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Langston HughesLangston Hughes, a member of an abolitionist family and grandson of the firstAfrican-American to be elected to public office, was born on February 1, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. He was poet, novelist, short story writer, playwright, song lyricist, radio writer, translator, author of juvenile books, and lecturer. Langston was still a baby when his parentsseparated, and his father went to Mexico. Hughes grew up and went to school in Lawrence, Kansas, where his grandmother helped bring him up. In the eighth grade, he was selected as Class Poet. His father encouraged him to pursue a more practical career but he was dropped outof university because of average grades. During these times, he continued to write poetry. His first published poem was "The Negro Speaks of Rivers". This was one of his mostfamous poems and it appeared in Brownie's Book. His first book of poetry was, The WearyBlues, which was published in 1926. This book made him known among literary people. Jameswent to Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania, on a scholarship He received his B.A.degree there in 1929. From then on James earned his living as a writer. 'Not Without Laughter', which was published in 1930, was the novel that won the Harmon gold medal for literature. Healso took out a book of poems, in 1935. Also, he wrote the lyrics for 'Street Scene', a 1947 opera by Kurt Weill. Langston Hughes was first recognized as an important literary figure during the 1920s, aperiod known as the "Harlem Renaissance" because of the number of emerging black writers. DuBose Heyward wrote in the New York Herald Tribune in 1926: "Langston Hughes, althoughonly twenty-four years old, is already conspicuous in the group of Negro intellectuals who aredignifying Harlem with a genuine art life. Always intensely subjective, passionate, keenlysensitive to beauty and possessed of an unfaltering musical sense, Langston Hughes has given usa 'first book' that marks the opening of a career well worth watching."In Hughes's own words, his poetry is about "workers, roustabouts, and jobhunters on Lenox Avenue in New York, or Seventh Street in Washington or South State inChicago people up today and down tomorrow, working this week and fired the next, beatenand baffled, but determined not to be wholly beaten, buying furniture on the installment plan, filling the house with roomers to help pay the rent, hoping to get a new suit for Easter and pawning that suit before the Fourth of July." Lindsay Patterson, a novelist who served as Hughes' tragedy was double-edged: he was unashamedly blackat a time when blackness was dmod, and he didn't go much beyond one of his earliest themes, black is beautiful. Nevertheless, Hughes, more than any other black poet or writer, recorded faithfully the nuancesof black life and its frustrations. Although Hughes had trouble with both black and white critics, he was the first black American to earn his living solely from his writing and public lectures. Partof the reason he was able to do this was the phenomenal acceptance and love he received from average black people. A reviewer for Black World noted in 1970: 3. "Those whose prerogative it is to determine the rank of writers have never rated him highly, butif the weight of public response is any gauge then Langston Hughes stands at the apex of literaryrelevance among Black people. He used his poetry and prose to illustrate that 'there is no lackwithin the Negro people of beauty, strength and colorful background to his writing. When his first book waspublished, he had already been a truck farmer, cook, waiter, college graduate, sailor, and doorman at a nightclub in Paris, and had visited Mexico, West Africa, the Azores, the CanaryIslands, Holland, France, and Italy. As David Littlejohn observed in his Black on White: A Critical Survey of Writing by American Negroes: "On the whole, Hughes' creative life[was] as full, as varied, and as original as Picasso's, a joyful, honest monument of a career. There [was] no noticeable sham in it, no pretension, no self-deceit; but a great deal ofdelight and smiling irresistible wit. Hughes' [greatness] seems to derive from his anonymous unity with his people. He seems to speak for millions, which is a tricky thing to do. "Hughes reached many people through his popular fictional character, Jesse B. Simple(shortened to Simple). Simple is a poor man who lives in Harlem, a kind of comic no-good, astereotype Hughes, in return for a drink. His tales of his troubles with work, women, money, and life in general often reveal, through their very simplicity, the problems of being apoor black man in a racist society. Donald C. Dickinson wrote in his uninhibited pursuit of those two universal goals, understanding and security. Simple is a well-developed character, both believable and lovable. The situations he meets and discusses are so true to life everyone may enter the fun. Simple is anatural, unsophisticated man who never abandons his hope in tomorrow. "Hoyt W. Fuller believed that, like Simple, "the key to Langston Hughes was the poet sdeceptive and profound simplicity. Profound because it was both willed and ineffable, becausesome intuitive sense even at the beginning of his adulthood taught him that humanity offended his unshakable conviction that mankind is possessed of the divinity offended his unshakable conviction that humanity "the one sure Negro classic, more certain ofpermanence than even Baldwin or Ellison or Wright. . . . His voice is as sure, his manner asoriginal, his position as secure as, say Edwin Arlington Robinson's or Robinson's or Robinson Jeffers'. . . . directness, his poetic sense and ironic intelligence, he maintainedthrough four decades a readable newness distinctly his own. "During his lifetime, he wrotesixteen books of poems, two novels, three collections of short stories, twenty plays, children'spoetry, musicals & operas, three autobiographies, a dozen radio & television scripts, dozens ofmagazine articles, and many other things. In addition, he edited seven anthologies. Langston Hughes poems told about the joys and miseries of the ordinary black man in America. JamesLangston Hughes died, at 65 years of age, in New York City on May 22, 1967. 