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Historical Moments in Langston Hughes' *Montage of a Dream Deferred*

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The paper queries the meaning of *Montage a Dream Deferred* (1951), a representative work by the so-called "Harlem Renaissance" poet Langston Hughes (1902-67), where the poet tries to represent the historical black experience in a work of fiction. Why was the poem written at the outset of the 1950s, not during the 1920s when the Harlem boomed and flowered? This initial question leads to the questions of montage, blues music, and the final episode of American Dream, suggesting a further motif of symbolizing a gap between the historical time and the fictive one.

The question of "history" or historicity in any work of art includes many lesser entangled questions, like the one of cunning human wish to survive the more violent but ultimately gentler force of nature through "a formula or rule for manipular convenience" as Emerson phrased it in his Foulcauldian essay (240), or the one of evanescent sense to make out the finally dwindled human dreams and despairs through "perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence" as Eliot explained its mechanism in his Emersonian essay (14). And our target here concerns the question how Langston Hughes (1902-1967), a celebrated Harlem Renaissance poet, encounters his sense of belatedness by writing his exemplary work of memory *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), which was published at the beginning of Cold War years, well after the trauma of World War II and of more distant World War I.

As Arnold Rampersad described in his definitive two-volume biography of the poet, Hughes at the time of publishing the book must surely have overcome his sense of loss and dismay during all those years of wartime and after-the-war confusions. On September 14 of 1951, he reportedly announced his breakthrough :

"I have completed a new book I wrote last week!" he informed Arna Bontemps. "No kidding—a full book-length poem in five sections called *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. Want to see it?... The new poem," he added in an excited postscript, "is what you might

call a precedent shattering opus—also could be known as a *tour de force*." (*Life* II: 151)

This book of poems was actually one long poem : "one poem had expanded into a suite of verse on Harlem, then divided itself into five parts (later six), each designed to be autonomous, all intended however to form a diverse unity," as Rampersad describes it (II : 151); this may revealingly become so when the whole time sequence may be understood to begin in the morning, progress through daytime into evening, into late night, and on to the following dawn, while the place is singularly focused in the Harlem and its Manhattan environs, at the time of economic blight after the wartime boom, well after the more conspicuous one during the 1920s.

The consolidated strength of *Montage of a Dream Deferred* should rival other major works of the period, including Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). Yet in it Hughes' singular literary eccentricity, heavily relying on the music of blues and jazz, may attest to a triumph of combining the human wisdom and the inhuman miseries of the outside world. He stressed in the preface to the book the value of joining the individual's observations and the community's historical circumstances :

In terms of current Afro-American popular music and the sources from which it has progressed—jazz, ragtime, swing, blues, boogie-woogie, and be-bop—this poem on contemporary Harlem, like be-bop, is marked by conflicting changes, sudden nuances, sharp and impudent interjections, broken rhythms, and passages sometimes in the manner of the jam session, sometimes the popular song, punctuated by the riffs, runs, breaks, and disc-tortions of the music of a community in transition. (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 21)

In short, the poet is professedly trying to rescue his sense of belatedness or loss by resorting to solving the unresolvable problem of marrying the technique and the subject matter, or the "popular music" and the "community in transition," as in the quote above. Heeding this reminder, we now go into the poems per se and consider various historical moments and their meanings.

I Estrangement, Montage, and Cinema

As its title of the book of poems shows, Hughes had in mind the essential cinematic nature, or so-called "documentary" quality of its prosodic method, as he once admitted to such a label in describing his whole poetic career¹. Indeed, as Rampersad argues, he "was proud to be a 'documentary' poet of African American life, setting down on paper the life and language of the people" (*The Poems: 1941-1950*, 9). Yet, as Rampersad himself also narrows its description, Hughes may well have intended by the first letter in the rubric a special cinematic meaning of "the composite, swiftly changing picture" of the montage and even of "the inspired arrangement of still fragments" of the collage (*Life II* : 151). A more general survey of "the American poet at the movies" would confirm such a view, saying that his work "intends to put the reader in mind not only of jazz structure but of the fluidity of film, as the poet turns his attention to one scene after another without transition or argument" (Goldstein 78), which compares more significantly with other examples from the observation :

