feelings of pain especially with the speaker who expresses his sadness and sorrow by using the blues music and said:

"Ain't got nobody in all this world,

Ain't got nobody but ma self.

And

"I got the Weary Blues

And I can't be satisfied.

This pain conveyed throughout the poem by the speaker is also about what the African American feels due the persecution and humiliation they face. Lines such as 'To the tune o' those Weary Blues.' It refers to the sorrowful and soulful music being played by the pianist in the poem, which serves as both the inspiration for and the setting to the speaker's reflections on the difficulties and challenging in his life.

The mood in in the poem *The theme of English B (1901-1967)* by Langston Hughes is insightful where the poem explores the issues of identity and race. the author is questioning himself and his belonging to the society as a black citizen within a white community. through reading the poem we see that Langston intend to ask a question regarding the self-exploration like 'Me—who?' and 'So will my page be colored that I write?' which he clearly questions his belonging to the society as a black and if it is acceptable that he is colored between the whites or not.

In *The Lynching (1922)* by Claude, the mood is sympathy and sorrow. the reader is driven to feel sympathy and sorrowful toward those kinds of harmful act of lynching against the black Americans that time. McKay manipulates readers' emotions by exploiting their compassion for the victim of the lynching. The poem use of sensory evocation and emotive language, such as 'The women thronged to look, but never a one Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;' could suggest a sense of pity in the women eyes towards the hanged body in the way that the reader contemplate the scene and its implication.

## 5-The Representation of the African American Experience

Throughout the poem of *Let America be America again* (1935) Hughes try to portray the experience of the different kinds of the marginalized groups in America due the oppressive hierarchy and prejudice. He also denounced about the false promises giving by the white Americans to this denied races from liberty, safety and equality. The stanza five from the line four to six ‘I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek— And finding only the same old stupid plan Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.’ Langston explains how every time they fool them with a fake promise and the situation remain the same. He illustrates about the experience of the immigrants who flow from the south looking for more freedom and peace referring to them by the use of ‘I’ yet it wasn’t much different. The strong one insult the weak. However, he calls for the awakening of the desire of being equal and dreaming.

*America* (1921) by Claud McKay captured a significant image of the harsh realities that African Americans had to live in place where there is no right and no dignity. He uses the ‘I’ reflecting his own experience as an immigrant in this cultured hell that is full of the discrimination and racism. He also captured the disillusionment, resilience in defeating and refusing to be silenced against the injustice. The line nine in the poem ‘I stand within her walls with not a shred’ Claude says that he is facing this prejudice, and he will earn it without complaint or giving up.

In the poem *Enslaved* (1889 –1948) Claude McKay tackles the issues of the slavery and enslavement and its effects on the black citizen psyche and physic. He also delves into how the colonial powers claim that they owe and control the land which appears in his lines. Such as, the line three until six:

Enslaved and lynched, denied a human place

In the great life line of the Christian West;

And in the Black Land disinherited,

Robbed in the ancient country of its birth,

They have been denied in their own land where they get birth and the colonial power come and reclaim that they owe these lands and the African Americas have no right in it. The use of the word 'Christian west' refers to the dominant religion forced to the slaveries which claimed as a superiority while persecuting them with the morals of this religious cultures. They have been treated like an animal for a long until their heart is filled with hate 'My heart grows sick with hate, becomes as lead,'.

In further, *the weary blues (1925)* by Langston Hughes identify the worries of the African American descent at the same time celebrating their culture by using of the most crucial musical element by the Afro-Americans, which is the blues music. where he invites the feeling of sadness and mournful that the black people carry in their hearts.

*The theme of English B (1901-1967)* deals with one of the significant experiences by the African American and their struggles of identity within the white academic setting. the poem explains the internal conflict by the young black student who is navigating his own culture and identity within the realm of the white community.

Being me, it will not be white.

But it will be

A part of you, instructor.

These lines show the conflict between the black student and the teacher about the issue of identity, race and belonging against the standard put by the white teacher. He illustrates that he is a part of him despite their differences there still a common bond as they are both humans.

*The Lynching (1922)* by Claude McKay tackles the experience of the African descent in American with the brutal act of violence that is called lynching. It captures the feeling of fear, pain, and suffering endured under the white despotism. In the second line of the poem 'by the cruelest way of pain' McKay explains that the lynching as the most brutal way of pain that is used against the black people ever that means lynching is not the first act of violence against the black people. He also shows in the line thirteen 'And little lads, lynchers that were to be, Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee' that the young boys who witnessed the lynching will continue this cruel practice, yet he describes them as dancing around the scene which is abnormal for young children. However, it is becoming normal thing for them and they will do it also in the future because for them it is something for amusement now.

