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“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” An African Centered Historical Study of the Selfethnic Liberatory Education Nature and Goals of the Poetry of Langston Hughes: the Impact on Adult Education

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“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” An African Centered Historical Study of the Selfethnic
Liberatory Education Nature and Goals of the Poetry of Langston Hughes: the Impact on
Adult Education

By

Sarah E. Howard

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Partial Degree Requirement for a Doctorate in Education

National Louis University

June, 2009

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this historical study were to 1) document the Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature and goals of the poetry of Langston Hughes (from 1921 to 1933); and 2) to document the impact this poetry had on members of the African Diaspora. In addition, the goal of this research was to expand the historical knowledge base of the adult education field, so that it is more inclusive of the contributions of African Americans.

This study addressed the problem that the historical and philosophical literature of the field does not to any significant degree include the intellectual and adult education contributions or activities of African Americans.

Framed within an African Centered Historical Paradigm, this qualitative study analyzed sixteen of Hughes' poems, his essay entitled, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain", (1926) and the foreword to his college senior research project. The units of analysis were the conceptual elements embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998).

The results of the data analysis showed that each literary piece contained these conceptual elements: Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism; the substance of the selected works reflected African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba*; and/or that his goal was to facilitate the development a positive Selfethnic Image. Further, this study provided a new meaning construct for using literature art as a specific curricular element in Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education; thus, the concept of Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Education was developed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is very important for me to acknowledge those who have helped me produce this dissertation. First, I thank my Creator from whom all my blessings flow. Thanks to my family members who have been my biggest cheerleaders for this project, as well as for all my educational goals. I give a special thanks to my Aunt Geneva from whom I have learned so very much, especially about having ‘good common sense’ of which she has a healthy dose and helped to instill a generous portion in me. She has my utmost respect and my deepest love, because she first loved me.

Thanks to Susana Stoll who gave up her weekends to edit my study. I thank her especially for her loyalty and for her support during my doctoral journey and throughout the many years that we have been friends. I value her friendship immensely.

A thank you goes to my friend Patti Kulavic for her kindness, support and undying enthusiasm. She is a true friend and endured many hours of complaining and crying through the writing of this study. She was always available when I needed a shoulder to either cry or lean on.

I extend a special thanks to my Purdue University Calumet family, where I work, and worked throughout my doctoral journey, for their support, pride and belief in me and for helping me celebrate this wondrous accomplishment.

I also thank Dr. Tom Heaney, who served on my dissertation committee, whose quick turn-around time in response to drafts kept me on track. I appreciate his assistance during my years as a doctoral student and for his help with this study. In addition, Dr. Derise Tolliver, who was a real trooper, served as my external advisor. I thank her for her fresh eyes and suggestions for a future research agenda on my topic.

Lastly, a heartfelt thank you goes to Dr. Scipio Colin III, for serving as my primary advisor. Her guidance, support and generosity with her time, energy and ideas are the reasons I completed this dissertation successfully and on time. The highlight of my studies was learning about the African Centered Intellectual Paradigm. I will be eternally grateful that she taught me the theory, the application and the embodiment of this philosophy. As she used to say, “ONWARD AND UPWARD!”

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“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” An African Centered Historical Study of the Selfethnic
Liberatory Education Nature and Goals of the Poetry of Langston Hughes from the Period
of 1921 to 1933:
The Impact on Adult Education

By Sarah E. Howard

PREFACE

“THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS” (HUGHES 1921)

The title of this study is taken from the poem written by Langston Hughes in 1921. “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” was the first of many of his poems published in *The Crisis* magazine, which is the publishing arm of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization still in existence today. Hughes wrote the poem in about fifteen minutes on a ship crossing the Mississippi River, as he wondered about what this river crossing had meant to the thousands of enslaved Africans as they traveled to their new home in America to be sold and bred like cattle. His progression of thought about these travels then led him to think about the rivers of the past – his past - his African past. In the first volume of his autobiography, *The Big Sea* (1940), Hughes explains this stream of consciousness regarding his union with his ancient historical past: “Then I thought about other rivers in our past – the Congo, and the Niger, and the Nile in Africa – and the thought came to me: ‘I’ve Known Rivers’ ...” (Hughes 1921 as cited in Hughes 1940, 55).

This poem will be documented in its entirety and analyzed in more detail later, but the quote above from Hughes’ autobiography is answering one of the research questions guiding this study: What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of Langston Hughes? The *Nguzo Saba* is a set of seven principles that reflect African traditions and culture: “[*Nguzo Saba*] asserts that adult

educational policies, practices, experiences, philosophies, ethical issues, theories, and concepts must be considered and evaluated on the basis of the perspective and experience of African Americans/African Americans” (Colin 1998, 54).

The historical connection that Hughes made between the enslaved Africans’ crossing of the rivers in Africa and then the Mississippi river upon their arrival in America, point to how Hughes is using the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* or Faith. Hughes is revealing in this metaphysical connection between the Mississippi River and the rivers of Africa the belief and importance of the historical connections between African America and Africa. This faith is not just in the historical connections of African American culture but also a faith in its teachers and leaders of the culture, who work to free a mind that has been taught that it is inferior. Hughes devoted his life to helping African Americans create a positive Selfethnic Image and to eradicating a psychosocial meaning construct of race inferiority.

Chapter one, the Introduction, follows and sets up the study.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose Statement of the Study

The purpose of this historical study is 1) to document the Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature and goals of the poetry of Langston Hughes; and 2) to document the impact his poetry had on the field of adult education. In addition, the goal of this research is to expand the historical knowledge base of the field, so that it is more inclusive of the contributions of African Americans to the field.

Problem Statement of the Study

The adult education field does not, to any significant degree, include in the required and sanctioned texts of the field, the contributions of African Americans, as either “producers or consumers” (Colin 1989, 3) of adult education programs. This historical exclusion from the field does not give an accurate understanding of the history of the field, nor does it provide for inclusive curricular programs, which negatively impacts African American graduate students.

Historical Overview of the Problem

The adult education historians of the required texts for the field (Knowles 1962; Stubblefield and Keane 1989; Kett 1994; and Stubblefield and Keane 1994) have not documented an accurate history which includes the contributions of African Americans. Given the massive impact that the poetry of Langston Hughes had on the Selfethnic Liberatory Education of African Americans, this oversight leaves out an important aspect of adult education history and American history in general. For history to be effective and

comprehensive, it has to document a true, complete and accurate history. An inaccurate history supports a racist system and does not properly showcase the sociocultural and intellectual realities of African Americans, which in turn affects the field of adult education that negatively impacts African American graduate students.

African American scholars have reviewed the historical literature of this area of study and have documented the exclusion of African American contributions to the field. Colin's (1989) historical study on the Universal Negro Improvement Association - African Communities League (U.N.I.A. – A.C.L.), documented this organization as an adult education movement that had as its educational goal education for Self Reliance. She stated the following about her review:

“To date, the literature relative to the historical development of adult education in America has ignored the intellectual contributions of African-Americans to the knowledge base and conceptual framework, and has failed to acknowledge this group's participation as both consumers and producers of adult education programs (Anderson & Drkenwald, 1979; Grattan, 1971; Knowles, 1977; Stubblefield, 1988)...”
(Colin 1989, 3)

The poetry of Langston Hughes, which came to prominence during the Harlem Renaissance Movement, is a great example of an adult education activity that was both produced and consumed by African Americans. The goal of both producing and consuming adult education activities through the poetry of Hughes, and the period known as the Harlem Renaissance “reflected a different worldview.” (Colin 1989, 3) This different worldview of adult education, which was developed by African Americans for African Americans was Selfethnic and Liberatory in nature, and had as its goal, Selfethnic Reliance and the teaching of a Selfethnic image that improved Racial Pride and Racial Esteem. The “S” and “I” in the words, “Selfethnic Image” are capitalized because the

concept of “Selfethnic” used by Colin (1989) refers to the African American race and is capitalized as she uses it. Colin (1989) explains the development of the different worldview as one that was a response to legal segregation and “Jim Crow” laws that were in effect from 1900 until 1965. The different worldview was an institutionalized socio-educational philosophy and ideology that put African ideas and ideals at the center of scholarship and one where African American accomplishments and contributions are included in history and in educational programs. The educational programs were produced by African Americans for African Americans in a new socio-education philosophy.

Many scholars have written about the exclusion of African American contributions to the historical knowledge base of the field. Hammond, Frison and Gregg who were adult education graduate students at the time they conducted their study, entitled, “An African-Centered Perspective in Adult Education: Celebrating Voices from the African Diaspora” (1999), wrote the following about their review of the historical literature of the field and the exclusion of the contributions of African Americans:

The void was the exclusion of the historical, philosophical, and theoretical intellectual contributions made to the field of adult education by people of African descent. It was as if people of African descent were eliminated or did not participate in adult education activities either as students or as educators (Hammond et al, 1991, 11).

Johnson Bailey and Cervero in their chapter, “The Invisible Politics of Race in Adult Education”, published in the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (2000), documented that although race is a key component in relationships in negotiating power and privilege, the topic of race was not the focus of any single chapter in “the entire corpus of eight previous [adult education] handbooks” (Johnson Bailey and Cervero 2000, 1151).

Although traditional historians in the field have virtually excluded the contributions

of African Americans, they have been involved in adult education activities since coming to this country as enslaved Africans; for example, teaching themselves to read when it was forbidden by law. Johnson-Bailey, in her study, “A Quarter Century of African Americans in Adult Education: an Unknown and Unheralded Presence” (2002) stated that the African American involvement in adult education has been consistent and that it has been one of commitment, but has been “unknown” to adult educators, practitioners and students. This unknown status of the contribution of Africa Americans to the field is because of non-documentation that has resulted in their exclusion in the history of the field. Not only have African Americans participated in adult education programs, they have participated as both consumers and producers as early as 1619, when they first came to this country as enslaved Africans (Colin 1989; McGee and Neufeldt 1985; Johnson-Bailey 2002).

The field of adult education has addressed this exclusion to some degree. One of the ways it has addressed this is the production of the book, *Making Spaces* (Sissel and Sheared (2001), which was written to ‘make space’ for those voices that had been previously excluded from the traditional historical adult education texts. The book was a result of an official statement made by the Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE) in 1992 that there was an “exclusion of certain voices and knowledge bases within the adult education literature” (Sissel and Sheared 2001, 13).

Since the documentation of this exclusion by the CPAE in 1992, more of their contributions have been documented by scholars of the African Diaspora. Smith and Colin, in their chapter in *Making Spaces*, “An Invisible Presence, Silenced Voices: African Americans in the Adult Education Professoriate” list the works that have been written by African Americans in the field of adult education as of 2001:

The edited works of Neufeldt and McGee (1990), the contributions of Colin (1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1999), Easter (1995, 1996), Guy (1993, 1996), Guy and Colin (1998), Sheared (1992, 1994), Johnson-Bailey (1994, 1999), and Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1996) are examples of the significant contributions African American/African-American researchers have made to the historical and theoretical literature in the adult education field (Smith and Colin 2001, 61-62).

One such contribution that was made in 2002, was an edited work entitled, *Freedom Road: Adult Education of African Americans*. The importance of this historic work is described in the foreword: "...it will begin to fill the 'structured silences' in graduate curriculums on African American history" (Cunningham 2002, xiii).

An earlier edited work by McGee and Neufeldt (1985) entitled, *Education of the Black Adult in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography* is the first exhaustive annotated bibliography discussing black adult education and contains over three hundred annotated sources. The editors write that African American adult education "has been largely overlooked by historians" (McGee and Neufeldt 1985, xii). Their goal in editing this book was to provide a greater understanding of the educational plight of African Americans, and to document the accomplishments of the race.

In addition to these various reviews of the historical texts by African American Scholars, the researcher reviewed *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties: Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990*, Kett (1994). This historical adult education text was one of the texts that graduates students in a doctoral program could choose to review, with the critical lens of whose voice was missing in the text. The book documents various methods and evolution of adult education programs and activities, and the history of European Americans, while lacking information about the history of

people of color. Two paragraphs of this five hundred seventy-nine page book are devoted to describing African Americans in 1830 and their establishment of their own literary societies. African Americans are mentioned two other times in the book - once, when reporting on community college statistics and the second time when the African American Women's Clubs were documented as an adult education program. (This is in the *Notes* section as part of the discussion on European American Women's Clubs and not in the full text.)

Adult Education in the American Experience: from the Colonial Period to the Present, (Stubblefield and Keane 1994), was also one of the historical texts that could be chosen to be reviewed from the standpoint of whose voice was missing in the history. This book was also reviewed by the researcher. The book provides a historical account of the types of adult education institutions, associations, and types of delivery organizations and systems utilized from the colonial period through the beginning of the 1990s. The authors document that enslaved Africans were trained by being given apprenticeships during the Colonial Period, making the slave experience sound rather benign. In discussing that slaves were apprenticed with no wages, they make the point that these slaves might "enjoy industrial freedom" in return for wages (Stubblefield and Keane 1994, 38). The authors also minimally mention African Americans' participation in other adult education activities, most of which were documented about and during the civil rights period.

Significance of the Study

This study will expand the historical knowledge base of the field by including the contributions of an African American Selfethnic Liberatory adult educator. This expansion will render adult education a field that has a more inclusive and accurate history. This study's inclusion in the historical knowledge base of the field will impact the Selfethnic Racial Pride and Racial Esteem of African American graduate students by providing Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989). This study will ensure that graduate students are acquainted with Langston Hughes, as an African American who has contributed to the field of adult education as a Selfethnic Liberatory adult educator. This study will also impact program planning that would include both formal and informal definitions of adult education activities and programs. Once included in the adult education historical knowledge base, it can be used to produce African Centered curricular adult education graduate programs and activities.

By including African American contributions to the knowledge base of the field, African American graduate students will be able to see their own adult educational history reflected back to them, thereby helping them to “see” a positive Selfethnic Image “reflected” back to them. When they don't see themselves “reflected” in the literature they don't have that image to emulate, as do members of the dominant culture. Seeing one's own ethnic group in successful enterprises creates an opportunity for modeling the behavior, thus sending the message that others can accomplish rewarding endeavors as well. Seeing one's own ethnic group “reflected” in positive situations creates what Colin (1989) calls “Selfethnic Reflectors.”

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors was developed by Colin from studies of

African American scholars who all agree that systematic exclusion of their race's contributions in the historical knowledge bases creates psycho-social meaning constructs that perpetuate race inferiority. The effect is that African American graduate students are not learning that their race has contributed to the field; this has negative consequences for their practice of adult education and on their self image and self esteem. This lack of historical accuracy also creates a false premise for non-African American graduate students, allowing them to believe in the inferiority of their colored classmates.

One of the African American scholars who agreed with the premise that exclusion causes Selfethnic negation was Ambrose Caliver, adult educator and civil servant, who made the point that African Americans need to value their own race's achievements just as they are taught to value the accomplishments of European Americans. Caliver provides one of the building blocks for Colin's (1989) Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors by admonishing members of the race to value their own race's achievements just as they have been taught to value the efforts of European Americans, which is cornerstone of a Eurocentric Intellectual paradigm.

Another African American scholar's work that Colin used to construct the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors was Thomas Sowell, adult educator, who made the point that history has depicted African Americans too often as a problem to be fixed and people who are "recipients of benefits rather than creators of something admirable" (Sowell 1974, 313 as cited in Colin 1989, 13). Colin explains that the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors "is the acknowledgement of the African American presence, the validity of their experiences, and the inclusion of the race's contributions to the intellectual and socio-historical development of this country..." (Colin 1989, 17). Furthermore,

...this would enable members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator... 'apostles' of the power of self-ethnic consciousness raising viewed this theory as a curricular element, a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the building of a positive Selfethnic image (Colin 1989, 24).

Colin's Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors provides African American graduate students with a tool to guide them in documenting the accomplishments of African American adult educators, so this history can be added to the historical knowledge base of the field. Furthermore, it achieves documenting that African Americans are not a problem to be fixed, but are valuable and contributing members of society. This will create meaning construct for all graduate students to be educated about the truth of African Americans as contributors to the field of adult education. This then, can be accessed by all adult education graduate students so that an accurate history of the field is presented.

By adding African American contributions to the historical knowledge base of the field, graduate students will be more prepared to work in a diverse world. This inclusion in the historical knowledge base of the field will provide information for creating more diverse curricular programs and help the practice of the field to meet inclusiveness goals, thus helping to meet the needs of a diverse graduate adult education student body. As the number of African American adult education graduate students who conduct African Centered research increases, the historical knowledge base of the field must increase in proportion by including these contributions.

Stubblefield, a traditional field historical scholar, understood the importance of the historical field continuing to change as the field's contributors become varied, the needs of society change, and more diverse graduate students write about the diverse groups'

contributions. Stubblefield was not specific or prescriptive, but rather was more philosophical regarding changing sociological demographics and how the historical knowledge base of the field must concomitantly change: “As a social practice matures and gains greater acceptance, however, a history that remains only institutional, inspirational, and celebratory, will prove to be inadequate to the demands of the future.” (Stubblefield 1988, 26).

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of the Study

Conceptual and Theoretical Frame

The conceptual and theoretical frame for this study is the African Centered Intellectual Paradigm, which is also known by the following names: “Africentric Intellectual Paradigm”, Africentricity, or “Afrocentricity”. The term, “Afrocentricity” was coined by the father of Afrocentricity, Asante, who defines it as centrism that is grounded in African values, ideas and ideals and allows scholars to conduct research putting the view point of the African at the center as the means to analyze the study.

On his website, devoted to Afrocentrism, Asante (n.d.) writes:

When black people view themselves as centered and central in their own history then they see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than as marginals on the periphery of political or economic experience.
(website www.asante.net/scholarly/afrocentricityarticle.html).

The terms “Africentric”, “Africentrism”, “Africentric Intellectual Paradigm” or “African Centered Intellectual Paradigm” were coined by Colin and have the same meaning as Asante’s versions of the concept. Colin, however, includes the African Centered principles of the *Nguzo Saba* in her definition, which she calls the “seven principles of an Africentric Worldview (Colin 1998, 44). The *Nguzo Saba* is “an indigenous, and therefore legitimate African value system... [that is used] as a normative framework for defining an Africentric cultural perspective” (Colin 1998, 42). The *Nguzo Saba* “addresses the major elements of a cultural system by focusing on the essential elements of community and identity, aesthetics, economics, politics, philosophy, and religion” (Colin 1998, 44). The elements of identity and aesthetics (art) are key components that will be the focus of this study, while

the concept of Selfethnic refers to identity and Langston Hughes' poetry is art or aesthetics.

The seven principles of the *Nguzo Saba* are as follows:

1. ***Umoja*** (Unity) - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.
2. ***Kujichagulia*** (Self-Determination) - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.
3. ***Ujima*** (Collective Work and Responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.
4. ***Ujamaa*** (Cooperative Economics) - To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.
5. ***Nia*** (Purpose) – To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
6. ***Kuumba*** (Creativity) - To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
7. ***Imani*** (Faith) – To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our

This study will use only the principles of *Imani*, or Faith and *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination as they are the two most prevalent principles in Langston Hughes' adult education philosophy that will be documented in Chapter Three, *the Development of Langston Hughes as Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator*. His poetry will be documented and analyzed in Chapter Four.

The remainder of this chapter describes the African Centered concepts, theories and themes that this study will use to analyze the poetry of Langston Hughes in Chapter Four, as well as his other primary sources. The poetry of Langston Hughes and the other literature that he authored are used and cited in this study as primary sources. Primary

sources are data sources which are “the basic material used in historical studies” (Barzun and Graff 1957). The Socioeducational Philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance provides a philosophical framework within which this study resides. The Selfethnic Liberatory adult education poetry of Langston Hughes has the goals of Selfethnic Reliance, and one of its goals was to help improve the image of the race. The key African Centered concept for this study is “Selfethnic” which is a term coined by Colin (1989), and refers to members of the race defining their own sense of itself – their True Self – a sense of value and accomplishment. Below are the concepts, theories and themes used to analyze the primary sources in this study.

Theories

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors

The following definition reflects a more complete depiction of Colin’s theory. It refers to: “... the acknowledgement of the African American presence, the validity of their experiences, and the inclusion of the race’s contributions to the intellectual and socio-historical development of this country”... (Colin 1989, 17)

And

“...this would enable members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator” (Colin 1989, 24).

