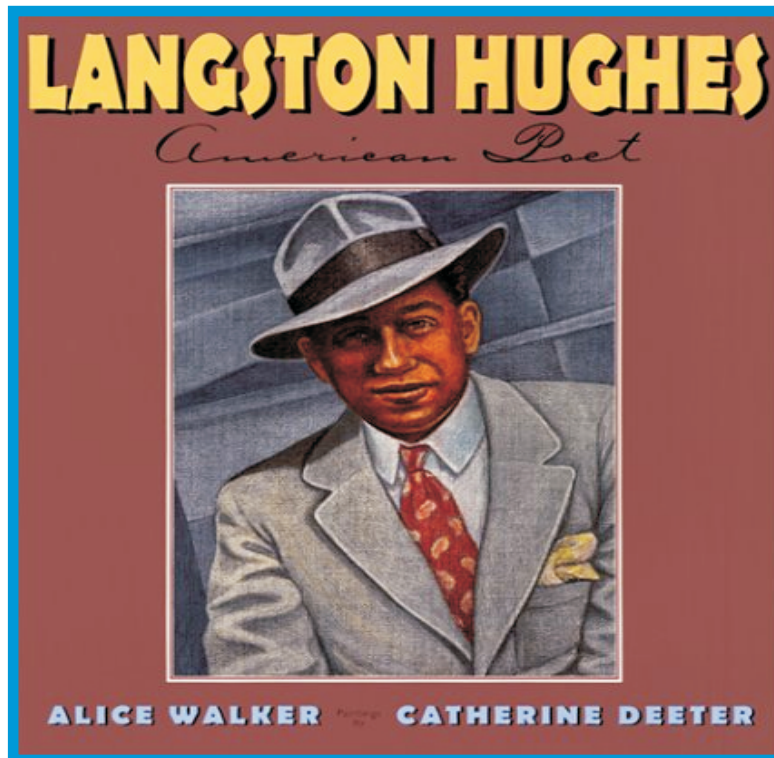


GOLDEN RESEARCH THOUGHTS

THE ME OF AMERICAN DREAM IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES



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Abstract :

The concept of social security has been mentioned in the early vedic hymn which wishes everyone to be happy, free from ill-health, enjoy a bright future and suffer no sorrow. The phrase, 'Social security' is therefore, a new name for an old aspiration. Today it is based on the "Ideals of human dignity and social justice".

Keywords: Social Security Measures ,Physically Disabled ,social justice.

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INTRODUCTION

In his poetry Hughes renders the voices, experiences, emotions and spirit of African and American. In his attempt to capture the lives of every day African American he deals with subjects like prostitution, racism, lynching, teenage pregnancy, and American dream. He is inspired by the American dream.¹ Being a Negro, he always thinks about equality, and freedom. Which are symbols of American Dream.² He is inspired by the American Dream since his childhood and he gained experience in white society. One summer in Chicago when he was teen-ager Langston Hughes felt the American Dream damaged in his face; a gang of white youths beat him up so badly that he went home with blacked eyes and a swollen jaw. He had been punished for cutting through a white neighborhood in the South Side on his way home from work.³ That night as he tended his injuries young Hughes must have mused disturbed thoughts about fulfillment of his American dream of freedom, justice, and opportunity for all.

When he starts writing, the American Dream has been one of his most frequently recurring themes. Hughes's treatment to American dream is highly emotional and with a sense in which he is eager for freedom. The American may have come dramatically true for many, Hughes the American dream is merely that a dream.

Long before the Chicago Summer during world War I Hughes experienced the plight of the Negro in America. As poet says:

They send me to eat in the
...eat well

And grow strong.

("I, too, Sing America" SP, 275)

But Hughes wants to achieve equality and freedom for the all the Negroes. As he further says:

Tomorrow
I'll be at the table when company...
...Then, Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am and be ashamed- ("I, too, Sing America" SP, 275)

The poem gives an expression that in a democratic country people are treated in such away. But he does not want to live in such conditions.⁴ The wants to bring freedom, equality and justice in the Negroes. He always seems eager for freedom and equality in his poetry. Hughes poetry presents the unfulfilled fraction of the American dreamers. His poem "Let America Be America Again" pleads for fulfillment of the dream. It speaks of the freedom and equality which American boasts, but never had as poet says:

Let America be America Again...
...Let it be the pioneer of the plain
(America Never was America to me.)