## **6-Symbolic Significance: Decoding Hidden Meanings**

### **6.1 Geographical symbols**

Both Claude McKay and Langston Hughes use symbolism in their poetry to convey different themes and elements like Race, Freedom, resistance and equality. The three of the poems are related in the geographical symbols. In *Let America Be America Again Hughes (1935)* uses America itself as a symbolic element which has a double face. America in the real life, and America the dream that Hughes want to live in, in the first line of the poem 'Let America be America again.' He mentioned America twice to separate between them. in the fifth line the first stanza. He illustrates that 'America never was America to me' in these lines he is reclaiming about

America as the land of every race and every man. they were born raised and grow up in this land which they have a strong connection with this heavenly earth.

Additionally, He uses the Land as symbol which represent a source of life, wealth and the geographical border where the citizens can share their freedom and liberty inside. in the third stanza the first line 'O, let my land be a land where Liberty' Hughes use the word land as place where there is a liberty 'Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!'

Analogously, Claude McKay in his poem *America (1921)* also use America as his symbolic pattern. He uses the pronoun 'She' referring to America as a person in the first line 'she feeds me bread of bitterness,' hints to the nurturing mother who provide to her children, depending to the context of the poem can provide emotions like tenderness as well harshness. Yet here America is providing her citizens. By this personification McKay was able to confess about his hate and love to this land. the fifth line of the poem 'Her vigor flows like tides into my blood' Claude is personifying America and explain it as a water that flows and tides in his blood he belongs to this culture. Blood is a sign of connected relationship which here Claude is explaining America as the mother that share connected relationship with him.

*Enslaved (1889–1948)*, in the other hand, also use a geographical symbol which is Land. in the fifth line he said 'And in the Black Land disinherited,' he emphasizes that the colonial powers narrative claim that the land is from their ownership. by doing that they take the authority over the black people even under their own properties. The black people have been unjustly deprived their rightful inheritance. He capitalized the word 'Black' to draw the attention to the racial nature and social justice within the broader context.



## 6.2-Romantic Symbols

The romantic symbols in the poem *The weary blues (1925)* are a lot. Such as, in the line nine and ten in the second stanza ‘And far into the night he crooned that tune. The stars went out and so did the moon.’ The author Clarifies that the stars and the moon are gone, yet both are an important symbol of hope and showing the path which the people in a long time period help them in traveling and navigating, but the speaker explains in this c that they are disappearing. Yet, these symbols signify the disillusionment that the speaker experienced while hearing the singing of the pianist and the pain he is going through.

The poem *The Theme of English B (1901-1967)* also invite a romantic symbol ‘To this college on the hill above Harlem.’ The word hill which represents the highness of something. this college on the hill which gathered only the white people ‘I am the only colored student in my class.’ Which consider a top and better than Harlem which is under the hill. It means that the hills are the separator between the superior and the inferior which is white people and black people.

Correspondingly, *The Lynching (1922)* by Claude McKay also has some romantic symbols also like Day and Night. The fifth line ‘All night a bright and solitary star’ and the line nine ‘Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view’. This night represents the invisibility where all the crime are committed in silence without no witnesses. Meanwhile, the Day is when all the crimes and the heinous acts appeared to the people.

## 7-Imagery Unveiled: Painting Pictures with Words

Both Claude McKay and Langston Hughes use the imagery to convey their thoughts and experience on the slavery, discrimination and oppression upon the colour.

Hughes use several images in his poem *Let America be America Again* (1935) to portray his idea about racism and suffering. The line two the fifth stanza 'I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.' The image relies on the many years of racism and oppression under the white domination, and their struggle of their souls against this racial discrimination. It may be seen as the stereotype and the historical narrative over the black Americans as a victim to the slavery rather than acknowledge their identities. The six lines on the six stanzas 'Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.' is an image to those poor immigrants who were hoping for a better life and a good opportunity, but it remains just the same. It could be seen as an exalting ruthless competition and exploitation of the helpless.

McKay's poem also invites some imageries. For instance, in *America* (1921) Claud say that America 'feeds me bread of bitterness' in the first line, this imagery depicts the harsh reality in America and the suffering he lived up to the racist system in America. Also, in in the second line 'tiger's tooth' the tigers are often so strong and powerful. Claude tries to compare between the tough racism and oppression he is going through in America is much deep as the tooth of the tigers.

