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V úvodu práce diplomandka stručně charakterizuje období, jemuž se bude věnovat, především s ohledem na situaci Amerických černochů a jejich postavení ve společnosti. Dále definuje pojem modernismus a Harlemská renesance. Do tohoto dobového a literárního kontextu zařadí zvoleného autora. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza jeho prozaických děl, v níž se studentka zaměří na zobrazení problematiky rasových vztahů. Bude rovněž analyzovat formální stránku děl. Závěrem své analýzy shrne a vysloví obecnější závěr o Hughesově pohledu na rasové vztahy zobrazené v jeho próze.

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- **Hughes, Langston. Not Without Laughter. New York: Random House, 1930. Hughes, Langston. The Ways of White Folks. New York: Random House, 1934.**
- **Kellogg, William O. American History The Easy Way, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 2010, 4th Edition.**
- **Williams, Ella O. Harlem Renaissance; A Handbook. 2008**
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Annotation

This Master's Thesis focuses on the racial issues as they are depicted in Langston Hughes's novel *Not Without Laughter* and a collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks*. It defines the connection between the Harlem renaissance and American modernism. The analysis has its base in the theoretical input, which elaborates on the position of the African-American community within American society. Based on the findings and the theoretical input, the conclusion of the thesis summarizes Langston Hughes' depiction of racial issues in his prose.

Keywords

african americans, segregation, race, harlem renaissance, modernism

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá zachycením rasové tématiky v románu *Not Without Laughter* a sbírce povídek *The Ways of White Folks* amerického autora Langstona Hughese. Práce definuje spojitost mezi Harlemskou renesancí a Americkým modernismem. Teoretická část, jež se zabývá problematikou Amerických černochů a jejich postavením ve společnosti, slouží jako výchozí material pro analýzu vybraných děl. Na základě teoretické části a analýzy děl je v závěru práce vysloven obecný závěr o zachycení rasové tématiky v próze Langstona Hughese.

Klíčová slova

afro-američané, segregace, rasa, harlemská renesance, modernismus

Obsah

INTRODUCTION

Terms such as slavery, freedom, racism, segregation, white supremacy, violence, African Americans and the Harlem Renaissance are very closely tight together and they refer to certain, very tough period of the American history. Even though the situation of the African Americans has improved, it is still possible to hear about racially-motivated incidents taking place in the United States of America, even in the twenty-first century. Thus, the problem of racial relations and their consequences became the main focus of this thesis, where two prosaic works of one of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, will be analyzed. According to the fact that the Harlem Renaissance took place in the period commonly talked to in connection to Modernism, the analysis of the literary works chosen for the thesis also briefly comments on their form in connection to Modernism.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part concentrates on providing the reader with historical background of the African-American community in the United States of America, the reality of slavery, the fight for freedom during the Civil War and with the description of the African-American struggle for real freedom after the war. It also informs about the incentive of the African-American former slaves behind their decision to move to the North, and about the conditions in which the newcomers were forced to live. Thus the thesis reveals the most problematic racial issues of the beginning of the twentieth century.

Concerning African-American community in the United States of America, the Harlem Renaissance, as an African-American movement, cannot be omitted from the thesis, too. Talking about African Americans and the Harlem Renaissance, it is also necessary to name one of the biggest African-American literary names, Langston Hughes, who is considered to be one of those African-American American writers, who managed to turn attention to literature written by African Americans, and thus helped to reach certain level of racial pride. With regard to his skin color, the thesis also shortly presents his life, as well as his work. Even though Langston Hughes is primarily well-known for his poems, which have already been focused on by many authors, his works of prose, such as his semi-autobiographical novel *Not Without Laughter* and a collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks*, are also worth noticing, and thus they became the main subject of the analysis in this thesis.

In addition to the historical background of the African American community, the racial injustice they were confronted with in the United States of America, and information capturing the rise of the Harlem Renaissance, including Langston Hughes and his work, the theoretical part of the thesis also focuses on Modernism, as a movement of the early 20th century, its definition, main features, formal experimentation in particular, and its different understandings. The aim of the chapter focused on modernism is to provide criteria for the analysis of *Not Without Laughter* and *The Ways of White Folks.*

The second - practical part of the thesis focuses on the analysis itself. In the first part of the practical thesis, focused on racial issues, each of the books is analyzed separately and they are compared to each other in the conclusion of the thesis. The information provided in the theoretical part of the thesis together with the analysis of the books interconnects Langston Hughes's prose with the period of white supremacy and oppression in the United States of America. Moreover, the second part of thesis elaborates on to what extent, if at all, it is possible to find any connection between the chosen prosaic works of Langston Hughes and the features of Modernism as they are defined in the theoretical part.

For the sake of unambiguity, it is necessary to define certain terms which are connected to the African-American community in the United States of America. Who does the thesis understand by African Americans? A person is referred to as being African American or Negro, if he is of any African ancestry, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood is. Thus, the term includes mixed white and Negro, black as well as mulatto, as well as mixtures of non-white races.[1] As it has been already suggested, the thesis deals with African-American fight for freedom and thus another term – freedom should be also defined. The problem with freedom is that it can be understood in many different ways. However, the freedom African-American people fought for means that there are no legal or institutional restrictions on the individual and that all citizens are treated equally; it includes an internalized individual state of autonomy, pride and self-respect; it allows all individuals to participate in the political process; and it also ensures the liberation of a group from external control, such as enslavement or oppression.[2] In the theoretical part, the thesis captures whether and to what extent African Americans managed to gain this kind of freedom.

[1] Robert C. Smith, Hanes Walton Jr., Sherri L. Wallace, *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 284.
[2] Smith et al., *American Politics,* 3.

1. THEORETICAL PART

1.1 Historical Background of the African-American community in the USA

Concerning the African-American community in the United States of America, slavery was the most problematic issue the African-American people has had to face in everyday life, and thus it became an inseparable part of their history. The next chapter focuses on the beginnings of slavery in the U.S. and the reasons why there was such a need for slaves, especially in the South.

1.1.1 An Argument over Slavery

As Kellogg mentions in his work, "at the root of any discussion on slavery, its merits or its horrors, its expansion into new territory or its abolition, was its economic necessity for the South."[3] In the South, heavy labor was supplied by slaves, who, as Kellogg suggests in his work, even though they were often treated better than northern workers, lacked one of the basic American values – freedom.[4] The following paragraphs briefly summarize how difficult and successful, if successful at all, their journey towards this basic human value was.

As it was suggested in the previous paragraph, the problem of slavery was connected mainly with the South. In comparison to the Northern non-slavery states, the South was dependent on agriculture, and thus the Southern states needed to maintain slavery in at least some of the new territories after entering the Union after the expansion of the nation in 1840.[5] The Congress needed a solution for the situation so it came with the Compromise in 1850, where a new concept of Popular Sovereignty was introduced, which let the people of every new territory decide themselves whether they wanted to maintain slavery or not. At the same time, the concept also included the abolition of slave trade, but not the abolition of slavery.[6][7]

Although the Compromise should be a solution to the situation, the problems between the South and the non-slavery states continued, and after Abraham Lincoln had won the Republican's party nomination, he delivered a speech, in which he suggested that "the nation would have to be all free or all slave."[8] This was a thread for the Southerners, who were worried that if Lincoln won the elections, which finally happened, he would do whatever he could to abolish slavery and

[3] William O. Kellogg, *American History the Easy Way* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 2003), 136.
[4] Kellogg, *American History*, 136-137.
[5] Kellogg, *American History*, *137*-138.
[6] Kellogg, *American History*, 141.
[7] Gary B. Nash, *The American People: creating a nation and a society* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 308-309.
[8] Kellogg, *American History*, 141.

establish an all-free Union. As it was expected, the election of Lincoln significantly sharpened the situation, which Kellogg explains as that "the Lower South insisted on a guarantee of the right to slavery in the territories. Lincoln insisted on holding to the Republican platform, which stood for no extension of slavery to the territories."[9]

1.1.2 From an Argument towards the Civil War

Lincoln's hopes for keeping the Union started to fail on 20 December 1860, when South Carolina seceded from the Union "declaring the experiment of putting people with different pursuits and institutions under one government a failure."[10] Later, other countries such as Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed South Carolina in its secession and they together created a new nation called the Confederate States of America (CSA). Later, the remaining four states of the Upper South (Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas) also joined the CSA, in opposition to Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware and Missouri, who eventually joined the Union camp. CSA wrote its own constitution in 1861, in which slavery was explicitly recognized.

On the other side, there was Abraham Lincoln in the lead, who wanted to avoid conflict but was at the same time determined to restore the Union. The conflict was now inevitable and America was in front of "the most brutal and destructive conflict in American history."[11] During the conflict known as the Civil War both opposing sides went through victories as well as defeats. Between these victories and defeats on both sides, there was an event of great significance for slaves in November 1861, when the Union took Port Royal Sound and freed the first slaves, which meant a small victory for the African American. However, this was not the only effect the war had on the African-American people of America. The war brought problems for both opposing sides as well as for the African-American community. The treasuries of both North and South were empty; they both had to face problems with the wounded and with the lack of manpower, which were to high degree caused by desertion of soldiers. The problems of African-American people did not appear only in the South but also in the North, where they were considered "economic competitors and the cause of the war"[12] especially by Irish, and thus became their targets. "Mobs beat and lynched blacks an even burned the Colored Orphan Asylum" and "more than 100 people died in the three days of rioting."[13] The worries about African-American people taking white men's jobs and political rights continued to cause problems in different parts of the North, and thus the

[9] Kellogg, *American History,* 141.
[10] Nash, *The American People*, 320.
[11] Kellogg, *American History,* 144.
[12] Nash, *The American People*, 334.
[13] Nash, *The American People*, 334.

idea of emancipation of slaves caused race riots in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Buffalo and Cincinnati.[14] This fact shows that even in the North the attitudes towards emancipation of slaves were not unanimous. The attitudes of political parties were similar to those of people in the North, and thus Lincoln was forced to reach the emancipation by taking cautious steps, which is further described in the next subchapter.

1.1.3 On the Way to Emancipation Proclamation

Lincoln, being aware of the controversy over slavery, decided to emphasize that his primary intention was to save the Union rather than to abolish slavery:

> If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union.[15]

Another careful step Lincoln took in the emancipation of slaves came in 1862, when he issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which stated that "unless rebellious states (or parts of states of rebellion) returned to the Union by January 1, 1863, the president would declare their slaves forever free,"[16] and at the same time offered compensation for those states.[17] As both Nash and Boyer suggest in their work, Lincoln did not expect the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation to bring the Southern rebellious states back to the Union. He did not expect the states to surrender after all the fighting, and he was right in his expectation because none of the states did so. In fact, the main goal of the document was to prepare the northern public for the emancipation of slaves as a necessary part of saving the Union.[18] [19] The preliminary version of emancipation proclamation was followed by its final version on New Year's Day, 1863, when Lincoln issued Emancipation Proclamation, which as Boyer points out "declared forever free all slaves in areas in rebellion."[20] Even though the practical impact of the proclamation was limited and did not free all slaves in the South, it did have a significant effect on African Americans because it made them realize that the nature of the war was changing and it also enabled them to join the Union army.

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[14] Nash, *The American People*, 335.
[15] Paul S. Boyer. *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People. Volume 1:To 1877* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990), 505.
[16] Boyer. *The Enduring Vision*, 505.
[17] Nash, *The American People*, 335.
[18] Boyer. *The Enduring Vision*, 505.
[19] Nash, *The American People*, 335.
[20] Boyer. *The Enduring Vision*, 505.

1.1.4 The end of Civil War

It was not only because of the official abolition of slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation that 1863 became an important year, but also because of two important battles, at Gettysburg and at Vicksburg, which are considered turning points of the whole Civil War because Southerners were forced to surrender. However, even though the two mentioned battles were considered turning points, the official end of the Civil war did not come until 1865, when the South was defeated at Appomattox on 9 April. Southerners' surrender, with Lee in the lead, was very important for the African-American people as they also participated on the victory, as Franklin explains in the following quote:

> For blacks, Lee's surrender was a victory. At last they had achieved what human beings everywhere have always wanted – freedom. The end of the war brought to a close a period of enslavement that had lasted for almost 250 years. The desire for freedom had been kept alive through the centuries by those blacks who demonstrated by their conduct that freedom and the right to it transcended racial lines. The victory was won in part by their struggles through the centuries as well as by their service in the final battles.[21]

On the other hand, even though the South was defeated and it had to surrender and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which abolished slavery, "southern whites were determined to resume control of both land and labor."[22] Thus it was necessary to specify what freedom meant, which became one of the problems of the post-war America, which became to be known as the Reconstruction era. This period of the American history is further elaborated on in the next subchapter.

1.1.5 Reconstruction Era

As it was not exactly clear what freedom meant after the Civil War, and different parts of the United States of America understood this term differently, it is possible to summarize that the African Americans were given certain basic rights but also some restrictions, which varied from state to stae, by so-called black codes. Thanks to the black codes, African-American people could for example marry, own property, make contracts or testify in court against each other. On the contrary, "some codes established racial segregation in public places; most prohibited interracial marriage, jury service by blacks, and court testimony by blacks against whites."[23] As it can be seen from the explanation of the black codes, they did not exactly support the idea of free African

[21] John Hope Franklin, Alfred A. Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 218.
[22] Nash, *The American People*, 348.
[23] Boyer. *The Enduring Vision*, 531.

Americans and showed that the South, which did not provide the freedmen with equal citizenship and economic independence, did not intend to internalize this idea. Moreover, the black codes, as well as the reconstruction plan, were defended by the then president Andrew Johnson, who became president at Lincoln's death.

Congress felt the need for an action which would support equal civil rights for both African-American and white people, and thus it came with the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866 and proposed its ratification to the states. Not only did it provide permanent constitutional protection of the civil rights of freedmen by defining them as citizens, but at the same time it guaranteed the equal protection of the laws. President Johnson himself discouraged the southern states from the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Even though the states rejected to ratify the amendment, the president found himself in trouble because the Republicans achieved the victory in elections, and managed to pass the Reconstruction Acts, thanks to which African Americans were enfranchised, as well as bills which restricted the powers of the president. Johnson also unsuccessfully opposed Fifteenth amendment, which prohibited the denial of suffrage for African-American men (not women). The situation for African-American people seemed promising and their lives started to reshape as Boyer shows in the following quote:

> Emancipation reshaped black communities where former slaves sought new identities as free people. African Americans reconstituted their families; created black institutions, such as churches and schools; and participated in government for the first time in American history.[24]

However, 1883 was a crucial year for the African-American community in the South because "the provisions of the Civil Rights Acts of 1875, which assured African-Americans of equal rights in the public places, were declared unconstitutional,"[25] and thus African Americans were made "second-class members of the southern society."[26] The next goal southerners managed to fulfil was disfranchisement of African-American people, when between 1890 and 1910, African-American people were disfranchised in all 11 former Confederate states.[27] The exclusion from voting was only one of the problems African-Americans had to deal with in this period. Interracial marriage was made impossible and the situation got even worse with the so-called Jim Crow laws as Nash claims in the following quote:

> …state and local laws legalized informal segregation in public facilities. Beginning with railroads and schools, "Jim Crow" laws…were extended to libraries, hotels, restaurants,

[24] Boyer. *The Enduring Vision*, 466.
[25] Nash, *The American People*, 383.
[26] Nash, *The American People*, 383.
[27] Nash, *The American People*, 383.

> hospitals, asylums, prisons, theatres, parks and playgrounds, cemeteries, toilets, morgues, sidewalks, drinking fountains, and most places where blacks and whites might mingle…Political and social discrimination made it even more possible to keep blacks permanently confined to agricultural and unskilled labor and dependent on whites for their material welfare…[28]

As Nash points out, white people managed to exclude African-American people from the trades and by 1890s, the percentage of African-American craftsmen lowered to 10 percent. In summary, the jobs majority of African-American people were engaged in included work such as laundry work, domestic service, sharecroppers or farmhands, which were primary slave occupations in the times of slavery.[29]

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, interracial marriage was prohibited by black codes, but during the Reconstruction era some of the Southern states, such as Louisiana or South Carolina, wanted to make sure people of mixed race were considered and considered themselves a part of the African-American race, and thus make sure that the white race remains pure. In order to do so the states came with so-called one-drop rule by which "they limited the definition of black persons to those with one-fourth, one-eighth, or some other fraction of black ancestry."[30] Later, this definition was even tighten up by some states by explicitly stating the one-drop rule, by which all people with one drop of African-American blood did not belong into the white group. "By 1915 the one-drop rule became universally backed by whites in the South and North."[31]

Considering all the above-mentioned facts about life conditions of the African American community, it is not surprising that African-American people sought a better place for living, which is the topic of the next chapter.

1.2 Coming North, Harlem Renaissance and Langston Hughes

Disfranchisement, difficult and sometimes cruel life conditions, violence and the vision of rich opportunities in the cities were the main reasons, why the African-American people started considering leaving the South. Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia were the first states facing the outflow of African-American people, which started as soon as 1879.[32] The first years of the twentieth century were thus marked with large numbers of African-American people coming

[28] Nash, *The American People*, 383.
[29] Nash, *The American People*, 383.
[30] F. James Davis, "The Hawaiian Alternative to the One-drop Rule," in *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, ed. Naomi Zack (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), 121.
[31] Davis "The Hawaiian Alternative," 122.
[32] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 278.

to the North, especially to Northern cities, and it gave rise to the segregated African-American inner-city worlds of New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland.[33] The inflow of African-American people continued after World War I, not only because of the migration of African-American people from the South but also because of greater opportunities for work in the North.[34] The first of the cities, New York, attracted many African-American artists and became the heart of a movement called the Harlem Renaissance. One of the artists inseparably connected to the Harlem renaissance was Langston Hughes, who is often referred to as one of the most prolific authors of the movement, and thus, the author as well as the movement will be further discussed in the following subchapters.

