

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION SUFFERED BY EDGAR ALLAN IN JOHN NEUFELD'S *EDGAR ALLAN*

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ABSTRACT

Racial Discrimination of colored people has become popular in the history of the United States. The white people used to do it towards the black people. It happens not only in the real life but was also illustrated novels. With this hindsight, this study aims at analyzing the racial discrimination which lies in the *Edgar Allan* novel written by John Neufeld, American Novelist for young adults and adults. The object of this study is the main character : Edgar Allan, the two-year black child who gained the inappropriate treatments done by his new white family. This study utilizes descriptive qualitative approach to depict how the white people executed the subordinate people through their treatments of racism. The results show that the structural racism also occurred in this novel, such as in the forms of aversive racial attitudes, individual racism, institutional racism, and interpersonal racism. Moreover, the expressions of prejudice namely anti-locution of prejudice, avoidance of prejudice, discrimination of prejudice and extermination of prejudice had been discussed.

Key words: Racism; Edgar Allan; discrimination; inappropriate treatments

Race is a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups, Cheney et al, (2006:1). Further, they say that “racism is any attitude, action or inaction, which subordinates a person or group because of her / his race / color / ethnicity. Racism is the systemic mistreatment experienced by people of color.”

In De Benoist (1999:11) states that the first difficulty arises from the fact that racism is a *Schimpfwort*: a term with pejorative connotations, whose very use inevitably tends to be more *instrumental* than descriptive. Deploying the adjective “racist” involves using a powerful epithet. It can be a smear designed to disqualify those at whom the term is addressed. To call someone a racist, even if the charge is intellectually dishonest, can be a useful tactic, either in successfully paralyzing or in casting enough suspicion as to curtail credibility.

More broadly, Ruth Benedict in De Benoist (1999:13) writes: “Racism is a dogma according to which one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital superiority.” According to Arthur Kriegel in De Benoist, he has written that racism is an ideological-scientific system which divides the contemporary human species into sub-species, resulting from separate development and endowed with unequal average aptitudes”. Moreover, Ridley (1995) in Ponterotto’s opinion (2006:17) defines racism as “any behavior or pattern of behavior that tends to systematically deny access to opportunities or privileges to members of one racial group while perpetuating access to opportunities and privileges to members of another racial group”.

Thus, the term of racism can be variety based on those scientist’s perspectives. It is because the main concept of it is that they are depending on social, historical, economic and political factors rather than a static reductionist biological concept. Otherwise, more writers’ opinion says toward to De Benoist that racism is a Schimpfwort: a term with pejorative connotations, whose very use inevitably tends to be more instrumental than descriptive. In addition, racism can be also as a dogma according to Arthur’s view which ethnic group and it is also an ideological-scientific system which divides the contemporary human species into sub-species, resulting from separate development and endowed with unequal average aptitudes. In addition, Feagin and Vera (1995) in Henkel et al, (2006:101) explains “Racism is more than a matter of individual scattered episodes of discrimination,” it represents a widely accepted racist ideology and the power to deny other racial groups the “dignity, opportunities, freedoms, and rewards that are available to one’s group through a socially organized set of ideas, attitudes, and practices” (p. 7).

Taylor in Kearney’s view (2003:3) says that the distributive system that determines the possibilities and constraints within which people of color are forced to act. The system involves the operation of racialized structural relationships that produce the unequal distribution of material resources, such as jobs, income, housing, neighborhood conditions, and access to opportunities.