4. The Harlem Renaissance, also known as the New Negro Movement, was a literary, artistic, cultural, intellectual movement that began in Harlem, New York after World War I and endedaround 1935 during the Great Depression. The social foundations of this movement included thegreat migration of African America from rural to urban spaces and from south to north; dramatically rising levels of literacy; the creation of national organizations dedicated to pressing African American civil rights, up lifting the race, and opening socio economic opportunities; and developing race pride, including pan African American sensibilities and programs. The movement raised significant issues affecting the lives of African American sensibilities and programs. The movement raised significant issues affecting the lives of African American sensibilities and programs. The movement raised significant issues affecting the lives of African American sensibilities and programs. sculpture, movies, and protests. Voices of protestand ideological promotion of civil rights for African Americans inspired and created institutions and leaders who served as mentors to aspiring writers. Although the center of the HarlemRenaissance began in Harlem, New York, its influence spread throughout the nation and beyondand included philosophers, artists, writers, musicians, sculptors, movie makers and institutions. A Dream Deferred: The poem dream deferred first appeared in 1951 in a collection of Langston Hughes's poetry, Montage of a Dream Deferred. Background: The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution after Civil War era granted blackAmericans basic rights as American citizens but court and legislative decisions later weakenedthe legal protection of blacks. For example, in a case the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1896 pronounced that it was legal to provide "separate but equal" accommodations for passengers of acertain area. This type of ruling set a standard that led to segregated schools, restaurants, parks, libraries, and so on. Hate groups inflicted inhuman treatment on innocent blacks, including brutalbeatings and lynchings. Many so-called "enlightened" or "liberal-minded" Americans looked theother way, including law-enforcement officers, clergymen, politicians, and ordinary Americans. By the mid-20th century after World War II, black frustration with white oppression grewstronger. Some of their individual dreams inevitably became the collective dream of manypeople. 5. Analysis: Langston Hughes uses simile, diction, and stanza form to illustrate that dreams deferred poes it dry uplike a raisin in the sun? In the Bible, raisins are a sensuous source of strength hence they speak of nourishment, restoration, the result of great joy just as time must pass for the grape to dry into a more delicious fruit. But if a raisin is left in the sun to dry up, it becomes hard and impossible to eat; its valuesucked out, it no longer serves its useful, nutritional purpose. This symbolizes a hardening. If adream is destroyed it hardens the heart. The image brings to mind slavery and sharecroppinginstitutions that forced blacks to work in the fields under the sun.Or fester like a soreAnd then run? The notion of a running sore indirectly implies life and opportunity because if we have a sore, we want it to run so that it may dry up and heal but if it festers and runs, that means it is infected and will take longer to heal hence a festering sore symbolizes infection. Dreams that are left todie will infect or poison the mind. Does it stink like rotten meat?Why rotten meat stinks? For what makes this unpleasant smell so strong is the new creation of American blacks and wants us to consider dreams to be as real as fleshand as vital as food because dreams don't dwell in the cloud palaces, they crawl on the earth, and, if they are not cared for or acted upon, they'll haunt us.Or crust and sugar overlike a syrupy sweet? If we leave pancake syrup or honey unused for several months, and we go back to bring thebottle, we might find that there is crusty accumulation on the top of the bottle and the contents are no longer usable. Hence the dream forced to sit idle hardens into an unusable substance ofthoughts that have separated themselves from the goals and crusted over with despair, doubt, anger, and hatred. This again symbolizes a hardening or a shell being formed. Maybe it just sagslike a heavy load. 6. A heavy load makes one walk slowly, makes one awkward as he tries to move under the load. The dream not realized may become heavy to bear, because it still weighs on ones mind withdepression and mental weariness. Or does it explode? A person might explode with his despair if dreams are deferred dream is growing moreserious and angrier with each new line. Conclusion: The theme of transience (an impermanence that suggests the inevitability of ending or dying) isthere just like humans and lots of