And

“...’Apostles’ of the power of Selfethnic consciousness raising viewed this theory as a curricular element, a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the

building of a positive Selfethnic image” (Colin 1989, 24).

The Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education

This theory is grounded in the Socio-educational Philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance. “Advocates of this orientation view the development of Selfethnic pride and unity as the means to an end that yields Selfethnic liberation, and economic success. It is also believed that due to the racist nature of American society, adult education programs must be culturally grounded in that they must reflect those educational activities, formal and informal, that are designed and implemented by individuals and organizations that have their roots in the community (racially, ethnically, and geographically) and the programmatic goals are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group” (Colin 1998, 46).

Concepts

Selfethnic

Selfethnic refers to the “Self-acknowledgement of self-value construct ... which reflects a ‘proper conception of self’ (Colin 1989, 17). The word, “Selfethnic” is written without the hyphen, and denotes a sociocultural meaning and a historical significance that is grounded in the Africentric world view. This view is reflected in the conceptual synthesis of the descriptions *self* and *ethnic*; it represents the revitalization of a traditional perspective in that the concepts of individual and groups are a false dichotomy” (Colin 1994, 51). In African culture an individual is not separate from the other members in the community. Both are part of each other, and are seen as one.

Selfethnic Negation

Selfethnic negation refers to "...systematic exclusion of the history and contributions of any groups of persons leads to "Selfethnic negation... What are the psychological ramifications of this? This lack of 'reflectors,' by its omission, psychologically tells the African-American students that their Selfethnic group has developed nothing that has significant contributory value to the field..." (Colin 1989, 13)

Selfethnic Reflectors

This term pertains to African Americans seeing successful and positive "representation of their ethnic group" (Colin 1989, 13) reflected in any given field, venue, enterprise, and so forth. Seeing their own racial group's accomplishments and contributions to society "reflected back to them, increases their sense of racial pride and esteem" (Colin 1989, 13) and provides an example of a mirror of what they themselves can also contribute because they have seen someone else of their own kind achieve worthwhile endeavors.

The Research Questions Guiding the Study

1. How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?
2. What African Centered concepts, including but not limited to the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of Langston Hughes?
3. How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic image?

Methodology of the Study

Traditional Qualitative Methodology

The methodology used for this historical study is Qualitative Methodology, and is focused on understanding the natural social human world. Qualitative research is highly interpretive in nature, and does not look at quantitative causal relationships or quantitative correlations. The researcher can be at the center of the qualitative research, as well as participate in the research, and can also interpret the data from a subjective viewpoint (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

Traditional Historical Methodology

Traditional historical methodology uses primary data to answer questions about the past. Historical research also is the most effective methodology for understanding, analyzing and improving practice. It uses primary sources, which are those that an author either wrote about an event, and that he or she was the eyewitness or participant in the event. It can also be a reporting of a direct observation of an event (Merriam and Simpson 1985).

African Centered Qualitative Methodology

This study is grounded in the African Centered method of qualitative inquiry. This method was postulated by Asante as part of the Afrocentricity (Asante 1990, 1996, and 1997). The African Centered method of inquiry operates in the same way as traditional qualitative research, with the difference being that African values, ideas, and ideals will be at the center of the research and will allow the researcher to be at the sociocultural and intellectual center of the research. This method will enable the researcher to examine the data from this sociocultural and intellectual center and give the researcher license to

analyze and interpret the data from this vantage point.

African American methodology is used to challenge the traditional scientific paradigms that serve to promote and perpetuate racist systems, including those of education. Research that uses a Eurocentric method serves the function of oppression of those typically identified as the “other”. Conversely, Afrology has the goal of amelioration of the race’s oppressive condition (Akbar, 200). Akbar, like Colin, is promoting Selfethnic Reliance and Selfethnic Liberation. Akbar, like Colin, is teaching members of the African Diaspora to research their own history and to educate the race to establish principles that will liberate them from the destructive effects of socio-cultural and intellectual racism.

Another goal of Africology is to bring about ‘humanism’ for members of the Diaspora, which refers to putting a real “face” on the African by presenting his true identity. Eurocentric research typically does not make connections between mind, spirit and body. The communal spirit of African culture weaves its way into the African Centered analysis of research, with one goal being that it must be used to change existing racist policies that will lead to liberation and advancement for the race.

Akbar’s African Psychology is similar to Colin’s (1989) Socio-educational Philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, which states that African American scholars/historians have historically agreed on a conceptual continuity that demands “that educational curricula reflect reality of African-American culture, values, and social and intellectual histories” (Colin 1989, 23).

African Centered Historical Methodology

History is an extremely important component in Africology because of the non-

documentation or misrepresented documentation of African history in traditional historical texts. Scholars of the African Diaspora have written extensively about the importance of an accurate history; a few of them are highlighted in this study. One such scholar is Carter G. Woodson (1933), African American historian, educator and founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson's thesis is that African Americans and others have been mis-educated. This mis-education extends to those African Americans who have been educated in formal institutions using a Eurocentric curriculum. In addition to Woodson's thesis on mis-education, it includes a plan for re-education. It is a plan for Selfethnic Liberatory education in that it prescribes educational programs created by and for African Americans, by using their people's history. These programs would include assessing the various and sundry challenges in the culture, with a curriculum that addresses these problems. In this way, the education is specific to the needs of the community.

W.E.B. DuBois (1903), adult educator, scholar, author, and civil rights activist stated that the educational process that begins without including the race, culture and history of a people, contributes to that people's racial oppression. DuBois, as editor of *Crisis* magazine, put this into practice by including regular features on the history and culture of African Americans in the monthly magazine.

Arturo Schomburg, writer, historian, author, civil rights activist, co-founder of the Negro Society of Historical Research, president of the American Negro Academy (which championed African American history), and also served as the first curator for the Negro Collection at Fisk University and of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and Art at the New York City Public library. During his tenure, he amassed a world acclaimed collection of African and African American artworks, manuscripts, rare books, slave

narratives, and other African historical artifacts, and wrote about the importance of history to African American culture. Schomburg's thesis postulates that it is necessary for African Americans to "remake" their past if they are going to make their future. He made the point that the past – the past record of accomplishments - must be understood if a future of accomplishments was going to be created. Schomburg dedicated his life to collecting the "proof", (art and artifacts) that African history is connected to African American history. He proved, through his collection that African American history did not begin when they came to America as enslaved Africans, but that their history began with a rich culture and with extraordinary accomplishments in Africa, pre-American arrival.

Professor Molefi Asante, the father of Afrology, considered history to be of paramount importance in his development of the discipline. Asante makes the point that the acquisition of knowledge takes place within a social and political context and is defined by economic and historical factors. His thesis is that Eurocentric historians have documented certain aspects of African American history and have disregarded the rest, and he believes that the Africologist's task is to retrieve the complete history of the African. Meaning construct also takes place within a political context and the proper reporting of history determines the meaning that is constructed from events in the culture.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized in the following manner. Chapter Two documents the Harlem Renaissance as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Movement, by giving the nature and goals of the Movement and the impact that it had on the field of adult education, and also describes the Selfethnic adult education activities that took place. Although the research questions guiding this study refer to the literary works of Langston Hughes, these same questions will be applied to the Harlem Renaissance Movement, as it provides the historical period within which Hughes developed as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary adult educator.

Chapter Three documents the psychosocial, psycho cultural and sociocultural development of Langston Hughes as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator. Chapter Four analyzes Hughes' Selfethnic Liberatory poetry, although analysis of his works and of the Harlem Renaissance Movement is conducted throughout the study, especially in Chapters Two and Three, where the historical antecedents of the Harlem Renaissance, and where Hughes' life is documented, respectively. Chapter Five is the conclusion and recommendations for future investigations.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY - THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE - A SELFETHNIC LIBERATORY ADULT EDUCATION MOVEMENT THAT USED LITERATURE AS ONE OF ITS METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Introduction

In order to understand Langston Hughes as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator, the Movement in which he came into prominence, the Harlem Renaissance, is being documented in this chapter. The Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature, goals and activities of the Harlem Renaissance are presented here to give the historical context in which Hughes developed as a Selfethnic Liberatory adult educator.

The Harlem Renaissance Movement - A Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Movement

What Is the Harlem Renaissance?

Mis-education to Re-education. The Harlem Renaissance Movement was a sociocultural and sociopolitical Movement for change that was conceived of, for and by African Americans; it was a Movement that used art in all its manifestations (this study looks only at literature) to re-educate African Americans to have a positive Selfethnic Image. The self image of African Americans had historically been defined as inferior, subhuman and/or inhuman by racist leaders and educators of the country (Colin, 1989, 1998; Du Bois 1903; Lewis 1994; Locke 1925; Schomburg 1926; Woodson 1933).

This negative self image was perpetuated by a racist formal educational system, but was also taught in informal ways outside the classroom through a number of different venues such as mainstream and Eurocentric magazines, art, cultural events, and so forth.

These formal and informal methods of mis-education generated and regenerated a system of mis-education about the intellectual abilities of African Americans and their cultural relevance.

Movements are about change; change from one way of doing and being, to “moving” toward a different way of doing and being. The Harlem Renaissance Movement was a cultural, intellectual, spiritual, economic, political “moving” away *from* the negative effects of being erroneously and negatively defined by others, *to* “moving” toward members of the African Diaspora defining themselves, for themselves, and by themselves as intelligent, productive, and beautiful human beings who were Selfethnically Reliant, or who could create and control their own destiny.

The leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, worked on their adult re-education agenda and were acting within the framework of the Socioeducational Philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, which promotes Selfethnic Reliance through educational curricular. The process described is one of mis-education-to-re-education, and it is the thesis that Woodson espoused in his seminal work, *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1933). The concepts of mis-education and re-education are major themes that are historical antecedents to the Harlem Renaissance Movement.

The negative effects of this mis-education resulted in what Colin (1989) defines as Selfethnic negation. Selfethnic negation refers to what happens within the psyche of African Americans when their history is excluded, or negatively and/or erroneously documented, and does not reflect a true and complete history. This produces meaning construct in which African Americans perceive themselves as inferior, and sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy that nothing is worth producing, and/or if something is produced, it is of

poor quality.

Woodson's re-education thesis, which was both Selfethnic and Liberatory, was very prescriptive. He advocated that African Americans depend on themselves for their own re-education, as well as their own social, political, spiritual, economic existence. He proposed the following be included in an African Centered curriculum:

- 1) African Americans must study and understand their condition and get training to be in service to their race to help those less fortunate.
- 2) African Americans must work not only to be comfortable themselves, but to help other members of their race to be comfortable as well.
- 3) African Americans must have a vision for the future, and must work to educate others of their group to work toward a vision that includes a positive Image and a Self Reliant future.
- 4) African Americans must direct attention to the folklore of Africa, to the philosophy of those proverbs, to the development of language and the works of the race's writers in an effort to use one's own cultural elements to teach Selfethnic Reliance.
- 5) African Americans must work within the political system to improve the African American condition.
- 6) African Americans must produce their own art to "portray the life of [their] people" (Woodson 1933, 180).

Mis-education and Re-education: Connection to the Research Question Guiding the Study.

This sub-section will connect the research questions guiding the study to Woodson's theses on mis-education and Re-education. The research questions guiding the study were written in regards to Langston Hughes; however, in conducting layered analysis for this study, the

research questions are being applied to the Harlem Renaissance period as well since it is the historical period in which Hughes came into prominence, and provides the historical backdrop for understanding his development as an adult educator. The questions follow:

1) “How and in what ways did the Harlem Renaissance address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?” It did so by addressing the mis-education being taught in formal and informal ways in a Eurocentric educational system. This mis-education caused poor Selfethnic racial pride and esteem, which caused individual Selfethnic negation of those in the race. Woodson’s thesis on Re-education addressed the ways to rectify the mis-education caused by a Eurocentric approach to education through African Centered educational programs created by members of the race and addressing their specific needs. The thesis of re-education is reflected in the goals of the Harlem Renaissance – one being the goal of Selfethnic Liberation.

2) “What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance?” The Harlem Renaissance Movement was framed within the Socioeducational Philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance. The agenda to improve the Selfethnic Image of the race produced adult education activities that had the goal of liberation – the liberation of the race’s mindset that it was socially, culturally, and intellectually subordinate to the mainstream, Eurocentric, race. The Socioeducational Philosophy of Self Reliance is a world view in which educational programs and activities are created for the purpose of providing sociocultural liberation from the belief in inferiority. These programs, with a goal of liberation, are what Colin (2007) calls “Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs”, and are created by and participated in by members of the African Diaspora and

...provide both formal and informal educational activities (the introduction of new knowledge/information and/or deprogramming regarding knowledge and/or understandings as a result of a miseducative process)...as a result of the impacts of sociocultural and intellectual racism (Colin 2007).

The concept of Selfethnic used in this sub-section form the primary focus of the thesis of this study. Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs (Colin 1999), and the Mis-education and Re-education theses of Woodson (1933), are the African Centered concepts explained in this sub-section.

The *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* and *Kujichagulia* are also African Centered concepts reflected in this sub-section. *Imani*, or Faith, is represented in Woodson's (1933) the mis-education and re-education theses, because of the Faith that Woodson showed in the intellectual abilities of his people to create a culturally relevant re-education program although none was in place before. *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination, is represented in Woodson's belief in his people to do it for themselves, when they had been taught that they did not have the intelligence to create anything relevant. The full meaning of *Kujichagulia* means to define for self (the race), to name for self, to create for self, and to speak for self. This is relevant because this was being proposed at a time when it was not widely accepted that African Americans were capable of creating their own educational programs.

3) "How and in what ways did the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic image?" The mis-education/re-education thesis is a historical antecedent for the Harlem Renaissance and frames the development the "Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs" that were produced during that time. The programs were directed toward re-education of a Racial Self Image that had been sorely damaged. All of the goals of Woodson's prescriptive re-education program

apply to creating a positive Selfethnic Image, but the following are more succinctly relevant:

- 1) African Americans must have a vision for the future, and must work to educate others of their group to work toward a vision that includes a positive Image and a Self Reliant future.
- 2) African Americans must direct attention to the folklore of Africa, to the philosophy of those proverbs, to the development of language and the works of the race's writers in an effort to use one's own cultural elements to teach Selfethnic Reliance (Woodson 1933).

Effect of Mis-education on African American Graduate Students. African American graduate students who do not see their own race's contribution documented in the historical texts of the field are infected with Selfethnic negation. This omission does not produce "reflectors" (Colin 1989) for them to see that they can produce worthwhile projects, like others members of the educational community. When a race of people documents their people's accomplishments and successful history, it provides "reflectors" for which those of the race see that their ethnic group produces and accomplishes successful endeavors. This lack of "reflectors" constitutes mis-education that affects not only African Americans, and African American graduate students, but members of other racial groups who are being educated to think and believe that African Americans are inferior, and have not contributed anything worthwhile to the development of American history or to the field of adult education. These racist, systemic educational practices perpetuated a negative stereotype of the race during the period of the Harlem Renaissance.

The New Negro. Called the principal architect of the Harlem Renaissance, Charles

Spurgeon Johnson, sociologist, educator, editor, political strategist and civil rights activists, chose to use “letters and art” as a means of gaining respect, and to provide a different strategy to be used that would prove that African Americans were as White people, since every other method of getting Whites to see that African Americans “were as good as” did not work (Lewis 1994, Hughes 1940). African Americans had tried many ways to gain acceptance by White America. The literary works of the Harlem Renaissance did not emulate Eurocentric writing; the writers, especially the younger ones were incorporating their own cultural ideas, ideals and values in their writing. (Before this they tried emulating White cultural writings and stylings, trying to show that they could do this better than their White counterparts.)

Johnson, who was also the editor of *Opportunity Magazine*, the publishing arm of the Urban League, said the following about the Harlem Renaissance Movement writers: “...they seemed to care less about what White people thought, or were likely to think, than about themselves and what they had to say” (Johnson 1955 as cited in Lewis 1994, 215). Johnson and others who helped him organize the first gala to jump start the Harlem Renaissance, said it was created as a “program to promote racial advancement through artistic creativity” (Johnson 1925, 510). The literature that was produced during the Harlem Renaissance consisted of twenty-six novels, ten volumes of poetry, five Broadway plays, and a countless number of essays and short stories (Lewis 1994).

The Harlem Renaissance Movement was a movement *from* the “old Negro” *to* the “New Negro”. The old Negro was concerned about being accepted by the White racists who deemed him inferior, and was concerned about proving to the racists that he was equal to them. They set out to do this by emulating their culture, claiming it as their own,

ignoring their own culture; believing, as they had been educated to believe, that their culture was not important, and non-existent.

Johnson wrote about this pivotal event that officially kicked off the Harlem Renaissance Movement (this will be discussed in detail in the section, “How and Why Did the Harlem Renaissance Begin) and this “New Negro” in the quote below. Although he was writing specifically about the poetry of James Weldon Johnson, civil rights activist, poet, novelist, playwright, diplomat, linguist, and leader in the NAACP, who was a major contributor to the Harlem Renaissance Movement, the quote captures the essence of not only Johnson’s work, but of the other writer activists of the Movement, and of the Movement itself: “In a curiously fascinating way both style and content bespoke the meeting and parting of the old and new in Negro life in America” (Johnson 1955 as cited in Lewis 1994, 208).

The Harlem Renaissance, the budding ground for the “New Negro,” was a time in which the race was searching for sociocultural and intellectual emancipation. Johnson called it a “self-conscious and race-conscious movement” (Johnson 1955) that had the energy to bring about change, especially change regarding the inferior African American image. These African Americans, working within the purview of a philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, had learned that emulating White culture was not gaining them acceptance or rendering them equal in the eyes of their White oppressors. The new world view of these New Negro writers was one of embracing a new, positive, Selfethnic Image that would help improve Racial Pride and Esteem. Alain Locke, writer, philosopher, educator, activist and editor, who edited the book, *The New Negro* (Locke 1925), which was an anthology of writings, drawings and illustrations by mostly African Americans who

contributed to, and/or who were involved in the Harlem Renaissance Movement, defined the spirit of the Movement as a “renewed self-respect and self-dependence” (Locke 1925, 4-5). The “New Negro” writer did not feel subservient, or inferior, but was instead an accomplished producer, consumer, and contributor to his/her own Selfethnic Liberatory Adult re-education that promoted a positive Selfethnic Image. Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education makes use of both informal and formal methods of educational delivery. This also defines the Harlem Renaissance as an adult education activity, which Colin explains as “...if adults are actively involved in an activity in which they are learning something, whether it be new knowledge, skills, or an alternative perspective, then that process is adult education” (Colin 1989, 29).

The new knowledge that was disseminated during the Harlem Renaissance Movement was that African Americans could define their own Image, through literature and other art forms, rather than fight against a reality that had been created for them by White racists who were continually producing literature that defined them as inferior. Between 1911 and 1923 extensive literature, including several popular culture-type publications, were written vilifying Africans and their culture and African Americans and their culture (Lewis 1994, Locke 1925). Re-defining themselves through literature was a different way to use their power and defining their own Image had a very different focus than trying to defend themselves against untruths. Being on the defensive weakens one’s position, because of the use of armor, which is heavy, to protect oneself. The heavy armor, in the heat of battle, wears and slows one down. To be on the defensive is to “accept” all the “bullets” (racist definitions) “fired” by answering them with a defensive action. All the energy is used to defend and ward off the attack. Instead of staying in this defensive

position, the writer activists of the Harlem Renaissance Movement stood firm on African Centered principles, and created a powerful and firm position of Racial Esteem and Pride by providing adult educational programs that improved the Selfethnic Image of the race.

The New Negro: Connection to the Research Questions Guiding the Study. In this sub-section the research will be answered in connection to the New Negro: 1) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance Movement address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?" One of the ways it addressed the negative impact factor of sociocultural and intellectual racism was the philosophy of the New Negro and the publishing of the book, *The New Negro* (Locke 1933), which is an anthology of writings by authors who addressed the effects of racism and ways to address it, thereby creating a new Selfethnic Image. The damaging effects of selfethnic negation caused by a racist educational system was the catalyst for creating a identity that was based on a new philosophy – a philosophy of the New Negro, which was a philosophy of believing in the Self efficacy of the race to speak for itself to a more positive Selfethnic Image. *The New Negro* was an answer to the negative impact factors of a culture that promoted an abnormal Eurocentrists' and White Supremists' negative and dehumanized and inferior definitions of African Ameripeans" (Colin 1989, 13). 2) What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the works of the Harlem Renaissance? The concepts of "Selfethnic" are reflected in the "New Negro", which refers to the race's power and intelligence to create for itself.