Therefore, it is blatant to be seen that there is a strong system which control the human life by the power group. If it is done unequally, the subordinate people who suffered it will automatically get unequal treatments. It can be in the form of professions, financials, and opportunities and so on. And all of this has appeared in this novel. The writer found some talking about it which conveys the racial discrimination and the researcher also used the theory of racism especially the structural racism as the main theory of this research. And the structural racism are aversive racial attitudes, individual racism, institutional racism and

interpersonal racism. While the other one is the supporting theory of racism which include the antilocution, avoidance, discrimination and extermination. Yet, the writer had used the selected data only which involved all the theories above. So, the analysis below will not be separated into a, b, c, and so forth but it will be in the form of long discussion or paragraphs. In this point, the writer gets the previous study which has been done by Kharisma Nursani (2013) under the title “Chief Carl Brasshear’s Struggle against Racism in Men of *Honor* Movie. Nursani’s thesis entitled Chief Carl Brasshear’s Struggle against Racism in Men of *Honor* Movie. In doing her research Nursani uses qualitative approach to find out the racial identity through movie. Then, the writer intends to apply those aspects also to the racial aspect of his study.

The difference lies in the data and also in the analysis of the data. It is indeed true that both Nursani’s and the writer analyze the data by using the theory of race. However, Nursani’s analyses of racism through movie, well the writer itself takes the analysis through novel of Edgar Allan. Thus, this study focuses to analyze a sort of novel written by John Neufeld S.G. Philips, New York under the title *Edgar Allan*. He was born in Chicago 1938. He writes a lot of short stories at the age of ten or eleven. Then, twenty years later he comes across a story that he can tell well as *Edgar Allan*. He is an American novelist for young adults and adults, editor, playwright, short story writer, and television scriptwriter.

Neufeld’s first novel, *Edgar Allan*, deals with the unsuccessful adoption of a black child named Edgar Allan by a white suburban minister and his family. It describes the inner turmoil and lack of unity within the family which lead to the failure of the adoption, and explores the themes of racism, intolerance, and the effect of community pressure. So, the writer gets that this novel has demonstrated about racism. As the readers know that one of the children of Mr. Fickett family points out that the main character of this novel namely Edgar Allan is black and it is. Finally, the writer analyzes the racial discrimination suffered by Edgar Allan in *Edgar Allan* novel by John Neufeld. Hopefully, It will over some contributions to the study of literature in general and drama in special.

METHODS

This research is naturally using a descriptive qualitative method which means that this research scrutinizes the data by describing and analyzing the data in details. The data are analyzed in the form of words, phrases, or utterances or sentences. Creswell (2009:17) defines that qualitative approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing differ from the traditional, quantitative approaches. Purposeful sampling, collection

of open-ended data, analysis of text or pictures, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings all inform qualitative procedures.

Moreover, in Keegan (2009:11) says “qualitative research is less easy to define. It explores questions such as what, why and how, rather than how many or how much; it is primarily concerned with meaning rather than measuring.” The present research is descriptive and qualitative in nature. It is due to the fact that the writer examines some utterances of racial discrimination applied in *Edgar Allan* novel.

The source of the data in this research is novel entitle *Edgar Allan*. There are a number of utterances and dialogs that show the racial discriminations. The main data is written data, collected from the utterances and dialogs which contain racisms. Further, this novel is used because it could fulfill the data that are needed. The data which contain the racism utterances and employs had been sorted and chosen to be discussed. Then, the writer collected and separated them into some parts according to what kinds of racism they were. After that, the writer started to analyze and describe one by one all the data. Some supported theories of race were used to support the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the research. In this analysis, the writer uses some theories of race. The theory of race consists of the structural racism and the expression of prejudice. The analysis is conceptually as the following:

The Racial Discriminations suffered by Edgar Allan in John Neufeld’s *Edgar Allan*.

The analysis below shows some racial discriminations which suffered by Edgar Allan. He gets some bad biases treatments done by the white family of Mr. Ficket’s and his social environment. For instances, his new school, the church of father’s working and some children’s parents from the nursery school. Wilson (1973) in Bulmer and Solomos (1999:242) demonstrates that a working definition of racism to be used as a starting point here is that racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to rationalize or prescribe the racial group’s treatment in society, as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment.

