

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on two different components of the poetry of African American poet and writer Langston Hughes, who is best known as a singer of Harlem Renaissance: protest through the prism of social problems of his time, and spirituality via religious motives rooted in African American folk tradition. Literary heritage of Langston Hughes is deeply rooted in and extensively fed by the history of African American people, which reveals itself in multiple allusions to social history as well as to literature of colored America. After the Emancipation, despite the great hopes of the Blacks, they had been betrayed by the elite and experienced what scholars called the Nadir of racial injustice. Therefore, the protest of African Americans had not faded out. Still, spiritual tradition of the Blacks remained their spiritual stronghold. These facts had been reflected in national literature. For Langston Hughes, Nadir is something which he grew and lived with. Hughes campaigns against unjust laws and regulations, unfair racial attitudes, and hypocrisy of clergymen, often affiliating himself with socialist ideology. However, African American tradition influences him so much that, alongside, he remains faithful to the belief (religious consciousness) of his ancestors.

The problem of present dissertation is linked to the necessity of new vision regarding literary heritage of Langston Hughes after coming of new socio-political and socio-cultural era. XXI century demands revising and reviewing many of questions and issues, answers on which seemed axiomatic in previous century. With the fall of communist ideology, with the win of the rights of colored America, with religious awakening in former socialist camp, and religious crisis in many of established democracies, the questions put by Hughes in his poems require new insight. This leads to the hypothesis of the dissertation, which, summed up, says that: 1) As racial/social protest and religious spirituality are widely present in African-American literature, these two are intensively present in poems of Langston Hughes, thus making him an important successor of his predecessors; 2) Although the existing literature identifies Langston Hughes as a writer hostile to religion, religious motives are an important component of his literary heritage, which stems from his adherence to African-American tradition; and 3) In his creations, the poet manages to find the domain in which the motives of social protest are coherent with religious spirituality, where these two do not exclude each other.

Using historical, literary, linguistic, and, even, statistic analysis, we can say with assurance that not only does the hypothesis have the right to exist, but it can be fully justified. Among else, we appeal to such a unique form of African American folklore as the blues, which Hughes used in his poems. The blues proves to be the domain where the poet manages to combine his motives of protest to those of spirituality bringing these two in harmonious synergy.