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Breaking Free from False Realities: An analysis of the Modernist critique of social institutions

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An analysis of the Modernist critique of social institutions

Abstract

I have observed a common theme in modernist literature that examines social institutions of power. I refer to this theme as a recognition of *falsely appointed authorities of power*. These authoritative powers observed in modernist literature are byproducts of a historically imperialistic and patriarchal European society. Within this literary analysis, the natural progression would be to then contemplate whether this theme exists outside the literary context. I purpose that it does. Just as modernist authors criticized institutions such as colonialism and slavery that perpetuated the corruption in falsely appointed powers, we can see a contemporary literal example in the analysis of corporations and their ability to “self-appoint” themselves into high places of power.

Proposal

Modernist literature rejects Victorian ideologies and classical philosophy that rationalized the belief that certain groups or kinds of people had the right and authority to rule over others. This rejection of traditional ideologies can be examined in the character and story representation in a variety of modernist literature. Literature examples of this analysis would include Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, William Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses*, Ernst Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* and Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*. An example of methodology is outlined below:

I. **Literary Analysis:**

A. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad’s depiction of the corruption of The Company, The Pilgrims and Kurtz brings to light an assessment of the devastation colonialism and imperialism, as *false appointed authorities of powers*, created for African people.

II. **Character Analysis and Representation of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*:**

A. Kurtz’ character is a metaphorical representation of imperialism and colonialism. He is a representation of an idealistic and romantic conception of imperialism and power. He prevails in the beginning as an illusion of order, power and progression; however his reality is that he succumbs to corruption and creates destruction. His demise becomes a prophecy for the *falsely appointed powers* in society.

We can examine the same theme outside the literary context within a literal contemporary examination of corporations. I purpose an analysis of several themes that demonstrate how some corporations are similar to the *falsely appointed authorities* in modernist literature. An example of the corporate analysis is outlined in the section titles of my proposed paper below:

- I. **Explaining and demonstrating how some corporations have become “falsely appointed powers of authority”**
- II. **Examination of the unethical and exploitative practices of some corporations, specifically in lower income areas.**
- III. **Examination of the unethical relationship between corporations and politics**
- IV. **Existing in a society that relies on a lower class (“how you treat the least of these”)**
- V. **The demise of “falsely appointed powers” in modernist literature as a gloom prophecy for unethical corporative powers in society.**