

**AN ANALYSIS OF RACIAL PREJUDICE IN PAUL LAURENCE
DUNBAR'S "THE LYNCHING OF JUBE BENSON"**

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

MR. KRIENKRAI YAIKONG

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Master of Arts degree in English

at Srinakharinwirot University

October, 2004

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AN ABSTRACT

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Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Advisor
Committee: Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai, Dr. Saengchan Hemchua, Mr. Michael
Rudy.

This research was conducted for the purpose of answering the following research questions: Why is the main character, a black man, in Paul Laurence Dunbar's "The Lynching of Jube Benson" judged guilty as charged with committing a crime? How does racial prejudice effect the main character so as to be accused of raping a white woman? This study was analyzed according to racial concepts, which include traditional beliefs about Blacks based on the theories of Carolus Linnaeus as well as Sir Francis Galton and Darwinism.

The results of this study indicated that the main character in "The Lynching of Jube Benson" was judged guilty as charged with committing the crime of rape of a white woman. Whites were conditioned to think that Blacks were members of an inferior race. Blacks still possessed animal characteristics that resulted in their criminal behavior and strong sexual desire. Whites believed that the main character was the person who raped a white woman, so he was judged guilty and then was lynched by a white mob without trial.

Obviously, racial prejudice played a significant role causing the main character to be accused as the man who raped a white woman.

การศึกษาอคติทางเชื้อชาติในเรื่องสั้นของ พอล ลอเรนซ์ ดันบาร์

เรื่อง “The Lynching of Jube Benson”

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
นายเกรียงไกร ไยคง

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา ตาม
หลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ
ตุลาคม 2547

เกรียงไกร ไยคง. (2547). การศึกษาอคติทางเชื้อชาติในเรื่องสั้นของ พอล ลอเรนซ์ ดันบาร์ เรื่อง “The Lynching of Jube Benson.” สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม. (ภาษาอังกฤษ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. คณะกรรมการควบคุม: ดร. สุภาภรณ์ ยิ้มวิสัย, ดร. แสงจันทร์ เหมเชื้อ, Mr. Michael Rudy.

งานวิจัยนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อจุดมุ่งหมายในการตอบคำถามงานวิจัยว่าทำไมตัวละครเอกซึ่งเป็นคนดำในเรื่อง “The Lynching of Jube Benson” ของพอล ลอเรนซ์ ดันบาร์ ถูกกล่าวหาว่าเป็นอาชญากร และอคติทางเชื้อชาติได้ส่งผลต่อตัวละครเอกอย่างไรในการถูกกล่าวหาว่าเป็นผู้ข่มขืนผู้หญิงขาว งานวิจัยนี้ได้วิเคราะห์เนื้อหาตามแนวความคิดทางเชื้อชาติที่รวมความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับคนดำที่สืบเนื่องกันมาแต่โบราณ และตามทฤษฎีของ Carolus Linnaeus, Sir Francis Galton และ Darwinism เป็นสำคัญ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ตัวละครเอกในเรื่อง “The Lynching of Jube Benson” ถูกกล่าวหาว่าเป็นอาชญากรผู้ข่มขืนผู้หญิงขาวเพราะ คนขาวในเรื่องถูกหลอมนให้มีความคิดว่าคนดำเป็นเชื้อชาติที่ต่ำต้อยกว่าคนขาว คนดำมีนิสัยใกล้เคียงกับสัตว์ที่ส่งผลให้คนดำมีพฤติกรรมทางด้านอาชญากรรม และมีความต้องการทางเพศสูง ดังนั้นคนขาวในเรื่องเชื่อว่าตัวละครเอกของเรื่องเป็นผู้ข่มขืนผู้หญิงขาว และตัดสินใจแขวนคอตัวละครเอกโดยไม่ได้มีการพิจารณาคดี

จากการวิเคราะห์เห็นได้ชัดว่าอคติทางด้านเชื้อชาตินี้มีบทบาทสำคัญในการทำให้ตัวละครเอกของเรื่องถูกกล่าวหาว่าเป็นอาชญากรผู้ข่มขืนผู้หญิงขาว

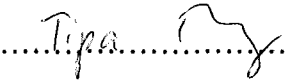
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Master's Project Advisor

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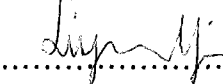
(Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai)

Chair of the Master of Arts degree in English

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(Asst. Prof. Dr. Tipa Thep-Ackrapong)

Oral Defense Committee

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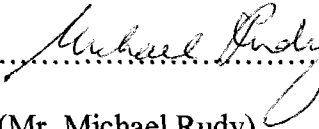
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Reader

