

**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN LANGSTON HUGHES'  
POEMS: A MARXIST APPROACH**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

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by :

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Langston Hughes is one of many writers of America. He is one of America's greatest black writers. His consequences to Racial Consciousness as a source of inspiration for black people. He is an internationally acclaimed African American Life. He was born in 1902 and died in 1967. He wrote novels, short stories, plays, poetry, operas, essays, work for children. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/langston Hughes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/langston%20Hughes)).

He started his career in 1921 with written poem. The Negro speaks of Rivers appeared in his first book of poetry the weary Blues, first published in the Crisis in 1921. Much of his writing was inspired by rhythm and language of that era. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/langston Hughes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/langston%20Hughes)).

Langston Hughes poems are interesting, such as *a new song*, *Cross*, *I too*, and *children's Rhymes*. There are some aspects that make these poems interesting to study. The first aspect is Langston Hughes poems appeared a real condition that happened to black people in that era. The primary conflict were the description of the life of the people in lower class, that is, the real life of blacks in the lower social/economic strata and the superficial groups and prejudices based on skin color within the black community.

The second aspect, Langston Hughes is a famous American black writer. During the mid 1950s and 1960s, Hughes became famous writer among the younger poets. Hughes wanted young black writers to be objective about their race. Langston Hughes has a goal to bring two worlds together, one black and one white and make them one. His poem becomes controversial poems in America.

The third aspect is the structural elements of Poetry. There are speaker, spoken to, setting, theme, figures of speech, imagery, rhythm, sound (alliteration, assonance, rhyme), tone, forms of poetry. The titles of Langston Hughes poems describe black conditions. There is racial discrimination between races in America. The theme of Langston Hughes' poems is all human beings are created equal. The blacks are also realizing that they have a dream as whites. Poetry differs from some kinds of prose in usually being more specific. The poem communicates experiences, emotions, attitudes and propositions by dealing with a particular situation or event that implicitly embodies abstract generalizations. (Altenbernd and Lewis, 1966: 4).

The last aspect is the philosophical that concerns with Langston Hughes to protest racial discrimination to get equality between blacks and whites group. The discrimination is received by the black people not only on one aspect, but also it is received on all aspects of life. Langston Hughes wants to show to government and all people that the discrimination has made

bad for the black's life. Especially, the black people became the educated peoples because their right to school has been stolen by the white people.

Based on the four aspects above racial discrimination was reflected in Langston Hughes' poems. Racial discrimination created is resulted the inequalities and ethnicity. The problem is always found in countries that have many kinds of races. Race appears a difference of skin color. The general group of people based on the skin color are white people and black people. These groups also create two social classes in society; the whites are regarded as the higher class. They own power authority in social, political and economical. On the other hand, the black class is regarded as the lower class.

By what sends  
The white kids  
I aint sent  
I know I can't  
be President

What don't bug  
Them white kids  
Sure bags me  
We know everybody  
Aint free

Lies written down  
For white folks  
Ain't for us a tall  
Liberty and justice  
Huh! For all?

*Children Rhymes* written by Langston Hughes (1902 – 1967)

The poem above shows that the blacks are not free. They are feeling discriminated by the whites. They cannot get the access to the authority of

politic, society or economic. Especially, in the political field they also have difficulties to have to access to the governmental occupation and authority. They are not have the authority becomes president or leader in America. The poems of Langston Hughes also show discrimination in social aspect and economic aspect. In the economic aspect, Hughes shows that the whites as the owner to own and handle the production sources and as the employees. They get higher payment. The blacks are slave of the whites. They do not have the authority in economical aspect. They get lower payment. In the social aspect, the blacks are poor and educated so the get low social status. As a result, these groups appears the racial discrimination from the whites toward the blacks in America.

These are some comments of the readers of the poems of Langston Hughes. They are Beth Diemer and Dellilah Miller. The first is Beth Diemer. Beth Diemer is from United States. He states that Hughes writes the poems based on his feeling and thought. He identifies himself with others outside his race when he says he likes something. Diemer consider that rhyme would have raised the appeal of the poem. He appreciates the candor. There is evidence that Langston started his homework immediately. This fact suggests that the assignment not only motivated him to write, but it caused him to think. The outcome is a path of reflection and perceptions, which leads to a revelation of truth that everyone is the same.

The second reviewer is Dellilah Miller. Style is from United States. She states that Hughes makes the world real. We can talk about stratification or xenophobia all we want but we will never really know how it feels. She thinks that he brings something to us in his poetry. She certainly adores him. Both of reviews suggest that Langston Hughes Poems describe real condition in stratification or racial discrimination in America in that era.

