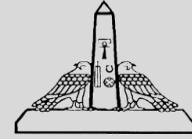


كلية الآداب

حوليات آداب عين شمس (عدد خاص 2017)

[www.aafu.journals.ekb.eg//:http](http://www.aafu.journals.ekb.eg/)

(دورية علمية محكمة)



جامعة عين شمس

*The American Dream versus the Deferred Dream:  
America as Presented by Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes  
A Postcolonial Study*

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**Abstract**

Both Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes had dreams for their nations and believed that those dreams would come true only if their nations believed in their national discourses and put them into action. Thus, both poets were propagators of national discourses and resisters of colonial discourses. Hence, this paper aims at analysing the ideologies instilled into Whitman and Hughes's minds and reflected through their poems by means of a thorough analysis of some of their poems, aspiring to a better understanding of the different images of America depicted in their poems.

Although it may appear on the surface that there is nothing in common between Whitman and Hughes because they did not live during the same period, and they came from different ethnic origins and ideological backgrounds, they share some common aspects. For example, both of them wrote poetry that voiced the discourses that prevailed in their societies after the end of a colonial period (i.e.: the independence of the United States in 1776 and the emancipation proclamation in 1863). Moreover, they resisted the colonial discourses through which the colonizers (the British colonizer and the White Americans) exercised power over their people (white Americans and African Americans respectively). However, unlike Whitman who acted mainly as a mouthpiece for white American discourses, Hughes subconsciously voiced white American discourses and intentionally voiced African American discourses. Here two questions arise:

- 1- What are those discourses?
- 2- When and how did they originate?

There were two **Eurocentric** discourses that went side by side in imperialist countries despite being apparently opposite to one another, namely **Racial Discourse** and **Anti-slavery Discourse**. Those two discourses were Eurocentric because they stressed the European power and superiority over the colonized natives and facilitated their oppression and colonization. According to Sonderegger, two hundred years after its establishment, the Atlantic and Transatlantic Slave Trade succeeded in connecting the status of a slave to black skin colour. Consequently, people with dark skin were despised, dehumanized and commodified. However, it was not until the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the concept of “race” developed into an explanation for human differences in time and space. Both reification and racism produced a stereotyped image of Euro-African relations that represented the African as ‘heathen’ and ‘black’ and the European as ‘Christian’ and ‘white’. After 1650, the demand for African slaves in the Americas and the Caribbean increased when the “plantation complex” was systematized, and consequently the exploitation and cruelty of colonial slavery became harder to ignore. This led to the initiation of an anti-slavery resistance in the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the hands of enlightened philosophers who discussed the issue of slavery and the slave trade. The transnational anti-slavery pressure movement, that consisted of men and women of European, African and diasporic origin, became gradually influential and politically effective. Thus, they succeeded in illegitimizing slave trade in 1807 in Britain and other European countries. Another important agenda of the anti-slavery movement was the emancipation of the slaves that was not attained before the late 1830s in the British colonies, 1848 in French territories, the course of a bloody Civil War (1861- 1865) in the United States of America and the late 1880s in Cuba and Brazil. After the emancipation acts of the 1830s and 1840s in Britain and France, abolitionists and policy makers became more concerned with the conditions

in Africa. However, their Eurocentric attitudes blurred and biased their concern and views on African realities. Hence, they believed that intervention in the name of Christianity, human progress and improvement is their right and duty. (45, 46) Thus, despite being apparently opposed to the racial discourse, the ironic fact was that anti-slavery discourse was racial in its essence. However, according to Sonderegger, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both anti-slavery and missionary efforts and the anti-slavery discourse were severely attacked by means of racial discourse. Thus, politicians, churchmen, scientists and novelists debated over issues such as new conceptions of race, natural selection and evolution with the aim of proving their colonial authority and justifying racism rather than reaching valuable intellectual facts. (47) Hence, the relationship between racial discourse and colonization is dialectic.

Those two apparently opposite discourses affected Whitman. On the one hand, Whitman resisted racial discourse and promoted anti-slavery discourse for many reasons. First, he believed that the institution of slavery and the racial discourse, upon which slavery was based, originated mainly from the European feudal system in general and the British colonial system in particular. Hence, he believed that this unjust institution and the despotic discourse supporting it should not be part of his dreamland America whose core principles were freedom and equality. This is confirmed through Loving's words "Whitman hated England's aristocratic ways and wanted none of those artificial distinctions in America." (105) This idea is voiced through Whitman's poem "**Song of the Redwood-Tree**" in which the wood nymphs stress that America, idealistically described as "*virgin lands*" and "*the empire new*", should not be built ".....red from Europe's old dynastic slaughter-house,/(Area of murder-plots of thrones, with scent left yet of wars and scaffolds everywhere,)" (Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: 1892 "Deathbed" Edition* 312). This idea is also voiced through his poem "**Europe**" / "**Resurgemus**". According to Oliver:

"Europe"(1850) was written to celebrate the European revolutions of 1848–49, taking place 72 years after the American Revolution of 1776—"the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> years of these states." A second French Republic was set up in 1848, after revolutionists had taken away Louis-Philippe's throne; Ferdinand I of Austria abdicated during the same year, and his nephew Franz Josef became emperor; and there were other European revolutions taking place as well that included Hungary, Ireland, Venice, Germany, and Denmark. "Resurgemus," the original title for this poem, means resurgence (probably from the Latin word *resurgo*), as in the rising up of citizens against unjust governments. (81)

Thus, in “**Europe**”/ “**Resurgemus,**” Whitman shows how those revolutions carry hope and freedom for the "slaves" and the "exiled patriots" from the tyrant "kings" of Europe. He also shows that as an American he would never lose hope in freedom. It is also voiced in his poem "**A Boston Ballad**" in which he attacks the Fugitive Slave Act, by which runaway slaves like Anthony Burns were captured and tried without jury. This appears through the sarcastic extended imagery in which he advises the Mayor of Boston to send a committee to England to fetch King George's corpse and bring it to Boston to attend the procession of the President's marshal retrieving the runaway slave:

But there is one thing that belongs here shall I tell you  
 what it is, gentlemen of Boston?  
 I will whisper it to the Mayor, he shall send a committee to England,  
 They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a cart to the royal  
 vault,  
 Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from the  
 grave-clothes, box up his bones for a journey,  
 Find a swift Yankee clipper here is freight for you, black bellied  
 clipper,  
 Up with your anchor shake out your sails steer straight toward  
 Boston bay.  
 Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out the government  
 cannon,  
 Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another  
 procession, guard it with foot and dragoons.  
 This centre-piece for them;  
 Look, all orderly citizens look from the windows, women!  
 (Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 405)

Through this image, Whitman implies that by putting the Fugitive Slave Act into action the American federal government does not differ much from the British tyrannical government that America revolted against and became independent from in the first place. Another source of irony is derived from the contrast between the image of the corpse of King George, attending the procession to witness how the despotic legacy of slavery did not die with him, and the image of the weeping phantoms of the soldiers, who died at the War of Independence for freedom:

What troubles you Yankee phantoms? what is all this chattering of  
 bare gums?  
 Does the ague convulse your limbs? do you mistake your crutches  
 for firelocks and level them?  
 If you blind your eyes with tears you will not see the President's  
 marshal,  
 If you groan such groans you might balk the government cannon.

For shame old maniacs bring down those toss'd arms, and let your  
white hair be,  
Here gape your great grandsons, their wives gaze at them from the  
windows,  
See how well dress'd, see how orderly they conduct themselves.  
Worse and worse can't you stand it? are you retreating?  
Is this hour with the living too dead for you? (404, 405)

Similarly, in Whitman's poem "**Blood-Money**", he resembles supporters of the Fugitive Slave Act to Judas Iscariot, who helped in Jesus' rendition and thus crucifixion in return for pieces of silver. Moreover, he describes slavery as "the foulest crime in history" (468) in "**This Dust Was Once the Man**". In addition, in "**To the States**", Whitman attacks the institution of slavery and warns that "Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city of this earth, ever afterward resumes its liberty." (172) Second, Whitman's patriotism and deep love for America made him fear the disunity of his country over the issue of slavery, so he believed that the abolition of slavery would restore unity to his country and would end Civil War if the North won the war.

