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## Identity as Self-defence: Langston Hughes as the Voice of the Voiceless

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### Abstract:

*This paper aims to reveal the presence of the black American poet Langston Hughes through his poetic imagination in resuscitating and reasserting the identity of the black writers of the Harlem Renaissance in American society. Almost without exception, Hughes’s poems revolve around the essence of black identity in American society. Emphatically, his poems raise the question of accepting and embracing black identity without showing any sense of bashfulness or diffidence. The non-reconciled spirit of Hughes always functions in an oppositional form of resistance and non-reconciliation. The bitterness of his soul reminds his peers to indefatigably cling to their identities in order to prove their presence and existence in American society. As a humanist, secular, un-dogmatic and contrapuntal poet, who believes in the multiplicity of voices, Hughes profoundly confirms that Africanism and Whiteness are inextricably tied. They are two sides of the same coin that cannot be extricated and together conflate to the wholeness of American society. Undoubtedly, Hughes’ poetic imagination could help in reconstructing and reclaiming the identity of his nation by nurturing hope and optimism in the consciousness of the African Americans.*

### Introduction

Langston Hughes, the most indomitable leading African American literary figure, had the poetic and artistic power to profoundly transform the image of African Americans to be more resilient, radical and resistant. The artistic and aesthetic contributions of Hughes, which are chiefly considered as spiritual and emotional sources of resilience, strength, freedom and

emancipation to African Americans, catapulted him to be the voice of his tribe, or, as John C. Hodges argues in “Wondering about the art of a wanderer: Langston Hughes and his critics”, Hughes was the “Poet Laureate of the Negro Race” (Hodges, 1986, p. 19). Hughes’s uncompromising and intransigent intellectual stance forcefully ingrained, infused, and even saturated his consciousness with an unyielding refusal to surrender to racial oppression and injustice. The long suffering that Hughes experienced in an oppressive society filled him with an everlasting belief and attitude to relentlessly defend the human rights and equality of African Americans in the oppressive White hegemonic society. His valour and audacity made him the voice of the voiceless and the most invincible advocate of the meekest African Americans in the face of discriminatory bigotry in American society. Hughes is not only considered the voice of African Americans, but of all the “wretched of the earth” who are silenced, downtrodden and unrepresented.

Needless to say, Hughes’s literary writings predominantly revolve around racism, cruel treatment, oppression, subjugation, indignity and injustice. As an oppositional and political maverick who audaciously opposed and unremittingly resisted the oppressive hegemonic system that Whites practised against African Americans, Hughes definitely influenced and impacted other black writers to be more radical, revolutionary, intransigent, resistant and non-reconciled in their thinking, as well as oppositional to the idea of racism, discrimination, oppression and injustice. Inevitably, his writings have the power to infuse a non-reconciled oppositional consciousness and awareness that brings out an awakening in the minds of African American writers against all forms of hegemonic oppressive political power.

### **The presence of Langston Hughes:**

The poetic presence of Hughes has haunted many black writers. We find Amiri Baraka, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and others bear much resemblance to Hughes in the form of intransigence, non-reconciliation and resistance. In his article “Art as Resistance: Black Aestheticism in Amiri Barak’s and Maya Angelous’s Selected Poetry” Hamza Rauf Awan comments on the art of African American writers which becomes a form of resistance against the colonizers by asserting “Afro-American and African literature or art became a channel for resistance against the colonizers. Moreover, aesthetics deals with cataclysmic events or social settings in which it is being produced as the poetry and artistic writings of Amiri Baraka and Maya Angelou depict accordingly” (Rauf Awan, 2021, p. 2). Hughes’s non-reconciled writings inevitably functioned in a powerful way that inspired and engrossed other black poets of the Harlem Renaissance to be infused with non-reconciliation and intransigence as well as to keep

the dynamic mobility of resistance against oppression and injustice alive. For Hughes, resistance and non-reconciliation emphatically reinforced African American writers to prove their fragmented, discontinuous identity, and to represent themselves in a world that was full of racial prejudice and discrimination. Certainly, Hughes's aesthetic and artistic writing function powerfully in sustaining and maintaining multiple forms of resilience, emancipation, freedom and representation. As the voice of his tribe, Hughes remained unyielding in his unstoppable resistance and opposition in order to achieve freedom and liberty for African Americans. In his article, "Hughes as Dramatist" (1995) Ella Forbes comments on Hughes's brilliant aesthetic and poetic writing that undoubtedly defended African Americans and their identity by stating that "Langston wrote in a manner designed to speak to, for, and from African Americans, and we recognize ourselves, our triumphs, and our failures in his work" (Forbes, 1995, p. 167). It can be argued that Hughes was reasserting the voice and presence of African Americans and positioning them in history in order to prove their ineluctable contribution and presence in the making of America. Hughes's intellectual effort determined his humanist stance that strongly buttressed African Americans to stand up and represent themselves when unrepresented.

