

Prejudice Against Japanese-Americans in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*

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Abstrak

Prasangka, terutama prasangka rasial, adalah salah satu masalah sosial yang masih terus terjadi di Amerika. Namun, dari sekian banyak masalah prasangka rasial di Amerika, masyarakat umum masih sangat jarang membahas mengenai prasangka terhadap orang Asia-Amerika, terlebih lagi terhadap mereka yang merupakan warga keturunan Jepang. Dalam novel *Snow Falling on Cedars*, David Guterson mencoba untuk memberikan gambaran mengenai prasangka-prasangka yang dialami oleh warga Jepang-Amerika, baik dari sudut pandang orang keturunan Jepang sebagai korban maupun dari sudut pandang orang kulit putih sebagai pelaku prasangka. Oleh karena itu, studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa saja prasangka yang diterima oleh warga Jepang-Amerika, apa penyebab timbulnya prasangka itu, dan apa saja dampak prasangka dalam kehidupan warga Jepang-Amerika. Menggunakan konsep prasangka dalam ilmu psikologi sosial, studi ini menemukan bahwa prasangka yang dialami oleh orang Jepang-Amerika adalah prasangka rasial, yang disebabkan oleh faktor-faktor seperti frustrasi pribadi, keraguan karena keterbatasan pengetahuan dan pengalaman tentang kelompok lain, ancaman terhadap harga diri seseorang, dan kompetisi untuk status, kekayaan dan kekuasaan. Prasangka memberikan beberapa pengaruh pada kehidupan para korbannya seperti tingkat kepercayaan diri yang rendah, kegagalan, ramalan yang terwujudkan sendiri dan juga kekerasan.

Kata Kunci: *prasangka, stereotip, diskriminasi*

Abstract

Prejudice, particularly racial prejudice, is one of the social problems, which still occurs in America. However, of the many problems of racial prejudice in America, people still rarely discuss about prejudice against Asian-Americans, especially toward those of Japanese descents. In the novel *Snow Falling on Cedars*, David Guterson tried to depict the prejudices experienced by the Japanese-American citizens, both from the standpoint of people of Japanese descent as the victims and the standpoint of white people as perpetrators of prejudice. Therefore, this study aimed to find out what kind of prejudices received by Japanese-Americans, what factors that led into the prejudice, and effects of prejudice toward Japanese-Americans' lives. Using the concept of prejudice in social psychology, this study reveals that the prejudice experienced by the Japanese-Americans is the racial prejudice, caused by factors such as personal frustration, uncertainty because of lack of knowledge or experience toward other group, threat to one's self-esteem, and competition for status, wealth, and power. The prejudice gives some influences on the characters' life, such as low self-esteem, disadvantages/failure, self-fulfilling prophecies, and also violence.

Keywords: *prejudice, stereotype, discrimination*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of prejudice and discrimination against minorities has long been one of the social problems that still occur in American society. The special privilege and rights, legally and socially, are only given to white Americans from the European descendants. Other American citizens such as Native Americans, African-Americans, Asian-American, and Latin-Americans are restricted or even eliminated their rights in most crucial facilities such as education, citizenship, land ownership, and many others. Even though all kind of racial discriminations were officially banned in the mid-20th century, the prejudice acts still continue in modern

Americans society. The prejudice that leads into racist acts still occurs in the employment, housing, education, lending, and government.

Through American history, we would have been very familiar with the prejudice against blacks. However, the prejudice that the blacks faced is not only racial issue in America. Other racial issues are still occurred in America, such as prejudice against Native Americans and Asian-Americans. People barely know about those prejudices because they never discussed them in public. For the example, in contrast to the blacks whom the prejudice acts are told in a variety of literary works, Asian-Americans do not have many writing and literary

works that depict the injustice they received. Only a few Asian-Americans literature that was known to the public.

Among literary works about Asian-Americans that are known to the public, most of them written from the viewpoint of Chinese-Americans. Only a few literary works discuss the prejudice experienced by the Japanese-Americans. David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* is one of few literary works that discussed Asian-Americans prejudice from the viewpoint of Japanese-Americans. Japanese-Americans were one of the biggest victims of American prejudice toward Asian people, especially because of the World War 2, in which the war changed the total perception of the American society against Japanese-Americans, even after the war ended.

David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* tells the story of prejudice that the Japanese-Americans experienced because of American citizens' prejudice against those who have Japanese ancestry. Set in 1954 in fictional island San Piedro, the novel tells about the prejudice that Kabuo Miyamoto faced because he was accused as murderer of Carl Heine, a well-respected white citizen of San Piedro. The main story is all about Kabuo's trial, but along the story there are some flashback that also tell about the bad treatment that the Japanese-Americans got from the whites, especially during the World War 2.

Snow Falling on Cedars is one of the works of western literature that depicting the ugly form of American society, the practice of racial prejudice and discrimination. Though technically this novel cannot be categorized as an Asian-American literature because it was not written by an Asian-American, yet the solid depiction regarding the society views against Japanese-Americans after World War II could provide a view to readers about the historical facts which is rarely discussed today. Based on those ideas, this study aims to analyze the form of prejudice against Japanese-Americans in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*, specifically the Japanese-Americans who lived in San Piedro, the causes, and the impacts of those acts towards the characters' lives.

