

## **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ISSUES AS SHOWN BY SOLOMON AND PATSEY IN *12 YEARS A SLAVE* MOVIE**

**Dezelin Brigitha Julan, Satyawati Surya, Nita Maya Valiantien**

Department of English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences,  
Mulawaman University  
E-mail: brigithadezelin@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to describe the portrayal of racial discrimination as shown in Solomon and Patsey characters of *12 Years A Slave* movie. In order to do so, this study used Allport's theory of intentional, explicit discrimination focusing on several types of racial discrimination such as verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination. The data used in this study were words in forms of narration, dialogue, and action related to the portrayal of racial discrimination towards Solomon and Patsey characters that were taken from *12 Years A Slave* movie script. This study showed that the portrayal of racial discrimination as shown in Solomon and Patsey characters of *12 Years A Slave* movie was classified into five types of intentional, explicit discrimination behaviours such as verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination. On one hand, the portrayal of racial discrimination as shown in Solomon character was included as verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination. On the other hand, the portrayal as shown in Patsey character was a bit different since Patsey did not experience any segregation treatment. This study concluded the portrayal of racial discrimination as shown in Solomon and Patsey characters occurred as the result of white supremacy ideology as the basis thinking and belief of most white characters in the movie.

**Keywords:** *racial, discrimination, racial discrimination, character*

### **ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penggambaran diskriminasi ras pada karakter Solomon dan Patsey difilm *12 Years A Slave*. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori diskriminasi intensional, eksplisit dari Allport untuk menganalisa penggambaran diskriminasi ras difilm tersebut yang berfokus pada beberapa tipe diskriminasi ras seperti kekerasan verbal, pengucilan, segregasi, kekerasan fisik, dan pemusnahan. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini berupa kata-kata dalam bentuk narasi, dialog, dan aksi yang berhubungan dengan penggambaran diskriminasi ras terhadap karakter Solomon dan Patsey yang*

diambil dari skrip film *12 Years A Slave*. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggambaran diskriminasi ras seperti yang diperlihatkan oleh karakter Solomon dan Patsey difilm *12 Years A Slave* dibagi kedalam lima tipe diskriminasi secara intensional, eksplisit seperti kekerasan verbal, pengucilan, segregasi, kekerasan fisik, dan pemusnahan. Penggambaran diskriminasi ras pada karakter Solomon termasuk kedalam lima tipe tersebut: kekerasan verbal, pengucilan, segregasi, kekerasan fisik, dan pemusnahan. Di sisi lain, penggambaran diskriminasi ras pada karakter Patsey sedikit berbeda mengingat ia tidak mengalami tipe segregasi. Maka dari itu, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penggambaran diskriminasi ras seperti yang diperlihatkan oleh karakter Solomon dan Patsey terjadi dikarenakan adanya ideologi supremasi kulit putih yang dianut sebagian besar karakter-karakter kulit putih yang ada difilm tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** ras, diskriminasi, diskriminasi ras, karakter

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Movie as one of the tool to express humans' experiences of life obviously includes social issues that happen in real life. Those represented issues in movie may serve purposes such as showing certain events in life, delivering some parties' hope to gain a better life by showing what have happened in the real life to the movie, and etc. Thus, there are so many movies based on true stories happen in real life to be presented to the audience. One of those movies is *12 Years A Slave*. This movie tells about the African-American race slavery in the early nineteenth that has shattered the human rights equality. It is a story of skin coloured discrimination.

The researcher wanted to describe the portrayal of horrible and inhumanly racial discrimination practiced by white characters in the movie towards the black characters who were imposed to be their slaves. There was a great deal of human rights issues being portrayed in the movie to show that all kinds of human being: black, white, yellow, red, or any other skin colour do not deserve to be treated racially. As the chosen characters to be focused on, the researcher chose to analyse Solomon Northup and Patsey characters as the victims of racial discrimination. The researcher uses Allport's theory about intentional, explicit discrimination which covers five discriminatory behaviours such as verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination. Thus, this study is entitled *Racial Discrimination Issues as Shown by Solomon and Patsey in 12 Years A Slave Movie*.