However, dismantling and obliterating the stereotypical image that Whites had formulated about African Americans as being submissive, inferior and barbaric was the chief concern that preoccupied Hughes's poetic imagination. His political activism, resistance and insurgence are predicated on humanist principles of freedom, liberty and emancipation. Accordingly, his poetic efforts were essentially intended to create hope, optimism and a better future for his own people, which became a discourse of resistance against oppressive hegemonic forces. In their article, "Langston Hughes' message for the black masses", Thurmon Garner and Carolyn Calloway-Thomas elaborate on Hughes's radical resistance and opposition against oppression by arguing that "Hughes was a social activist. His activism was not based on a political art designed to provide collective direction and leadership to the Black community. His activism was by contrast an individual effort to apply written, literary, and artistic talents in a balanced depiction of the cultural, social, and political assets of Blacks." (Garner and Thomas, 2009, p. 165) Therefore, the poetic form of Hughes is an indestructible potent weapon that is unflinchingly unleashed in the face of hegemonic political power. Writing poetry is the form of power that Hughes used in a world that is full of political and oppressive power. As such, the aesthetic cannot be separated from the political and the individual cannot be separated from the collective in Hughes's oeuvre. The sufferings of African Americans are considered as his own sufferings.

As the voice of his tribe, Hughes wrote from an uncompromising and non-reconciled stance. His poems which aim to devastate and dismantle the stereotypical image about African Americans function powerfully to displease and dissatisfy oppressive authorities in American society. It can be argued that his poetic virtuosity and literary craft appear in the approach in which he combines politics into his aesthetic writing in order to keep the Blacks' aspirations alive, even as an imagined idea. In his article, "Langston Hughes-Patternmaster", Jonathan Scott comments on Hughes's powerful style of writing in employing politics in his art by arguing that "He too sides politically, not because he thought politics was more important than art, but rather because he felt that art is much better when its techniques are linked to politics. In other words, political art is not about saying the right political things but, instead, doing their right things politically as an artist" (Scott, 2006, p. 35). By immersing politics into his aesthetic art, Hughes could represent the voice of African Americans and create self-emancipation for his nation. His unrelenting dissident stance was dedicated to achieving emancipation, representation and freedom for his people. The radical, insurgent and resistant activism preserves his presence and maintains him in rocking the boat and "speaking truth to power". The bitterness of his soul always reminds him to champion and advocate the unrepresented.

Endurance and unyielding refusal to surrender are considered a substantial bedrock of Hughes's non-reconciled and oppositional imagination. The more endurance one can maintain in the face of oppression, the better future will be waiting. Suffering and injustice are merely a detour towards emancipation, better days, and an auspicious future. Nevertheless, this can be fulfilled through indefatigable endurance of harsh and cruel treatment. Tenacity and determination in the consciousness of African Americans endows them with more strength and power to be unyielding, uncompromising and resilient. Such an unwavering endurance empowers African American with the idea of surviving despite White oppressive bulldozers that decimate and disintegrate the identity of African Americans. Accordingly, endurance is considered to be the ultimate factor that profoundly emancipates and liberates African Americans from the discriminatory, cruel and unjust acts of Whites which function in an inhumane way. The harrowing and unbearable experiences that African Americans faced have ultimately made them to be a resistant people who keep walking despite their wounds. Metaphorically speaking, the executioner's whips have only empowered them with more determination to endure.

Obviously, Hughes's poetry functions as a reminder that African Americans are people who have a deep history, culture, origins, traditions and civilization which cannot be neglected and underestimated. As human beings, African Americans have the same rights and claims as

other people in American society with regard to all forms of progression and advancement since they are also an essential part of the construction of American society. Therefore, the existence of African Americans is inevitable and cannot be easily evaded. As such, the identity of African Americans cannot be easily obliterated, and their history remains despite all attempts of neglecting it. However, all of Hughes's struggles can be said to defend, reinvigorate and reconstruct the identity of African Americans. Profoundly speaking, Hughes's poetry functions in a way that empowers the collective consciousness of belonging to the culture, heritage and tradition of African Americans. This can be obviously seen through all his writings. The personal cannot be separated from the collective in any of his poetic writings.