In the first stanza poet said that America is not America of his dream. He was living in a country where he was not free. Hughes wants to get freedom. It is very ironical and suffering that the freedom he wants to get, ultimately, fails to get. It looks forward to a day when "Liberty is crowned with no false patriotic of love."⁵ Hughes not limiting his plea to the dawn trodden Negro; he includes, the poor white, the Indian, the immigrant-farmer, worker, "the people share the Dream that has not been. The dream still beckons.

In "Freedom's plow he points out that America is a dream" and the product of the seed of freedom is not only for all American but for the entire world. In the poem, the speaker instigated the dreams to make America a free land, where everybody is free. But he makes clear that is a dream of not one person but of all natives of America. This poem also starts with the description of the slaves, who were pulled from their home land and were thirsted in America: yet they came here "seeking a greater freedom" to this new world called America. And in the poem, he quoted the words of some great political leaders who fought for the political freedom of the Black people. First of all he mentions the statement of Jefferson, one of the presidents of the United States of America, who said:

AL MEN ARE CRETED EQUAL...

ENDOWED BY THEIR ...

...PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

("Freedom's plow", SP, 52)

Basically it is also a protest poem in classic sense, addressed to white America, and not to "to their hearts as to their heads". Further, Hughes urges them, through the voice of these great men, to return America to first principles. There might even be no need to go hunting for foreign ideologies. The blue print is right their in their home, it's just a matter of building upon it:

The plan and the pattern is there,
Woven from the beginning
Into the warp and woof of America

("Freedom's plow", SP, 52)

In this way the strength is given to him by no others than these whites. But until, this is done and achieved, he urges the black folks to hold on to the plow and never let go. This, he says, is the song of the slave sung long ago: "keep

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your Hand on the Plow! Hold on! No solution at hand, only endurance, patience, a continuing struggle is there for the blacks that are supported by the words of Lincoln:

NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH
TO GOVERN ANOTHER MAN
WITHOUT THAT OTHER'S CONEST

("Freedom's plow", SP, 52)

But the climax of the poem reached when poet says:

BETTER TO DIE FREE
THAN TO LIVE SLAVES

("Freedom's plow", SP, 52)

From the above discussion it becomes clear that Hughes is eager for American Dream. And who wants to bring equality among Negroes and White American.

In, "As I Grow Older", the poet looks at the dream. He had almost forgotten his dream; then it re appeared to him. But a well rose- a high, sky-high wall. A shadow: he was Black. The wall and the shadow blotted out the dream, chasing the brightness away. But the poet's dark hounds sustain him:

My dark bonds!

Break through the wall!

Find my dream!

Help me to shatter this ...
... a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whiling dreams of sun!

("As I Grow Older", SP, 111)

Throughout Hughes's life – and his literary expression- the American Dream has appeared as a ragged, uneven, splotched, and often un attainable goal which often become a nightmare, but there is always hope of the fulfilled dream even in the darkest moments.⁶

The poem "Dream Variation" is about dream. Here the poet expresses the unnaturalness of prejudice when he says:

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the...
...Dark like me-

That is my dream!

("Dream Variation" sp, 106)

Here poet expresses the dream for freedom. The poet wants to feel free and dance mildly, something he cannot assume in America. He wants to rest till coal and calm night loathes him. He compares his darkness with the night. He likes darkness in everything and wants it in his own life. What the poet actually wants to convey in this poem is that the Negro is mare naturally and poem is that the Negro is more naturally and spontaneously human for not having been molded by the "Circus of civilization" created by the Western of White men. He identifies himself with the coal, gentle and tender night. The Negro simple association and identification with the night with death, the untroubled, tender and peaceful sleep leads him to eternity. The soft night like river, is eternal in comparison to the white day. In "Dream Variation" we witness the highest aspirations of the people of his race- and all humanity and this comes from the histolysis view of Africa.

In the poem "Dreams" also deals with the theme of dream. In "Dream" the message that Hughes is trying to convey is that dreams are important to our lives, and we should not let go of them⁷. As poet says:

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams...
... Fast to dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

("Dream Variation", sp, 106)

Everyday should have dream about their life may be about the equality or justice. Otherwise without dream life is like a bird that had no wings for flying. And which is unable to fly. So everybody should have dreams. According to him, every man in this world is free. And they can speak and dreamed about their future. So Blacks are also free and always dream about the equality and freedom.

As Black man asserts:
I have as much right
As the other fellow...
... My two feet
And own the land.

The desire for freedom to stand by the whites, and be equal to them as says to the Black in this poem:

Listen, America—

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I live here, too
I want freedom
Just as you.

In brief Hughes claim that in American, these us no equally, no freedom, no equal opportunity for all. But it is in American dream. They have to do struggle for equality freedom. Actually, Hughes's poetry shows racism in America.