In order to support the study, this study will use the concept of prejudice in social psychology, which is included in the tricomponent model of attitude principles; affection, behavioral, and cognition. Tricomponent model of attitude principles can be applied to study the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, because they have a strong relation toward each other and these three concept are closely related concept that affects each other. According to Stangor, stereotyping is the cognitive component of this field, defined as beliefs about the characteristic of member of a particular social group. If we begin to develop extreme stereotype toward something, we may also develop prejudice, a hostile or negative attitude toward a group of people or toward the

members of that outgroup. The stereotype and prejudice may also create discrimination, the unfavourable negative behaviors toward a group and its members (2012, p. 649).

The definition of prejudice is always changing from time to time in line with the changing forms of the prejudice itself. However, generally speaking, prejudice can be defined as an improper negative attitude against an individual based on the individual's group membership (Nelson, 2009, p. 2). The group may consist of people with particular ethnicity, gender, age, religion, or nationality or it can consist of people who are different in such a way from those who prejudiced. Prejudice based on incorrect information and understanding of a group to whom it is directed, however, prejudice is not directed to an isolated individual, but to an identifiable group or an identifiable member of a group (Edwards et al., 2014, 413).

Allport also defined prejudice as "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a group member" (1979, p. 9). The prejudice will eventually lead into forms ethnocentrism or in-group favoritism in general. People often show favoritism toward members of their own group without feeling hatred toward other group, but the positive view of their own group can turn into a form of prejudice.

Victims of prejudice are not limited to one person or one group of people only. Victimized groups of prejudice that have been studied mostly based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, disability, or mental illness. However, this study will focus on racial prejudice or racism as the main prejudice. Racism is certain kind of prejudice, which is based on an incorrect understanding and less precise generalization toward certain social groups. As a manifestation of moral and social disease in the community, racism can provide a wide range of adverse effects such as fear, intolerance, separation, segregation, discrimination, and hatred. Jones (1997, p. 10), also defines racism as a special form of prejudice, in which according to him the concept of perceived biological differences linked with form of competition and system justification, along with self-superiority. The differences would encourage people to continue judging others based on their appearance.

Prejudice cannot come out of nowhere. There are always some reasons why people decide to think and act differently toward other people in such bad way. According to Levin and Levin (1982, p. 202), the four causes are personal frustration, uncertainty because of lack of knowledge or experience toward other group, threat to one's self-esteem, and competition for status, wealth, and power. Personal frustration can lead into

scapegoating people who deemed as inferior group, in which can starting the prejudice tendency. Ignorance toward others also can trigger the prejudice because people only rely on stereotype and never try to know more about others. Prejudice also can be triggered by threat to self-esteem, in which mostly experienced by superior group who afraid of the inferior groups success. The threat to self-esteem is leading to competition for the top status in the society, such as competition in term of business and economics, and the result can trigger prejudice toward the loser group.

Prejudice against those regarded as inferior groups can give a wide range of effects to the victims. There are many possible effects of prejudice, but of course, it all depends on each individual. What kind of effects they have received and how strong it affects their lives, depend on how each individual receive those effect. Based on Kyriakidou (include in Syed, 2015, p. 24), prejudice can gives bad impact toward its victims, such as lowering their self-esteem, creating disadvantages/failure, emerging the self-fulfilling prophecies, and triggering violence toward the prejudice victims. Because of prejudice, the victims will slowly losing their self-esteem and unable to face others equally. Prejudice also gives disadvantages for the victims that make them became the failure of the society. The bad treatment that the victims received can change their perspective toward others, in which the outcomes actually worsen their situation. At last, the prejudice will result in violence, such as verbal abuse and physical violence.

This study tries to reveal the prejudice against Japanese-Americans in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Moreover, this study also tries to show the overall view of prejudice against minorities in America that almost never exposed before. The prejudice, in which later transforms into racism issue, always becomes the major topic that many scholars discussed when they talk about America. However, not everyone aware those Asian immigrants, Japanese especially, also become one of the racial prejudice victims in America. Hopefully, the results of this study not only explain the prejudice itself, but also the causes and the effects that following the prejudice acts.

METHOD

This study is a literary research. It is regarded as a descriptive qualitative study and use a library research. The source of the data is mainly the novel David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*, the e-book form that downloaded from Google Book online store. The data also supported by the 1999 movie adaptation of the novel by the same title, *Snow Falling on Cedars*. The data are in form of quotations from the direct and indirect speech of

the characters, dialogues, narrations, and epilogues inside David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* that present aspect of prejudice toward Japanese-Americans and the background story of Japanese-Americans Internment during World War II.

The method of collecting data, which is used in this study, is library method. Library method is used for collecting the data from the novel and in analyzing this study; library research is using an approach. The type of library research in this study is close reading to sort and classify the data in the form of statement and quotation.

In analyzing data, the study uses some steps. First, reading closely to David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* and analyze the text that deal with the used approach on the novel. Second, classifying data based on the statement of the problem in order to avoid broad discussion. There are three classified problems in this study, there are finding out the prejudice acts against Japanese-Americans, the causing factors of prejudice, and their impacts towards the characters. Third, describing the prejudice acts that are stated from the quotations and statements by using concept of prejudice. Fourth, revealing the causing factors of acts that the Whites did to Japanese-Americans, even though they are both the residents of San Pedro. Fifth, revealing the effects of prejudice that Japanese-Americans still endure even years after the Pearl Harbor Incident because of American public sentiment and stereotype against Asian and people with Japanese bloodline. Fifth, deducing based on the analysis that is in line with the problems.