In *Enslaved* (1889 –1948) the line ten has an imagery with a sense of divine 'To the avenging angel to consume' here Claude is calling for the angels who is their job to protect and doing the tasks of delivering justice to consume or destroy this repressive regime. The line seven in *enslaved* 'My heart grows sick with hate, becomes as lead,' is an image about the heavy and the exhausting

emotions the author with hate and sickness is having because of the racism he faced. The more he faces this racism the more he hates it.

As well as, *The weary blues* (1925) present some imageries. In the line six in the first stanza 'He did a lazy sway. . . .' this image explain the sense of mood to the music itself which is swaying in lazy way that is slow and relaxed. it also can describe sense of continuity which the pianist is going forward and getting back at the same time. In the first stanza the line nine 'With his ebony hands on each ivory key' this line has a unique image which the author emphasize that the speaker is using his ebony hands which means he is black colored referring to his black identity on the ivory key of the piano which they are the white keys in the piano referring to whiteness. Through this image Hughes is reclaiming about the power of his cultural identity that he is tracing his unique touch over the ivory key which is the white dominance.

In the other hand, the poem *The Theme of English B* (1901-1967) displayed an imagery to provide the reader with a powerful engagement to the themes and the emotions. The third stanza the line twelve 'So will my page be colored that I write?' the author here suggests that his writing will reflect his experience and identity. The papers are usually white which represent in the poem the teacher himself or the white people. Meanwhile, what he is writing illustrates his experience and cultural identity on the poem by leaving his traces on the white page or the white people in fact. This image emphasizes the empowerment of the black identity and representing the self.

The poem *The Lynching* (1922) by Claude McKay also showcased some imageries to give a vivid image about the experience of the act of lynching between the black people and how they feel about it. The line eleven and twelve in the poem 'The women thronged to look, but never a one Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;' He describes the eyes of the women who looked

to the dead body as a 'steely blue'. The colour blue often represents the feeling of depression and emotional numbness. Their blue eyes are lifeless. It is not their first experience for them facing this kind of brutal act, anyone of them could be the next.

## **8-Unveiling the Core Themes**

Claude McKay and Langston Hughes similarly share a common theme. For instance, freedom, equality, melancholy, and oppression. They capture the struggles and aspiration of the African American literature enlightening their persisting significance on the literary canon:

### **8.1- The Theme of Freedom**

The theme of dreaming in freedom is the most overwhelming topic in the poem of *Let America be America Again (1935)* in the nine stanza the third line 'And yet must be—the land where every man is free.' Hughes explain that the freedom has not been accomplished all yet and the freedom must be fulfilled. The line space shows the long distance between the situation of the blacks under the discrimination to the day of freedom. The third stanza of the poem Hughes is calling for the equality in America the land of liberty.

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

The use of 'O' in the first line shows fierceness and urgency that indicate the desire of the author to see his land the land of liberty.

Likewise, The title of the poem 'Enslaved' is itself manifesto the poet longing into the freedom. He is reclaiming about the years he has been suppressed and enslaved by the colonial powers. The last line in the poem when he said 'To liberate my people from its yoke!' demonstrate that the poet is craving for liberty with a sense of determination and passion. The word 'yoke' in other hand carries a meaning of bondage, subjugation and restriction which is an image about how the blacks are subjected to the white people expressing his aspiration for freedom and dignity.

The theme of freedom. Also, is appeared in the poem *America (1921)* by Claude McKay too. the last two lines indicates a metaphorical language to convey an important message about the value of something which is the freedom 'Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand, Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.' McKay capitalized the T in the word time to demonstrate the importance of the time that is going and dismiss the value of a things, yet for him if the black people accept the violence, oppression and racism by the time they will lose their identity as a part of the society. Equally to a 'priceless treasures sinking in the sand' the sand in these lines represent the inability and inevitability of seeking this spot of freedom.

## **8.2-The Theme of Resistance**

The poem *Let America be America Again (1935)* Also showing the elements of resistance against the colonial powers who is controlling over the land. the eleventh stanza four and five lines 'And yet I swear this oath— America will be!' showcased the direct challenging to the sovereign. Hughes use the 'I' the first personal pronoun as his swearing that America will be a free land full of the opportunities, which gives a sense of an individual responsibility of reclaiming his personal dedication that America is for all, yet the poem is addressing the redeal which are the African Americana to join for this challenge and commitment to get their freedom.

