

Judgment and Rating of Jury

GRADE A

1. Langston Hughes (Reappointment Group 14) Mr. Bontemps unhesitatingly rates this candidate as the number one literary contestant. Mr. Hughes, however, has changed his plan of work and Mr. Bontemps' comments on the new plan will be sent later.
2. Claude McKay (Group 30) Claude is an exasperating individual: a) he is sour and cantankerous; b) he never seems to do the writing of which he is capable.

I doubt that a fellowship will help him, but one must admit a) that he is a gifted writer, at his best, b) that his references are of the best, c) that he projects a fascinating book, and d) that his talents are perfectly suited to this work.

But Claude has recently done a poor job on his book "Harlem", failed in a re-write job on "They Knew Lincoln", and I doubt that he's putting much heart in his work. I hope I'm wrong. Maybe a fellowship will revive him. God knows he needs the money.

GRADE B

1. Owen Dodson (Group 30) This boy has won the attention of a number of people, some of them top-notch. He has shown real promise. Indeed, of all the hopeful playwrights among young Negroes, he seems to be the most likely to succeed.

On the other hand! His project is silly: epic drama in newspaper style. There is no reason to think he could bring it off.

In general, he is on the "arty" side. Now, here is the fellow who ought to live in a sharecropper's hut and hobnob with people.

He'd be a good risk if he promised to get down off his high horse and try to simply write for the stage. Why he must try to out-do Homer I can't see.

Yet I want to be among those who recognize his promise.

GRADE C

1. Maggie Coleman Rodriguez (Group 30) Horace Cayton knows Mrs. Rodriguez better than any of her other references and I agree with his estimate of her application. No soap.

GENERAL COMMENT

Hughes, McKay, and Dodson, in my opinion, rate consideration - none of the other three (two not sent to Committee). Hughes is miles ahead of the other two, everything considered, but Dodson is a prospect, and McKay used to be sort of a genius.