

Analysis Racial Discrimination and Social Stratification in 12 Years a Slave

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe racial discrimination found in 12 Years a Slave movie and to analyze social stratification reflected in 12 Years a Slave movie. 12 Years a Slave movie is tell about slavery in American at eighteen century which adapted from novel Twelve Years a Slave based on the real experience of author Solomon Northup who became a slave during 12 years. The research design was a qualitative with sociological approach to be analyzed. Then source of the data consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data source was 12 Years a Slave movie. Meanwhile, secondary data source derived from book, internet source and journal. The result of the research showed that racial discrimination against Niggers slave was found in form of less well treatment, restriction, insult, and distinction by white people. The researcher also found types of social stratification which included slavery, caste and class were caused by racial discrimination because there had a level position between white people and black people.

Keywords: racial discrimination, social stratification, sociology

INTRODUCTION

In human social life, some problems might happen around people because each human has a different background with other. The social background can be affected by religion, ethnic, race, culture, status, economic and other. That background sometimes created conflict that was unavoidable. Conflict is part of human life and always occurs in society which caused by inequalities among the society or because they possess a different concept. Theoretically, people are regarded the same, but in real situation is not. People have a differential arrangement in society as known by “social stratification”. According to Giddens (2009:1133), social stratification is the existence of structured inequalities between groups in society, in terms of their access to material or symbolic reward. Social stratification divided into slavery, caste and class.

Slavery is one of basic social stratification which person owns by another people as property by another people who control their work and life. The status of the slaves usually coincident with an African American (black skin), this makes a system which races most influence. Black skin sacrifice and target of discrimination based on slavery which occur in United States who did by white people.

12 Years a Slave is a movie adapted from novel "Twelve Years a Slave" in 1853 as memoir and slave narrative based on true story about freeman African American who was kidnapped and become a slave for 12 years. 12 Years a Slave Movie represented black people of the vast majority of those who endured from slavery as subject of racial discrimination. The purpose of this research was to describe racial discrimination found in 12 Years a Slave movie and to analyze systems of social stratification reflected in 12 Years a Slave movie because this movie was raised racial discrimination of American history in United States whose slavery was experienced by Solomon Northup and Niggers and the story point out how white people treating Niggers as property not as human being while happened in 18th century.

Racial Discrimination

According to Narayan (2008), racial discrimination defines as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. Meanwhile, According to Healey (2014:21) racial discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status.

Social Stratification

The caused of racial discrimination is there found the social stratification in that society. According to Andersen et al (2015:171), social stratification is a relatively fixed, hierarchical arrangement in society by which groups have different access to resources, power, and perceived social worth. Henslin (2009:172) divided stratification into three. They are slavery, caste and class.

Slavery

Henslin (2009:172) said that slavery, whose essential characteristic is that some individuals own other people, has been common throughout world history. According to Giddens (2009:435) slavery is an extreme form of inequality, in which certain people are owned as property by others. Thus, according to Kendal (2014:203) slavery is an extreme form of stratification in which some people are owned or controlled by others for the purpose of economic or sexual exploitation.

Caste system

According to Henslin (2009:173), in a caste system, status is determined by birth and is lifelong. Someone who is born into a low-status group will always have low status, no matter how much that person may accomplish in life. According to Giddens (2009:434) a caste system is a social system in which one's social position is given for a lifetime. Henslin (2009:175) divided caste system into two types, they were:

India's Religious Castes

India provides the best example of a caste system. Based not on race but on religion, India's caste system has existed for almost three thousand years (Chandra in Hensley 2009:175).

U.S. Racial Caste System

In this system, all whites, even if they were poor and uneducated, considered themselves to have a higher status than all African Americans (Henslin, 2009:175).

Class system

According to Henslin (2009:176) a class system, in contrast, is much more open, for it is based primarily on money or material possessions, which can be acquired. Moreover, according to Giddens (2009:437), a class can be defined as a large-scale grouping of people who share common economic resources, which strongly influence the types of styles that they are able to live.

METHODOLOGY

According to Ary et.al (2010:426), the research design is the researcher's plan of how to proceed to gain an understanding of some group or some phenomenon in its context. The research design in this research used qualitative descriptive. In addition, according to Ary et.al (2010: 446), qualitative studies are a distinctive type of re-search in education and social science that can produce vivid and richly detailed accounts of human experience. The data need to process the research divided into two, there are primary data and secondary data. The primary data source was 12 Years a Slave movie which adapted based on the true story from novel "Twelve Years a Slave" by Solomon Northup. Then, secondary data source derived from other source such as book, internet, journal, article, previous research and other research which could support the research.