Thus, the society contributions towards Edgar Allan are regardless for they make him being away from his new family. They force the family to leave him out and one of the children of Mr. Ficket’s agrees with them. While discrimination is “a description of behavior” (Bulmer and Solomos, 1999:242) which means the action of some people who do some racists to Edgar Allan are varied. It can be from the social, educational, institutional

and etcetera. Then, the next two discussions are the perspective's writer of points of view to this research.

Family's points of view

The writer analyzes first racial discrimination from the family's point of view. They show as the following:

"Edgar Allan arrived about two weeks later, right on schedule: Early in the Afternoon. And he was cute.... When I walked in, Edgar Allan, Stephen, and S.A. were all on the floor, on hands and knees, "learning" S.A. was "reading" to them from a picture book.

I think I just stood there a minute. I was surprised. That was all. Just surprised. Maybe I never really expected exactly what we got."(p.17-18)

Edgar Allan: The reason why the name of Edgar Allan was Edgar Allan? It is because he came Early in the Afternoon. It is supported by the data above which shows he comes right on schedule and the adoption agency named him so and he was cute. Then, the first happen was about Michael who got shock because his father took a new different comer. He knew when Edgar Allan played with Michael's younger brother and sister in the living room. His sister, Sally Ann, was giving them a learning and reading from a picture book. It could be seen that there was an equal strata between the black and the white people. Why? There were no differences of place, book or special treatment towards them, especially for Edgar Allan as he was black. In Kearney's view (2003:3) says that "American society was founded on principles of social equality, and today there is widespread support for racial equality and integration. It is through the process of racial socialization that these American ideals of racial equality and integration are transmitted."

Thus, it is seen from the social equality that the American people at that time did the equality of different people. Further, from the data above the Edgar Allan got his privilege as well even though his new brother has a white color. He has the same right to get something to learn and some information from a book read by Sally Ann. Besides, the next happening was about the Michael who felt worry by himself because he did not know first that his father got a black child. His expression shows that there is an unintentional expression shown by him towards Edgar Allan. This is an indication which the action of Michael can be called as an aversive racial attitude. Gaertner (1986) in Levin's view (2003:2) quotes that aversive racism refers to the unintentional expression of these anti-black feelings by people

who sincerely endorse, on a conscious level, egalitarian values and principles. Rather than reflecting bigotry or hatred, the anti-black feelings held by aversive racists reflect fear and discomfort; their discriminatory behavior toward blacks is characterized more by avoidance than by intentional hostility.

Moreover, this behavior which is shown by him indicates the subtle form of prejudice. He is a white person and he does not realize that what he did is prejudice or racism. According to National Association and Social Workers' (2007:10) state that Aversive racism is another subtle form of prejudice. People who engage in the practice see themselves as non-racists, but they will do racist things, sometimes unintentionally, or they will avoid people without overt racist intent. What they believe about themselves and will attest to is the importance of fairness, equality, and justice, but because they have been exposed to the ever-present societal racism just by living in the United States, they will reflect it in their conduct (Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; Tatum, 1997). Finally, good people can do bad things to others in many ways for which there is no formal grievance, but still have negative sometimes unintentionally effect.

So, this anti-black feeling can make the Edgar Allan feels discomfort rather than happy. Michael's discriminatory behavior towards Edgar Allan was only more characterized by avoidance than by intentional action or hostility. First, he had a little bit unbelievable towards the father. Yet, he just could not say anything. He was not the principle of the family he had. The point was that he just followed the usual rule at his house. However, Edgar Allan still does not get his feeling what has happened to him for he is almost three years of age. He just listen everything he heard.

".... So I just sat there a while, watching. And I was still there when M.N. came here."

"She walked in the door, turned towards where the noise was rising every minute, and stepped into the room."

