Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

 **Race Relations in the 1950s and Now**

The Civil Rights Movement that continued for ages indicated the blatant and uneven gulf between two very dissimilar races. Back in the1950s African Americans had no rights at all. It was the time of huge conflict and black discrimination was at its peak. Every day there was an incident of racial discrimination. They could not live life as a normal white person would live. They were abused beaten up, called rude names, and were treated like trash all because of their skin color. Same was the case with other races besides African Americans. African Americans had been fighting for centuries but could not achieve anything. They would live every day in the fear of white Americans and had so many sanctions. The main reason behind the change was that the segregation became part of American life. The change affected the life of white people which caused an outburst in them. The gulf between the two races was so huge that even they had different music that was not mixed. The 1950s sparked off a necessity from the black people to get equality with the white people.

In the year 1964 when the Civil rights acts were passed, only 18 percent of the white people reported that they had a black friend. The play Fences written by Augustan Wilson portrays a picture of a world of black people who have to fight with the white for their rights and also they have to bear their own sufferings. Alan Nadel in his Book writes that Craig Werner views Wilson's plays like a call for the new responses to the jazz possibilities of Afro-American lives (Nadel, 1993). Bono the friend of Troy at one scene is seen to be saying that a white man told him that his complaint is filed and they cannot fire him. His remark shows how firm he has a belief in the authority of white People. The way he tells is reaffirming the authority of white people (Wilson, 1985). The setting of the lay is back in the 1950s. World War II made America a superpower but the situation of black remained the same. The depiction of the adults or the older generation in the play is of oppressed people, who have already surrendered to the white. The next generation, however, wants to change their lives and the difficulties and the problems.

As we know that there were lesser or no opportunities for the black people to succeed in life and to get education back in the 1950s, so is shown in the play. The blacks are portrayed as uneducated because of which they are bound to do the lowly jobs of garbage picking to make both ends meet. The definition of democracy given by Lincoln is not how black people lived in America. The black people were depicted lazy and dull, this was portrayed in the play when Troy talks about a man carrying a big watermelon. This was a stereotype about black people that they love to eat watermelon, and are simply dancing and singing. This was the reference towards that stereotype (Wilson, 1985).In 1950 the spark of the civil rights movement showed that there is hope for the better future of blacks and the other minorities. However, there was no social political or physical advantage given to the black. Still, the movement stirred the suppressed to stand up and fight for their rights. Obviously, the whole situation affected the white too and this caused chaos to happen. Everyone who believed in the equal rights for all humans stood up and work really hard on each and every level to get the civil rights for all those who were living in the suppression of white. Most of the back women who were employed at that time were working as house servants in the homes of white. In the play Troy also fights for his rights, he is aggravated at the fact that blacks only picked the cans of garbage and the white used to drive the trucks (Wilson, 1985). Wilson portrayed the true image of the lives of minorities living in the US at that time. Mary L. Bogumil in his book Understanding August Wilson states that Wilson became the voice to the cornered Afro- Americans who were told that they will live a life safe and sound in US but failed their entrance to it (Mary L. 1999). This type of manual labor was fixed for the black only. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Andrew Goodman, Malcolm X and many more were citizens who put their lives on risk to pursue equal rights for the black population. They took a stand for their belief. There were many racial groups like KKK who attacked them physically and mentally and made their lives harder to live in America. On September 15th, 1963, there was a bomb attack on the Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that took the life of four girls and many other people got injured. Also, there were laws such as Jim Crow Laws which was a local l to enforce segregation between the black and the white. It stated that blacks should have separate bathrooms, restaurants, and schools. As we see in the play that all the blacks do the lowly job of garbage picking and none of them is doing a white-collar job, so was the real case(Wilson, 1985). That law did make sure that the black population does not get to get public service jobs.

Between 1950 and 2019 there has been a significant improvement and the things have changed a lot for the black, but still the total eradication of racial discrimination has not been possible yet. The patterns and the themes of racial discrimination that could be seen those days can be seen even now against the black population. The 2016 presidential elections in the USA reaffirmed that there still is discrimination in the USA. The policies and attitude of President Donald. Trump clearly show his discrimination against minorities. However, from the education point of racial discrimination is still present in the country. We can say that there has been a significant improvement and the blacks no more live in segregation. Still, some of the schools in the south are strictly opened for white only. Even though the problems are not the same as they were before back I 1950s but the problems have not ended yet. Overall it can be said that the situation has become better in many ways but still much is needed to be done.

Works Cited

Wilson, A. (1985). Fences. London: Penguin Books, 1986.

Nadel, A. (1993). May All Your Fences Have Gates: Essays on the Drama of August Wilson. University of Iowa Press, 1993, p.282.

Mary L. (1999). Understanding August Wilson, University of South Carolina, 1999, p.165.