DISCUSSION

Society's Prejudice against Japanese-Americans

Prejudice is a common issue that is faced by almost all American citizens who are deemed not part of the whites or European-Americans. The prejudice eventually leads into discrimination acts against minority groups. Prejudice against Native American for example, such prejudice existed in America but never made public. Prejudice against Asian immigrants who came to settle in America was also almost never discussed in public. For a long time, many Asians came to America to work. However, the whites did not welcome the arrival of Asians in America. Since they first came to America, Asians must endure the hardship because of the prejudice directed at them by the other Americans. This was compounded by the emergence of Yellow Peril idea, the idea in which East Asian people were seemed as mortal danger to the rest of the world. This idea expanded into a tremendous sentiment against Asians, in which their presence became feared and hated by other Americans.

As part of the immigrants who came to America to look for sources of new jobs, the Japanese people also

received unpleasant treatments from the local residents. Because they came from Asia, then the strongest prejudice that they received was racial prejudice. Local residents, especially the whites, had long put a sense of suspicion and hatred toward Asians, especially after Chinese labors filled many important positions in the American economy. Japanese people, who came from different country, also automatically labeled as aliens that threaten the lives of white Americans.

Because of their Asian racial lineage, Japanese people had physically different from Americans who almost all of them were whites. Because of the difference in their race, the Americans put the unfounded suspicions against those Asians, especially Japanese people. Even, although the Japanese did not have bad intentions against Americans because they came there just to work, but Americans actually showed indifference toward those immigrants, they even refused to recognize Japanese as human beings.

In David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*, racial prejudice against the Japanese people had been existing long before the main story happens. Japanese people left their homeland to seek new jobs in America after they heard that this country has big job opportunities. They came to the U.S. territories, which is adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, such as Hawaii and the west coast of America that directly overlooks the Pacific Ocean. One of their stopover places in this novel was the fictional island of San Pedro. The location of San Pedro that near California and the west coasts of America, also the fact that the island has a large area for the development of agriculture, encouraging the Japanese immigrant came there to work.

"Their parents and grandparents had come to San Pedro as far back as 1883. In that year two of them—Japan Joe and Charles Jose—lived in a lean-to near Cattle Point. Thirty-nine Japanese worked at the Port Jefferson mill, but the census taker neglected to list them by name, referring instead to Jap Number 1, Jap Number 2, Jap Number 3, Japan Charlie, Old Jap Sam, Laughing Jap, Dwarf Jap, Chippy, Boots, and Stumpy—names of this sort instead of real names." (p. 52)

As one of the island with incredible natural potential, San Pedro required a lot of manpower to fill the position of field workers in fields and mills. The first generation of Japanese immigrants, Issei, was the one who eventually filled the position of field workers. However, their arrival in San Pedro unfortunately also coincided with anti-Asian movement that is emerging across America. Therefore, not only the local residents of San Pedro that gave unfavorable treatment to Japanese immigrants, even the

government officials also refused to acknowledge their existence as human being.

As stated in quotation above, the government officials preferred to write down the mean and insulting names for Japanese immigrant in the population census data rather than wrote their real names. They referred the Japanese immigrants as Jap number 1, Jap number 2, and so on. Even some Japanese got the nicknames that blatantly insulting their physical condition, such as nickname Dwarf or Stumpy. The whites did it just because they felt weird with the racial differences between Americans and Japanese, therefore they thought that Japanese were bad and they consciously treated them badly too.

Although many years have passed since the first time Asians come to the United States, but the hatred towards Asians is never disappear. As implied in quotation above, although San Pedro's residents with Japanese descent almost mostly the second generation immigrants, but most of the whites residents, especially those who had long lived there, treated them as strangers. The whites even treated them as if they were in the lower status than the whites were, by constantly saying offensive nicknames like Japs.

"What about the Islander? Who's that?"

"The Islander is Miyamoto," said Dale Middleton.

"Ain't that right? The middle one?"

"The oldest," Ishmael Chambers explained.

"Kabuo—he's the oldest. The middle is Kenji. He's working at the cannery."

"Suckers all look alike," said Dale. "Never could tell them guys apart."

"Japs," William Gjoavaag threw in. He tossed the stub of his cigar into the water beside the Susan Marie. (p. 30)

The nickname "Japs", as also stated in the quotation above, was the nickname used by Americans to refer those who have Japanese ancestry, no matter whether they were the people of Japanese Empire, the first generation Japanese immigrants, as well as those who were born and raised in America. However, unfortunately, this nickname had a negative connotation because the word "Japs" was meant as an insult that contains the element of racism. This insult had the intent to humiliate the Japanese people, in which they were regarded as a bunch of losers. Moreover, this nickname continued to attach to all Japanese descent even until many years later.

The nickname "Japs" not only created the stereotype in which all Japanese were viewed as loser, but also made people to start seeing them as other group that different than the rest of Americans, even though those Japanese immigrants also part of American citizens. As stated before, the whites viewed the Japanese immigrants as

weirdo. They looked at the physical differences between Asians and Americans as something disgusting, weird, and unlovable. Because they were already eaten by their own view on Japanese people, they did not even bother to see the differences between each individuals, they only saw that all Japanese were the same, they were losers.

