

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Langston Hughes is the leader of Harlem Renaissance. He is an important poet and he helps other black writers to get their works published. Hughes is the first black writer who could support himself by his writings (High 212). He is praised for his ability to say what is important to black people. Hughes is famous for his descriptions of black people's life. His works usually concern social injustice (Kirk). Hughes' poems have serious messages. He often writes about racial issues, describing his people in a realistic way with understanding and hope (Kirk).

Based on those facts, I would like to analyze his works "As I Grew Older", "The Negro Mother", "Theme For English B" and "Dream Variations" for my thesis. In my opinion, these four poems are interesting to be analyzed because these four poems focus on the same subject matter and they clearly show the description of black people's life, racial issues, social injustice and the hope of black people. These four poems also show the effect of discrimination, how black people are treated and what they feel.

Although these four poems are all about discrimination, there is something that makes each poem interesting to be analyzed. One can see that “As I Grew Older” presents “[an] ever-present feeling of the problems caused by race issues” (“Essay, Research Paper: Langston Hughes”). In “The Negro Mother”, Hughes “extols the black woman as the hope of the black community” (“Langston Hughes Mother To Son & The Negro Mother Comparison”) and “he tried to advise the black community to never give up” (“Langston Hughes Mother To Son & The Negro Mother Comparison”). In “Theme For English B”, “Langston Hughes dramatizes a black college student’s assignment to write a theme that is true” (Grimes). “Dream Variations” is written “in a structure that copies the repetitions of American blues music” (“Dream Variations Summary/Study Guide”).

I would like to analyze the theme of the poems. According to Perrine, “theme is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by the story” (Perrine 102). Based on that definition, I would like to analyze what are implied about life in the poems through formalism approach because this approach “focuses on the words of the text” (Kennedy and Gioia 630). I would like to analyze racial issues, social injustice, and the hope and life of black people in the poems through diction.

Statement of the Problem

The statements of the problem are:

1. What is the theme of each poem?
2. How is the theme of each poem revealed?

Purpose of the Study

Based on those statements of the problems, the purposes of the study are

1. To state the theme of each poem.
2. To show how the theme of each poem is revealed.

Method of Research

The method I use is library research. First, I read four poems by Langston Hughes as the primary texts. Then, I start to analyze the theme of each poem and show how the theme is revealed. To support my analysis, I gather some resources and references from books and Internet. Finally, I draw some conclusions of what has been discussed.

Organization of Thesis

I divide the thesis into three chapters, which is preceded by the Acknowledgement, Table of Contents and Abstract. In the first chapter, I present the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study and Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two will consist of the discussion of the theme of each poem. The last chapter will be the conclusion of the analysis. Then, I will present the Bibliography, Appendices and the Biography of the Author.