Imani, or Faith, and *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination are both reflected in the New Negro because of the Faith the race had to move to a new way to identify self. This act of creating a new Self Identity took courage, which is also representative of Faith –

Faith in the Racial Self to forge a new path – a new path of positive racial identity. This new path that was forged improved the intellectual, psychosocial, sociocultural and spiritual Selfethnic Identity of members of the race. 3) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance Movement contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic Image? The *New Negro* (1933), which is a concept, a philosophy and an anthology, emanating from the Harlem Renaissance, was one of the ways that the Movement contributed to the development of a positive Selfethnic Image. As a concept it defines the elements of the New Negro as not accepting and acting from an inferior racial identity. As a philosophy, it is the framework of a positive racial identity that is applied to intellectual pursuits and research. As an anthology, *The New Negro* (Locke 1933) is a collection of African Centered authors who wrote chapters on the New Negro (who were part of the Harlem Renaissance) from their specific expert subject matter.

The *New Negro* is representative of the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin, 1989), which is defined as

“the acknowledgement of the African American presence, the validity of their experiences, and the inclusion of the race’s contributions to the intellectual and socio-historical development of this country...This acknowledgement enables members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success, and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator (Colin 1989, 24).

The *New Negro* (Locke 1933) was conceived of by members of the Harlem Renaissance, and contributors to this edited volume were members of the African Diaspora and a few European Americans who were committed to this new philosophy of the race speaking for itself, and defining itself as worthy, as successful, as intelligent, as beautiful and so forth.

Locke, in editing the work, decided to concentrate on “...the forces and motives of self-determination” (Locke 1925, xvi Introduction). To speak or oneself, to define oneself as worthy, as successful, as intelligent, as beautiful and so forth represents the principle of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination, which is a principle of the *Nguzo Saba*. Colin includes the *Nguzo Saba* in her definition of Africentrism, which she defines as

a sociocultural and philosophical perspective that reflects the intellectual traditions of both a culture and a continent. It is grounded in the seven basic values embodied in the Swahili *Nguzo Saba*. It asserts that adult educational policies, practices, experiences, philosophies, ethical issues, theories, and concepts must be considered and evaluated on the basis of the perspective and experience of African-Americans/African Americans” (Colin 1998, 54).

When Did the Harlem Renaissance Begin? The phase of the Harlem Renaissance Movement for this study is from 1921 to 1933. This phase was officially kicked off on March 21, 1924, at a gala event at the Civic Club in New York City, and was organized for the purpose of honoring young African American artists, writers and intellectuals who were there to promote the intelligence and talents of those in the race. Alain Locke, writer, editor, philosopher, and educator, acted as the Master of ceremony for the event (Lewis 1994, 1997). The gala was held as a ploy to get the artists noticed by business people who were there, especially publishers. As a result of the gala, Paul Kellogg, editor of *Survey* magazine, published a special edition of the magazine to spotlight the talents of the artists present at the gala who were also involved in the Harlem Renaissance Movement (Johnson 1926; Lewis 1979; Locke 1925).

This special edition of the magazine, was titled *Survey Graphic*, because it contained graphic art in addition to literature, was published in March 1925. The title of

this special edition was “Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro”, and was very successful, in terms of sales. As a result of this success, Alain Locke was commissioned to be the editor of an anthology of these artists, and to expand the concept of what had gone on that night at the Civic Club. The result of that commission was *The New Negro* (Locke 1925).

The Civic Club gala was the brain-child of Charles S. Johnson, civil rights activist, business strategist, sociologist, educator and editor of *Opportunity* magazine, the publishing arm of the Urban League, one of the sponsors of the gala. The gala was a joint effort between the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Jesse Fauset, author and Literary Editor of the *Crisis* magazine, the publishing arm of the NAACP was also very instrumental in planning the event, along with Johnson (Lewis 1994, 1997).

How and why did the Harlem Renaissance Begin? The Harlem Renaissance Movement was strategically created by civil rights activists to use literature as an instructive method to improve the damaged Selfethnic image of African American people. The Movement’s Selfethnic literary agenda plan produced in seven magazines, eighty-five school periodicals, seventy religious publications and five music magazines (Johnson 1928, 20). This was a huge accomplishment for the race, in addition to a huge contribution to the field of adult education.

The civil rights leaders of the two organizations specifically chose literature as a means of instruction. The *Survey Graphic* magazine, as the special edition of the *Survey* magazine, that featured the Harlem Renaissance writers and visual arts who were espousing a more authentic cultural image of the race are examples of Selfethnic Liberatory adult education activities; the literary works featured in the magazine were examples of

Selfethnic Liberatory adult education activities, that used literature as the teaching element. Likewise, the *Opportunity* magazine, the *Crisis* magazine and the book, the *New Negro*, all mentioned above are examples of Selfethnic Liberatory Literary adult education activities. In addition, and in like form, the NAACP and the Urban League, the two civil rights organizations that were catalysts of the Harlem Renaissance are Selfethnic Liberatory adult education organizations. Charles S. Johnson stated that the purpose of the Renaissance was “to redeem, through art, the standing of his people” (Lewis 1994, 90). The part of the movement that focused on literature as a means of education was nicknamed, “civil rights through copyright” by the leaders of the Movement (Lewis 1997).

The Harlem Renaissance Movement started in answer to a racist educational system that promoted mis-education that resulted in a low racial Selfethnic image (Lewis 1994, 1997). Between 1911 and 1923 extensive literature was written vilifying African and African American culture, and spread the notion that Africans and African Americans were inferior (Locke 1925; Lewis 1994, 1997). World War I ended in 1919 and African American soldiers came back to America after fighting for their country to find that they were still discriminated against (Lewis 1994, 1997). Industrialization in the south had prompted African Americans to go north in search of work; and one of the places to which they migrated was Harlem in New York City (Lewis 1994, 1997; Johnson 1928).

Because of this migration, African American culture in Harlem spontaneously erupted and commanded the attention and curiosity of Whites (Johnson 1928). Though these cultural ways of being with visual and written art, dance, ways of dress, ways to mold and deliver speech, poetry, music, and ways to worship and so forth, were a normal way of life for African Americans, they became a thing of wonder to the White people of Harlem,

who had begun to move out of the area when the people of color moved in. Once this happened, the apartments were broken up to create two or more apartments out of one; then African Americans were charged twice, three times or four times as much as rent as their White counterparts had paid when they lived there. This was one of the many ways that racism was practiced in the African American community of Harlem.

The word began to spread among Whites about the cultural explosion in Harlem; especially among the Greenwich Village artistic and literary community. They had not seen the same type of rich culture in their own neighborhood; in turn, they tried to understand and emulate it by studying the people and the culture and crowding themselves into the Harlem night clubs (Lewis 1994, 1997).

Other Whites in and around Harlem, in addition to the Greenwich Village artists, were not only fascinated by African American culture, they saw the spirit with which this culture was expressed, and they sensed it was something they were missing in their own culture (Lewis, 1994). This was something that they wanted, felt they were lacking, and wanted to know how to embrace. One of them wrote that "...the African American is just what the doctor ordered, a tonic capable of aiding a diseased, dissipated civilization" (Lewis 1994, 36). As a result of their wants and wishes to understand African American culture, White writers in and around Harlem started to publish short stories, poems and novels about African American people, but knew nothing about these fictional characters and their lives, so the result was an inaccurate and distorted story telling frenzy. White artists also produced visual artistic renderings that depicted African Americans in an unfavorable, negative, untruthful image. The examples the researcher has just been describing are example of sociocultural and intellectual racism. The following examples

are representative of how the Harlem Renaissance Movement addressed these negative impact factors.

During this time, the NAACP and the Urban League in Harlem, helped to lay the philosophical foundation for defining and promoting a positive Selfethnic Image, increased their efforts to promote literature, and other art as a means for promoting positive racial propaganda, since these had not been used to fight racism before. From 1923 to 1926 several African American Renaissance writers were published as a result of the strategies implemented to improve racial esteem by the leaders of the Movement (Lewis 1994, 1997). These early published works had a profound effect on the Harlem Renaissance Movement, as it gave other writers hope that they too, could be published with material that accurately depicted their race as dignified, intelligent, talented people, and did not depict them as “uncles,” “aunties,” “sambos,” and “toms.” Reflecting their own people as culturally proud and accomplished was a means of providing Selfethnic Reflectors for the race, which is a concept embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors Colin (1998), which is,

the acknowledgement of the African American presence, the validity of their experiences, and the inclusion of the race’s contributions to the intellectual and socio-historical development of this country...This acknowledgement enables members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success, and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator (Colin 1989, 24).

These examples of successful made it possible for other members of the race to think, feel and believe that they, too, could be successful and contribute to history.

The pivotal moment of those years came when African American writer, Jean Toomer, became the first of the Harlem Renaissance Movement writers to get a book,

Cane, published in 1923. A collection of poems and short stories, the book investigated African American life in the south and how southerners dealt with the effects of industrialism. Toomer's characters were accurately and truly depicted as full human beings, and from a cultural standpoint, as southern African American laborers. The characters in his book "spoke" in dialect. The latter is an important point, since writing or speaking in dialect had been heretofore deemed inferior by members of the African American community because it was not "proper" English as is spoken in more formal settings. This historic novel provided Selfethnic Reflectors for other Renaissance writers and for the African American community.

Cane (Toomer 1923) was based on real people that Toomer met when he visited the south, and its publishing was proof to Johnson, one of the planners behind the Movement and the Civic Club gala, that literature was the way to show African Americans truthfully, to show the culture proudly and accurately, and a way to show case their talents. Johnson's strategic plan to use literature for a "...purpose: to redeem, through art, the standing of his people" paid dividends with the publishing of this first novel (Lewis 1994, 90), that also paved the way for others to publish their works as well.

After Reconstruction, the federal government created educational programs that a few African Americans took advantage of, and as a result some moved into the middle class after taking advantage of these opportunities. This small percentage of African American upward social movement caused panic in White racists, and they stepped up their efforts to create literary works and scientific studies that continued to perpetuate the myths of African American inferiority in comparison to the general populace (Lewis 1994, 1997).

The racist activity spurred the writes of the Renaissance writers to write and publish

more. Other Harlem Renaissance Movement writer activists were published shortly after Toomer's *Cane*. In the summer of 1926 these Harlem Renaissance authors' works were published: *There is Confusion* (Fauset 1926) the first novel by Jesse Redmon Fauset, who was a novelist, poet, editor, and educator. At the time of this, her first published book, she was Literary Editor of the *Crisis* magazine, the publishing arm of the NAACP. *Fire in the Flint* (White 1924), written by Walter Francis White, novelist and civil rights activist, was Assistant Executive Secretary of the NAACP when this, his first novel was published. In 1926 his second novel, *Flight*, (White 1926) was published. These few examples of early published works further give credence to the connection between the Harlem Renaissance Movement and the civil rights organizations.

These published works, in addition to reflecting the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors, were also Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs, which is an element of Colin's Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (1998). Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs are those that are created by African Americans for the purpose of meeting the needs of those in the culture for Selfethnic Pride and Esteem that bring about Selfethnic Reliance. The goals of these programs "are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group" (Colin 1998, 46). Another programmatic goal is to undo a belief that the race was inferior, and create a positive Selfethnic Image. By writing about the lives of African American culture and characters, this liberated an old mindset that believed that European culture was superior. These publications provided that are examples of African Centered concepts used in this study. In providing Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989), they provided examples of contributions to the adult education field by African Americans, which showed others of the race that they can also contribute.

The Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Programs and Activities of the Harlem Renaissance. This section documents the adult education programs and activities of the Harlem Renaissance. The following activities answer the research questions guiding the study; thusly, 1) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism? The Harlem Renaissance Movement was engineered in protest against "...the assumption of the irremediable inferiority of blacks" (Locke 1925, xv Introduction).

2) What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance? The adult education activities described in this chapter are reflective of Colin's work on Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (1998), which includes the concept of Africentric Culturally Grounded Programs (2007).

Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education is grounded in the philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, (Colin, 1989) and advocates a world view that is committed to improving the racial pride and identity, with a goal of Selfethnic Liberation, which includes economic success. This philosophy includes a curricular element in which culturally grounded adult education programs are created. These goals of these programs "...are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group" (Colin 1998, 46). 3) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Harlem Renaissance contribute to a positive Selfethnic Image? It helped to define a new Selfethnic Image.

The Movement was run like a "university without walls"; that is, an institution of learning that does not have a brick and mortar edifice, but has similar systems in place that develop and deliver educational programs. The administrators of the Harlem Renaissance Movement's literature "branch's" "university without walls" used many of the systems

that a brick and mortar university uses to populate its unseen “college” with writer activists. Though the writer activists were teachers in the Movement, instructing their students (audiences) on a new way to be, they were also students, who were learning how to participate in, and at the same time, consume adult education programs, as well as create them. These are examples of, like all the administrative work for the Movement, of Selfethnic adult education activities that were culturally grounded.

Charles S. Johnson, civil rights activist, business strategist, sociologist, educator and editor of *Opportunity*, the publishing arm of the Urban League, acted as a “university without walls” administrator who recruited the writer activists to participate in the Movement. He learned of talented writers and where they were living. He would then recruit them to come to New York to join the Movement, and to share their talents and literature, although some of the writers came to New York on their own (Lewis 1994, 1997; Locke 1925). Once in New York, the writer activists, with the help of Johnson’s staff and others from the NAACP and Urban League, would find lodging, oftentimes with friends or relatives. Writers would receive assistance finding jobs, and be given mentors or sponsors who could help them navigate their way around New York. Some of the writers would receive benefactors who provided monetary help while they wrote and went to their “odd jobs.” Writers were invited to events, house parties, professional association meetings that provided networking opportunities, where they met other writer activists, publishers, and members of the business community who could help them. The new arrivals were given letters of introduction to friends and acquaintances in other cities and countries if they travelled. In this way, the writer activists would be able to have someone help them get around and inform them of livelihood issues, such as lodging, food, and jobs while

adjusting to their new environment.

In addition to the “university without walls” adult education activities, the writer activists also participated in speaking engagements. They would recite their works in places like the New York City Public Library, African American churches, at African American professional and vocational association meetings, and African American colleges and universities. Writer activists would read their works at dinner parties, private rent parties, and at various other events. African American publications were also made available to publish their works and included the aforementioned *Opportunity* magazine, the *Crisis* magazine, the *Nation* magazine, the *Phylon* magazine, the *Messenger* magazine, *the Journal of Negro Education*, *the Journal of Negro History*, *the New York Age Newspaper*, the *Liberator* magazine and *Fire!* magazine, for which Langston Hughes was one of the founders (Lewis 1997). The influence of the Harlem Renaissance was responsible for the following original African American literary efforts in the 1920’s - seven general interest magazines, eighty-five school periodicals, seventy religious publications and five music magazines (Johnson 1928, 20).

African American publishers committed to the writer activists to publish their works. An example of the type of commitment that African American publishers made available to the writer activists, is the *Crisis* magazine, which devoted its August, 1923 issue to the “younger literary movement among Negroes” (*Crisis*, July 1923, Table of Contents). Literary magazines and African American Greek organizations, as well as other African American organizations and associations gave literary contests in which monetary prizes were given for the best piece of literature. The *Opportunity* magazine clearly defined its commitment to publish literature that helped to dispel the myth that the race was

inferior. Its partial policy/purpose statement read: "...to inculcate a disposition to see enough of interest and beauty in their own lives to rid themselves of the inferior feeling of being a Negro" (Johnson 1926, 20).

The writer activists and editors reviewed each other's literary works in the African American publications; they advertised each others' books in these publications; the publications ran advertisements for African American businesses and events. There were regular features in the magazines for the latest African art works, the latest books written by African Americans, announcements about community members who graduated from college, got married, had anniversaries, and, the obituaries. There were announcements regarding race members who had received scholarships, and had been awarded other types of monetary and non-monetary awards. They were the major sources for publishing African American poets' works. Langston Hughes' poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (Hughes 1925), which was the first of his poems to be published, and became just one of many of his poems published in the *Crisis* magazine.

All of the examples in this section are reflective of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination and *Imani*, or Faith. Using these Selfethnic Reflectors to show the race that they could contribute to society just like others in the race is a way that the Harlem Renaissance contributed to developing a positive Selfethnic Image. The planners, administrators, writers, activists, participants of these adult education programs had unshakeable faith in their own ability and in the ability of their own people to have an accurate concept of their own Identity. Faith (*Imani*) is an African Centered concept that is reflected in these examples. Having the Faith and Courage to redefine oneself is also an example of Self-Determination, which leads to Self Reliance.

CHAPTER THREE

LESSONS LEARNED FROM LIVED EXPERIENCES: THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGSTON HUGHES AS A SELFETHNIC LIBERATORY LITERARY ADULT EDUCATOR

Introduction

This section will document those life experiences of Langston Hughes that formed his progression as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator, such as his encounter with racism and his early upbringing which had an influence on this development.

Furthermore, how these experiences motivated him to commit his life to teaching his people a more accurate history, and an accurate Selfethnic Image – a positive Selfethnic Image - will also be explored.

Langston Hughes' Motivation to Decide to Become a Racial Writer

In the African Centered tradition communication takes place for the purpose of collective goals, rather than for individual goals. Communicating through the art form of literature, both spoken and written, are constructed for the purpose of establishing African Agency, or for the purpose of establishing an African Centered sense of power among the collective (Asante 1998). This provides a goal or function of resistance - resistance to a dominant ideology that teaches that Eurocentrism is supreme (Asante 1998). Hughes had learned that his family members fought for what they thought was Righteous and Just for African Americans (Hughes 1940). He also learned early on that he could use language as a means of resistance – how Hughes used his poetry as a means of resistance will be analyzed later in Chapter Four. Hughes learned from the time he was a child that words could be used as a means to communicate, as a means to fight for what he thought was right for his race, as well as a means of resistance against the dominant culture that was

racist in its approach toward African Americans.

Hughes first got the notion to be a writer as a child because his mother and grandfathers were writers as well as orators. His desire to write became more pronounced when he was a teenager, and became stronger as he moved into adulthood, when he made the decision to make a living as a writer; but not just any writer; but to be a “writer and write stories about Negroes, so true that people in far-away lands would read them – even after I am dead” (Hughes 1940, 34). Hughes wrote these words in his autobiography when he was explaining his desires to be known as a “race man” (Lewis 1994, xix Preface). Through these words, he was explaining his love for writing and his love for his people, joining them both in wholly matrimony through his career as a racial (a member of the African American race who writes about race matters) writer. One of his goals as a race man was his commitment to portraying the race as truthfully as he knew how, without apology – the good, the bad and the indifferent (Hughes 1940, 1956). Hughes himself became an orator later in his career, in 1933 when he toured the country and recited his poetry.

Hughes’ decision to become a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator is an example of his use of *Imani*, or Faith. He had faith in himself and in his people to be able to write about them as they are in real life. He had faith that this was the way to validate the racial identity of his people. This is also an example of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination. At the time that Hughes made this decision, it was not acceptable or understood by both his own race and his European counterparts. His actions also showed that he believed in defining his own culture instead of accepting the definition that had been assigned to him by a Eurocentric system. This helps us understand how one works within the frame of

African Centered Intellectual Paradigm, as defined by Colin (1998). Hughes was acting as an African Centered sociologist, who was committed to documenting, and therefore reproducing the traditions of his culture. He was instrumental in meaning making for his people and helped to advance an African Centered cultural agenda. This is reflective of elements in Colin's (1998) definition of Africentrism. Africentrism is

a sociocultural and philosophical perspective that reflects the intellectual traditions of both a culture and a continent. It is grounded in the seven basic values embodied in the Swahili *Nguzo Saba*. It asserts that adult educational policies, practices, experiences, philosophies, ethical issues, theories, and concepts must be considered and evaluated on the basis of the perspective and experience of African-Americans/African Americans (Colin 1998, 54).