On the other hand, some critics suggest that the suppressed racial tone in Whitman's poems emanates from his fear that the "unity" gained by America after Civil War would be dissociated and endangered by the emancipated slaves, who started to claim their civil rights as American citizens. Hence, Oliver believes that Whitman "had some difficulty with racial equality as the threat of Civil War began to loom large in the late 1850s, because as much as he hated slavery, preservation of the Union was more important to him." (13) Reynolds explains how those two seemingly opposite stances went side by side not just in Whitman's mind but also in Lincoln's mind:

Whitman's views on race and slavery were in several ways like Lincoln's. Both criticized abolitionism, which they feared threatened the Union. Both were more concerned about preventing the spread of slavery than about getting rid of it. Both expressed doubt that the races could be successfully integrated. ("Politics and Poetry" 71)

This contradiction resulted from the racial discourse, which was originally imported to America by the British colonizers and was deeply rooted in the subconscious of the White American society. That same racial discourse is what made the integration of the emancipated slaves into the American society, after the end of Civil War, difficult if not impossible. According to Reynolds, "During and after the war, there developed a theory of racial attrition that predicted the ultimate elimination of so-called "inferior" races.... The infusion of this racial theory of Darwinian thought ...

convinced many that certain racial groups would disappear in time. Evidently, Walt Whitman was among the convinced." (qtd. in Herrmann 39) Moreover, it made Whitman, who has sung in favour of emancipation of slaves and claimed to "favor the widest opening of the doors" for African American suffrage, express his worries that "we have now infused a powerful percentage of Blacks, with about as much intellect and caliber (in the mass) as so many baboons" (qtd. in Klammer 117)

The conflict between racial discourse and anti-slavery discourse made Whitman ambivalent in his feelings towards African slaves, and this ambivalence is reflected in his representation of the African slaves in his poems. Thus, sometimes he abandons the usual stereotypes of African slaves and represents them as beautiful creatures and fully-dimensioned human beings that deserve to be treated humanely and respectfully. This appears in his poem "**I Sing the Body Electric**" in which he praises **the body**: "Flakes of breast muscle, pliant backbone and neck," **soul**: "pluck, volition" and "passions and desires" and **the mind**: "all baffling brain" of the African slave. He also stresses the fact that the human body is priceless and is not to be sold at an auction in the lines "Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough\ for him."(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 123) In the same way, in "**Song of Myself**", he shows the beauty of the African slave who "drives the huge dray of the stoneyard" and admires the beauty of his body and the strength of his "calm and commanding" soul:

His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over  
his hip band,  
His glance is calm and commanding.  
He tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead,  
The sun falls on his crispy hair and moustache.  
Falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs. (37)

Such representations were made on purpose by Whitman to attract the attention of the White readers to the human and beautiful side of the African slaves and to the fact that both of them were similar as human beings. However, in "**Ethiopia Saluting the Colors**" he represents African slaves as being barely human through the character of **Ethiopia**. Ethiopia is an emancipated African female slave who stops a procession heading to the Carolina seashore under the leadership of Sherman to salute the Union army. In Whitman's portrayal of the situation one can notice deep racism in the use of diction. Thus, Whitman uses words that imply that Ethiopia is barely human if not animalistic such as "hardly human" that was repeated twice, "woolly-white", "bare bony feet", "as the savage beast" and "wags". Moreover, the strange way she acts "lingering all the day" and "Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her darkling eye" and the awkward grammar she uses to express herself "*Me master years a hundred since from*

*my parents sunder'd*" stress the primitive and non-human image Whitman draws for her. Ambivalence between the racial and anti-slavery discourses reaches its peak with their being present side by side in poems such as "**Song of Myself**" and *Leaves of Grass*. For example, in the following lines from his poem "**Song of Myself**," although it seems at the first glance that Whitman is showing compassion towards a wounded runaway slave, with deeper analysis one can find the embedded racist discourse. Thus, Whitman's compassion did not change the way he referred to the slave using the object pronoun "him" instead of identifying him with a name though he stayed a whole week with Whitman. Moreover, Whitman degrades the slave to a non-human state by describing him using words like "limpsey", "his revolving eyes" and "his awkwardness" and by offering him "coarse" clothes to wear. Similarly, in the following lines from *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman's compassion is reflected through his oneness with an African slave, whom he symbolizes by the word "Lucifer". Thus, he expresses the slave's feelings of agony and misery as he is oppressed, loses his brother and sister and is separated from his wife using the first person pronoun "I". However, the racist discourse reveals itself through the negative diction Whitman uses to describe the slave and everything related to him such as "not dead", "sorrowful", "terrible", "wronged" and "oppressed". This also applies to the verbs used such as "hate", "oppresses", "destroy", "Damn", "defile", "informs against", "takes pay for their blood", "look down" and "carries away". Furthermore, the excessive use of first person pronouns such as "I" and "me" stresses the defying tone that is one of the main characteristics of the rebellious Lucifer. Similarly, the use of the word "not dead" instead of "alive" is an accurate description of the life that either Lucifer or an African slave led: a death in life state. In addition, the exclamations in the last three lines as well as the curse "Damn him!" and the threat "I will either destroy him" make the reader feel that this African slave/Lucifer is a source of menace to be feared and hated more than to be sympathised with or pitied. Besides, the name Lucifer, a significant name that symbolizes evil, pride, rebellion, and seduction, indicates that the African slave, just like Lucifer, is innately evil and is incapable of being redeemed because this is against his nature. Also, being the devil's "heir" makes the African slave responsible for all the sins committed by Whites. Thus, although Whitman's representations of African slaves in his poems are supposed to be tools through which he propagates the anti-slavery discourse, the racial discourse deeply instilled in his subconscious finds its way to the surface through them as well.

Besides, it seems that the conflict between the racial and anti-slavery discourses initiated new hybrid discourses. Hence, the racial discourse, which aims at constructing the identity of the colonizer through stressing his superiority and demeaning and controlling the Other/colonized through

stereotyping, propagandized itself through several alluring discourses, which apparently support the welfare of the Other. Those discourses include but are not limited to **Americanism** (spread by means of **Americanization**) and its sub-discourses such as **American Exceptionalism**, **Democracy**, the **American Dream** and **American Patriotism**. Ironically, those same previously-mentioned racial discourses were also used to propagandize the anti-slavery discourse in American society.

The **Americanism** discourse is evident in some of Whitman's poems such as "**City of Ships**", "**Old Ireland**", "**Passage to India**", "**Salut au Monde!**" and "**Song of the Broad-Axe**". Thus, in "**City of Ships**", Whitman celebrates New York City and acknowledges the importance of every ship stopping at it and bringing about a diversity of people from different great nations around the world to share in making it a great city: "City of the world! (for all races are here,/All the lands of the earth make contributions here;)"(429) Similarly, in "**Old Ireland**", Whitman describes how Ireland was devastated by the potato famine between 1846 and 1850 by personifying it as Virgin Mary weeping at the grave of her Son "mourning her shrouded hope and heir". Of course her Son is a symbol of hope for freedom and independence from British colonization, so Whitman assures her by saying: "For know you the one you mourn is not in that grave, /It was an illusion, the son you love was not really dead, / The Lord is not dead, he is risen again young and strong in another country," (494) In the last stanza, Whitman refers to the fact that the Irish people who immigrated to America during the 1850s to escape poverty in their homeland are going to be the "new blood" that will nourish America. Another poem that tackles the idea that America is the land whose civilization is the outcome of the fusion of diverse civilizations is "**Passage to India**", which he wrote to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal, the completion of the American transcontinental railroad and the laying of the Atlantic Ocean cable; three historic events that occurred during 1868 and 1869. Those three means connect the people either on a continental level (the American transcontinental railroad) or on an intercontinental level (the Suez Canal and the Atlantic Ocean cable). Whitman then refers to the fact that Columbus dreamt of finding a passage that connects the West to the East when he first set out on the voyage that ended by docking on America's shores. Then, he assures that Columbus's dream has come true because now America is the shore at which people from the East and the West gather to pursue their dreams: "Ah Genoese thy dream! thy dream!/ Centuries after thou are laid in thy grave, /The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream." (533) Furthermore, "**Salut au Monde!**", whose title means "Greetings to the World", carries greetings and best wishes from America to all people around the world in Section 11 of the poem. Similarly, in "**Song of the Broad-Axe**", Whitman describes America as "the place of ceaseless salutes of new-comers." (335)



