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Songs of Strength: The Blues Aesthetic in Langston Hughes's Poetry for Black Youth

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أغاني القوة: جمالية البلوز في شعر لانغستون هيوز الموجّه للشباب السود

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Abstract
This study explores how Langston Hughes employs the blues aesthetic in his children's collection *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems (1932)* as a cultural and poetic strategy to affirm and fortify Black youth. By weaving themes of sorrow, joy, endurance, and self-affirmation into verses accessible to young readers, Hughes reconfigures the blues from adult lament to a poetic language of survival and strength for the next generation. The study aims to examine how Hughes adapts the improvisational structure, repetition, and vernacular rooted in blues performance to nurture a sense of self-worth, historical continuity, and inner strength in Black youth. The study discusses selected poems written in blues structure from Hughes' *The Dream Keeper.*
Keywords: Hughes, Blues, Black children, empowerment, The Dream Keeper.

المستخلص
تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية توظيف لانغستون هيوز لجماليات البلوز في مجموعته الشعرية للأطفال "حارس الأحلام" كإستراتيجية ثقافية وشعرية تهدف إلى تأكيد وتقوية الشباب السود. من خلال نسج موضوعات الحزن، والفرح، والصمود، وتوكيد الذات في أبيات يسهل فهمها على القارئ الصغير، يعيد هيوز تشكيل البلوز من مرثية للكبار إلى لغة شعرية تعبّر عن البقاء والقوة لجيل جديد. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل كيفية تكييف هيوز لبنية البلوز الارتجالية، والتكرار، واللغة المحكية المتجذرة في الأداء الغنائي للبلوز من أجل تنمية الإحساس بقيمة الذات، والاستمرارية التاريخية، والقوة الداخلية لدى الشباب السود. وتتناول الدراسة عدداً من القصائد المختارة المكتوبة وفق بنية البلوز من مجموعة "حارس الأحلام".
الكلمات المفتاحية: هيوز، البلوز، الأطفال السود، التمكين، حارس الأحلام.

1.Introduction Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was a poet, novelist, historian, columnist, playwright, and creator of children's literature. Hughes was the most prolific and esteemed author of his period. Hughes's oeuvre is marked by its democratic ethos; he was profoundly devoted to American democracy, despite its failure to fulfill its promises during his lifetime. Hughes dedicated his life to articulating in his writings the aspirations, victories, and challenges of African American individuals, consistently nurturing the youthful optimism that "we have tomorrow / Bright before us / Like a flame" (*The Dream Keeper* 91). In this preliminary perspective,

Hughes confronted the prevailing white populace that sought to perpetuate the subjugation of black individuals through racial discrimination and legal segregation. He also urged African American artists to enhance black culture through visual arts, music, poetry, and literature. Following his demise, Hughes's spirit of challenge retains a feeling of urgency for contemporary readers. Hughes was acutely aware of the daily suffering endured by black individuals in America, and the Jim Crow laws, along with other manifestations of racism he observed in his youth, would eventually be expressed in his nearly fifty-year writing career (Santis 15).

The Harlem Renaissance, also known as the Negro Renaissance, represented Langston Hughes's pivotal period and was integral to the New Negro Movement, recognized as the inaugural Black cultural movement in America. The early 20th century prompted African Americans to adopt their black identity and cultivate racial pride (Wagner 150). The New Negro movement produced works including poetry, music, drama, fiction, and painting, rooted in modernity and dedicated to the history and culture of black individuals (Jordan 848). Consequently, "Children's literature of the Harlem Renaissance emerged from the program of racial "uplift" that took hold in the 1890s" (Capshaw xv). Children's literature was pivotal in reshaping black youth during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. The leading authors of the period were deeply engaged in shaping a black national identity through the literary depiction of childhood (xiii). During that time, Langston Hughes and other poets, authors, and artists acknowledged that the seed of knowledge about Black culture needed to be instilled in the minds of the children and young adults (Tolson 17). Hughes commenced his writing career in his adolescence, penning his initial poetry at the age of fifteen. His contributions are a foundational element of African American children's literature.