Likewise Melvin B. Tolson's "Harlem Gallery" and Robert Hayden's "Middle Passage" reveal to readers the neglected times and places of black history in documentary style. Just as Hayden mixes voices and documents describing the slave trade, and Muriel Rukeyser in *U.S.1* (1938) offers voices and documents about the effects of silicosis in miners, so William Carlos Williams in *Paterson* (1946-58) will welcome into his study of the New Jersey city whatever materials in whatever form he can use to represent with didactic energy the typography of a modern American metropolis. (Goldstein 78)

And though Goldstein continues to say that these examples above are "all poems motivated by a sense of citizenship rooted in local history, however much they open out onto cosmopolitan topics" (Goldstein 78), I emphasize here the binary relationship between the local and the cosmopolitan, whose twin poles may be contrasted and related in a stark documentary manner. Hence, also in Hughes' case, the binary relationship between the Harlem through the 1920s to the 1950s and the concomitant one in the United States and abroad should matter more greatly, since in this belated poems of the early fifties we witness not only the localized questions of the black community but the more universal ones awaiting all those who have gone through the boom in the twenties, the depression in the

thirties, and the world war in the forties.

The poem *Montage of a Dream Deferred* begins, then, in this sense of binary relationship between the Harlem in the early fifties and the world at large, but more truly in the sense of binary opposition or gap, not between those spatial differences, but between the temporal ones, since the realization of "a dream," personal or otherwise, always becomes "deferred" as to make one almost estranged from the initial expectations :

Ain't you heard
The boogie-woogie rumble
Of a dream deferred?

Listen closely :
You'll hear their feet
Beating out and beating out a—

You think
It's a happy beat?

Listen to it closely :
Ain't you heard
something underneath
like a—

What did I say?
(The Poems : 1951-1967, 27)

In this partial quote from the opening song called "Dream Boogie," whose danceable tune may yet remain not too strong enough to be a "bop" or bebop, and more importantly, not too smooth enough as to be always interrupted by the accompanying voice, we see a revealing gap between the initially hopeful tone of expectation (as in the opening call of "Good morning daddy!") and the sudden interruption or deferral in the narrator's voice. The key question, repeated later in the closing "Lenox Avenue Mural" section (in a more generalized form, "What happens to a dream deferred?" [*The Poems : 1951-1967, 74*]), is : "*You think/It's a happy beat?*" Personally, Hughes may have realized his dream of owing a

house (at 20 East 127th Street of Harlem) through the profit from the successful Broadway musical play *Street Scene* in 1947, but, more glaringly, he was to gradually and symbolically sense the widening gap between the initial expectation among the blacks in the South and the dwindled realization among those who migrated North. As Rampersad also explains, this is "a heightened sense of the futility of Harlem dreams—not completely futile, perhaps, but delayed so persistently that it amounted to a denial" (*Life II*: 152).

The cinematic moments of estrangement in the *Montage* include such clashing fragments of the Harlem life as :

Cadillacs with dignitaries
will precede it.
And behind will come
with band and drum
on foot . . . on foot . . .
on foot . . .
—"Parade" (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 28)

That little Negro's married and got a kid.
Why does he keep on foolin' around Marie?
Marie's my sister—not married to me—
. . . .
Did it ever occur to you, boy,
that a woman does the best she can?
—"Sister" (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 30)

I could take the Harlem night
and wrap around you.
Take the neon lights and make a crown
—"Juke Box Love Song" (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 33)

All these, depicting on the surface an almost random pastiche of Harlem scenes and of Harlemites but symbolizing in effect the same deferred sense of dreams in depth (through representing black presence in "Parade," poverty in "Sister," and ephemerality in "Juke Box Love Song"), are taken from the first section of songs called "Boogie Segue to Bop," but

the second portion called "Dig and Be Dug" has more scathing rhythm and more of the cinematographic details which cover all of America :

The Roosevelt, Renaissance, Gem, Alhambra :

Harlem laughing in all the wrong places

at the crocodile tears

of crocodile art

that you know

in your heart

is crocodile:

(Hollywood

laughs at me,

black—

so I laugh

back.)