**American Exceptionalism** discourse is evident in some of Whitman's poems such as **“Song of the Broad-Axe”**, **“The Prairie-Grass Dividing”**, **“A Song for Occupations”**, **“Thoughts” [Of Public Opinion]** and **“Thoughts” [Of these years]**. Thus, in Section 5 of **“Song of the Broad-Axe”**, Whitman defines what makes a place become a "great city" (i.e. what makes America a great place):

The place where a great city stands is not the place of  
stretch'd wharves, docks, manufactures, deposits of produce merely,  
.....  
Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of  
elected persons,  
.....  
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President,  
Mayor, Governor and what not, are agents for pay,  
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves, and to depend  
on themselves,  
.....  
There the great city stands. (335,336)

In other words, America is not just great because of its facilities and amenities. Its greatness emanates from its democratic system that makes people speak against "the never-ending audacity of elected persons", that makes the "President,/Mayor, Governor and what not" mere "agents for pay" and that teaches children self-control and ambition.

Whitman's notion of American democracy included three main factors: individuality, equality and developing a national literature. First, he believed in an individuality that would make people capable of thinking independently without being separate from the whole fabric of society. This notion of individuality is derived from Rousseau's social contract that states that the general will is equal to the sum total of individual wills. In other words, Rousseau postulates that there is no contradiction between freedom and authority because citizens are the main source of legislation. Thus, the individual's free will is exercised when the individual abides by the law. (Munro) Second, he believed that an equality that would dissolve the differences between classes and men and women and would abolish slavery was another essential factor of American democracy. However, the issues of slavery and lack of women's rights were always there to remind Whitman that democracy would not be established unless all people became equal and educated enough to attain individuality. Thus, he wrote poems that tackled the two issues, yet his attitude toward women is clearer than his attitude toward slavery. That is because there are only few instances in his poetry in which he mentions the word "man" or a derivative of it without the word "woman" or a derivative of it. In contrast, Whitman was ambivalent in his

attitude towards slavery. He also aimed at stressing the idea that a society can become democratic only if equality between opposites is fulfilled. That is why the equality of opposites such as good and evil and men and women is one of Whitman's important themes in *Leaves of Grass*. Third, he believed that America should develop a national literature to be able to play an important role in world history and to become a world leader. (Oliver 276, 277) The three factors of democracy were tackled in many of Whitman's poems such as **"I Hear America Singing"**, **"The City Dead-House"**, **"To a Common Prostitute"**, **"You Felons on Trial in Courts"**, **"A Woman Waits for Me"**, **"On the Beach at Night Alone"**, **"All is Truth"**, **"The Rounded Catalogue Divine Complete"**, **"Song of the Universal"**, **"Song at Sunset"**, **"From Paumanok Starting I Fly Like a Bird"**, **"One's-Self I Sing,"** **"The Dalliance of the Eagles"**, **"Small the Theme of My Chant"** and **"Election Day, November, 1884"**. In **"I Hear America Singing"** Whitman mentions people from different professions and social levels, males and females ("mechanics", "carpenter", "mason", "boatman", deckhand, "shoemaker", "hatter", "wood-cutter", "ploughboy", "mother", "young wife", "girl"). Then, he shows how all of them are equal in singing happily and individually "Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else"(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 174) Moreover, in **"The City Dead-House"**, **"To a Common Prostitute"** and **"You Felons on Trial in Courts"**, Whitman tackles the idea that equality should include all American citizens even the insignificant and despised ones like prostitutes and criminals. Thus, in **"The City Dead-House"** he mourns the death of a prostitute and the way her body is treated with disrespect being "unclaim'd, it lies on the damp brick pavement," (494) Besides, he tries to give her some dignity and respect by describing her as "The divine woman" and her body as more valuable than"..... all the rows of dwellings ever built!/ Or white-domed capitol with majestic figure surmounted, or / all the old high-spired cathedrals," (494) In addition, in **"You Felons on Trial in Courts"**, Whitman stresses the idea that all people are equal in being sinful and this should make people abstain from judging one another. Thus, he mentions abhorred and despised people such as "felons", "convicts", "assassins" and "prostitutes", confesses that he is not any better than they are and even expresses his oneness with them.

Those poems are significant because in them Whitman not only mentions people that were despised at that time, but also mentions them in a respectful way in his poetry and declares that they have the same rights as any other American citizen. This conforms with Whitman's aim of creating an American literature that was unique and different from the conservative British literature in both form and subject matter. This aim made him tackle subjects that were considered taboos at that time such as the sexual relation between men and women as well as homosexuality among men. He even

wrote a whole collection of poems tackling those subjects and he gave it the title *Calamus*. According to Oliver:

Several of the *Calamus* poems are overtly sexual, but they too carry the larger idea of the need in a democratic society for love among all people—perhaps the single most important theme in *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman, who most biographers believe was homosexual, or perhaps bisexual, made a distinction between the two kinds of love that is important to an understanding of these poems. He used the term *amativeness* to describe the love between men and women, and he used the term *adhesiveness* to describe the love between two men. The latter term is used to describe the brotherhood of man, a love sometimes physical (which may be, though not necessarily, sexual) but most often spiritual, a love he uses as a metaphor for democracy; he believed that love was one of the essential ingredients for the America he envisioned. (Oliver 54)

In other words, love and sex, which nearly had the same meaning for Whitman so that he used them interchangeably, were an expression of democracy because they made people united and equal. Thus, the idea of unity achieved through sex is clear in the following lines from “**A Woman Waits for Me**”:

Sex contains all, bodies, souls,  
Meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,  
.....  
All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth,  
These are contain'd in sex as parts of itself and justifications of itself.  
(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 258, 259)

Nevertheless, it was not just love/sex that united people and made them equal. According to Whitman sleep and death also united people and made them equal. This appears in the following lines from his poem “**The Sleepers**”:

The sleepers that lived and died wait, the far advanced are to  
go on in their turns, and the far behind are to come on  
in their turns,  
The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall flow and  
unite they unite now. (549)

In “**One’s-Self I Sing**”, “**Small the Theme of My Chant**” and “**The Dalliance of the Eagles**”, Whitman tackles the idea that preserving one’s individuality does not contradict with being part of the democratic “en masse”. According to Oliver, the expression “en masse” is “a term Whitman uses in “Song of Myself” to mean people together as a unified force.” (67)

Moreover, Whitman believed that democracy is based on free-thinking individuals who also act as part of the society. (386) This Whitmanian definition of democracy that acts as the main theme for *Leaves of Grass* is voiced in the first two lines of the first poem in *Leaves of Grass*, “**One’s Self I Sing**”: “One’s-self I sing, a simple separate person, /Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.” (165) Then, he repeats it in “**Small the Theme of My Chant**”, in which he refers to the theme of his poem “**One’s-Self I Sing**”, describing it as "the greatest" theme:

Small the theme of my Chant, yet the greatest namely,  
One's-Self a simple, separate person. That, for the use of the New  
World, I sing.

.....  
Nor cease at the theme of One's-Self. I speak the word of  
the modern, the word En-Masse. (627, 628)

In “**The Dalliance of the Eagles**”, Whitman presents that idea metaphorically through the two eagles whose "rushing amorous contact high in space together" does not prevent them from flying separately and independently: "Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight, /She hers, he his, pursuing." (412)

The **American Dream** discourse is evident in some of Whitman's poems such as “**Pioneers! O pioneers!**”, “**To a Pupil**” and “**A Song of Joys.**” In “**Pioneers! O pioneers!**” Whitman stresses the idea that America is a tough land and not a place where the lazy can survive. Americans are the adventurous pioneers who strive restlessly to explore and build their new homeland. The idea that the pursuit of happiness is a right to all Americans is tackled through Whitman's “**A Song of Joys.**” According to Oliver, " 'A Song of Joys' is about all the various 'joys' available in life." (181), and he adds that "America is for the poet a land of happiness, of joy available for everyone who seeks it." (182). Thus, in the poem, Whitman presents a catalogue of people of different occupations doing different activities and enjoying what they do:

O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys!  
The saddle, the gallop, the pressure upon the seat, the cool  
gurgling by the ears and hair.  
O the fireman's joys!  
I hear the alarm at dead of night,  
I hear bells, shouts! I pass the crowd, I run!  
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

.....  
O the mother's joys!  
The watching, the endurance, the precious love, the anguish,  
the patiently yielded life

.....  
O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise again!