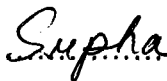
(Dr. Saengchan Hemchua)

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Reader

(Mr. Michael Rudy)

This master's project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University

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16...October 2004

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Kriengkrai Yaikong

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

From 1620 to the early 1800s, some West Africans wanted to conquer other African tribes and their territories. They defeated many tribes. The members of the defeated tribe were captured and sold. Many of them were sold to European slave dealers and later to American New England slave dealers. During this period, in the American South, cotton, tobacco, corn and cane plantations required the work of many laborers. To meet the demand for these laborers, many plantation owners in the South bought black slaves from New Englander slavers. The trading and use of slaves flourished in the American South.

Due to physical characteristics of Blacks, they were considered biologically inferior, and even worse, were no longer men in view of the white men. White men believed that they were granted a Caucasian divine right to dominate inferior races. Anglo-Saxon or Caucasian believed themselves superior to other races (Weinstein and Gatell 79). Moreover, Blacks, according to white supremacist views, were innately inferior, shiftless, and hopelessly unfit to participate in the white man's civilization (Weinstein and Gatell 77). Blacks were considered walking pieces of property. By buying and selling them, Whites gained many advantages. As a consequence of this bondage, Blacks suffered grievously from their masters' mistreatment. Executions, whippings, branding, and other forms of severe punishment were common. Slaves were sometimes hot iron branded by their owners in US states of South Carolina, Georgia, and

on the islands of the West Indies (Jordan 233). These powers included the absolute authority over life and death. The fear of their masters' authority forced Blacks to submit to their masters and offer them their life long servitude.

Blacks still encountered intense racial prejudice in white communities after the Civil War during 1861-1865 and after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The Emancipation freed Blacks from their state of bondage and gave them freedom of movement. Likewise, the Civil War gave Blacks the right to occupy lands, especially areas in the Deep South. Henceforth, Blacks were deemed to have social equality with Whites. Moreover, many Blacks were enfranchised, and some were offered opportunities to work in public offices and on jury service. Similarly, because Blacks outnumbered Whites in the South, Blacks were encouraged by the Radical Republican to engage in elections. However, with the failure of Reconstruction after 1876, coupled with the fear of Blacks' social and economic equality with Whites, white supremacists stimulated white southerners to think that "the South must remain a white man's country in all ways and at all times"(qtd. in Weinstein and Gatell 73).

To carry out the plan for a White Country Forever, white supremacists encouraged white southerners to bar Blacks from voting and having social contacts with Whites. They brought back the propaganda of white supremacy, racial chauvinism, and Negrophobia. White supremacist had the need to maintain white superiority and dominance over Blacks. These supremacists encouraged Negrophobia by depicting Blacks in negative ways and convincing Whites to have a profound hatred of Blacks. The stories about Blacks were concerned primarily with crime, charges of rape, attempted rape, alleged instances of arrogance, impertinence, and surly manners or lack of prompt

and proper servility in conduct. These charges were widespread among white Americans. As a consequence of these efforts by the white supremacists, Blacks were degraded and were undermined in all ways (Weinstein and Gatell 82).

The Jim Crow Laws, which were confirmed by the Supreme Court Decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), played a significant role in deepening racial prejudice against Blacks and restricting them legally. These Laws established the principle of separate, but equal, which in turn supported racial segregation. Tied to this legal system, Blacks were racially segregated, politically disenfranchised, and economically marginalized. Because of this racial bias, Blacks were denied many basic rights as American citizens. Blacks were segregated to receive service in places of public accommodation and public facilities. This legal system, along with the depression crisis, caused Blacks to be often falsely accused of some crime and then confined in farm labor camps. Blacks were hired out by the state to local plantation owners or contractors. Some were forced to accept low earnings as sharecroppers or agricultural workers. This legal system led to other forms of anti-black violence and terrorism, which often ended in lynching. All these forms of oppression were used in the South to intimidate Blacks into submission and to prevent them from voting. Obviously, this legal system became a system of racial apartheid. The effect on Blacks was to receive unfair treatment. This treatment was beyond the protection of law.

After many years of fighting for civil and the voting Rights, Blacks achieved equal rights with the enactment of the Civil Right Act of 1964 and the Voting Right Act of 1965, under the leadership of President Lyndon Baines Johnson. These acts banned racial discrimination in public facilities and employment and spelled the end of Jim Crow

Laws. These laws guaranteed the full citizenship for Blacks, making Blacks eligible to register and vote. Blacks achieved the same status as all other American citizens, with same political and economical rights. However, the beliefs about black inferiority and criminal behavior were still deeply embedded in white societies.