2.The Blues Aesthetic in Selected poems from *The Dream Keeper* The black folk art tradition in the United States is an artistic expression of the Black experience, originating from oral and visual arts. Africans brought to the US during slavery created music, poetry, stories, and visual artwork, forming a new cultural identity. Black children's literature has housed historical, social, political, and spiritual aspects of the past, preserving the black folk art tradition and encompassing aesthetic qualities like the blues aesthetic (Tolson 1). In his collection *The Dream Keeper,* Hughes writes a note on Blues, he states, Blues have a strict poetic pattern with one long line repeated and a third line rhymed with. They are not group songs and are usually sung by one person alone. He also compares blues with spirituals, describing spirituals as “songs about escaping from trouble, going to heaven and living happily ever after” (44). Unlike the spirituals that look toward heavenly escape, the blues validate earthly existence and material struggle, making them deeply relevant to the lived experiences of young African Americans in an unjust world. Also, James Cone states, “the blues are about black life and the sheer earth and gut capacity to survive in an extreme situation of oppression” (97). Hughes inserts five Blues poems in his children’s collection *The Dream Keeper*, all have the “pattern traditional in blues songs: an initial loss, then an overcoming of grief by moving on” (Taher 82). By integrating the blues’ structure and ethos into his poetry, Hughes creates “songs of strength” that teach youth to see power in their survival, and dignity in their cultural heritage.Erskine Peters asserts that “Hughes uses black music” in his poetry “as aesthetic, social and political referent because, to a great extent, black music is black history” (34). This observation reveals how Hughes transforms the blues into more than a musical form, he uses it as a vehicle to transmit the historical memory, cultural resilience, and emotional depth of the African American experience. Scholarship on Hughes’ writing has historically correlated Hughes’ aesthetic and poetic concerns with his racial identity (Jones 1145). The blues in Hughes’s poetry does not merely reflect sorrow or hardship, it reframes suffering into endurance, loneliness into solidarity, and marginalization into identity. Thus, Hughes’s use of the blues becomes a form of counter-storytelling, in the sense of Critical Race Theory, that resists dominant narratives and equips young Black readers with cultural tools to understand and reclaim their history In a 1929 journal entry, Langston Hughes articulated his vision for the establishment of Negro Culture, asserting, “To create a Negro culture in America—a real, solid, sane, racial something growing out of the folk life, not copied from another, even though surrounding, race” (qtd. In Chinitz 97). This perspective is evident in his works, notably in the essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” where Hughes critiques the black middle class for emulating white values and lifestyles while dismissing vernacular expressions like jazz and blues. Hughes underscores "racial individuality" and differentiates between racial authenticity and universalist inauthenticity. He contends that “the Negro artist can express his racial individuality, his heritage of rhythm and warmth, and his incongruous humor that frequently, as in the Blues, manifests as ironic laughter intertwined with tears” (Hughes 2). For Hughes, authenticity resides in the black masses, whom he depicts as distinctly unashamed of their racial identity. He perceives the cultural manifestations of the Negros, grounded in their quotidian lives, as the

foundation for a thriving African American art movement (Chinitz 97)Despite writing across various genres, including novels, plays, short tales, essays, autobiographies, histories, and libretti, Hughes fundamentally identified as a poet. In his inaugural poetry collection, *The Weary Blues* (1926), Hughes's principal strategy was to integrate poetry with African American music, considered the fundamental essence and expression of black culture. Hughes's blues and jazz poetry represents a novel form, "one that told of the joys and sorrows, the trials and triumphs, of ordinary black folk, in the language of their typical speech and composed out of a genuine love of these people" (Rampersad and Roessel 4) For numerous Black children, the initial encounter with poetry manifests as street rhymes. Street rhythms expressed through song, dance, and clapping constitute an oral legacy. They are acquired rapidly and retained indefinitely. If poetry were instructed in the classroom with the same vigor and enthusiasm as street rhymes, a greater number of students would likely be engaged during lessons (Tolson 79). Nursery and street rhymes are poetic structures that embody rhyme, rhythm, and performance. They associate play with the musicality of language and educate children about linguistics and music. The street rhymes are profoundly embedded in African American children, fostering cooperation, camaraderie, and a sense of community. Furthermore, they offer foundational instruction in rhythm, improvisation, and narrative that resonates within blues and cultural traditions. In his essay "Children and Poetry", Hughes says:

To make words sing
Is a wonderful thing—
Because in a song
Words last so long. (CW, 9:364)