But before attention is turned to Harlem Renaissance and Langston Hughes, it is necessary to elaborate on the problems the African American people had to face while finding their new homes up in the North. The incoming African Americans believed in better life conditions provided by the cities they moved into, but the following paragraphs will show how distant the reality was from their expectations, and

1.2.1 Problems of the African American people

Majority of the incomers faced difficulties while looking for jobs. If they managed to find a job, it usually was an onerous and unattractive one. Having been welcomed to work as servants, it was much easier for African-American women to find a job than for African-American men. Moreover, African-American had difficulties finding jobs because of objections raised by white employees.[35] Such people did not have another choice than to join the working class. African-American working class people commonly lived in segregated and very crowded neighborhoods clustered around industrial cities. They usually owned small houses with inadequate public services, such as outdoor hydrants, from which women had to bring water for washing, cleaning and also for cooking. Many of them even could not afford their own house, and thus they had to rent one.[36]

On the other hand, some of the urban African Americans managed to rise into the middle class and owned big houses equipped with modern facilities such as gas lighting. Such houses were situated beyond working-class neighborhoods. Some of these people did not rise into the

[33] Phillip M. Richards, "Realism and Victorian Protestantism," in *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, ed. Paul Lauter (Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 359.
[34] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 364.
[35] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 310.
[36] Nash, *The American People*, 398.

middle class by their own effort, but they inherited those houses from their relatives.[37] On the other hand, as Yellin claims in his work, there were thousands of African-American people who, between 1880s and 1910s, managed to pass civil service exams and thus could work in the executive offices of the federal government, for example sorting in the Post Office Department, thanks to which they managed to live middle-class lives.[38]

Another problem African-American people had to deal with was lynching and violence in general. African-American people of both North and South had to face manifestations of hostility towards the members of their community. As Franklin suggests in *From Slavery to Freedom*, concerning lynching, "the South was far ahead of the rest of the country, but several Northern states, notably those in the Midwest adhered to this ancient barbaric ritual of total disregard for the law,"[39] and he, together with Nash, also points out that African-American people were lynched and attacked for many reasons, such as rape, attempted rape, homicide, robbery, testifying in court against white people, marrying white woman, insulting white people or simply having a bad reputation, even in big Northern cities.[40] [41]Moreover, in some cases, it was not only the accused, who had to face the violent revenge for the crime, as the following paragraph shows:

> In an altercation an African American shot and killed a white officer. A mob gathered and broke into the jail where the black was being held. The citizens murdered the black in the doorway of the jail, hung him on a telegraph pole, and riddled his body with bullets. They then proceeded to wreak destruction on the black section of the town. When they have finished, eight buildings have been burned, many blacks had been beaten, and others have fled, never to return.[42]

Similarly, Nash gives another example of a 32-year-old African-American man, Ed Coy, who was accused of a rape of a white woman and burned alive by a mob. As the author suggests by saying "his alleged victim somewhat hesitatingly put the torch to his oil-soaked body,"[43] his innocence was not proven false and the victim herself was not convinced that the punishment was well-deserved.

It was lynching, violence and also unfair working conditions and opportunities that made many mulatto people, who officially belonged into the African-American community, decide

[37] Nash, *The American People*, 399.
[38] Eric S. Yellin, *Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America* (Chicago: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 1-2.
[39] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 312.
[40] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 312.
[41] Nash, *The American People*, 384.
[42] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 315.
[43] Nash, *The American People*, 384.

between two unpleasant possibilities – conform to the given situation, live as African-American people and face such problems like lynching and violence; or to make a life-changing decision and pass for white.[44] Those who decided not to pass remained under white control. The whites controlled the interracial contact on the basis of master-servant behavior also called racial etiquette, which forced African-American people not to get out of their place and show their subordinate position within the American society. As Davis mentions, "black violations of the etiquette or other challenges to the system resulted in warnings, threads of violence, and act of terrorism, including lynching."[45] The one-drop rule, of course, meant no sexual contact between African-American men and white women, but on the other hand, many white men did have sexual contact with African-American women and girls. As such contacts took place, usually out of marriage, mixed-race children were born, but according to the rule, they were considered African-American and thus were not tolerated in white people's houses. As a result, mixed-race children stayed in their mothers' houses. The reason for doing so was the concern about keeping the white race pure.[46]

As the previous paragraphs show, the situation of the African American people was very serious. Apart from those who decided to take a very painful step of passing for white, and thus escape the racial obstacles, there were also people who felt the need to start acting in order to gain the long-desired freedom. The following subchapter will focus on the most prominent opinions on how to reach this goal.

1.2.2 Differing attitudes

Both Franklin and Nash agree that Booker Talliaferro Washington and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois are the two names which should not be omitted while discussing African-American reaction to the problem of white supremacy in the United States. However, despite the fact that they shared a common concern, their responses to the issue differed dramatically.

Booker T. Washington was born a slave and he became one of the biggest African-American leaders in American history. In his opinion, he was deeply influenced by the founder of Hampton Institute Samuel Chapman Armstrong, who, as well as Washington himself, put emphasis on physical labor. Washington believed that "economic self-help and the familiar

[44] Davis "The Hawaiian Alternative," 123.
[45] Davis "The Hawaiian Alternative," 123.
[46] Davis "The Hawaiian Alternative," 123.

Puritan virtues of hard work, frugality, cleanliness, and moderation were the way to success."[47] Thanks to his hard work, he became the founder and principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Washington internalized Armstrong's ideals and "by the time that Washington graduated he was convinced that in order for African Americans to achieve success they must do some useful service that the world wanted."[48] By this statement he suggested that it is necessary to find a way in which the African-American community could be useful. Through joining education and work, such as cooking, building houses and other tasks, he managed to persuade the Southerners that education of African-American is nothing they should be afraid of. He "counseled his people to respect the law and to cooperate with white authorities in maintaining peace,"[49] rather than directly demanding equality. Despite the fact that he secretly worked for African-American civil rights, in public he tended to discourage African-American people from being focused on immediate gain of suffrage, equality and civil rights.

Concerning education, Booker T. Washington saw no use in teaching African-American people science, mathematics and other, in his own words, impractical subjects, and he put emphasis on industrial education, by which he understood "everyday practical things of life…something that is needed to be done, and something which they will be permitted to do in the community in which they reside."[50] Washington claimed that if people followed his advice, African Americans will gradually get into the position of power and respectability in the South.[51] Even though he had a lot of supporters, there also were people who disagreed with his attitude and criticized his approach, one of which was W.E.B. Du Bois.

W.E.B. Du Bois was as well a member of African-American community. He criticized Washington for his vision of education for African-Americans because he found it too economy-oriented, instead of being aimed at production of complex, intelligent people. He also was in opposition to Washington's attitude towards civil rights and suffrage because he believed that it was impossible for African-American people to rise within the society without being enfranchised.[52] He called for a militant action in order to ensure equality for the African-American community, and later, after joining his Niagara movement with NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), became editor of NAACP's journal *the Crisis.*

[47] Nash, *The American People*, 384.
[48] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 270.
[49] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 270.
[50] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 272.
[51] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 274.
[52] Franklin et al., *From Slavery to Freedom*, 274.

As the previous paragraphs suggest, the responses to violence and living conditions of African-American people differed significantly, which is also reflected in the analysis of Hughes's works.

1.2.3 Harlem, the Heart of the Harlem Renaissance

As it was suggested in the introduction to chapter 1.2, Harlem, a part of New York, profited from the migration of African-American people, especially in the time of World War I, when large numbers of African-American people were coming and filling the war industry. The amount of African-American people and their economic aggressiveness helped to turn Harlem into the most well-known African-American community in the United States.[53] Hughes himself supports this idea in his autobiography *The Big Sea*, in which he claims that the "Negro vogue" spread not only to books, but also to African sculpture, music and dancing, and thus it became intellectual and cultural center of the African-American community.[54] Many talented "colored" people came to Harlem to inspire African Americans throughout the world, to attract others to come to Harlem, and to use their talent for reaching not only personal success but also the racial one. The inflow of such artists laid the foundations for the movement known as the Harlem Renaissance, whose peak years were between 1917 and 1928.[55]

In addition to the migration and World War I, George B. Hutchinson points out that there were other factors that created conditions for the emergence of the Harlem Renaissance. He suggests that "the Negro Renaissance depended on a general conjuncture of economic expansion and realignment among ruling classes- which in turn encouraged transformations in the fields of art, literature and cultural critique."[56] Concerning literature, the author emphasizes the importance of newly developed institutions, which had the potential to "shape the specific context, in which new ideologies- and new concepts of the 'literary'- were created and disseminated."[57] The emergence of such institutions was supported by stimulating cultural environment of culturally-diverse New York, where new publishers and publishing industry in general were concentrated. Moreover, it was the freer atmosphere of the city that also encouraged the producers to find new

[53] Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 14.
[54] Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1963), 224.
[55] Paul Finkelman, Cary D. Wintz, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance: K-Y* (New York: Taylor & Francis Books, 2004), 892.
[56] George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995), 4.
[57] Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance*, 4.

ways of racial expression.[58] It is important to highlight 1920s as the period in which the African-American writing experienced the biggest growth, and when African-American authors, such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay or Jean Toomer, despite not being all of the same mind, managed to connect different places and thus create a "varied, dynamic network that challenged the cultural status quo."[59]

The ways of doing so cannot be easily summarized because, as Cary D. Wintz suggests, "there was no common literary style or political ideology associated with the movement; it was a reflection of identity far more than an ideology or a literary or artistic school."[60] To specify the literary efforts of the Harlem Renaissance, Wintz uses Langston Hughes' essay *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,* in which Hughes declares the Harlem-renaissance authors' intention to "express our [the authors'] individual dark-skinned selves without fear of shame."[61] Despite the wide scope of interest of the authors, H. L. Gates mentions that there were certain themes commonly addressed by the authors of the Harlem Renaissance, including depiction of rural southern black life or exploring life in Harlem and other urban centers.[62] Concerning the focus of the thesis, Hutchinson's contribution to *Encyclopedia Britannica* offers even more relevant perspective on the depiction of black life in the fiction produced by the Harlem renaissance authors, in which he states that "the novelists of the Harem renaissance explored the diversity of black experience across boundaries of class, color, and gender while implicitly or explicitly protesting anti-black racism."[63]

While discussing the impact of Modernism on African-American literature, the works of the Harlem-renaissance authors used to be either excluded from the canon or labelled as examples of *low modernism* and contrasted to the *high-modernist* writing. However, taking into consideration that modernism is a very complicated and broad phenomenon, this issue will be discussed in detail later in the thesis. As Langston Hughes is commonly referred to as one of the leading figures of the Harlem renaissance, the following subchapter informs briefly about his life and work, before attention is turned to his prosaic works, which became the main focus of the analysis in the thesis.

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[58] Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance*, 6.
[59] Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance*, 6.
[60] Cary D. Wintz, "Introduction," in *Harlem Renaissance Lives from the African American National Biography*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr., Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), vii.
[61] Langston Hughes, *The Negro Artist and the Racial Moutain* (1926), cited in Cary D. Wintz, "Introduction," viii.
[62] Wintz, "Introduction," ix.
[63] "Harlem Renaissance: American Literature and Art," George Hutchinson, Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified November 26, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/event/Harlem-Renaissance-American-literature-and-art.

1.2.4 James Mercer Langston Hughes

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born to mixed-race parents on 1 February 1902 in Joplin, Missouri, but was raised by his grandmother in Kansas, where his passion for books was rooted. Hughes himself mentioned that his life was influenced by Jim Crow laws, for example when his father sought a place with no Jim Crow and thus left for Cuba and Mexico, which caused his parents' separation. However, except for the estrangement with his father, his life was also affected by his mother's decision to prefer her acting career to her own son and let Hughes' grandmother take care of him.[64] It was in Cleveland where he reunited with his mother Carrie and started publishing his works while attending a racially-mixed Central High. After graduation, Langston moved to Harlem and published poems in *The Crisis*, a journal published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,[65] which resulted in the close friendship with Countee Cullen and the fact that he was "welcomed almost immediately by such famous writers of the Harlem Renaissance as W. E. B. Du Bois and Claude McKay."[66] His poetry is often considered his biggest achievement.

During his university studies at Lincoln University, he was, as many other African-American writers of that time, supported by a white patron, in his case it was a white female patron Charlotte Osgood Mason.[67] While writing his novel *Not without Laughter*, the patron covered all his expenses so that he didn't have to work and could finish his book, which happened in 1930. However, the problem with such white supporters was that they often tended to intervene in the art produced by the patronized.[68] First, Hughes admired his patron and was thankful but as she pushed him to be primitive in his works, which was in contrary to his opinion, he decided to ask to be released, not supported.[69]

Hughes reflected some aspects of his own life in his work, e.g. being engaged in low-status jobs, such as working in a wet wash laundry, or facing racism not only from his schoolmates but also from one of the teachers while attending a white school.[70] His work was also influenced by

[64] Harold Bloom, "Introduction," in *Langston Hughes: comprehensive research and study guide,* ed. Harold Bloom (USA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999), 11.
[65] Bloom, "Introduction," 12.
[66] Bloom, "Introduction," 12.
[67] Michael Borshuk, "Not Without Laughter," in *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Cary D. Wintz, Paul Finkelman (New York: Taylor & Francis Books, 2004), 918.
[68] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, 128-129.
[69] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, 136.
[70] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, 203, 14-16.

travelling to the Soviet Union before his collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks* was published in 1934, and spending a whole year there. As Rampersad suggests, Hughes used many different genres to express his artistic self, such as poetry, short stories, novels, plays, books for children and also his autobiographies *The Big Sea* and *I Wonder as I Wander*.[71]

In 1967, at the age of 65, the author had to undergo a minor surgery, but despite all expectations his health got worse the next day and 22 May 1967 Langston Hughes died. His death, however, was in a way an important point for the African-American community, because, despite being African-American he became such a well-known author that his decease was announced on the front page of the New York Times the next morning.[72] Even though Langston Hughes' poetry is often considered his biggest contribution to literature, his prose is also of high quality, and thus the next subchapters of the thesis will provide further information about the two works chosen for the analysis in the thesis.

1.2.5 Not Without Laughter

It has been already mentioned in the previous subchapter that the novel *Not Without Laughter* was written during Hughes' university studies with the help of his white patron Charlotte Mason. Hughes himself remembers writing this twenty-two-chapter coming-of-age novel in a chapter of the same name in his autobiography. In *The Big Sea*, he admits that *Not Without Laughter* is only partly an autobiographical novel and at the same time points out that majority of the characters in the novel were inspired by his own family. Bearing in mind what has been mentioned previously about Hughes's literary work, it is the main character of the novel, Sandy, for whom the author drew inspiration from his own life. The novel, for which Hughes collected material in Chicago, and also places part of its story there,[73] follows the boy's life and his search for identity, which is influenced by the members of his family, e.g. his grandmother Hager, mother Annjee, father Jimboy, or aunts Harriet and Tempy, which will be further discussed in the analysis of the novel in the practical part of the thesis.

The reason why he decided to create a fictional family, rather than use his own, is explained in the following quote:

[71] Bloom, "Introduction," 13.
[72] Brenda Haugen, *Langston Hughes: The Voice of Harlem* (Minneapolis: Compass Point Books, 2005), 93.
[73] Mary Hricko, *The Genesis of the Chicago Renaissance: Theodor Dreiser, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and James T. Farrell* (New York: Routledge, 2009, 81.

> I wanted to write about a typical Negro family in the middle-west, about people like those I had known in Kansas. But mine was not a typical Negro family. My grandmother never took in washing or worked in service or went much in church. She had lived in Oberlin and spoke perfect English, without trace of dialect. …My mother was a newspaper woman and a stenographer then. My father lived in Mexico City. My grand uncle was a congressman. …But I thought maybe I had been a typical Negro boy. I grew up with the other Negro children of Lawrence, sons and daughters of family friends…We were poor-but different. For the purposes of the novel, however, I created around myself what seemed to me a family more typical of Negro life in Kansas.[74]

In the same chapter, he also admits he had to re-read and re-write his novel several times because he was not satisfied with it, which did not change even with the final version of the novel, because he felt like he did not manage to depict the characters as beautiful as they were.

Despite Hughes' own doubtfulness about the novel, which he himself labelled as the least favorite of his books, *Not Without Laughter* was well received by both white and African-American critics of the time. In addition to the fine reception, in 1931 the novel was awarded with the Harmon Gold Award for Literature.[75] However, the publication of the novel caused tension between Hughes and his white patron Charlotte Osgood Mason, who disliked his departure from primitivism in the novel.

1.2.6 The Ways of White Folks

The Ways of White Folks is a collection of fourteen satirical short stories published in 1934 after the author's return from the Soviet Union, where he wrote some of them, e.g. *Poor Little Black Fellow*, *Slave on the Block* or *Cora Unashamed.*[76] Even though each of the stories has its own characters and setting, including stories located both in in the South and North and told by both African American and white people, they are interconnected by their common focus, which Haugen describes as their concentration on "the ways in which white people controlled black people."[77] Similarly, Peter Bruck mentions the practice of the collection to examine "the black-white relationships", including for example white patronage as depicted in the short stories *Poor Little Black Fellow*, *The Blues I'm Playing* or *Slave on the Block.*[78] Joyce Ann Joyce also

[74] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, 303-304.

[75] Haugen, *Langston Hughes*, 78.

[76] Kate Baldwin, "The Russian Connection: Interracialism as Queer Alliance in '*The Ways of White Folks'*," in *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes*, ed. John Edgar Tidwell, Cheryl R. Ragar (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 210.

[77] Haugen, Langston Hughes, 83.

[78] Peter Bruck, "Langston Hughes: The Blues I'm Playing," in *The Black American Short Story in the 20th Century: A Collection of Critical* Essays, ed. Peter Bruck (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner Publishing Co., 1977), 74.

emphasizes the fact that the collection "gives a comprehensive glimpse of the various manifestations of race relations throughout the United States and within all the different class strata of white society"[79] and that it, through being satirically humorous, "reveals a world in which whites do not understand their behavior, in which they are not in touch with themselves, and, thus, in which they are both physically dangerous to blacks and psychologically dangerous to blacks and themselves."[80] As race issue is the main interest of the thesis, such relationships will be discussed in more detail in the analysis of the collection.

Joyce also comments on the reception of *The Ways of White Folks* by referring to Rampersad's claim that "some of the reviews of the collection demonstrate the highly mixed reactions of white readers to any black literature that acutely depicts white hypocrisy, corruption, or insensitivity,"[81] and exemplifies such reactions on the examples of Herschel Brickell, Horace Gregory, Sherwood Anderson or Martha Gruening. In addition, Rampersad mentions that negative reactions to the collection appeared also among African-Americans. He quotes Alain Locke, who pointed out that "greater artistry, deeper sympathy and less resentment, would have made it a book for all times."[82] Even though the reactions differed, publishers were attracted to the collection. As Bruck points out, in contrary to Hughes' poetry, which "was usually published in such black journals as *Opportunity* and *The Crisis,*"[83] his short stories were published by such well-known periodicals like *Esquire*, *The American Mercury* or *Scribner's Magazine*, and thus Hughes managed to gain attention of white readers. A. S. Harper confirms the fact by providing a list of Hughes' short stories with their publication information, including *Cora Unashamed* and *Poor Little Black Fellow* published in *The American Mercury*, *The Blues I'm Playing* and *Slave on the Block* published in *Scribner's Magazine*, or *A Good Job Done* and *Home* published in *Esquire*.[84]

As both Hughes' prosaic works analyzed in the thesis were published in the period commonly talked about in connection to literary Modernism, it is necessary, in order for the

[79] Joyce Ann Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender In Langston Hughes's *The Ways of White Folks,*" in *Langston Hughes: The Man, His Art, and His Continuing Influence,* ed. C. James Trotman (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 99.
[80] Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender," 100.
[81] Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender," 99.
[82] Alain Locke, "Negro Angle: Review of The Ways of White Folks, by Langston Hughes," Survey Graphic 23 (1934), cited in Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I: 1902-1941, I, Too, Sing America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 290.
[83] Bruck, "Langston Hughes: The Blues," 74.
[84] Harper, "Publication History," 296.

analysis to be complete, to briefly introduce the movement and elaborate on its relation to the Harlem renaissance. Thus, the following chapter will be dedicated to the issue.