I feel the ship's motion under me, I feel the Atlantic breezes fanning  
me,

I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head, There she blows!

(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 324-326)

The paradoxical image of the fireman's being maddened "with pleasure" at such a tragic scene as the flames is very significant because Whitman's insincerity is reflected through this exaggeration in expressing pleasure.

**American Patriotism** discourse is evident in some of Whitman's poems which idealize and idolize America and the American democratic atmosphere such as "**America**", "**To a Foil'd European Revolutionaire**", "**The United States to Old World Critics**", "**The Wallabout Martyrs**", "**A Broadway Pageant**" and "**Orange Buds by Mail from Florida**". According to Oliver, "**America**" "is one of the shortest but most precisely descriptive statements in *Leaves of Grass* showing Whitman's love of America." (31) Although "**America**" consists of six lines only, those six lines reflect Whitman's strong belief in the American principles of democracy, equality and freedom:

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,

All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,

Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,

Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,

A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother,

Chair'd in the adamant of Time.

(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 616)

The poem stresses equality among the members of the American nation despite all their individual differences: "daughters", "sons" and "grown, ungrown, young or old." Equality is also stressed through the extended image of America personified as a motherly queen sitting in the "centre" amidst her children which implies that she treats them equally despite their differences. Moreover, equality is stressed through the repetition of the word "equal" twice. In addition, the patriotism discourse is stressed by mentioning the basic ideals of democracy such as freedom and equality in front of the law. Besides, capitalizing the principles of democracy "Freedom, Law and Love" as well as the personified image of America "Mother" and describing America as a motherly queen with great characteristics "Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich", "grand, sane, towering, seated" and "Chair'd in the adamant of Time" reflect Whitman's patriotism. Another technique that Whitman used to deliver the discourse of patriotism is writing poems that commemorate patriots who sacrificed their lives for American freedom and democracy. One example of those poems is "**The Wallabout Martyrs**". According to Oliver:

There is a prose epigraph which explains that the “Wallabout Martyrs” were the American Revolutionary “patriots” who died in the British prison ships and prisons during 1776–83 and were buried, “many thousands of them—in trenches in the Wallabout sands.” Wallabout Bay was on the East River, between the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges. The prisons were where the Brooklyn Navy Yard is now located. (231)

Thus, through the poem, Whitman achieved two goals: criticizing Britain's tyranny and bloody history and glorifying American patriots by describing them as "Greater than memory of Achilles or Ulysses" and "The stepping stones to thee to-day and here, America." (Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 615) Other examples of poems commemorating patriots are mainly included in Whitman's *Drum-Taps* especially the poems dedicated to Lincoln such as “**O Captain! My Captain!**”, “**When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d**”, “**Hush’d Be the Camps To-day,**” and “**This Dust Was Once the Man**” in which Lincoln is a symbol of all those who lost their lives during the Civil War. The American patriotism discourse is also evident through poems in which Whitman criticizes and attacks politicians who corrupt America's democratic atmosphere such as “**Myself and Mine**”, “**Dough-Face Song/ Song for Certain Congressmen**”, “**To the States: To Identify the 16th, 17th or 18th Presidentiad**” and “**To a President**”. According to Oliver, "Whitman is revolutionary in the sense that he believes loyalty comes best from criticism, even of the most popular men of the time. He would go even further by aiming his criticism precisely at those most “eminent,” perhaps merely to keep them honest." (125) Thus, in “**Myself and Mine**” he writes:

Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace, I hold up  
agitation and conflict,  
I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one that  
was thought most worthy.

(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 379)

In other words, Whitman's patriotism makes him prefer to expose the problems of the American society and attack the politicians praised by others to make America a flawless nation and make politicians work hard to keep their integrity and avoid criticism.

Of course, the previously-mentioned discourses are not tackled separately in Whitman's poems because most of the time more than one discourse can be intertwined in the same poem.

Being exposed to the racial discourses propagandised by Whitman and other White intellectuals, Hughes was subconsciously affected by the prevalent racial discourses in America. This is the hybridity effect or the double-consciousness, referred to by Bhabha and Gilroy respectively, resulting from the contact with the colonizer and his discourse. Thus,

Hughes believed that the American dream would come true one day; a fact that appears in Hughes's poem "**America**" that mimics the discourses of Americanism, democracy, patriotism and the American dream. In the poem, the Americanism discourse appears through the welcoming tone by which different races in America (the "Jew", the "dark" and the "outcast") are addressed. Moreover, the repetition of "You and I" several times and mentioning in different ways that both of them are America ("You are America./I am America" and "Being America./You and I") stress that all of them are equal in being part of the process of building America. That equality is part of the discourse of democracy, which is also delivered through the ideas of freedom "Out of yesterday/The chains of slavery" and equality tackled in the poem:

You of the blue eyes  
And the blond hair,  
I of the dark eyes  
And the crinkly hair.  
.....  
Being brothers,  
Being one, (52)

In addition, the patriotic discourse is reflected in the reference to the American values of democracy, equality and freedom and to the fact that America is different from despotic Europe:

Out of yesterday,  
The ghettos of Europe;  
Out of yesterday,  
The poverty and pain of the old, old world,  
The building and struggle of this new one, (52)

As for the American dream, it is clear in the poem through the recurrent ideas of pursuing one's dreams and the ability to achieve them through hard work no matter what race one belongs to:

America is seeking the stars,  
America is seeking tomorrow.  
.....  
America—the dream,  
America—the vision.  
America—the star-seeking I.  
.....  
The building and struggle of this new one,  
We come  
You and I,  
Seeking the stars. (52)

However, the previous lines do not only show how Hughes is influenced by the White American discourses, but they also show how far his style is influenced by the style of one of America's most prominent national bards; namely Whitman. Hence, Hughes's poem can be considered as mimicry of the following lines from Section 17 of Whitman's "**By Blue Ontario's Shore**":

O I see flashing that this America is only you and me,  
 Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,  
 Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, are you and me,  
 Its Congress is you and me, the officers, capitols, armies,  
 ships, are you and me,  
 Its endless gestations of new States are you and me,  
 The war, (that war so bloody and grim, the war I will  
 henceforth forget), was you and me,  
 Natural and artificial are you and me,  
 Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and me,  
 Past, present, future, are you and me.

(Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* 481)

Those White discourses are present side by side with the New Negro discourse that takes pride in the African American identity and achievements:

I am Crispus Attucks at the Boston Tea Party;  
 Jimmy Jones in the ranks of the last black troops  
 marching for democracy.  
 I am Sojourner Truth preaching and praying  
 for the goodness of this wide, wide land;  
 Today's black mother bearing tomorrow's America.