## **B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. ALLPORT'S INTENTIONAL, EXPLICIT DISCRIMINATION**

Allport explains the sequential steps of an individual to behave negatively toward members of another racial group, which are verbal antagonism, avoidance,

segregation, physical attack and extermination (qtd. in National Research Council 56).

## **a. Verbal Antagonism**

The racial comments may not be regarded as serious enough to be unlawful (balanced against concerns about freedom of speech), but they constitute a clear form of hostility. Verbal and nonverbal hostility are first steps on a continuum of interracial harm-doing. Verbal abuse and nonverbal rejection are reliable indicators of discriminatory effects, as they disadvantage the targets of such behaviour and creating a hostile environment. They also precede with more overtly damaging forms of treatment, such as denial. In legal settings, verbal and nonverbal treatment are often presented as evidence of the discriminators' biased state of mind, as they may also constitute unlawful discriminatory behaviour when they rise to the level of creating a hostile work environment (Allport in National Research Council 57).

## **b. Avoidance**

A discrimination performed in form of avoidance appears when people may choose to not associate with the members of disadvantaged racial groups that may cause them to be isolated. In legal settings, avoidance of casual contact can appear as evidence indicating hostile intent. Avoidance appears harmless in any given situation which can lead to long-term exclusion and segregation. It may be particularly problematic in situations in which social networking matters, for example: employment hiring and promotion, educational opportunities and access to health care. Avoiding another person because of race can be just as damaging as more active and direct abuse (Allport in National Research Council 57).

## **c. Segregation**

If one could not understand well about segregation, then it may appear similar to the avoidance. Both are indeed a form of discrimination by stepping away the disadvantaged racial group, yet the difference is laid on the one who does this act. Avoidance is performed by individual, while segregation is performed by public institutions such as public services, schools, etc. The most common examples include denial of equal education, housing, employment and health care on the basis of race. Most of people in America support laws enforcing fair and equal opportunity, but some people do not support civil rights for all racial groups are likely to exhibit intentional and explicit discrimination by any measure. They see the threat of the out group as both economic and value based (Allport in National Research Council 58).

## **d. Physical Attacks**

Physical attacks are collated with other overt forms of discrimination. Hate crimes are closely linked to the expression of explicit prejudice and result from perceived threats to the group's economic standing and values (Allport in National Research Council 58).

## **e. Extermination**

This form of discrimination behaviour is also known as mass killings based on racial or ethnic animus do occur. These are complex phenomena; in addition to the sorts of individual hostility and prejudice described above, difficult life conditions, strong leadership, social support for hostile acts and socialisation that accepts explicit discrimination (Allport in National Research Council 58).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Discriminatory Behaviours</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1.	Verbal antagonism	Disparaging racial comments in or out of the target's presence.	Verbal and non verbal hostility, verbal abuse and non verbal rejection, denial, and unlawful discriminatory behaviours.
2.	Avoidance	Alienation to the target of the racial group in such to isolate them.	Avoidance of casual contact, long term exclusion, and segregation. Problematic in social networking matters, for examples: employment hiring and promotion, educational opportunities and access to health care.
3.	Segregation	Exclude members of a disadvantaged racial group from the allocation of resources and from access to institutions.	Denial of equal education, housing, employment, and health care.
4.	Physical attacks	Racial group that have been perpetrated by proponents of segregation.	Harm treatment, the expression of explicit prejudice.
5.	Extermination	Encompass histories of	Mass killing based on racial or ethnic animus

		institutionalised prejudice and discrimination.	do occur, difficult life conditions, and hostile acts.
--	--	---	--

## 2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The first previous study was entitled *Racism in 12 Years A Slave Movie* by Taufik in 2016. Taufik's study focused on the kinds and impacts of racial injustice towards black characters in *12 Years A Slave* movie. He used three different theories to find out the answers of his objectives: Paradies et. al and Liliweri's theories about kinds of racial injustice and Utsey et. al theory about impacts of racial injustice. The form of Taufik's study was a descriptive qualitative research. The results of his study found five kinds of racial injustice along with its three impacts. Those kinds of racial injustice were prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, violence, and segregation. Meanwhile, its three impacts were shown as racism-related trauma, racism-related stress and distress, and anticipatory racism reaction.