1.3 Modernism

As it has been already mentioned in the previous chapter, the historical period in which the Harlem Renaissance flourished is also typically connected with Modernism. The following chapter will be thus dedicated to the definition of the term, its periodization, and the changes in its understanding, which consequently shape the perspective on the connection between modernism and the Harlem Renaissance.

Despite the ordinariness of the word *modern*, what is understood under the term *Modernism*, from the literary point of view, is not an ordinary movement, which can be easily understood or defined. Childs summarizes the complexity of the movement by stating that "Modernism is such a complicated phenomenon that it is argued to be a period, style, genre, or combination of these."[85] Paul Poplawski, in *Encyclopedia of Modernism*, supports this idea in his claim that "there is no universal consensus on precisely what constitutes Modernism" and adds that the understanding of the movement is conflicted and heterogeneous.[86] Moreover, authors writing on Modernism struggle to find the exact dates which could be labelled as the beginning and end of Modernism. Both P. Childs and Houston A. Baker even suggest that Modernism can be understood as a timeless concept with no end at all.[87] [88] In spite of this fact, if any periodization of the movement is made, the authors usually place the movement between the years 1890 and 1930 with its culmination before the First World War.[89]

As much as time boundaries are difficult to be stated, it is also demanding, if not impossible, to summarize the main features of the movement. What Modernism has in common with different periods or movements in American literary history is the fact that it can be described as a revolt against or reaction to the preceding literary trends. It is possible to see the reasons behind such reaction in David Signal's claim that "Modernism represents an attempt to restore a sense of order to human experience under the often chaotic conditions of twentieth-century

[85] Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 12.
[86] Paul Poplawski, *Encyclopedia of Literary Modernism* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), vii.
[87] Childs, *Modernism*, 2.
[88] Houston A. Baker Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 2.
[89] Childs, *Modernism*, 15.

existence".[90] The human existence Signal refers to in the quote was largely affected by the twentieth-century widespread mechanization and industrialization, WWI and discoveries in science and philosophy, e.g. Darwinian theories of evolution and natural selection, Einstein's Theory of Relativity or Freudian advances in psychology. Thus, such reality could not be fully reflected through Victorian literature, which was influenced by ideas such as God-centrality, the true opposite to Darwinian evolution and natural selection theory.[91] [92]

If Victorian literary practice was no longer suitable for the period, emergence of new modes of expression was inevitable. What strategies different authors used to reach this aim will be further elaborated on in the following subchapter. However, before any features of such modes are labelled as typical of Modernism, it is necessary to differentiate between different strands of the movement.

1.3.1 Harlem Renaissance and Modernism

As it has been indicated in the previous paragraph, it is possible to understand Modernism in different ways. Frequently, the movement is divided into so-called *high* and *low modernism*. Mark A. Sanders in *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism* understands the term *high modernism* as the strand of Modernism whose main attention is commonly turned to such names as Ezra Pound, Thomas Stearns Eliot, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce or John Dos Passos, whom he also calls the *formalists.*[93] In the middle of the 20th century, this view of Modernism was the prevailing approach, which remained dominant until 1980s. Hutchinson, as well as many other authors, also admits that the production of the Harlem Renaissance had been for a long time marginalized and excluded from the discussion over Modernism because of the common excessive concentration on traditional conceptions of American Modernism.[94]

Mitchell opens the discussion on the Harlem renaissance criticism by stating that some Harlem renaissance leaders and critics, e.g. DuBois, Locke or James Weldon Johnson, viewed "the creative expressions of African Americans…as a means toward racial equality and as adequate

[90] David Signal, "Towards a Definition of American Modernism," American Quarterly 39, no. 1 (Special Issue: Modernist Culture in America (spring, 1987): 8.
[91] Childs, *Modernism,* 59.
[92] Mark Sanders, "American Modernism and the New Negro Renaissance," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism,* ed. Walter Kalaidjian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130.
[93] Sanders, "American Modernism," 136.
[94] Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance*, 1.

proof of ability to participate in American life and to contribute to American culture."[95] The author believes that this desire to participate in American life and culture resulted into Harlem Renaissance critics' assimilationist tendency to evaluate African-American literary tradition with reference to "the great tradition of the Western European literary culture."[96] A similar idea is expressed in the *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism,* which suggests that "DuBois, Johnson and Locke have been taken to the task for overestimating the role that the creation of high art and literature could play in winning equality for the African American masses".[97] In the light of such comparisons to the high art, the literary efforts of the Harlem Renaissance authors were often consequently considered failure. However, the perspective from which the connection of the Harlem renaissance and modernism was seen before has been challenged by many critics since the end of the 20th century and the term *modernism* has be rethought.

One of the first authors who courageously challenged the long-lasting position of the Harlem Renaissance in the discussion over Modernism was Houston A. Baker Jr., who counters the claim that the Harlem Renaissance failed to produce effective or modern art. Baker finds the origins of such an accusation in the already-mentioned fact that the Harlem Renaissance workings had been for a long time incorrectly compared to "British, Anglo-American, and Irish creative endeavors"[98], which, according to the author, unjustly makes the voices of Harlem Renaissance authors, e.g. Nella Larsen, Claude McKay or Langston Hughes, sound not modern.[99] In *The Harlem Renaissance and Modernism*, the author openly admits his belief that "Africans and African Americans - through conscious and unconscious designs of various Western "modernisms"- have little in common with Joycean and Eliotic projects."[100] In his approach to the Harlem Renaissance, he uses the terms "mastery of form" and "deformation of mastery" to explain what it means to sound modern in African-American manner in relation to the dominant tradition of Modernism. Heather Hathaway comments on Baker's theory while explaining that "the modernist aspects of the Harlem Renaissance are "usually attributed…formally to its goals to 'deform' the 'mastery' (to modify Baker's terms) of traditional white literary structures by

[95] Angelyn Mitchell, "Voices Within the Circle: A Historical Overview of African American Literary Criticism," in *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present,* ed. Angelyn Mitchell (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 4.
[96] Mitchell, "Voices Within the Circle," 4.
[97] Simon Lee-Price, "African American Literary History and Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Christa Knellwolf, Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 256.
[98] Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance,* xiii.
[99] Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance,* xiii, xiv.
[100] Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance,* xvi.

celebrating African American folk expression and cultural tradition through the use of vernacular".[101]

Hutchinson labels Baker's view as a binary model of modernism, which pays little attention to the fact that there also were "forms of uncanonical, 'native' (white) modernism with which the African American renaissance was intimately related."[102] V.M.Kutzinski suggests that it was not only a matter of geography what connected some of the Harlem renaissance authors with such uncanonical modernists. Together, they shared travel experience which shaped their political beliefs, their left-wing political commitment in particular. In contrary, such political interest is not typical for the authors of canonical modernism.[103] In addition, Heather Hathaway also emphasizes that "the modernist aspects of the Harlem Renaissance are usually attributed thematically to the movement's nationalistic and collective impulses"[104], which she understands as the outcome of the influence of modernity (the reality of the early 20th century) on African-American authors, whose reaction to the changes that took place in the then United States was very different from that of white authors. The author further explains that such reactions included social and political critique, which she exemplifies on McKay's use of art to criticize the racial injustice within American society. Similarly, Michael Borshuk suggests in his contribution to the *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* that Hughes' novel *Not Without Laughter* not only "criticizes the injustices that result from Jim Crow and presents strategies for black resistance" but it also "stands as one of the most politically intriguing novel of the Harlem renaissance,"[105] despite his patron's censorship rooted in her inclination towards primitivism, without which it would sound more politically engaged. This idea is also supported in Mary Hricko's work, in which she refers to John Shield's study *Never Cross the Divide* to emphasize Hughes's left-wing political intentions in the novel,[106] as well as in Robert E. Washington's *The Ideologies of African American Literature*, which emphasizes the noticeable change in Hughes's thinking and writing manifested in the novel, including his departure from primitivism and his political engagement based on his observation of "the black community's descent into economic desperation."[107]

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[101] Heather Hathaway, "Exploring 'Something New': The 'Modernism' of Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows*," in *Race and the Modern Author*, ed. Heather Hathaway, Josef Jarab, and Jeffrey Melnick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 54.
[102] Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance*, 14.
[103] Vera M. Kutzinski, *The Worlds of Langston Hughes: Modernism and Translation in the Americas* (Ithaca anad London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 92.
[104] Hathaway, "Exploring 'Something New'," 54.
[105] Borshuk, "Not Without Laughter," 918.
[106] Mary Hricko, *The Genesis*, 80.
[107] Robert E. Washington, *The Ideologies of African American Literature: From the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Nationalist Revolt* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 103-104.

The collection *The Ways of White Folks,* as it has been already mentioned, also concentrates on the black-white relationship within American society, e.g. by criticizing the racism behind the practice of white patronage, white physical violence against African-American community as a consequence of racial assumptions or, on the other hand, willingness of mixed-race characters to abandon their family in order to pass for white. Published in 1934, four years after *Not Without Laughter*, Hughes's recast of ideology outlook and his sojourn in the Soviet Union, the collections' political engagement is expected. Bloom makes a comment on Hughes's political engagement while citing Maryemma Graham, who claims that Hughes's "practice of social realism integrated the classic Marxist view of class struggle,"[108] which, as George Parker Anderson states, is reflected in *The Ways of white folks.*

With regard to the extent of the thesis and its main focus being depiction of racial issues, the issue of class is not discussed in detail in the analysis, even though certain parts of the analysis may touch the issue slightly. Concerning the requirement of the thesis to comment on the formal aspects of the two works analyzed in the practical part, I intend to investigate whether, and, if so, to what extent the Anglo-American formal experimentation is reflected in the collection and the novel. In order to do so, the following subchapter is focused on summarizing its main features, which are later used as criteria in the analysis.

1.3.2 Formalist Approach to Modernism

As it has been already mentioned, the authors who are generally included into the strand of modernism labelled as *high modernism* can be also referred to as *formalists,* for whom the "formal experimentation was the most aesthetically rewarding."[109] Their work is generally seen as innovative and experimental in form, both in poetry and prose. Representing reality by modernist authors, which realism managed through its mirroring, was achieved through turning attention to human mind and its workings. According to the fact that the main focus of the thesis is Langston Hughes' prosaic production, the following paragraphs deal with features typical for modernist works of prose. Also, as the movement is characterized by a wide range of characteristic features, it is thus impossible to cover them all. Consequently, only few of them which seemed most prominent in the secondary sources are elaborated on and reflected in the practical part of the thesis.

[108] Maryemma Graham, *The Practice of Social Art* (1990), cited in Matt Longabucco, "The Poetics and Prose of Langston Hughes," in *Langston Hughes*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publisher, 2002), 71.
[109] Sanders, "American Modernism," 136.

One of the most typical features of Modernism mentioned by critics is the narrator. Childs points out that modernist fiction rejects some of the fundamentals of classic realism, including dependable narrator. Such narrator is substituted by unreliable, introspective, subjective, falling or even neurotic or insane narrators, and the modernist literature often focuses on social, spiritual or personal collapse.[110] Lathbury confirms this idea on concrete examples of literary work commonly regarded as the typical examples of modernist literary art. In W. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury,* he calls the narrator of the first chapter "actual idiot" and mentions his "mental deficiency."[111] In the second chapter, the narrator is a Harvard student but at the same time, he is "unable to order his life successfully"[112] and ends his own life by jumping of a bridge. Apart from the personalities of the narrators, the novel also reflects another Modernist feature - multiple narrators. It is possible to differentiate between four narrators in the novel and only one them makes use of the 3rd person narrative technique, which is typical for realist writing.[113] Lathbury exemplifies the use of multiple narrator on another Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying,* which involves 15 narrators, none of which takes form of the 3rd person narrator. It is also possible to see the connection between the careful choice of the narrator, whose narrative inquires human mind, and another typically modernist phenomenon, the stream of consciousness.[114]

What can be understood under the term *stream of consciousness style* is "the flow of impressions, memories, and sense-impressions through the mind by abandoning accepted forms of syntax, punctuation, and logical connection."[115] In contrary to realistic tendencies to focus on surfaces of minds, by using this technique, Modernists' usage of the technique enabled their fiction to caption characters' consciousness, emotion, hidden drives, desires and feelings, which seem not to be edited in any way.[116] [117] As a special technique belonging under the stream-of-consciousness technique, in which we can listen to protagonist's thought, critics often mention the use of free indirect discourse (FID). Lewis points out that the use of FID makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish between the voice of the narrator and the character, and explains the term as a mixture of direct and indirect discourse.[118] Regine Eckardt supports this understanding by stating that "the

[110] Childs, *Modernism,* 20, 23, 74.
[111] Roger Lathbury, *American Modernism (1910-1945)* (New York: Fact on File, 2005), 35.
[112] Roger Lathbury, *American Modernism,* 36.
[113] Roger Lathbury, *American Modernism,* 34.
[114] Childs, *Modernism,* 11, 82.
[115] Dinah Birch *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 958.
[116] Childs, *Modernism,* 60, 82.
[117] Lathbury, *American Modernism*, 29.
[118] Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 42.

respective passages seem to be worded in part by a protagonist of an ongoing story, in part by an external narrator."[119]

If any modernist feature should not be omitted from discussion over modernism, it is the way time is treated in such works. Modernism makes use of abrupt beginnings and open-endedness of prosaic works, non-chronological order of events, it moves back and forth through time, includes flashbacks and "a technique of breaking off episodes at the height of their interest to start a new one – which is then broken off".[120] [121]

Even though the above-mentioned features are typical for Modernism, the impossibility of finding any of them reflected in a literary work doesn't necessarily have to mean the work should be labelled as being non-modernist. Thus, rather than producing any such conclusion about *Not Without Laughter* or *The Ways of White Folks*, the analysis concentrates on investigating if the two works written by the Harlem Renaissance author Langston Hughes really have little or nothing in common with the Anglo-Amercian strand of Modernism, particularly with its experimental tendencies concerning form.

2. PRACTICAL PART

2.1 Racial Issues in *Not Without Laughter* and *The Ways of White Folks*

2.1.1 *Not Without Laughter* – analysis

Considering what has been said about the novel, *Not Without Laughter* is a coming-of-age novel based partly on Hughes' life. The protagonist of the novel is an African-American boy James Rogers, nicknamed Sandy because of his sandy hair, who lives in an African-American neighborhood among his African-American friends. He comes across many situations in which he gets to feel his skin color, and is surrounded by his relatives, each of whom deals with racial issues in his or her specific way, which, to certain extend, shapes Sandy's personality.

The following subchapters are dedicated to the racial concerns as they are depicted in the novel. Even though the whole novel is divided into thirty chapters, the analysis will not deal with each of them separately. The reason for doing so is the fact that the chapters are closely linked to each other by different racial issues. By dealing with each racial issue separately rather than

[119] Regine Eckardt, *The Semantics of Free Indirect Discourse: How Texts Allow Us to Mind-read and Eavesdrop* (BRILL, 2014), ix.
[120] Childs, *Modernism,* 59.
[121] Lathbury, *American Modernism,* 31,36.

analyzing them in isolation, the thesis provides a more complex and more clearly arranged analysis.

2.1.1.1 Color Matters

The novel *Not Without Laughter* shows the importance of skin color was by drawing attention to differentiation of the character's being black or white. While introducing new characters, Langston Hughes refers to the person's being white or [colored] in majority of cases. Elizabeth Schulz emphasizes Hughes' interest in skin color in *Natural and Unnatural Circumstances in Langston Hughes' Not Without Laughter,* where she claims that Hughes "glories in the diversity of skin tones throughout *Not Without Laughter."*[122] Paul C. Rosenblatt, who includes *Not Without Laughter* into his analysis, also suggests that skin color is an important means of referring to the African-American in the novel.[123] All chapters of the book provide with many such examples.

Concerning Sandy, Langston Hughes gives evidence of Sandy's not being white, sometimes only by hinting, such as mentioning his brown hands, or by openly admitting his being "nicely browned piece of toast, with dark, brown-black eyes and a head of rather kinky hair"[124] or by saying that Sandy is not as white as his father, who is referred to as being [nigger] but at the same time admitting he is lighter and that Hager often calls him "yaller". Shultz adds that Sandy's skin color is also compared to his friends' color, e.g. to Willie-Mae's ebony-black and Buster's ivory-white skin tone.[125] Apart from Sandy and his friends, other important characters are also referred to as being "colored", e.g. Hager, her daughter Annjee or Hager's neighbor Miss. Carter. Moreover, what can be found in the novel is the reassurance of the non-whiteness of the African-American characters by labelling white people whites, such as Mr. and Mrs. Gavitt, Mrs. J. J. Rice or Sandy's teacher.[126] Moreover, even when talking about people in general, not mentioning their names, the author commonly makes sure that there is a clear distinction between African-American and white members of different groups of people, as if Hughes tries to imply that the society back then did not except mixing of races together. To do so, he uses phrases such as "group of excited

[122] Elizabeth Schultz, "Natural and Unnatural Circumstances in Langston Hughes' "Not Without Laughter", *Callaloo* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 1183.
[123] Paul C. Rosenblatt, *The Impact of Racism On African American Families: Literature as Social Science* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2014), 83.
[124] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), 11.
[125] Schultz, "Natural," 1183.
[126] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 4, 6.

white and colored women,"[127] instead of saying a group of excited women, or "all neighborhood white and colored,"[128] instead of saying all neighborhood.

Except for using words like "brown", "black", "Negro" and "colored" for dark-skinned people, Langston Hughes also makes use of many other labels, often based on comparison to different things, ranging from material to food or natural objects. In one of the chapters, called *Dance*, the author uses such words more frequently than elsewhere. He describes aunt Harriet's boyfriend Mingo as "patent-leather black boy;"[129] mentions the fat orange-colored man,[130] from whom Sandy buys his sandwich; a biscuit-colored little girl,[131] who wants Sandy to buy her a sandwich too; a slender yellow boy,[132] who Harriet dances with; mahogany-brown boy talking about girls;[133] "a little autumn-leaf brown"[134] calling to a dark-purple man"[135] or a mustard-colored man hitting a maple-sugar brown woman near the dancing-hall door.[136] The author, via the characters in the book, also addresses black people by calling them "coal," "sealskin browns", "smooth blacks" or "chocolates-to-the-bone."[137] As already mentioned, some of the descriptions are derived from natural objects, which is also emphasized in Elizabeth Schultz's work, where she states that Hughes "relates skin colors to nature, associating people with clay, roaches, blackberries, sealskins, maple sugar, or autumn leaves."[138] Hughes also describes African-American people's faces as "gleaming like circus balloons- lemon-yellow, coal-black, powdered-grey, ebony-black, blue-black faces; chocolate, brown, orange, tan creamy-gold,"[139] which Schultz sees as the author's rivaling with nature's colors while describing skin tones.[140] By contrast to this wide variety of smiles and imaginatively described features of African-American characters, the only word used to refer to white people is "white".