This case also happened in San Pedro, in which its residents did not even know their own fellow residents' names, they just knew that some of them were "Japs". As can be seen in the quotation above, the islanders argued about the one that had the highest possibility of meeting Carl Heine before he was killed. After searching for some evidences, they thought that the fishermen who used to work together with Carl were the one who had the greatest chance to kill him. However, their conversation turned into about those fishermen's names. Apparently, they did not remember the names of the fishermen. Only one person that memorized it and he tried to explain their names. However, the others showed their ignorance, because in their eyes, all Japanese were the same.

The prejudice against the Japanese-Americans reached its peak when the Second World War broke out. The war had nothing to do with the Japanese immigrants. In that war, there were battle between American soldiers with the Japan Empire soldiers, but the Japanese immigrants really did not have any ties with the war. Moreover, they had become part of American citizens. If anything happens, they would give priority to defend America. However, when the Pearl Harbor Bombing took time, almost all Americans immediately viewed the Japanese as enemies, even the Japanese immigrants were also seen as enemies.

"The Japs are the enemy," wrote Herbert Langlie. "Your newspaper is an insult to all white Americans who have pledged themselves to purge this menace from our midst. Please cancel my subscription as of this date and send refund immediately." (p. 129)

All the Americans had ingested the idea that all Japanese people were evil and they were the enemies of America. Therefore, they did not hesitate to voice their hatred toward the Japanese. As indicated in the quotation above, right after the Pearl Harbor Incident, the relationship between the whites San Pedro and the Japanese became worse. The whites claimed that the Japanese were the enemy. They did not want to accept the slightest idea that showed that the Japanese were not totally evil. They even dare to pose a threat for a newspaper that should provide news that more siding with America in this wartime, instead of gave support to the Japanese people.

"He announced that on New Year's Eve a public dance would be held under the slogan "Remember

Pearl Harbor—It Could Happen Here!" men in uniform would be admitted at no charge; all islanders were encouraged to attend. (p. 127)

The effects of Second World War were never fading away, even until years later. As shown in quotation above, the white Americans were always trying to remind people, especially to the future generations, that all Japanese were their enemy. They used all media, at every occasion, to remind people continuously about the Pearl Harbor Incident. The incident was the culmination of all prejudice acts against the Japanese, which gave birth into many human rights violations, even to the Japanese who had become the legal American citizens. Therefore, the Americans' effort to remind constantly about that incident was tantamount to an attempt to instill the Japanese were the enemy.

The whites still hold a lot of resentment toward the Japanese by always linked them to the Pearl Harbor incident. Although, as previously explained, the Japanese-Americans had nothing to do with the incident and the war itself. However, the fact that they continued to be treated as a national enemy showed that Americans still suspected that the Japanese could be treacherous at times and they could launch attacks on them when they were off guard. Therefore, the hatred, suspicion, and all prejudice against the Japanese that they still hold making them unable to fully open up to the Japanese.

"She was still staring out the window at the snow with strands of wet hair pasted against her cheek. "It's all unfair," she told him bitterly. "Kabuo didn't kill anyone. It isn't in his heart to kill anyone. They brought in that sergeant to say he's a killer—that was just prejudice. Did you hear the things that man was saying? How Kabuo had it in his heart to kill? How horrible he is, a killer? Put it in your paper, about that man's testimony, how all of it was unfair. How the whole trial is unfair." (p. 216)

The strong feeling of hatred from the whites toward the Japanese, even though they themselves did not know what to hate about those Japanese, affected their personal judgment toward the Japanese. They could no longer saw every action of the Japanese with an objective view. Unconsciously, they must had been prejudiced against the Japanese, by thinking that all Japanese were bad and they were planning a despicable acts against the whites. They could not resist the urge to always give a negative view to the Japanese.

In quotation above, we could see how the hatred of white people against the Japanese had successfully blinded them in term of equality in law. Kabuo was charged with murder case of Carl Heine and he was forced to follow the trial as a suspect, without further investigation. All residents of San Pedro had the notion

that Kabuo was really a killer; therefore, Kabuo not trying to defend himself against the accusation. His attitude made all people believe that he had killed Carl and they were even trying to aggravate Kabuo's punishment by giving testimony that discredit Kabuo.

Prejudice against the Japanese in America, especially in San Pedro will never end, even though times have changed. Perhaps the Second World War had made people aware that human rights are the property of every human being, not only belong to the whites alone. Therefore, at least they should respect the rights of every people, especially the right to life. However, the prejudice that a person hold could not just disappear in an instant. Proved in the story above, many Japanese still feel treated unfairly simply because of the bad views and prejudices from the whites. The prejudices made them unable to converge and feel the pride as fellow American citizens.

Factors that Cause the Prejudice Acts

Based on the tricomponent model of attitude principle, prejudice can be categorized as behavioral elements, in which it needs some factors from cognitive element that will trigger the prejudice acts to be happened. As stated before, Levin and Levin (1982, p. 202) composed four main causes that can be counted as the trigger of the development of the prejudice acts. According to them, the first cause of prejudice is personal frustration. The personal frustration arises from someone's feeling of disappointed when his desires and expectations are unfulfilled. The feeling of disappointment will manifest in his mind that he has failed. However, the frustration can also be formed from his fear and he cannot express this feeling. This will trigger some reactions such as anger and aggressive acts.