From all of the background above, the writer is interested in analyzing Langston Hughes' Poems that reflected racial discrimination in America between blacks and whites. In this research, the writer wants to focus on the Langston Hughes' Poems and the writer uses Marxist approach to analyze the poems. Based on the reason, the writer intends to conduct a study on Marxist approach with the title RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN LANGSTON HUGHES' POEMS: A MARXIST APPROACH.

## **B. Literary Review**

Before analyzing it, the writer has read other papers that are relevant with her analysis, especially about the approach. They are as follows:

1. Mulyani with the title Racial Discrimination in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man: A Marxist Approach. She was the student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and the aim of her research is to analyze Racial

Discrimination in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* by using a Marxist approach.

2. Ida Kusuma Wardani with the title *Against Social Segregation in Richard Wright's The Native Son: A Marxist Approach*. She was the student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and the aim of her research is to analyze *Against Social Segregation in Richard Wright's The Native Son* by using a Marxist approach.

The writer has an interesting data that will be analyzed in the research paper. The data are taken from Langston Hughes' Poems. They are written in a sort language, but they used to reflex the Racial Discrimination in America in early twentieth century and this research uses A Marxist Approach. That point makes this research is interesting to be held. In this research we will know what elements of poetry are and how the racial discrimination reflected in Langston Hughes' Poems. And the point that makes this research paper becomes different to the other is this research is analyzing the racial discrimination that is reflected in Langston Hughes' Poems by using A Marxist Approach.

### **C. Problem Statement**

The problem of the study that writer wants to analyze in this research is how racial discrimination is reflected in Langston Hughes' Poems.

#### **D. Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the writer limits on Racial Discrimination of Five Langston Hughes' poems. The writer concentrates on *I too*, *Cross*, *A New Song*, *Children's Rhyme*, *Mother to Son*.

#### **E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the structural element of the poems.
2. To analyze the poems based on Marxist approach.

#### **F. Benefits of the Study**

The writer hopes, that this research about Racial Discrimination in Langston Hughes' Poems will be benefit for the researcher and the readers generally. The benefits of the study are:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefits**

Theoretical benefits are to give some information's and contributions to literary studies on Langston Hughes' Poems and also to improve the body of knowledge in studying literature.

##### **2. Practical Benefits**

It is to enrich the writer's knowledge about literature work, especially analyzing poems based on A Marxist Approach.

## **G. Research Method**

In analyzing this study, the writer uses qualitative method. Dealing with research method, there are four aspect that need to be involved as follows:

### **1. Object of the Study**

The object of the study are Langston Hughes's poems. They are A New Song, Children's Rhymes, Cross, I too, Mother to Son.

### **2. Types of the Data and the Data Sources**

The data source used in research can be categorized into two sources of Data. They are primary data and secondary data.

#### **a. Primary data Source**

The primary data sources are poems written by Langston Hughes.

#### **b. Secondary data Sources**

The secondary data sources are some material related to the data required, such as Langston Hughes biography, internet website, and research approach books.

### **3. Technique of the Data Collection**

The data collection is done through documentation or library research. Some steps of collecting the data are:

- a. Reading the poems.
- b. Identifying the topic of the poems.
- c. Accessing to the internet to get several information and articles related to the object of the study.
- d. Taking notes of information in both primary and secondary data.
- e. Arranging, researching and developing the selection materials into a good unity toward the topic of the study.
- f. Drawing conclusion based on the analysis of the data.

#### **4. Technique of the Data Analysis**

The technique of data analysis is descriptive analysis, in which the writer tries to describe the structural elements of the poems and identifies the relationship between poems and the Marxism theories.

#### **H. Paper Organization**

The research paper is divided into six chapters:

Chapter I is the introduction , covering Background of the Study, Literary Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefit of the study, Research Method, and paper Organization.

Chapter II is Underlying Theory, covering The Notion of Marxism, Founders of Marxism, Principles of Marxism, Marxist Theory and Literary Criticism, and Theoretical Application.

Chapter III is Social Background of America in the mid twentieth century, covering Social Aspect, Economic Aspect, Political Aspect, Science and Technology Aspect, Cultural Aspect and Religious Aspect.

Chapter IV is Structural Analysis this chapter explains the structural elements of the poetry, and it consists of Rhythm, Rhyme, Repetitions, Alliteration, Assonance, Simile, Metaphor, Symbol, and Theme.

Chapter V is Marxist Analysis that consists of Social Aspect, Economic Aspect, Political Aspect, Science and Technology Aspect, Cultural Aspect and Religious Aspect.

Chapter VI is conclusion and suggestion.