Hughes traveled extensively as a child; as he did so he became closely acquainted with Jim Crow laws and other racist practices in the country. As an adult he also had many experiences with racist practices as he traveled the world (Hughes 1940, 1956). As he experienced these racist acts and his response to them, he was bringing these issues out in the open. By doing them He had learned early on to deny racist propaganda; and not internalize it; instead, he committed his life to fight against it. The goal of his poetry was to resist the racist meaning making for the purpose of changing the psyches of his people that had been damaged by sociocultural and intellectual racism. In this regard, this is an example of how he addressed the negative impact factor of sociocultural and intellectual racism, and is an answer to the research question, "How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes address the sociocultural and intellectual impact factors of racism?"

It was those African Americans who did not believe this, and did not internalize a belief in their mythical inferiority who were motivated to change this belief in their people.

As one of those who did not believe in his race's inferiority, Hughes was committed to teaching members of the race that they had a history of accomplishment, dating back to ancient Africa (there is evidence of this in the poem, the "Negro Speaks of Rivers" (Hughes 1925)), including their courageous trip through the Middle Passage. He also committed himself to writing about the inherent beauty of his people - the beauty of their identity as not inferior. His commitment was to instructing African American with the message that, "we are people, black and beautiful as the night" (Hughes 1940, 108). This is another example of his use of the principle of *Imani* - Faith which he had in his people and their history.

Hughes' family history is bursting with examples (that will be discussed later in this chapter) of strong role models that taught him both directly and indirectly to have the strength of his convictions and beliefs. These are reflective of the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) which will also be discussed later in this chapter. One of these beliefs was that his intellectual and spiritual abilities and the intellectual and spiritual abilities of his race were capable of producing beautiful and impressive works. He believed that African American people were intelligent, beautiful, and capable of being self-reliant. His family examples of leadership also taught him to be self-reliant; but he was not just content to be individually self-reliant; nor was he content to just have this distinction for his family only.

He learned from his family's legacy to also help his people to develop these same beliefs, and encourage them to be accomplished as well. His family's legacy taught him that their achievements were not an anomaly, but that these same accomplishments were available to the entire race, if they were taught to believe in themselves. He committed his

life to teaching African American people that they were capable of accomplishing and contributing to the wellbeing and Racial Pride and Racial Esteem of their people.

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri in 1902, although he did not spend much time there. As a child he traveled throughout America a great deal because his mother, Carrie Lewis Langston, moved to where there was work. Because of this frequent travel, Hughes' mother decided to send him to live with his grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas when he was just a young boy. His grandmother raised him until he was twelve years old, when she died (Hughes 1940, 1955).

He became fond of books and reading because he was an only child; books kept him company and entertained his imagination, as he was an extremely bright boy. His reading also created a desire in him to become a writer. When he was a child he remembered when he made this career decision. A book he was reading came alive to him, and he felt like he had been transported to the world of the writer through the writer's words. He remembered wanting to make others feel the way he felt at that moment. He wanted to use writing to take people on journeys in their minds so they could "see" vividly what he saw, could think what he thought, and could feel what he felt.

During the night of this epiphany, the writer was writing about snow and Hughes could actually "see", "hear", and feel the snow falling. It was at this moment that this deep desire to write took on a new goal – a goal to write for and about his own people. He wrote about this moment in the volume of his autobiography, *The Big Sea* (Hughes 1940) writing that the author's words, "...made me really want to be a writer and write stories about Negroes, so true that people in far-away lands would read them-even after I am dead" (Hughes 1940, 34). It was at about the same time that Hughes started to "receive" poems

in his mind and imagination. He wrote: "...poems came to me now spontaneously, from somewhere inside" (Hughes 1940, 34). This is reflective on an element in Colin's definition of Africentrism. Hughes is addressing how the spirit (or the cultural system that is indigenous to his race) communicates with him to "give" him these poems. In this regard, Hughes is show how he is inherently connected to the principles of the *Nguzo Saba*, "which address the major elements of a cultural system by focusing on the essential elements of community and identity, aesthetics, economics, politics, philosophy, and religion" (Colin 1998, 44). The *Nguzo Saba* is a Swahili word which literally means "seven principles", and is referred to by Colin as the "seven principles of an Africentric value system. This is an example of an African Centered concept used, and is in answer to the research question, "What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of the Langston Hughes?"

His affinity for the arts was instilled in him by his mother. When Carrie Lewis Hughes would travel around the country looking for work, she would also look for work as an actress (Rampersad 1993, Hughes 1940). She also wrote and recited her poetry, acted, and read aloud in church plays, local productions, and community centers while she worked to make a living. Carrie Lewis Hughes became a single mother when Langston was just two years old, when she and her husband, Hughes' father, James Nathaniel Hughes, separated. She remarried some years later and gave Hughes a brother (Hughes 1940).

Carrie Lewis Hughes was a fighter. When Hughes was seven years old, and it was time to go to the first grade, he was refused admittance to the all White school that was close to his residence in Topeka, Kansas because of his color. His mother went to the

school and convinced the administration that he should be admitted, for she would not take no for an answer. His presence at the White school was tolerated by most, except for one of his female teachers, who regularly made disparaging remarks about his color. This provoked the White students in her class to throw stones and tin cans at him as they chased him home. However, he stayed at the school and endured this until he had to move again (Hughes 1940). This lesson taught Langston to have strength of character to be able to accomplish his goals in the face of adversity. The way his mother handled the school administration taught him to have the strength of his convictions, and to stand up for his rights and to fight for his beliefs.

Mrs. Hughes exposed her son to all types of art. She and Hughes would go to the cinema, live plays, musical concerts, church and to community center artistic productions whenever she could scrounge up the extra money. Hughes developed a love for the performing arts as a child and this love continued throughout his life, and as an adult became a patron and supporter of the arts. He also enjoyed and became a frequent patron of cabarets, where he enjoyed blues and jazz as well as the ambience and the different characters who hung out and worked there (Hughes 1940). His mother was reflective of a Selfethnic Reflector for Hughes through whom he learned from to love to write, to love the arts, and to have the courage to stand up for what he thought was right.

As he developed as a young man and became a poet, he began to incorporate musical melodies into his poetry. His cultural experiences with the music in the cabarets, and the music that he had listened to in church as a child inspired him to write poetry musically and rhythmically. He incorporated in his poems the observations and experiences of the musicians, patrons, as well as the ambience of the cabarets he visited.

His second volume of poetry, *The Weary Blues* (1925), is a collection of his lyrical jazz and blues poems; many of the poems in this volume had the words, “jazz” or “blues” in their titles. Hughes wrote the following about his ability to blend musical melody with the words in his poems: “I tried to write poems like the songs they sang on Seventh Street...Their songs – those of Seventh Street – had the pulse beat of the people ...” (Hughes 1940, 207).

The Influence of Hughes’ Maternal Grandmother and Mother on His Development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator

Not much is documented about Hughes’ paternal grandparents; more is known about his maternal grandparents, who had a huge influence on his life and development (Rampersad 1993). Hughes’ maternal Native American grandmother, Mary Leary educated him about his family, and passed down his family history to him orally. She would hold him on her lap when he was a little boy and tell him of the enslaved Africans and their educational pursuits, their quests and struggles for freedom. She would also share with him how his step grandfather, grandfather, and great uncle were involved with helping to educate their people about liberation and being free physically, emotionally, and spiritually. She told him of how his step-grandfather did whatever he could to help enslaved Africans escape to freedom. Mary Leary’s stories emblazoned a vision in Hughes’ psyche to help his people. He wrote: “Through my grandmother’s stories always life moved, moved heroically toward an end. Nobody ever cried in my grandmother’s stories. They worked, or schemed, or fought” (Hughes 1940, 17). Hughes wrote a poem about his beloved grandmother and those stories, and the influence of those stories on his life. The poem, is entitled, “Aunt Sue’s Stories” (Hughes 1921) and will be analyzed in Chapter

Four.

Aunt Sue's Stories

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.

It is evident in this passage that his grandmother's stories were not written down, but were in her memory, or in her "head". The poem goes on:

*Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.
Summer nights on the front porch
Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom
And tells him stories....* (Hughes 1921, 121)

Hughes was provided many examples of Selfethnic Reflectors through his grandmother's stories that chronicled his family's contributions to society, adult education, and to the fight for liberation for African American people. Selfethnic Reflectors refers to practice of providing examples of accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to provide "reflectors" for others to be able to "see" that they can be accomplished contributors as well. This example is in keeping with the "Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors" (Colin 1989) which states that acknowledging African American's contributions to history allows them to see that they can also contribute to society, and be active participants in creating history. Colin writes that providing Selfethnic Reflectors for the race "enables members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success, and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator" (Colin 1989, 24). Hughes' mother and grandmother taught him about his family's accomplishments and contributions to society, thus predisposing him to knowing and believing he could be a productive and contributing member to society.

This was also a way of passing on the baton to Hughes so he could continue his

family's legacy. Many of the family accomplishments had to do with providing a better society in which African Americans could flourish and succeed, and were regarding helping their people become educated and improve their life circumstances. These ideas were engrained into Hughes' psychosocial development, and were a motivating factor in his development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator. This passing down of an oral history from generation to generation is an African Centered tradition and reflects a concept known as NOMMO, which is the power of the spoken word to reproduce ideas, traditions and ideals for the development and maintenance of the same in the community, and for the sake of honoring the community.

Hughes' mother and grandmother, by passing down his historical legacy were evoking the principle of NOMMO, which is indigenous to members of the African Diaspora, and refers to one of the principles that reside in the African Ancestral Memory Bank. Being connected to African Ancestral Memory, and using the principles that lie therein, is what Asante refers to as the "realization and channeling of the ancestral knowledge" (Asante 1998, 71). Evoking the principles inherent in the Ancestral Memory Bank is one of the ways that African Americans address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. This is an example of how Mary Leary addressed the negative impact factor of sociocultural and intellectual racism, by accessing the Spirit of NOMMO from the Great Ancestral Subconscious. This is an answer to the research question, "How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes (in this case his grandmother) address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?" This is also an example of an African Centered concept that is embedded in Hughes (and Mary Leary's) also learned to access the Spirit of NOMMO from his

grandmother, which is evidenced in his poem, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* (1925), which will be analyzed in Chapter Four. These examples render Mary Leary an adult educator.

NOMMO is another example of the principle of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination. Self-Determination is set forth by words and within the context of this study Hughes used his poetry to re-define the definition of race identity. *Kujichagulia* is the ability to define self, to create for self and to speak for self. NOMMO is the means for which to implement *Kujichagulia*, and is used to call into being or create cultural truth (which is to define the self). This ability of Africans to access indigenous knowledge, like *Kujichagulia* and NOMMO, is what Harrison calls, “our ancestral juju – which gives potency to our endeavors and guides us through the proper relationships with forces so that we may be granted clarity of vision” (Harrison 1972, Preface xii)

Mary Leary’s First Husband and Hughes’ Step-Grandfather, Lewis Leary. One of the stories that Mary Leary told Hughes was about her first husband, Lewis Leary, Hughes’ step-grandfather. Lewis Leary died in the historical event, the Raid on Harper’s Ferry. Lewis Leary, whom Hughes never met, was a free African American, and died fighting alongside John Brown in this raid on Harper’s Ferry on October 16, 1859. John Brown, an abolitionist, led 21 men on a raid of Harpers Ferry, a military arsenal warehouse. John Brown believed in armed revolution as a means to end slavery, and raided Harper’s Ferry armory hoping to confiscate the weaponry to help forcibly free the slaves. The location of the armory, between the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, connected the slave holding states of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, and made it an easy route for getting to and from these states, all which were a prime location for an armed revolution. The same night that he and his men raided the armory, the local militia held Brown’s men off, while the

Marines and other armed forces ended the insurrection (Hughes 1940; White 1959). Lewis Leary was one of the 21 men, and one of five African American men who composed Brown's resistance group. Leary died that same night; he was only twenty five years old when he gave his life fighting for the freedom of enslaved Africans. Hughes recaptured this cultural and familial historical event in the poem entitled "October 16: the Raid".

This poem is framed within the Theory of Selfethnic Liberation (Colin 1989), since it documents a historical event that helps to develop Selfethnic Pride and Esteem.

October 16: the Raid

Perhaps
You will remember
John Brown.

John Brown
Who took his gun,
Took twenty-one companions
White and black,
Went to shoot your way to freedom...
Where two rivers meet
And the hills of the
North
And the hills of the
South
Look slow at one another-
And died
For your sake.

Now that you are
Many years free,
And the echo of the Civil War
Has passed away,
And Brown himself
Has long been tried at law,
Hanged by the neck,
And buried in the ground-
Since Harper's Ferry
Is alive with ghosts today,
Immortal raiders
Come again to town-

Perhaps
You will recall
John Brown (Hughes 1931)

Hughes was passionate about African American history and captured a piece of that history in this poem. The poem had a double meaning for him because his step-grandfather was one of the members of John Brown's group that believed in armed resistance to free enslaved Africans. So while he was reminding his readers of this history, he is also remembering his step-grandfather, Lewis Leary, who was killed on that fateful, but very pivotal night in the fight for African American freedom. Hughes wrote many poems about historical events and people during his career as a writer, all of which helped to promote Racial Pride and Esteem.

This is an example of how Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. It is also an example of an accounting of true history and true lived experiences, which is an element in Colin's Theory of Selfethnic liberatory Adult Education, states that one documenting the true lived experiences is liberatory. She explained that the programs that are Selfethnic and Liberatory have "programmatic goals [that] are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group" (Colin 1998, 46).

The Influence of Hughes' Grandfather and Great Uncle on his Development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator

Hughes' grandfather, Charles Henry Langston, was Mary Leary Langston's second husband. Charles was an abolitionist, and went into politics, "looking for freedom - for a bigger freedom than the Emancipation Proclamation had provided" (Hughes 1940, 13). Charles Henry Langston was also a writer who wrote an autobiography as well as the

speeches he gave as a politician. Grandfather Langston established the Inter-State Literary Society in Kansas, a black literary society which was an adult education activity.

Hughes' great uncle, John Mercer Langston, also wrote many speeches and published an autobiography entitled, *From a Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol: or The First And Only Negro Representative In Congress From The Old Dominion* (1894).

Langston went into politics and became a congressman, the U.S. Minister to Haiti, the Dean of the Law School of Howard University, and was the first African American President of Virginia State College. This is an example of a Selfethnic Reflector (Colin 1989), which states that seeing one's own ethnic group "reflected" in positive contributory situations creates Selfethnic Reflectors. This provides the psychosocial "mirror" which allows African Americans to "see" themselves reflected in positive and successful situations, modeling behavior for other members of their race. Colin explains how this creates a meaning construct for success:

This creates a psychosocial meaning construct that allows Other members of the race to recognize that they, too, can be successful and make meaningful contributions to society (Colin 1989, 24).

The Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1989) states that educational programs and activities are developed for the purpose of Selfethnic Liberation and economic success, and are culturally grounded, which means they meet the cultural and sociocultural needs of the race and are created by members of the race. The activities of Hughes' grandfathers, great uncle, and grandmother represent Selfethnic Liberatory adult education activities and render them Selfethnic Liberatory adult educators as framed by Colin's theory which states that seeing one's own ethnic group "reflected" in positive

contributory situations creates Selfethnic Reflectors. This provides the psychosocial “mirror” which allows African Americans to “see” themselves reflected in positive and successful situations, modeling behavior for other members of their race. “This creates a psychosocial meaning construct that allows other members of the race to recognize that they, too, can be successful and make meaningful contributions to society” (Colin 1989, 24).

The Influence of Hughes’ Father on his Development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator

Langston’s father, James Nathaniel Hughes (the son of Charles Henry Langston and Mary Leary Langston) left America in 1903 because he did not believe that he had to live within a system that did not treat him like his White counterpart. He did not understand how any African American could stay and live in such an oppressive and racist society, and believed that African Americans could not thrive in such a society. He voiced his beliefs to Langston that he did not respect African Americans who tolerated America’s systemic racism. The older Hughes left America and went to live in Mexico, where he became a very successful businessman, owning several businesses and land. His dream was to have his son educated in Germany with a business degree, and after graduation have him come to work with him in Mexico to take over his businesses and become his heir (Hughes 1940).

Hughes had his own ideas for his future. He had already cultivated a strong sense of self because of his examples of leadership from his mother, father, grandmother, grandfathers and uncle. His career plans were to study at Columbia University and become a writer. He chose Columbia because he loved New York City, especially Harlem and

wanted to be close to the Cultural Revolution that was the Harlem Renaissance Movement. Hughes had a strained relationship with his father because of the latter's negative attitude toward his own people and their disagreement about his chosen profession. Hughes' father did not believe that one could make an adequate living writing. In fact, when Hughes' first poem was published, he did not receive any money for it and father Hughes thought that that this would dissuade his son from pursuing a career in writing. His father's move to Mexico also taught Hughes not to be afraid to travel and live abroad, which he did throughout his adult life; many of his poems were written about his experiences in other countries.

The Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Philosophy of Langston Hughes

Hughes' philosophy of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education is presented in this section by discussing three of his literary works: his essay, entitled, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (Hughes, 1926), the foreword to his senior research project when he was graduating from Lincoln University (Hughes 1940), and an excerpt from an unpublished manuscript by Hughes (Hughes 1965).

"The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (Hughes 1926). - (Note: this essay is included in its entirety in the appendix.) This essay became the Credo for Harlem Renaissance artists when it was published in the *Nation* magazine. In this Credo, Hughes instructed African American artists to create art that was Selfethnic and Liberatory. Hughes explained that the "mountain" the African American poet had to face and conquer was a belief in racial inferiority that was taught to them through mis-education. As a reminder, Woodson's thesis on mis-education (1933) refers to the practice of Eurocentric education as the means of cultural reproduction or for ensuring the values embedded in and

inherent to Eurocentrism is promoted over other cultural views. This practice produces in the African American, Selfethnic negation (Colin, 1989), which is the denial of their True Self, and produces low racial self esteem and does to produce racial pride. Eurocentric education puts European values, beliefs and views at the center of scholarly pursuits and traditions. Woodson calls this the “Mis-education of the Negro,” (1933) which is the practice of reproducing the idea that European ideas, ideals, culture and values are the only viable ones, which asserts that race’s sociocultural and intellectual superiority.

In answering the research question guiding the study, “How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism? He addressed it in this Credo with the following words in the Credo,

One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet - not a Negro poet," meaning, I believe, "I want to write like a white poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white" (Hughes 1926)

Hughes is giving an example of Selfethnic negation (Colin 1989) in this poet. As a reminder, Selfethnic negation refers to the systematic exclusion of the history and contributions of any groups of persons. This exclusion or “lack of reflectors” constructs a negative Selfethnic image for the racial group that is excluded in the history, and

Tells African-Ameripean adult education graduate students that their Selfethnic group has developed nothing that has significant contributory value to the field of adult education...." (Colin 1989, 13).

Hughes is encapsulating Colin’s concept of Selfethnic negation, which is also an example of an African Centered concept used in this example of Hughes’ philosophy of adult education. It is Selfethnic negation because the poet is negating his own culture, and his

own color. Hughes believes that Selfethnic negation is at the core of this poet's words. He emphasizes Selfethnic negation in this passage by repeating these words, "I want to write like a white poet". However, he also attaches the word, "meaning" to these repeated words. This is an example of how Hughes is constructing meaning for Selfethnic negation. He intuitively understood the concept of Selfethnic negation. In this regard, another question guiding the study is being answered with this passage – the question, "What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of the Langston Hughes?"

The African Centered concept of Selfethnic is reflected in this passage. Selfethnic is a new meaning construct for understanding one's cultural Identity, and leads to a True Self value construct, a True racial image and a True racial identity. In essence, it is "self acknowledgement of self value construct that reflects a proper conception of self" (Colin 1989, 23).

Also the African Centered concept of the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* (Faith) is reflected in this passage. Hughes is giving a glimpse of his faith in his culture and in its validity. He reveals more of his use of *Imani* in his philosophy later in the Credo. He continues with his example of this poet:

And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet
has ever been afraid of being himself. And I doubted then
that, with his desire to run away spiritually from his race,
this boy would ever be a great poet (Hughes 1926, 192).

Hughes continues with the use of the principle of *Imani* in these words. He is saying that connected to one race and creating from it is a spiritual endeavor. He makes the point here that the poet is afraid to be his own racial self. He is using the poet as an example of what the race and what Eurocentrically-focused African American artists create. He continues

But this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America - this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.