To suppress the tension that arises from the frustration, usually someone will search for scapegoat as an outlet for the frustration. In David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*, the Japanese are suitable scapegoat to be sacrificed because of their passiveness in the society. Although they receive harsh treatment from society, they will not openly throwing protest against the whites. Therefore, the whites become more eager to blame all the frustration that they feel to the Japanese.

One proof of how prejudice can be created from personal frustration is the prejudice that occurred in the Second World War. The war was one of the major events that brought great impact for United States. The war has sacrificed a lot of money, resources, and also human life only within the short period time. Therefore, the defeat in war was something that should never happen. They should be able to defeat the enemy and defend their country. Thus, when they received news that Pearl Harbor had

fallen as a result of the suicide attacks from the Japanese army, the whole Americans felt the incredible anger for having lost to Japan.

"He said that he hoped the boys in his class would take their duty to fight seriously and that furthermore they should consider it an honor to meet the Japs head-on and do the job of paying them back. "War stinks," he added. "But they started it. They bombed Hawaii on a Sunday morning. On a Sunday morning, of all things." (p. 121)

Once they knew that the Japanese were the one who responsible for the Pearl Harbor attack, people started blaming the Japanese for that incident. They blamed why the Japanese attacked them on Sunday, the day on which the Americans generally lowering their guard against enemy attacks. They began to see the Japanese as the evil enemy who had ruined their tranquility.

The anger that aroused from the frustration due to the fact that United States had been defeated by the Japanese army made the whites were starting to show their aggressive attitude. They did not hesitate to teach their children to take up arms and fight the Japanese. They even found it an honor if they were meeting and defeating the evil Japanese. They had made all Japanese as the scapegoat of this incident and this fact later also ultimately affected the safety of the Japanese-Americans who did not know anything about the war.

The second cause of prejudice is uncertainty about a person based on lack of knowledge or experience with group to which they belong. As described in the previous chapter, due to various internal and external factors around us, we have little chance to learn and understand about those who are not the members of our group. This situation will make us only rely on the stereotypes of those people that have been created in the community, which basically also contains a very little information about the other groups. However, because of our ignorance, we used to take for granted the information that goes without bothered to filter back which one of the information that is correct and which one that is wrong.

The information we receive is not entirely correct. Much of information only contains part of the truth of other groups and some even contains information that completely wrong about those groups. This misinformation, wrong stereotypes, can lead to misconception, which ended up as a feeling of suspicion and distrust to each other. Especially if this misconception has concerning the realm of races, this can lead to prejudice against other races that deemed inferior to those superior races.

Many people, who were racially superior like the whites, did not know anything about the other races other than their own race. Just a little information about the

other races that circulated among the whites and it was also treated as unimportant. Let alone the alien-like races such as Asians. Asians lived in other part of the world that difficult to reach by the whites. They knew about Asians existence only from news and story from merchants or people who happened to be on duty there. They never met in person and interacted with each other. However, when the Asians first came to America, they were not welcomed and they actually got unfavorable views from the whites.

As happened in quotation above, the Japanese were also despised by the whites. Their position was even equated with the unskilled laborers Indians, who in the eyes of the whites, their positions were similar to slaves, despite the fact that they were contract workers. They could think that way because they misunderstood the Japanese work ethic. The Japanese were diligent workers. They did not complain to the menial jobs that normally done by slaves. The white man did not understand it. Therefore, the whites looked down on people of Japan because they looked like slaves.

“The Japanese man nodded. He was always nodding, thought Etta. It was how they got the better of you—they acted small, thought big. Nod, say nothing, keep their faces turned down; it was how they got things like her seven acres.” (p. 85)

Not only the background of the Japanese people, the whites also did not understand and did not want to understand about the Japanese culture. Asian's east culture had the distinction that is in stark contrast to the American's west culture. If the American western culture tend to be free, open and rugged, Asian culture is the opposite. Asians tend to be soft, enclosed, and does not expressive. Especially for the Japanese, the characteristics of the Asian culture reflected in their behavior that upholds manners. This is in contrast to Americans who are not too rigid about manners. This clash of cultures leads into misunderstanding in which the Americans as the superior view the Japanese culture as ancient culture.

In the quotation above, Etta seemed did not understand the Japanese culture. Therefore, she had suspicions and prejudices about the behavior shown by Zenichi. Etta realized that Zenichi preferred to nod than said something directly. Etta thought that what Zenichi did was one of the behaviors shown by the Japanese who were planning something nasty. She did not understand that it was one of the manners of the Japanese. In Etta's eyes, what Zenichi did was just like what was done by the sycophants who secretly planned to seize her fortune behind the polite behavior.

The third cause of prejudice is threat to one's self-esteem. Members of the superior group tend to have great self-esteem. They have worked hard to achieve success and crawled up the ladder of social strata until they manage to get on top and they are recognized as part of the superior group. They have managed to beat the others and emerged as a better existence than the others emerge. Because of that, then they have a great sense of confidence and arrogance toward others.

