### The Harlem Renaissance: Comparing Two Poems

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| **“America” by Claude McKay**  Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,  And sinks into my throat her tiger’s tooth,  Stealing my breath of life, I will confess  I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.  Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,  Giving me strength erect against her hate,  Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.  Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,  I stand within her walls with not a shred  Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.  Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,  And see her might and granite wonders there,  Beneath the touch of Time’s unerring hand,  Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.  Source: Claude McKay, "America" from Liberator (Dec. 1921) | **“I, Too” by Langston Hughes**  I, too, sing America.  I am the darker brother.  They send me to eat in the kitchen  When company comes,  But I laugh,  And eat well,  And grow strong.  Tomorrow,  I’ll be at the table  When company comes.  Nobody’ll dare  Say to me,  “Eat in the kitchen,”  Then.  Besides,  They’ll see how beautiful I am  And be ashamed—  I, too, am America.    Source: Langston Hughes, “I, Too” from Collected Poems. Copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. |

**Comparing “I, Too” and “America”**

**Content**: In your own words, what is each text saying?

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| “I, Too” by Langston Hughes | “America” by Claude McKay |

**(Graphic organizer continued onto next page)**

**Textual Evidence**: Provide specific examples of language (word choices and connotation) that supports your understanding of the poem’s main idea. Consider how those choices reveal the tone of the poem.

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| “I, Too” by Langston Hughes | “America” by Claude McKay |

**Similarities**: How are these texts similar, connected or related? How are they alike, whether in terms of subject matter, theme, purpose, tone, etc.? What specific lines and details echo each other or connect?

**Differences**: How are the two different—again, in terms of subject matter, theme, purpose, tone or anything else? Where do they “disagree”?

**The Two Texts Together**: How does reading the two together make you see or understand things you might not if you read them separately?

**Questions and Reactions**: What questions or reactions do these texts and their content raise for you?

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