Apart from the skin tone, Rosenblatt also points out that other features are taken into consideration in some of the novels included in his analysis, such as "hair texture and the shape of

[127] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 5.
[128] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 5.
[129] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 60.
[130] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 61.
[131] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 62.
[132] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 62.
[133] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 62.
[134] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 63-64.
[135] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 64.
[136] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 69.
[137] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 65.
[138] Schultz, "Natural," 1183.
[139] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 65.
[140] Schultz, "Natural," 1183.

nose and lips."[141] According to him, the fact whether the features tend to bear more resemblance to typical African-American or white features can have effect on the characters' lives in the novels.[142] Even though the author does not point to any particular pieces of textual evidence dealing with these features in Hughes' novel, there is at least one striking example in *Not Without Laughter*, namely in the chapter *Conversation*, where Hughes provides the reader with description of one of Sandy's friends, Buster, who was a child "with straight golden hair, which his mother made him wear in curls"[143] and whose "eyes were blue and doll-like and he in no way resembled a colored youngster"[144]. To emphasize how divergent this character's features are from those of typical African-American people, Hughes describes Sandy's hair right after Buster's as "hair that would lie smooth only after a rigorous application of vaseline and water."[145]

To sum up the issue of color, Langston Hughes not only differentiates between black and white people, but he also points out that the words "colored", "black" or "Negro" refers to a wide range of people from being ivory-white, as Sandy's playmate Buster, to being coal-black as Willie-Mae Johnson, who lives next to Sandy.[146] Even though African-American people were freed from slavery, they were still not considered equal to white community, and thus, as suggested earlier, miscegenation of races was unacceptable. The following subchapter comments on the problem of race-mixing and the possibility of racial passing as it is, or is not, captured in Hughes's novel *Not Without Laughter.*

2.1.1.2 Mixing Races, Passing for White

Concerning the novel *Not Without Laughter*, the problem of race-mixing of white and African-American people seems to be of less importance than in the collection of short stories, which will be dealt with later in the thesis. However, according to Steven C. Tracy, in *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes*, the novel *Not Without Laughter* "confronts the reality of miscegenation directly through the various colors in Sandy's family: black Hager and Harriet, dark Annjee, light yellow Jimboy, and brown Sandy"[147] and "additionally, the text includes the story of

[141] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 83.
[142] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 83.
[143] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11.
[144] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11.
[145] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11.
[146] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11-12.
[147] Steven C. Tracy, "*Langston Hughes and Aunt Hager's Children's Blues Performance"*, in *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes*, ed. John E. Tidwell and Cheryl R. Ragar (Missouri: The University of Missouri Press, 2007), *26.*

Buster, 'the white man's child'."[148] This quote makes it obvious that it would be incorrect to completely omit the topic from the analysis of the novel.

It is true that Sandy, having a yellow father and black mother, can serve as a good example of a mixed-race character, and his mother Annjee feels proud of the fact because "there were mighty few dark women had a light, strong, good-looking young husband."[149] However, even though Jimboy is "light", it would not be correct to call Sandy's parents' marriage interracial because, according to what has been mentioned previously about the one-drop rule, a yellow man still belongs into the African-American race, even though he might have white ancestors, which Hager doubts in the chapter *Conversation* by saying that "nobody knew who Jimboy's parents were."[150] In conclusion, it is possible to agree with Tracy in his claim that Sandy and the members of his family can be thought of as examples of race-mixing in the novel.

However, even a better example of race-mixing is Sandy's ivory-white friend Buster. When Sandy's grandmother Hager and her friend Sister Whiteside discuss Buster's origin in the chapter *Conversation*, Hager expresses her opinion that Buster is not his father's biological son. Eddie, his official father, is an African American, as well as his mother, but Sister Whiteside claims that Buster is probably 'some white men's chile'."[151] The already mentioned fact that he had "straight golden hair" and "his eyes were blue doll-like and he in no way resembled a colored youngster"[152] implies that even though black-white sexual contact was limited, mixed-race children were born and lived with their African-American mothers, as suggested in chapter 1.2.1.

Even though Buster does not gain any material wealth from being much lighter than any of his friends, he manages to profit from the fact that white people have no clue he is probably at least partly African-American. Such practice of some African Americans to take advantage of their white-like appearance and deny their origin, in order to avoid facing racial problems or to gain white advantages can be referred to as passing for white or racial passing. The very title of Juda Bennett's work *Multiple Passings and the Double Death of Langston Hughes* suggests Hughes's profound interest in the practice of passing. The author starts his analysis with a claim that "at the beginning of his career and throughout most of his forty years of writing, Langston Hughes repeatedly returned to the theme of racial passing, exploring the subject in two autobiographies,

[148] Tracy, "*Langston," 26.*
[149] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 24.
[150] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11.
[151] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 13.
[152] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 11, 13.

several poems and short stories, a brief scene in his first novel, and at least one play."[153] Bearing in mind that *Not Without Laughter* is Hughes's first novel, Bennett must refer to some evidence present in the text that is being analyzed here. Even though he does not exemplify what is meant by the "brief scene", it most likely includes Sandy's friend Buster. This claim is further supported by Steven C. Tracy.[154] Bennett either refers to the scene dealing with Children's Day, which Buster wants to attend, and thus he decides to pass for white and is consequently allowed to get there; or, more probably, he refers to Buster's frank statement in chapter *The Doors of Life*, where Buster explains that, as white as he is, he doesn't need to be smart because he sees his future as follows:

> But I'm not gonna worry about being smart myself. A few more years, boy, and I'll be in some big town passing for white, making money, and getting along swell. And I won't need to be smart, either – I'll be ofay. So if you see me sometime in St. Louis or Chi with a little blond on my arm – don't recognize me, hear! I want my kids to be so yellow-headed they won't have to think about a color line.[155]

On this example, Hughes not only illustrates the purposes of passing and the willingness of some African-American people to deny their African-American ancestors, but he also shows what price the passing-for-white people have to pay. If Buster decides to pass for white he must make a painful decision of pretending that he doesn't know any of his "colored" friends. But it seems that for Buster it is the most probable picture of his future life.

Although the author does not seem be too concerned with race-mixing in the novel and uses Buster as the only example of passing for white, he definitely includes another aspect of black-white relationships in his work – racial etiquette. As already explained, the term racial etiquette refers to the master-servant behavior expected from African-American people towards whites. Given that African-American characters in the novel are usually in contact with white people only when at work, and bearing in mind that ignorance of the racial etiquette was often verbally or physically punished, the problem of master-servant behavior is focused on and addressed in the following subchapters, but not in isolation.

2.1.1.3 Lifestyle and Attitudes

The very first chapter introduces Sandy, the protagonist of the book and the closest relatives he lives with, one of whom is Sandy's mother Annjelica Rogers. She works as a servant for rich white Mrs. J. J. Rice on the other side of the town, and is definitely a perfect portrayal of an African-

[153] Juda Bennett, "Multiple Passings and the Double Death of Langston Hughes," *Biography* 23, no. 4 (fall 2000): 670.
[154] Tracy, "*Langston,"26.*
[155] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 186.

American person of the time. As mentioned in chapter 1.2.1, being a servant in a white people's house was a very common job African-American women occupied at the time, and moreover, as a servant Annjee is engaged in a job typically occupied by former slaves. Mrs. Rice pays her very inadequately and the boss's attitude also reminds that of former slaveholders towards their slaves. In the chapter *Nothing But Love*, Sandy's grandmother Hager even compares white people's behavior towards their African-American servants with the situation during the times of slavery like this: "Some o'de white folks was just as nice to their niggers as they could be, nicer than many o'em is now, what makes'em work for less than they needs to eat."[156] Hughes summarizes Mrs. Rice's superiority and Annjee's subordinate position by saying "And every colored girl in town said that Mrs. J. J. Rice was no easy woman to work for; yet she had been there now five years, accepting everything without a murmur!"[157] As for interracial relations, Mrs. Rice and Annjee are an example of a functioning master-servant relationship based on the racial etiquette. The quote also suggests that African-American women did not change their job very often, which does not apply for African-American men.

Paul C. Rosenblatt in *The Impact of Racism on African American Families: Literature as Social Science* makes an interesting point about jobs and wages – in several novels, he observes certain impact of joblessness and job denial of African-American people on their character, men in particular, and its consequences for African-American family, who already face difficult economic situation. He refers to *Not Without Laughter* as one of such novels, taking Jimboy as the main representative of the phenomenon. The author mentions concrete examples from the novel, such as Jimboy's co-workers' reluctance to work with him because of his skin color, Jimboy's unsuccessful attempt to join the union, or "the only job possibilities being menial and ill-paying (hard work, low wages, and being defined constantly as less than white men)."[158] Annjee's colored husband Jimboy openly expresses the lack of economically satisfying work in his statement in the chapter *Jimboy's Letter* while saying that "There was no well-paid work for Negro men,"[159] and he also complains about the nature of his work while working on a railroad as follows: "Work has not been so good here. Am with a section gang of coloreds and Greeks and somehow strained my back on the Union Pacific laying ties…."[160] The same applies to Harriet's boyfriend Mingo, who

[156] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 126.
[157] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 23.
[158] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 31.
[159] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 22.
[160] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 20.

has hard hands from mixing concrete and digging ditches.[161] Another example of such unattractiveness or physically demanding character of jobs for low wages can be found in the chapter called *Conversation,* in which "an old Negro" Logan, who calls himself poor while talking to Hager, tells her that, after the storm, he "got'nough work to do to last me de next fo'weeks, cleanin'up yards an'haulin'off trash."[162] The main character of the novel, Sandy, as he grows older, engages in an unattractive job himself. Cleaning and polishing brass spittoons full of slimy contents, together with cleaning, shoe-shinning and scrubbing the toilets, becomes his duty while working at the Drummer's hotel.[163] When pointing out the inadequate number of working opportunities in the novel, the author tends to turn his attention more towards men than women, by which he confirms what has been already mentioned about African-American women – that they were often servants and finding jobs was less problematic for them.

In connection to the problem of employment of the African Americans in the novel, Cary D. Wintz uses the term "exploitation of black labor."[164] He examines the characters of Hager, Annjee and Harriet to demonstrate the differing reactions to working conditions and wages in *Not Without Laughter*. The first character he refers to is Sandy's grandmother Hager, who is a laundry woman. As for Hager, Hughes describes her reward for the job like this: "On Thursdays she did the Reinhart's washing, on Fridays she ironed it, and on Saturdays she sent it home, clean and beautifully white, and received as pay the sum of seventy-five cents."[165] Thus, her working conditions remind of those that Annjee has to cope with. Even though Hager and Annjee do unattractive jobs for little money, they do not seek any change (at least for some time in Annjee's case). They are willing to keep working despite the low pay and offensive treatment of their bosses.

Finding herself in such a situation, Hager, as a strongly religious woman, "finds consolation in a religion that preaches love and forgiveness and the bliss of life everlasting in the other world"[166] and she also sticks to her believe, that "love, not hate, will eventually solve the racial problem."[167] Her piousness, together with her hard-working and frugal personality, can be understood as one of the essential characteristics of a true African American envisioned by B.T.Washington. Steven C. Tracy also supports Hager's interest in such values in his contribution

[161] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 59.
[162] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 18.
[163] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 148-149.
[164] Charles I. Glicksberg, "Negro Fiction in America," in *Analysis and Assessment, 1940-1979*, ed. Cary D. Wintz (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 479.
[165] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 25.
[166] Glicksberg, "Negro Fiction," 479.
[167] Glicksberg, "Negro Fiction," 479.

to *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes*, where he states that "From Hager, Sandy gets his sense that the best way to respond to hatred in the world is with love,"[168] and that "he also inherits from her his ethics of hard work, his love of spirituals, his pride in his African American heritage, and his commitment to becoming a great man."[169] However, it is not only her personality, which indirectly suggests her inclination to Washingtonian attitudes. In the chapter *Hard Winter*, she openly confirms this inclination by saying "I's gwine make a edicated man out o'him. He's gwine be another Booker T. Washington"[170] while talking about Sandy, and adds that she wants her grandson to become a leader of African-American people. Later, she expresses similar idea in the chapter *Children's Day*, when she tells Sandy that she is going to make a smart man out of him "fo'de glory o'God an'de black race"[171] and that Sandy is going to become something. Moreover, it is not only Sandy whom she supports in his studies, but she also discourages her daughter Harriet from leaving school. Unfortunately for Hager, Harriet is an absolute opposite to her mother (until she gets older) and she "hates the white with uncontrolled fury."[172] What Tracy mentions as the origin of her hatred is Harriet's frustration rooted in her "bumping up against the ceiling of her limited possibilities."[173] Consequently, Harriet, as opposed to Hager, fits into what Wintz labels "a rebellious group"[174] within African-American community depicted in the novel.

The way Hager and Annjee earn money while working for whites, in a way, serves as a source of discouragement for Harriet in her studies, as the author suggests by this quote: "Harriet say she ain't goin' back [to school] next fall. Says there ain't no use in learnin' books fo' nothin'but to work in white folks' kitchens when she's graduated."[175] Harriet does not want to end up like her mother and sister and becomes radical in her actions. Not only does she quit school, but she also quits her job because she feels she's not being paid enough for all the work she is expected to do, and she even feels like African-American people are still treated like slaves: "All that work for five dollars a week with what little tips those pickers give you…Look at my finger-nails, all broke from scrubbing that dining-room floor….Waiting table and cleaning silver, washing and ironing table-linen…And only three waitresses on the job. That old steward out there's a regular white

[168] Tracy, "*Langston,"* 28.
[169] Tracy, "*Langston,"* 28-29.
[170] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 97.
[171] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 137.
[172] Glicksberg, "Negro Fiction," 479.
[173] Tracy, "*Langston,"* 29.
[174] Glicksberg, "Negro Fiction," 479.
[175] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 14.

folk's nigger."[176] Harriet also expresses her disappointment with the money African-American people get for working for whites by saying that white people pay African-American people "one dollar for five dollars' worth of work."[177] The author, of course, mentions other difficulties that African-American people have to face while working for whites, such as being fired whenever the whites decide[178] or giving them forced vacation with no pay,[179] which can cause insurmountable problems to a poor family.

Even though Harriet, the youngest of three Williams' sisters, stands in opposition to her mother throughout the novel, Tracy points out that at the end of the novel, it is her who finally identifies with Hager's insistence on education, particularly for Sandy, when Annjee wants him to leave school. At this point, Harriet uses her hard-earned money to fulfill her mother's dream.[180] Considering other members of her family, she doesn't have much in common with either of her two sisters. However, with her sister Tempy, she shares the disgust with the unsatisfactory situation of many African-American people.

As much as Hager expresses her admiration for Booker T. Washington in the novel, one of her daughters, Tempy, feels the same towards one of his biggest opponents, Dr. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. When Sandy lives with Tempy, he once calls Booker T.Washington "great" and his aunt reacts in disappointment by saying "Teaching Negroes to be servants, that's all Washington did!...Du Bois wants our rights. He wants us to be real men and women. He believes in social equality. But Washington-huh!"[181] Walter Benn Michaels evidences Tempy's disapproval of Washington's thoughts by a quote from the novel, where Tempy calls Washington "white folks nigger."[182] Tracy also points out Tempy's inclination to DuBois and stresses her intention to transfer her admiration to Sandy by exposing him to "a sense of the greatness of a 'race leader' like W.E.B. Du Bois."[183] What Hughes suggests in the novel as the source of Tempy's disrespects towards Washington is the fact that he established an industrial school despite the fact that there already were enough workers. In contrary, Du Bois is praised for his opinion that African-American people should study, get smart and travel to Europe.[184] Such ideas are supported

[176] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 27.
[177] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 54.
[178] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 54.
[179] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 57.
[180] Tracy, "*Langston,"* 30.
[181] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 175.
[182] Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 91.
[183] Tracy, "*Langston,"* 30.
[184] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 175.

in Tempy's letter, which she sends to her sister Annjee when Sandy lives in Mr. Siles's and her house. She writes that "Sandy seemed like a quiet, decent child, smart in his classes"[185] and that "colored people needed to encourage talent so that the white race would realize Negroes weren't all mere guitar-players and housemaids."[186] This quote also alludes to Tempy's attitude towards African-American music displayed in the novel.

Elizabeth Schultz emphasizes Tempy's desire "to identify with the color and the material prosperity of Stanton's upper-class whites" and her tendency to "distance herself from the rich African-American culture embraced by the other members of her family,"[187] and thus she disassociates herself from her poor African American family.[188] As Tempy wants white people to think highly of her race, she warns Sandy that when he lives in her house, he will have to "do things right"[189] as she does. By doing things right she means using proper language for example, so she keeps correcting his dialect-influenced speech, such as the word "ain't" in "I certainly don't want my white neighbors to hear you saying ain't,"[190] which is called slavery talk in the chapter *Tempy's House*.[191] Apart from talking like white people, she thinks that African-American people should dress like white people and think like them, too. Thus, when Sandy comes to their home, Tempy offers buying new clothes for him and the next day she outfits him completely, so that he was not a disgrace to their family.

Tempy and her husband also believe that, in order to be more like whites, African-American people should stop singing all the time, because, according to them, blues and spirituals were "too Negro."[192] This can be also thought of as another way of trying to giving up one's cultural heritage. Tempy's attitude towards music even worsens her attitude towards Jimboy, who in no way reminds of Tempy's model of an ideal African-American man. She openly admits her disrespect for Jimboy in the chapter *The Doors of Life*, when her sister Annjee expresses her worries about Jimboy's fighting in the war and not sanding any letters, which is followed by Tempy's insensitive comment "Good thing he's gone."[193]

[185] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 169.
[186] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 169.
[187] Schultz, "Natural," 1185.
[188] Cary D. Wintz, "Langston Hughes" in *Analysis and Assessment, 1940-1979*, ed. Cary D. Wintz (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 423.
[189] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 169.
[190] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 173.
[191] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 169.
[192] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 171.
[193] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 185.