Hughes's lines convey the magical quality of words set to music that reflect the timeless nature of songs and the power of lyrical poetry.The Blues, as a musical genre, encapsulates the trials and adversities faced by African Americans, both during slavery and in freedom. The blues originated following the Emancipation Proclamation and was profoundly anchored in the experiences of the African working class. The transition from slavery to freedom following the Civil War did not confer complete autonomy upon black individuals. Consequently, blues music offered a means to articulate the tribulations of everyday existence. Legal emancipation did not resolve the concerns faced by African Americans; rather, it exacerbated problems such as poverty and intensified discrimination (Tolson 9 Historically, almost all of the books written by non-black writers for black children have depicted African American culture oppressively by reinforcing stereotypes or in ways that "feel "safe" for classrooms. This pattern reflects a persistent trend of "stereotyped representation by outside forces" (Abbas and Mahdi 1321). Dianne Johnson asserts that African American adolescents exist in a society and world where the concept of a "happy ending" does not represent a plausible paradigm. Their realities must be depicted; necessity implies "bleakness." It signifies that the literature must encompass a diverse array of experiences. Consequently, children's literature must reflect the experiences of black children, but this does not imply that such literature must be somber; it should encapsulate the range and intricacy of African American lives. Writers and poets ought to integrate the blues aesthetic into literature for black youngsters to attain this objective. The blues aesthetic promotes critical reflection among young readers regarding their experiences and identities, rather than presenting simplified or misleading representations of black culture (Tolson 14).A significant portion of Langston Hughes's poetry is associated with the blues. He established a novel methodology for poetry by incorporating rhythms and ideas derived from folk traditions (Eyerman 90). Hughes's artistic style has been shaped by the African American vernacular music tradition, characterized by themes of abandonment and isolation, with a primary focus on the orphaned child and the legacy of slavery, including the abduction of slaves, the dislocation of black families at the sales platform, and the arduous conditions during and post-slavery. In numerous songs by Hughes, blues music expresses profound sentiments of abandonment and solitude, mourning the individual's anguish of being forsaken akin to an abandoned child (Tracy 166).In his juvenile poetry, Hughes employs the lexicon and rhythms of Black vernacular speech alongside African American blues. This is evident in "Homesick Blues" from *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems*. The poem narrates a tale that encapsulates the experiences of Black individuals through the stylistic elements of blues music, which frequently intertwines joy and sorrow. The speaker in the poem is keen to return to the South. Hughes employs the imagery of a railroad bridge and the auditory presence of passing trains to elicit the speaker's feelings of nostalgia. In their essay "How Langston Hughes Used The Blues," Patricia A. Johnson and Walter C. Farrell, Jr. assert that "Hughes had learned to use the blues form as a means

of narrating some of the events or situations that are recurrent in the lives of oppressed Afro-American workers" (59).

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere. (*The Dream Keeper* 66)

Because of racial discrimination, the speaker looks for a boxcar to take him home; as a black individual, he is prevented from riding on a regular passenger train. As "the legacies of slavery and racism are still visible and go beyond being a mere geographical location of the American South" (Fattah &Yousif, The Racialization 143). Hughes contends in a "Note on Blues" that "the blues are songs about being in the midst of trouble, friendless, hungry, disappointed in love, right here on earth. The mood of the blues is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh" (Hughes 44). Thus, the speaker in the poem expresses profound anguish, yet opts to laugh rather than weep as a means of coping with sorrow; "To keep from cryin'/ I opens ma mouth an' laughs." In his essay "The Artist at Work: Technique and the Artist's Vision," Tom Feelings asserts:

There is a definite bittersweet duality going on in the best Black work, a mutuality of consciousness, for those two major elements of our lives, joy and sorrow, never just exist side by side, on a flat surface. They interact with each other and build on each other; the sorrow and pain of the Black experience have always been tempered by the strength of Black people, and our joy has been tempered by our pain. Always surrounded by restrictions and limitations in, terms of form, we are hostage to hope, we improvise in spite of those restrictions, sometimes transcending the form itself, making it new. We celebrate life, we can take the pain, we have endured it (695).