—"Movies" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 36*)

WONDER BAR

∴

WISHING WELL

∴

MONTEREY

∴

MINTON'S

(altar of Thelonious)

∴

MANDALEY

∴

Spots where the booted

and unbooted play

∴

LENOX

∴

CASBAH

∴

POOR JOHN'S

∴

Mirror-go-around
where a broken glass
in the early bright
smears re-bop
sound

—"Neon Signs" (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 37-38)

These two instances above (quoted in full) show how the poet puts cinematic moments of montage quite truthfully onto the page, however crowded each referred passages gather to mean in their totality. Being "black," the wrongheadedness of Harlem dreams, when compared with a Hollywood one of "crocodile tears/of crocodile art," is noted in the former instance, while in the latter is described also a "mirror-go-around" of various refracting blackness in the "neon signs" which suggest all of America. More typical instances may reappear in the section of "Early Bright" as depicting the late night scenes and "early bright" scenes of urbanity, as in such poems as "Bar," "Café : 3 A.M.," "Drunkard," and "125th Street."

II Blues, Jazz, and Be-bop

As Steven C. Tracy said in his *Langston Hughes and the Blues* that "[d]efining 'the blues' has proved to be a difficult task for the scholar and the aficionado" since "[t]he term is complex of separate entities—an emotion, a technique, a musical form, and a song lyric"(59), we may well go into an erratic distinction between "blues," "jazz" and "be-bop," all three of which, though independent in a musicography, may not yet form disparate entities in the talk of poetry criticism. Biographically, various motifs of Hughes' poetry may have been "unified technically [. . .] by a centripetal appeal to the rhythm of the new 'be-bop' jazz" (Rampersad, *Life II* : 152), we still cannot know the way to discern in essence the literary effect of using the blues, jazz, and be-bop, except in degrees of their syncopating speed and rhythm.

Again as in our first quote from "Dream Boogie," the key issue has been the musical uplifting of our emotion through the introduction of "boogie-woogie rumble," which echoes

precisely the low tone and noise of dancing feet, once heard strongly at the time of Harlem Renaissance. But that the whole poem of "Dream Boogie" is basically in the form of blues (catching the fundamental tone of "Does a jazz band ever sob?" in "Cabaret" of *The Weary Blues* [1926]) does not delimit the poem created in the be-bop jazz :

Sure,
I'm happy!
Take it away!

Hey, pop!
Re-bop!
Mop!

Y-e-a-h!
(*The Poems : 1951-1967, 27*)

The aggressiveness of a new be-bop style of jazz, replacing the plaintive tone of blues, is the major form of change in the 1950s, which also reflects the change of protest style among the blacks from the one under the complete Jim Crow segregation (emancipatory hallucination or resignation) to the one of a more precipitated sense of racial tension, after the wartime protest of the NAACP against the War Department for requiring a higher minimum intelligence score for black recruits than the whites, for example (hence, a sense of more sedate yet sturdier self-confidence among the blacks).

And when aggressiveness gone, the poem still retains the aberrant rhythm of nonconformist assertions and renegade enjoyments, first in its "Children's Rhymes" : "*Liberty And Justice—/Huh—For All.*" // *Oup-pop-a-da!/Skee! Daddle-de-do! /Be-bop!/. . . De-dop!*" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 30*), or then in its "Figurine" or small statue of any commemoration, there simply proclaimed, twice (at the second time in its "Figurette"), to mean a dadaist message : "*De-dop!*" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 32 & 39*), or even in its "Projection" of collective wishes : a short cry of "Do, Jesus!" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 45*). Or much later in its "Flatted Fifth" avenue and its "Jam Session" with "Be-Bop Boys" with some "Tag," all from an "Early Bright" section, there appear the sentences like "Little cullud boys in berets/*oop pop-a-da*/horse a fantasy of days/*ool ya koo*/and dig all plays" and "Letting midnight/out on bail/*pop-a-da . . .*" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 46 & 51*). Whatever each

instance can mean in its own integrated context, the use of such be-bop scat words and rhythm unmistakably show a renewed sense of change in the black protest style.

A case of most plaintively executed form of blues may be found in "Ballad of the Landlord," but the more understated complaint and anguish can be found in a series of poems on the last war. Though this starts actually with the early poem on death "Dead in There" (depicting the death of "[a] re-bop daddy" who "used to say" self-ironically "Wake up and live!" [*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 39-40]), it first takes the bluesy form of "Green Memory" (revealing the wartime mechanism of money-making as "money rolled in/and blood rolled out," also with the self-satisfied sense that "blood/was far away/from here— // Money was near" [*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 42]), then takes a plaintive form in two songs in the depression time "Wine-O" and "Relief" (the former complaining a heavy alcoholism of "[s]oaking up a wine-souse/Waiting for tomorrow to come," and the latter exposing another hypocritical self-satisfaction in getting relief : "[m]y heart is aching/for them Poles and Greeks/on relief way across the sea/because I was on relief/once in 1933," this also with a self-righteous resignation : "[t]o tell the truth./if these white folk want to go ahead/and fight another war./or even two./the one to stop 'em won't be me" [*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 42-43]).