After the incident around B. T. Washington, Sandy does not dare to mention the name again in Tempy's house. On the other hand, he does not blindly rely on his aunt's recommendation "take Du Bois for your model, not some white folks' nigger,"[194] but read his book *Up From Slavery* and makes his own conclusion that both Washington and Du Bois were great men. However, at first, Sandy conforms to Tempy's lifestyle and decides to study hard so that he becomes someone one day, and thus he dedicates all his time to school, work and reading books, leaving his social life behind. As a student of the classical course in high school, he makes her Du-Bois-oriented aunt proud, because he studies Latin, ancient history and English.[195] On the other hand, in his heart he remains the same Sandy Rogers that he used to be, who believes joy, fun and laughter should not be omitted from one's life.[196] Thus, even though Tempy is trying hard to "mold him [Sandy] into her bourgeois existence,"[197] Sandy suddenly he finds his aunt too proper and her attitude towards life false, and rebels. He concludes the African-American life really is as follows:

> There's no advancement for colored fellows. If they start as porters, they stay porters for ever and they can't come up. Being colored is like being born in the basement of life, with the door to the light locked and barred- and the white folks live upstairs. They don't want us up there with them, even when we're respectable like Dr.Mitchell, or smart like Dr. Du Bois.[198]

Even though Tempy identifies herself only with Du Bois's "emphasis on education and high culture"[199] it is also Washington's belief in hard work that brings her up into the higher spheres of the society. At the beginning, she works hard as a personal maid for white Mrs. Barr-Grant, and later her mistress lets her take hold of her house because she needs to work. "Tempy pleased Mrs. Barr-Grant by being prompt and exact in obeying orders and appearing to worship her Puritan intelligence."[200] But it was Mrs.Barr-Grant herself who was being worshiped and imitated. Tempy imitated her speech, read books and improved much as a housekeeper, and thus made her mistress feel thankful for her faithful services. As a result, Tempy inherited one of Mrs. Barr-Grant's small houses. Thanks to her mistress' generosity and having no living expenses because she resided in the woman's house, Tempy managed to buy another house and marry Mr. Siles, who, despite being African-American, also owned some property.

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[194] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 175.
[195] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 176.
[196] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 177,179-180.
[197] Cary D. Wintz, "Langston Hughes" in *Analysis and Assessment, 1940-1979*, ed. Cary D. Wintz (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 423.
[198] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 189.
[199] James B. Kelly, *Bloom's How to Write about Langston Hughes* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), 170.
[200] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 170.

In addition to using Tempy's character as a source of hatred towards Washington and admiration towards Du Bois, it is also possible to understand her and her husband's example as Hughes's attempt to turn attention to class difference in the novel, as many authors have already pointed out. For example, as it has been suggested earlier, Michael Borshuk points out that the novel not only "criticizes the injustices that result from Jim Crow and presents strategies for black resistance" but "it also examines class hierarchies within the African American community,"[201] and additionally he describes Tempy as a demonstration of class tensions in *Not Without* Laughter. The author also refers to George S. Schuyler's claim that *Not Without Laughter* is "a social document, an epic on the sable lowly that white American and bourgeois black American look down upon."[202] It is true that on Mr. Siles and his wife's example Hughes shows that except for African-American people engaged in unattractive and demanding work, for which they were not payed sufficiently, there were also African-American people who were often engaged in social service and lived middle–class lives, even though they belonged in the same ethnic group or even the same family as their poor relatives.

In contrary to any other member of her family, Tempy is "... doin'well. Got a fine house, an'her husband's a mail-clerk in de civil service makin'good money….they don't 'sociate no mo'with none but de high-toned colored folks…Course Tempy don't come to see me much 'cause I still earns ma livin'with ma arms."[203] The same applies to Sister Whiteside's daughter Maggie: "de man she married done got to be a big lawyer in St.Louis. He's in the politics there, an'Magiie's got a fine job herself-social servin', they calls it. But I don't hear from her once a year."[204] These two descriptions of their daughters show that such people not only had big houses and different lifestyle, but they also tended to meet and associate only with people of their own status, and thus forgot about the members of their families, who earned their living on manual work, because it might harm their public acceptance.

Concerning the fact that Sandy experiences both the working class life, which Jimboy summarizes as the situation in which "The white folks are like farmers that own all cows and let the niggers take care of'em. Then they make you pay a sweet price for skimmed milk and keep the cream for themselves,"[205] and the middle-class life while living with his aunt Tempy, it leads him

[201] Borshuk, "Not Without Laughter," 918.
[202] George S. Schuyler, *Views and Reviews* (Pittsburgh Courier, 1948), cited in Michael Borshuk, "Not Without Laughter," in *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Cary D. Wintz, Paul Finkelman (New York: Taylor & Francis Books, 2004), 918.
[203] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 15.
[204] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 16.
[205] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 54.

to the conclusion quoted by A. Singh in *Novels of the Harlem Renaissance: Twelve Black Writers, 1923-1933,*[206] when Sandy tells himself "I want a house to live in too…like Tempy's and Mr. Siles's…But I wouldn't like to be like Tempy's friends- or her husband, dull and colorless…ashamed of colored people."[207]

Not only were the African-American people paid insufficiently and often treated like slaves or even worse in their jobs, but they also had to face segregation, not only at work. The next subchapter elaborates on the problem of how segregation is depicted in the Langston Hughes's novel *Not Without Laughter*.

2.1.1.4 Segregation

African-American community in the United States had to face segregation in many areas of their lives. *Not Without Laughter* is a novel where readers can come across concrete situations, which depict the phenomenon in its fullest extent.

As Langston Hughes suggests, Sandy and his family live in a neighborhood of African-American people, distant several blocks from the white people's houses. When Sandy and his friend Jimmy go for the laundry Hager needs to wash and iron, in order to get paid, they have to walk seven blocks.[208] When Sandy helps his mother finish the work at Mrs. Rice's house, they have to walk fourteen blocks to reach their own house.[209] The fact that Hughes mentions the distance in such situations can be understood as author's intention to emphasize that, as already mentioned in the thesis, it was typical of African Americans to live in segregated neighborhoods. On the other hand, there are sporadic exceptions this rule in the novel, which will be dealt with later. Apart from the importance of distance, Hughes managed to truthfully depict the already mentioned fact that the members of African-American community usually lived in small houses and had to bring water from hydrants for washing. The same relates to Hager, Annjee and Sandy, who live in a small house, for which Sandy is often asked to bring water for washing. Hughes makes direct remarks about the smallness of the house and, additionally, it becomes even smaller in the reader's eyes when compared to the white people's houses. To turn attention to the size of such houses, Langston Hughes uses descriptions like "their large frame dwelling,"[210] "the big

[206] Amritjit Singh. *Novels of the Harlem Renaissance: Twelve Black Writers, 1923-1933* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 78.
[207] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 210.
[208] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 25.
[209] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 47.
[210] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 4.

corner house,"[211] or points out that some houses had upstairs windows,[212] like Mrs. Rice's house, or large bay windows.[213]

It is not only living blocks away from the rich white community demonstrating how segregation worked in the half-fictional world of *Not without Laughter*. Schultz makes a remark on racial injustice by referring to "unnatural circumstances of racism and poverty"[214] in the novel, as well as Cheryl A. Wall, who mentions the practice of Jim-Crowing African American characters in *Not Without Laughter*.[215] What appears to be one of the most prominent and frequent manifestation of racial oppression in the novel, which indicates the super-ordination of white community to the African-American one, is the element of back door. When Harriet expresses her disappointment with Annjee's and her mother's work, she says: "you run to some white person's back door for every job you get,"[216] through which she implies that back door was the proper place where African Americans were supposed to enter a white house. Quoting Black in *Literary Criticisms of Law*, Binder and Weisberg provide a clear understanding of Harriet's point of view because it explains the connection between back door and African-American community by stating that "…segregation is the pattern of law in communities where the extralegal patterns of discrimination are the tightest, where Negroes are subjected to…going to the back door."[217] Another back-door experiences are depicted in the chapter *Work*, when Sandy and his mother use the back door to leave Mrs. Rice's house;[218] in the chapter *Christmas*, where the author mentions that "Sandy went to return the Reinhart's (white people) clothes… At the back door of the Reinhart's house a warm smell of plum pudding and mince pie…;"[219] and in the chapter *One by One*, when Sandy uses Mrs. Rice's back door to deliver a letter to his mother.[220] When Sandy gets older and works in a Drummer's hotel, he must use the back door while entering the hotel, too.[221] Similarly, when Tempy is in hospital to undergo an operation, they do not let her mother enter the hospital by the front door.[222] All the characters mentioned in this paragraph have to use the back

[211] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 5.
[212] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 5.
[213] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 107.
[214] Schultz, "Natural," 1181.
[215] Cheryl A. Wall, "Whose Sweet Angel Child? Blues Women, Langston Hughes and Writing during the Harlem Renaissance," in *Langston Hughes: The Man, His Art, and His Continuing Influece*, ed. C. James Trotman (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 40.
[216] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 53.
[217] Charles L. Black, Jr., "The Lawfulness of Segregation Decisions," cited in Guyora Binder, Robert Weisberg, *Literary Criticisms of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 103.
[218] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 47.
[219] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 104.
[220] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 117.
[221] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 148.
[222] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 172.

door only because they are African-American. In the whole book, there is not even one African-American person depicted entering a white house through the front door. The only example of African-American people entering by the front door is when they enter African-American people's houses.

Turning attention to different manifestations of white power over African-American community, it is again Harriet, whose experience Hughes uses to demonstrate segregation in the novel. Rosenblatt points out that Harriet's opinion on and hatred towards white people are rooted in her childhood memories when she encounter "racial teasing and torment."[223] Her hatred is further intensified by remembering seeing an educational film at the Palace Theatre with her class-mates. When she sits with her class and the film starts, a girl in a uniform comes and tells her that "the last three rows on the left are for colored."[224] Despite Harriet's objections that she's there with her class, she is forced to move to the back and sit on the proper seat. As Ch. A. Wall points out, the girl's Jim-Crowing in combination with a lack of defense provided by her "seemingly liberal teacher and classmates"[225] result in Harriet's leaving school. Apart from Harriet, it is also Sandy and his two African American class-mates, who experience segregation in school in its characteristic form. First of all, segregation is directly addressed by Hughes in the situation when Sandy passes from the "colored fourth grade" to the white fifth grade in September. The author even strengthens the idea of segregation by his explanation that "the Negro children were kept in separate rooms under colored teachers until they had passed the fourth grade" and "then, from the fifth grade on, they went with the other children, and the teachers were white."[226] As the author further shows, the all-African-American classes are not the only way of segregating African-American children at school. Schultz claim that "the young boy [Sandy] confronts the racial cruelties of his new classroom teacher"[227] probably refers to Sandy's Jim-Crowing experience while getting a seat in his new classroom. The teacher first wants the children to write their names on a piece of paper, so that she can read the names and get to know who they are. She probably does so in order to find out the names of the dark-skinned children. After that she reads the names and seats the children. Firstly, she gives seats to the white children and then she asks the two

[223] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 99.
[224] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 55.
[225] Wall, "Whose Sweet Angel Child," 40.
[226] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 87.
[227] Schultz, "Natural," 1180-1181.

African-American girls and Sandy to take seats behind the last white child. One of the girls sums the situation up by saying that "She [the teacher] put us in the back cause we're niggers."[228]

School is not the only place where Sandy's childhood is faced with the problem of segregation. In the chapter *Children's Day*, Sandy and his friends want to attend a Free Children's Day Party, which the Daily Leader claimed to be "open for all the readers of the reader who clipped the coupons published in each issue. On July 26 these coupons, presented at the gate, would entitle every child in Stanton to free admittance to the park."[229] Even though Sandy and his friends do what they are told to do to be allowed to the party, they are denied at the entrance gate and told that "this party's for white kids."[230] As Schultz emphasizes, this experience reminds Sandy that their race is not welcome in Kansas and helps him to realize the spreading nature of racism.[231] Unfortunately for Sandy, it is not possible to find any other apology for their denial because Sandy's white-like friend Buster, manages to pass for white and is allowed to enter the party, even though he's of African-American origin.

The next area of life African-American people were segregated in was in their jobs, as mentioned in the previous subchapter. As Hager's son-in-law points out in the chapter *Work*, "Donahoe laid me [Jimboy] off yesterday on account o'the white bricklayers said they couldn't lay bricks with a nigger,"[232] and adds another example that he was fired because of white men's complaints about working with an African-American man. On this example, Hughes shows that white people always managed to find an excuse for firing an African-American man because Jimboy explains his situation as follows:

> … the white union men started sayin' they couldn't work with me because I wasn't in the union? So the boss come up and paid me off. 'Good man, too,' he says to me, 'but I can't buck the union.' So I said I'd join, but I knew they wouldn't let me before I went to the office. Anyhow, I tried. I told the guys there I was a bricklayer and asked'em how I was gonna work if I couldn't be in the union. And the fellow who had the cards, secretary I guess he was, says kinder sharp, like he didn't want to be bothered: 'That's your look-out, big boy, not mine.' So you see how much the union cares if a black man works or not.[233]

As the previous paragraphs show, the characters in *Not Without Laughter* had to face segregation in their lives in many different places. The situations depicted in the novel correspond

[228] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 89.
[229] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 138.
[230] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 139.
[231] Schultz, "Natural," 1182.
[232] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 42.
[233] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 54.

with what was mentioned about the influence of so-called Jim Crow laws on the African American community in chapter 1.1.5. Apart from entering through back door and segregation at school, theatres, children's days or hotels, Hughes suggests that there were also "wide stretches of beach where the whites did not want Negroes to swim,"[234] white restaurants where African-American people were not welcome,[235] or the Opery House, where African-American people were supposed to sit on the top gallery and with the rest of the folks. One of the African-American characters in the novel even makes remarks on Jim Crow laws influencing their lives while saying that "the top gallery'll be full o'niggers sence it's a jig show; but I ain't goin' anear there myself to be Jim-Crowed."[236] Majority of the characters, including Harriet as probably the most striking example, are disappointed with the way white people Jim-Crow them but it is also possible to find an opposite ones who don't care because they simply want to enjoy themselves despite being oppressed, such as Jap Logan, who says: "Don't care if they Jim-Crow niggers in the white folks' Opery House."[237] An isolated, but probably the most unusual, example where segregation takes place in *Not Without Laughter*, is in a graveyard. When Hager dies, "in at the wide gates and through a vast expanse of tombstones the procession passed, across the graveyard, towards the far, lonesome corner where the most Negroes rested."[238] This quote again confirms Nash's claim in chapter 1.1.5 that segregation of an African-American person continued even after his or her death, in cemeteries, morgues or graveyards.

Despite the fact that color line is quite noticeably and openly drawn in the novel, Tempy tends to pretend there is no. Once, she doubts the reason behind not letting her mother to enter the hospital through the front door by claiming that Hager was forced to use the back door not because of her skin color but because of the apron she wore. On the other hand, there are situations in which Tempy herself gets to know how segregation works, for example when she either has to enter certain place by the back door, for example Wright's hotel or New Albert Restaurant, or when there's no door open for her at all, e.g. in Rialto Theatre or Staton Y.M.C.A.,[239] because even institutions like Y.M.C.A. segregated people on the basis of race, which Hughes confirms in chapter *Chicago*, where he depicts Sandy approaching a "colored" Y.M.C.A.[240] In summary, Hughes provides multiple examples of different African-American characters in the novel who

[234] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 209.
[235] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 208.
[236] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 135.
[237] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 136.
[238] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 165.
[239] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 189.
[240] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 207.

face segregation based on Jim Crow laws. Even though segregation brought tears into many African-American eyes, including Sandy's, and anger into many African-American hearts, African-American people had to fight even bigger enemy- verbal and physical violence.

2.1.1.5 Verbal and physical violence

Verbal assaults and physical violence were common proofs of white supremacy over African-American people. As was suggested in the previous subchapter, Harriet experienced racially-motivated violence in the form of "racial teasing and torment"[241] in her childhood, which gave foundations to her perspective on white people in general. In *Not Without Laughter,* this feeling of disrespect is even intensified by a verbal assault by a white woman Harriet works for, when Harriet accidentally breaks a glass pitcher. Harriet wants to apologize but the woman shouts: "Shut up, you impudent little black wench,"[242] and she also adds what she thinks of African-American people in general: "All you darkies are alike – careless sluts…You're all impossible!"[243]As the quotes show, white people did not fear using very offensive words while talking to their African-American servants. Apart from such words, the most frequent manifestation of disrespect towards African-American people can be found in calling them nigger or other color-grounded nicknames, for example, as Harriet puts it in the novel "white folks give you- coon to your face, and nigger behind your back."[244] Sandy is himself called a Kansas coon and African-American bastard by a drunken man while working at the Drummer's hotel,[245] and is also often called nigger by white boys from across the street, and thus Hager never allowes him to play outside their block.[246] Thus verbal violence becomes an inseparable part of the African-American experience in the novel.

Concerning physical violence towards African-American people, *Not Without Laughter* does not provide any example of such injustice happening to any of the African American characters as the novel proceeds. However, Mrs. Johnson's memory refers to a violent event against African-American people in the past, when she remembers the times after the Civil war, when African-American people started doing better and better, until one of the local African-Americans was at first verbally assaulted and later physically attacked by a white man. He defended himself by shooting the white man into his shoulder. The shooter managed to run away but the white people decided to take revenge on the African-American people of the town. Mrs.

[241] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 99.
[242] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 56.
[243] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 56.
[244] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 53.
[245] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 153.
[246] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 82.

Johnson remembers the day as "so they comes to our do's an' tells us to leave our houses- git de hell out in de fields, 'cause dey don't want to kill nobody there dis evenin'!...Den looked like to me 'bout five hundred white mens took torches an' started burnin' wid fiah ever' last house…De white folks ain't left nothin' fer de niggers."[247] This incident, particularly the revenge taken on innocent people, reminds of the event mentioned in the chapter 1.2.1.

Even though physical violence does not take place in the story, the author emphasizes the possibility of violent actions against African-American characters, if they disrespected the rules. Apart from hearing Mrs. Johnson's story and seeing articles in the newspaper informing about a negro boy being lynched, it were adult African-American people who warned Sandy as well as Buster of certain things that might bring them into trouble. Buster's mother discourages her son from bringing flowers to his white classmate Dorothy Marlow, tells him that "there might be trouble even among kids in school over such things,"[248] and scares him by saying "Don't you know they hang colored boys for things like that?"[249] Sandy is also worried about seeing white Miss McKay completely naked while entering her room, because "he had often heard of colored boys' being lynched for looking at white women, even with their clothes on."[250]

In summary, the African-American characters in *Not Without Laughter* become victims of verbal assaults but there is no evidence of physical violence towards them, except for the past event in Mrs. Johnson's life. However, especially the young people in the novel are warned that such violence can take place if they give white people a reason to do so. As the whole chapter 2.1 shows, Langston Hughes' novel *Not Without Laughter* touches not only the problem of violence towards the African-American people but also many other areas of their lives. Through thoughtful description of characters and their families, who find themselves in more or less racially affected situations, he manages to demonstrate the biggest obstacles African-American people had to face in their everyday life, as well as the wide range of reactions to the problems. In the next chapter the thesis turns its focus on Hughes's collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks.* The collection will be analyzed and compared to the novel, in order to show what these two prosaic works have in common, as well as showing the differences between them.

[247] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 53.
[248] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 119.
[249] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 119.
[250] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 152.

