

# Ramona essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



When Helen Jackson wrote a report for The Bureau of Indian Affairs, on the plight of the Indians in southern California, she effectively controlled her feelings because the document was factual. *Ramona*, a popular novel, is the place where Jackson found a platform to let her emotions run free. *Ramona* is the story of a girl whose name is the title of the novel. The half Indian half white girl goes through a multiplicity of both emotional and physical journeys before the book comes to a semi-sweet end. In the book, *Ramona* is taken in by her foster mother's sister Senora Moreno. The woman is Spanish, and dislikes the Indians and whites in equal measure. For this reason, she does not shower *Ramona* with the love that a child would typically expect from a mother. *Ramona* feels unaccepted in the society where she should feel affiliated. The novel is based in a time when European intrusion had significantly disrupted the, otherwise, calm life of the Americas.

The story's pace is set when *Ramona* meets Alessandro, a pure Indian who Jackson describes as the strongest and most handsome person - perhaps even more handsome than *Ramona*'s foster brother Felipe. When *Ramona* and Alessandro plan to get married, the Senora estate denounces the plans. As such, the two lovebirds have to move to Temecula village, which is the home to Alessandro. A rude shock meets the couple, when they realize that the village has been taken over by the whites. This marks the beginning of the real plight. The couple embarks on moving from village to village in search of a place to stay for whatever period. Along their travels, they go through drought, cold weather, hostility and ultimately lose their child, thanks to the negligence of the doctor in charge of Indian affairs. The journey's and troubles lead to the insanity of Alessandro who later dies.

Following the painful loss of both a baby and a husband, Ramona loses emotions and memory. The loss of emotions is evidenced in the quote " I love no other living man," (Jackson 621). The novel comes to an end in a bittersweet description of how Felipe takes Ramona away to Mexico – a place he considers safe for her.

Analytically speaking, the novel fails as a social critique – something it was initially meant to be. On the contrary, the story is quite successful as a conventional tragic love story. This presumption or observation is based on the fact that in the novel, Jackson effectively describes the plight of the Indians in the Americas, but gives no solution or suggestion whatsoever with regard to the same. Notably, the love story between Ramona and Alessandro overshadows the social critique. Notably, the novel lacks an element of deep entertainment. The story is rather flat, offering superficial entertainment because Jackson gives minute details of every situation. Worth mentioning is that the novel appears a little boring because the author does not adequately employ such tools as suspense and irony. However, contrast is effectively employed in describing the differences between the serenity that characterizes Indian life, and the fast paced confusion brought about by the intrusion of the whites.

The primary theme – dislocation – is effectively brought out through the novel's deep description of the plight faced by Indians on their own land. While the Indians have a legitimate claim on the land, they are displaced and forced to pave way for the whites, whose primary intention is to exploit the land. Perhaps the most notable strength of this novel is the fact that it practically speaks to the audience. Speaking to the audience means that

Jackson, the author addresses issues that define the social conditions of the audience. As such, the readers feel incorporated into the novel's primary themes - dislocation and social interactions. The traits of Ramona also reflect the nature of the audience. Notably, the Americans and Europeans value the virtue of piety - a key feature of Ramona's character. The theme of social interactions is explained effectively by Jackson, as she explains how the Indians depend on the whites. However strained, the relationship between the whites and Indians is a primary theme. Jackson particularly focuses on the dysfunctional nature of the relationships.

Another feature that the novel effectively employs to achieve a considerable degree of success is symbolism. However little, Jackson uses symbolism to bring out some form of foreshadows. The American writers of the time prominently used the color of the eyes to foreshadow the character or inner environment of a character. Jackson uses the prominent blue color of Ramona's eyes to show the reader the inner traits of the Californian Indian girl. The novel is emotionally involving, especially considering that Jackson does not leave out any detail. The extent to which she explains the plight of Ramona gets the reader's moved. The climax of such emotional attachment comes where Ramona has to bear the pain of losing both a baby and a husband (Jackson 608). Notably, this comes after she has lost identity and a sense of affiliation. Such misfortunes attract the attention of the reader in such a way that he or she feels for the main character.

While the novel is successful as a traditional love story full of tragedies, it diverts from its main purpose - that of exposing the tribulations of the Indians in their own land. This failure is accompanied by such other failures

as the lack of authenticity in the characters. If the novel was to be reconstructed, it would be advisable to use characters that are more than just exotic whites. The use of authentic characters is the key to originality. Originality could have made the purpose easily attainable. For instance, remaining authentic could have made the audience get more interested in understanding the primary purpose - social critiquing. The novel ends without creating an impression that something must be done, and urgently so. On the contrary, it satisfies the urge of the reader to see Ramona settled and enjoying a serene life. As a social critique, the book should have ended by creating a thought in the mind of the reader, that, indeed, action is needed.

If I was to rewrite the novel, I could have endeavored to prioritize the social plight of the Indians over the deep romantic tales. While the romance is necessary in adding flavor to the novel, it ought to have been down-played in such a manner that broader problems are addressed. The end of the novel ought to be restructured so as to make the reader ask questions. Such questions ought to be the basis for bringing up the ideas on how the reader can participate in bringing social change, or how they can be part of the solution to the plight in question. Overall, the novel is successful to the extent of using aesthetic language, and involving the reader. However, it is wanting to the extent of social critiquing as it does not address the action-needed part.

## **Works Cited**

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Ramona*. New York: Signet Classics; Reissue. 2002.