

Race, Class and Society in Select Novels of Mark Twain: A Study

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Abstract

The Article is all about the class and social conflicts that happens during the period of Mark Twain and his childhood and adulthood later he gives his works related to race and conflicts happened during the his age and during his childhood with more adventures and related work towards the kids which leads the readers to go with the flow of the work where their childish nature comes to reborn within them when they read. This Article deals with Mark Twain's Introduction and then the growth and development of American novels, then comes the Mark Twain and his contemporary writers, and Mark Twain's life history and then it deals with Mark Twain's works, finally to conclusion which gives the whole outlet of the article. The themes are search for Identity, the Quest for freedom, moral crisis, slavery, violence, superstition, corruption on both political and social background, blindness over religion and laws and people over power and more fantasy which makes the readers more interest to read the novels. His works gives us the reality of the society with some fantasy in it which all emotions of people are connected in different ways.

Keyword: Class, Race, Adventure, Fantasy, Slavery, Law and order, Religious belief, Power and Social discrimination.

Introduction

The work gives the Racism and class discrimination that happens in his novel with more adventure with child protagonist and where he struggle to fit in the society which has built with more restriction and orders which are favour for one sided people and where the other have to accept it without any belief towards the orders and law. Mark Twain is a pen-name adopted by Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Twain's work has become more realistic portraits of life and time he has immortalized the lifestyle of the people of Mississippi and its landscapes. Where all kinds of people live, the rich, poor, upper class, lower class, homeless, and more on and on.

The Growth and Development of American Novels

It all started after the Colonial period. The early 1600s when the Colonial started the people of Colonial age are mostly concern about the living of the society. The very first writer who became famous is John Smith who wrote about the history of Virginia in 1608. Then comes Nathaniel Ward and John Winthrop who wrote about the religious believe in order to bring the people together in the colonial age. Then comes "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up" by Anne Bradstreet which was known as the first American poetry collection though it was published in England.

In 1776 the United States declared Independence and that's the time where new American poetry and fictions were originated that's where the journals started to emerge, The Federalist Papers by John Jay and James Madison were more concern about the political status of America. The first American Novel was written by William Hill brown which was published in 1789 called "The Power of Sympathy". Then comes the short story in 1800s such as Rip Van Winkle and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

Then comes the Romantic period between 1830 and 1870 which includes writers such as Edger Allan Poe who has taken poetry to next level where he discuss about death which plays a vital role in his poetry like "The Raven" and "Alone" and more on. Then comes Walt Whitman who gave the new version of poetry where people saw the value of nature through his work.

Then when the Civil war arise in 1850s the work of writers are more related to war and seclusion and genocide and slavery etc., Emily Dickinson's poetry are prime example of this period "Because I could not stop for Death", "My Life has stood – a Loaded Gun" are examples of pre -war and post war poetry. First African American play was published by William Wells Brown called "The Escape" in 1858.

Contemporary Writers of Mark Twain

William Dean Howells and Henry James were Twain's two most important contemporaries. Twain and James expressed distaste toward each other during their period but they never expressed their dislike in public, they have an indirect attack between themselves. They both have their own way of emerging literary realism. On the other hand William Dean Howells and Twain had a good relationship with each other. Harriet Beecher Stowe, another contemporary who lived next to his house. The writers of their period used to hang out in her house, her literary works are more related to slavery and poverty and social discrimination. Howells viewed realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material."

Howells was a Christian socialist and he idealized Leo Tolstoy and his works. He joined a Christian socialist group in Boston and attended several churches, including the First Spiritual Temple. Which lead him to view the society in socialist manners.

Mark Twains Work

Mark Twain's famous works are *The Gilded Age* in 1873 which he wrote in collaboration with his Hartford neighbour Charles Dudley Warner, which gives the political corruption that started with the Grant administration in 1869 and prevailed into the 1870s and beyond where we can see the growth of American culture and society which is called "The Glided Age".

Then comes "Adventures of Tom Sawyer" which deals with Tom, Joe, Huck and their friendship, imagination, truth, and fantasy where they create their own world of adventures which make them free from the real world of laws and orders and restrictions. The bond between them allows them to overcome the obstacles they undergo and the trust with each other saves them from trouble.

Twain gives "The adventures of Huckleberry Finn" in 1884. This work gives us the theme of slavery and racism through the characters called Huck and Jim. Both Huck and Jim struggles for freedom but in a different ways. Huck from his father and Jim from slavery, then comes the "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", "The Tragedy

of Pudd'n head Wilson", "The Mysterious Stranger" etc., are more notable works of Mark Twain which gives the theme of race, class, poverty, social discrimination in the society.

Conclusion

Mark Twain gives his work with more interesting value to the people of the society with more reality and some fantasy to it to make the readers more interesting. He usually uses the theme race and class difference in his work because during and after his childhood he has watched the people suffer from class and race discrimination and this stands over his head and this made him to write novels and stories which are related to suppression of people and slavery where he tries to give the best version of his thoughts to the readers and deliver it more interesting manners. His works give value of people and society and how they must behave one another rather than finding differences within themselves.

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