
Views of Race And Inequality: Blacks And Whites Are Worlds Apart

Research has shown that about four-in-ten blacks are doubtful that the United States will ever achieve racial equality (Pew Research Center). This clears any benefit of the doubt that doubts that racial inequality has powerfully shaped American history from its beginnings.

Americans like to think of the founding of the American colonies and, later, the United States, as driven by the quest for freedom – initially, religious liberty and the political and economic liberty. From the start, American society was equally founded on brutal forms of domination, inequality, and oppression which involved the absolute denial of freedom for slaves. This is one of the great paradoxes of American history – how could the ideals of equality and liberty coexist with slavery? We live with the ramifications of that paradox even today.

In the Strive for their voices to be heard, blacks have made significant headways in the post-civil right age, socially, politically and economically. But amid all these progress, though persistent and troubling issues of poverty, crime, and unemployment, divorce persisted.

This is revealed starkly in the statistics on executions for rape by race in the period before the 1960s.

Between 1930-1960, an average of 25 (the least number is five) black men were executed annually for rape in the United States, nearly all in the South, whereas for whites the numbers were never more than 4 and in most years zero or 1.

Racism was a system of plain legal renunciation of equality to people based on their race in the United States until the 1960s.

The Harlem Renaissance

The dictionary defines the word “renaissance” simply as a “cultural rebirth,” or simply put, ‘a rebirth’ or ‘a revival.’ But in this context, the Harlem Renaissance was merely used to mean the rebirth or revival of the African- American Art. The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural, social, and artistic explosion, a blossom in African-American life, and most importantly, an African-American cerebral reawakening.

The Harlem Renaissance was also narrowly allied with the New Negro Movement. The Negro

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Movement was more concerned and associated with the creation of a renewed American identity as it was with the departure from the old. The New Negro Movement was an exertion to describe what it meant to be African-American by African-Americans themselves.

The New Negro Movement ignited arguments and considerations about the affiliation between race and art.

The Civil Right Era

Lee Rainwater and William Yancey debated that “The year 1965 may be known in history as the time when civil rights movement was discovered, in the sense of becoming explicitly aware, that abolishing legal racism would not produce Negro equality”.

During the 1970s, there was an eruption of literary activity in African-American literature: about twenty-five novels, major dramatic works, and volumes of poetry were released. This incident has been referred to by some critics the beginning of the second renaissance of black women’s writing, whereas others consider this moment as the advent of black literary postmodernism (Dubey and Goldberg 566-617). Also during the late 1970s, Two influential books titled *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (1968) and *The Black Aesthetic* (1971) were published which encompassed the work of creative artists and intellectuals who devoted themselves to constructing artistic and cultural works to black audiences. The list is long, but summarily, Statistics has revealed that the United States had approximately 8935 black officeholders as at 2000. This was a progressive increase for the black Americans.

Over time, the civil rights movement gained significantly and noticeable greater national support than it had earlier. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Federal Government began to support these efforts, consequential in the landmark civil rights legislation of the middle 1960s. The mainstream of artists of the Black Arts Movement appealed to the specificity of African-American art, proposed aesthetic separatism, sponsored a nationalistic approach to literature, beheld art as a weapon, and had intentions to withdraw from the dialogue with White society.

The bulk of this kind of writing is permeated with race pride. The contributors of the two anthologies included such prominent Black Arts era figures as Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Ed Bullins, Don L. Lee, Gwendolyn Brooks, and others (Daina).

Men like Benjamin Quarles (1904-96) had a significant impact on the teaching of African-American history. Quarles and John Hope provided a bridge between the work of historians in historically black colleges, such as Woodson, and the black history that is now well established in mainline universities. In the 21st century, black history is regarded as mainstream. Since proclamation by President Jimmy Carter, it is celebrated every February in the United States

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during “Black History Month.” Proponents of Black History believe that it promotes diversity, develops self-esteem, and corrects myth and stereotypes, although there is some argument against it.

Also, the birth of several contemporary African-American (Black) women writers like Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, continued with several central themes in African-American women’s literary tradition as female friendship, exploration of and discovery of identity and community, racial oppression and sexual violence, the importance of ancestry. In 1993, Toni Morrison won a Nobel Prize. She employed several themes which include the experiences of black women, female friendship, motherhood, clashes between blacks and whites, a black man’s violence, his irresponsibility, immorality, black racism, black people’s inferiority complex, and thus their acceptance of the models of white society and stereotypes forced on them (Daina). This economic and political awakening of numerous artistic voices had consequential effect and had led to the limelight Political icons like Jesse Jackson (Civil right leader), Douglas Wilby (The First African American Governor of United States of America), Moseley-Braun in 1992 (First black woman elected to the United States Senate), to mention a few.

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