other living things in the world, dreams if they are ignoredgrow, transform, and change their shape, whether we want them to or not. There should be asense of social equality and we are reminded of the importance of doing. Relationship of A Dream Deferred and A Raisin in the Sun :Walters dreams of success is like festering sore infected with money? Walter: Because, it is life, Mama! It takes a lot of time for its healing and realization after which he says:.Life just like it is. Who gets and who dont get. Mama, you know its all divided up. Life is.Sure enough. Between the takers and the living power inside topreserve his dignity and manhood but is not materialized yet hence it is appearing lifeless withunpleasant smell of frustration and anger. It is shown in these lines: Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousineand I say, Yes, sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir? Mama, that aint no kindof job that aint nothing at all.Ruths dream of a better house (or living situation) sags like a heavy load in his mind thatswhy she is saying:Yes, life can be a barrel of disappointments sometimes.and dries up like a raisin after Carl Linders threat and Willys ran out with money. She says: 7. Lenall work twenty hours a day in all the kitchens in ChicagoIII strap mybaby on my back if I have to and scrub all the floors in America and wash all the sheets in America if I have tobut we got to MOVE! We got to get OUT OF HERE!! Beneathas dream of career is like crust and sugar over that gets bigger and smaller but is not static because she participates in music classes and riding as well. She hates a festering soreinfected with assimilation when discovering her identity in a white-dominated culture by sayingI hate assimilationist Negroes! Mamas dream of maintaining the family dignity and honoring big Walters memorythat hislife and his death had meaning is sagging like a heavy load and is shown in these linesrespectively: SonI come from five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppersbut aintnobody in my family never let nobody pay em no money that was a way of telling us we wasntfit to walk the earth. We aint never been that rugand thenlook at methe red showing in his eyesthe veins moving in his headlseen him grow thin and old before he was fortyworking and working andworking like somebodys old horsekilling himselfSimilarly her dream of a house with a garden dries up like a raisin but later it is materialized. Langston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred is often referred to as a masterpiece of the African-American literature movement. Written in 1951, it is a meditation on a dream that is deferred in time and place. The poem is a reflection on what happens when dreams are suppressed, neglected, or even forgotten. Through a series of rhetorical questions, it poses the idea that a dream that is unexpressed often leads to unhappiness and restlessness, rather than joy and fulfilment. The poem is set in Harlem and the imagery is often associated with late 1940s and early 1950s New York City. It deals with the struggle of African-Americans in this urban landscape, struggling to be heard and respected, while also referencing and alluding to the racial inequality of the time. This inequality and discrimination is echoed in the poems tone and in its use of metaphor, particularly when combined with the description of Harlems African-American community. The poems it the core of the story and it is one that can be deferred or put off until a later date. The poems imagery, which includes imagery of smoke, raisins, and lemon. These words reflect the feelings of frustration, containment, and powerlessness that African-Americans experienced in post-war United States. You might likeWho was william wordsworth influenced by? The poem is an implied metaphor for the idea that a dream that is not expressed or explored often leads to unhappiness and stagnation, rather than joy and fulfillment. Its structure is deliberately set up to allow for a rhetorical questioning, which raises the possibility that a person can achieve something if their dreams are allowed by fulfilling a dream, Hughes paints a picture of a community with potential that is being let down by its own neglect. Langston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred can be seen as a lyrical call to action, indicating that if dreamers take the time to recognize their own potential and take steps to actualize it, they can achieve a better life for themselves and their community. This is a point that is made even more impactful by its public expression during a period of intense racial inequality in the United States. Historic ContextLangston Hughes wrote A Dream Deferred during the period of the Great Migration, when many African-Americans were leaving the South in order to seek better opportunities in the North. This movement provided African-Americans with opportunities to pursue their dreams, to have better jobs and a higher standard of living. However, despite these opportunities, they faced significant difficulties as they integrated into a society that was highly segregated. At the same time, African-Americans faced racism and discrimination in the form of housing restrictions, discriminatory employment practices, and educational segregation. This resulted in African-Americans being confined to the same areas of the city and denied access to many of the same opportunities that their white counterparts enjoyed. It is this sense of confinement and powerlessness that is reflected in Hughes poem. You might likeHow To Host A Poetry NightHughes