.....  
 Who am I?  
 I am the ghetto child,  
 I am the dark baby,  
 I am you (Hughes 53)

As a new Negro, he also expresses ambition and desire for self-improvement:

Who am I?  
 You know me,  
 Dream of my dreams,  
 I am America.  
 I am America seeking the stars. (53)

This hybridity/double consciousness also appears in other poems such as "**I, too**" "**Lincoln Monument: Washington**" and "**Freedom's Plow**"



in which White American discourses are present side by side with African American discourses. Thus, in "**I, too**", Hughes stresses the fact that democratic individuality should encompass Blacks "too" and should make them become independent individuals yet be part of the Black and White "en masse" alike. Moreover, in "**Lincoln Monument: Washington**", Hughes mentions "old Abe"/ Lincoln" as a symbol of democracy, equality and freedom, and how his democratic ideals are going to survive "Against the/Timeless walls/Of time"(103). However, at the same time he criticises American racism by referring to the fact that those ideals, once supported by Lincoln, have been forsaken and long forgotten after he died by using the word "lonely" and the repetition of the words "Sitting" and "Quiet":

Sitting in the marble and the moonlight,  
Sitting lonely in the marble and the moonlight,  
Quiet for ten thousand centuries, old Abe.  
Quiet for a million, million years. (103)

In addition, in "**Freedom's Plow**", Hughes uses intertextuality by alluding to White American as well as African American ethos that initiated discourses deeply instilled in the minds of Whites as well as African Americans, and capitalizes the allusions to stress their importance and sacredness. Thus, he mentions the following statement from the "Declaration of Independence"(1776) upon which the discourses of democracy and the American dream were based:

ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL . . .  
ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR  
WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE  
RIGHTS . . .  
AMONG THESE, LIFE, LIBERTY  
AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. (265, 266)

Furthermore, he mentions a statement from Lincoln's "Peoria Speech"(1854), in which he explains his objection to the Kansas-Nebraska Act: "NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH/ TO GOVERN ANOTHER MAN/ WITHOUT THAT OTHER'S CONSENT." (266) In addition, he mentions a statement from Frederick Douglass's speech "Men of Color, To Arms!" (1863) given in Rochester, New York to urge African Americans to join the Union army in order to achieve freedom: "BETTER TO DIE FREE,/THAN TO LIVE SLAVES." (266)

Moreover, Hughes was a real patriot because he had commitment to ideals such as liberty, a free republic, limited government and civic activism, yet he also had a critical understanding of those liberal political values. This appears in his poem "**America**" in the following lines, in which he implies that America's democracy is flawed since it is only

applicable to the Whites: "There are stains/ On the beauty of my democracy,/ I want to be clean." (53) Thus, he uses the metaphor in which he resembles democracy to beautiful clothes that were stained by the injustice and racism of the Whites. Besides, the use of the possessive adjective in "my democracy" shows his belief that he should enjoy democracy thanks to his American identity because he is not just an African but also an African-American. Although mimicking the Whites' discourse might seem to be an assertion of their power over African Americans, in reality it undermines that same discourse by exposing its lies. "**The Colored Soldier**" is an example of the poems in which Hughes exposes the lies of White politicians by contrasting their promises of a better life, more democracy and more equality to the hard life and oppression that African Americans were subjected to:

Didn't our government tell us things would be fine  
When we got through fighting, Over There, and dying?  
So now I know we Blacks are just like any other—  
'Cause that's what I died for—isn't it, Brother?"

.....  
It's a lie! It's a lie! Every word they said.  
And it's better a thousand times you're in France dead.  
For here in the South there's no votes and no right.  
And I'm still just a "nigger" in America tonight. (147,148)

Similarly, in his poem "**Comment on War**", he declares that "We who are old know what truth is —/Truth is a bundle of vicious lies"(221) to satirize the lies propagandized by American politicians. Hughes wrote many other poems in which he exposes the lies of American politicians such as "**Children's Rhymes**", "**Harlem [1]**", "**Freedom Train**", "**How About It, Dixie**", "**The Black Man Speaks**", "**Beaumont to Detroit: 1943**", "**Southern Negro Speaks**", "**NAACP**", "**Broke**", "**Dear Mr. President**", "**Ballad of Roosevelt**", "**Dinner Guest: Me**", "**Crowns and Garlands**", "**The Backlash Blues**", "**Prime**", "**Mother in Wartime**".

Hughes's poems even represent the ambivalent African American feelings towards Whites, so in poems like "**The White Ones**", "**Pale Lady**" and "**Brotherly Love**" Hughes declares that he does not hate Whites. However, in "**To Certain Intellectuals**", "**Southern Mammy Sings**", "**Madam and Her Madam**" and "**Do You Reckon?**" he declares his hate to Whites and the impossibility of establishing a good relationship between them. Nevertheless, in poems like "**America**" and "**Theme for English B**" he expresses neutral feelings towards Whites, yet he stresses that Blacks should be treated as equals to Whites.

On the other hand, being disillusioned by the racial agenda behind the humanistic facade of the anti-slavery discourse, African Americans decided to create their own counter-discourses and propagate them through

their artistic works especially during Harlem Renaissance. Those discourses were **Pan-Africanism**, **Afrocentricity**, **Black Nationalism**, the **New Negro**, **Negritude** and **African Socialism**. By observing the previously-mentioned discourses, I found out that some of them were based on common principles.

I believe that the discourses of **Pan-Africanism**, **Afrocentricity** and **Black Nationalism** are almost identical in being mainly based on the principles of African solidarity and independence as the keys to solving the problems of the colonized, oppressed black people. Those three discourses appear in many of Hughes's poems such as "**The Negro Speaks of Rivers**", "**Prelude to Our Age**", "**A Ballad of Negro History**", "**The Negro Mother**", "**Always the Same**", "**Memo to Non-White Peoples**", "**Brothers**", "**Broadcast to the West Indies**" and "**Good Morning**". Thus, in "**The Negro Speaks of Rivers**", Hughes unifies the experience of Africans along history (the Pharaonic epoch and the modern age) and around the world (in Congo, Egypt and America) through the use of the first person "I":

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. (Hughes 23)

Similarly, in "**Prelude to Our Age**", that has the subtitle "**A Negro History Poem**", Hughes mentions all the instances in which great black people and their contributions were mentioned in history or literature around the world and along history:

The spoken word of bard or chief,  
And the beaten drum  
That carried instant history  
Across the night,  
.....  
Pictures on stone, hieroglyphics,  
Parchment, illuminated scrolls.  
Homer's  
"Blameless Ethiopians."  
On all these rolls landmarking man,  
The shadow of my hand:  
Negro.  
Aesop, Antar, Terence,  
Various Pharaohs,  
Sheba, too.  
Ethiopia, Ghana, Songhay.

Arab and African; the Moors  
 Gave Spain her castanets  
 And Senegal her prayers.  
 All this before the type that moved  
 in which Juan Latino spoke:  
 "Ad Catholicum-Pariter et Invictissimum" —  
 The shadow of my hand  
 Across the printed word:  
 Granada, 1573.  
 Yoruba, Benin, Guinea,  
 Timbuctoo and Abderrahman Sadi's  
 "Tarikh es Soudan." (379)

Then, he uses intertextuality to give a summary of the history of African Americans, since their enslavement and the journey "Between the Gold Coast and our land./Jamestown, Virginia, 1619" and until they succeeded in attaining some rights through the Civil Rights Movement. He does that with the aim of showing that slavery, suffering and racial acts against people of African dissent are what connects Blacks in Africa and America. Thus, he alludes to African American spirituals, that were sung by African slaves in plantations and had freedom and punishment of the unjust as their main themes, such as "**Go Down Moses**", "**Swing Low, Sweet Chariot**" and "**My Lord, What a Morning.**" He also alludes to the songs that were sung by African Americans during and after the Civil War and carried hopes in freedom after war such as "**Oh, Freedom**" and "**The Battle Hymn of the Republic.**" In addition, he alludes to freedom and equality speeches given by White American presidents such as Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation speech in 1863 "Once slaves —/'Henceforth and forever free' " and an October 1898 address given by Roosevelt at the New York Lennox Lyceum: "As I heard one of the Rough Riders say, '/.... /' 'They can drink out of our canteens.' "(382)

He finally ends the poem by giving hope that "Tomorrow/Is another/Page"(384) Hughes nearly repeats the same ideas and theme of "**Prelude to Our Age**" in "**A Ballad of Negro History**" in which he refers to the contributions of black people in different countries and along history. Moreover, in "**The Negro Mother**", Hughes addresses the whole African "race" reminding it of the hardships it has faced since it was enslaved and the road still ahead of them till they can achieve freedom:

Children, I come back today  
 To tell you a story of the long dark way  
 That I had to climb, that I had to know  
 In order that the race might live and grow.  
 .....  
 Remember the whip and the slaver's track.  
 Remember how the strong in struggle and strife

Still bar you the way, and deny you life —  
But march ever forward, breaking down bars. (155, 156)

Here, it is noticed that the poem's rhythmic regularity created by means of couplets and iambic tetrameter imitates the rhythms of African drums. This poem aims at stressing the fact that Africans around the world went through the same hardships and have the same goal that they can achieve only by being united as brothers and sisters. This idea is echoed in "**Always the Same**" in which Hughes shows that black people are treated the same way around the world:

It is the same everywhere for me:

On the docks at Sierra Leone,  
In the cotton fields of Alabama,  
In the diamond mines of Kimberley,  
On the coffee hills of Haiti,  
The banana lands of Central America,  
The streets of Harlem,  
And the cities of Morocco and Tripoli.

