Poetry Analysis || “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” Kolin Krewinkel

Period 3/4

In, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” Langston Hughes uses imagery to convey his thoughts on his African-American ancestry. For instance, he says, “I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.” In this quote, it’s clear to see that Langston views what Lincoln did for the South brought hope to many African-Americans. In addition, it showed that he, or his ancestry, were there when the times were worst for his people, and when conditions improved. Along with this, Langston also states, “I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.” With this, Hughes is implying that his ancestry built great things in the past. As a result, he has great pride in himself and his heritage; his confidence is unwavering even under the tough conditions he now must face in America. With examples such as these, Hughes is able to give the reader a crystal clear image of his views on African-American ancestry.