Hughes is providing more detailed meaning to the concept of Selfethnic negation. In doing so, he is also giving more detail into his adult education philosophy. He is that his literary works will reflect as much Negro as possible, and is an urge toward blackness. Hughes' literary works were devoted to his desire to bring forth the beauty and validity of the African American culture. Again, this reflects the principle of *Imani*, or a profound and unshakeable Faith in his culture and his people. *Imani* means, "To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle".

Hughes goes on to describe the immediate background of this poet as being one of middle class, one who was educated in the Eurocentric tradition. He says that his family was read White papers and magazines, and that the "word white comes to be unconsciously a symbol of all the virtues. It holds for the children beauty, morality, and money. The whisper of 'I want to be white' runs silently through their minds". Hughes goes on to say that the young poet like many of his brethren, is taught not to see his own racial value; that "he is taught rather not to see it, or if he does, to be ashamed of it when it is not according to Caucasian patterns" (Hughes 1926, 192).

Hughes is getting into more detail about Selfethnic negation by describing the "Mis-education of the Negro" (Woodson 1933). As a reminder, mis-education describes the nature of Eurocentric education that produces selfethnic negation, which is the negation of one's True Self. Eurocentric education puts European values at the center of scholarly

pursuits and traditions. Woodson (1933) calls this the “Mis-education of the Negro”. The practice of mis-education creates, or reproduces European ideas, ideals and culture as being superior to those of African Americans. This causes low racial esteem, low racial pride and a negative self image for the race. This passage is an explanation of the “Mis-education of the Negro” by Hughes, and is an African Centered concept used in this study.

Like Woodson, who had, in addition to a mis-education thesis, postulated an African Centered re-education thesis, so did Hughes. Woodson prescribed certain programmatic goals that re-African Centered education programs and activities should have. One of them, that is pertinent to this discussion, is the following: “African Americans must produce their own art to “portray the life of [their] people” (Woodson 1933, 180). Hughes described African Centered Re-education this way:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express
Our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame
...We know we are beautiful...We build our temples for
tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top
of the mountain, free within ourselves (Hughes 1926,
193).

The African Centered Concept of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) is represented here. *Kujichagulia* means “To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves”. Hughes is attributing new meaning construct to the African American race, as beautiful and that is a natural way of expression. He also mentions that this True expression of his racial experience renders him and his race “free”. He explains in this passage that when they express a True racial identity, they are providing a better future for the race, evidenced by the words, “We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how...” Hughes further makes it clear in this passage, by the words, “...we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves” (Hughes 1926, 193), that the “mountain”

represents the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism, as a result of mis-education.

This passage is also an example of the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1989). This theory, which is grounded in the philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, and explains that adult education programs must be culturally grounded, in that they must be created by members of the African Diaspora and must reflect the needs of the African community. To this end these programs must be “reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group” (Colin 1998, 46). This is precisely what Hughes was writing about in this passage. It is further summed up in his words,

Foreword to Hughes' Senior Project - His research surveyed the students on their perceptions of things on campus, such as “food, living conditions, social life, academic standards, and race relations between the Negro student body and the white faculty”... (Hughes 1940, 306). There were no African American professors at Lincoln. Hughes had heard his fellow students for years say that the school was better off with White teachers, believing them to be superior to their own. He wrote

Over and over I heard many students agree that it was better so, that there was something inherently superior in white teachers (Hughes 1940, 307).

His research results showed that 81% of seniors and juniors felt that it was right to have an all-White faculty. He interpreted this data thusly

...the college itself has failed in instilling in these students the very quality of self-reliance and self-respect which any capable American leader should have – and the purpose of this college, let us remember, is to educate ‘leaders of the colored people’ (Hughes 1940, 308).

He also noted in his study that the faculty/student relations at Lincoln were confined almost entirely to curricular activities, and that there was no social interaction between the faculty and the students. He discovered in the study that the students did not feel like they were a part of the entire culture of the campus; that their participation at the college was relegated only to the classroom, and that they did not, in fact, feel welcomed by the faculty in other areas and activities of the campus life.

Hughes' survey created a hailstorm of controversy. Letters came in from patrons and benefactors saying they would not employ Lincoln men to teach. Some of them were outraged at the very idea of hiring the graduates as professors of the University. Surprising to Hughes was the reaction of some African American leaders, who reprimanded him that his survey was not the way to "get things out of white folks" (Hughes 1940, 310). He was advised by some of these same leaders that he had to cajole White folks to leave buildings as a legacy. Hughes disagreed. About his disagreement he wrote the following about the well-meaning African American leaders

I began to think back to Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, John Brown, Fred Douglas – folks who left no buildings behind them – only a wind of words fanning the bright flame of the spirit down the dark lanes of time (Hughes 1940, 310).

Though the survey upset the status quo at the time, ten years later, Lincoln University had African American members on the faculty and Board of Trustees. Hughes was a trailblazer, never afraid to speak up for what he believed in. He had incredible and unshakeable courage to address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. This is a prime example of how Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism, and answers the research question guiding the study –

“How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?” This survey research and results of it is also an example of what Hughes advocated what happen as a result of addressing racism. He said in his poem, “Alabama Earth (At Booker Washington’s grave)” these words, “Serve – and hate will die unborn. /Love – and chains are broken (Hughes 1928). The hate he is referring to is the self hate that is the result of Selfethnic negation.

The foreword that was referred to at the beginning of this section is given here partially.

In the primitive world, where people live closer to the earth and much nearer to the stars, every inner and outer act combines to form the single harmony, life. Not just the tribal lore then, but every movement of life becomes a part of their education (Hughes 140, 311).

Hughes’ survey was not only virgin in its subject matter, but he also added a foreword to the study, which he knew was unconventional; however, this did not matter to him because he followed his Inner promptings. The foreword gave a glimpse into Hughes’ spiritual beliefs and explains to the reader his connection to his indigenous roots. One of the elemental constructs of Hughes’ spiritual belief is that education is connected to all of life, and happens as a result of life, and is indigenous to African culture.

Hughes’ definition of adult education is similar to Colin’s definition, which she explains as “...if adults are actively involved in an activity in which they are learning something, whether it be new knowledge, skills, or an alternative perspective, then that process is adult education” (Colin 1989, 29). Hughes’ take on this is that all of life and the interconnection of human and non-human life presents opportunities for education for adults. This is an African Centered concept is reflected in this foreword, and answers the

question, “What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of the Langston Hughes? The principles of both *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) are African Centered concepts that are also reflected in this passage. Hughes is explaining indigenous African beliefs in the foreword as a prelude to the study. This is an example of *Kujichagulia* in that it speaks to Self-Determination to define the African way of life. *Kujichagulia* means “to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves” (Colin 1998). *Imani* is reflected in that it shows how much faith Hughes has in the culture of his race.

An Excerpt from Hughes’ Unpublished Manuscript (Hughes 1965). Hughes’ Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Philosophy is also reflected in the following passage from an unpublished manuscript: “Hang Yourself, poet, in your own words, otherwise you are dead” (Hughes 1964 as cited in Rampersad 1988, 85). In this passage Hughes is instructing African American poets to write from their own cultural experience, otherwise they commit a cultural death.

This section was a discussion of Hughes’ Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education philosophy.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA SELECTED SELFETHNIC LIBERATORY POEMS

Introduction to the Chapter - This chapter will document and analyze the Selfethnic Liberatory poetry of Langston Hughes from the period of 1921 through 1933. It is during this period of the Harlem Renaissance that Hughes developed most prolifically as a Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Educator. It is also during this period that Hughes emerged as a major contributor to the Harlem Renaissance, as both a producer and consumer of adult education activities. The selected poems in this chapter will be those that Hughes created as a result of the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. The chapter is divided into separate sections for each year between 1921 and 1933, with applicable sub-divisions for each year that will analyze how and in what ways Hughes' poetry addressed the negative impact factor of racism, the African Centered concepts that embedded these works, and the ways that the poetry contributed to developing a positive Selfethnic Image.

In the previous chapter Hughes' Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education philosophy was documented. That philosophy provides a context the remainder of this chapter that analyzes Hughes' poems from the viewpoint of a Selfethnic Liberatory adult educator.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (1922) and Aunt Sue's Stories (1921)

The poems "the Negro Speaks of Rivers" (Hughes 1921) and "Aunt Sue's Stories" (Hughes 1921) are presented in this section. In analyzing these poems, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). Some historical background is presented that helps the reader understand the historical context of the poem, while the

analysis of them follows.

During Hughes' first year at Columbia University, his very first poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" was published in the *Crisis* magazine, A Selfethnic Liberatory Adult magazine. The poem follows:

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (Hughes 1921)

I've known rivers
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I look upon the Nile and raised the pyramids about 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.

I've known rivers"
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors – One of the ways that Hughes addressed the negative sociocultural and intellectual impact factors of racism was to document an accurate history in his poems. Documenting an accurate history is a conceptual element in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. He documented ancient African history as a means to teach the race that their history began in ancient African. He documented positive examples of historical contributions by Africans and African Americans in this poem. This addresses the negative impact factors of racism because traditional Eurocentric history does not acknowledge the ancient African historical connection to African American history. He makes the historical link through these words: "The following rivers of both

the “Mississippi and the Nile – “ancient, dusky rivers”. This historical omission leads to and causes Selfethnic negation. Selfethnic negative causes damaged Selfethnic Racial Pride and Esteem. Documenting an accurate history is a way that Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. To counterattack Selfethnic negation, Hughes provided Selfethnic Reflectors by this accurate history.

This poem also helps us to further understand the use of the African Centered concept of Selfethnic Reflectors. Hughes provides Selfethnic Reflectors in this poem by providing examples of African Americans who are successful contributors to society. This enables them to know that they, too, can be successful just like the examples of success that he gave them. Selfethnic Reflectors is a conceptual element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. The achievements of the race are ‘reflected’ in the following passage:

*I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I look upon the Nile and raised the pyramids about it.*

In these lines he is telling African Americans that they have these accomplishments in their history – accomplishments of building something. In this passage Hughes is writing about African history that is also African American history.

In looking at the entire poem, he uses the words “ancient rivers” as a metaphor to connect the two continents, to show that the enslaved Africans brought their history to American via the “muddy Mississippi”. The poem reflects elements of the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors in that Hughes is advocating Selfethnic pride. In highlighting ancient African history as a sociocultural reality for African Americans, Hughes shows that this historical connection is a viable part of their lived experiences.

This example helps us to understand the element of culturally grounded programs,

which is also a conceptual element in Colin's (1989) Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. She wrote that these programs have

“..goals that are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that and life experiences that are indigenous to that group” (Colin 1998, 46).

When Hughes writes in this poem about the connection to ancient Africa, it mirrors the experiences that are indigenous to African Americans.

Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani (Faith) and Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) –

Both the principles of *Imani*, or Faith and *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination are demonstrated in this poem. Hughes' absolute faith in his people in clear is this poem, although not obviously stated. He has faith in African/African American history, which demonstrates his faith in the continuity of history. He has faith that Selfethnic Reflectors are a means to demonstrate an accurate and complete history.

The poem helps us to understand the principle of *Kujichagulia*, which means that members of the race define their own identity, rather than accepting definitions provided to them through Eurocentrism. By re-defining the history from an African Centered viewpoint, he is also re-educating the race on their identity as being one of accomplishment, and historical relevance. This is an example of contributing to the development of a positive Selfethnic image.

The other poem chosen for 1921 is “Aunt Sue's Stories” (Hughes, 1921, 121) is a tribute to his grandmother, who passed down his family legacy to him, thereby providing him with Selfethnic Reflectors. By paying tribute to her in this poem as one who passed down a positive example of historical contributors, he is identifying her as a Selfethnic Liberatory Educator. The poem is a reenactment of one of many family stories that she

passed to Hughes regarding his family legacy. It follows:

Aunt Sue's Stories (Hughes 1921)

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.
Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.
Summer nights on the front porch
Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom
And tells him stories.

Black slaves
Working in the hot sun,
And black slaves
Walking in the dewy night,
And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of the mighty river
Mingle themselves softly
In the flow of old Aunt Sues voice,
Mingle themselves softly
In the dark shadows that cross and re-cross
Aunt Sue's stories.

And the dark-faced child, listening
Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories.
He knows that Aunt Sue never got her stories
Out of any book at all,
But that they came
Right out of her own life.

The dark-faced child is quiet
Of a summer night
Listening to Aunt Sue's stories

Nguzo Saba Principle Imani (Faith) and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult

Education - Hughes' grandmother used an African Centered approach to teaching him about his history. She did not depend on the formal, traditional system of education to teach him about his history. She knew intuitively that in order for Hughes to receive an accurate depiction of history, she had to instruct him herself. This is an example of using the African Centered principle of Faith (*Imani*). She told him about his history, while using real life examples of his grandfathers and great uncle as those who positively contributed to

history. She told Hughes about the “black slaves working in the hot sun, ...and black slaves singing sorrow songs”, which is an illustration of true lived experiences that she witnessed.

The stories that Hughes’ grandmother passed down to him gave him information about the enslaved Africans who “worked in the hot sun and walked in the dewy night”. He is showing in these words that the enslaved Africans worked hard and for long hours in the hot sun, and until the dewy night. This is an example of a Selfethnic Reflector, which is a conceptual element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors.

This was the way in which Mary Lewis Langston addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism; it further, explains her as a Selfethnic Liberatory Educator in that she taught from the world view of the African about the African, who was committed to educating Hughes about the Selfethnic Liberatory efforts of his race. Hughes, likewise, did the same for African Americans. This is a powerful example of how Mrs. Lewis Langston’s role as a Selfethnic Liberatory adult educator acted as a mirror for Hughes to duplicate the essence of her actions as a teacher.

Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani (Faith) and Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Selfethnic Reflectors and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education – The concept of Selfethnic Reflectors and both the principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) are represented in this poem. Hughes believed in his grandmother’s stories as those that were true and were those that taught him his history about slavery. He had faith in this as part of his indigenous lived experience. This represents faith that he had in her historical knowledge and passing on of these events. It also showed his grandmother’s faith in the race’s self reliance to survive. Hughes embodied the lessons in

her stories. This is also an example of how Hughes believed in oration as a way to teach culture. Asante says that writing is a form of oration (Asante 1998). Hughes showed through this poem that he believed in this oral, albeit, informal method of teaching. Later in his career he became an orator by going on tour to recite his poems (Hughes 1940).

The principle of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) is reflected in this rendering of a true history. It regenerates and motivates members of the African Diaspora to create from an African American world view, which shows Self-Determination to define their own history, which is from their view point. This true history provides Selfethnic Reflectors. It is also an example of how Hughes contributed to creating a positive self image for African Americans.

Negro (1922) and Laughters (1922)

The poems analyzed in this section are “Negro” (Hughes 1922) and Laughters (Hughes 1922). In analyzing these poems, the following were found to be reflected in “Negro”: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) and the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* (Faith). The *Nguzo Saba* principles of both *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) are reflected in “Laughters”. Some historical background follows that provides the historical context of the poems, while the analysis follows.

In 1922 when Hughes was 20 years old, he completed his first semester at Columbia University and withdrew, because he did not like the prejudice levied at him while there. When he first showed up there, the admission clerk told him it was a mistake that he was admitted, until she saw the check from his father. And still then, because the check came from Mexico (which is where his father lived); she was confused that he was not Mexican, but African American (Hughes 1940). This was just one example of the

many racist occurrences that happened at Columbia that motivated him to leave Columbia after just the first year.

After he left Columbia, he eventually landed a job, after being turned down time and time again. He only worked at this odd job for a short period of time. He quit because of mistreatment, and decided to go to work on a steamship, partially because he couldn't find employment in Harlem, and partially because he wanted to travel. This job afforded him the opportunity to earn some money, and see the world at the same time. And Hughes, despite in his own words that, "On many sides, the color line barred your way to making a living in America" (Hughes 1940, 86), his faith increased in ability to earn a living. This is evidenced in his Poem, entitled, "Negro" (Hughes 1922):

Negro (Hughes 1922)

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.

I've been a slave:

Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.
I brushed the boots of Washington.

I've been a worker:

Under my hand the pyramids arose.
I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.

I've been a singer:

All the way from Africa to Georgia
I carried my sorrow songs.
I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:

The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.
They lynch me still in Mississippi.

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. - Hughes, in documenting a true history that connected African and African American history, addressed the negative impact factor of racism. He wrote about the racist practices that happened to Africans in the Congo, African Americans in Mississippi, with Caesar, and with President Washington. Documenting racist practices in his poems is how he addressed the negative impact factor of racism. These words give evidence: *“The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo/They lynch me still in Mississippi”*.

Hughes also documented accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to history in this poem. In this regard the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) is reflected in this poem. It states that seeing one’s own ethnic group “reflected” in positive contributory situations creates Selfethnic Reflectors. This provides the psychosocial “mirror” which allows African Americans to “see” themselves reflected in positive and successful situations, modeling behavior for other members of their race to do the same. This creates a psychosocial meaning construct that allows other members of the race to This is evidenced by these words in the poem, *“I’ve been a worker/Under my hand the pyramids arose/I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.”*

Colin (1989) views this theory as a “curricular element, a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the building of a positive Selfethnic image”. This is what Hughes demonstrated in this poem. He used it as an adult education activity to teach African Americans about developing a positive Selfethnic image. Having these African American accomplishments documented in his poems provided an example for others in the race to follow suit. This is both an example of how Hughes helped to promote a positive Selfethnic image and how he used the African Centered concept of Selfethnic Reflectors.

Hughes makes a positive Selfethnic Reflector “sandwich” of the poem, by beginning and ending it with same positive definition of black race identity - “I am a Negro/Black as the night is black/Black like the depths of my Africa.” In between these words of positive race identification, is a history of what the “Negro”. Hughes ends the poem with the positive declaration of self image: “I am a Negro/Black as the night is black/Black like the depths of my Africa”. He makes this a positive by claiming that the color Black simulates the continent of Africa. Hughes’ definition of the word black as beautify and intellectual is how this reference is a positive reference.

Another African Centered concept that is reflected in this poem is the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). *Kujichagulia* is the ability to define oneself, which promotes Selfethnic Reliance, which is ability to depend on self and to know that one can defines ones on image and identity. Hughes defines “Negro” as black, and as having attributes of intellectual and cultural depth, which was not the popular view at that time. He does this by explaining all the many accomplishments that Africans and African Americans have made.

Nguzo Saba Principle of Imani (Faith) - A frequent subject and word used in Hughes’ poems is “dream”. The subject of “Dreams”, as he used them, referred to faith in and hope for the future. Faith (*Imani*) is an African Centered concept and is one of the principles of the *Nguzo Saba* used to analyze Hughes’ poetry. He was committed to giving hope to his people for the creation of a better life. Hughes used the word and concept of “dreams” in his poetry also to depict the “dream” of the past to remind African Americans about their history, both negative and positive, lest they forget. Knowing where one came from is a good place to start when one is trying to get to an improved place in life.

The poem “Laughs” is a poem that is an example of how Hughes used the concepts of *Imani* or Faith, along with and the concept of hope. This is one of those where he employed the idea of dreams also.

Laughs (Hughes 1922)

Dream-singers,
Story-tellers,
Dancers,
Loud laughs in the hands of Fate –
 My People.
Dish-washers,
Elevator-boys,...
Dream-singers all,-
 My People.
Singers and dancers
Dancers and laughs.
Laughs?
Yes, laughs...laughs...laughs –
Loud-mouthed laughs in the hands
 Of Fate.

Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani (Faith) and Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) – In this poem, through *Imani* (Faith), Hughes is reminding his people about their resilience that they have been “loud laughs in the hands of fate”. This is a reminder of their faith that they have had to endure and dream and create a better life while working in menial jobs, which could have been used to define oneself as inferior. But he reminds his people that that did not do that. That in the face of being defined as inferior they had the faith to dream and create a new identity for themselves. *Imani* is one example of an African Centered concept used by Hughes in this poem.

“Laughs” is also an example of the use of the African Centered concept of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination. Hughes is defining the Selfethnic Image of the race as survivors or laughs. This is contrary to the image of victim that had been given to

African Americans by Eurocentrism. So, in addition to *Kujichagulia* as an example of an African Centered concept in this poem, it is also used as a way to explain the positive Selfethnic Image that already was inherent in the survival consciousness of the people. In this regard Hughes promoted a positive Selfethnic image through this poem. Hughes is probably referring to artists here in this poem. In addition to naming the general populace of the race as “dream-singers”, he was also talking about artists. In this regard Hughes was promoting Selfethnic liberatory adult education view point. Hughes, in many of his poems instructed African American artists on being Selfethnic and liberatory in their work. He felt that they were the true dreamer for the race – to create a new vision – a new Selfethnic Identity. In this regard, this poem is also addressing the negative impact factors of racism by documenting how difficult it was for them to find honest, respectable work.

