

Race Racism and Social Inequality in the United States

Posted on September 19, 2019

Historical Foundations of Race and Social Inequality

Since the establishment of the United States of America, it has faced several problems and issues regarding different diversified populations. Race is a symbol that identifies the cultural and ethnic heritage of the people and differentiates them from others. The most significant issue is racism, which nourished the country with the arrival of black slaves from the country of Africa in the past centuries.

Different influential people bought slaves from Africa and transferred them to the United States for the labour force. People started to buy black slaves for their work, primarily related to agriculture. Influential people are the white people in the United States, who are considered superior human beings due to their cultural and ethical heritage, which distinguishes them from other people. The structure of the society applied many boundaries on women, and she was considered the property of her husband. Lower-class people in the country were also the ones who were considered poor, and due to their social status, they were mistreated. African Americans, lower-class people and women in the past centuries of the United States faced numerous troubles, hardships, hatred, societal boundaries and difficulties for their survival.

Slavery and Racial Oppression

The powerful white people bought the black slaves and used them for their work. Black slaves were treated as servants, and most people treated them like animals. Their masters were allowed to beat them and punish them with or without any specific reason. The black slaves served their masters for many centuries and accepted their status in the society of the United States. The masters of the slaves abused their slaves and used them for anything, like they tortured the kids of the slaves and abused their wives. It was the darkest era of the country, where no one was able to fight for the black slaves. The slaves were responsible for any task their master assigned them, and they had to do it. Most people used their slaves for agricultural and labour purposes. Most slaves were responsible for the fieldwork at the farms and grew the fields for their masters. In return, they received average food and some clothes to wear. The clothes were designed in a manner that distinguishes them from their masters. They were not allowed to make any decisions, and their masters treated them as animals, which made the black slaves vulnerable and miserable.

The rape of female Negroes was not considered an 'issue' because it was considered the right of their white master. It was one of the pathetic realities of American society that female slaves were found only a body to be used or assaulted, not a soul or a person. Thousands of children born in that period never knew their fathers and spent their lives without any father's name. Children of slaves were separated inhumanly from their mothers at a very early age (1-4 years of age). In 5-6 years, the child is in absolute need of his/her mother and her care. But the fierce wind of racism and bondage covered everything around. It is even more barbaric that child slaves were preferred as compared to adult slaves. It was because of this that children were more comfortable being tamed and trained and agreed to do whatever the master wanted. On the other hand, adults are more prone to show resistance. Numerous slaves fought for their rights and started to demand the states for their national citizenship. The white people never wanted to grant United States citizenship to the black slaves, so they started to give them some rights, such as being allowed to get married legally. (Crenshaw, 1989) But the black slaves deserved more and never stopped their fight for their rights. Numerous movements were initiated in the era of industrial development by the slaves and were affected by international war scenarios, which impacted the country in the 18th and 19th eras.

Emancipation and the Continuing Struggle for Equality

Many black heroes arose for the black slaves and consistently devoted their lives to ending the slavery era for the slave people. Several efforts and devotion of numerous people won one day when Abraham Lincoln became the President of the United States. He was a true hero for black people and took several initiatives for the rights of black slaves. He faced so much trouble when he started the initiative to grant certain rights to black people. He faced problems and issues but consistently fought for his people. He was the initiator of the movement which ended the slavery era in the United States. Many states of the country accepted the law that ended the slavery system, and no one was allowed to make black people their slaves.

The ending of the slavery era was the greatest achievement for the black people. However, the issues and problems between the white and black people were not resolved. White people never wanted to accept the status of black people, and they never wanted to give them equality. This raised numerous issues within the country, including the equality movements raised by black people. The United States Constitution granted the right of citizenship to black people, and it was another huge accomplishment for black people. The black slaves became African Americans and gained all the rights of the national citizens of the country. The African Americans were now free from their miserable and painful life, but most white citizens of the country never accepted them as equals.

