

Introduction to pop culture essay



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The purpose of this paper is to analyze a piece of popular literature including a critique of the story and a commentary about the influence of the work in popular culture. The paper will identify the literary production of *The Green Mile* written in 1996 by Stephen King. The paper will provide a brief description of what the novel is about, Stephen King's background, and rather the novel fits other literature of the genre.

Furthermore, the paper will discuss the cultural significance; whether the novel is economically successful or has fan followings and also what cultural values are reinforced or challenged. Background *The Green Mile* is about a man that was sent to prison for the rape and murder of two little girls and a prison guard who over time believes in the man's innocence. The readers believe in the man's innocence from the beginning; since, many times when an African American is put in prison in the beginning of a story there is always an assumption that he or she is put in prison over something a Caucasian has done. The suspense in the novel makes it difficult to put the book down, just when the reader thinks that he or she thinks they know what will happen-something changes. Stephen King is known as a writer of horror fiction; many of his stories have unsuspected endings. The endings of most of his work keep the reader in suspense wondering if there is going to be a sequel to the story and wanting more. *The Green Mile* is a piece of literature that fits into the fiction genre; however, it is not a piece that fits in with horror as the Stephen King is known for.

This novel can most likely fit as a fictional history genre. The novel may be fictional; however, aside from the paranormal events the way people were treated in prisons during 1932 which is the time that the novel was based on.

Cultural Significance The cultural significance of *The Green Mile* is well it reflects the actual of that time. In the 1930's anytime a Caucasian was killed and an African American was found near the scene he or she was the one mostly to be convicted of the crime without a fair trial.

Racism is a cultural trait that is part of the American history and although much has changed over the years racism still occurs today. This novel offers a clear picture of how African Americans were prosecuted for crimes that were done by Caucasians, because back in those days they did not look for evidence to prove or disprove a case if an African American was near the crime scene he or she was automatically guilty; however, the novel adds some supernatural events that makes it more interesting. Stephen King's novels are clearly economically successful and he has fans that follow his work. The summery on the back cover *The Green Mile* by Stephen King (1999) states: When it first appeared, one volume per month, Stephen King's *The Green Mile* was an unprecedented publishing triumph: all six volumes ended up on the New York Times bestseller list — simultaneously — and delighted millions of fans the world over (Summery, para 2). Cultural Values Reinforced or Challenged The cultural values that are reinforced or challenged in *The Green Mile* (1999) are the values of truth, justice, and life. The Novel is mainly about the superintendent of E-Block otherwise known as Death Row named Paul Edgecombe and an African American man named John Coffey who is charged with the rape and murder of two little girls and sentenced to death. Edgecombe comes to believe that Coffey is not capable of committing the crime he is accused of doing.

Edgewcombe goes so far as tracking down Burt Hammersmith the reporter that wrote most the stories about Coffey's trial to learn as much as he could about Coffey's past. Justice is a cultural value to the victims as well as the friends and family to the victims; however, this value is challenged when the person prosecuted for the crime is not the person responsible, instead he turns out to be a person that tried to help the girls. Life is a cultural value that this book reinforces; rather someone's life is taken away or the supernatural healing that Coffey provides to give life. Conclusion In conclusion, Stephen King's *The Green Mile* (1999) is a popular fiction novel that takes place in a Cold Mountain State Penitentiary's E-Block. This novel is a number one seller according to reviews. Much like most of Stephen King's novels the ending is not one that the readers expect when the truth about Coffey and what really happened to the little girls is uncovered in the story. The values of truth and justice are challenged in this novel, Edgewcombe seeks the truth but it did not change anything for Coffey; justice is the purpose of Coffey being sentenced to death for the rape and murder of the two little girls; however, since he did not do the crime there really was no justice.

Throughout the novel Life is the only value that has is reinforced; rather someone's life is taken away or the supernatural healing that Coffey provides to give life. Reference King, S. (1999). *The Green Mile*.

Riverside, NJ: Simon ; Schuster Inc. Retrieved January 10, 2010