

Final Exam Essay #2.

In this class, we have looked at the literature of 4 different literary periods: Native-American; Puritan; Enlightenment; Romantic (consider *Moby Dick* in the Romantic period). Choose **ONE** subject or trend in early American literature and explain how that subject evolved or was treated in **THREE** of those literary periods. Be sure to clearly define the subject or trend and **be sure to cite specific works that we have read or looked at in class and at least one specific example from each those works** to support your answer.

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Throughout this semester we have read many different stories ranging from many different literary periods. These literary periods include the Native-American, Puritan, Enlightenment, and the Romantic periods. Over these many different periods that we have studied there is one subject that has kept been written about and discussed. Slavery has been discussed in almost every literary period that we have studied this semester.

In the Native-American literary period we are briefly given a hind site of slavery in the story Mishosha, or the Magician and His Daughters. In this story the older brother set out with his younger brother to try and find a way to survive. While the older brother was trying to retrieve an arrow in the water “an old man sitting in the center [of the canoe], seized the affright ed youth, and placed him in the canoe” (1424, Mishosha). As the story progresses the old man keeps telling the older brother what to do. For example, the old man told the older brother “come, my son, I have a mind to gather gulls eggs” (1425). Any time the older brother was required to go do a task the old man went along as well. In other words, slavery was just starting out and the old man was not sure how to treat his slave. Although, the older brother is eventually able to out smart the old man the older brother was indeed captured and was forced to do these task. In this literary period slavery was just beginning to take form and in the literary periods after the Native-American periods slavery would hit full force.

In the Puritan literary period we are given a better view of how slavery evolved in this time period. By looking at the story The Journal of Madam Knight we are able to see how slavery has changed since the Native-American days. This story talks a few times about slaves. For example,

“there are a great plenty of Oysters all along by the sea side, as far as I Rode in the Colony, and those very good. And they Generally lived very well and comfortably in their families. But too Indulgent (especially ye farmers to their slaves: suffering too great familiarity from them, permitting them to sit at Table and eat (as they say to save time,) and into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand” (594, Knight).

In other words Madam Knight was talking bad about the white men and black men sharing anything. So, from the Native-American period to the Puritan period slavery has evolved in to something from

one event happening to hundreds to thousands of people were kept as slaves to do the work. Another time in the literary writing periods that helped changed slavery was the Enlightenment.

In the Enlightenment literary period we are given an even bigger picture of what slavery has evolved into since the Native-American period. In the story about Olaudah Equiano it takes a new approach to how a work is conveyed on slaves. In this story it was the first time that a slave written a first hand account about their stay in slavery. In this story Equiano talks about the treatment that himself and other slaves went through. For example, in this story Equiano was captured and taken as a slave while near his home in Africa. He was captured with some other family members and they were all sold to different slave owners. Throughout this story the Equiano was sold a few times amongst different slave owners. In other words, in the enlightenment period the slaves were now at a point where they were captured, tortured, and beaten and then resold over and over again to different slave owners. Luckily for Equiano, he was able to buy his way to freedom. However, slavery has come a long way during these three different literary periods.

During this semester we have read many different stories from many different literary periods. While reading these stories from the different literary periods we have studied many different subjects that have been talked about in all of the literary period. Slavery was one of the main subjects that was discussed in almost all of the literary periods that we discussed this semester. Over this semester we have seen how slavery has evolved over many different literary periods.

Works Cited

Knight, Sarah Kemble. "The Journal of Madam Knight." The Heath Anthology of American Literature Volume A. Ed. Paul Lauter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 585-602.

"Mishosha, or the Magician and His Daughters." The Heath Anthology of American Literature Volume B. Ed. Paul Lauter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 1423-1428.