2.1.2 *The Ways of White Folks* – analysis

2.1.2.1 Color Matters

In her contribution to *Langston Hughes: The Man, His Art, and his Continuing Influence*, Joyce A. Joyce emphasizes Hughes's use of both black, especially female, and white characters to demonstrate the impact of the later on the members of African –American community, and thus the need to differentiate between African American and white characters in the collection is essential.[251] If any comparison to the novel *Not Without Laughter* is made, the author again differentiates between the races openly or gives hints that help the reader to deduce character's ethnicity. However, in at least one of the stories, the author delays the revelation of a character's skin color until the end of the story, which will be shown in one of the following paragraphs.

Concerning the hinting tactics, the short story *Slave on the Block* can be considered a typical example. In the story, Hughes makes remarks on the Carraways that they may be "looked a little like poor white folks, although they were really quite well of."[252] The fact that he comments on their financial situation to specify it in the quote but does not comment on their race suggests that there is no doubt about Carraways' whiteness. Moreover, the beginning of the short story is filled with indicia supportive of the idea. Another example can be found in the short story *Father and Son*. The reader is not informed about Colonel Tom's skin color but the fact that he has a half-Negro son and he still "had no real son, no white and legal heir to carry on the Norwood name; this boy was a son by his Negro mistress"[253] ensures the reader that Colonel and his African-American mistress Coralee do not fit within the same racial group.

In the short story 'Rejuvenation through joy', the author does not give any hints, neither does he specify openly what skin color the main character Lesche is until the end of the story. Even though Lesche is described as a big black-haired young man, who is handsome beyond words, his skin color is not revealed until "Eugene Lesche is reputed …to have committed a daring act, one implicitly laced with racially charged sexual innuendo"[254] and uncovered to be "a Negro-passing for white!"[255] In contrary to the story of Lesche and his Colony of Joy, there are also characters

[251] Joyce Ann Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender in The Ways of White Folks", ed. C. James Trotnman (New York: Garland Publishuing, 1995), p.100-101.
[252] Langston Hughes, *The Ways of White Folks (*New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 20.
[253] Hughes, *The Ways*, 207.
[254] Sandra Y. Govan, "The Paradox of Modernism in *The Ways of White Folks*," in*Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes*, ed. John Edgar Tidwell, Cheryl R. Ragar (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 159.
[255] Hughes, *The Ways*, 98.

who are directly labelled as being black or white, such as Cora in *Cora Unashamed* referred to as Negress, her white lover Joe, Jack's white girlfriend in *Passing*, little black Arnie in the short story *Poor Little Black Fellow*, or Luther in *Slave on the Block*, who is described as being "as black as all the Negroes they [the Carraways] had ever known put together."[256] Even though Langston Hughes specifies the shade of Luther's skin, such descriptions of characters are not as typical for the collection as they were for Hughes's novel *Not Without Laughter.*

On the other hand, what connects both the analyzed works is Rosenblatt's idea that, apart from skin color, *Not Wihout Laughter* makes use of referring to other physical features, e.g. nose or hair, especially while describing mixed-race children, as it has been demonstrated in the previous chapter.[257] It is possible to find similar descriptions in *The Ways of White Folks,* for example in the short story *Cora Unashamed* or *Red-Headed Baby*, where little mixed-race Clarence is described as a red-headed blue-eyed yellow-skinned baby. The ways of depicting race-mixing and the problem of passing for white in the collection is further elaborated on in the following subchapter.

2.1.2.2 Mixing Races and Passing for White

In comparison to the novel *Not Without Laughter*, the collection of short stories shows author's deeper interest in the problem of interracial contact, marriage and children as well as with the mixed-race people passing for white. Kate A. Baldwin suggests that several of the stories in *The Ways of White Folks* involve "varied formations of cross-racial desires,"[258] which is confirmed as soon as in the very first short story *Cora Unashamed*. The story of an African-American woman Cora captures both interracial sexual contact and, consequently, the problem of mixed-race children. Cora has a white lover and gives birth to Josephine, a half-white girl with blond hair and grey eyes. Even though she does not feel it is a disgrace to carry a white's man baby inside her body, she does not expect its father to stay with her and take care of his baby, because as Cora herself claims, "he was of that other world,"[259] meaning the white world, and it's members were not supposed to have children with women from the other-black world. Thus she "of course hadn't expected to marry Joe, or to keep him,"[260] which finally turns out true. *Cora Unashamed* also slightly touches the idea of appropriateness of marriage within the white race when white Jessie

[256] Hughes, *The Ways*, 20.
[257] Rosenblatt, "*The Impact*," 83.
[258] Kate A. Baldwin, *"*The Russian Connection: Interracialism As Queer Alliance in Langston Hughes's *'The Ways of White Folks*'," *Modern Fiction Studies* 48, no. 4 (Queer Fictions of Race Special Issue (Winter 2002)): 799.
[259] Hughes, *The Ways*, 7.
[260] Hughes, *The Ways*, 7.

gets pregnant with a white boy. Cora's encouraging words "there ain't no reason why you can't marry, neither – you both white"[261] both demonstrates the commonness of such a marriage and at the same time implies the inappropriateness of an interracial one.

However, as Joseph McLaren adds, apart from *Cora Unashamed*, the taboo issue of interracial relationships and its consequences is also very prominent in *Mother and Child, Red-Headed Baby* and *Passing*.[262] Betsy, the main character in *Red-headed Baby* has an affair with a red-headed white-skinned man and later she gives birth to his red-headed baby, of whom the man has no clue until he comes at Betsy's place again later. When he gets to know he's the boy's father, he feels disgust towards him, showing no interest in taking care of him, such as Joe in Cora's story. In addition, *Passing* provides the reader with a different example of an interracial relationship. In this case, the story of a mixed-race Jack and his darker mixed-race siblings implies not only a longer affair between their parents, but also the father's at least partial interest in his mulatto children, unlike in *Cora Unashamed* and *Red-headed Baby.* Even though the father decided to the inheritance to his white family, Jack emphasizes his father's financial support provided to his mother and her children by saying that he "did buy you [Jack's mother] a house and sent us all [Jack and his siblings] through school."

Staying focused on the issue of interracial relationships and their outcomes, Rampersad stresses out the short story *Passing*, whose title itself indicates its focus, as well as McLaren, who also points out that "Hughes also dealt with 'passing' and other mulatto themes in such stories as…*Passing*,"[263] which is in agreement with Juda Bennett's claim that Langston Hughes explored the subject of passing in some of his short stories.[264] Given that Jack's skin in *Passing* is light and his hair good, meaning white-like, he indeed becomes one of the best candidates for passing for white in the collection, from which he gains certain advantages. As Jack himself puts it, such advantages include getting his 65- dollars-a-week job; the possibility of being in line for promotion to the chief office secretary within the company, which he would never been given had it not been for his passing for white; or dating a white girl, who has no idea about Jack's background, of which Jack has no intention to tell her because he wishes to marry her one day. Jack enjoys his freedom from oppression and fears being revealed to such an extent that he swears he would even deny his

[261] Hughes, *The Ways*, 13.
[262] Joseph McLaren, *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist in the Protest Tradition, 1921-1943* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1997), 61, 52.
[263] McLaren, *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist*, 61.
[264] Bennett, "Multiple Passings," 670.

paternity if any of his and his wife's future children were born dark-skinned.[265] Despite enjoying the benefits of his white life, Jack also has to face the averted side of it. The whole short story takes form of a letter of apology which "a man passing for white writes to his mother after he has refused to speak to her publicly."[266] Except for expressing his feelings that he "felt like a dog,"[267] Jack also praises his mother for pretending not to know him in "You were great, though. Didn't give a sign that you even knew me, let alone I was your son."[268] His situation, as well as Buster's in the novel *Not Without Laughter*, demonstrates the choices mixed-race people had to choose from. As it has been already mentioned, they could either choose to avow their African-American descent and remain in contact with their relatives and friends, but consequently occupy low-payed jobs and stay under control of white people; or to pass for white, earn more money, have white partners and become members of the superordinate race, but at the same time lose touch with their African-American families and friends.

As it has been suggested in the previous subchapter, Hughes himself quite straightforwardly mentions another character in the collection- Lesche in *Rejuvenation Through Joy* – as one of those passing for white. However, Lesche's story, in contrary to Jack's seems not to mention the ugly side of such a decision. Lesche enjoys the privileges of his white-resemblance but he does not face any consequences. In contrary to Jack's and Lesche's examples, not all the mulatto characters in *The Ways of White Folks* get the chance to pass for white, such as Bert in *Father and Son,* whose skin color prevents him from doing so. However, McLaren emphasizes Bert's desire to "…behave in the manner of his 'white half',"[269] which implies that if Bert were provided with such an option, he would probably make use of it.

After all that has been mentioned about interracial contact and mixed-raced children so far, one might conclude that it was mostly white men who sought sexual contact with members of African-American race and had mixed-race children. However, *The Ways of White Folks* also displays exceptions to this rule, for example in the form of Miss Briggs' story in *Little Dog*, in which she finds herself falling in love with a "colored" janitor. As the man regularly comes to her porch to bring food for her dog, she gradually becomes aware of her inclination towards the janitor, causing her body to emit signals ranging from blushes in her face for no good reason, trembling of the hands or awaiting the man with anxiety to making errors over books. However, in contrary to the

[265] Hughes, *The Ways*, 52.
[266] Rampersad, *The Life*, 282.
[267] Hughes, *The Ways*, 51.
[268] Hughes, *The Ways*, 51.
[269] McLaren, *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist*, 64.

previously-mentioned stories, her desires remain unfulfilled, no miscegenation takes place and she, being aware of the social unacceptability of such a relationship, moves away, despite crying over her loss.[270] Another, and even more serious, example of the phenomenon can be found in the short story *Mother and Child*, which Rampersad correctly summarizes as the story of "a married white woman, her black lover, and their defiantly healthy baby boy."[271] The short story can be also understood as the combination of the short stories *Little Dog* and *Red-Headed Baby*, in which a white woman's love towards an African-American lover mixes with the mulatto children theme. The short story also comments on the possible violent consequences for the child's father, which will be discussed later in the thesis.

All the above-mentioned examples truthfully capture the reality of transracial love and relations in general in America. *Poor Little Black Fellow* offers a comparison of different approaches towards the phenomenon in the United States and Europe. The main character Arnie, an African-American orphan raised by a white Pamberton's family among white people, is expected to marry a dark-skinned woman in his homeland, but visiting Paris offers him a new, much more liberal or even limitless, perspective on interracial relationships. Claudina, one of Arnie's new friends, even implies that white women even find African-American men attractive by saying that some French girls "might put him [Arnie] in their pockets, crazy as they are about chocolate."[272]

Apart from interracial marriage, sexual contact and the examples of passing for white, Hughes' collection *The Ways of White Folks* also deals with racial etiquette. However, like in *Not Without Laughter*, as racial etiquette is often displayed in connection to jobs, and its violation in connection to lynching and violence in general, it is focused on in the following subchapters.

2.1.2.3 Lifestyle and Attitudes

Concerning jobs African-American people were engaged in, the main character of the first short story in the collection *The Ways of White Folks*, Cora, embodies a typical African-American woman of the time, and thus she reminds the reader of Annjee from the novel *Not Without Laughter*. She is "is humble, strong and generous,"[273] and also works as a domestic for a white family, the Studevants, whose female members "are hypocritical, elitist and insensitive."[274] Her position in the Studevants' house as well as in the society in general is summarized as that she

[270] Hughes, *The Ways*, 168-175.
[271] Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, 282.
[272] Hughes, *The Ways*, 149.
[273] Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender," 104.
[274] Joyce, "Race, Culture and Gender," 104.

"worked for the Studevants, who treated her like a dog. She stood it. Had to stand it; or work for poorer white folks who would treat her worse; or go jobless…..She was the Studevants' maid of all work – washing, ironing, cooking scrubbing, taking care of kids, nursing old folks, making fires, carrying water."[275] By saying this, Hughes not only confirms what has been previously mentioned about African-American female servants in white houses, but he also draws attention to the master-servant behavior expected from African-American people. Apart from *Cora Unashamed*, there are also other short stories, in which Langston Hughes uses the picture of an African-American woman working as a maid for white families. For example in the short story *Slave on the Block* where Carraways have an African-American maid, who dies and is substituted by another "colored" woman; or in *Poor Little Black Fellow*, which depicts a "colored" woman Amanda, who works for Pambertons as a servant, as well as Arcie in *One Christmas* Eve.

Concerning the racial etiquette, Cora always calls Mrs. Studevant madam and does not object to anything she's told. When she tries to express her own opinion on Jessie's pregnancy, she is ordered to "shut up,"[276] and, knowing her position, she makes no more comments on the situation. However, when Mrs. Studevant causes Jessie's death, Cora gives up on racial etiquette and acquaints everyone at the funeral with what her boss have done, despite losing her job as a result. However, she is not the only example of a defiant person in the collection. Similarly to Harriet's resistance of white superiority in the novel, Rampersad points out the resentful character of Mattie and insolent nature of Luther in *Slave on the Block,*[277] who are exposed to a very specific sort of racism in the form of fetishism of African-American culture. The author further exemplifies the appearance of rebellious characters in the collection on the short stories *The Blues I'm Playing* and *Father and Son*, in which Oceola "defies her rich, elderly white patron to marry the man she loves" and a white man's mixed-race son "eventually slays his father."[278]

However, if any member of the fictional African-American community chooses to let himself or herself to be carried away by their emotions and stand up to their masters, he/she must inevitably expect certain consequences, for example going jobless and thus being forced to search for another job. As it has been already mentioned, finding a job was a demanding task for African-American people, especially for men. Even though men's labor situation does not receive noticeable attention in *The Ways of White Folks*, Hughes points out that Luther, in the *Slave on the Block*, had "Been

[275] Hughes, *The Ways*, 3-4.
[276] Hughes, *The Ways*, 12.
[277] Arnold Rampesard, "Introduction," in *The Short Stories of Langston Hughes*, ed. Akiba Sullivan Harper (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), xvii.
[278] Rampesard, "Introduction," xvii.

looking for a job for the last four months"[279] before being hired to take care of Carraways' garden. Jack, in *Passing,* confirms the idea by claiming that it was difficult for an African-American man to find and keep a job.[280] Roy in *Home* also comments on the shortage of working opportunities for African-American men in: "most of his [Roy's] old friends, musicians and actors, were hungry and out of work."[281] In *Berry,* Langston Hughes even avoids using any gender-specifying words in the claim that "jobs were too hard to get,"[282] which can be understood as author's intention to refer to both men and women.

If African-American people finally manage to find a job in the collection, it usually is an unattractive job for little money, in contrary to white people who often occupy higher positions, such as Kenneth, who takes over management of a hardware store, or Colonel Tom, who owns a big cotton plantation. Jack supports the idea in *Passing* while referring to an African-American porter, who sweeps out the office, and about whom he makes a comment that "no matter how smart that boy'd get to be, they wouldn't hire him for a clerk in the office."[283] Apart from the porter, it is also the African-American women mentioned in the first paragraphs of this subchapter who occupy low-status jobs in the collection. *The Ways of White Folks* also focuses on the inadequate reward African-American people get for doing the work, such as Arcie's $7 a week in *One Christmas Eve*, four of which she needs for paying for her room and a woman who looks after her child when she works;[284] or Milberry's $8 a week for doing "a work horse"[285] in a home for crippled children. Apart from the status of such jobs, Miller makes a remark on the unequal pay for identical work when performed by African-American and white workers, as depicted in *Berry.*[286] In the conversation about how much Berry should be paid for his work, Dr. Renfild asks: "how much did we pay the other fellow [the white man who held the post before Milberry]?"[287] When Mrs. Osborn answers that he earned $10 a week, Dr. Renfield orders: "Well, pay the darkie eight,"[288] which makes it clear that race plays a significant part in the doctor's decision. Even though not all the characters in the collection are paid insufficiently, such as Mattie

[279] Hughes, *The Ways*, 23.
[280] Hughes, *The Ways*, 52
[281] Hughes, *The Ways*, 35.
[282] Hughes, *The Ways*, 181.
[283] Hughes, *The Ways*, 52.
[284] Hughes, *The Ways*, 199.
[285] Hughes, *The Ways*, 181.
[286] R. Baxter Miller, *The Art and Imagination of Langston Hughes* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 103.
[287] Hughes, *The Ways*, 180.
[288] Hughes, *The Ways*, 180.

and Luther in *Slave on the Block*, or the African-American boy working for Mr.Lloyd in *Good Job Done*, who gets $25 a week, none of the characters seems to fit within the middle class such as Tempy in *Not Without Laughter* or her husband, who is engaged in the social service.

As it has been previously suggested, the short stories offer a wide range of different attitudes of dark-skinned people towards whites, from being an obedient servant, who stands nearly whatever it takes to keep his or her job, to rejecting the stereotypes and insulting his or her white master. While reading the collection, one cannot oversee the growing radicalism of the characters, beginning with the story of Cora, an obedient servant, who "is like a tree-once rooted, she stood, in spite of storms and strife, wind, and rocks, in the earth."[289] The only thing that forces Cora to stand up to her mistress is the heart-breaking pain she feels after the death of a beloved person. Luther and Mattie in the following story *Slave on the Block* are both less obedient than Cora and both even dare to violate the racial etiquette by talking back to a white woman for less serious reasons than Cora. The next character Jack, in *Passing*, chooses to abandon his family and pass for white rather than to conform to the master-servant relationship, as well as Lesche in the *Rejuvenation Through Joy*. In *Good Job Done*, an African-American woman Pauline decides not to stand violent assaults from a white men and she physically attacks him with a bottle of whisky. Both the determination not to conform to the master-servant model and physical violence reach their peak in the very last short story *Father and Son*, in which Bert refuses to accept the position of a half-slave on his white father's plantation, keeps breaking the rules given by the racial etiquette, and finally kills his ownfather. Moreover, Bert takes even more radical step when he commits suicide in order not to let a mob take revenge on him, which is be further commented on later.

In conclusion, as the whole subchapter shows, in many of the short stories in the collection Langston Hughes managed to depict the inequities and difficulties the members of the African-American community had to face in the labor sphere, as well as their unwillingness to conform to slavery-like master-servant relationship, which, in many cases, resulted in various actions. Bearing in mind that such actions against white oppression gradually become more violent throughout the book, the collection appears to be more radical than the previously-analyzed novel *Not Without Laughter*. Except for working conditions and wages, segregation can be considered another phenomenon that contributed to the dissatisfaction of the African-American people, and thus the phenomenon is focus on in the next subchapter.

[289] Hughes, *The Ways*, 4.