However, their confidence also carries a wide range of consequences for themselves. Their success cause the sense of panic and fear against all threats that can potentially destroy their success. Of all the kinds of threats that exist around them, the threat from the inferior group is the one that they feared the most. They have considered the inferior groups as failed groups because they are unable to position themselves in the equal place to the superior group. Therefore, when the inferior group is starting to show signs of success and begin to outperform the superior group, the superior group will do everything possible to prevent that from happening.

As part of the superior group, the whites had the tremendous pride, especially toward status and position in society. They believed they were the best among all. Therefore, they tended to build arrogance toward the people they considered inferior. They refused to rank equated with those of the lower classes. They also refused to cooperate, particularly in business and trade with people from other groups. For them, doing those kinds of thing was just the same as insulting their dignity.

“Don't try waving new church clothes at me Carl. I can get myself clothes when I need them. We're not such paupers as to sell to Japs, are we? For new clothes? For a pouch of fancy pipe tobacco? I say you'd better keep hold of your land, keep a tight hold, Carl, and a new frilly hat from Lottie's won't change that.” (p. 79)

In the quotation above, Etta Heine absolutely rejected the idea of selling the land to Miyamoto Family. Etta, since the beginning, did not want to sell the land, but the fact that people who wanted to buy the land was the Japanese, even more hurting her pride. So far, Etta always viewed the Japanese with the suspicious look because of various negative stereotypes about the Japanese. Therefore, when she knew that her husband intended to sell the land to the Japanese, Etta not only hurt her pride, but she also felt threatened by what would happen to the Japanese in the future, since at this time they were confident enough to buy the whites' land.

The whites could not imagine how their self-esteem would be trampled as people from groups that they considered were lower than they were able to crawl up to get to the same position with them. They began to worry

that someday those people would match or even exceeded them, especially in terms of position in society. They could not imagine the people they once regarded as garbage would stand proudly on top of them.

The last cause of prejudice is the competition for status, wealth and power. Status, wealth and power are three main components that has always been the key elements in the competition for the top strata of society. Those who have managed to achieve these three things will certainly become the ruler of the society. They will get the most benefits and advantages from their position as part of the superior group. Therefore, a lot of people try to reach that position. In addition, those who have achieved these three things will protect what they have with all they have.

Members of the superior group, who has secured the top position in the society, will begin to build stability in order that they will remain at the top of society. Therefore, they are very sensitive to threats that possibly can make them lose their position and stability. The threat comes mainly from the inferior groups that starting the movements to attain the status, wealth, and power. Their movements are gradually approaching the position that had long been held by the superior group; make the superior group become frightened. That fear makes them start to think badly against the inferior and it affects their attitude in competing for those three things.

“By century’s turn over three hundred Japanese had arrived on San Pedro, most of them schooner hands who jumped ship in Port Jefferson Harbor in order to remain in the United States. Many swam ashore with no American currency and wandered island trails eating salmonberries and matsutake mushrooms until they found their way to “Jap Town”: three bathhouses, two barbershops, two churches (one Buddhist, the other a Baptist mission), a hotel, a grocery store, a baseball diamond, an ice cream parlor, a tofu shop, and fifty unpainted and slatternly dwellings all fronting onto muddy roads. Within a week the ship jumpers possessed mill jobs—stacking lumber, sweeping sawdust, hauling slab wood, oiling machines—worth eleven cents an hour.” (p. 52)

As mentioned in the previous discussion, the whites had Yellow Peril sentiment against Asians because the Asians were considered as a major threat to the lives of the whites. The greatest threat to Americans, of course, was in economic terms. Asians had the high ability and work ethic, it made Asians laborers was very needed, especially in American factories. However, their abilities were not only limited as laborers. With their abilities and experiences, Asians could easily created and managed new businesses in America. Seeing that, the whites were concerned that Asians could take over and dominated the American economy.

Asians' abilities in terms of economy and trade could be proved in the quotation above. The Japanese immigrants decided to come to San Pedro so they could still live in America and they not forced to return to Japan. However, because of San Pedro condition, which initially contained only empty land, there were no works available for them. The Japanese immigrants did not give up with this situation. From the vacant land, they started to build their own town. Eventually, in just one week, they had no difficulty in sustaining themselves. They found jobs with income more than enough for the whites' standard.

Impacts of Prejudice Acts

People who are victims of prejudice may accept a variety of negative treatments, which are the effects of the prejudice acts. Those negative effects can be physical, psychological, or social disadvantages, low self-esteem, weak ambition, or physical and verbal abuse. How strong is the effect of prejudice that can be felt depends on each individuals, it can be influenced by how severe the prejudice directed against them and how strong a person’s emotional situation when faced with various kinds of prejudice against them. Based on Kyriakidou (include in Syed, 2015, p. 24), there are four main negative effects that give great impact toward Japanese-Americans of San Pedro.

One of the negative effects of prejudice is low self-esteem. Self-esteem is the most important treasure for every human being, which its value even rival the other mundane factors such as wealth and marital status. Because self-esteem is so important and valuable, people are trying to raise their self-esteem so that they can appear more important, more powerful and superior compared to others. They also do everything to protect their so-called dignity from various threats.