My People (1923)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). In spite of its short length, this poem represents a strong example of how Hughes helped to develop a positive Selfethnic image for the race. The poem is as follows:

My People (Hughes 1923)

The night is beautiful,
So the face of my people.

The stars are beautiful.
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors - This entire poem is an example of how Hughes promoted a positive Selfethnic image. Promoting a positive Selfethnic image is a conceptual element reflective of the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. Hughes grew up and had learned that African Americans had been lauded as ugly and inferior by Eurocentric artists and intellectuals. This poem provided an understanding of just how Hughes used poetry to re-define a negative racial self image. He used this tactic for defining a positive Selfethnic image of the race to counteract the negative definitions that his race had been subjected to.

Selfethnic Reflectors provides data to help the reconstruction of Selfethnic negation. The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors provides the power of “Selfethnic consciousness raising that [provides] a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the

building of a positive Selfethnic image” (Colin 1989, 24).

Nguzo Saba Principles of both Imani (Faith) and Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

- This is also an example of the African Centered concept of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) and *Imani* (Faith) because of Faith in his race and helping the race to see that they are beautiful, which is defining the race as beautiful. Hughes compares his race to aspects of nature, like “night”, which is a metaphor that he uses often for his race. He also uses “night” to describe the race’s skin color. “Night” is natural, and Hughes is making the point that dark skin color is natural like the night. This is representative of how he promoted a positive Selfethnic Image by naming himself and his race as beautiful.

Imani is reflected in this poem in that it shows Hughes’ ultimate and complete faith in himself, his art, his race to be able to define the Selfethnic Identity. This promotes *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) and is the art of naming and defining self as positive.

Dream Variation (1924)

The poem, “Dream Variations” (Hughes 1924) selected for this year tells a story of a people coming into their own (understanding their own culture and Selfethnic esteem). In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* (Faith). Some historical background is presented that provides a context for understanding the sociocultural backdrop of the time. The analysis follows.

This was the year of the official kick-off of the Harlem Renaissance Movement that was promoted a gala that was given at the Civic Club in Harlem (Lewis 1994). The gala was organized for the purpose of honoring young African American artists, writers and intellectuals who were contributing to the Movement. Publishers, civil rights workers, businessmen and women, and publishers were invited and came to the event to help promote the work of these artists. Langston Hughes was in attendance. The poem follows:

Dream Variations (Hughes 1924)

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
 Dark like me –
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening . . .
A tall, slim tree . . .
Night coming tenderly

Black like me.

Nguzo Saba Principle Imani (Faith) - Hughes, as well as the other artists involved in the Renaissance, was filled with hope this year. The primary African Centered concept reflected in this poem is *Imani*, or Faith. It is an example of how Hughes is advocating, and advocated that racial artists and his people dream and create a vision for their own future. That dreaming is by creating art. This is evidenced by his words, “To fling my arms wide/In some place of the sun...” He is also advocating that his people become happy as they wait – as they wait “til the white day is done.” Hughes is reflecting here *Imani* by suggesting that the White supremacy has a time limit, and that it will be done. But he is advocating that they must do their part to dream and have a vision of a better future, by creating a Selfethnic Image.

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors - This poem represents an example of *Imani*, the principle of Faith, in that Hughes is predicting that eventually “night comes on gently, Dark like me”. This is Hughes’ future vision for his people that he is expressing faith that African Americans will come into their own, and that African American culture will be accepted for its real essence by their own people. In this regard, the poem is also an example of how Hughes promoted the development of a positive Selfethnic image. Promoting the development of a positive Selfethnic image is a conceptual element in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors, which provides positive examples of the race’s contribution to society.

Liars (1925), the Dream Keepers (1925) and Song (1925)

In analyzing these three poems that were published in 1925, the following were found to be embedded in each poem: The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). The historical context for these poems is presented first, followed by the analysis.

1925 was a year in which Langston Hughes had a considerable number of poems published; it is for this reason that more are highlighted in this section. During part of the year 1925, Hughes lived in Washington, D.C., which he disliked immensely, mostly because of the mis-educated African Americans there who thought he should be working in a more “prestigious” job because he was famous and his poems had been published. He perceived that they looked down their nose at those less educated, (including him) and those who worked in blue collar jobs, like him. Hughes was fond of the odd jobs that kept him employed while he wrote. The odd jobs afforded him the opportunity to quit readily when things did not suit him, or when he needed to travel. Also, very few of the white collar jobs were advertised for African Americans, so he was relegated to applying for those jobs advertised as needing “colored” help which were mostly manual labor jobs.

Washington, D.C. had stringent Jim Crow practices that Hughes did not experience in New York (Lewis 1994). He could not see a live show, which was something that he loved to do, because they would not sell tickets to African Americans. Hughes wrote

I could not get a cup of coffee on a cold day anywhere within sight of the Capitol, because no “white” restaurant would serve a Negro. I could not see the new motion pictures, because they did not play in the Negro houses (Hughes 1940, 206).

He also thought that the educated African Americans in Washington, D.C. were unkind,

lacked common sense, and were an “unbearable and snobbish group of people as I have ever come in contact with anywhere” (Hughes 1940, 207). Hughes wrote a lot of poems this year, as he wrote a lot when he was lonely or unhappy (Hughes 1940). He wrote further that this group was “...unbearable and snobbish...” (Hughes 1940, 207). One of the poems he wrote about his experience in Washington, D.C. follows:

Liars (Hughes 1925)

It is we who are liars:
The Pretenders-to-be who are not
And the Pretenders-not-to-be who are.
It is we who use words
As screens for thoughts
And weave dark garments
To cover the naked body
Of the too white Truth.
It is we with the civilized souls
Who are liars.

This poem is an example of how Hughes addressed the negative impact factor of a racist educational system that produced mis-educated African Americans. Hughes is saying here that they do not tell the truth from an African Centered perspective. Their perspective is derived from Eurocentrism, and thus, according to Hughes, is a lie. This is evidenced in these words: -- *“It is we who screen for thoughts/And weave dark garments to cover the naked body/Of the too white Truth./It is we with the civilized souls /Whoa are liars.”* Colin would refer to this as Selfethnic negation (Colin 1989). She and Hughes both surmised that this causes low racial esteem, a lack of racial pride and a negative racial self image.

This poem is also a means for documenting a true history, which is a conceptual embedded element in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. This poem is also an illustration of how Hughes was an instructor of Selfethnic values. He taught how promote Selfethnic

values by pointing out how those who do not have them, behave. He is setting the example, as an artist/activist, as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator by documenting a true history. He is providing a positive example as one who promotes Selfethnic values. As a result of the embedded elements, this poem is grounded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors.

He is saying in this poem that the Eurocentrically- educated African Americans in Washington, D.C. perpetuated racism just as much as their White counterparts. This is evidenced by these words, “*It is we who use words/as screens for thoughts/and weave dark garments/ to cover the naked body/ of the too white Truth.*” Hughes refers to the Eurocentrically- educated Washingtonians as “*civilized souls*” who are liars in the poem. This is an elemental concept embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors by providing an example of what not to do, and how not to be.

In 1925 The *Survey* magazine published a special issue, the *Survey Graphic* because it contained replications of visual art as well as literature. The *Survey* magazine did not, a rule, contain visual art. The issue was sub-titled, “Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro”, and included works by Harlem Renaissance artists. The following two poems, written by Hughes, were published in that special issue:

The Dream Keeper (Hughes 1925)

Bring me all your dreams,
You dreamers,
Bring me all your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

Nguzo Saba Principle of Imani (Faith) - As a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator,

Hughes was committed to not only educating the populace, but was committed to teaching writers regarding advancing the notion of a positive Selfethnic Image (Hughes 1926). This poem is an example of the faith that Hughes had in a Higher Spirit, or Creator; he did not espouse to any particular religion, especially not Christianity (Hughes 1940). He wrote in one of his poems about his disappointment in the traditional Christian religion (Hughes 1940). His spiritual beliefs were alluded to in many of his poems, as it is in this one, but he did not attribute those beliefs to any particular religion. He did, however, write about how the greater power was talking through him to others, which is encapsulated in this poem. His faith was in a comforting, protecting presence, which is evidenced by these words: *“Bring me all your/ Heart melodies/that I may wrap them/In a blue cloud-cloth/Away from the too-rough fingers of the world”*.

Nguzo Saba Principle Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - African American sociologist and the “principal architect” (Lewis 1994, 208) of the Harlem Renaissance, Charles S. Johnson, described this type of writing (as found in this poem) as defiant. Johnson said this about the defiant writing of Hughes: “[it is]..more than a protest note; it was one of stoical defiances which held behind it a spirit magnificent and glowing” (Johnson 1924 as cited in Lewis 1994, 208). The defiance inherent in the spiritual teachings of Hughes taught against a god that told them to be obedient to a false self definition of inferiority. The spirit that Johnson referred to in Hughes’ work was a type of people’s spirit – their collective spirit - which was part of a larger spirit of self love and self acceptance, and of self value. In this sense, this poem is an example of how Hughes helped to promote a positive Selfethnic Image, which is a conceptual element in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. It is also an example of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) in that

Hughes was employing the act of defining for his own people a positive selfethnic Image.

Another African Centered concept reflected in this poem is that of “artistic libator” (Asante 1998, 79). Asante likens the African artist to a libator, who in ancient African culture had the job in ceremonial events to lead the participants in conjuring up the ancestors and delivered the message to the audience to engage them in call and response exchange (Asante 1998, 79). The libator “assumes a completely poetic nature” (Asante 1998, 78); and as poet, “brings together the ancestral spirits, the supreme God, and the living people in one place” (Asante 1998, 80). This represents the *Nguzo Saba* principle of Self-Determination which explains how the race has the confidence and courage in itself to provide its own definitions of its identity, which includes defining their own spiritual rituals and their own definition of their deity.

Hughes’ poem, “Song” (1925) is another example of how Hughes assumed the role of the artist as libator who “brings together the ancestral spirits, the supreme God, and the living people in one place” (Asante 1998, 80), by channeling and delivering the message of “love” and “beauty”. This is an example how both *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), interconnect and blend to form an African Centered way to define the race.

Song (Hughes 1925)

Lovely, dark, and lonely one,
Bare your bosom to the sun.
Do not be afraid of light,
You who are a child of night.

Open wide our arms to life,
Whirl in the wind of pain and strife,
Face the wall with the dark closed gate,
Beat with bare, brown fists –
And wait.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and Nguzo Saba Principle of Kujichagulia - This poem is an example of how Hughes helped to develop and promote a Positive Selfethnic Image, which is a conceptual element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors, which promotes positive examples for the race so that others can see that success is possible and thereby are provided with the motivation to do the same. In this poem Hughes is instructing his people and his fellow artists, to tell the truth by promoting an African Centered reality: "*Bare your bosom to the sun. /Do not be afraid of light /You are a child of night.*" He tells them be themselves and do not be afraid of Eurocentric culture that has been exalted as superior. This is an example of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination, to create a new reality of courage to live from an African Centered viewpoint.

Nguzo Saba Principle of Imani - This poem is also an example of *Imani* or Faith. Hughes advocates that his people "*open wide our arms to life, /...face the wall with the dark closed gate/Beat with bare, brown fists – and wait.*" Hughes is reminding his people to face with courage (an aspect of faith) the "*wall with the dark closed gate*", which is racism. This is also an example how he helped to develop a Positive Selfethnic Image by helping them to see their own strength in themselves. He advocates that they fight racism, evidenced by the words, "*Beat with bare, brown fists/ and wait.*" Again, Hughes is demonstrating that he had faith in them to take action regarding racism. This poem is also demonstrating the principle of *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination, which is having the courage to define their own racial identity. Hughes demonstrates this in the poem.

Elevator Boy (1926)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). Some historical context is provided while the analysis follows.

Hughes published a collection of poetry this year, entitled *The Weary Blues* (Hughes 1926). He gave the collection this title after his poem of the same name that won him first prize in the *Opportunity* magazine literary contest in 1925. He decided to complete the education that he started at Columbia University, and entered Lincoln University in Pennsylvania on a scholarship. Lincoln University was an all African American, all male University that had an all-White faculty and staff.

Hughes was committed to writing about all facets of African American life; not just about the educated life. He did this because the trend among African America writers had been to only write about those who were educated, and in a Eurocentric sense. They did so to try and show that they, too, were “acceptable” from a Eurocentric perspective. Hughes looked to those of the race who were not formally educated or to those who were not “mis-educated” as providing rich material about which to write. He wrote: “They furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardization” (Hughes 1926, 693).

His poem, “Elevator Boy” was published in magazine, *Fire!!*, for which he was a co-founder with his friend, writer Wallace Thurman. He also included it the *Weary Blues* (Hughes 1926) collection. This poem is an example of Hughes’ poetry that expressed how he felt about employment opportunities available to his people. They could only apply for jobs for which a “colored” person was specifically advertised. These jobs were in short

supply, and were mostly for manual labor positions.

Elevator Boy (Hughes 1926)

I got a job now
Runnin' an elevator
In the Dennison Hotel in Jersey.
Job ain't no good though.
No money around.
 Jobs are just chances
 Like everything else.
 Maybe a little luck now,
 Maybe not.
 Maybe a good job sometimes:
 Step out o' the barrel, boy.
Two new suits an'
A woman to sleep with.
 Maybe no luck for a long time.
 Only the elevators
 Goin' up an' down,
 Up an' down,
 Or somebody else's shoes
 To shine,
 Or greasy pots in a dirty kitchen...

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani and Kujichagulia - Hughes, in this poem is addressing the negative impact factors of socioeconomic and sociocultural racism. African Americans, in 1926, were relegated to blue collar jobs that didn't pay much. Many college-educated men and women had to take positions as blue collar workers because these were the only ones available to them. They could only apply for jobs if advertisement specifically requested a person of color. Hughes paints a bleak picture of the employment situation of his people in the poem, for which he had a personal experience. He had been employed as a Pullman porter, a messman on a ship, a cook, a bouncer in a cabaret, a laundry worker, a busboy, just to name a few. He held some of these positions while he was a published writer, and to support himself while

he wrote, while he was a college student and after he graduated from college. In this poem, he is instructing others of the race that a job does not define personal worth. This is evidenced by the words, “*Jobs are just chances/Like everything else.*” This poem is also an example of both *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) because Hughes is re-defining their self worth as not connected to the job that they do. Hughes exemplified this because he knew he was a writer/artist/activist/instructor and kept writing, publishing and teaching even if he was working in a manual labor job.

Song of a Dark Girl (1927)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination). Some historical background is presented that helps the reader understand the historical context of the poem, while the analysis follows.

Hughes published his second collection of poetry in 1927 this year entitled, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (Hughes 1927), in which he writes about the blues culture – the musicians, the cabarets, and so forth. Many African American writers did not approve of his subject matter, and wrote harsh reviews in their publications about this collection of poetry, claiming it was not a “fit” subject about which to write. “Song for a Dark Girl” is a poem written in the blues tradition, and *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (Hughes 1927) collection of poetry.

Song for a Dark Girl (Hughes 1927)

Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross roads tree.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Bruised body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked shadow
On a gnarled and naked tree.

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani and Kujichagulia - This poem is an example of how Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism, by documenting lynching. Hughes used personification in the poem by giving a personal identity to the lynched person that he wrote about. Hughes was committed to writing about current sociocultural events of the day that informed people of the atrocities therein. Documenting a true history is one of the ways that Hughes addressed the negative impact factor of racism. This is also an example of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) as well by having faith in redefining the Racial Self.

Alabama Earth (At Booker T. Washington's Grave) (1928)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education. Some historical context is provided, while the analysis follows.

Hughes visited the Tuskegee Institute in 1927, an African American vocational school founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881. Washington was an African American educator and businessman, who was a proponent of vocational education for African Americans. Shortly after his visit, Hughes wrote the poem, "Alabama Earth", which is his tribute to Washington.

Alabama Earth (At Booker Washington's Grave) (Hughes 1928)

Deep in Alabama earth
His buried body lies –
But higher than the singing pines
And taller than the skies
And out of Alabama earth
To all the world there goes
The truth a simple heart has held
And the strength a strong hand knows,
While over Alabama earth
These words are gently spoken:
Serve – and hate will die unborn.
Love – and chains are broken.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors - Hughes wrote the anthem after visiting the actual gravesite of Washington, which is on the campus of what is now known as Tuskegee University. This, poem, which is only one of his tributes to Washington, captures the spirit both men, which was to serve and love the race. Hughes was committed to serving, as was Washington. It was love that motivated both men to improve the condition of their people. This poem is also an example of how Hughes used the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors to

frame this poem. He used Washington as an example of a Selfethnic reflector, one who served with love. Colin said it this way:

the acknowledgement of the African American presence, the validity of their experiences, and the inclusion of the race's contributions to the intellectual and socio-historical development of this country ... This acknowledgement enables members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success, and could be viewed as a more viable participatory motivator (Colin 1989, 24).

Hughes provided an example of Booker T. Washington as a man who served and loved, used truth, and hard work. Using these led to freedom. He is making it possible for other African Americans to see that they can be contributors to African American history by providing this example of Washington.

There are elements of this poem that are reflective of the Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education tradition, which advocates that the development of Selfethnic pride and unity is an end goal of those programs reflective of the tradition. The programmatic goals also include documenting a true history. This element is included in both the theories of Selfethnic Reflectors and Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education. Colin wrote that Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education programs have goals that are "reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group" (Colin 1998, 46). She refers to these programs as culturally grounded programs.

Militant (1930)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia*. Some historical context is presented, while the analysis follows.

Hughes published his first novel, *Not without Laughter* this year, which received rave reviews, and for which he won the prestigious Harmon Foundation Medal for literature, which paid \$400.00, the most money he had ever earned from his writing. This was also the year that the Great Depression was in full bloom.

By the 1930's Hughes was writing not only poetry, other types of literature. He traveled to Cuba for the second time in 1930 in search of a musician to provide music for a play he was writing. Hughes was profoundly affected by the racism in Cuba. He had to go to court while there for attempting to go a "Whites only" public beach. He learned that White Americans, who lived in Cuba, implemented these types of "Whites only" racist practices. He wrote this about racism in Cuba:

The use of Havana as a winter playground by American tourists has, of course, brought its quota of Southern racial prejudice from the mainland. Hotels that formerly were lax in their application of the color line now discourage even mulatto Cubans, thus seeking the approval of their American clientele (Hughes 1956, 28).

He decided, while on his trip to Cuba, to spend time in Haiti instead, because Cuba was so disappointing to him; but he found more of the same. He saw the same type of racism in Haiti that he had seen in Cuba, with the lighter complexioned blacks having the better jobs and being better educated, generally. The darker blacks were generally the poorest and less educated. The poor blacks in Haiti could not afford to wear shoes, and were called

peasants. Hughes called them the “people with no shoes” (Hughes 1956, 25). There were places where shoes were required, for entry. On one evening Hughes was outside enjoying a band playing in Port au Prince asked a Haitian in the crowd where all the people with no shoes were. The Haitian replied that they “could not walk here – the police would drive them away” (Hughes 1956, 29).

Hughes decided to make a living, solely as a writer this year, while visiting Haiti. Because of the Depression, scholarships, fellowships and literary prizes had become scarce. Hughes realized that making a living as a writer was different, and more difficult than that of his White counterparts. If they had been published by the major publishing companies or in the most popular magazines, they were rewarded with jobs at the major publishing houses, or they got offers to write film scripts for film and/or radio. Several of them had gone to Hollywood and were employed as writers. On the other hand, Hughes, who was widely published, including in major magazines, like *Vanity Fair*, did not get offered any of these coveted jobs. He said this about the lesser known, and lesser published White writers:

White friends of mine in Manhattan, whose first novels had received reviews nowhere nearly so good as my own, had been called to Hollywood, or were doing scripts for the radio. Poets whose poetry sold hardly at all had been offered jobs on smart New York magazines. But they were white. I was colored” (Hughes 1956, 4).