Black:

Exploited, beaten and robbed,  
Shot and killed.  
Blood running into  
Dollars  
Pounds  
Francs  
Pesetas  
Lire (165)

This appears through the definition of the word "Black" without specifying her/his country "Exploited, beaten and robbed,/Shot and killed." and through mentioning different places (Sierra Leone, Alabama, Kimberley, Haiti, Central America, Harlem, Morocco and Tripoli) and currencies (Dollars, Pounds, Francs, Pesetas and Lire). Here, Hughes's craftsmanship appears through expressing deep feelings of anger and bitterness using only few words. It is also stressed in "**Memo to Non-White Peoples**" in which Hughes repeats twice:

I'm sorry but it is  
The same from Cairo to Chicago,  
Cape Town to the Carib Hilton,  
Exactly the same. (457)

The theme of solidarity among Blacks in America, Africa and the West Indies is evident in other poems such as "**Brothers**" in which Hughes

stresses the idea through the use of the synonymous words "related", "kinsmen" and "Brothers":

We're related—you and I,  
 You from the West Indies,  
 .....  
 Kinsmen—you and I,  
 You from Africa,  
 I from the U.S.A.  
 Brothers—you and I. (424)

Although solidarity with fellow Blacks around the world was an important issue, the solidarity with the fellow Blacks in the West Indies was even more important at that time. That is because it was thought that pacifying the conflict between African Americans and the black immigrants from the West Indies would boost the power of black people in America. Thus, in "**Broadcast to the West Indies**" Hughes sends his greetings along with a message of solidarity to his fellow black people in the West Indies:

I, Harlem, say:  
 HELLO, WEST INDIES!  
 You are dark like me,  
 Colored with many bloods like me,  
 Verging from the sunrise to the  
 dusk like me,  
 From day to night, from black to  
 white like me.  
 HELLO! HELLO!  
 HELLO, WEST INDIES! (273)

The solidarity with fellow Blacks in the West Indies is stressed through the repetition of "like me" while the strong emotions of love and fraternity are reflected through the use of capital letters and exclamation marks to deliver the greetings. This idea is repeated in Hughes's "**Good Morning**" in which he shows that the Harlemites were mainly composed of African Americans from the north and the south in addition to the Blacks coming from the West Indies.

I also believe that the discourses of the **New Negro movement** and the **Negritude movement** wanted to achieve the same goals. The New Negro and Negritude discourses appear in many of Hughes's poems such as "**Dark Youth of the U.S.A.**", "**Ballad of Booker T**", "**Interne at Provident**", "**Graduation**", "**A Song to a Negro Wash-woman**", "**Mother to Son**", "**The Heart of Harlem**", "**Negro Servant**", "**Negro Servant**", "**Dream Boogie**", "**Juke Joint: Northern City**", "**Trumpet Player**", "**Drums**", "**Harlem Dance Hall**", "**When Sue Wears Red**", "**My People**", "**Me and My Song**", "**Color**", "**Argument [2]**", "**Poem [4]**", "**Laughs**", "**Beggar Boy**", "**Elevator Boy**", "**Militant**", "**The**

**South**" and **"Go Slow"**. For example, in **"Dark Youth of the U.S.A."**, **"Ballad of Booker T"**, **"Interne at Provident"** and **"Graduation"** Hughes reinforces the fact that becoming educated and developing one's status are important ways for African Americans to attain independence, to destroy the stereotypes that Blacks are ignorant and unable to learn and to gain respect and feel proud of themselves and their race. This idea is clear in **"Dark Youth of the U.S.A."** in which Hughes informs the African American youth that to "be wise and strong", to seek knowledge and to make the black race proud is their "mission" and "ambition":

To be wise and strong, then, studying long,  
Seeking the knowledge that rights all wrong—  
That is my mission.  
Lifting my race to its rightful place  
Till beauty and pride fills each dark face  
Is my ambition. (157)

The importance of education in improving the lives of black people is reflected through dedicating **"Ballad of Booker T"** to commemorate Booker T. Washington. Washington started as a slave and managed through education to become an American educator, author, orator and advisor to presidents of the United States as well as the dominant leader in the African-American community. He even helped hundreds of Africans to get educated by establishing the Tuskegee Institute, a historically black college in Alabama. This idea is also delivered in a symbolic way in **"Interne at Provident"** through the character of the African American young man who works as an interne surgeon at Provident hospital. The aim of the young man is to learn the "skills of surgeons" not just to cure "...ills quite common/Among all who stand on two feet" but also "To cure ills of Africa,/Democracy,/And mankind." In other words, by becoming a doctor, this young man is going to show the Whites that he is as smart and respectable as they are. Then, Hughes draws the attention to the importance of the give and take relationship characteristic of African solidarity by showing how "Charity's checked money" is what has helped the young man to become a doctor and how he returns the favour by curing the "ills of Africa". Hence, empowering one person can empower the whole race. In addition, the hard-won pride the young man feels is represented symbolically through the following lines: "He's wearing /A crown of sweat/ Gleams on his forehead." (373)

Similarly, in **"Graduation"** Hughes shows how education can improve the social status of African Americans on the individual level, as well as for the whole race. He does this symbolically through the characters of "Mary Lulu Jackson", who is celebrating getting her typist "Diploma," and "her mama," who works in the kitchen of wealthy people and "Brings remainders from the kitchen" so that they can eat. Hughes shows that getting

that diploma can improve not just the life of those two poor ladies but also the situation of the whole "colored race" in the following lines:

Mary Lulu Jackson,  
Eating chicken,  
Tells her mama she's a typist  
And the clicking of the keys  
Will spell the name  
Of a job in a fine office  
Far removed from basic oven,  
Cookstoves,  
And iceberg's kitchen.

.....  
*Mama says, Praise Jesus!*  
*The colored race will rise! (315)*

The character of the poor and uneducated African American mother, who wears her life out and supports her children so that they can have a future and a life better than the one she has had, is recurrent in Hughes's poems. It is as if he is delivering a message to the black race that they should support their children with all their might for the sake of improving the life and future of the race. This character appears in many poems like "**Graduation**", "**A Song to a Negro Wash-woman**" and "**Mother to Son**." However, Hughes does not only consider education a source of pride and resistance, but he also thinks of Harlem as another source of pride, resistance and even relief for African Americans. Hence, in poems like "**The Heart of Harlem**", "**Negro Servant**", "**Dream Boogie**", "**Juke Joint: Northern City**", "**Trumpet Player**", "**Drums**" and "**Harlem Dance Hall**," Hughes shows how the characters in the poems find relief in Harlem and its night clubs. This relief is partly due to its being a vent for their repressed feelings of anger and frustration, and partly for being a means for people of African dissent in the diaspora to their homeland and their African heritage. This idea is clear in the following lines from "**Negro Servant**":

All day subdued, polite,  
Kind, thoughtful to the faces that are white.  
O, tribal dance!  
O, drums!  
O, veldt at night!

.....  
At six o'clock, or seven, or eight,  
You're through.  
You've worked all day.  
Dark Harlem waits for you.