*Enslaved (1889 –1948)* by Claude McKay, similarly, introduce the theme of resistance. the twelfth- and thirteen-lines Claude expresses his desire for the complete disappearing to the white authorities ‘The white man’s world of wonders utterly: Let it be swallowed up in earth’s vast womb,’ the image he uses by saying ‘swallowed up identify the feeling of the author towards the colonial oppressive system by le and to bring a new fair system. the sentence he uses ‘earth’s vast womb’ reflects his excitement in starting a new life as a free black man.

Just as, *America (1921)* by Claude McKay deals with the theme of resistance as well. in the sixth line ‘Giving me strength erect against her hate’ Claude emphasizes that the hate and racism which he has got in America is not making him weak, but rather, he is stronger and wants to fight back for his freedom. The use of the word ‘erect’ could refer to masculinity and physical power. Furthermore, the use of ‘her’ which is America that is referred as feminine Claude McKay reclaim his power and consciousness as more powerful than the discrimination and oppression he receives. Also, in the ninth line ‘I stand within her walls with not a shred’ means that he is going to fight within the enemy wall and inside America where the people are being discriminated and racist not shred, which means that he will fight with no surrender or getting back.

### **8.3- The Theme of Oppression**

*The weary blues (1925)* manifests a theme of oppression in its lines the use of the blues serve as an important element for reflecting the pain and sadness the pianist is feeling. the poem points out how the African Americans are struggling due the oppressive treatment by the white authorities. The first stanza from the line thirteen to fifteen ‘He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool. Sweet Blues! Coming from a black man’s soul.’ The speaker explain that the pianist is playing a saggy tune which refers to the quality of the music that depicts some kind of weariness and heaviness. this heavy tune implies that the pain the pianist is carrying in his heart is as a

‘musical fool’ who confess about everything regardless of how others are going to judge him. The last line of the poem ‘He slept like a rock or a man that’s dead.’ The speaker manifests his weariness about the pianist who is might be dead. Where he describes him as ‘a rock man’. Argues a finality of someone who was solid and unyielding about his pain. this description conveys a feeling of loss and strength.

Similarly, *The Lynching* (1922) by Claude McKay too carries on its lines the theme of oppression. which he captured the brutal reality of the vicious violence the black Americans had to face from the horrific act lynching. The title itself is named by this violent behaviour ‘The Lynching’ which draw its attention to the horrific action the African America had to face at that time. In addition, the whole poem is describing, precisely, how a black man unjustly hanged by the whites and had to suffer until his soul left him the ninth line ‘Hung pitifully o’er the swinging char.’ Describe the frightening scene of the murder with a lack of empathy towards the victims. The fourth line ‘The awful sin remained still unforgiven’ the act of sin for Claude is unforgiving by God because the lynchers has no regret about their actions.

#### **8.4-Racism and Discrimination**

The poem *The theme of English B* (1901-1967) delves into the theme of racism and discrimination on its lines. It shows how the black Americans struggle about their identities within the community. The line seven in the fourth stanza ‘Sometimes perhaps you don’t want to be a part of me.’ Explain how the white instructor do not want the existence of the student on the class. upheld a sense of otherness and the division notion of identity, yet since he is the only black student in the white schools. He is inferior based on race which goes against the themes of unity. He is aware of his racial difference inside the academic setting.

In the same manner, *The Lynching* (1922) also has a theme of racism which Claude McKay explain it with a vivid imagery which is lynching. in the second line ‘by the cruelest way of pain,’ Claude illustrates that lynching is not just a normal crime it’s a hate crime that does not just start from now, but it has a long-time history, so he describes it as the ‘cruelest’ which explain that lynching was not the first worst violent discrimination against the black in the history.

### **Conclusion:**

As a conclusion to this chapter of the practical part which provide a deep analysis to their selected poem Langston Hughes and Claude McKay share a various differences and similarities. In the side of the differences Langston Hughes focus more on creating a different structure and form that challenge the traditional poems by the dominant powers, yet the tone used in the poem is likely peaceful and melancholic that shape his desire of the peace and freedom as a part of the society. In addition, he uses of the ‘I’ in most of his poem referring to the African American to reclaim about their experience. In the other hand, Claude McKay stuck in the traditional form like the Shakespearean sonnets which explain his influence to the occupation system. The tone of his poetry is more powerful and harsh than Langston use. Furthermore, his poems reflect his experience as an immigrant in America but not as an African American poet. In the side, of similarities both the poets use a symbols and imageries to picture their experience as a black citizen in the society to give a direct image about what they see and feel. Also, they share a similar theme that evoke the black suffering and oppression by the white authorities.