Speaking proudly, Hughes did not show any form of ignominy, reluctance or diffidence in displaying the characteristics of his blackness. Unashamedly, he insists on his blackness as a source of beauty and origin, therefore in his essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain", Hughes writes that the great [Negro] artist is one who is not "afraid of being himself" and "accepts what beauty is their own without question" (Hughes, 1926, p. 2) Axiomatically, Hughes is advocating the idea of African American pride. He places much reverence and pride in his own race. Blackness is the source of his pride, beauty and dignity. In one of his poems, Hughes states:

I am a Negro  
Black as the night is black,  
Black like the depths of my Africa. (*Negro*)  
Blackness is the colour of his race, which determines his identity, belonging and culture. Believing in blackness enables Hughes to have no sense of indignity. He strongly claims:  
Me, I feel like a man in Harlem, U.S.A., or anywhere else in this American country, because I feel like a man inside myself wherever I be. But some folks are not made like that. Some black men do not feel like men when they are surrounded by white folks who look at them as if blackness was bad manners or something. It is not bad manners to be black, any more than it is good manners to be white. God knows, God made both of us. (Defender, Dec. 29, 1962, p. 8)

Far from doubting and showing any kind of humiliation, Hughes strongly contends that the African American artist must represent the issues of his people courageously and audaciously without accepting any kind of reconciliation and resolution with White hegemonic power. Accordingly, Hughes is rather proud of his colour and race. In his book, *Voices from Harlem Renaissance*, Nathan Irvin Huggins elaborates on blackness as a source of power for African Americans by arguing "[a]t root or at its primary origin black awareness includes the fact of acting in full consciousness of being deliberately created black by God and as such being equal

to all human beings. Therefore, a real conscious black man should not surrender his soul to anybody and has to struggle against all the forces that try to imprison it” (Huggins, 1976, p. 4). Therefore, African Americans should not feel any sense of shyness or humiliation. Blackness is considered as their miraculous gift that perpetuates their belonging and identity.

### **Hope and future in Hughes’s Poetry:**

For Hughes, the function of the intellectual – either as a poet, dramatist or novelist – is not to be sheepishly passive, silent and go along with the herd, but rather to be courageously radical, uncompromising, non-reconciled and resistant in order to assert freedom and the rights of his/her people when being suppressed and oppressed. The intellectual in Hughes’s resistant and non-reconciled imagination is the one who is able to oppose, resist, confront and rock the boat in the face of all forms of hegemonic oppressive power. This is what the French theorist Julian Benda believes and confirms by affirming “Real intellectuals are supposed to risk being burned at the stake, ostracized or crucified” (in Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 1993, p. 7). Profoundly speaking, Hughes’s poetry helps to reinforce, empower and reinvigorate the sense of pride and self-respect in the souls of African Americans. He considers his Blackness as part of his identity, a source of his strength and power as well as a banner of pride. He asserts:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure does not matter. [*We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.*] (my emphasis, Hughes, 1926, p. 2)

The last two lines artistically resemble and align with the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish’s understanding, perception and imagining of the future. In his poem, “A State of Siege”, Darwish states: “We do what the unemployed and prisoners do... we nurture hope” (Darwish, 2015, p. 121). Aesthetically, both Darwish and Hughes nurture hope and address the future in their poetry. Building temples for tomorrow and nurturing hope have the power to always infuse a sense and meaning of life in the consciousness of the oppressed. Both poets metaphorically inject in their oppressed and colonized people the vaccine of hope, liberty, emancipation, representation and power. By doing so, the two poets resuscitate and revitalize

the consciousness of belonging and clinging to their identity as well as creating a better future that is thoroughly different from the past even if it is imagined.

In the poem, “I, Too, Sing America”, Hughes affirms his black identity without hesitating or showing any kind of humiliation and bashfulness. He clutches onto his roots as a black man, asserting: “I am the darker brother”. This line demonstrates that Hughes exposes himself as a black man who is very proud of his origins and skin. Again, this line artistically resembles Mahmoud Darwish’s understanding and conception of his identity as an Arab. In his poem, “Identity Card”, Darwish affirms his belonging to the Arabs by asserting “Write down I am an Arab”. Both Hughes’s and Darwish’s poems reveal their belonging to their race and origins without fear or showing humiliation in the American or Zionist society, respectively.