The second previous study was entitled *Anything but Race: Content Analysis of Racial Discourse* by Smith in 2017. This study aimed to find out whether students at Michigan Western University were consciously and/or unconsciously practicing the colourblind racism. Smith's study obtained his data from the responses of 15 students at Michigan Western University regarding his racism-related questions. After obtaining the data needed, Smith's study analysed them to find out whether the responses showed any practice of colourblind racism, consciously and/or unconsciously by using Bonilla-Silva frameworks of colourblind racism. The result of Smith's study showed that most of his respondents claimed they did not practice any colourblind racism for they were widely aware of its (racism issues) existence in USA particularly in Michigan.

## C. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design of this study posed as a descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research concerns on involving the analysis to summarise method with an analytical description data analysis (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge 24). This means when presenting data analysis is done by describing the data itself. In this study, the research instrument was the researcher herself due to the fact that the researcher conducted all the steps required in completing this study. Words were the data needed in this study in forms of narration, dialogue, and also action related to the racial discrimination issues towards Solomon Northup and Patsey characters that were taken from *12 Years A Slave* movie script. In collecting the data needed in this study, there were two steps done by the researcher such as watching *12 Years A Slave* movie and taking notes of the narrations, dialogues, and actions related to the objective of this study as described in the film script.

As the process of analysing data, this study followed the three steps of analysing qualitative data analysis by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The first step was data condensation. In this step, the researcher started its analysis after collecting the data by focusing the analysis to find out types of discriminatory behaviours which were practiced by white characters towards Solomon Northup and Patsey characters as the victims of racial discrimination issues in *12 Years A Slave* movie. The second step was data display. The researcher displayed the data analysis into descriptions by explaining the indicators of Allport's five discriminatory behaviours that were identified within each data. The third step was drawing conclusions. The researcher concluded the discriminatory behaviours which were practiced by white characters towards Solomon Northup and Patsey characters as the portrayal of racial discrimination in *12 Years A Slave* movie.

## **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. VERBAL ANTAGONISM**

The first discriminatory behaviour is known as verbal antagonism. This behaviour covers acts such as verbal abuse, denial, and unlawful discriminatory behaviours (Allport in National Research Council 57). As the victims of racial discrimination, both Solomon Northup and Patsey received such treatments of verbal antagonism due to their belonged race as black people. They were not treated as human being but merely as property of those white people who claimed themselves as Solomon and Patsey's masters.

#### **a. Solomon Northup Character**

Verbal antagonism behaviour also included an act of denial. The act of denying one's capabilities (members of disadvantaged racial group) to perform things outside the stereotypes of being a member in a disadvantaged racial group. Similar as to what happened towards Solomon when he showed his intelligence in giving suggestion to create another path passing through a river to Ford as his master.

Data 5 (min. 36:39)

Tibeats : **Are you an engineer or a nigger?**

Ford : Let the man say his piece.

One day, Solomon gave his suggestion to carry the woods efficiently by passing through a river instead of the land. Hearing Solomon spoke his plans up to Ford was somehow enraging Tibeats which triggered him to perform the verbal antagonism behaviour. Tibeats cut off Solomon's explanation by disparaging racial comments and denying his intelligence at the same time.

Tibeats took Solomon as nothing but a slave due to Solomon's belonged race as black people. He refused to see any black people to afford lives (doing and/or posses things) just like as white people might afford. It was because of his biased

state of mind to associate black people as lower race and that they were created to serve their lives as mere slaves. Therefore, when certain case like Solomon appeared, Tibbeats could not bring himself to accept it.

## **b. Patsey Character**

Another black character who also became the victim of verbal antagonism behaviour was Patsey. Patsey was a black girl who worked for Edwin Epps long before Solomon Northup was being sold to him.

Data 15 (min. 56:58)

Epps : I ain't done, Treach. Ain't I owed a minute to luxuriate on the work Patsey done?

Treach : Yes, sir.