"She stood there. Her mouth opened. Her face reddened. And then she walked out. Just like that."(p.18)

Right after that, when Michael stays away from Edgar Allan, in sudden his elder sister came home. She had just returned back from school and looked happy before she arrived at home. But, after arriving at her house, she had been shocked by the noise which

was coming from the living room. She was actually almost at her room. She turned to it and her mouth opened then her face reddened. Finally, she could not stand it; she just walked out and came towards her room. It is not easy being an Edgar Allan because as the different child, he is also new not only for Michael or Marry Nell's family but also for his surroundings. Well, it is hard for receiving this action which is shown by Marry Nell as the elder sister of Michael. It was because she had shown an interpersonal racism directly when she knew him at first. Lawrence and Keheler (2004:2) conclude that "interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once private beliefs come into interaction with others, the racism is now in the interpersonal realm. Examples include public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias and bigotry between individuals."

Meanwhile, Marry Nell also did avoidance towards him. She hates him because he has a different color of skin. She expressed a fury and movement to leave the Edgar Allan. It is supported to the theory of Allport (1979) in Ponterotto (2006:14) states that avoidance occurs when the individual moves beyond just talking about a certain group to avoid an individual from others group. Further, this individual expresses avoidance behavior that it will tolerate inconvenience for the sake of avoidance. Thus, the Marry Nell has the most hatred towards him. The writer sees from the action of her which can be analyzed by looking at her behavior.

Besides, the more expression of racism is able to look at Marry Nell. She had shown an individual racism as well. Lawrence and Keheler (2004:1) says that the individual racism includes prejudice, xenophobia, internalized oppression and privilege, and also beliefs about race that influenced by the dominant culture. Thus, the expressions of Marry Nell show that she has seen doing racism as she is the white people who give affliction towards Edgar Allan. Moreover, Lawrence and Keheler (2004:2) says that the "white supremacy is a historically based on pertuted system of exploitation and oppression of continent, nations and peoples of color by white peoples." In this case the Marry Nell gives an oppression feeling towards Edgar Allan. Just as usual, he cannot feel it first for he is enjoying playing with his new family.

Institution's points of view

The mother drops both her children, Stephen Paul and Edgar Allan to Nursery School. The teacher welcomes them well especially for Edgar Allan; she does not care about his skin. Right after school, when the mother takes them, there is something from the park cars looking at her. Then she tells this to her husband.

"...You're imagining things, Eleanor," my father said. "And that's understandable. But I can't believe that those women would think a three-year-old is a threat their own children."

"He's not just any three-year-old, Robert. He's black. That's the threat," my mother said. "I will give you five to one that by tomorrow afternoon you'll have three calls from three separate mothers, each wanting to know exactly what that child is doing in that school."(p.41)

According to Allport (1979) in Ponterotto (2006:14) namely the theory of antilocution of prejudice which the mildest form of prejudice and is characterized by prejudicial talk among like-minded individuals and the occasional stranger. This is a rather controlled expression of antagonism that is limited to small circles. It happened to the mother of Marry Nell which she said to her husband that because of Edgar was black so her husband would get a call from three different mothers, why there was a black child at school. The words *"He's black"* and *"you'll have three calls from three separate mothers"* mean that she did any sort of talking about negative feeling to Edgar Allan while the other one was any kind of step which was done by the mothers of nursery school to deny him as the student in it. What they did were antilocution and discrimination prejudice that in Gordon Allport's many lasting contributions to psychology was to delineate clearly the various forms and escalating expressions of prejudice. Specifically, Allport (1979) in Ponterotto (2006:14) state that the discrimination phase, the individual takes active steps to exclude or deny members of another group access to or participation in a desired activity. Discrimination practices in the past and currently have led to segregation in education, employment, politics, social privileges, and recreational opportunities (see D'Andrea & Daniels, 2001, and Jones, 1997, for specifics). Then, the data of the mothers of the nursery school who have steps to exclude the Edgar Allan from the school is as the following:

"By four o'clock that day, father had had not three but four calls, and had done his best to explain and to soothe people. This happened at school, in his office, and I was sorry about that. Because when I heard all about this, that mean stomach thing grumbled again, and I wondered a little what father had said to those people."(p.42)

The next analysis happens when the men came to Mr. Ficket's house. They two people had serious discussion in the study room and then the mother also had a serious talk with father. But afterwards, the mother walked out of the study. She showed her sadness and

seemed angry. Then, Michael, asked to the father what had happened in the study till made mother felt so. At last, the father answered that the men who came from the church wanted to know whether we were going to keep Edgar Allan or not. Yet, the father convinces to Michael that it had to be remembered which was only a testing period.