# **The General Conclusion**

### **The General Conclusion:**

This dissertation negotiates the comparisons in the selected poems by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay an essential figure of the African American and Jamaican literature during the era of the Harlem renaissance by examine their stylistic elements and thematic use. Also shedding light on the most important aspect of their life to acquire a meaningful understanding of their identity, cultural background and experience.

This comparative study provides different insight into the variances and parallels in the poems of Claude McKay and Langston Hughes. It situates their poems *Let America be America again*, *The Weary Blues* and *The Theme of English B* by Langston Hughes and *The lynching*, *Enslaved* and *America* by Claude McKay. Both the poets invite the themes of racial injustice, equality, the quest of freedom and oppression in their works as a mean of resistance and revolution against the dominate power which is the white community. They encourage for the fighting about their place within the society by presenting their experience under the discrimination and oppression.

McKay and Langston use imagery and symbolism to give a direct image about what they feel, see and to express their emotions in a vivid image. The application of imagery gives a meaningful understanding to the portrayal of the complexities of the African American experience and identity in their work. In addition, the use of symbols gives a powerful visual that allow the poets to manipulate the reader's attention on what extreme this discrimination harm their life.

In other hand, as they share a common feature. They are also different in many elements. Langston Hughes focus more on the creating his own form of poetry that serve the African American tradition. He uses the first personal pronoun in all the selected poems which reflects the struggles of his people by being their voice. He freely expresses his identity as a part of the African

American culture. Moreover, Hughes identifies the elements of his cultural background as the use of the musical elements like the blues capturing the racial pride and the strength of his culture.

Claude McKay. On the contrary, stuck in the traditional form of the sonnet and the English language standard which create a sense of confusion about his identity to the American culture, but he talks about the racial identity and invite a theme such oppression and resistance. Also, Claude McKay talks about the African American experience not as a part of this society, but as an immigrant to the United States who the moment of the prejudice and resilience between their walls.

Additionally, each poem tone by Claude McKay and Langston Hughes reflects the poets attitude towards the subject matter which is conveyed throughout the poem by the use of images and language style. Also, the mood which is a different emotional response elicited on the reader created by the tone the poet depicts in his poem.

Ultimately, analysing their works through a postcolonial lens reveals how Hughes and McKay challenge dominant cultural narratives and reclaim African American identity. Their poetry serves as a form of resistance against colonial and racial oppression, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage and solidarity.

Comparing a two important figures identity and cultural background give awareness of how Claude McKay a Jamaican as an immigrant express about his experience and identity in his works and the deep roots of Langston Hughes and his celebration of the richness of African American culture. Their poetry continues to resonate with readers today, serving as a testament to the enduring power of art as a means of resistance and a vehicle for cultural expression to stimulate thoughts, evoke emotion, and promote comprehension in a context of a diverse and interconnected world as literary pioneers who used their voices to challenge prevailing norms and advocate for

equality. The themes explored in Hughes and McKay's poetry, such as racial injustice, cultural pride, and the quest for equality, remain highly relevant today. Contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter echo the same calls for justice and recognition that these poets articulated. Their work continues to inspire activists and artists who seek to challenge systemic racism and advocate for social change.

This research may offer an insightful involvement to another comparative studies for other poets in a different generation and periods to examine their evolution to the stylistic and thematic application collecting their different perspective and experience. Yet, shedding light on different identities and marginalized communities and their struggles promoting cultural awareness in today's society.

As a result, this dissertation reaffirms the significance of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay as pivotal figures in the literary canon, whose works continue to inspire and challenge readers worldwide. Their revolutionary poetry not only captured the essence of the Black experience during the Harlem Renaissance but also laid the groundwork for future generations of writers and artists to explore themes of identity, resistance, and social justice. By delving into the intricate connections between their poetic styles and the cultural context of their time, this study enhances our understanding of their legacy and underscores the timeless relevance of their contributions to literature and cultural history.

