



RACIAL INTERDEPENDENCE IN ERNEST J.GAINES' A LESSON BEFORE DYING

M.Rajalakshmi* Dr. C. Govindaraj** R. Lissy***

*M. Phil Research Scholar, Dept of English, Sri Vidya Mandir Arts & Science College, Uthangarai, T.N.

**Associate Professor, Dept of English, Periyar University PG Ext. Centre, Dharmapuri. T.N.

***Assistant Professor, Dept of English, Sri Vidya Mandir Arts & Science College, Uthangarai, T.N.

Abstract

A recurring theme throughout Gaines novel is the search for dignity and masculine identity in a hostile, racist environment. As he points out in an interview, the major conflict in my work is when the black male attempts to go beyond the line that is drawn for him. Although he consistently celebrates the pride and dignity of African Americans, he has often been criticized by black writer who feel that his work do not adequately portray the harsh realities of black life.

Key Words: Racist Environment, Dignity, Pride, Harsh Realities.

Introduction

The women that surround Grant in *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines are all catalysts for his eventual change away from the bitterness and doubts. Without Miss Emma or Tante Lou, it seems natural to conclude that Grant would have stagnated in his despair and spent his life feeling angry and irritable. However, since Emma and Tante Lou force Grant to go visit Jefferson and keep him motivated to stick with the task they've assigned him, they can be said to be the real force in the novel—rather than Grant. The role of women in *A Lesson Before Dying* is quite significant as they are the foundations of community and family. Vivian, while an equal force in Grant's eventual change in attitude that constitutes a form of double consciousness in *A Lesson before Dying* by Ernest Gaines and seems to have a different effect. While Grant tends many times to shy away from interaction with his aunt and Emma throughout *A Lesson Before Dying*, and even in one of the most important events in *A Lesson Before Dying* he finally opens up to Vivian at the end and admits his weakness by laying his weary head in her lap. The metaphorical sense as well. Even though he part of the Tante Lou, Miss Emma, and Vivian's lives, he seems to be only there in presence rather than in spirit. The first half of *A Lesson Before Dying* shows Grant always separating himself from the women in his life and the small gestures he makes of what he feels to be his "apartness" seem like they are keenly felt among these women, even if the author doesn't delve too deeply into these women's psyches and inner thoughts.

Changes in Social and Legal Status

The social and legal status of blacks has changed in the south. But for most of the novel the characters act as they would have years ago with the blacks awaiting fix and the lynch mob. Luke will and his crew except the blacks not to fight back. However times have changed. When sheriff mapes finds out that Fix is not coming to the plantation. He laughs. The sheriff finally sees that he and the other old man have been acting as if it was early in the century. Instead of the late 1970s, The civil rights movement has come and gone. Salt and pepper are demonstrating racial harmony on the food ball field. Social relation between whites and blacks has changed and the character should act accordingly.

The final courtroom trial affirms of the altered legal status of the race in the south. All of the defendants are tried together and all of them receive the same penalty. This equitable trial stands in sharp contrast to the legacy of racially biased legality in the South. By the end of the novel, everyone knows that the race more fairly seem to legally co-exist. At first grant seem to resent this but as he too grows more rooted in the community he begins to understand his aunt and Miss Emma and related to them as he should.

His relationship with Vivian leads to a more earnest commitment to particular human being for after she becomes pregnant with his child grant's relationship to the entire community gradually changes. As Vivian is forced by the terms of her divorce to remain within visiting distance of her ex-husband, Grant is now also tied to the area. His dream of escaping the south perhaps is moving back to California replaced by the necessity to remain and to change the social conditions of a specific place.

Again even though these positive changes are taking place amidst the backdrop of a horrible execution the women is Grant's life have made this tolerable by showing him that he did by helping Jefferson was right. When grant is finally able to let go of his experiences with the women in his life and how they connect to Jefferson and his community, he lays his head in Vivian's lap which is a sign that then teacher has finally learned a lesson.



Racial Interdependence

The existence of racial interdependence is mostly obvious seen with the combination of salt and pepper. The success of these two players relies on their cooperation with one another. If Cal, the fullback, did not support Gil, the halfback, the duo would fail. Their need for joint playing is a metaphor for the entire south and in fact, the entire country. The races need to work together for everyone to be successful.

Working separately will not allow for success in football or in American society. Cal and Gil will become All American players due to their cooperative effort. Similarly the united State of America will become more truly all Americana if race fairly work together and are equally appreciated for the roles that each of them play.

Conclusion

Ultimately, it is story about finding both physical and psychological plays a role in lesson. The novel is set in the fictional community of Louis land in the pre civil Right south much of the beauty and power. But that doesn't mean they are not universal people write about what they know best and readers respond to that wherever they happen to live.

Gaines work his magic in several ways through his meticulous attention to detail his focus on local colour such as regional language, culture, and foods and his faithful rendition of conversations. He has said about himself that he is not a storyteller he simply records conversations.

Work Cited

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