"Ballad of the Landlord" sets the scene in the more dynamic situation of the questioner (tenant) and the answerer (landlord). Though the answerer appears only at one time in the poem, he is the one who actually has all the might of law and police force in reality. In contrast, the questioner has been on the defensive (with some swaggering bluff) from the start :

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you come up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?

Ten Bucks you say is due?
 Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you
 Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?
 You gonna cut off my heat?
 You gonna take my furniture and
 Throw it in the street?

Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
 Talk on—till you get through.
 You ain't gonna be able to say a word
 If I land my fist on you.

(The Poems : 1951-1967, 43-44)

The quoted first half, followed immediately by the landlord's call ("*Police! Police!/Come and get this man!/He's trying to ruin the government/And overturn the land!*") is, as Jemie analyses (71), all tightly constructed in the conventional English folk ballad form, until toward the end the irregular rhymes in the black folk dialect, especially of "*man*"-"*land*" and "[a]rrest"-*"press,"* break the ballad convention and find a blues quality of syncopating variable feet in a new jazzy way, all of which again is summarized into a succinct account of media coverage in the last lines : "*MAN THREATENS LANDLORD // TENANT HELD NO BAIL // JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL*" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 44*).

The fundamental blues note, heard in these poems, reappears several more times later. "Projection," at the end of "Dig and Be Dug" section, catches only some resurfacing moments of black complaint, since in its telling title of a future dream the reader is asked to "[d]o" (or perform in any sensible and insensible measure of "doh") anything significant to change the present-day stagnation into a hallucinatory vision, where "the Savoy/leaps clean over to Seventh Avenue/and starts jitterbugging . . . Abyssinia Baptist Church/throws her enormous arms around/St. James Presbyterian/and 409 Edgecombe/stoops to kiss 12 West 133rd," so in effect realizing a bleakly feasible (as is said "like a Dizzy Gillespie transcription/played by Inez and Timme"²⁾) sense that "Willie Bryant"³⁾ and "Marian Anderson"⁴⁾ /will sing a duet./Paul Robson⁵⁾ /will team up with Jackie Mabley⁶⁾./and Father Divine⁷⁾ will say in truth./*Peace!/It's truly/wonderful!*" (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 45*)

Other echoes of blues may be heard in those poems which have already been cited as showing explicit be-bop strains, as "*pop-a-da*" in "Jam Session," but more subtly in any poem entitled "boogie." Here as showing a typical example of "boogie" poems which least claim its booming upliftedness of be-bop jazz, we take "Lady's Boogie" from the "Vice Versa to Bach" section. The poem begins in the casual narrative of the (possibly male) speaker :

See that lady
Dressed so fine?
She ain't got boogie-woogie
On her mind—

But if she was to listen
I bet she'd hear,
Way up in the treble
The tingle of a tear.

(The Poems : 1951-1967, 56)

The above lines in a verse form may be paraphrased in prose as exposing the hidden unconscious part of a lady who, after a fashion of imitating the white culture, may exclusively listen to the Western classic music of Bach. "The tingle of a tear" in a delicate "treble" of that music has yet to contain some sobbing or plaintive undertone. This is why the poem is called "lady's boogie," though the protagonist apparently is in no way of dancing "boogie." But above all else, if the poem had ended here, this short piece may never have become a current version of American blues. The poet adds one scat voice, which resonates with all the alliterative force of iconoclastic be-bop :

Be-Bach!
(56)

Bach or any major Western classic composer's name starting B (Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, or even Britten) would do, but the rapping blow of b-sounds may surely reflect the speaker's stance against such an orthodoxy.