### **Abstract:**

This research is a comparative study between two outstanding figures in African American and Jamaican Literature. The theoretical part provides a historical and literary background of the poets. On the other hand, the practical part involves a detailed analysis of their poems to highlight the differences and similarities between them. The primary objective to this study is to examine the extent of which Langston Hughes and Claude McKay represent the cultural black identity in their selected poems by exploring the structure, symbols, imagery, and themes in their works. This study sheds light on the poets' engagement with issues of race, identity, and social injustice. Also, the different types of black identities who challenged the societal expectations and cultural norms. Ultimately, it highlights the enduring impact of Hughes and McKay's poetry in shaping literary discourse and celebrating diverse voices in American literature. This study highlights that Hughes' use of blues and jazz conveyed the cultural richness and emotional depth of the African American experience and contributed as a form of resistance and empowerment. In contrast, McKay's structured and often militant poetic forms confuse his identity with the American culture. Both poets effectively employ their unique styles to articulate the struggles and aspirations of African Americans, using their art to foster a sense of solidarity and resistance. Additionally, a deeper investigation into their correspondence to their works could provide even greater insight into their creative processes and ideological development.

**Key Words:** Comparative study, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, black identity, challenging, cultural norms.

## ملخص:

هذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة مقارنة بين شخصيتين بارزتين في الأدب الأمريكي الأفريقي والجامايكي. ويقدم الجزء النظري الخلفية التاريخية والأدبية للشعراء. ومن ناحية أخرى، يتضمن الجانب العملي تحليلاً مفصلاً لقصائدهم لإبراز أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه بينهم. الهدف الأساسي لهذه الدراسة هو دراسة مدى تمثيل لانغستون هيوز وكلود ماکاي للهوية الثقافية السوداء في قصائدهما المختارة من خلال استكشاف البنية والرموز والصور والموضوعات في أعمالهما. تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على تعامل الشعراء مع قضايا العرق والهوية والظلم الاجتماعي. وأيضاً الأنواع المختلفة من الهويات السوداء التي تحدد التوقعات المجتمعية والأعراف الثقافية. وفي النهاية، فهو يسلط الضوء على التأثير الدائم لشعر هيوز ومکاي في تشكيل الخطاب الأدبي والاحتفاء بالأصوات المتنوعة في الأدب الأمريكي. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على أن استخدام هيوز لموسيقى البلوز ونقل الثراء الثقافي والعمق العاطفي للتجربة الأمريكية الأفريقية وساهم كشكل من أشكال المقاومة والتمكين. في المقابل، فإن أشكال ماکاي الشعرية المنظمة والمتشددة في كثير من الأحيان تخلط بين هويته والثقافة الأمريكية. يستخدم كلا الشعارين أساليبهما الفريدة بشكل فعال للتعبير عن نضالات وتطلعات الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي، باستخدام فنهم لتعزيز الشعور بالتضامن والمقاومة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن إجراء تحقيق أعمق في مدى توافقهم مع أعمالهم يمكن أن يوفر رؤية أكبر لعملياتهم الإبداعية وتطورهم الأيديولوجي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** دراسة مقارنة, لانغستون هيوز, كلود ماکاي, الهوية السوداء, تحدي, الاعراف الثقافية.

## Résumé :

Cette recherche est une étude comparative entre deux figures marquantes de la littérature afro-américaine et jamaïcaine. La partie théorique fournit un contexte historique et littéraire des poètes. D'autre part, la partie pratique implique une analyse détaillée de leurs poèmes pour mettre en évidence les différences et les similitudes entre eux. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'examiner dans quelle mesure Langston Hughes et Claude McKay représentent l'identité culturelle noire dans leurs poèmes sélectionnés en explorant la structure, les symboles, les images et les thèmes de leurs œuvres. Cette étude met en lumière l'engagement des poètes dans les questions de race, d'identité et d'injustice sociale. Également, les différents types d'identités noires qui ont remis en question les attentes sociétales et les normes culturelles. En fin de compte, il met en évidence l'impact durable de la poésie de Hughes et McKay sur le façonnement du discours littéraire et la célébration des diverses voix de la littérature américaine. Cette étude souligne que l'utilisation du blues par Hughes transmettait la richesse culturelle et la profondeur émotionnelle de l'expérience afro-américaine et contribuait en tant que forme de résistance et d'autonomisation. En revanche, les formes poétiques structurées et souvent militantes de McKay confondent son identité avec la culture américaine. Les deux poètes emploient efficacement leurs styles uniques pour articuler les luttes et les aspirations des Afro-Américains, utilisant leur art pour favoriser un sentiment de solidarité et de résistance. De plus, une enquête plus approfondie sur leur correspondance avec leurs œuvres pourrait fournir un aperçu encore plus approfondi de leurs processus créatifs et de leur développement idéologique.

**Mots Clés :** étude comparative, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, d'identités noires, remis en question, les normes culturelles

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