I went down to de station.
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station.
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin' for a box car
To roll me to de South. (*The Dream Keeper* 66)

Utilizing the blues song genre, the poet deliberately contravenes grammatical conventions, such by the purposeful absence of subject-verb agreement in "I opens ma mouth an' laughs," and addresses the grave issue of segregation by intertwining bitter and sweet thoughts to encapsulate the African American legacy. Selecting the blues style for this children's poetry invites criticism, as during Hughes's era, blues and jazz were perceived by some, especially within the black middle class, as vulgar and inferior art forms favored by the masses. Hughes asserts that the blues form in a children's poem is beneficial and pertinent to all black individuals, especially children, who have also experienced the racism referenced in the poem. The speaker attempts to return to the South via a boxcar, as an African American, he would not have been accepted on a passenger train, nor would black children. In this circumstance, the speaker laughs to prevent tears (Martin 74).

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin'
I opens ma mouth an' laughs. (*The Dream Keeper* 66)

Hughes used African American vernacular to validate the linguistic and cultural identity of African American readers. He inspires young readers to embrace their black language and culture by portraying black vernacular English as a potent and beautiful form of expression. The poem's musical components, including rhythmic repetition, embody the blues aesthetic inherent in African American culture, allowing for the artistic expression of emotions and experiences. Nancy D. Tolson asserts: "To engender a sense of familiarity for the reader within the narrative, artistry relies on the language of shared experiences and comfort. The warmth of unwritten words, predominantly conveyed through speech in Black culture, is encapsulated in Black children's literature" (39). The blues aesthetic reflects suffering and serves as a means of empowerment, reinforcing black children and young adults by affirming their emotions and offering a cultural legacy that transforms misery into creativity and resilience.Hughes's poem, "Bound No'th Blues," from *The Dream Keeper*, exemplifies the blues style. It

illustrates the plight of an African American individual seeking freedom and a life of dignity while journeying from the harsh South to the North. Within the poem's context, the "No'th" serves not merely as a location, but as a symbol of emancipation and the potential for an improved future. The speaker's odyssey is both emotional and corporeal, encapsulating the black experiences of resilience, solitude, and optimism as conveyed through the blues, an expressive medium of the black community. Tony Bolden asserts, "In order to make literature more meaningful in the everyday lives of African Americans, writers must create a literature that more closely resembles their expressive forms" (16).Kalamu ya Salaam identifies six concepts that define the blues aesthetic as an ethos, serving as a helpful framework for understanding blues tradition and applying it to black children's literature. These concepts are stylization of process, exaggeration, brutal honesty clothed in metaphorical grace, acceptance of the contradictory nature of life, faith in justice, and celebration of the sensual (357-58). Numerous characteristics of Kalamu ya Salaam's blues aesthetic correspond with "Bound No'th Blues." Hughes emulates the musical cadence of blues songs through the stylization of patterns, including repetition and rhythm. The repetition of lines at the poem's outset, coupled with black dialect, establishes a melodic cadence that encapsulates the improvisational and emotional core of the blues, while simultaneously highlighting the speaker's journey and his determination to pursue a more promising future. Consequently, this stylization fosters a sense of affiliation with African American culture. Hughes argues that "The blues, unlike the spirituals, have a strict poetic pattern: one long line, repeated, and a third line to rhyme with the first two. Sometimes the second line in repetition is slightly changed and sometimes, but very seldom, it is omitted" (44).

Goin' down de road, Lawd,
Goin' down de road.
Down de road, Lawd,
Way, way down de road. (*The Dream Keeper* 46)