Hughes began to plan, in spite of the racist practices of those who held his writing fate in their hands, his career as a writer. He did want to write fluff. He wanted to make a living writing Selfethnic Liberatory literature (Hughes 1956). He wanted to continue to write the kind of writing that had brought him into prominence. He also did not want to write under

a pretend name, like other African American writers. Hughes wrote: “I wanted to write seriously and as well as I knew how about the Negro people, and make that kind of writing earn for me a living” (Hughes 1956, 5).

Hughes found a mentor in Mary McLeod Bethune, who was president of Bethune-Cookman College, an African American college. While visiting her at her college, on his way to Cuba, she encouraged him to tour the South and read his poems to African American students who she said would be proud and inspired by seeing and hearing from him. Mrs. Bethune told Hughes that he could help African American students and that “you can help black students to feel that a Negro youth can amount to something in this world in spite of our problems” (Hughes 1956, 6). The next year Hughes decided to take his “poetry to the people” and toured the Southern United States and some parts of California reading his poetry to predominantly African American artists. Hughes was already reading his poetry to the public, but due to the advice that he received from Mrs. Bethune, he began to tour the south extensively and read his poetry. Hughes touring and reading his poetry is an adult education activity according to Colin: “...if adults are actively involved in an activity in which they are learning something, whether it be new knowledge, skills, or an alternative perspective, than that process is adult education” (Colin 1989, 29). This adult education activity was a Selfethnic liberatory adult education activity.

The following poem was published in 1930 and is an illustration of the racist experiences Hughes had in Cuba and Haiti.

Militant (Hughes 1930)

Let all who will
Eat quietly the bread of shame.

I cannot,
Without complaining loud and long,
Tasting its bitterness in my throat,
And feeling to my very soul
It's wrong.
For honest work
You proffer me poor pay,
For honest dreams
You spit is in my face,
And so my fist is clenched
Today –
To strike your face.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors - In this poem, Hughes is addressing the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism. He explains that he intends to address the wrongness of racism. He is addressing in this poem, the poor pay that African Americans receive for hard work is wrong. He is explaining that his way of addressing racism is to speak out against it, by “*complaining loud and long...*”. Further, he is explaining that the result of this racism is anger. Anger is another effect of Selfethnic negation. Hughes is offering examples of honest work and honest dreams that his people have been committed to, offering examples of Selfethnic Reflectors.

Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani and Kujichagulia - He is also admonishing members of the race to express their displeasure with how they are being treated. This is an example of a Self-Determination to speak out and speak up for themselves, expressed in the words - “*strike in the face*”, which is a metaphysical example of how Hughes instructed members of the African Diaspora can speak about how racism is wrong, while he spoke out about it himself in the poem.

Call to Creation (1931)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. Some historical context is presented, while the analysis follows.

Hughes this year started to also write about oppression of others as well as those of African Americans, which is an African Centered principle (Asante 1998). This year, he created the Golden Stair Press with Prentiss Taylor, and published a pamphlet entitled, *The Negro Mother*, in which he talked about the faith of the Negro mother in her children, and how she instilled that faith in them. The Depression is still in full bloom and Hughes is deeply moved by what it has done to people.

Call to Creation (Hughes 1931)

Listen!
All you beauty makers,
Give up beauty for a moment.
Look at harshness, look at pain,
Look at life again.
Look at hungry babies crying,
Listen to the rich men lying,
Look at starving China dying.
Hear the rumble in the East:
“In spite of all,
Life must not cease.”
In India with folded arms,
In China with the guns,
In Africa with bitter smile –
See where the murmur runs”
“Life must not cease,
Because the fat and greedy ones
Proclaim their thieving peace.”
Their peace far worse than war and death –
For this is better than living breath:
Free! To be Free!

Listen!
Futile beauty-makers –
Work for awhile with the pattern-breakers!

Come for a march with the new-world makers:
Let beauty be!

Hughes in the words at the beginning of the poem is advocating that those leaders/writers and others attend to the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism, evidenced by these words: “*listen all you beauty makers’/Giv up beauty for a moment./Look at harshness, look at pain,/Look at life again*”. This poem however is different from poems in previous years that addressed racism, in that he is calling attention to racism that affects not only African Americans but to that of the African, the Indian and the Chinese. This idea to address racism generally is also an African Centered concept, as evidenced by the words of Asante: “Afrocentrists...believe that it is necessary to confront all forms of discrimination, persecution, and oppression simultaneously” (Asante 1998, 9).

Hughes is admonishing members of the race to speak up about oppression of all those who oppressed. This is providing an example of a positive Selfethnic Image to be able to believe in ones’ self enough to be able to speak about the oppression of others, in addition to self. By this, Hughes is providing a Selfethnic Reflector by addressing oppression of his and other races in the poem.

Justice (1932)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* (Faith). Some historical background is presented that helps the reader understand the historical context of the poem, while the analysis follows.

This section will highlight the portion of Hughes’ life in which he toured the United States and read his poetry to mostly African American audiences; in particular students in

African American colleges and universities, African American centers, associations, sorority and fraternity meetings and so forth. As explained previously, this was a Selfethnic Liberatory adult education activity.

In the first volume of his autobiography, *The Big Sea* (Hughes 1940), Hughes documents the description of this Selfethnic adult education activity in which he toured and read his poetry. It was because of this that Hughes was able to make a living as a writer. The adult education program had a logical sequence that it followed. First, he would start the program with a humorous poem. Then he would read several other poems, building in the intensity of their subject matter about racism, until he came to a current racial situation that was prevalent in the country.

After the current racial situation poem reading, he would optimistically list the past achievements “on the part of Negroes” (Hughes 1956, 59), which is documenting a true, valid history. Documenting a valid history is reflective of a curricular element in the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1989). This theory is grounded in the philosophy of Selfethnic Reliance, (Colin, 1989), and advocates the development of Selfethnic pride and unity as a means to Selfethnic liberation, and economic success. This theory includes the creation of adult education programs that are

culturally grounded in that they must reflect those educational activities, formal and informal, that are designed and implemented by individuals and organizations that have their roots in the community (racially, ethnically, and geographically) and the programmatic goals are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to that group (Colin 1998, 46).

The description of Hughes’ touring program is an example of a culturally grounded program. Another factor of culturally grounded programs is that it introduces new

knowledge, and/or new information that de-programs those who have been mis-educated through a Eurocentric educational process (Colin 1998, 2007).

After reading the current poem about the current racial history in the country, he read his poem, “Mulatto”, regarding bi-racial racial members. The current racial situation in the country at that time was the case of the Scotsboro Boys. The case of the Scotsboro Boys was about eight African American teenage boys who were charged with raping a White woman. Even after the woman retracted her story, the boys were still tried for rape. About his tour of 1932 Hughes wrote these words:

Many of my verses were documentary, journalistic and topical.
All across the South that winter I read my poems about the plight
Of the Scotsboro boys (Hughes 1923).

Following the current event reading, he would then stand for a rather long pause, because he knew he had the complete attention of his listeners again (Hughes 1956). Hughes ended his the program with poems about hope for the future, about his vision for the improvement of the racial condition, and the improvement of Selfethnic image of his people.

The poem, “Justice”, was included in Hughes’ collection of poetry entitled, *Scotsboro Limited* (Hughes 1932), that was devoted to the Scotsboro case.

Justice (Hughes 1932)

Justice is a blind goddess.
To this we blacks are wise:
Her bandage hides two festering sores
That once perhaps were eyes.

This poem is an example of how Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism, which is an element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989). Hughes uses one of America’s Democratic symbols, Justice, to illustrate the racist treatment of African Americans. Hughes is also providing an

example of one who addressed racism, providing a Selfethnic Reflector.

Hughes illustrates his faith in his ability to speak up about this. He is also illustrating *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) by being able to give different definition of justice as it relates to the experiences of African Americans.

A New Song (Hughes 1933)

In analyzing this poem, the following were found to be embedded: the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the *Nguzo Saba* principle of *Imani* (Faith). The historical context of the poem is presented first, followed by the analysis.

Hughes traveled to Russia this year as a screen writer, with a group of other African Americans to film a movie conceived of by Russians about racism in America. It is fitting and appropriate to end this chapter with the poem, “A New Song” (Hughes 1933), which embodies Hughes’ ideas as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator.

New Song (Hughes 1933)

A New Song
I speak in the name of the black millions.
Let all others keep silent a moment.
I have this word to bring,
This thing to say,
This song to sing:

Bitter was the day
When I bowed my back
Beneath the slaver’s whip

That day is past...

That day is past...

That day is past...

New words are formed.
Bitter
With the past
And sweet

With the dream.
Tense, silent,
Without a sound,
They fall unuttered –
Yet heard everywhere:

Take care!

Black world
Against the wall,
Open your eyes...

Be wary and
Be wise!

Before
The darker world
The future lies.

Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors - This poem addresses the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism by writing about a racist history, evidenced by these words, “*I have this word to bring/Bitter was the day/When I bowed my back/Beneath the slavers’ whip*”, which is both an element of both the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors. The poem also reflects a true history, or authentic lived experiences. Colin defines authentic lived experiences as those which are “indigenous to that group” (Colin 1998, 46). This poem epitomizes the idea in Colin’s (1998) Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education that developing Selfethnic pride and unity leads to Selfethnic liberation and economic success. This is evidenced by Hughes mentioning a new future wherein a new philosophy will be utilized to create.

Nguzo Saba Principles of Imani (Faith) and Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - Hughes tells his peoples that the past is over and that there are new words forming. This is metaphor for a new philosophy in which there is a better future, which includes a positive Selfethnic Image, reflecting that he had Faith (*Imani*) in the future – better future. This

new future, based on a positive Selfethnic image philosophy, is evidenced by the words,”
That day is past.../New words are formed.../and sweet with the dream. In this regard the
poem is an example of how Hughes developed and promoted a positive Selfethnic image.
Hughes is full of faith in this poem for the future with the philosophy of selfethnic reliance,
which is evidenced by these words: “*New words are formed.../And sweet/With the
dream.../Before/The darker world/The future lies.*”

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY/FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will provide a summary of the research, findings, then will present recommendations. Summaries are first.

From Chapter One –the Introduction to the Study - The purposes of this study were 1) to document the Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature and goals of the poetry of Langston Hughes, and 2) to document the impact his poetry had on the field of adult education. In addition, the goal of this research was to expand the historical knowledge base of the field, rendering it more inclusive of the contributions of African Americans, because to date, the historical knowledge base of the field does not include, to any significant degree, the breadth and depth of the many contributions that African Americans have made to the field (Colin 1989; McGee and Neufeldt 1985; Johnson-Bailey 2002).

This study expanded the historical knowledge base of the field rendering adult education a more inclusive and accurate history, by documenting the Harlem Renaissance as an adult education activity. This is the period in which Langston Hughes came into prominence. Langston Hughes was also documented in this study as not only an adult educator, but a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator. By examining Hughes' life, this study discovered that his grandmother, his two grandfathers and his great uncle were also Selfethnic Liberatory adult educators because they committed their lives to ensuring that African Americans Selfethnic esteem was improved by letting others know the contributions that their people had made.

By being included in the historical knowledge base of the field, the racial esteem and pride of African American graduate students in the field will be positively impacted.

This will, in turn, give them incentive to be contributors as well; thereby providing Selfethnic Reflectors for them. Selfethnic Reflectors is a conceptual element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989), which is a primary theory that framed this study. This inclusion will also impact curriculum and program planning in the field. In addition, the study provided new meaning constructs for the definitions of both adult education and adult education activities.

This study documented that African Centered literature is a viable subject matter to be used in the culturally grounded programs that is a required curricular element embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1989, 1998).

The conceptual and theoretical frame used for this study is the African Centered Intellectual Paradigm, which is centrism that is grounded in African values, ideas and ideals and allows scholars to conduct research putting the view point of the African at the center of scholarly and intellectual pursuits (Asante 1998). The researcher prefers and used Colin's (1998) definition of African Centered, because it includes the African value system of the *Nguzo Saba*, which is a Swahili term that literally means "seven principles". The *Nguzo Saba* is "an indigenous, and therefore legitimate African value system... [that is used] as a normative framework for defining an Africentric cultural perspective" (Colin 1998, 42). The *Nguzo Saba* "addresses the major elements of a cultural system by focusing on the essential elements of community and identity, aesthetics, economics, politics, philosophy, and religion" (Colin 1998, 44).

The seven principles of the *Nguzo Saba* are as follows:

1. ***Umoja*** (Unity) - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.
2. ***Kujichagulia*** (Self-Determination) - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.
3. ***Ujima*** (Collective Work and Responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.
4. ***Ujamaa*** (Cooperative Economics) - To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.
5. ***Nia*** (Purpose) – To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
6. ***Kuumba*** (Creativity) - To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
7. ***Imani*** (Faith) – To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our

This study used only the principles of *Imani*, or Faith and *Kujichagulia*, or Self-Determination as they are the principles deemed the most prevalent in the selected poems included in this study.

Chapter Two – Historical Overview – The Harlem Renaissance Movement –

To provide a historical context of the period in which Hughes developed as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator, the Harlem Renaissance Movement was highlighted and documented as a Selfethnic Liberatory adult education activity. Who started the Movement, why the Movement was started, who was involved in the organization of the Movement, when it began, what it was, what its philosophy and goals were – was documented in Chapter Two.

This historical backdrop revealed that the nature and goals of the Harlem Renaissance reflected conceptual elements of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998), which is one of the theoretical foci of this study. The Movement promoted an educational curriculum for re-education that improved the racial Selfethnic image of African Americans that served to counteract the negative effects of a Eurocentric educational system based on sociocultural and intellectual racism. The time period of the Renaissance was a time in which the race was searching for sociocultural and intellectual emancipation, as a means to resist both the practice and damaging effects of promoting the race as inferior by traditional Eurocentric historians and scientists. The goal of the Movement to re-educate the race, was both a Selfethnic and Liberatory act as defined by Colin (19889, 1998).

One of the pieces of evidence that the Movement had a Selfethnic Liberatory education goal is explained by the words of Charles S. Johnson, one of the “architects” of the Movement, who was also a Sociologist. He wrote that it was a self-conscious and race-conscious movement that had the energy to bring about change, especially change regarding the inferior African American image. The Movement used all forms of art as a means to teach this new Selfethnic Image. Literature, in the form of poetry, essays, plays, novels, etc., was one of the major art forms that the planners used as to teach racial pride (Lewis 1994). This is an example of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education.

Further evidence that the Harlem Renaissance Movement was reflective of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education are in the words Alain Locke, writer, philosopher, educator, activist and editor, of the book, *The New Negro* (Locke 1925), which was an anthology of writings, drawings and illustrations by mostly African Americans who

contributed to, and who were involved in, the Harlem Renaissance Movement. Locke wrote in the foreword of the book “that the purpose of the New Negro was “to document the New Negro culturally and socially, - to register the transformations of the inner and outer life of the Negro in America that have so significantly taken place in the last few years...” Locke continued that he included those literary works in the book whose foci was the ideology of “...self-expression and the forces and motives of self-determination. So far as he is culturally articulate, we shall let the Negro speak for himself...[that the Movement] has spirit of renewed self-respect and self-dependence” (Locke 1925, 4-5).

Finally, the evidence proved that this new Negro, that Locke wrote about, and included their writings in his book, did not feel subservient, or inferior, as they had been taught; but rather, chose to write about themselves in a positive framework that showed themselves and their race as accomplished and intelligent.

The ideas just discussed provide evidence of the nature and goals of the Harlem Renaissance that are reflective of the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998). A salient element in Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998) is that it makes use of both informal and formal methods of educational delivery systems (Colin 1989; Ross 1985 as cited in Colin 1989; Hughes 1926; Hughes 1929; and Hughes 1965). Literature and art are both formal and informal methods of educational delivery systems. Colin explains that adult education occurs “...if adults are actively involved in an activity in which they are learning something, whether it be new knowledge, skills, or an alternative perspective, then that process is adult education” (Colin 1989, 29). Another salient element in Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education is documenting a true history. Many of the writers of the Renaissance wrote about current historical events, as well as

documenting the historical connection between African Americans and African history, especially ancient African history. Documenting a true history is also a conceptual element in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors.

One of the major points of Chapter Two is the documentation of the Harlem Renaissance adult education activities as a kind of “university without walls”. The Movement was run like a “university without walls”; that is, an institution of higher learning that does not have a brick and mortar edifice, but has similar systems in place that develop and deliver educational programs. The administrators of the Harlem Renaissance Movement’s literature “branch” “university without walls” used many of the systems that a brick and mortar university uses to populate its unseen “college” with writer activists. As an example, they recruited artists, found them employment, lodging, monetary grants, and introduced them to other artists and business people in the community. They gave them letters of introduction to others as they traveled, so they could have assistance for their needs. They provided publishing opportunities and literary prizes as a means for them to compete with their writings. Opportunities were provided for them to be contributors in literary collections and anthologies. Speaking engagements were also made available to them.

Chapter Three – Hughes’ Lived Experiences that Framed him as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator – This chapter documented Hughes’ lived experiences that framed his development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator. His family history and his experiences with racism were key components in this development. His grandmother, grandfathers, great uncle, mother and father supplied Hughes with Selfethnic Reflectors, as they were contributed positively to society and to the improvement of the esteems of the

race. His mother instilled in him the love of art, literature and travel; his grandmother taught him about his family history that was filled with examples of contributors to Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education.

His grandmother passed down his family the legacy that his grandfathers fought for racial improvement and freedom. His grandmother made sure that Hughes knew about how his grandfathers and great uncle were educators and activists who worked to improve the conditions of the race. As an example, Hughes' great uncle, John Mercer Langston, wrote many speeches, published an autobiography entitled, *From a Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol: or The First And Only Negro Representative In Congress From The Old Dominion* (1894) (that is still in print and available as on 2009), became a congressman, the U.S. Minister to Haiti, the Dean of the Law School of Howard University, and was the first African American President of Virginia State College. This is evidence of how *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) and *Imani* (Faith) were instilled in him.

Another factor that framed Hughes' development as a Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Educator was his experiences with racism, which included his experiences during the Jim Crow law period, in which there were "separate but equal" social practices. For example, there were separate bathrooms for Whites and African Americans. African Americans had to sit in the back of the bus, whereas White people sat in the front. When traveling by train, African Americans had to sit near the engine, where it was noisier and hotter. Some of these experiences are documented in Chapter Three; but they were only a smattering of Hughes' experiences.

Hughes' Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Philosophy was also provided in Chapter Three. Meaning construct for his philosophy was extracted from three sources:

Hughes' essay entitled, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (Hughes 1926); the foreword to Hughes' senior research project, and his answer to his own question regarding, "What is poetry?" that was answered in one of his unpublished manuscripts. The answer, which was, "Hang yourself, poet, in your own words, otherwise you are dead" (Hughes 1964 as cited in Rampersad 1988, 85).

Hughes took on the role as mentor instructor to other African American artists in addition to instructing the general populace of the race. He understood his role as an informal educator, having learned that from his family members. He advocated African American poets to write from their own cultural experience, and to document a true history, as is evidenced in all the poems included in this study. Hughes, by doing this provided a Selfethnic Reflectors for the other writers. He taught that writing from one's own cultural experience would bring freedom, Selfethnic reliance as a new future, as evidenced in his poem "A New Song" (Hughes 1933), as well as in others in this study. To write from a worldview that is not from one's own cultural experience is a psychosocial and sociocultural death, which is evidenced in the quote, "Hang yourself, poet, in your own words, otherwise you are dead" (Hughes 1964 as cited in Rampersad 1988, 85).

Other concepts that comprise Hughes' Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Philosophy that emerged from the analysis the poems include his instructions to:

- 1) Create literature from a culturally grounded perspective,
- 2) Document a true history, which includes the historical connection to ancient Africa,
- 3) Promote the beauty and intelligence of the race, thereby providing Selfethnic Reflectors, and improving the Selfethnic image of the race,
- 4) Understand that learning occurs inside and outside of the classroom , and

interconnected with all of nature

Chapter Four – Selected Poems from 1921–1933: Data Analysis and Findings –

The selected poems and the analysis are included in Chapter Four. In this section a summary will be provided of the three themes that emerged from these poems. The research questions guiding the study will provide the means for how these themes emerged from the poems. The research questions guiding this study were:

- 1) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?
- 2) How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic Image?
- 3) What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of Langston Hughes?