III Harlem, the South, and the American Dream

As a canonical critic Onwuchekwa Jemie rightly claims (74), "Freedom Train" and "Deferred" constitute the climax of "Vice Versa to Bach" section, and indeed, they are among the most strategic poems in *Montage*. These two poems may summarize in essence what Hughes has been doing up until this point of his whole creative life, since the idea of political freedom or the "deferred" sense in any dream of such an idea coming true has been always with him from the start, where he once proclaimed: "Hold fast to dreams/For if dreams die/Life is a broken-winged bird/That cannot fly . . ." (*The Poems : 1921-1940*, 154)⁸

Before going into these two longer poems of masterwork, we deal with a middle hit of much anthologized piece called "Theme for English B," which is made up mostly of the narrator's reply to the instructor's request at the outset :

*Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you—
Then, it will be true.
(The Poems : 1951-1967, 52)*

The commentators on this poem rightfully point out its autobiographical reference of such an incidence: "I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem./I went to school there, then Durham, then here/to this college on the hill above Harlem . . ." (52)⁹ But the final question that "being colored doesn't make me *not* like/the same things other folk like who are other races" catapults the poet-narrator into the realization of mixed racial reality :

. . . will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white—
yet a part of me, as I was a part of you.
(*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 53)

Though the poet admits this reality by saying "[t]hat's American," he ends up asking a

(still unanswered) agonizing question of racial identity and the hope of racial equality of E Pluribus Unum. The question of American dream of achieving a total freedom will then be the last topic of the thesis, through considering "Freedom Train" and "Deferred."

Both "Freedom Train" and "Deferred" are the longer narrative poems in *Montage*, besides "Ballad of the Landlord" and "Theme for English B," treated above. The merit of longer narratives in the larger sequence is that a reader can feel both a closed sense of historical moments and an open sense of flowing history, which goes quite randomly through the briefer and more concentrated snapshot poems.

The historical moment in "Freedom Train" originates in the patriotic train which toured all over the country through 1947 till 1948, carrying historical documents and mementoes. The United States of America, as a nation, must have been proud to have triumphed the world war and celebrated its national idea of freedom and democracy. But for a black man, freedom has so far (until the quite recent time when a black or colored can actually become a president) been a fantasy. That's why the basic idea that a black man finds himself estranged and barred from riding the "freedom train" makes a present reader unconvinced of its trustworthiness of such an assertion in the poem.

The poem consists of two voices, alternately of the unsuspecting black boy protagonist who tries to ride the train in the Jim Crow South and the poet-narrator who exposes the harsh reality of racial segregation and hopes for a different reality in the freedom train. The boy's voice (in indented unitalicized lines) poses innocent questions which expect the idea of racial equality and freedom, while the narrator's voice (in unindented lines which lead also italicized various other voices in the last part) both calmly indicts the deceptive unreality of such an idea and passionately hopes for a different future. One of his indicting comments goes like this :

If my children ask me, *Daddy, please explain*
Why there's Jim Crow stations for the Freedom Train,
 What shall I tell my children? . . . *You tell me—*
 'Cause freedom ain't freedom when a man ain't free.
 (*The Poems : 1951-1967, 57*)

The black narrator who has these children and also his grandmother and grandson conducts almost preacherlike the back chorus refrains in the answering voice of a black boy :

But maybe they'll explain it on the
Freedom Train. (57)

The sermon style of questioning preacher and answering chorus underscores the nature of black congregation and its communal interaction. The driving force and rhythm expressed in the refrain of "Freedom Train" both confirm the singing quality of the poem and the forceful persuasiveness in narrating a political idea. If we as readers think back on the history of blacks in America, especially their slave past and emancipatory efforts as in the northbound train of the Underground Railroad, a hopeful tone in these lines may become both celebratory and ironic, in that the dream of racial equality is almost achieved and that the historical weight of such an emancipation puts on an always belated sense of dream deferred. The gospel-like chant in the ending lines has a dead G. I. for its topic, exposing another severe reality of unrealized dream of freedom : "Then maybe from their graves in Anzio/The G. I.'s who fought will say./*We wanted it so!*" (58), which again will become realized only in the future prayer :

Then I'll shout,
Glory for the
Freedom Train!

Then I'll holler,
Blow your whistle,
Freedom Train!

Thank-God-A-Mighty!
Here's the
Freedom Train!

(*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 58)

Our last instance of showing historical moments in *Montage* is called "Deferred." This poem, as Jemie explains (75), is a case of an individual's dream, not a collective one as in "Freedom Train." The speaker of the poem is a black male who "dropped out six months when [he] was seven, / [and dropped] a year when [he] was eleven, / then got put back when [his family] come North" and, though feeling that "[t]o get through high at twenty's kind of

late," thinks that "maybe this year [he] can graduate" (*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 58-59¹⁰).