2.1.2.4 Segregation

It has been already mentioned that segregation was a common manifestation of white supremacy over African-American people in the United States, and the analysis of Hughes' novel *Not Without Laughter* has shown the author's noticeable interest in addressing the issue in his work. The following paragraphs will analyze to what extent, if at all, segregation is depicted in the collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks.*

As suggested earlier, segregation of African-American people was such a widespread phenomenon that African-American people had to face it even at places where equal treatment independent of race distinction would be expected, like cemeteries or morgues. Despite the fact that such places do not occur in *Cora Unashamed*, it is still possible to see the story's connection to the issue. The short story displays a funeral held in white people's dining room, which the African-American servant Cora attends as the only African-American person. As Hughes puts it, the dining room is crowded with people, but it is only Cora who is seated by the dining-room door, which means in the back, behind all the whites.[290] Hughes also uses more permanent examples of segregating African-Americans such as placing them into certain parts of a house, which is captioned in *Berry*, where Mrs. Osborn expresses her concern over "colored" Milberry's staying by saying "Well, where would he sleep?"[291] implying that he cannot be accommodated with whites and that it is necessary to find him what R. Baxter Miller calls "an appropriate place for him to sleep."[292]

If segregation is dealt with in connection to accommodation of the characters in the collection, it is possible to observe two patterns. The first option is placing the African-American people in the lowest part of house, such as Luther and Mattie in *Slave on the Block*, who both have their rooms in the basement,[293] as well as in the short story *Little Dog*, where an African-American janitor and his family also live in the basement of the house. The idea of segregated living in this short story is even more emphasized by Miss Brigs' comment "let him stay in the basement, then, where he belonged."[294] The other option is the attic, such as in the case of Milberry in *Berry* or Arnie in *Poor Little Black Fellow*. However, the story of Arnie's encounter with segregation does not end in the attic because when he gets older, he becomes "too big" for the "social world of

[290] Hughes, *The Ways*, 16.
[291] Hughes, *The Ways*, 180.
[292] Miller, *The Art and Imagination*, 103.
[293] Hughes, *The Ways*, 20, 23.
[294] Hughes, *The Ways*, 173.

Mapleton,"[295] and the Pambertons suggest him to move to the garage, where he could have the whole top floor for his own apartment and where he could have his "colored" friends.[296]

Even though Arnie's segregation is presented as a token of goodwill, the boy is fully aware of the true reason behind it, which he summarizes by commenting on segregation in American in general as follows: "Separate, segregated, shut-off. African-American people kept away from everybody else. I go to Fisk; my classmates, Harvard and Amherst and Yale…I sleep in the garage, you [white people] sleep in the house."[297] By saying so, Arnie also emphasizes the impossibility of choosing a college by himself, which the author confirms by stating that "Arnie had to find his own [African-American] world," and thus the Pambertons want him to attend "one of the nicer Negro colleges like Fisk."[298] The idea of segregation in schools is also depicted in *Home* by referring to a white school, into which Roy was invited to play his music, and even more directly admitted in the sentence "There was no higher school for Negroes in Hopkinsville."[299]

As segregation resonates throughout *Poor Little Black Fellow*, Arcie encounters what Kate A. Baldwin understands as "the ignorance of white gentility"[300] in many more situations such as being refused to join a Summer Camp for the Scouts because "they [the organizing company] simply could not admit Negroes. Too many parents would object;"[301] or being considered a servant while travelling to Europe with Pambertons, and thus forced to travel in the second class. As Langston Hughes puts it in the short story, it is not before landing at Cherbourg when they can all meet on "an equal footing,"[302] which again reflects the already-mentioned difference in treatment of African Americans in Europe and the United States.

Arcie, having discovered the possibilities of freedom in Europe,[303] summarizes the life in Paris as "Here [in Paris] it didn't matter – color,"[304] by which he means no separation in hotels, cafés or restaurants, elevators for all and not only for whites - the true opposite of America. Baldwin also points out that the same issue is addressed in the short story *Home*, in which the

[295] Hughes, *The Ways*, 139.
[296] Hughes, *The Ways*, 139.
[297] Hughes, *The Ways*, 157.
[298] Hughes, *The Ways*, 138.
[299] Hughes, *The Ways*, 46.
[300] Kate A. Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters Between Black and Red, 1922-63* (Durham and London : Duke University Press, 2002), 144.
[301] Hughes, *The Ways*, 138.
[302] Hughes, *The Ways*, 143.
[303] Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, 269.
[304] Hughes, *The Ways*, 149.

situation in Europe helps Roy better understand the limits of the U.S. citizenship.[305] The awakening he experiences in Europe even makes things worse for Roy when he comes back home, where he's sharply reminded of the rules African-American people are expected to follow in the States. Even the fact that Roy gets off a Pullman in his hometown, makes people make remarks on the African-American musician and his behavior. Bearing in mind that a Pullman can be defined as "a luxury (=expensive and comfortable) railway carriage,"[306] it is understandable that a Pullman was "something unusual for a Negro in those parts."[307] In addition to *Home*, the idea of separation in transport appears again in the short story *Father and Son*, where Bert travels home "in a Jim Crow car bound for South Georgia….Sitting in the smoky half-coach allotted to Negroes…."[308]

Moreover, the story of Bert and his homecoming is also concerned with the same issue as the novel *Not Without Laughter* – back door. Even though McLaren mentions the issue in connection to Hughes' play *Mulatto*, which is often considered to be an adaptation of his short story *Father and Son*, his findings seem relevant for the short story, too. As the author puts it in his work, master-servant etiquette denied access to certain protected spaces including front door, and thus "the front door of the Norwood residence becomes symbolic of "equality" and the spatial boundaries fostered by hierarchies of race and power."[309] *Father and Son* depicts such idea explicitly by stating that "no Negroes go in and out of that [front] door, or across his [Colonel's] front porch. When the old [African-American] house-man, Sam, wanted to sweep off the front porch, he would have to go out the back door and come all the way around. It was as absurd as that."[310] Bearing Bert's rebellious nature in mind, it is not surprising that it is Tom's mulatto son who does not intend to follow such a rule and keeps using the front door when Colonel can't see him. Moreover, when he has an argument with his father, he refuses to use the back door and tells Colonel Norwood ":I'm not your servant…You can't drive me out the back way like a dog. I'll go…but no out the back – from my own father's house."[311] In contrary to *Not Without Laughter*, the short story depicts a young African-American man, who enters or leaves a white man's house through the front door. On the other hand, the only time when such disobedience happens is when the white man is not at home or when he dies.

[305] Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line*, 139.
[306] *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "pullman", accessed April 16, 2020, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pullman.
[307] Hughes, *The Ways*, 36.
[308] Hughes, *The Ways*, 221.
[309] McLaren, *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist*, 61.
[310] Hughes, *The Ways*, 223.
[311] Hughes, *The Ways*, 241.

In conclusion, the African-American characters in *The Ways of White Folks* are often told where to live, sit, walk or study, and some of them choose to do so in order to avoid problems with white people. However, it is also possible to find characters who prefer confrontation of their oppressors to conformity to segregation, which often causes them big problems with the white society. The responses they get for their disobedience ranges from verbal assaults to lynching.

2.1.2.5 Verbal assaults, violence and lynching

As suggested in the previous paragraph, the African-American characters in the collection often face either verbal or physical violence because of their inappropriate behavior including acts of impudence like violation of master-servant behavior, attempted rape, not conforming to segregation rules, or even such simple facts like being African-American. Such examples in *The Ways of White Folks* are depictions of the race-affected situation in the United States of America, as it was mentioned in chapter 1.2.1.

As in the case of any other issue in the thesis, some of the short stories in the collection depict the problem of verbal and physical violence more than others. Even though *Home* begins as a story of one of the luckiest African Americans, who are doing well and make good money, it turns out to be one of the most violent short stories of the whole book. As already mentioned, Roy encounters verbal assaults when he gets of a Pullman while arriving to his hometown. The white men who see him getting off the train openly call him nigger and express their disgust with Roy's homecoming by saying "I hope she [Roy's mother] is gladder to see yuh than we are."[312] However, non-pleasant comments turn out to be just the presage of the physical attack Roy experiences after his return. The act of physical violence is based on a mendacious accusation of an attempted rape of a white woman Miss Reese, which reflects the reality of African-American people in the then USA. Miss Reese, who knows Roy and appreciates his musical talent, meets him in front of a drugstore, she bows to him and greets him. Roy's reaction and the events that follow are described in the following quote:

[312] Hughes, *The Ways*, 36.

> Roy started, bowed, nodded, "Good evening, Miss Reese", and was glad to see her. Forgetting he wasn't in Europe, he took off his hat and his gloves, and held out his hand to this lady who understood music. They smiled at each other, the sick young colored man and the aging music teacher in the light of the main street…Roy opened his mouth to reply when he saw the woman's face suddenly grow pale with horror…he felt a fist like a ton of bricks strike his jaw…his head hit the edge of the plate glass window of the drugstore. Miss Reese screamed….The movies had just let out and the crowd, passing by and seeing, objected to a Negro talking to a white woman – insulting a White Woman – attacking a WHITE woman – RAPING A WHITE WOMAN….When Miss Reese screamed after Roy had been struck, they were sure he had been making love to her….So they knocked Roy down.[313]

However, as T. Harris points out, the incident with Miss. Reese is rather an excuse for Roy's lynching than the true reason for doing so. The true motive for such an action is the fact that he is "an uppty nigger,"[314] who "has education, clothing, and talents that should be reserved for whites only,"[315] which makes white people "look ridiculous,"[316]and thus the white decide to punish the African-American musician, by which they "eliminate the threat to its [the white mob's] image of white superiority in education and art."[317] Consequently, Roy ends up hanged naked on a tree for no other reason than being dark-skinned and acting like white.

Except for *Home*, the series of events in the short story *Father and Son* also results in the death of its main character Bert. Bert, a mixed-race son treated like an African-American person, experiences violence from his father already as a child when he's beaten because of calling him "papa" in front of white people, and the situation between them gradually sharpens as Bert gets older. He refuses to obey his father, and thus Colonel Tom often verbally assaults him, calling him "black bastard"[318] and "nigger."[319] However, it is an incident at a post office what causes Bert life-threatening trouble. The story depict the scene at the post office as follows:

[313] Hughes, *The Ways*, 47-48.
[314] Hughes, *The Ways*, 36.
[315] Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals* (Bloomingston: Indiana University Press, 1984), 83.
[316] Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, 84.
[317] Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, 84.
[318] Hughes, *The Ways*, 236.
[319] Hughes, *The Ways*, 240.

> …a simple argument over change. But the young woman who sold the stamps was not used to arguing with Negroes, or being corrected by them…The girl looked at the change and realized she was wrong. She looked at Bert – light near-white nigger with grey-blue eyes. You gotta be harder on those kind than you have on the black ones. An educated nigger, too!...Instead of correcting the change, she screamed, and let her head fall forward in front of the window. Two or three white men waiting to buy stamps seized Bert and attempted to throw him out of the Post office.[320]

Bert experiences similar treatment as Roy, when he's punished for no other reason than being an educated African American. Tom's son leaves after the incident and the woman tells everybody she had been insulted by him, which results in the Bert's argument with his father, who holds a gun on him. Despite his anger, Tom is not able to shoot his own son but Bert kills him. Consequently, Bert is chased by a mob of white people, and he chooses to commit suicide to avoid the white men from taking him alive, by which he deprives "the mob of the presumed delight of lynching him."[321] Even though Bert escapes the punishment from the mob, *Father and Son* depicts previously-mentioned cruel practice of taking revenge on other African-American people, e.g. family members, Bert's brother in this case, who is lynched.

Even though many of the short stories in the collection include examples of verbal attacks towards African Americans, such as calling them "nigger", "darkie", "wench", "black buck" and other, it is the two above-mentioned stories *Home* and *Father and Son* in which violence towards African-American people strikes the most and which make the collection to appear more violent than Hughes' novel *Not Without Laughter*.

2.2 High-modernist features in *Not Whithout Laughter* and *The Ways of White folks*

Considering the point of view in the analyzed works, Hughes mostly depends on the 3rd person narrator. As many authors refer to the novel as being realistic and traditional in form, e.g. DaNean Pound in *African American Literature:An Encyclopedia for Students*,[322] it is not surprising that *Not Without Laughter* does not make use of any shifts in the point of view and the whole novel is narrated by an omniscient 3rd person narrator, which can be defined as an external narrator, who "offers 'inside views' of many characters in the storyworld, often commenting on the narrative world and reporting not just characters' actions, speech, and writing, but also their emotions and

[320] Hughes, *The Ways*, 234.
[321] R. Baxter Miller, "The Physics of Change in 'Father an Son'," in *The Man, His Art, and His Continuing Influece*, ed. C. James Trotman (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 137.
[322] DaNean Pound, "Relism," in African American Literature: An Encyclopedia for Students, ed. Hans A. Ostrom, J. David Macey (California: Greenwood, 2020), 296.

cognition."[323] Similarly, many of the short stories in the collection, e.g. *Cora Unashamed, Slave on the Block* or *Poor Little Black Fellow*, are told from this perspective. However, as Alan M. Wald points out, Hughes in his collection *The Ways of White Folks* "progresses facilely among invigorating compass of forms that engage stream of consciousness, an omniscient narrator, monologues, and letters."[324]

Even though omniscient narrator appears right at the beginning of the short story home, it is interrupted by passages of Roy's perception narrated in the 1st person and his mother's monologue. Another example of such shift in the point of view occurs in the short story *Red-Headed Baby*, which starts as a first-person narrative told by one of the main characters in the story, Mr. Clarence, and it is not before the fifth page of the story that the 3rd person narrator appears. Soon, again, the third person narrator starts mixing with the 1st person point of view and Mr. Clarence continues to narrate the rest of the story. David Michael Nifong summarizes the technique used to narrate the story as "a beautifully constructed stream-of-.consciousness/integral monologue."[325] Apart from the change in the point of view, *Mother and Son* is an example of what Nifong calls "dramatic monologue with an effaced narrator,"[326] in which the reader is forced to depend entirely on a dialogue of two women. Thus, bearing in mind that modernists made use of unreliable narrators, it is possible to question the reliability of the entire story, which is highly subjective. Subjectivity is also prominent in Mr. Clarence's story, which is filtered through the white man's perception.

Concerning *Red-Headed Baby,* it is possible to notice that the change of the narrator is achieved through the use of free indirect discourse. The sentences "The white man [Mr. Clarence] stares intently, looking across the table, past the lamp, the licker bottles, the glasses and the old woman, way past the girl. Standing in the door from the kitchen- Look! a damn red-headed baby. Standing and saying a damn word, a damn runt of a red-headed baby"[327] suggests that the third person narrative changes into Mr. Clarence's talk, but the author does not signal the change in any way. Even though this is the most prominent example of free indirect discourse within both prosaic works, this device is quite frequently used by the author, especially in *The Ways of White Folks.* In *Home,* "and the roar of their voices and the scuff of their feet were split by the moonlight into

[323] Peter Melwille Logan, George Olakunle, Susan Hegeman, and Kristal Efrain. *The Encyclopedia of the Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 556.
[324] Allan M. Wald, *Exiles from a Future Time: The Forging of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Left,* (Chapel Hill: The University of Carolina Press, 2002), 88.
[325] David Michael Nifong, "Narrative Technique and Theory in *The Ways of White Folks*," Black American Literature Forum 15, no.3 (Autumn, 1981): 93.
[326] Nifong, "Narrative Technique," 93.
[327] Hughes, *The Ways*, 130.

a thousand notes like a Beethoven sonata"[328] is most likely uttered by the main protagonist, who associates the sounds with Beethoven, because he himself is a musician. The same can be applied to the short story *Slave on the Block,* in which "most effective in oil canvas"[329] suggests that, mentioning the canvas necessary for painting, it is the painter Anne Carraway who describes the African-American boy, not the narrator of the story. Apart from the previously-mentioned examples of free indirect discourse, dialect can be also a useful tool in distinguishing who the author of an utterance is. In *Home,* Roy's mother encourages her son to play the violin by saying "Play yo'violin, son!"[330] Later, the same dialectal sentence appears within a paragraph narrated in the third person narrator without any signal that it is Roy's mother talking. Thus, the boarder between the character's and the narrator's talk fades away. Another such example can be found in the short story *Father and Son.*[331]

Even though such striking examples cannot be found in the novel, there are certain passages in which the reader is not sure about the author of the utterance. For example, if sentences such as "Word from Jimboy surely – or word about him,"[332] "Gee, it was hard to have a Christian mother!"[333] "Gee, but she could kiss,"[334] "Jimboy! Jimboy! Like Jimboy!"[335] or an exclamation "Eu-uuu!"[336] were surrounded by quotation marks, the reader would definitely consider them the character's speech, but since no quotation marks are used, the origin of the utterances remains uncertain.

Apart from free indirect discourse, many passages capturing character's inner thoughts appear in both works. In *Home,* the whole first-person-narrative part of the story[337] reflects the inner thoughts of the main character Roy, including his dream, music and racial issues. The author makes use of triple dots to capture the flowing mind of the character. Triple dots also appear in *The Blues I'm Playing,* in which Mrs. Ellsworth starts thinking about her protegee Oceola and her thoughts are not finished because she probably falls asleep, as it is indicated very soon in the sentence "when she woke up in the morning…"[338] Apart from suggesting the incompleteness of

[328] Hughes, *The Ways*, 49.
[329] Hughes, *The Ways*, 24.
[330] Hughes, *The Ways*, 38.
[331] Hughes, *The Ways*, 220.
[332] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 100.
[333] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 58.
[334] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 192.
[335] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 211.
[336] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 78.
[337] Hughes, *The Ways*, 39-42.
[338] Hughes, *The Ways*, 107.

the thoughts in the collection, the novel makes use of triple dots to express the sudden jumps between the thoughts as they suddenly pop out in the character's mind. The following quote captures such thoughts in Sandy's mind:

> And Reverend Braswell was as black as ink, but he knew God…God didn't care if people were black, did he?...What was God? Was He a man or a lamb or what? Buster's mother…- she intended to sit by His side by and by…Was Buster's father white? Buster was white and colored both. But he didn't look like he was colored. What made Buster not colored?...And what made girls different from boys?[339]

Another example can be found in the chapter *The Doors of Life*, in which the author describes the sudden changes in the characters thoughts as a "maelstrom of thoughts."[340] Concentrating on the characters' mind, the novel also depicts the associations of the characters based on their sensory perception. Hearing Jimboy playing guitar and seeing him touching the guitar softly, Anjee's mind associates his touch with a breeze and his music with a "wind rustling through the long leaves of the corn".[341] Similarly, in *Dance,* watching people, Sandy compares the faces of the people around him to circus balloons of different colors.[342]

As it has been mentioned earlier in the thesis, modernist works often do not follow the chronological order of events. This is definitely not the case of the analyzed novel *Not Without Laughter.* It is possible to find concrete realist-like time references such as dates, months, years, and seasons of the years or festivals during the year, which suggest that the individual chapters of the novel are arranged in the chronological order. The author makes reference to all the four seasons of the year, to Christmas, Easter, and Valentine, 1912 or 1918. He also depicts the maturing of the main protagonist Sandy through 6 years, starting with a small boy, who can be carried by his mother at the beginning of the novel, and ending with a third-year student of high school, which makes the novel a coming-of-age novel, while respecting the order of events as they happened. In contrary to the novel, the short story *Father and Son* does not follow chronological order of events. If chronology was followed, the second part and the third part of the story, which presents the mother and father of the main protagonist Bert before he was even born, and his mother's first pregnancy with his older brother Willie, would be placed right at the beginning.