Emphatically, Hughes, like Darwish, believes in a future that will emancipate his people from the hegemonic power of White supremacy and from oppression in America similar to those oppressed by the power of the Zionist occupation in Israel. By the same token, Hughes is able to empower and reinforce African Americans with the consciousness of being individuals, who are able to reveal and express their talents just like other people. He wants African Americans to climb and transcend the “racial mountain” and not to be stuck in the past and recalling its memories. All in all, Hughes’s poetry maintains advocacy for a myriad web of humanist values that include freedom, justice, cultural coexistence, love, empathy and inclusion.

Despite the unbearable suffering, innumerable kinds of ill treatment, torture and anguish that African Americans had experienced, endured and struggled with throughout history, Hughes firmly believes that a better future is awaiting his community. His writing has the power to infuse someone with the idea that there will be a spring of hope, a sense of salvation and redemption that pave the way to an outstanding and flourishing future. Reading Hughes’s poetry, one can recognize plenty of images such as coexistence, understanding, empathy, respect, love and equal treatment that the poet draws. These images profoundly indicate that Hughes is a universal humanist secular writer who believes in the meaning of humanity.

Moreover, the reader finds that Hughes deliberately portrays the past of blacks as fully saturated and overloaded with suffering, racism, segregation, discrimination and pain in order to create and shape a better understanding of the present and hope for the future to his people. Hughes is an advocate of the so-called “low-down folks” which is a concept that refers to the common people who are able to create distinguishable forms of artistic creativity. William R. Nash in his article “Harlem Renaissance” comments on how Hughes urges African American

artists to cultivate a sense of pride by stating “Hughes encourages artists to embrace the values of ‘the low-down folks,’ the masses of common people who furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations” (Nash, 2006, p. 154).

Accordingly, Hughes considers the past not only as a past in the traditional sense, but also a bridge, a point of departure, and a step towards freedom, emancipation and liberty. However, Hughes’s humanist stance remains unwavering as he insists on making his voice and the voice of African Americans heard. It is a voice that speaks back against the slavery, hegemony and dehumanization that are prevalent in American society. As an intransigent and non-reconciled black poet, Hughes strongly believes in the unstoppable and unyielding refusal to surrender easily to a White hegemonic and oppressive society that demolishes those who have a different complexion and are not considered as civilized as Whites.

It is largely considerable that most of Hughes’s poems have a sense of pride, beauty and dignity in them. They deeply celebrate African folk traditions, heritage and culture. In his essay, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”, Hughes strongly asserts that African American artists must cling and remain faithful to their origins in order to forcefully prove their right to live like others and to reclaim their identity which maintains their belonging to their blackness. Hughes poses a compelling question in his essay by asking “Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro – and beautiful”, and then he declares that “Most of my poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from the life I know” (Hughes, 1926, p. 3) Hughes’s artistic contribution functions in a way that it has the power to change the mindset of African Americans by re-educating them about the beauty of their culture. Hughes comments on his relentless and indefatigable task by asserting “My seeking has been to explain and illuminate the Negro condition in America and obliquely that of all human kind” (Hughes,13). Therefore, it can be argued that Hughes along with his poetic form becomes a beacon of hope, future, dialogue for dreamers, road for emancipation, and illuminating light for the oppressed and downtrodden Black people in American society.

In his book, *The collected poems of Langston Hughes*, Arnold Rampersad affirms that Hughes is the representative voice of African Americans in America. He asserts “To many readers who love verse and are also committed to the ideal of social and political justice, [he] Hughes is among the most eloquent American poets to have sung about the wounds caused by injustice” (Rampersad,1995, p.3). By depicting issues of racism, oppression, equality, and coexistence, Hughes became the voice of the marginalized and the unrepresented.