Epps : Damn queen. Born and bred to the field. **A nigger among niggers.**

Epps owned a cotton plantation and had his black workers to work as pickers in the field. He developed a system where every cotton picked by the workers must be measured and its minimum average per day was two hundred pounds for each picker to fulfill. There was a whipping punishment waiting for those workers who fulfilled less than two hundred pounds of cotton.

As shown in the dialogue above, Epps proudly said that he complimented the work of Patsey for she always met beyond his expectation. Yet, what Epps had done above was not an act of complimenting at all. All he did was insulting the existence of Patsey as human being. Epps stated that Patsey was born to work in the field implying that she was destined to be as a slave not as a free human being. Furthermore, his statement addressing Patsey as 'nigger among niggers' posed bigger insult than any other verbal abuse intended to the black characters in the movie. Epps clearly referred Patsey as slave among slaves: she positioned the very bottom seat of being enslaved. That she deserved to live such horrible life (being owned) due to her belonged race as black people.

## **2. AVOIDANCE**

The second behaviour of intentional and explicit discrimination is called as avoidance. Avoidance is the behaviour through which avoiding the target of disadvantaged racial group in terms of casual contact, long exclusion, and cause no physical harm to the target (segregation) (Allport in National Research Council 57). As the target of disadvantaged racial group, Solomon Northup and Patsey characters received the treatments of avoidance by their white masters.

### **a. Solomon Northup Character**

The form of avoidance behaviour towards Solomon Northup was practiced by his first white master, William Ford. Truthfully, William Ford was not the kind of white master who treated his workers as property. He treated them as human

beings. Yet, the fact that he bought and acted as he owned them was inevitable to include him as a slaver as well.

Data 8 (min. 53:31)

Solomon : Master Ford. You must know that I'm not a slave.

Master Ford : I cannot hear that.

Solomon : Before I came to you, I was a free man.

Master Ford : I'm trying to save your life. And I have a debt to be mindful of. And that is to Edwin Epps now. And he is a hard man. Prides himself on being a nigger breaker. **But truthfully, I could find no others who would take you.** You've made a reputation of yourself. Whatever the circumstances, you are an exceptional nigger, Platt. But I fear no good will come of it.

Ford chose to sell Solomon to another white master as his resolve saving Solomon's life under Tibeats' murder intention. Previously, Solomon and Tibeats were involved in a fight to the attempt on Solomon's life. Realising the severe effect of Tibeats' murder attempt, Ford decided to sell Solomon to Edwin Epps, another white master for the sake of saving Solomon's life.

The issue laid on Ford's act was that he chose avoidance behaviour to save Solomon's life. Instead of facing directly the root of the problem (dealing with Tibeats), Ford avoided Solomon by selling him to another white master whom notoriously as the worst master for black workers. This act of Ford was included as avoidance in employment hiring because he excluded Solomon Northup from his cycle (employment) instead of Tibeats who was red handedly caught as the one in fault due to Solomon's race as black people. Ford might just capable of firing Tibeats instead of selling Solomon away since he knew exactly who was at fault between the two of them, but he did not.

## **b. Patsey Character**

As a black character, Patsey also received the avoidance treatments from Mistress Epps due to her jealousy. Mistress Epps realised that her husband favoured Patsey in a different way. This fact triggered her to practice the avoidance behaviour towards Patsey.

Data 18 (min. 1:16:32)

Mistress Epps : A moment from the dancing. Come sample what I baked for y'all. **There'd be none for you, Patsey.**

One night, Mistress Epps interrupted the dancing moment by giving them cookies which she claimed as baking on her own. Every worker took one, but when Patsey almost took one, she was stopped by Mistress Epps' exclamation telling that the cookies were for everyone but her.

Hearing this, Patsey chose to turn away to hide her shock and disappointed feeling over Mistress Epps words. Mistress Epps' exclamation of excluding Patsey from all the black workers was included as avoidance behaviour in form of casual contact. She intentionally avoided Patsey in the presence of other people to show how much she resented her.

### **3. SEGREGATION**

When an act of avoidance continues, it may lead to another severe racial behaviour known as segregation. Segregation refers to the act of treating people differently (in a bad way) due to their racial status (Allport in National Research Council 58). Between the two black characters, Solomon Northup and Patsey, there was only one character who received segregation treatment. The character was Solomon Northup. The exact reason appeared unclear, but it might be related to Epps' preferences as he personally favoured Patsey.