The previously mentioned order of the events in *Father and Son* also suggests that while the reader starts reading the short story, he or she finds himself in the middle of the story, and thus

[339]Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 123.
[340] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 187.
[341] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 36.
[342] Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, 65.

it can be considered an abrupt beginning. *Home* also starts abruptly by stating that "the boy came back,"[343] and very similar example occurs in *Berry*, where the author uses almost identical sentence to open the short story. Even though the definite articles are used in these short stories, the reader doesn't know who the boys are. They also come back or arrive, but the reader doesn't know where from. The same pattern can be observed in the short story *Mother and Child,* where the adjective "it" and the definite articles at the beginning of the story place the reader right in the middle of the narrative. *Red-Headed Baby* shows another example of an abrupt beginning. The story starts with a direct speech of an unknown origin and the reader also becomes confused by its content.

The summary of the high-modernist features has already proved that open-endedness also belongs among useful formalist tools. Closed ending seems to be more frequent in the analyzed works. For example, at the end of the novel, the main protagonist Sandy finds his own attitude towards life and is about to return to school, his mother continues in her work but is no longer forced to rely on her son, and Harriet finally becomes successful and makes satisfactory money, even though she is an African-American. Cora in *Cora Unashamed* leaves her work and "the Jenkins niggers, Pa and Ma and Cora, somehow manage to get along,"[344] Roy in *Home* dies hung on a tree; there is no more lecture by Lesche in the Colony of Joy in *Rejuvenation Through Joy*; and Bert ends his life with his own hands in *Father and Son.*

In contrary to such endings, some other stories leave the readers thinking about the possible events following the end of the stories, and thus asking questions like: "Was it Douglass' child in *Mother and Child*?" or "If it were Douglass' baby in *Mother and Child*, did he get punished for his deed in the end?" or "Did Arnie finally marry the white girl Emily in *Poor Little Black Fellow*?" Such questions remain unanswered in the short stories, and thus, it is possible to consider their ending open.

To summarize the chapter, if any comparison of the two works is made, it is the collection of short stories who meets the criteria stated in the theoretical part to larger extent than the novel. Even though it is possible to find certain passages including stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse in the novel, it is much more common in *The Ways of White Folks*, including stories told almost entirely in the stream-of-consciousness form. The novel follows chronological order of events and its story is complete, which cannot be said about all the short stories. In

[343] Hughes, *The Ways*, 33.
[344] Hughes, *The Ways*, 18.

addition, many of the short stories include a change in narrators, unreliable narrators or even no narrator at all, most strikingly captured in the short stories *Home, Red-Headed Baby* and *Father and Son*.

3. CONCLUSION

As the theoretical part of the thesis showed the process of changing the position of African -American people within the American society from slaves into officially free people was not easy. There were moments in which the future seemed promising for the African Americans, such as freeing of first slaves, but such moments were often replaced by their opposites. Slavery became the problem especially in the times when new territories were expected to join the Union, which worried the South because slavery was an essential part of their economic power, and thus the Southerners wanted to protect it. The protection of slavery was one of the reasons why Civil War between the South and the North finally broke out.

Even though the North won the decisive battles of the Civil War, forced the South to surrender and President Lincoln managed to pass the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, by which all slaves in areas of rebellion were declared forever free, their freedom was much more official than genuine. During Reconstruction Era, their lives did not change much in the South because they still were not treated equally. African –American freedom was limited by so-called black codes, which ensured certain rights to African -American people, but on the other hand, they also included many restrictions, and some of them even segregated African -American people from white, which later became one of the biggest racial issues in the United States of America. Moreover, Jim Crow laws further worsened the situation of the African American community. By Jim Crow laws and disfranchisement of African Americans, the African -American community was pushed away from the trades and their living conditions became unbearable. This kind of freedom was not the one the African Americans fought for in the Civil War, and thus many of them sought better living conditions and work opportunities in the North. However, even after moving North, many of them found themselves facing the same difficulties based on their skin color as in the South. Jobs were hard to find and their living conditions did not improve much.

One of the most significant African -American writers Langston Hughes decided to move northward to New York, where Harlem became a cultural and political center of the African -American community in the early 20th century. He started writing poems, and later, while being supported by a white female patron, he wrote his first novel *Not Without Laughter*. In 1934, the novel was followed by a collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks*. Both these works manage to depict many racial issues mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis.

In both of them the author makes sure that there's no doubt about the characters' skin color. Even though the main protagonist of the novel *Not Without Laughter*, Sandy, is of mixed origin, Lagston Hughes is not too concerned with the problem of mixed-race children and mulatto people in general. He makes several remarks on Sandy's, Jimboy's and Buster's ancestry but the main focus of the book is put elsewhere. In contrary, Hughes' collection of short stories *The Ways of White Folks* includes several short stories where race mixing becomes the main issue. On such examples, he manages to depict the attitudes of the white society towards people of mixed origin.

Apart from using Buster as an example of race-mixing, the author also uses his character to draw attention to passing for white. Even though the idea of passing for white is suggested in the novel, not much textual evidence is dedicated to the issue. Given that Buster is the only example of passing for white in *Not Without Laughter*, it can be concluded that there are other issues which the author is more interested in. As passing for white depends on race mixing, it is understandable that the collection of short stories is much more concerned with this phenomenon than the novel. In *The Ways of White Folks*, Langston Hughes depicts not only the fact that some African Americans tended to pass for white in order to gain better jobs and positions within the society, but also the consequences they had to face while doing so.

Another aspect of African American life that Hughes draws attention to in both his works is segregation. He manages to provide the reader with many examples of segregation including school, theater, graveyards or such events as Children's Day, and he also compares the practice of segregation of African -American people in the USA to the situation in Europe.

Without any doubts, both the works include remarks on African-American lifestyle, including the problem of jobs. Langston Hughes depict the situation of the African American in the USA by placing the small African-American characters' houses into a segregated African-American neighborhoods and he also intensifies the smallness of the houses by providing descriptions of big houses owned by white people. Apart from modest housing, majority of the African-American characters also occupy low-payed jobs, in which racial etiquette is expected. If the master-servant rules are violated, the characters face not only verbal assaults but also physical violence by their white masters or by white people who decide to take the punishment into their own hands. Considering physical violence, both *Not Without Laughter* and *The Ways of White Folks* include examples of physical attacks and lynching, but violence definitely prevails in the collection.

In *Not Without* Laughter, Langston Hughes also aims at the difference in attitudes of individual characters. He includes two main opposites by including Hager and Tempy. Hager, with her strong religiousness, conformism and hard-working personality, embodies the ideas of Booker T. Washington, whereas Tempy, with her act-like-white strategy and her passion for education as a means of uplifting the race, is rather Du-Bois-oriented. As the main character lives with both these characters, he cannot escape their influence. However, as he grows up, he himself comes across situations which shape his view of life in segregated America. Concerning the collection, none of the characters is influenced by Washington and Du Bois to such a great extend as Hager and Tempy, and thus these two characters remain the most significant representations of the opposing attitudes in the thesis.

In conclusion, if *Not Without Laughter* and *The Ways of White Folks* are compared, it is possible to find racial issues they both have in common, as well as those which are focused on in more detail in the first or in the second. However, when Langston Hughes' work is assessed as a whole, there is no doubt that the author aims at depiction of the tough life of the African-American community in the United States of America, including all its aspects, starting with being born as a mixed-race child and ending with being lynched and killed even for a crime a person does not commit and buried in a segregated graveyard.

As for their connection to Modernism, Harlem-Renaissance authors have been for a long time excluded from the discussion or considered failure, because they were commonly compared to the Anglo-American strand of Modernism, which was typically engaged in formal experimentation. However, it is the thematic focus, including political engagement and social critique, what, according to critics, can be considered a connection of the Harlem-Renaissance authors to non-canonical strands of Modernism and what is depicted in both the works. Apart from their thematic focus, scholars point out that it is the depiction of folk culture and use of vernacular through which such authors managed to express themselves in a modern way. As the textual evidence from both the collection and the novel shows, African-American vernacular is also depicted as an inseparable part of the colored life, with Hager being the most striking example.

However, as formal experimentation is usually considered non-typical of the authors of the Harlem Renaissance, the analysis concentrates on several aspects of such experimentation, based on selected criteria. Based on the analysis, the novel can be described as a coming-of-age novel narrated by an omniscient narrator, which realistically and chronologically depicts adolescence of an African-American boy, who finally creates an opinion on the world around him

at the end of the book. Even though several passages include stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse, the form of the novel is rather traditional. In contrary to the novel, the collection of short stories makes use of stream-of-consciousness technique and many different narrators, ranging from omniscient to effaced, opens some of the stories abruptly and leaves them unfinished, and does not always follow chronological order of events. Thus it is possible to say that the collection is more experimental in form than the novel. However, bearing in mind all that has been mentioned about Modernism in the entire thesis, it would take much deeper analysis to come to such conclusions which would allow me to label any of the two works Modernist.

RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce si klade za cíl analyzovat vybraná prozaická díla Langstona Hughese, jednoho z předních představitelů Harlemské renesance ve Spojených státech Amerických, s ohledem na situaci Amerických černochů a jejich postavení ve společnosti. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí, teoretické a praktické. Teoretická část práce podává stručný, avšak ucelený obraz o problematice Afro-Americké komunity v USA od období otroctví až do doby, do které vybraná díla spadají. Počátky otroctví jsou spojovány především se zemědělsky orientovaným Americkým jihem, kde byla poptávka po pracovní síle uspokojena právě za využití otroků.

Pracovní i životní podmínky otroků se lišily, ale jedno měli společné, a to, že jim bylo upíráno jedno z hlavních lidských práv – právo na svobodu. Od roku 1840 docházelo ve Spojených státech amerických k územní expanzi a vznikala tak nová teritoria, o něž měl zájem jak Americký sever, tak jih. Když byl do čela Republikánské strany zvolen Abraham Lincoln, který hlásal, že národ musí být jednotný v názoru na otroctví, americký jih, závislý na zemědělství, a tudíž i na otrocích jakožto pracovní síle, cítil obavu ze zrušení otroctví. V tomto okamžiku proti sobě stály dva naprosto protichůdné názory, které nakonec v roce 1861 vyvrcholily v konflikt známý pod názvem Americká občanská válka, v níž stála Unie proti Státům konfederace.

Občanská válka přinášela výhry i porážky oběma stranám, ale také první dílčí úspěchy v otázce zrušení otroctví, když byli v listopadu 1861 osvobozeni první otroci. Netrvalo však dlouho a protichůdné názory na zrušení otroctví se začaly nejen na jihu, ale také na severu USA, kde docházelo k pouličním nepokojům a lynčování Afro-Američanů, kteří byli obviňováni, že berou bílým Američanům práci. Z tohoto důvodu musel tehdejší prezident Lincoln postupovat při rušení otroctví opatrně, a proto na veřejnosti ve svých projevech stavěl záchranu Unie nad zrušení otroctví. Nakonec dosáhl žádaného výsledku a roku 1863 bylo podepsáno Prohlášení o osvobození otroků. Občanská válka však oficiálně skončila až porážkou Států konfederace 9. dubna 1865. Ve stejném roce bylo také 13. dodatkem Ústavy oficiálně zrušeno otroctví.

Konec války s sebou přinesl období rekonstrukce, které mělo za úkol nejen znovu začlenění bývalých Států konfederace do Unie, ale také vyřešení otázky, co s množstvím nově osvobozených bývalých otroků. Během tohoto období rekonstrukce byly zavedeny tzv. black codes, které vymezovaly nejen práva ale i určitá omezení pro Afro-Američany. Afro-Americké obyvatelstvo mohlo například uzavírat sňatky, ale pouze v rámci své rasy, mělo právo na vlastnictví majetku, ale nesmělo například vypovídat u soudu proti bělochům, což je důkazem

toho, že byla jejich svoboda nadále omezovaná a bylo jim upíráno rovnocenné občanství a ekonomická nezávislost. I přesto, že vypadala situace po smrti A. Lincolna nadějně, nakonec bylo Afro-Američanům odejmuto právo volit a pomocí tvz. zákonů Jima Crowa byli segregováni na nejrůznějších místech, jako například v divadlech, školách, parcích, na hřbitovech apod. Segregace a odejmutí práva volit vytlačila Afro-Americké obyvatelstvo z obchodu a vytvořila z nich podřadné občany, kteří se vzhledem k tíživým životním podmínkám rozhodli odejít na americký sever, který sliboval lepší pracovní i životní podmínky. Realita však často nenaplňovala očekávání Afro-Amerického obyvatelstva a nadále byli utlačováni bělošským obyvatelstvem, segregováni, či dokonce verbálně či fyzicky napadáni.

Díky tomuto přílivu Afro-Amerického obyvatelstva vznikaly na severu Spojených Států Afro-Americké čtvrti, například Harlem v New Yorku, kam přicházeli další Afro-Američané i po První světové válce. Harlem se stal kulturním a politickým centrem Afro-Americké komunity a dal vzniknout hnutí známému pod názvem Harlemská renesance. Jedním z nejznámějších autorů patřících do tohoto hnutí byl Langston Hughes, jehož román *Not Without Laughter* a sbírka povídek *The Ways of White Folks* jsou předmětem analýzy této diplomové práce. Sám autor byl Afro-amerického původu a jeho román je zčásti autobiografický. Sám však ve své autobiografii *The Big Sea* přiznává, že postavy v onom románu jsou fiktivní, jelikož chtěl vytvořit obraz typické Afro-Americké rodiny, což ta jeho nebyla. Při psaní *Not Without Laughter* byl Hughes podporován běůlošskou patronkou, která mu hradila veškeré výdaje, aby se mohl plně věnovat psaní. Byla to právě Charlotte O. Mason, kdo se snažil vést Hughese k tzv. primitivismu v jeho díle. Publikace románu *Not Without Laughter*, ke kterému měla jeho patronka výhrady a cenzurovala jej, nakonec vedla k ukončení jejich vztahu patron-chráněnec.

Hlavním hrdinou románu je Sandy, který žije se svou matkou Annjee a babičkou Hager. Mezi další hlavní postavy patří Sandyho otec Jimboy, teta Harriet, teta Tempy a Sandyho přátelé. Na jejich postavách a situacích, ve kterých se ocitají, autor poukazuje na problémy, kterým museli Afro-Američané čelit na začátku 20. století. Ve 30 kapitolách se věnuje problematice pracovních příležitostí pro černochy, jejich finančnímu ohodnocení, chování jejich nadřízených, životních podmínek Afro-Američanů, všudypřítomné segregaci a slovnímu i fyzickému násilí. Autor také zmiňuje praxi Afro-Američanů, kteří těžili z toho, že jsou zčásti potomky bělochů, a díky svému vzhledu tak mohli využít možnosti vydávat se za bílé, a získat tak lepší postavení ve společnosti. Toto téma však není v románu natolik výrazné jako ve sbírce povídek *The Ways of White Folks.* Více pozornosti je věnováno problematice pracovních příležitostí, životního stylu a segregace, a v neposlední řadě také na přístup jednotlivých postav ke svému postavení ve společnosti. V tomto

ohledu jsou v příběhu nejvýraznější postavy Hager a Tempy. Postava Hager reflektuje myšlenkami B. T. Washingtona, který prosazoval metodu industriálního vzdělání a umírněného přístupu, jež by měl přispět k postupu Afro-Americké rasy na úroveň bílé. Svoboda by dle jeho přístupu neměla být vymáhána okamžitě. Hager je ukázkou přizpůsobení se dané situaci bez ohledu na podmínky, ve kterých je nucena žít i pracovat. Postava Tempy, naopak, zosobňuje myšlenky W. E. B. Du Bois, který prosazoval komplexní vzdělání jakožto nástroj pozdvihnutí rasy a volal po svobodě a rovnosti pro Afro-Americké občany.

Ve sbírce povídek *The Ways of White Folks* se autor opět vrací k problematice pracovních příležitostí, životních podmínek, segregaci i násilí. Přístupy jednotlivých postav k jejich postavení ve společnosti však nejsou natolik výrazné jako v románu *Not Without Laughter*. Ve sbírce povídek je naopak více pozornosti věnováno problematice míchání ras a dětí, které z takových vztahů vzešly, i jejich postavení ve společnosti. Autor mimo jiné ve sbírce také vyobrazuje více postav míšenců, kteří se rozhodli obětovat kontakt se svou rodinou či přáteli za cenu lepšího postavení ve společnosti, které získávají vydáváním se za bílé. Vezmeme-li v úvahu slovní a fyzické násilí a problematiku lynčování Afro-Amerického obyvatelstva, zdá se, že je to právě sbírka povídek, která se na tento aspekt života Afro-Amerického obyvatelstva ve Spojených státech amerických zaměřuje více než autorův román *Not Without Laughter*. Shrneme-li obě autorova díla, lze konstatovat, že Langston Hughes ve svém prozaickém díle věrně zachycuje mnohé aspekty života Afro-Američanů v americké společnosti na začátku 20. století.

Kromě rasové tématiky je též část práce zaměřena na Modernismus a formální stránku děl. Teoretická část se věnuje tomu, jak bylo k otázce Modernismu přistupováno ve 20. století a jaký je jeho vztah k tvorbě Harlemské renesance. Upozorňuje, že byla Harlemská renesance často v diskuzi o Modernismu opomíjena či úplně vynechána, což bylo dle mnohých autorů způsobeno tendencí kritiků srovnávat díla autorů Harlemské renesance s díly Anglo-Amerických modernistů, se kterými měli málo společného, zejména s jejich experimentálním přístupem k literatuře. Teoretická část práce proto pojednává o různých proudech v rámci Modernismu a ve svém závěru definuje kritéria pro analýzu děl v praktické části práce. Jelikož je modernismus velice široký pojem a množství znaků, kterými se vyznačuje, je rovněž velmi rozsáhlé, pozornost je věnována zejména postavě vypravěče a jeho spolehlivosti, zobrazení toku myšlenek postav a s tím spojeným tzv. free indirect discourse, chronologii jednotlivých událostí v obou dílech, a v neposlední řadě také problematice náhlých začátků a otevřených konců prozaických děl.

Srovnáme-li obě prozaická díla na základě kritérií, která byla stanovena v teoretické části práce, sbírka povídek má k formálnímu experimentování blíže než román *Not Without Laughter*. Navzdory tomu, že je v románu možné narazit na volný tok myšlenek jednotlivých postav i na tzv. free indirect discourse, lze konstatovat, že je román realistickým vyobrazením života dospívajícího Afro-Amerického chlapce Sandyho ve světě segregace a útlaku, který respektuje chronologické pořadí událostí. Ve sbírce povídek využívá autor všech výše zmíněných modernistických technik, přičemž v povídkách s názvy *Home, Read-Headed Baby* a *Father and Son* jsou tyto modernistické prvky nejvýraznější.

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