“....one afternoon, when two men who belong to our church came by to talk to father. I don’t think I have ever heard mother and father argue, but I suspect they came pretty close to it that afternoon. I don’t know exactly what the men said to father, but afterwards, after the serious talk between him and mother; I had the feeling that things were really getting kinds of tense. Mother walked out of the study and her face was set in a way I’d never seen before she looked determined about something, and sort of angry and sad at the same time.”(p.47)

“What did those men want, who came this afternoon?” I asked. Father turned to look at me a moment, sort of studying me. “You are a big fellow for your age,” he said. “In your thinking, I mean.”.... “What those men wanted, “said father, “was to know whether we’re going to keep Edgar Allan or not.”, “what else would we do with him?” I wanted to know. “Well, Michael,” father said, “E.A. isn’t really ours yet. Remember the testing period? Well....” (p.48)

Thus, from the data above, it showed that the two men from a church had plan to exclude Edgar Allan smoothly, the first action was they came to Mr. Ficket’s house then they asked him whether he kept Edgar Allan or not. Unless, Mr. Ficket still did it, the two men from the church might ask Mr. Ficket to leave the church. This action was similar to the theory of Allport (1979) in Ponterotto (2006:14) namely extermination of prejudice. It says that the extermination involves the systematic and plan destruction of a group of people based on their group membership. At this moment, the Edgar Allan now is one of Mr. Ficket’s family.

The effects which are caused by the racial discrimination towards Edgar Allan as the main character, Marry Nell’s family and some mother’s children of Nursery School in John Neufeld *Edgar Allan*.

In Heslin., et al (2005:842) say that “implicit theories can be domain specific, pertaining particularly to areas such as ability, morality, or personality”. Thus, the writer gets the implicit of much racial discrimination of some utterances that have been done by some

characters in this novel. Moreover, they have shown an ability to control the situation which Edgar Allan involved in it. Every person in this novel who has done much racial discrimination towards Edgar Allan never thinks that they will do some mistakes. It implies that the racial discrimination appear in many condition and situation. Then, the impacts of all these racial discrimination are not only to Edgar Allan but also to almost his new family or Marry Nell's family.

CONCLUSION

The title of this research is the racial discrimination suffered by Edgar Allan in John Neufeld *Edgar Allan*. Further, this research is about racism which the writer found some utterances of racial discrimination produced by many characters in the novel. After describing and analyzing the data, the writer concludes that there are two points based on the statements of the research in the previous chapter.

The first statement shows that there is much racial discrimination suffered by Edgar Allan. They have been found some theories of racism namely, aversive racial attitudes, individual racism, institutional racism, interpersonal racism and four expressions of prejudice. They are antilocution, avoidance, discrimination and extermination. Further, these theories reveal the racial discrimination in deep until the main character of the novel returns to the adoption agency. So, these all racial discrimination cause Edgar Allan getting suffered.

The second statement of the problem is telling about the effect of this analysis. It refers simply to Edgar Allan as the main theory of this novel. He is the child that has been the victim by many characters, in this case can be looked at the family's point of view and institution's point of view as well. He must return to the adoption agency for he is still three years of age so that he cannot against to do sort of racism towards some characters of this novel. He cannot against the people surrounding him. He just gets some pressures from different sides. So, the writer concludes that this novel is important to be read because there are some analysis of racial discrimination that show us the advantages and disadvantages of it.

Thus, by using all theories above, the writer gets easy to overcome the racial discrimination that lies in the *Edgar Allan* novel by John Neufeld. And, it makes the writer easier to do his research.

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