#### **a. Solomon Northup Character**

Epps as Solomon second white master practiced segregation behaviour towards Solomon by giving different treatment among his workers. He treated his white worker less brute than his black workers especially towards Solomon.

Data 9 (min. 1:29:10)

Epps : A good's day labour would average 200 pounds.

Armsby : Yes, sir.

Epps : I'm sure in no time, you'll develop as a picker. But it takes effort, boy. Put some damn effort into it.

Armsby : Yes, sir.

Epps : **Take them out, get to whipping.**

When measuring time arrived, Solomon only picked about a hundred and sixty pounds of cotton, while Armsby (a white man) was lower than him around sixty-four pounds of cotton. Obviously, if sticking to the rule, both of them would get whipped for not being able to reach the minimum average. Yet, Epps showed different treatment towards Armsby. He only warned (not even scolded) Armsby to work harder in the future so that he could reach at least the minimum average of cotton picked.

This act of Epps was contrary towards Solomon when he directly ordered Treach to get Solomon and another black worker to get whipped due to their incapacities. Epps' racial behaviour towards his black and white workers was identified as segregation in employment. He denied to treat his workers (black and white) equally. He treated Armsby way better than Solomon and other black workers. Even if all of them (Armsby and black workers) posed similar status as Epps' workers. This segregation behaviour happened due to Epps' biased state of mind of taking lowly other people outside of his race.

## **4. PHYSICAL ATTACKS**

The next step of discriminatory behaviour which inflicts fatal harm is physical attacks. When a person has reached this step, he or she will express their racial prejudice and hatred through physical attacks that may cause long term effect (Allport in National Research Council 58). In cases of Solomon Northup and Patsey as the victims of racial discrimination, they received the physical attacks behaviour cruelly.

### **a. Solomon Northup Character**

When Epps saw Solomon had a conversation with Patsey, that fact somehow pissed him off. He asked what they were talking about, yet Solomon refused to let him know since the conversation itself was about Solomon helping Patsey to get away from Epps (everyone in the cotton plantation knew if Epps was obsessed with Patsey).

Data 13 (min. 1:10:25)

Epps : You damn liar. I saw you talking with her. Tell me.

Solomon : I cannot speak of what did not occur.

Epps : **I'll cut your black throat!**

Solomon lied to Epps that he did not have any conversation with Patsey and it was just Epps' imagination. While the truth was the Solomon had conversation with Patsey telling her to go straight to her house without looking back at Epps when he called her.

Solomon knew that Epps would just make his way to bother Patsey which would cause her to get another harsh treatment from Mistress Epps. The physical attacks done by Epps was he pushed Solomon hard enough to have him touch the ground and threatening him by shoving a knife to his throat. There was no injury came out of this, yet Epps' behaviour was still included as physical attack since he inflicted murder attempt to Solomon.

### **b. Patsey Character**

If there was justification in comparing which one between Solomon Northup or Patsey characters who received the worst physical attacks, then it must be Patsey. As what befell towards Patsey, she received such treatments either from Epps or Mistress Epps. Both of them seemed to develop tendency of inflicting pains to Patsey when she did not even do things to rage them.

Data 19 (min. 1:00:31)

Mistress Epps : Sell her.

Epps : What's all this?

Mistress Epps : You will sell the negress.

Epps : Sell little Pats? She pick with more vigor than any other nigger. Choose another to go.

Mistress Epps : No other. Sell her.

Epps : I will not.  
Mistress Epps : **You will remove that Black bitch from this property** or I'll take myself back to Cheneyville.

During the dance party at Epps' residence, Mistress Epps was under the control of her jealousy then suddenly throw an empty bottle of wine and threw it straight to Patsey's forehead. Then she ordered her husband to sell Patsey by referring her as 'Black bitch' which was offensive. Mistress Epps had clearly practiced the behaviour of physical attacks towards Patsey due to her jealousy. The physical attacks she gave towards Patsey had inflicted physical wound as the bottle wine cut Patsey's forehead.