Because self-esteem is so valuable, it also make people become aware that self-esteem can also be used to destroy others. When someone has a problem with someone else and he wanted to defeat and destroy him, he just need to weaken or destroy the victim's self esteem, until the victim is not able to stand in par to the superior individual. That also happened to the Japanese-Americans, where they began to lose their self-esteems as a result of prejudice from the white Americans.

One signs of the weakening of the Japanese's self-esteem in white Americans' eyes was the fear and doubt that Japanese-Americans were still considered as equal and had the same status as other Americans. The Japanese already got the unpleasant treatment from the whites since long time ago. The whites showed hostility to the Japanese people by assuming they were bad and all that was done by the Japanese people was always wrong.

Therefore, the Japanese began to build fear and doubt toward the whites.

"Nobody knows who they are now. Everything is cloudy and unclear. Still, you should learn to say nothing that will cause you regret. You should not say what is not in your heart—or what is only in your heart for a moment. But you know this—silence is better." (p. 135)

Fear and doubt on the whites' trust toward them, making the Japanese's confidence and self-esteem weakened. They were not even sure of their position in society and whether they did was right and as expected by the whites. Their doubt made Japanese could not freely express themselves. They were afraid of the consequences; what would happen to them if they carelessly opened their mouths. Therefore, silence was the best choice for the Japanese.

The next bad effect of prejudice is disadvantages/failure. Disadvantages and failure obtained by the Japanese-Americans is the result of the competition in terms of wealth, status, and power against the whites. As mentioned in the previous section, all people are vying to get the status, wealth and power so that they can be at the top of society. Therefore, when they have managed to get three of them and they have emerged as a part of superior group, they will do anything to maintain their positions.

To keep them staying on top and holding the control in society, the superior group often limits access to public facilities for the inferior group. This limitation is done if the existence of the inferior group has been regarded as a major threat for the superior group. These limitations become a great disadvantage for the inferior group that eventually turned into their failure in society.

"At first they lived in a Beacon Hill boardinghouse where the walls were plastered with pictures from magazines and where the white people on the streets outside treated them with humiliating disdain." (p. 58)

One of the disadvantages that the Japanese got because of prejudice that they received from the whites was bad treatment. Since the beginning of the arrival of the Japanese in America, the whites had shown the antipathy towards all immigrants from Asia. Their attitude, as previously described, was arising from the influence of negative stereotype of Asians because of Yellow Peril sentiment. The important point of this sentiment was all Asians considered as a serious threat to the status, wealth, and power of the white Americans. Worried about the threat, the whites showed their reaction; giving the Japanese bad treatment.

As stated in the quotation above, when the Japanese first came to America, they were forced to stay in a less worthy neighborhoods. In addition, they also did not get a decent place to live. They had to live in a place that was even hardly to be called home. As if it was still not enough, they also must accept the humiliation from the whites. They were treated badly and no one was good enough to respect them as fellow human beings.

The third effect of prejudice experienced by Japanese-Americans is self-fulfilling prophecies. Self-fulfilling prophecies is the belief that something will happen as we expected. However, the belief becomes apparent simply because we act as if it is right and inevitable. In other words, our behavior that make it become real and not due to other factors.

Self-fulfilling prophecies often occurs in members of the superior group. They had faith against members of other groups that make their attitude toward those groups changed. That change will cause a reaction from the inferior groups in which they will act as expected from the superior group. However, that does not mean self-fulfilling prophecies cannot occur at the inferior groups. As the result of negative treatment that they get, the inferior groups also have a bad faith against superior group members. The conviction is ultimately affecting their behavior and make the superior group ill-treated them.

One of the predictions made by the Japanese was living in America would not be easy. Throughout their lives, they would only found the tension and unhappiness. Their thinking was based on what they had experienced since arriving in America. They came to a new place with a lot of difficulty. It turned out that when he got there, they also got a bad treatment from the whites. All those experiences made Japanese thought that they would not live happily there. That thought made them pessimistic to live life as a part of American citizen. Eventually in the end, they really went through unhappy life because of the effects of prejudice.

"And her people, insisted Fujiko, were Japanese—the events of the past months had proved it so; why else had their father been arrested? The events of the last two months should teach them something about the darkness in the hearts of the hakuji and the more general darkness that was part of living." (p. 134)

In addition to being pessimistic to live life as part of American citizen, the bitter life experience that experienced by the Japanese also made them to have their own prejudices about whites. Prejudice against white people that the Japanese possessed almost similar to the prejudice that white people had toward the Japanese. The prejudice that owned by each group became a reciprocal

relationship of cause and effect between superior and inferior groups. However, the Japanese could not commit acts of prejudice as that of white people because they were part of inferior group. All they did was harbored prejudices that were based on the bad stereotype of the whites that they had.

As stated in quotation above, prejudice against the whites that the Japanese had brought impact on loss of the Japanese faith toward white people. Because of ill-treatment received by the Japanese, they began to think that all white people had a bad heart. This thought was turned into a stereotype that applied to all white people without exception. Therefore, the Japanese was slowly losing their faith in white people by assuming the whites were not part of them.

The last effect of prejudice is violence. As we all know, if someone does prejudice against members of other groups, then at one point he will discriminate against those groups, as the real action of the prejudice he has done so far. The forms of discrimination may be diverse, but the most powerful and the one that have the real impact for the victims is violence. The violence acts can be destruction action of personal items belonging to the victim, to the bold actions directed at the victim such as verbal abuse and physical harm.