Hughes's poetry immensely helped to construct the presence of black people in America. Again, Rampersad reasserts that "Hughes's poetry proclaims struggle, sorrow, and sacrifice- while also expressing optimism and hope [...] Problems of inequality and discrimination would take decades to reverse, but even in the first half of the twentieth century, Hughes believed in the promise of change" (Rampersad, 1995, p.375). Hughes uses his language to demonstrate his wide perception of the past and the future. Despite the nightmarishness of the past, Hughes essentially treated it as a set of conditions that would catapult his people towards the future. His undeniable brilliance in connecting the past and the future is powerful. In his article, "Africa/America: Fragmentation and Diaspora", Jeff Westover argues "the speaker announces his knowledge for the benefit of his listeners, telling the story of a common past in order to cultivate united consciousness in the present" (Westover, 2002, p. 25). In this regard, Hughes believes in the power of cultivating hope in order to create a better future. He also believes in the function and the role of the poet in social transformation in a way that cultivates a collective consciousness that will enhance his people to create a better future through rectifying and reforming problems of the past.

As a secular, humanist, un-dogmatic and universal poet, Hughes strongly believes that equality can be achieved regardless of the multiplicity of ethnicities and races in the world. His poetry creates cultural integration, equality, empathy, coexistence and understating. It dismantles and demystifies all forms of official nationalism, political dogma, hegemonic assumptions, historical mystifications, and stereotypical images in the minds of Whites.

Evidently, Hughes uses his poetry to create a voice for the oppressed American society. He becomes "an outspoken critic of racism and segregationist policies prevalent in the United States of America." (Laurie, 2004, p. 11) His poetry transforms the consciousness of his people from being faceless into fearless and audacious in an unfair and unjust society. Therefore, for him his people have the power to represent themselves without waiting for others to represent them.

As Edward Said wrote in his book *Representations of the Intellectual* "the intellectual must speak truth to power", Hughes believes that the intellectual, whether a poet, novelist or artist, has a role in society that is "to speak truth to power" and be contrary to oppression without showing any kind of fear. For his part, Hughes accentuates that the poet must engage with issues and causes that are related to his/her people. Therefore, Hughes takes up the relentless task and responsibility to advocate for and defend his people in America.

Generally speaking, Hughes is considered to be the representative voice of African American society. He is the embodiment of his race, and he was also called the "people's poet".

In a conversation with the Cuban poet Nicolas Guillen, Hughes emphasizes that his “greatest ambition is to be the poet of the Blacks. The Black poet. Do you understand?” (Guillen, 2005, p. 56). Hughes profoundly believes that poetry is “not a luxury”, to use Adure Lurde’s words, but has a critical and functional role in changing, reshaping, reclaiming and reconstructing the self-perception and identity of African Americans. Hughes seeks to “re-educate both audience and artist by lifting the theory of the black aesthetic into reality” (Aberjhani: 162). More importantly, he takes poetry as a boat to sail into the future, to bury the past behind, to emancipate, and to shape and create a better future that flourishes and blooms with hope and life.

Although Hughes’s poetry is filled with images of the racism and ill treatments that his people experienced, it actually constructs equality between African Americans and Whites regardless of origin, colour and features. Hughes was preoccupied with creating a brotherhood and fraternity between African Americans and Whites, which appears clearly in his poem “I, Too, Sing America”, composed in 1924, in which Hughes exposed the consciousness of African Americans’ aspiration and hope for equality and democracy in America. He asserts that African Americans and Whites are two sides of the same coin and together they contribute to and form the wholeness of American society.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.  
Tomorrow,  
I’ll be at the table  
When company comes  
Nobody will dare  
Say to me,  
“Eat in the kitchen,”  
Then.  
Besides  
They’ll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed..  
I, too, am America.

The poem deeply connects the suffering of the past with opportunities of the future. Here, Hughes upholds and empowers “the Negro” to reveal their identity as a person who has rights and claims to live in America. Moreover, Hughes attempts to dismantle and break the barrier between Whites and African Americans through artistically creating equality and coexistence between the two. The black man should not feel any sense of alienation, internal exile, and

being wretched in American society. In his essay, “The Negro Digs in His Past”, Arthur A. Schamburg writes that: “The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future” (Schamburg, 1925, p. 11). As such, controlling and understanding the past enables African Americans to construct a better future. The past is a point of departure, merely a detour for a better future despite being loaded with suffering, ill treatment, slavery, racial discrimination and social marginalization.

It goes without saying that Hughes benefits from the past and shapes a new future for his people. His poetry tends to reconstruct a new identity for his oppressed people. Moreover, Hughes recovers the past aesthetically by reconstructing and considering it not as something that reminds African Americans of their anguish, torment and pain and impedes constructing and addressing their future. The past is a way to progress towards creating a future that is full of inclusion, empathy, hope and power.

