
"I, too, Sing America" As A Patriotic Poem

This essay will take us through Langston Hughes's I, too, Sing America through a historical and patriotic lens, looking at the patriotism shown in a black man that will speak for the whole black community.

Langston Hughes was a huge poet during the Harlem Renaissance and his poem "I, too, Sing America" reflects on the struggles that the black community was facing during this era. It tells the reader a story about social injustice and racial inequality. It tells the reader about this black man and how he is treated in the white man household. It is hard to see, but how Langston wrote this poem, it turns out to be quite Patriotic. Patriotism can be a very complex subject. It can be expressed by standing up for one's country or even criticizing it. If you love your country then like anything else you love, you want the best for it. But sometimes what's best for it isn't always happening at that time. But simply Patriotism is Love for one's country. But how does one truly love their country?

Hughes poem was published in 1945. That's about ten years before the start of the Civil Rights Movement. Prejudice and Racism was flourishing during this time. Blacks had no rights as a man like the white man did. Hughes' showed this in this poem and also that he envisioned a day in which blacks and whites will be like one and will be able to "eat at the same table together," in which would allow blacks to be considered equal Americans just like any other. Hughes criticizes the government in order to try and get it to improve itself and be the best that America can be

Being black in the Pre-Civil Rights era, you sure were not being treated like an American citizen. African Americans were supposed to be basically invisible labor. They were not considered like human beings. They barely had rights, no justice at all. With this poem imagery, Hughes's envisioned a greater America, a country that is all about freedom, rights and a greater opportunity.

The poem begins by saying that "I, too, sing America" (1). That he is the "darker brother" (2), and that he has to "eat in the kitchen when company comes" (3-4). But the speaker then says that "Tomorrow, ill be at the table when company comes" (8-10). The speaker then says that finally everyone will see just "how beautiful I am" (16). Then in the conclusion he again says that he "too is America" (18).

This can come to be said that, this man also sings of freedom. He desires what America can offer him. It can be said that this "darker brother" is indeed a black man. However, Langston

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Hughes didn't use "one of the dark brothers"; he said "I am the darker brother" (2). This would mean that he is not only addressing himself, but the whole black community as well. This man was sent to the kitchen to eat when company was around, this would indicate to the reader that this is perhaps a black slave in a white household. The author might not have meant the actual kitchen but perhaps their rooms. During the years of slavery, whenever company would arrive, the slaves were actually sent away, so they were out of sight. Then the black man envisions a brighter tomorrow at which he is longer sent to the kitchen, at which noone would "dare say to me "eat in the kitchen"" (11-14). He sees that one day everyone will see how beautiful he is and that just because he is darker, that he is the same just like any other. Everyone will "be ashamed" (17) of how they once treated this man because he to is America. (18). He wants everyone to be able to stand up and sing of celebration and freedom, such as in Walt Whitman's poem "I Hear America Singing. (Whitman) He to, is born a citizen of America and he wants to be like what the vice president of Public Policy said, " a free person that can craft a future with hope, compassion, justice, equality and self- determination" which would allow him to "be a beacon to the world" (Britt, Gerald).

Arnold Rampersad states in his biography of Hughes that he very aware of the struggles for social justice, and he was determined to play a role in these struggles especially the dominant white culture (Rampersad). This poem truly recognizes the struggle that was occurring with the black community in the United States. He expresses his dream of which black citizens will be considered as equal and free Americans. Also Arnold says in his biography, that Hughes' "envisioned a greater America, a more inclusive America. He claims with force that he is in fact part of America. A country that is all about equality and freedom" (Rampersad).

This poem explodes with patriotism. A want and desire for a better America. A place where we can be free, like as when Hughes envisions blacks and whites to come together and be able to "eat at the same table together". A quote from the poem, "they will be ashamed" can better be said as "they" as in America will be ashamed because we will see that it is unfair and unethical to keep a group down just because of their color. From the start we have been a country that fights for freedom and for a better tomorrow. Mary Oliver once said in a interview that the goal of a poet is "to be representative and in some way, instructive and useful" (Oliver). It is clear that with this poem, Hughes was a poet Laureate during the Harlem Renaissance and he stood up for his dreams. For America to be a better and more equal place for ALL citizens. It becomes clear when you examine what Langston wrote in his poetry and the history that was occurring during that period of time, Hughes, wanted to give change through his art of poetry. æ

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