One of the most frequent forms of violence experienced by the Japanese people is verbal abuse. Verbal abuse is invisible attack to someone by targeting the bad side of the targets through negative tone utterances. Verbal abuse is indeed intended to attack the victims mentally than directly attack them physically, because the mental scars will be more difficult to heal than physical injuries. Through verbal abuse, white people are trying to hurt Japanese's self-esteem by telling them how bad they are on regular basis.

“You heard the news. They’re arresting people. They’re calling a lot of people spies. Last night some men stopped at the Ichiyamas’ and called them names, Ishmael. They sat out front and honked their horn. How can this be happening?” she added. “How did things get like this?” (p. 125)

In the quotation above, the white people tended to vent their anger because of Pearl Harbor incident by verbally abuse the Japanese. They openly called the Japanese as enemy spies. They even insulted and called the Japanese with bad words. They did it to vent their anger, and they wanted the Japanese to know that the Japanese were the one that caused their anger.

“They unscrewed his lightbulbs and then drove out to his house. They called him a dirty Jap.” (p. 125)

In their anger, white people did not even bother anymore with kind of insults they gave to the Japanese

people. Therefore, they did not even care if they called Japanese people with bad word "dirty jap". The used of invective itself from the beginning had been wrong, because the term "jap" itself was very outrageous and inappropriate because it contained elements of racial insults. Doing verbal abuse by insulting one's race indirectly means that the whites since the beginning did not accept the Japanese and did not recognize them as part of the American citizens.

The other form of violence experience by the Japanese is physical harm. Physical harm received by the Japanese was not violence that resulted in physical injuries and such, but rather as the threats that might affect the safety of one self. Of course, the biggest threat to the personal safety of Japanese people was arrest without reason and without a clear procedure, which was carried out in the name of justice, but did not give any justice to the Japanese.

The impact of the Second World War and Pearl Harbor incidents was American citizens became suspicious that the Japanese-Americans were part of the American enemy. Not only its citizens, even the U.S. government had also started to suspect the involvement of the Japanese-Americans as an enemy spy. To prove it, the government sent officials to check if there was anything suspicious from the Japanese. However, eventually, nearly all-Japanese men was arrested and imprisoned just because they were suspected as spies for the enemy.

“My father was talking on the telephone. Everyone is worried about the navy transmitter, the one on Agate Point. They think it’s going to be bombed tonight. There are men going out there with shotguns to defend it. They’re going to sit in the woods along the beaches. The Shirasakis have a farm On Agate Point, and some soldiers from the transmitter station came there. They took their radio and their camera and their telephone, and they arrested Mr. Shirasaki. And the rest of the Shirasakis can’t leave their house.” (p. 125)

U.S. government suspicion that the Japanese was the enemy spy continued. As shown in quotation above, they conducted search and examination of the facts lead to the slightest suspicion of the involvement of the Japanese-Americans as an enemy spy. It made a lot of misunderstandings in which the Japanese people who happened to be in the wrong place also accused as spies for the enemy. Because of those problems, once again, Japanese people arrested for alleged enemies of the United States. Even the rest of the family members were also treated as house arrest.

CLOSING

Conclusion

Racial prejudice has long been a problem in American society. This ill-treatment is not only experienced by Blacks, but also by the Asians, especially Japanese, who came to America as laborers. Prejudice against Japanese-Americans peaked during World War 2 and it continues even until the war was over.

In David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars*, the prejudices are depicted in two timelines, the first is during World War 2 and the second is post-World War 2. During the World War, Japanese-Americans were suspected as spies and their status as citizens were suspended. They could not use public facilities and they were sent to internment camp. After war was ended, Japanese-Americans still got ill-treatment from white American citizens, such as the use of "Japs", the insult word referred to the Japanese-Americans. They also got limited access for better job, land-acquisition, and criminal procedure.

The prejudice against Japanese-Americans is based on the Asian's Yellow Peril stereotype, in which lead into others factors that causing the prejudice, such as personal frustration, uncertainty because of lack of knowledge or experience toward other group, threat to one's self-esteem, and competition for status, wealth, and power. Someone who is experiencing frustration will look for a scapegoat to be blame for his own misfortune. Moreover, the ignorance toward other groups will also trigger the prejudice, such as the ignorance of the Japanese's custom and culture that make the whites think negatively toward them. Prejudice can also triggered by a threat to self-esteem of members of a particular group, where they will start thinking negatively to those who seem to undermine their self-esteem. The threat to self-esteem is also influential to the competition for the top status in the society, such as competition in term of business and economics.

The prejudice gives the great impact toward the Japanese-Americans. Because of prejudice, the Japanese-Americans begin to lose their self-esteem and they end up accepting and believing the bad stereotype about them, such as the recognition that they are evil and sly. Prejudice also causes a lot of disadvantages for the Japanese, such as bad treatment and limited public facilities, because the Japanese are considered not deserve them. Disadvantages are also make the Japanese have negative thoughts toward those around them and it will change their attitude, in which they become more passive and they act like the loser. At last, the last effect of prejudice is violence, such as verbal abuse toward Japanese by calling them with bad names and enforced arresting people who suspected of being spies.

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