## 5. EXTERMINATION

The last and most dangerous of discriminatory behaviour is extermination. This behaviour refers to the act of mass killing, putting the disadvantaged racial group into difficult life conditions, and hostile acts (Allport in National Research Council 58). Once again, both Solomon Northup and Patsey also received this treatment given by their white masters: Edwin Epps and Mistress Epps. For the record, the form of extermination treatments experienced by Patsey was not literally exterminating her physically, but exterminated her willing to live. While for Solomon Northup, it literally almost exterminated his existence.

### a. Solomon Northup Character

Tibeats who resented Solomon so much that he conducted an attempt to exterminate his life by hanging Solomon onto a tree. This act obviously included as an extermination behaviour for Tibeats' intention was to kill him.

Data 14 (min. 48:21)

Chapin : Gentlemen, whoever moves that nigger is a dead man. I am the overseer on this plantation. William Ford holds the mortgage on Platt. If you hang him, he will lose his debt. You have no claim to his life. As for you two... if you have any regard for your own safety... I say, be gone!

Tibeats : You got no cause! **Platt is mine, and mine to do with as I please!** If you touch...

Tibeats and his two white men attempted to revenge on Solomon after he fought back Tibeats. Tibeats who prided himself so much as a white man could not take such treatment which then decided to kill Solomon. He and his two white men got Solomon to his knees, laced him in a rope and then hung Solomon by his neck to a tree.

Obviously, this act was not just an ordinary physical attack which its purpose to inflict physical injuries. Tibeats' intention had set his heart to kill Solomon which was shown by his statement above 'Platt is mine, and mine to do with as I

please'. Somehow, he felt that he owned Solomon's life just because he thought his rank as human being far above Solomon since he was a white man.

## b. Patsey Character

The form of extermination treatment received by Patsey character was a bit different comparing to Solomon. She was 'exterminated' in another way by being put in a difficult life conditions. The one who put Patsey to have a difficult life condition was no other than Mistress Epps.

Data 22 (min. 1:47:12)

Patsey : I went to Master Shaw's plantation.

Epps : Ah! You admit it.

Patsey : Yes, freely. And you know why? I got this from Mistress Shaw. **Mistress Epps won't even grant me no soap to clean with.** I stink so much, I make myself gag! 500 pounds of cotton. Day in, day out! More than any man here. And for that, I will be clean. That's all I ask. This, here, what I went to Shaw's for.

Based on Patsey's explanation of her reason sneaking to Shaw's plantation was heartbreaking. She had to sneak into another master's plantation whom willingly to give her a bar of soap so that she could clean herself. Even knowing she would get whipped one day if getting caught, Patsey still chose to do that. Given the unbearable pain of the punishment held in Epps' plantation should scare her away. Yet, she still sneaked her way out. There was only one thing coming up out of this: Patsey had given such difficult life conditions to the point she dared to bet her back getting whipped just for the sake of a soap bar.

## 6. DISCUSSION

After analysing the portrayal of racial discrimination towards Solomon Northup and Patsey characters, the findings in this study posed several similarities and differences with the two previous studies. The first previous study was entitled *Racism in 12 Years A Slave Movie* by Taufik. Taufik's study concerned its analysis to find out the kinds and impacts of racial injustice towards black characters in *12 Years A Slave* movie. The result of Taufik's study showed five kinds of racial injustice which were prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, violence, and segregation. While, for the impacts found of racial injustice were as racism-related trauma, racism-related stress and distress, and anticipatory racism reaction.

The results showed in Taufik's study posed similarity and differences with the result in the current study. The similarity between Taufik's study and the current study was on the matter of racial injustice' types as shown in *12 Years A Slave* movie. Both studies' result agreed there were the portrayal of racial injustice or discrimination in forms of discrimination, violence, and segregation practiced by white characters towards black characters in the movie. Meanwhile, the differences of results shown in each study were: (1) Taufik's study showed five

kinds of racial injustice which were prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, violence, and segregation; (2) Taufik's study also found out the impacts of racial injustice towards black characters in *12 Years A Slave* movie as racism-related trauma, racism-related stress and distress, and anticipatory racism reaction.