The expedition northward serves as a compelling metaphor for motivating black youths and young people to strive for freedom. The speaker's determination to persist in walking despite his burden demonstrates his autonomy and resilience; "Got to find somebody/To help me carry dis load." The speaker articulates his anguish of solitude: "Hates to be lonely,/ Lawd, I hates to be sad." He candidly reveals his internal turmoil, expressing suspicion even towards his friends: "But every friend I find seems / Like they try to do me bad." The poem's unflinching candor regarding the speaker's suffering and skepticism embodies Ya Salaam's tenet of "brutal honesty clothed in metaphor," with the metaphor of a journey to the North softening the stark reality of racism. These lyrics illustrate the vulnerability and emotional difficulties encountered by black teenagers; nonetheless, under the blues aesthetic, articulating one's adversities and obstacles is both inherent and permissible. Children's literature with a blues style is frequently misinterpreted by non-black individuals as melancholic and lacking in "happy-ever-after endings." Children's literature embodying a blues aesthetic imparts valuable lessons regarding self-esteem. In her book *Unbank the Fire,* Janice E. Hale elucidates the significance of exposing Black youngsters to this type of reading; she asserts that:This literature does not only benefit Black children but white children as well: The African American cultural tradition teaches African American children important lessons about the struggle implicit in human affairs. The tendency of European Americans to distort human history and to paint a picture of never ending European American victories has robbed white children of legitimate lessons about overcoming adversity. The suicide rate among white males, the highest in the country, is an example of what happens when one has been raised in a culture that expects unending triumphs. When one encounters the defeats and frustrations that are a part of living without having a tradition of overcoming adversity, one personalizes defeat (151). The blues aesthetic in the poem is expressed through life's paradoxes; the speaker's path embodies both despair and optimism. The "road" symbolizes both adversity and the potential for survival; hence, the duality of life's sweetness and bitterness must be embraced, a conviction integral to African American heritage: "Road's in front o' me,/ Nothin' to do but walk." This paradox instructs black youngsters to reconcile the advantages and disadvantages of existence and embrace life's inherent contradictions. The "road" symbolizes hardships while yet embodying optimism; the speaker's unwavering progression amidst adversity mirrors the African American community's steadfast belief in justice. Kalamu ya Salaam contends that Black individuals embody the ethos of blues, characterized by "an optimistic faith in the ultimate triumph of justice in the form of karma" (qtd. in Tolson 32). This optimism enables Black children and young people to persevere in the face of adversity, effectuate change, and seek justice.Salaam contends that "the deliberate use of exaggeration to call attention to key qualities, with being one of the most salient projections of exaggeration" (357). The phrase "These Mississippi towns ain't/ fit fer a hoppin' toad." Uses

exaggeration to convey disdain for Jim Crow laws in the South. In these lines, Hughes employs comedy to align with the black folkloric tradition of intertwining wit with critique. Consequently, the comedy employed serves as a critique to denounce the grim reality of segregation laws. Hughes's utilization of exaggeration to juxtapose the lives of black individuals with that of a toad underscores both absurdity and humor. This line's humor underscores the harsh reality of existing in such circumstances, alleviating the bitterness while providing a sharp condemnation. Kalamu ya Salaam characterizes humor as "merely an exaggeration of reality to convey a message" (qtd. in Tolson 70). Thus, the intentional application of hyperbole or humor functions as a mechanism to engage black children with the gravity of systemic racism, aiding them in comprehending their history and validating their own experiences. Ralph Ellison, in his critique of LeRoi Jones' Blues People, asserts:The blues speak to us simultaneously of the tragic and the comic aspects of the human condition and they express a profound sense of life shared by many Negro Americans precisely because their lives have combined these modes. This has been the heritage of a people who for hundreds of years could not celebrate birth or dignify death and whose need to live despite the dehumanizing pressures of slavery developed an endless capacity for laughing at their painful experiences. This is a group experience shared by many Negroes, and any effective study of the blues would treat them first as poetry and as ritual (265).In his autobiography *The Big Sea* (1940), Hughes states, "For my best poems were all written when I felt the worst. When I was happy, I didn't write anything" (54). Hughes regarded blues as a form of 'therapy'; he situated his pain within his poetry. Like Freud's idea of "the work of mourning," where grief is processed through expression and transformation (Al-Zubbaidi and Al-Hameedawi 2), Hughes employed the blues to navigate grief, transforming repetition, passion, and rhythm into solace and optimism. Hughes was acquainted with blues from a young age; as a boy, he articulated his anguish imaginatively. In Hughes's "Po' Boy Blues," the speaker, an impoverished black youth, articulates his individual and communal experiences, employing the blues tradition as a means to address his anguish. The speaker recounts the historical occurrence of the Great Migration, during which numerous African Americans departed from the South to the North. The speaker conveys his nostalgia for home by contrasting the warmth of the South with the chill of the North.