For analyzing the data, the researcher needed to collect the data such as determining the subject that would be examined, Looking for the movie, then after getting the movie, the researcher watched the movie repeatedly, identified the problem on movie, collected the script of movie, checked script and underlined the selected transcript and scene that show racial discrimination or taking note the duration of the movie. After data was collected, the writer analyzed the data with some procedures such as identified the data, grouped or classified the data, developed research with data already grouped or classified, then the researcher drew the conclusions of the research based on the findings.

RESULTS

12 Years a Slave movie reveals that discrimination based on race experience by black people often occurs, where white people treating black people badly because they think that they are higher level than black which adapted from true story of novel 12 Years a Slave of African American Solomon Northup who was being slave for 12 years.

Racial discrimination

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00:36:30)

Solomon Northup : "It occurs to me that the expense of transportation would be materially diminished..."

Tibeats : "Materially diminished"
Solomon Northup : "if we use the waterway"
Tibeats : **"Are you an engineer, or a nigger? ... Are you an engineer, or a nigger?"**
Ford : "Let the man say his piece"

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Tibeats thinks Niggers only become a slave, and cannot give any opinion because they are only black people who are uneducated. The form of racial discrimination also found in this data where the character Tibeats restricting Northup based on the color of the skin.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00:43:01)

Tibeats : **"You are a dog... and no better for following instruction!"**
Solomon Northup : "I do as ordered..."

Based on script above, it can be inferred that Tibeats said Northup is a dog because he is only a slave, whose work and identity was lower than Tibeats. He feels that Northup only a person who is regard of lowly like animal that must complies the command. It is form of racial discrimination in which Tibeats treating Northup less favourably based on the race.

Data 3

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00: 55:55)

Edwin Epps : "And that servant... "which knew his lord's will... which knew his lord's will. "...and prepared not himself..." Prepared not himself. "...neither did according to his will..."shall be beaten with many stripes." Do you hear that? "Stripes." That nigger that don't obey his lord... That's his master,do you see? **That there nigger shall be beaten with many stripes. Now, "many" signifies a great many. 40, 100, 150 lashes. 40, 100, 150 lashes. That's scripture.**"

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Edwin Epps would treat the Negroes badly based on his rule. Racial discrimination also found in this data which character Epss as owner announce the rule of slavery and the Niggers who do not follow his command will get the torture, it is clear that treating Niggers badly occurs in this society. Niggers refer to people who has a black colour of skin, therefor found form racial discrimination based on the colour of skin.

Data 4

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,01: 43:50)

Bass : “White and black alike ...
Mr. Epps : “You comparing me to a nigger, Bass?”
Bass : “I’m only asking, in the eyes of God” what is the difference?”
Mr. Epps : “**You might as well ask what the difference is between a white man and a baboon.** I seen one of them critters in Orleans. Know just as much as any nigger I got”

Based on the script above, Bass said that all people are same, but Epps said that the black people are alike with a baboon which not same with white. In this data, also showed form of racial discrimination when character Epps was distinct white people with black people based on colour own, and said that black people are baboons.

Social stratification

Social stratification giving differences between people with other, however people are equal but in this movie that differences often found. Social stratification was analyzed is slavery, caste and class.

Slavery

In 12 Years a Slave movie many scene show that slave not as human but as property. There are four major characteristic of slavery in American history.

It was for life and was inherited

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00: 30:17)

Eliza : “Please, sir. Do not divide my family. Do not take me unless you take my children.
Theopilus : “Eliza! Quiet!”
Eliza : “You will have the most faithful slave in me... the most faithful slave that has ever lived... But I beg that you do not separate us”
White Man : **“Your price for the boy?”**
Theopilus : “Eliza! Stop it!... I will give you something to cry about... Randall, come forward... Come, come, come. Now, **do you see how fit this boy is? Like ripe fruit.**

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Eliza desire her child to be with her, but her child will be sold to white man. Characteristic of slavery was found in this data where Theopilus offering Randal to white man. The child was sold and become slave too because his mother is slave.

It shows that slavery was inherited.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00: 40:29)

Eliza : “Under the circumstances, he is a slaver... But you truckle at his boot. You luxuriate in his favor”
Solomon Northup : **“I survive! I will not fall into despair!... I will offer up my talents to Master Ford! I will keep myself hearty until freedom is opportune!”**

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Northup is desire for life. He survives to get his freedom by showing his talent to Ford. It clearly shows that survive are important if they are need to life, because slavery was for life.

Slaves were considered property, not human beings.