.....  
O, sweet relief from faces that are white! (131)



In "**When Sue Wears Red**", "**My People**", "**Me and My Song**", "**Color**", "**Argument [2]**" and "**Poem [4]**", Hughes expresses his admiration for the beauty and the greatness of the Blacks by showing how they are beautiful inside out, and that they ought to be proud of themselves. He also stresses the fact that the beauty of African Americans is a mere extension of the beauty originally emanating from Africa. This meaning is clear in the following lines from "**Me and My Song**":

My song  
From the dark lips  
Of Africa  
Deep  
As the rich earth  
Beautiful  
As the black night  
Strong  
As the first iron  
Black  
Out of Africa  
Me and my  
Song (297)

Here, Hughes's pride of his African identity is clear from the use of positive capitalized adjectives to describe his African song such as "Deep", "Beautiful" and "Strong" and the repetition of the word "black" several times in the poem. However, Hughes did not only express the New Negro and Negritude discourses through race pride, but he also expressed them defiantly. Thus, in poems like "**Laughs**" and "**Beggar Boy**" he delivers the message that Blacks will survive racism and all the hardships they are facing and will keep on laughing. This is clear in the following lines from "**Laughs**" through the repetition of the word "laughs" and the use of the words "Loud-mouthed laughs" to describe Blacks:

Singers and dancers  
Dancers and laughs.  
Laughs?  
Yes, laughs. . . laughs. . . laughs —  
Loud-mouthed laughs in the hands  
Of Fate. (28)

This idea is also reflected in "**Beggar Boy**" through the character of the little beggar who "plays upon his flute a wild free tune/As if Fate had not bled him with her knife!" (29) Similarly, in "**Elevator Boy**", "**Militant**" and "**Go Slow**" Hughes delivers a warning message that the patience of the Blacks is not going to last forever, and that their anger would be unleashed as a destructive force one day. This idea is reflected through the following

lines from "**Militant**" in which anger and violence are expressed through the use of violent verbs such as "spit", "clenched" and "strike":

Let all who will  
 Eat quietly the bread of shame.  
 I cannot,  
 Without complaining loud and long,  
 .....  
 For honest work  
 You proffer me poor pay,  
 For honest dreams  
 Your spit is in my face,  
 And so my fist is clenched  
 Today—  
 To strike your face. (131)

Defiance reaches its peak in Hughes's "**The South**" in which he directly attacks the racist South by describing it as:

The lazy, laughing South  
 With blood on its mouth.  
 The sunny-faced South,  
 Beast-strong,  
 Idiot-brained.  
 The child-minded South  
 Scratching in the dead fire's ashes  
 For a Negro's bones.  
 .....  
 Passionate, cruel,  
 Honey-lipped, syphilitic —  
 That is the South. (26, 27)

Here, it is noticed how Hughes's ambivalent feelings are reflected through the paradoxical way in which he describes the White South. Thus, he intermingles positive adjectives such as "laughing", "sunny-faced", "passionate" and "Honey-lipped" with negative adjectives such as "lazy", "Beast-strong", "Idiot-brained", "child-minded", "cruel" and "syphilitic."

As for **African Socialism** discourse, I believe it is the most successful of all the previously mentioned African American discourses. That is because it boosts the resistance of the colonized Africans around the world to the racial and colonial discourses by making the "subaltern"/"oppressed" Other sympathize with them. The African socialism discourse appears in many of Hughes's poems such as "**Young Prostitute**", "**Workin' Man**", "**Broke**", "**Grant Park**", "**Prayer for a Winter Night**", "**Kids Who Die**", "**Open Letter to the South**", "**A New Song**", "**Dream of Freedom**", "**Call to Creation**", "**In Explanation of Our**

**Times**", **"Union"**, **"Chant for Tom Mooney"**, **"Good Morning Revolution"**, **"Song of the Revolution"**, **"Wait"**, **"One More 'S' in the U.S.A."**, **"Ballads of Lenin"**, **"Roar China!"**, **"Last Prince of the East"**, **"Stalingrad: 1942"**, **"Florida Road Workers"**, **"Steel Mills"**, **"God to Hungry Child"** and **"Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria"**. One way to deliver the African socialism discourse was writing poems that tackle the suffering of poor African Americans. Thus, in **"Young Prostitute"** he shows how some African American girls in Harlem had to work as prostitutes for very little money to be able to survive hunger and poverty:

Her dark brown face  
Is like a withered flower  
On a broken stem.  
Those kind come cheap in Harlem  
So they say. (33)

The misery of those girls is reflected through the simile in which Hughes compares the young prostitute to "a withered flower/ On a broken stem". Besides, their commodification and dehumanization by the capitalist society is reflected in the indifferent tone of the words "Those kind come cheap in Harlem." These women are likened to merchandise in a supermarket. Moreover, in **"Workin' Man"** and **"Broke"** he tackles the problems of underpaid and unemployed African Americans, and how those problems affect their relationships with their wives and fiancées. Thus, in **"Workin' Man"** the worker describes his wife and says, "she don't gimme lovin' "(119) while in **"Broke"** the young man is abandoned by his fiancée who tells him "she ain't got no mo' evenings free!" (149) when she knows he is broke. Moreover, in **"Grant Park"** and **"Prayer for a Winter Night"**, Hughes tackles the problems of the homeless and the poor African Americans. Thus, in **"Grant Park"** he describes how the homeless are chased away from Grant Park because "there were plans to transform the park into a commercial district" (Hricko 89):

You can see what they've done  
.....  
To brothers of mine —  
Sleepers on iron benches  
Behind the Library in Grant Park. (37)

In **"Prayer for a Winter Night"**, Hughes expresses his faith that the "icy blanket" of Winter will be more merciful to the poor as it will kill them, and so "They'll wake up in some rich kingdom of nowhere"(38) In addition, he tackles problems such as identity crisis lived by mulattos (resulting from being unable to fit into the White society or into the Black society due to American racism) in many of his poems through the character of the tragic mulatto. According to Wilujeng:

Inevitably, in Hughes's period, a mulatto ran a quite difficult life owing to his uncertainty of the exact race he belonged. As a persona, the character is described to be a little bit confused of his own identity. To be a White person, probably he is not fully accepted by the White father. He cannot curse his father as he may be proud of being half White. He cannot either curse his Black mother since she is the one who has given birth to him. Perhaps he does not really want to be a part of Black society owing to its hard consequences. Being a Black man means hardship in life. Sharpened by the interrogative ending, neither fully Black nor White, he lives in confusion. (204)

That is why, the tragic mulatto/a is usually represented as a melancholic, suicidal, fratricidal, and/or patricidal figure whose downfall is due to either an identity crisis or an innate biological defect. Such figures usually have to choose between their White side (the most likely choice) or their Black side. (Daut 2) This figure appears in poems like "**The New Cabaret Girl**", "**Cross**" and "**Mulatto**".

However, Hughes does not want the African socialism discourse to be delivered to Blacks only. Hence, he delivers his discourse to the Whites in poems like "**Open Letter to the South**", "**A New Song**" and "**Dream of Freedom**" in which he addresses the subaltern White workers and asks them to join forces with the Blacks to fight capitalism. This idea is reflected in the following lines from "**Open Letter to the South**":

In union lies our strength.  
 Let union be  
 The force that breaks the time-clock,  
 Smashes misery,  
 Takes land,  
 Takes factories,  
 Takes office towers,  
 Takes tools and banks and mines.  
 Railroads, ships and dams,  
 Until the forces of the world  
 Are ours!  
 White worker,  
 Here is my hand. (161)

Furthermore, in "**Call to Creation**", "**In Explanation of Our Times**", "**Union**", "**Chant for Tom Mooney**", "**Good Morning Revolution**", "**Song of the Revolution**", "**Wait**", "**One More 'S' in the U.S.A.**", "**Ballads of Lenin**", "**Roar China!**", "**Last Prince of the East**" and "**Stalingrad: 1942**" he expresses his solidarity with all the subalterns and the poor workers around the world and his admiration for their revolution against capitalism, exploitation and injustice. Moreover, he

encourages them to keep on fighting till they regain all their rights. This is clear in the following lines from "**Good Morning Revolution**," in which Hughes celebrates the upheaval of workers in the USSR, Germany, China, Africa, Poland, Italy and America, expresses his solidarity with them using "we", "our" and "Let's" and announces that it is their "job" to prevent hunger, cold and oppression everywhere:

Boy! Them radios —  
Broadcasting that very first morning to USSR:  
*Another member the International Soviet's done come*  
*Greetings to the Socialist Soviet Republics*  
*Hey you rising workers everywhere greetings—*  
And we'll sign it: *Germany*  
Sign it: *China*  
Sign it: *Africa*  
Sign it: *Poland*  
Sign it: *Italy*  
Sign it: *America*  
Sign it with my one name: *Worker*  
On that day when no one will be hungry, cold, oppressed,  
Anywhere in the world again.  
That's our job!  
I been starvin' too long,  
Ain't you?  
Let's go, Revolution!(163)

