Langston Huges Essay, Research Paper

Langston Hughes Langston Hughes was born on February 1, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. His father was James Nathaniel and his mother was Carrie Mercer Langston Hughes. His grandfather was Charles Langston, an Ohio abolitionist. As a young boy he lived in Buffalo, New York, Cleveland, Ohio, Lawrence, Kansas, Mexico City, Topeka, Kansas, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Kansas City, Kansas. In 1914 his parents divorced and he, his mother, and his stepfather moved to Lincoln, Illinois. In high school back in Cleveland, he was elected class poet, and editor of the senior class yearbook. He taught English to some families in Mexico in 1921 and also published his first prose piece, “Mexican Games”(Davis). In an excerpt from an article about Langston Hughes in Encarta 97, it says that he was discovered in 1925, while he was working as a busboy in a restaurant in Washington, D.C., when he accidentally left three of his poems next to the plate of Vachel Lindsay, an American poet. She helped him ge! t publicity for his works and she got him seriously started in writing(Encarta). In an article about Langston Hughes in The Reference Library of Black America it talks about all the places in the world that Hughes has traveled. He probably used much of the information of the cultures of other countries to write. Hughes traveled all over the world as a seaman. He went to the Soviet Union, Haiti, Japan, Spain, Genoa, France, and other parts of Europe. Hughes was an author, anthologist, librettist, songwriter, columnist, translator, founder of theaters, and a poetical innovator in jazz technology. Hughes liked to write in many genres such as prose, comedy, drama, fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and TV and radio scripts. Langston Hughes was the father of the Harlem Renaissance and made many contributions on the behalf of African- Americans which led to the end of discrimination and segregation(Davis). Hughes was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance because he was one of the most talented and famous black writers in his time. The Harlem Renaissance was the black movement during the 1920’s. Many African-Americans got famous during this time and more people in the United States and the world got to see another side of African- Americans which had never been seen before. People saw that blacks could do things the same or better than white people and many, but certainly not all, barriers like segregation were decreased noticeably. He wrote numerous protest poems in which he used irony to get his points across to the reader. Hughes was influenced by Jean Toomer, another black writer and poet. It seemed as though Hughes used his poetry as a way to combat against the ongoing struggle that African- Americans still face today. Many believe that his best poems were inspired by the city of Harlem. He was even called the “Poet-Laureate of Harlem” because of his unders! tanding for the city. Hughes best volume of Harlem works is Montage of a Dream Deferred. Hughes was the author who during the Harlem Renaissance used much of the Black culture in his work. He began to use the Blues, Ballad form, dance rhythms, folk speech, and Jazz in his poetry. Hughes had success in many different fields of writing. His best drama, “Mulatto,” a play, was performed on Broadway 373 times in 1935. In his best comedy, “Little Ham”(1935), again he uses themes from Harlem. Hughes’s best fiction is in his “Simple” series. In his lifetime, Langston Hughes won several awards. In 1925 he won his first prize for poetry in the Opportunity contest and third prize for essay in the Crisis contest. In 1926 he published his first volume of poems, The Weary Blues. In 1953 he won the Anisfeld-Wolfe Award. Hughes also won the Witter Bynner Prize for undergraduate poetry while attending Lincoln University. Even West Indian poets, such as Leopold Senghor, saw Hughes as the father of the Negritude Movement(Davis). One of Hughes’s works mentioned in the book, The Langston Hughes Reader, is entitled, My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience. This short story of his is a true story of his childhood. It shows all the themes he is fighting for and the things he is fighting against. What happens is that Hughes and a white friend of his go into a restaurant. His friend gets his food, but when he gets his, the white clerk charges him six times what the food is worth. He argued with the clerk and finally left with his friend. Years later a group of white and black workers walked in and demanded to be served. They did get their meals and ended the segregation in that particular restaurant. This shows how prejudice was in the early 1900’s. Even during the start of the Harlem Renaissance people still hated African-Americans. That story shows why Hughes wrote so many protest poems and became so involved in the black movement(Davis). Langston Hughes was the father of the Harlem Renaissance and made many contributions on the behalf of African-Americans which led to the end of discrimination and segregation. Hughes was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance because he was one of the most talented and famous black writers in his time. Even West Indian poets saw Hughes as the father of the Negritude Movement. It seemed as though Hughes used his writing as his weapon to combat against the ongoing struggle that African-Americans still face today. If it were not for Langston Hughes, African-Americans would not have their current political and social positions today, even though they are not equal to those that white Americans have.