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,00: 25:03)

Jonus Ray : “Who's in charge here?”

Captain : "I'm the captain!"
Jonus Ray : "I'm Mr. Jonus Ray... **My solicitor has documentation verifying the Negro known as Clemens Ray is my property**"
Captain : "I know nothing of this arrangement"
Jonus Ray : "**You are ordered to return that property immediately or be charged with thievery**"
Captain : "Free him"

Based on script above, it can be seen that Clements is property of Jonus Ray. He has a document ownership of slave Clements. It is clearly shown that the slave consider as property who own by other.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00: 30:32)

Theopilus : " **uh... 600 for the boy... fair and final... "**
Superb : "done"
Theopilus : "Superb. A moment, please... Mr. Ford"
Eliza : "Please"
Theopilus : " Eliza!"
Mr Ford : " **how much for the little girl?**"

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Randall was sold by showing the good body of him. Form of slavery also found in this data where Eliza's child was sold as property not as human.

Slaves were denied rights

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013, 00:19:35)

James H. Burch : "**I don't want to hear a word out of none of you! Not a one**"

Based on the script above, it can be inferred that Burch did not permit Nigger to talk. The form of denied right show in this data when the character Burch was prohibits Niggers. There is has a violation of right because all people has a right to speak.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,00:21:26)

Clements : “**If you want to survive, do and say as little as possible.** Tell no one who you really are and tell no one you can read and write... unless you want to be a dead nigger”

Based on the script above, it can be inferred that the Niggers not allow to speak if want to still life, it show that Niggers right to speak was limited and their ability must hidden. All people regarded with the same right but this data clearly show the right of black people were denied.

Coercion was used to keep slaves “in their place”

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,00:18:33)

Clements :” The reality to come is us being transported southward. New Orleans, if I was to venture... After we arrive, we'll be put to market... And beyond that... Well, **I suppose once in a slave state, there's only one outcome**

John : “No”

Clements : “I don't say that to give you empty agitation, John.”

Based on the script above, it can be inferred that after the Niggers was bought by slaver, their predestination is only one. It means that they are only keeping in their master place.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,01:38:45)

Negro Man : “I just wanna say something about Uncle Abram... **He was a good man... and he always looked out for us ever since we were little...**God love him...God bless him...God keep him.

Solomon Northup : “Amen”

Based on the script above, it can be shown that uncle Abram is a Nigger slave who already working long time to Epps. Nigger man said that uncle Abrams always looked the slave children since they are little, until he die. It means that he was work in that place and die in that place too. It is clearly show that the slaves will keep in the master place.

Caste

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,00:33:13)

Tibeats : “For all of you raw niggers that don't know... **my name is John Tibeats, William Ford's chief carpenter... You will refer to me as Master** ... Mr. Chapin is the overseer on this plantation. You, too, will refer to him as "Master." So, clap your hands”

Based on the script above, it can be inferred that form of racial caste system occurred. Northup cleverer than Tibeats, but the position Tibeats is higher than Northup.

Data 2

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,01:42:00)

Mr. Epps : “Hey, Bass.
Bass : “Oh, no, no, no”
Mr. Epps : “**No shame in taking respite from the heat... Drink, shade...** It's ungodly for travelers, hearty or otherwise”
Mr.Epps : “What's funny?”
Bass : “Epps, I merely mean to finish the work at hand, as requested. And as paid for”

Based on the script above, it can be seen that the differences between white and black labour. Bass as a white labor was offered drink by Epps without think about the black labour. However Bass and the Niggers same in job but the treatment is different. It clearly show that the position of white people is higher than black even though they are uneducated

Class

Data 1

(12 Years a Slave, 2013,01: 28:54)

Epps : “Armsby?”
Treach : “64 pounds”
Epps : “A good day's labor would average 200 pounds”
Armsby : “Yes, sir”

Based on the script above, it can be seen that Armsby is new labor and did not get the target. Mr Epss give his suggestion to be a good labor. It shows that Epss as owner was control of resource revenue of labour job with decide the target that must be obtained.

DISCUSSION

Racial discrimination experienced by black people because their colour of skin and nationality. Black people or Niggers regarded low level than white. Form of racial discrimination found in negative or less well treatment, restricting, insult, and distinction black people. After analyzing the movie, the writer concludes that there racial discrimination and social stratification between black people and white people of American century in eighen century. Solomon Northup is one of representation of black people in that period.

After analyzing the movie, the researcher suggests for next researcher who are interested in the same field to do research more deeply about the topic. The researcher also suggests to reader for can appreciated the literary work more than only to read or watch.

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