At the same time, he attacks the mercilessness and vanity of capitalists in poems like "**Florida Road Workers**", "**Steel Mills**", "**God to Hungry Child**" and "**Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria**". In "**Florida Road Workers**," Hughes shows how the rich alone reap the benefits of the work done by the poor and refuse to share profits with them through the symbolic image:

I'm makin' a road  
For the rich to sweep over  
In their big cars  
And leave me standin' here. (158,159)

Moreover, in "**Steel Mills**" the exploitation of poor workers, whose lives are worn out in the factories of the capitalists, is reflected through the following symbolic image, in which the repetition of the word "grind" mimics the sound of machines in factories, gives the harsh visual and auditory image of grinding meat and symbolizes the cruelty of the capitalist society:

The mills  
That grind and grind,

That grind out new steel  
And grind away the lives  
Of men,— (43)

In addition, in "**Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria**" Hughes reflects on an advertisement that announces the opening of the Waldorf-Astoria luxurious hotel. He sarcastically invites the "HUNGRY ONES", the homeless "ROOMERS", "EVICTED FAMILIES" and "EVERYBODY" to stay at the hotel's luxurious rooms and enjoy its luscious meals. At the same time, he contrasts the miserable life of the invitees to the pampered life of hotel residents. Besides, the poet reminds the invitees every now and then that capitalists managed to build such a place thanks to the exploitation of the poor. Hughes uses a matter-of-fact tone and a detailed description of the contents of the menu in order to agitate the poor subalterns to rebel against the capitalist oppressors:

They serve swell board at the Waldorf-Astoria. Look at this menu,  
GUMBO CREOLE  
CRABMEAT IN CASSOLETTE  
BOILED BRISKET OF BEEF  
SMALL ONIONS IN CREAM  
WATERCRESS SALAD  
PEACH MELBA

Have luncheon there this afternoon, all you jobless.  
Why not?

Dine with some of the men and women who got rich off of  
your labor, who clip coupons with clean white fingers  
because your hands dug coal, drilled stone, sewed garments,  
poured steel to let other people draw dividends  
and live easy.

(Or haven't you had enough yet of the soup-lines and the bitter  
bread of charity?)

Walk through Peacock Alley tonight before dinner, and get  
warm, anyway. You've got nothing else to do. (144)

Sadly, the exploited poor will never be allowed into such a place, as is evident in the following rhetorical questions:

You ain't been there yet?

.....

What's the matter?

You haven't seen the ads in the papers? Didn't you get a card?

Don't you know they specialize in American cooking? (145)

Of course, the aim behind such a highly sarcastic poem is to criticise the capitalists' vanity and to urge the poor subalterns to rebel against them. Thus, in the last section of the poem, he gives hope in salvation by announcing that "the new Christ child of the Revolution's about to be born."

(146) He even invites the revolutionaries in an indirect way to claim their rights in such places by visiting them:

Listen, Mary, Mother of God, wrap your new born babe in  
the red flag of Revolution: the Waldorf-Astoria's the  
best manger we've got. For reservations: Telephone EL.  
5-3000. (146)

Besides, Hughes expresses his compassion with foreign immigrants because they are subjected to racism and discrimination just like the Blacks. His compassion towards immigrants appears in poems like "**The Kids in School with Me**", in which he mentions different nationalities that were the nationalities of most immigrants at that time such as "The Italian", "the Polish", "the Irish", "the Spanish", "the Russian", "The Jewish", "the Grecian" and "the Chinese"; and declares his oneness and solidarity with them through the following lines:

We were a regular Noah's ark,  
Every race beneath the sun,  
But our motto for graduation was:  
One for All and All for One! (601)

Finally, by looking back at the analysed poems by Whitman and Hughes, it becomes clear that the American government's treatment of White Americans and Black Americans according to double standards resulted in two different attitudes towards America. On the one hand, White Americans had great pride and high expectations of the American political future and dreamt of a "future greater than all past" as Whitman wrote in his poem "**Turn O Libertad**". On the other hand, African American dreams of achieving civil rights, freedom, democracy and equal opportunity were always deferred by the ugly political reality of America. That led them to believe that political activism was the only way to achieve their dreams. Those two different attitudes towards America were initiated by two different sets of discourses: White American discourses such as **Americanism, American Exceptionalism, Democracy, the American Dream and American Patriotism**, and their African American counter-discourses such as **Pan-Africanism, Afrocentricity, Black Nationalism, the New Negro, Negritude and African Socialism**. Moreover, those discourses were propagated by national bards such as Whitman and Hughes and resulted in drawing two different images of America represented in their poems. On the one hand, Whitman's poems reflect the image of an idealistic America; a country that is based on the ideals of democracy, freedom and equality where all people live harmoniously and sing patriotic songs while working happily in their different yet equally important professions. It is a homeland that encompasses all people's personal, racial and gender differences benevolently and offers them equal opportunities to develop

themselves and succeed regardless of their birth conditions. To live in such an idealistic country would be a dream that anyone wants to make true, and to die for it would be the duty of anyone who really loves America and enjoys being one of its citizens. Although Whitman does not deny the fact that there is political corruption in America, he delivers the message that American democracy and freedom of speech are the keys for American people to fight corruption and maintain the idealism of their homeland. On the other hand, Hughes's poems reflect the image of an unjust America; a country that is based on discrimination and inequality and where subalterns (whether African Americans or poor Whites) need to fight against the mighty powers of discrimination and capitalism. In addition, it is a place where working hard, taking pride in one's black identity and being in solidarity with fellow subalterns around the world (fellow Blacks, persecuted immigrants and poor Whites) are the only ways to survive and to achieve the long-deferred dream of equality. It is an antagonistic place where African Americans suffer from poverty, unemployment, Jim Crow's segregation laws and lynching, yet at the same time they are considered American citizens only at times of war. Unfortunately, even at times of war African Americans suffered from racial discrimination. Besides, it is a country that is run by corrupt politicians who deceive and exploit Americans by using phony promises and ideals. Besides, the presence of different discourses in the same place and the interaction between the people adopting those discourses led to what Bhabha called "hybridity" or what Gilroy called "double-consciousness" which resulted in ambivalence towards the Other. Thus, to face such an ugly reality everyday while listening to songs about American freedom, democracy and patriotism being sung everywhere, African Americans had ambivalent emotions towards America. For example, although Hughes hated American racism against his people, he still had a dream about an America in which African Americans would have the same rights as the Whites and where the Blacks and the Whites can co-exist peacefully as fellow citizens; an image of America that can be rarely found in Hughes's early poems. Similarly, Whitman had ambivalent feelings towards the British colonizers and towards African Americans. He abhorred British despotism and the institution of slavery, which was one of its products, and attacked the institution of slavery several times in his poems. However, at the same time, the British racial discourse was deeply instilled in his subconscious and revealed itself every now and then through the racist representation of African slaves in his poems.



**المُلخَص:**

**الحلم الأمريكي في مواجهة الحلم المؤجل أمريكا كما صورها والت ويتمان  
ولانجستون هيوز دراسة ما بعد الاستعمار  
نهلة رزق سند إبراهيم ليلى**

كان لدى كل من والت ويتمان ولانجستون هيوز أحلاماً لأمتيهما وكانا يؤمنان أن هذه الأحلام يمكن تحقيقها فقط إذا أمنت كل أمة بحوارها القومي ووضعته قيد التنفيذ. لذا فقد قام كلا الشاعرين بترويج الحوارات الوطنية الخاصة بأمتيهما ومناقضة الحوارات الإستعمارية. ويهدف هذا البحث لتحليل الأيديولوجيات الراسخة في عقلي الشاعرين والتي تنعكس من خلال أشعارهما باستخدام التحليل الوافي لمجموعة من قصائدهما من أجل الوصول لفهم أعمق لوجود صورتين مختلفتين لأمريكا في أشعار كل منهما.

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