poem is also a reflection of the eras civil rights movement. The very title of the poem evokes the September 1958 speech by Martin Luther King Jr. entitled The Dream Deferred, in which King states, If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well. Analysis of Langston Hughes poem reveals that its speaker is both concerned and intrigued by the notion of a dream deferred, which is reflected in the poems rhetorical questions. These questions ask what might happen to a dream if it is not fulfilled and express the speakers sense of restlessness, foreboding, and anxiety. By asking these questions and fulfilment. The poem is also a meditation on the idea of freedom and the power of hope to bring about transformation, both of the individual and the possibility of transcending the limits of the present. By raising the possibility of achieving ones dreams, Hughes is suggesting that individuals can have control over their own destiny and can shape their own future. Finally, the poem is a call to action. It encourages individuals to take steps to pursue their dreams may not come easily, but his message is clear: dreams can be deferred and forgotten, but they can also be pursued and achieved. StyleYou might likeIs Maya Angelou A FeministLangston Hughes uses a range of poetic techniques in A Dream Deferred to create a sense of urgency and to imply a sense of poetic techniques in A Dream Deferred to create a sense of urgency and to imply a sense of poetic techniques in A Dream Deferred to create a sense of urgency and to imply a sense of urgency and urgency are urgency and urgency and urgency and urgency are urgency are urgency and urgency are urgency are urgency and urgency are urgency a poems strong rhythm, repetition of imagery, and use of alliteration also add to its sense of urgency and expectation, as does its use of rhetorical questions. Moreover, the poems tone is hopeful despite its subject matter. The imagery of smoke, raisins, and lemon serves to create a sense of fear and frustration, but Hughes does not allow this fear to dominate the poem. Instead, he balances it with words that imply hope, such as dew and air. This balance gives the poem the power to both critique and suggest an alternative. Hughes also employs vivid imagery to convey the idea that a dream that will eventually be realised, even if it is deferred in time. The poems imagery of smoke and fire link to the idea of freedom and the possibility of transcending the restraints of being confined. This imagery is both literal and metaphorical, creating the strong impression that a dream deferred still exists, but must be pursued in order to bring about the necessary change. Social ImpactLangston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred has had a significant impact on literature, culture, and society. The poem has been addressed and analysed by a wide-range of social commentators, academics, and scholars, who have all used it to explore the idea of the power of dreams and the importance of their realisation in American society. The poem has also been referenced by other authors, musicians, and activists, who have used its themes to inform their work and critique the racial inequality in the United States. You might likeA Poetry HandbookThe poem has also been used to advocate for civil rights and to encourage people to pursue their dreams despite the obstacles they may face. Hughess poem has become something of a rallying cry, echoing his call to action: take action now, despite the obstacles that may stand in the way. Ultimately, A Dream Deferred has become a powerful symbol of the power of a dream that cannot be contained and the potential for a dream to bring about change. Reception Langston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred has been widely praised and acclaimed by critics, who have described it as an important classic and a timeless classic of African-American Literature. The poem has also been included in anthologies of poetry, which testifies to its importance and influence both within and outside the African-American Literature. American community. The poem has also been referenced, analysed, and attributed to numerous African-American writers, scholars, who have all seen it as an important literary work. In addition, A Dream Deferred has been featured in a number of films, television shows, and songs, further highlighting its significance in African-American culture. Overall, Langston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred has had a significant and literature and literature and motivate individuals to pursue their dreams despite the obstacles they may face. In this way, the poem has become an enduring statement of the power of dreams and the importance of their realisation. LegacyYou might likeWhat is london by william blake about? Since its publication in 1951, Langston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred has been celebrated as one of the most important works of African-American literature and has come to symbolise the power of dreams and their importance in the struggle for civil rights and racial equality. The poem has had a significant impact on African-Americans, inspiring individuals to pursue their dreams and to stand up for their rights. As a result, A Dream Deferred has been celebrated as a reminder of the power of hope and potential. In addition, A Dream Deferred has had a lasting cultural impact. It has been referenced, analysed, and celebrated by a wide range of authors, artists, and activists and has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and songs. Its influence has been