

Racial Prejudice Towards African-American Portrayed In 12 Years A Slave

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Abstract

Racial prejudice is a wrong assessment in society which is done by particular group towards other groups based on their visual appearance. These researches aimed to investigate the factors causing racial prejudice as depicted in 12 Years A Slave movie. The data were collected by using a qualitative method. This literary research examines the racial prejudice of white people towards black people. White people have negative prejudice towards black people without enough knowledge. The result of the research illustrated the racial prejudice arises because of two factors. They are Hereditary Categorical Thinking about Others and In-Group Superiority and Out-Group Discrimination

Keywords: 12 Years a Slave, Racism, Racial Prejudice, Slave Narrative

INTRODUCTION

Racism is an one of interesting social issue which can be discussed. It happens in America which has multiple cultures. In America racism happened many years ago. "More than 150 years after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States, most U.S. adults say the legacy of slavery continues to have an impact on the position of black people in American society today" (Horowitz, Brown and Cox 2019). Eadyth Crawford is one of the victims of racism in America. As her statement in BBC NEWS article "*Brexit 'major influence' in racism and hate crime rise*", She believes that the victim of racism has lack of support from people around them (2019).

As a persistent phenomenon in a society, racism is an unfair treatment toward other people. It can be said that this phenomenon had happened in a society from the first time the European separating people based on their appearances. This

phenomenon can be traced back through studying a literary work (qtd. in Fajri 1). Historically, a race of people is defined as a population with distinguishable biological features. Racial prejudice leads one's perception towards race relation. Racial prejudice itself is known as insidious moral and social disease affecting people over the world.

Prejudice usually refers to judgment and negative opinion toward an inferior group. "Prejudice is a stronger feeling, but it is always negative, and it always refers to a group of people. Prejudice predisposes us to behave negatively toward certain people because of a group to which they belong" (Koppelman and Goodhart 24). It means behavior arises based on prejudice White people towards other groups. This bias tends to be negative. They assume that Black people are never better than theirs due to the negative bias.

In racial prejudice, there is a self-assured feeling on the part of the dominant

racial group of being naturally superior or better. According to Blumer (2014), there are four basic types of feelings that seem to be always present in racial prejudice in the dominant group. They are: (1) a feeling of superiority, (2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, (3) a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and (4) fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race.

Prejudice occurs because there is a different mindset between White people and Black people. Prejudice is about how someone processes and organizes information about a particular race. A person who is occupied by racial prejudice usually categorizes and groups information based on preexisting information. Then he will interpret new information based on that. According to Macrae and Bodenhausen, there are two causes for prejudice. (1) They are Hereditary Categorical Thinking about Others. The first factor is talk about humans will depend on perceptions formed in the past about people with these characteristics to help determine the reaction and behavior to deal with people with these characteristics. (2) In-Group Superiority and Out-Group Discrimination. The second factor is talk about how someone treats people based on their in-group and out-group bias. In-group bias is positive feelings and special treatment of someone to others who are considered part of the in-group, as well as negative feelings and unfair treatment of people who are considered as part of the out-group. This study aimed to reveal the factors that caused racial prejudice reflected in 12 Years a Slave movie.

METHODOLOGY

This is using qualitative study. According

to Patton and Cochran, "Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis". The data were analyzed by applying the systematic procedure to reach the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to discover the answer to the problem formulation. The data in this study were taken from 12 Years A Slave movie script. The data are in the form of sentences, dialogues, narations and discriptions.

FINDING(S) AND DISCUSSION

12 Years A Slave Movie

12 Years A Slave movie is a movie based on a true story written as a narrative bibliography of Solomon Northup. It took place in New York. It tells about the racial prejudice towards the characters. The main character is Solomon Northup who was kidnapped and sold as slavery for 12 years. Solomon is a violinist, He married Anne Hompton. They lived in Saratoga, New York. They have three children. One day come two people who offer him a job. Upon their arrival in Washington D.C. He was sold as a slave by White people. He woke up and realized that he was chained in an underground cell. He was delivered by a ship to New Orleans, where he was sold in a slave market. Platt Hamilton is his new name.

In April 1843 Solomon was sold by Ford and Tibaut to Edwin Epps. Solomon had various tasks. Epps used Solomon both as an artisan slave and he also as a field hand, occasionally he was leasing him out to sugar planters and processors. Solomon keep trying to escape several times during that period but he was unsuccessful. Only by the arrival of a Canadian abolitionist, a carpenter named Samuel Bass who came on a visit to Epps'

farm, Solomon was successful for some letters to be delivered to some of his friends in New York. In those letters, he mentioned all the events he went through and he asked for his rescue. One of those letters was addressed to Anne Northup who enlisted the help of Henry B. Solomon. He armed himself with an array of documentation along with letters from a senator and a Supreme Court justice, and then he traveled to Louisiana and hired local counsel with the help of Bass, they were able to locate Solomon and save him from slavery. His freedom was legally obtained on January 4, 1853. Solomon was reunited with his family later at that moment.

The racial prejudice depicted in Steve Mcqueen's 12 Years a Slave Movie

Racial prejudice is an assumption of a race. People may be able to judge other groups. Especially White people toward Black people. They can judge good or bad. White people think without enough knowledge about Black people, but they believe that their fact are the most correct. In *12 Years a Slave* movie, there is a part which can be the depiction of this situation.