The problems and issues were not ended for the African Americans, and they gained no respect from most citizens of the country. The white people never accepted the black people as equal to them due to their cultural and ethnic heritage. The white people wanted to dominate the country but were

unable to succeed and started to dominate the African Americans. The African Americans were successful in accomplishing the goal of equal rights and opportunities but were unable to remove hatred from the hearts of the people.

Gender Inequality in The Yellow Wallpaper

Numerous historians wrote about the history of women in the past, including the boundaries that were placed on women. The book, “Yellow Wallpaper” written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman published in 1999 in the United States. The main and primary focus of the book is to show the status of women in the society. She was not allowed to refuse their husbands and had to accept every order given by them. The story revolves around a lady who was mentally unstable, and her husband shifted her into a small room when she was diagnosed with some mental issues. Her husband showed her that he cared for her and wanted to recover her as soon as possible. But in reality, he took the wrong steps, which made his wife more miserable. He shifted her into a small room, and she was only allowed to rest. When she started writing something, her husband found out and refused her to write. She is mostly alone and wonders why she is here and why she is forbidden from the world. In her room, there was a yellow poster, and she started to imagine that on the poster, there was a woman who was lonely and wanted to be free.

She was just like a bird; she wanted freedom and to escape from the cage. She was considering her own condition in the form of another woman. She became miserable with the time and loneliness, but she was not allowed to argue with her husband or question his orders. Her misery, mental status, and loneliness lead her to more vulnerability, and in the end, she goes mad completely. She tears up the yellow wallpaper to free the woman inside it. The story shows the status of women at the end of the 20th-century era. She is vulnerable, and her husband makes her more miserable by locking her in a room where she is mostly alone. It shows the obedience of a woman in any condition of her husband and the cruelty of the husband towards his wife. (Collins, 2000) It also represents the several boundaries of society regarding women.

Racial Inequality in A Raisin in the Sun

Another important story discusses the status of the African Americans named, “A Raisin in the Sun” written by Lorraine Hansberry. The story revolves around an African American family consisting of one mother with a son and his wife also a daughter. The four family members loved each other very much. They received a huge amount of money from the insurance company regarding the father’s life insurance policy. Everyone started to see a dream regarding their wishes. Mother wanted to spend the money to buy a house, but the house she chose was in a society of white people. The white people offer them more money to stay away from their society. The son of the mother wanted to spend the money to buy a liquor store with his friend, but his friend cheated on him and lost the cash. It shows that American society was filled with trouble for African Americans. White people never

wanted the black family in their regions. The attitude of the white citizens towards the African Americans makes them depressed, and they consider themselves less superior to the white people.

The problems and issues faced by the African Americans made them depressed, and most often, they were involved in crimes and criminal activities to reduce their depression and return the hatred and ignorance of the white people. The criminal activities of the black people made them worse in front of the white people, and they never trusted the African Americans just due to the high rates of their criminal activities. The main issue is not the criminal nature of the African Americans but the ignorance, hatred, and pain received by the white people.

Class Inequality in Recitatif

Another story named, “Recitatif” written by [Toni Morrison](#) based on the story of two friends. One was black, and the other was white, and both loved each other. The story revolves around the problems and issues of the lower-class people who had to fight for their survival in the societies. The story shows the inequality and ignorance faced by the lower class people and their place in society. There were numerous problems for African Americans, lower-class people, and women. The powerful people were always considered the most reputable ones in society, whereas the lower-class people made efforts and fought for their survival throughout their lives.

Conclusion

The African Americans, lower class people, and women’s status in the past histories were mostly based on misery and vulnerability. African Americans, lower-class people and women in the past centuries of the United States faced numerous troubles, hardships, hatred, societal boundaries and difficulties for their survival.

References

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), Article 8. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/>

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
<https://www.routledge.com/Black-Feminist-Thought/Collins/p/book/9780415964722>