By turning to Hughes’s poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”, the reader finds that Hughes accentuates his sense of pride and self-esteem by highlighting “the Negro’s” role in ancient civilizations. He affirms that the black man is as old as those rivers, which are more primordial than human civilization. Hughes uses the first-person singular “I” which stands for the whole community. Predominantly, the poem offers a strong relation between the particular and the general. This is one of the poem’s subjects. Moreover, the poem can metaphorically include everyone, and it can be a reference to the possible unity of the human race. His humanist secular and exilic thinking indicates that he is a writer who advocates all forms of humanism. His thinking promotes and celebrates multiculturalism, equality, coexistence, mutual understating, love, and empathy among the human race. As such, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” speaks of history, knowledge and identity of all races. The speaker in this poem is the voice of the poet himself as being the representative and embodiment of the entire community:

I’ve known rivers:  
I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood  
and human veins.  
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.  
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawn where young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe  
Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and  
I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.  
I’ve known rivers:  
Ancient, dusky rivers.  
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Accordingly, in this poem, the speaker's voice establishes an attitude of recollection and self-knowledge. The use of rivers in this poem is very significant for Hughes. These rivers are more ancient and more primordial than human beings. Therefore, Hughes uses them to emphasize that African Americans have deep roots and origins in history as well as an essential role in constructing American society. The movement of rivers and the flow of water resembles the flow of blood in the body that is ineluctable to keep one alive. These movements constitute the notion of cultural integration in America. African Americans came from different parts of the world via the Euphrates, the Nile, and then finally to the Mississippi. Civilization in America came from these rivers outside of America.

Above all, Hughes's poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" confronts and opposes the idea that all forms of civilization are unique unto themselves. Hughes believes that civilizations and cultures are interconnected and interwoven with each other. The civilization of Africa is indeed a complement to the American one and has its great contributions in literature, art, and culture to American society.

Far from politics, cultural ideologies or any dogmatic thoughts, Hughes wrote his poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" to assert that he is a humanist, universal, secular and contrapuntal poet who believes in the idea of one mankind. His main concerns and central objectives were not only politics, resistance, non-reconciliation and violence but also employing the aesthetic, artistic beauty, and imagination in poetic forms. To some extent, we can say that politics is embedded within the aesthetic in a very sophisticated and creative and intellectual way.

## **Conclusion**

The non-reconciled resistance, unconquerable stance and bitterness of Hughes's soul function in a powerful way to address the future of African Americans. The non-reconciled humanist stance of Hughes also empowers the oppressed and enables them to speak back to achieve their emancipation, freedom and liberty. In his essay "Langston Hughes", Jonathan Scott points out that: "Hughes skillfully employed politics in art, not to praise political views but to convey the artistic meaning politically" (Scott, 2006, p. 35). Accordingly, the aesthetic imagination enables Hughes to convey his artistic and poetic meaning in a very sophisticated, brilliant and political way. As an insurgent poet, Hughes does not succumb or surrender to oppressive power. He keeps the non-reconciled, revolutionary and resistant attitude alive in the face of all racial oppression.

Being an un-dogmatic, humanist, universal, and secular poet provides Hughes with an unwavering stance in siding with his oppressed people. Above all, the power of Hughes's poetic and artistic writings emphatically aims to emancipate his people from an oppressive and merciless system by imbuing them with resistant and non-reconciled thinking. Such powerful writings offer Hughes's people unwavering stubborn resilience, rays of hope, a better future, and love of life by embracing its beauty and rejecting despair.

Moreover, his writings also tend to encourage unification, solidarity and coexistence for all peoples of the world and put them on equal ground. Undoubtedly, the militant poetic writings of Hughes call on the silenced, oppressed and downtrodden to speak and represent themselves. His poetic and artistic imagination functions in a way that cultivates the critical and oppositional consciousness of the oppressed African American artists whose role can be substantially encapsulated in representing the unrepresented and defending the defenceless. Ultimately, Hughes is a humanist writer who always infuses hope, the power to reclaim identity, and the firm belief of transforming the impossible into possible. His poetic writing revitalizes the consciousness and dreams of the "wretched of the earth" by enabling them to speak back against all forms of inhuman, hegemonic, oppressive, political and imperial power. His strong belief in emancipation and freedom licenses him to "speak truth to power" without being enslaved by it.

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