Those result were contrary to the result found in the current study since the focus of the study was not about finding out the kinds and impacts of racial injustice. Rather, the current study found there were five discriminatory behaviours as the result of intentional, explicit discrimination practiced by white characters towards black characters particularly on Solomon Northup and Patsey characters. The five discriminatory behaviours found were verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination.

The second previous study was entitled *Anything but Race: Content Analysis of Racial Discourse* by Smith which aiming to find out whether the chosen students at Michigan Western University consciously or unconsciously practiced the colourblind racism. The result of Smith's study claimed that most of his repondents did not practice any colourblind racism due to the facts that all his chosen students were widely aware of racism issue in USA particularly in Michigan and also that they had already taken racism classes which helped them to be more aware of its existence and effects.

As well as in the first previous study, there were also similarity and difference between the second previous study and the current study. The similarity laid on the results of Smith's study and the current study was about the existence of racism in USA, remembering that the current study's object, *12 Years A Slave* was a true story about racial discrimination in USA. Thus, both studies had proven that in USA, regardless as being one of the biggest multicultural nation, still portraying the existence of racial discrimination.

The difference on Smith's study result with the current study's was on this fact: Smith's study showed that the chosen students at Michigan Western University did not practice any form colourlind racism partly due to the fact that they had taken classes about racism. They were fully aware of its impacts to the living condition in Michigan as one of the multicultural states in USA. On the other hand, the result of the current study implied the white practitioners of racial discriminatory behaviours in *12 Years A Slave* movie seemed aware of their racism behaviours, yet still embraced and practiced it anyway due to their biased state of mind as white supremacy (a belief to take white race as the supreme kind above all race).

This study focused to describe the portrayal of racial discrimination towards two black characters in *12 Years A Slave* movie: Solomon Northup and Patsey characters. Both of these characters received several discriminatory behaviours given by the white characters. In Solomon Northup's case, he received five discriminatory behaviours which were verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation,

physical attacks, and extermination. While in Patsey's case, she received four discriminatory behaviours such as verbal antagonism, avoidance, physical attacks, and extermination. There were two reasons of Patsey for not experiencing the discriminatory behaviour of segregation: (1) Patsey had never picked cotton less than the minimum average standard in Epps' plantation which put her in an impossible position to be treated segregately (recalling the time when Solomon received segregation behaviour was due to his incapability of picking more cotton) and (2) Patsey was being favoured personally by Epps. This fact somehow prevented her to be segregated.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The result of this study reveals five discriminatory behaviours practiced by white characters towards Solomon Northup and Patsey characters in the movie. The racial discrimination occurs through the five discriminatory behaviours such as verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attacks, and extermination. In addition, there is a certain reason of why those white characters practiced the five discriminatory behaviours to Solomon Northup and Patsey characters. It is because the biased state of mind as white supremacist of believing that white people are the supreme race of human beings and therefore they pose some kind of invisible privilege to discriminate other races, especially on black people.

## **REFERENCES**

- 12 Years A Slave*. Dir. Steve McQueen. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Entertainment One Films, and Lionsgate. 2013. DVD.
- Hancock, Beverley, Elizabeth Ockleford, and Kate Windridge. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. National Institute for Health Research. (2009): 24. PDF.
- Miles, Matthew B., A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. "The Substantive Start: Chapter 1 Introduction." *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 3rd ed. California: Sage Publications, Inc., (2014): 31-33. PDF.
- National Research Council. "Theories of Discrimination." *Measuring Racial Discrimination*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. (2004): 55-58. Web. 04 July 2019.
- Ridley, John. "12 Years A Slave." Flim Script. *Springfield! Sprigfield!*. 2013. Web.15 July 2019.
- Smith, Christopher. *Anything but Race: Content Analysis of Racial Discourse*. Master Thesis. Michigan: Western Michigan University. 2017. PDF.

# *Ilmu Budaya*

**Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya**

e-ISSN 2549-7715 | Volume 5 | Nomor 1 | Januari 2021 | Hal: 121—135  
Terakreditasi Sinta 4

---

Taufik, Muhammad. "Racism in *12 Years A Slave* Movie." *English and Literature Journal* 3.1, 2016. Makassar: UIN Alauddin. PDF.