When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
Since I come up North de
Whole wide world's turned cold. (*The Dream Keeper* 58)

Examining African American history elucidates the importance of the blues as a form of expression for black individuals (Waldron 141). Samuel Charters perceives the blues as a narrative of that experience; he asserts, "In the blues will be found the expression of attitudes and beliefs that will become for the American Negro part of a racial memory, and part of a developing social history" (13). Charters emphasizes the historical and cultural significance of the blues in the African American community. The blues continuously convey a wide range of emotions, including sorrow, joy, wrath, hope, and perspectives on life. The youthful orator in the poem articulates his experiences and challenges, stating:

I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong.
Yes, I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong,
But this world is weary
An' de road is hard an' long. (*The Dream Keeper* 58)

Consequently, the blues function as a framework that legitimizes the emotions of black youth and substantiates their challenges, seeing them as integral to the human and historical narrative. Moreover, the blues tradition promotes emotional expression among black youth; the young black speaker articulates his anguish in matters of love:

I fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
Fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
She made me lose ma money

An' almost lose ma mind. (*The Dream Keeper* 58)

This self-expression is significantly empowering as Black youth inhabit an environment that frequently suppresses or marginalizes their voices. Engaging in the composition, performance, or auditory experience of blues music can be therapeutic. In his piece "The Blues As Black Therapy," Leonard Goines contended that blues music may exert a therapeutic influence on African Americans. Blues music has served as a medium for African Americans to address their challenges and alleviate their anxiety; Goines asserts:The blues are used by the Black man as a vehicle for emotional release at times when he feels himself helpless and incapable of effecting a resolution for the emotions and/or problems faced. It is for this reason that blues celebrating the pleasures and happiness of love are few. Further, the blues is a means of portraying the Black man's relationship to his society and times. They illustrate the types of situations, events and feelings which give rise to the need to create, sing or listen to the blues. (40) African Americans express their living circumstances through song, whether favorable or unfavorable. Simultaneously, other Black individuals see and connect with the issues, resulting in a therapeutic experience for everybody involved. African American adolescents must articulate their experiences that evolved into a blues aesthetic, which contributed to their survival. Hence, Albert Murray states, "We invented the blues; Europeans invented psychoanalysis. You invent what you need" (72). In his more upbeat poems, Hughes underlines many of the positive sides of Negros' life that the Harlem Renaissance focused on. The poem "Negro Dancers" from Hughes's collection *The Dream Keeper,* sets up a musical beat that brings the dance steps of the Charleston to life (Martin 74).

Me an' ma baby
Got two mo' ways,
Two mo' ways to do de Charleston!
Da, da,
Da, da, da!
Two mo' ways to do de Charleston!
Soft light on the tables,
Music gay,
Brown-skin steppers
In a cabaret. (*The Dream Keeper* 51)The poem contains a reference to white individuals: "White folks, laugh!/White folks, pray!" Nonetheless, these white individuals seem to function as outsiders, whereas the "Brown-skin steppers" constitute the focal point of the scene. Hughes also honors blackness through language and music, illustrating the artistic and cultural achievements of black individuals in music and dance. The reiteration of "Me an' ma baby's / Got two mo' ways / Two mo' ways to do de Charleston" underscores the performers' expertise and the artistic liberty they represent. By depicting the Negro dancers as the central figures in this poem, Hughes elevates black youth as a main point in his poetry for children and young people; the black stars in the poem embody the notion that black culture merits celebration and admiration. Prior to Langston Hughes, children's literature rarely authentically represented African American experiences. His work brought novel topics that allowed black children and young people to see affirmative representations of themselves through the celebration of black culture, language, and music, such as blues, fostering a sense of belonging and pride in their identity (Martin 75).

CONCLUSIONThe blues served as awakening call for freedom among African Americans in the United States following the abolition of slavery. It served as a healing medium for black youths who express their feelings about their difficult conditions that could not be changed. They sing their experiences of poverty, racism, and social alienation, not to resolve all these problems but to feel better since they are not alone in these troubles. Hence, the Blues emerged as a means of survival, a deeply emotional and collective form of storytelling that addressed the Blacks' life's suffering Langston Hughes uses Blues tradition to create poetry that connects with the experiences of Black youth. Utilizing Black dialect, rhythm, irony, grief, and humor, he reflected the everyday struggles and emotional landscapes of his community, elevating the blues into "songs of strength" that provide solace and empowerment. The blues aesthetic in his hands transcended mere reflection of Black pain; it stimulated Black determination, transforming personal adversity into communal affirmation. Hughes's blues poems provide young readers with a powerful voice that articulates their circumstances, validates their emotions, and reassures them that they are not alone.

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