The remainder of this section will be sub-divided into the three research questions. The findings from the data analysis will be summarized in each sub-division. To analyze the data (poems), each question was evaluated to determine which theoretical concepts (that framed the study) were embedded. The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) was used to answer the question, “How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?” To answer the research question, “What African Centered concepts, including the *Nguzo Saba* are reflected in the literary works of Langston Hughes?”, Colin’s (1998) definition of Africentrism (which includes the *Nguzo Saba*) was used. To answer the research question, “How and in what ways did the literary works of the Langston Hughes contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic Image?” The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin

1989) and the theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education were used. The embedded conceptual elements were extracted from the theories and from the definition of Africentrism to examine the poems. Then a determination was made as to which of these conceptual elements were reflected in each poem.

The themes that emerged from the poems reflect a connection between the conceptual, theoretical frame and the research questions guiding the study. The themes revealed that Hughes:

1. Addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism in his poetry;
2. Promoted the development of a positive Selfethnic image.
3. Framed his poems within the ideology of the *Nguzo Saba* principles. This researcher used only the principles of *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), although many of the principles are reflected in these poems. The researcher focused on these because of their prominence in the poems.

How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes address the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism?

The reason the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors was used as the theoretical lens for this question is that the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism are reflective of Selfethnic negation (Colin 1989), which is a conceptual element embedded in the theory. One of the ways to correct Selfethnic negation is to provide examples of the race who had contributed to the historical development of society. "...Racial Selfethnic pride and esteem is initially developed when one's culture and history are acknowledged, understood and appreciated by members of their own culture" (Colin1989, 19). This quote

provides an example of Selfethnic Reflectors. One of Hughes' examples of addressing the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism is his poem, "Song for a Dark Girl" (Hughes 1927). An excerpt follows:

*...Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross roads tree...*

In this example, Hughes is writing about lynching. He puts an identity to the lynched person to remind others that the lynched person was a human being with a life. This example is also documenting a true history, which is a conceptual element embedded in not only the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989), but also of the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998). There is conceptual continuity between the two theories that is evidenced in this example.

How and in what ways did the literary works of Langston Hughes contribute to the development of a positive Selfethnic Image?

The conceptual elements embedded in this question were fairly obvious. The development of a positive Selfethnic Image is directly linked to providing Selfethnic Reflectors. It is for this reason that the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) was used as the lens to answer this question. This theory describes the documentation of accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to sociohistorical history of the society. Seeing members of the race "reflected" in positive contributory situations creates Selfethnic Reflectors. This provides the psychosocial "mirror", which allows African Americans to "see" themselves reflected in positive and successful situations, modeling behavior for other members of the race. These Selfethnic Reflectors create meaning construct that allows other members of the race to recognize that they, too, can be

successful and make meaningful contributions to society.

Another conceptual element embedded in these two theories is that re-education of the race regarding a positive Selfethnic image includes a “curricular element, a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the building of a positive Selfethnic image” (Colin 1989, 24). Having African American accomplishments documented in the historical texts of the field of adult education provides a more accurate history for adult education graduate students generally, and provides Selfethnic Reflectors for African American adult education graduate students, and allows them a venue to observe that they can become both producers and consumers of adult education programs and activities.

Hughes had many examples in his poems that illustrate Selfethnic Reflectors. One of them is his poem, “My People” (1923). It is repeated here.

My People (Hughes 1923)

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful.
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

At the time this poem was written, it was not popular or socially accepted to speak or write about African Americans in a positive vane; the effects of which was Selfethnic negation. The inferiority of blacks was an accepted sociocultural and intellectual norm. Taking this into consideration, it was ground-breaking for Hughes to write about his race in such positive terms. *Imani* (Faith) is also evident in this poem, as it depicts the faith that Hughes had regarding a true Selfethnic image, which was positive.

What African Centered concepts, including but not limited to the Nguzo Saba are reflected in the literary works of Langston Hughes?

Colin's definition of Africentrism, which includes the *Nguzo Saba*, was the lens through which this question was answered. She defines Africentrism as

...a sociocultural and philosophical perspective that reflects the intellectual traditions of both a culture and a continent. It is grounded in the seven basic values embodied in the Swahili *Nguzo Saba* (Colin 1998, 54).

This study used only two of the seven principles that make up the *Nguzo Saba: Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) as they were found to be more prevalent to the conceptual/theoretical frame. There are many examples in Hughes' poems that depict the conceptual elements of *Imani* and *Kujichagulia*. The last poem selected for this study, "A New Song" (Hughes 1933) is used here to illustrate these two African Centered concepts. It is partially repeated here:

...Bitter was the day
When I bowed my back
Beneath the slaver's whip

That day is past...

That day is past...

That day is past...

Hughes, in this poem is expressing his faith in not only an actual historical past that is gone, but he is speaking of a metaphorical and psychological past of a belief in racial inferiority. *Kujichagulia* or Self-Determination is reflected in the following words of this poem:

...New words are formed.
Bitter
With the past
And sweet
With the dream.

Tense, silent,
Without a sound,
They fall unuttered –
Yet heard everywhere:

Hughes is giving an example of a new ideology, which is evidenced by these words: “*new words are formed*”. This new ideology promoted a positive Selfethnic Image for the race. It is the ideology of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education, or in the time period that this poem was written, the ideology of the New Negro (Locke 1925). Hughes was describing the metaphysical attribution of “new words”, which is a philosophy or ideology. This new ideology was one in which there was acceptance of the race in a positive manner.

Unexpected Finding: A New Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education Concept. –

Another concept emerged from the analysis of the poems that expands on one of the elements in the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education and in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors, which the author entitles: the Metatheory of Selfethnic Liberatory Literature. As these theories espouse, the curricular programs that are used in re-education must be culturally grounded, meaning that they must reflect formal or informal educational activities, conceived of and designed by members of the African Diaspora, and meet the needs of this group (Colin 1998). Colin does not prescribe any specific subject matter to be used in these culturally grounded programs; the Metatheory here does. It builds on Colin’s theories in that it identifies that African Centered literature (poetry) is a viable subject matter for culturally grounded programs. In addition to *Imani* (Faith) and *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) and three African Centered concepts were found to be embedded in the poems - “Art as Propaganda” (DuBois 1926), “African Art is Always Functional”

(Asante 1998), and the Rhetoric of Resistance (Asante 1998). These concepts are defined below:

“Art as Propaganda” - (DuBois 1926). “Art as Propaganda” (Du Bois 1926) has a purpose to help the improvement of the race. Du Bois, in a series of editorials in the *Crisis Magazine*, the publishing arm of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization, where he was the Editor, wrote about what he considered to be the criteria of Negro art. His view postulated that art always has a purpose to promote a positive impression of the race, as he was getting opposing arguments from members of his race that art can simply signify art, for art’s sake. He adamantly disagreed with this thesis. In his editorial, entitled “The Criteria of Negro Art” (1936) Du Bois wrote these words:

Thus all art is propaganda, and ever must be, despite the
Wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and
Say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always
For propaganda for gaining the right of black folk...
(Du Bois 1926)

Art, being socially and politically constructed is propaganda and it must be used as such; to make a point, to persuade, to push a certain agenda, and/or to dispense a certain ideology.

“African Art is Always Functional” - A similar concept to “Art as Propaganda” is that of “African Art is always Functional” (Asante 1998). Asante, in writing about the function of art in Africology, states that “African art is never *l’art pour l’art*, meaning that African art is **never** produced for the sake of **just** art. Asante explained it this way: “There can be no art without a functional objective within the mind of the artist. ... And the artist, or speaker, satisfies the demands of the society by calling into being that which is functional” (Asante 1998, 75). Functional African art, then, provides meaning construct

for the sociocultural, sociopolitical and sociospiritual understanding of a people.

“Rhetoric of Resistance” - This rhetoric or literature must also serve as the “Rhetoric of Resistance” (Asante 1998). This phrase refers to the fundamental ideas, written or spoken that have the goals of promoting liberty, fraternity and equality that have been systematically made unavailable to certain groups by those in charge, by assigning labels of inferiority to those groups, that resulted in oppressed treatment of those peoples. The writer or speaker of the ideas of promoting liberty, fraternity and equality for those who have been denied them, is called the “Rhetor of Resistance”. The Rhetor ascribes these ideas to African people, thus placing them at the center of the literary piece.

“African Art as Functional” (Asante 1998), and “Art as Propaganda” (DuBois 1926), and the “Rhetoric of Resistance” (Asante 1998), are concepts that are reflected in the selected poems in this study. African Centered literature, of which Hughes’ poems are an example of, is also an example of culturally grounded programs, because they have “programmatically goals that reflect the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous” to African Americans (Colin 1998, 46). All three concepts reflect these programmatic goals.

African Centered literature art can be defined as *African art* whose *function* is the creation of *propaganda* that has as its goal the *rhetoric of resistant* to a dominant culture’s ideology that has excluded the value of other cultures. African Centered literature, used as Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education curricular subject matter, must embed the three concepts above, and must be framed within both the Theories of Selfethnic Reflectors (1989) and Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (1998) to be considered culturally grounded programs. African Centered culturally grounded programs are elements

embedded in both theories. This discussion has provided meaning construct for the development of the concept of Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Education, which describes Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education programs that use literature as a curricular subject matter. These poems have demonstrated that they contain they are politically functional, that they are propaganda for the improvement of the race and that they are used as a tool in the resistance of a racist ideology. Hughes poems in this study have been shown also to contain elements of the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education, in addition to containing elements of the principles of the *Nguzo Saba*. This interconnectivity and continuity between theories and African Concepts is known as a Metatheory (Asante 1998). To understand the fundamental nature and embedded elements that comprise a Metatheory, the definition is provided here:

A Metatheory is defined as a conception that includes a multiplicity of theories; as such, it allows us to develop better interpretations, fuller understandings, and more effective articulations of the meaning of human goals and interactions, fuller understandings, and more effective articulations of meaning of human goals and interactions...it is justified by the theories that are consonant to it (Asante 1998, 45).

The Metatheory or Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Education: This study, building on Colin's theories, identified a subject matter for culturally grounded programs, and also provides new meaning construct for African Centered literature. This new meaning construct has evolved into a Metatheory that further builds on Colin's Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education. The Metatheory of Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Education has emerged from the analysis of this study. It explains that for literature to be Selfethnic and Liberatory it must have the following educational goals, which are elements in Colin's two theories. In addition, Selfethnic Liberatory Literature must:

1. Document an accurate African history, current and past, including ancient Africa, which improves the racial Selfethnic Image; thus improving Selfethnic racial pride and esteem.
2. Contain instructive rhetoric that decodes the mind of the destructive effect of selfethnic negation, and helps to break the “chains of psychological slavery” (Akbar 1996).
3. Express resistance to a dominant Eurocentric educational pedagogy that is lauded as the cultural norm.
4. Document the contributions of African Americans to the field of adult education, thus providing Selfethnic Reflectors for African American graduate students, creating an inclusive history, and expanding the historical knowledge base of field so that all graduate students are given a truer account of history.

Recommendations – The purposes of this historical study were 1) to document the Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature and goals of the poetry of Langston Hughes; and 2) to document the impact his poetry had on the field of adult education. In addition, the goal was to expand the historical knowledge base of the field, rendering it more inclusive of the contributions of African Americans to the field. As documented in the “Historical Overview of the Study”, African Americans have not only participated in adult education programs, but have done so as both consumers and producers as early as 1619, when they first came to this country as enslaved Africans (Colin 1989; McGee and Neufeldt 1985; Johnson-Bailey 2002). In this regard, more research needs to be conducted so that these contributions can be added to the historical knowledge base of the field.

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APPENDIX

The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain

Part I

by Langston Hughes

June 23, 1926

[In 1926, the Harlem Renaissance was in full flower; the poet Langston Hughes was one of its central figures. In this essay, Hughes urges Black intellectuals and artists to break free of the artificial standards set for them by whites.]

One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet - not a Negro poet," meaning, I believe, "I want to write like a white poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white." And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself. And I doubted then that, with his desire to run away spiritually from his race, this boy would ever be a great poet. But this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America - this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.

But let us look at the immediate background of this young poet. His family is of what I suppose one would call the Negro middle class: people who are by no means rich yet never uncomfortable nor hungry - smug, contented, respectable folk, members of the Baptist church. The father goes to work every morning. He is the chief steward at a large white club. The mother sometimes does fancy sewing or supervises parties for the rich families of the town. The children go to a mixed school. In the home they read white papers and magazines. And the mother often says, "Don't be like niggers" when the children are bad. A frequent phrase from the father is, "Look how well a white man does things." And so the word white comes to be unconsciously a symbol of all the virtues. It holds for the children beauty, morality, and money. The whisper of "I want to be white" runs silently through their minds.

This young poet's home is, I believe, a fairly typical home of the colored middle class. One sees immediately how difficult it would be for an artist born in such a home to interest himself in interpreting the beauty of his own people. He is never taught to see that beauty. He is taught rather not to see it, or if he does, to be ashamed of it when it is not according to Caucasian patterns.

For racial culture the home of a self-styled "high-class" Negro has nothing better to offer. Instead there will be perhaps more aping of things white than in a less cultured or less wealthy home. The father is perhaps a doctor, lawyer, landowner, or politician. The mother may be a social worker, or a teacher, or she may do nothing and have a maid. Father is often dark but he has usually married the lightest woman he could find. The family

attended a fashionable church where few really colored faces are to be found. And they themselves draw a color line.

In the North they go to white theaters and white movies. And in the South they have at least two cars and a house "like white folks." Nordic manners, Nordic faces, Nordic hair, Nordic art (if any), and an Episcopal heaven. A very high mountain indeed for the would-be racial artist to climb in order to discover himself and his people.

But then there are the low-down folks, the so-called common element, and they are the majority - may the Lord be praised! The people who have their nip of gin on Saturday nights and are not too important to themselves or the community, or too well fed, or too learned to watch the lazy world go round.

They live on Seventh Street in Washington or State Street in Chicago and they do not particularly care whether they are like white folks or anybody else. Their joy runs, bang! into ecstasy. Their religion soars to a shout. Work maybe a little today, rest a little tomorrow. Play awhile. Sing awhile. O, let's dance! These common people are not afraid of spirituals, as for a long time their more intellectual brethren were, and jazz is their child. They furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardization. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself. Whereas the better-class Negro would tell the artist what to do, the people at least let him alone when he does appear. And they are not ashamed of him - if they know he exists at all. And they accept what beauty is their own without question.

Certainly there is, for the American Negro artist who can escape the restrictions the more advanced among his own group would put upon him, a great field of unused material ready for his art. Without going outside his race, and even among the better classes with their "white" culture and conscious American manners, but still Negro enough to be different, there is sufficient material to furnish a black artist with a lifetime of creative work. And when he chooses to touch on the relations between Negroes and whites in this country with their innumerable overtones and undertones, surely, and especially for literature and the drama, there is an inexhaustible supply of themes at hand. To these the Negro artist can give his racial individuality, his heritage of rhythm and warmth, and his incongruous humor that so often, as in the Blues, becomes ironic laughter mixed with tears. But let us look again at the mountain.

A prominent Negro clubwoman in Philadelphia paid eleven dollars to hear Raquel Meller sing Andalusian popular songs. But she told me a few weeks before she would not think of going to hear "that woman," Clara Smith, a great black artist, sing Negro folk songs. And many an upper-class Negro church, even now, would not dream of employing a spiritual in its services. The drab melodies in white folks' hymnbooks are much to be preferred. "We want to worship the Lord correctly and quietly. We don't believe in 'shouting.' Let's be dull like the Nordics," they say, in effect.

The road for the serious black artist, then, who would produce a racial art is most certainly

rocky and the mountain is high. Until recently he received almost no encouragement for his work from either white or colored people. The fine novels of Chestnutt go out of print with neither race noticing their passing. The quaint charm and humor of Dunbar's dialect verse brought to him, in his day, largely the same kind of encouragement one would give a sideshow freak (A colored man writing poetry! How odd!) or a clown (How amusing!) The present vogue in things Negro, although it may do as much harm as good for the budding colored artist, has at least done this: it has brought him forcibly to the attention of his own people among whom for so long, unless the other race had noticed him beforehand, he was a prophet with little honor. I understand that Charles Gilpin acted for years in Negro theaters without any special acclaim from his own, but when Broadway gave him eight curtain calls, Negroes, too, began to beat a tin pan in his honor. I know a young colored writer, a manual worker by day, who had been writing well for the colored magazines for some years, but it was not until he recently broke into the white publications and his first book was accepted by a prominent New York publisher that the "best" Negroes in his city took the trouble to discover that he lived there. Then almost immediately they decided to give a grand dinner for him. But the society ladies were careful to whisper to his mother that perhaps she'd better not come. They were not sure she would have an evening gown. The Negro artist works against an undertow of sharp criticism and misunderstanding from his own group and unintentional bribes from the whites. "O, be respectable, write about nice people, show how good we are," say the Negroes. "Be stereotyped, don't go too far, don't shatter our illusions about you, don't amuse us too seriously. We will pay you," say the whites. Both would have told Jean Toomer not to write "Crane." The colored people did not praise it. The white people did not buy it. Most of the colored people who did read "Cane" hated it. They are afraid of it. Although the critics gave it good reviews the public remained indifferent. Yet (excepting the work of Du Bois) "Cane" contains the finest prose written by a Negro in America. And like the singing of Robeson, it is truly racial.

The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain

Part II

by Langston Hughes

But in spite of the Nordicized Negro intelligentsia and the desires of some white editors we have an honest American Negro literature already with us. Now I await the rise of the Negro theater. Our folk music, having achieved world-wide fame, offers itself to the genius of the great individual American Negro composer who is to come. And within the next decade I expect to see the work of a growing school of colored artists who paint and model the beauty of dark faces and create with new technique the expressions of their own soul-world. And the Negro dancers who will dance like flame and the singers who will continue to carry our songs to all who listen - they will be with us in even greater numbers tomorrow.

Most of my own poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from the life I know. In many of them I try to grasp and hold some of the meanings and rhythms of jazz. I am sincere as I know how to be in these poems and yet after every reading I answer questions like these from my own people: Do you think Negroes should always write about Negroes? I wish you wouldn't read some of your poems to white folks. How do you find any thing interesting in a place like a cabaret? Why do you write about black people? You aren't black. What makes you do so many jazz poems?

But jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul - the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile.

Yet the Philadelphia clubwoman is ashamed to say that her race created it and she does not like me to write about it. The old subconscious "white is best" runs through her mind. Years of study under white teachers, a lifetime of white books, pictures, and papers, and white manners, morals, and Puritan standards made her dislike the spirituals. And now she turns up her nose at jazz and all its manifestations - likewise almost everything else distinctly racial. She doesn't care for the Winold Reiss portraits of Negroes because they are "too Negro." She does not want a true picture of herself from anybody. She wants the artist to flatter her, to make the white world believe that all Negroes are as smug and as near white in soul as she wants to be.

But, to my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist, if he accepts any duties at all from outsiders, to change through the force of his art that old whispering "I want to be white," hidden in the aspirations of his people, to "Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro - and beautiful!"

So I am ashamed for the black poet who says, "I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet," as though his own racial world were not as interesting as any other world. I am ashamed, too, for the colored artist who runs from the painting of Negro faces to the painting of sunsets after the manner of the academicians because he fears the strange un-whiteness of his own

features. An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid of what he might choose.

Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand. Let Paul Robeson singing Water Boy, and Rudolph Fisher writing about the streets of Harlem, and Jean Toomer holding the heart of Georgia in his hands, and Aaron Douglas drawing strange black fantasies cause the smug Negro middle class to turn from their white, respectable, ordinary books and papers to catch a glimmer of their own beauty. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

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The Nation Magazine
June 23, 1926

Foreword to Hughes' Senior Research Project (Hughes 1940)

In the primitive world, where people live closer to the earth and much nearer to the stars, every inner and outer act combines to form the single harmony, life. Not just the tribal lore then, but every movement of life becomes a part of their education. They do not, as many civilized people do, neglect the truth of the physical for the sake of the mind. Nor do they teach with speech alone, but rather with all the acts of life. There are no books, so the barrier between words and reality is not so great as with us. The earth is right under their feet. The stars are never far away. The strength of the surest dream is the strength of the primitive world.

Epilogue to Hughes' Senior Research Project

This meant, I suppose, that where life is simple, truth and reality are one.

From Hughes' autobiography: *The Big Sea: An Autobiography*, page 31.