The gist of the poem, despite its seeming dispassionate enumeration of his dreams (his eventual graduation from high school, acquiring of "that white enamel stove," studying French, buying "two new suits/at once," having "one more bottle of gin," seeing "[his] furniture paid for," having "a wife who will/work with [him] and not against [him]," passing "the civil (service" [for a lifetime employment], even acquiring "a television set" or "a decent radio," and finally playing the piano¹¹), lies in an ironical juxtaposition of the following words in italics and the echoing voice of the speaker in its ending :

*Montage
of a dream
deferred.*

Buddy, have you heard?

(*The Poems : 1951-1967*, 60)

Now the title of the poem, emphatically italicized, appears in another half-resigned voice of the speaker, which is also the one of the poet who has been contriving all along to sound various blues notes and a message of achieving an American dream.

In sum, we have been witnessing how the poet's documentary style, heavily influenced by the cinematic method of montage, was especially motivated by his desire to capture the historical evidence of Harlem life in transition (in the first section), and then how the blues music underscored his sense of loss and belatedness in realizing the black people's dream (in the second section), and finally how the idea of American Dream was so constantly deferred for them that they could not but accept its unrealized actual status (in the third section), all concerting to make believe our assertion that the poet may have intended such a heavily conditioned meaning of disappointment in the poem's title and hence indicted various falsities in his real life.

【Notes】

- 1) In one of the reviews on his eighth collection of poems *One-Way Ticket* (1949), David Daiches, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*, called him a "documentary" poet, meaning a severely limited sense of his poetic sensibility and intelligence, which, as Rampersad reports, by the way, made "Hughes himself seem[ed] to like the term and even beg[in] to apply it to himself" (Rampersad, Intro., *The Poems: 1941-1950*, 9).
- 2) Dizzy [originally, John Birks] Gillespie was a famous jazz trumpeter and composer of bebop music (1917-93); Inez and Timme sounds to me like any nonprofessional pair of librettists by Agnes and Tim.
- 3) William Cullen Bryant, an eighteenth-century white poet (1794-1878).
- 4) Marian Anderson, a twentieth-century black singer (1902-93).
- 5) Paul Robeson, a twentieth-century black singer and actor (1898-1976).
- 6) Jackie "Moms" Mabley, a twentieth-century black comedienne (1894-1975).
- 7) Father Divine, a twentieth-century black preacher of Peace Mission Movement (1882?-1965).
- 8) This poem, quoted in its first stanza, appears in the "Uncollected Poems, 1921-1930" section. The editor Rampersad dated the composition in 1923 in his biography where the same manuscript passage reads: "Hold fast to dreams, my son, / For if dreams die / Life is a broken-winged bird / That cannot fly . . ." (*Life* I: 50).
- 9) Though Jemie and others eagerly claim its near autobiographicalness, I agree with Rampersad that this poem may yet present another of the poet's personae, another self-imposed mask like the one of Jesse B. Semple, or "Simple," the wry comical black urban Everyman, chronicled in the *Chicago Defender* during the war years (Rampersad, Intro. *The Poems: 1941-1950*, 6).
- 10) The quoted phrases originally appear all in italics, as of the emendated words in brackets.
- 11) All quoted phrases are from the text in *The Poems: 1951-1967*, 58-60. However, in order to make it readable and concurring to my interpretation, I sacrificed here the original italicization which might suggest a possible dialogue between a married couple.

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Historical Moments in Langston Hughes' *Montage of a Dream Deferred*

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本論文は、いわゆる「ハーレム・ルネッサンス」の詩人 ラングストン・ヒューズ (1902-67) の代表作『延ばされた夢のモンタージュ』(1951)に現れる歴史的な黒人社会の表象の意味を探求するものである。ヒューズがなぜ、そのような題目の作品をハーレム・ルネッサンスの花開いた1920年代ではなく、1950年代初頭に創作・発表したのかという論題から出発し、モンタージュ技法、ブルース音楽、アメリカン・ドリームなどの具体的問題を考察することで、作品のもつ歴史的時間と虚構的時間の齟齬にみる象徴的意味を考察する。