Clemens Ray : If you want to survive, do and say as little as possible Tell no one who you really are and tell no one that you can read and write

Clemens Ray : Unless you want to be a dead nigger (00:21:35 - 00:21:50)

Clement is Solomon's friend. He is a slave. They chatted on the ship when they were traveling to New Orleans. Clement tells Solomon and other slave, if they want to stay alive and safe. They can not tell anyone. They can read and write. Even they are educated. It will be a big problem for Black people if White people know that Black people can read or write. Because White people think Black people can not write and read.

Factors Causing Racial Prejudice towards African-American Found in Steve Mcqueen's 12 Years a Slave Movie

1. Hereditary Categorical Thinking about Others

Prejudice is the categorization of grouping people based on certain characteristics such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, and so on. When humans meet people with certain characteristics. Humans will depend on perceptions formed in the past about people with these characteristics to help determine the reaction and behavior to deal with people with these characteristics.

Mistress Epps : A moment from the dancing. Come sample what I baked for y'all.

Mistress Epps (Cont'd) : There'll be none for you, Patsey.

Mistress Epps (Cont'd) : Yah see that? Did yah see the look of insolence she give me?

Epps : Seen nothin' but her turn away.

Mistress Epps : Are you blind or ignorant? It was hot, hateful scorn. It filled that black face. Yah tell me yah did'n see it, then yah choose not to look, or yah sayin' I lie.

EPSS : Whatever it was, it passed.

Mistress Epps : Is that how yah are with the niggers? Let every ill thought fester inside 'em. Look at 'em. They foul with it; foul with their hate. You let it be, it'll come back to us in the dark a night. Yah want that? Yah want them black animals to leave us gut like pigs in our own sleep? (01:16:36 - 01:17:33)

At night, the masters and their slaves are dancing. Mistress Epps makes toast for her slaves but Patsey could not eat it. She hates Patsey. She is jealous because her husband likes her. She is fed up with her blackface. White people call that black people are like animals. White people categorize black people as animals. The nickname appears because they have different skin color characteristics. They

are mocked as animals. Even though it is clear that black people and animals are two different creatures, when white people see black people as animals.

2. In-Group Superiority and Out-Group Discrimination

Prejudice is about how to treat people based on their group. White people's bias is positive feelings and special treatment of someone to others who are considered part of their group, as well as negative feelings and unfair treatment of people who are considered as part of Black people. The main point of White people bias is self-esteem. There is a part of this movie that depicts superiority of White people to Black People.

Epps : That ain't a supposable case.

Bass : Because the law states that your liberties are undeniable? Because society deems it so? Laws change. Social systems crumble. Universal truths are constant. It is a fact, it is a plain fact that what is true and right is true and right for all. White and black alike.

Epps : Whoa, whoa, whoa. Yah compare me to a nigger, Bass? Yah might as well ask what the difference is between a white man and a baboon. Now, I seen one of them critters in Orleans that knowed just as much as any nigger I got. Yah'd

call them fellers citizens, I s'pose? (01:43:34 - 01:44:16)

Here Bass warns Epps about the law of slavery. The law of freedom to enslave Black people is a fact of lies. Based on Bass opinion , Black people and White people are the same. They are humans. They also have freedom as White people. Epps does not accept himself compared to Solomon. He thinks that he has high self-esteem than others. He also claims that Solomon is not a human. He is a beast. He feels superior to Solomon. He does not want to be compared to anyone. Solomon is a slave. A slave who resembles a beast.

Table 1:
Table Form

Items	1st meeting		2nd meeting		3rd meeting		4th meeting		Total Students
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Asking	0	12	3	9	3	9	4	8	12
Answering	4	8	11	1	9	3	10	2	12
Performing	9	3	10	2	12	0	12	0	12

Graphic 1:
Graphic Form

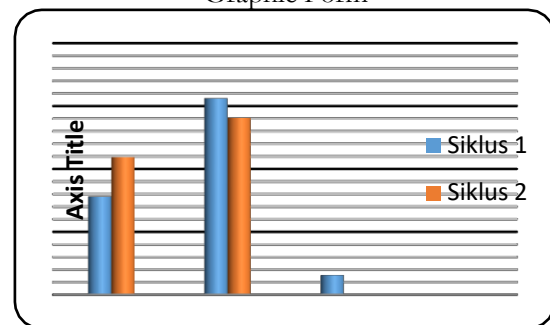


Figure 1:
Exampe of displaying figure



Source:

https://unsplash.com/@cristina_gottardi

CONCLUSION(S)

Based on the explanation about the racial prejudice in the previous chapter. The racial prejudice that occurs in this movie is caused by some factors. White people think categorically about other people. If they find differences such as race, religion, etc. It does not belong to their group. As depicted in this movie they have different skin colors. There are two factors causing racial prejudice. They are Hereditary Categorical Thinking about Others dan In-Group Superiority and Out-Group

Discrimination. White people do not want to be equalized to Black people. They feel better than other groups. Besides, White people always want to win. They feel their self-esteem must be maintained. There is no other group that can rival them.

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