featured in numerous films, the numerous films are not also to the numerous films. that their dreams can be achieved and their potential fulfilled. Finally, Hughes poem has been celebrated for its beauty and complexity. It evokes both a sense of frustration and a se enduring statement of the importance of dreams and the power of hope. ConclusionLangston Hughes poem A Dream Deferred has become one of the most influential pieces of African-American literature and one of the most famous works of the Harlem Renaissance. Its themes of power and potential, freedom and hope, have resonated with readers around the world and it has come to symbolise the power of dreams and to stand up for their realisation. The poem has inspired individuals to pursue their dreams and to stand up for their realisation. The poem has become an enduring statement of the power of hope. By Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University) Harlem is a short poem by Langston Hughes was a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance in New York in the 1920s. Over the course of a varied career he was a novelist, playwright, social activist, and journalist, but it is for his poetry that Hughes is now best-remembered. Given his centrality to the Harlem Renaissance, it is perhaps unsurprising that Langston Hughes chose to write a poem about Harlem? You can read the poem here. Harlem? Harle long, with the second comprising seven lines and the third two lines. The speaker of the poem asks a series of questions. He asks first, what happens to a dream that is deferred that is, a dream or ambition which is never realised? Does it try up like a raisin in the sun, shrivelling away and losing something of itself? Or does it grow putrid and infected like a sore (on a body) from which pus runs? And does the dream come to smell like rotten meat?He then wonders whether the dream simply grows weak, like a heavy burden being carried. The final stanza, another standalone line, is italicised for additional emphasis, and sees the speaker return to the interrogative mode: he asks whether this dream deferred might actually end up exploding, such as in a fit of righteous anger or frustration. Harlem: analysisOne of Langston Hughes best-known poems, I, Too, is often categorised as a protest poem. But it is also a poem of celebration, and one of the things which a critic or student of Hughes poem needs to consider is how these two sides to the poem are kept in careful balance. Harlem is more clearly and emphatically a poem of protest rather than celebration, focusing on the area of New York which had a large African-American population (and culture). In I, Too, Hughes took up Walt Whitmans famous words from his nineteenth-century poem I Hear Americans. But in Harlem, he takes up the idea of the American Dream, the ideal, or belief, which states that anyone, regardless of their background, can make a success of their lives if they come to America. Is this really true of African America? The reference to a dream deferred in the opening line of Harlem alludes to the fact that this short poem is of a piece with a much longer, book-length poem which Hughes published in the same year, 1951. That longer work, Montage of a Dream Deferred, was influenced by the rhythms and styles of jazz music, as Hughes takes us on a 24-hour tour of Hughes own Harlem in New York. The motif of the dream a favourite Langston Hughes trope is central to the poem, as Hughes plays off the real world with the ideal. But his dream deferred is also recalling the American Dream, and critiquing the relevance of this ideal for African Americans. The various images and similes Hughes employs in Harlem reveal a conflicted attitude towards this dream. While other Americans can make their way up the socio-economic ladder and achieve success for themselves and their families, the speaker feels that African Americans are being left behind. But the images are not all one and the same. We are given festering sores and rotten meat, but then the speaker proposes the sugared coating of a boiled sweet: altogether a more palatable image. So what is the purpose of this image? We talk about sugar-coating something to make it more palatable and acceptable, and therein lies the meaning of Hughes simile: black Americans are sold the idea of the American Dream in order to keep them happy with the status quo and to give the illusion that everyone in the United States has equal opportunities. But thats all it is: the sugar that covers up something less appealing or appetising, which is the rather less rosy truth. Like many of Langston Hughes poems, Harlem is written in free verse, its irregular line lengths and erratic rhythms suggestive of jazz music, which was so important to the culture and nightlife of Harlem. However, it is not wholly free verse, since Hughes does use rhyme: sun/run, meat/sweet, and load/explode (and note how explode contains, or carries, that load). The final line of Harlem suggests that if African Americans continue to endure the grinding poverty, mistreatment, and lack of opportunities they are currently enduring, their anger may burst out in an explosion of energy and rage. In some ways, Hughess poem is prophetic in predicting the growing momentum that the American Civil Rights movement would gain as the 1950s progressed, and figures like Malcolm X would use radical anger (as opposed to the less combative approach adopted by Martin Luther King) to galvanise black Americans into demanding a better life. Subscribe to get the latest posts sent to your email. 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