There are many Afro-American writers, for example, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, and Jessie Fauset who wrote about black racial prejudice and discrimination. According to Hazel Rowley, Richard Wright was called the Father of Black American Literature. His literary works became great influential works that portrayed the use of naturalism and the tradition of protest. In the main, his literary works reflected the lives of black proletarians who felt helpless under capitalism and sought ways to escape from that condition. His literary works focused on black working class men who encountered social emasculation in racist society. Unlike Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison was best known for the rehabilitation of liberalism in his novel, Invisible man. This novel did not limit its message to marginalization, degradation and racism but also was concerned with the use of blackness to break racial categories instead of sustaining them. Langston Hughes was an outstanding black poet whose literary works were marked by pessimism about race relations. His literary works not only strongly attacked racial segregation and racism but also emphasized lower black class life as well as racial pride. Jessie Fauset always portrayed the lives of black middle class who were called “genteel”. Actually, her novels’s messages were based primarily on Blacks’ passing for Whites to achieve equal privileges.

Among these writers Paul Laurence Dunbar was an Afro-American poet whose poems portrayed prejudice and racial discrimination. Dunbar was well known for his use

of black southern folk language in his literary works. He is considered a symbol of African-American literary artistry and a proper representative of his race (Hedges and Yarborough). In Catherine Lynette states that both Dunbar and his works manifest symbols of African's struggle for equality. Dunbar's works not only depicted the agrarian lives of Southerners, but also contained literary technique called the tradition of protest. Protest and direct rejection of dominant racial stereotypes, the subtle use of irony, and the dilemmas of race became outstanding features in his literary works (Jones, 35). Dunbar lived under the Jim Crow Laws during the heyday of lynching. Dunbar saw lynching of Blacks increased and become an entertainment for the white public. He depicted lynching in both his poems and short stories in an attempt to persuade his audience to change their social attitudes and put an end to lynching.

Dunbar's literary works are known for his use of black dialect. As a consequence, his literary works have been not widely studied. The researcher found only one study of Paul Laurence Dunbar's literary works. In "Our Family, White and Black: Revisiting the Racial Family in Turn-of-the-Century American Fiction (W. E.B Du Bois, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Pauline E. Hopkins," Casey Aaron Inge examined the influence of the notion of "family" on the race relations through literary works by W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins. The study showed that the American family considerably influenced the discovery of a cultural belief important to the development of bias against (African) Americans. The American family had the impact on the language and the way of thinking from which the cultural practice and race prejudice was derived. However, the study focusing on racial prejudice against Blacks portrayed in his short

stories has never been conducted. The researcher, therefore, proposes to analyze the racial prejudice against the main character in Dunbar's "The Lynching of Jube Benson."

"The Lynching of Jube Benson" was in Dunbar's first collection of stories entitled The Heart of Happy Hallow, published in 1904. In this short story, Dunbar depicted Jube Benson was lynched by Whites who ignored common virtue and whose racism originated from traditional beliefs about Blacks. In the story, Jube, a black man, lived in a little town of Bradford and became a reliable friend of all Whites. He once worked for Annie, Mr. Hiram's beautiful daughter. His loyalty to Annie changed to Dr. Melville, a white physician who rented two rooms of Mr. Hiram's house when knowing that Dr. Melville cared for Annie. Jube later befriended Dr. Melville and helped the doctor with his office work. Jube made the doctor's relationship with Annie develop considerably. He was even an important person who looked after the doctor when he was sick. One day after returning from visiting his friend, Dr. Melville found Annie seriously injured. Her face and dress were torn from struggling. Before dying, Annie exclaimed "that black _____." With the absence of Jube in that event, everyone agreed that Jube was the criminal and the rapist and he later was hunted and brought back to the town. He was taken to the yard and then lynched by Dr. Melville and a white mob. Ben, Jube's brother, and another Negro captured the white ruffian who blackened himself to imitate a Negro and took him to the yard to prove Jube's innocence. The rope was cut and Jube fell lifelessly on the ground. Jube had already died.

This study aims at examining the racial prejudice against the main character depicted in the short story. Since this study is about the prejudice against Blacks, it will help shape the readers' awareness so as to better understand and appreciate pieces of

literature that contain messages about prejudices and racial discrimination among Whites and Blacks.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Why is the main character in “The Lynching of Jube Benson” judged guilty as charged with committing a crime?
2. How does the racial prejudice effect the main character so as to be accused of raping a white woman?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will be the following:

1. The study of the racial prejudice against the main character in “The Lynching of Jube Benson” will help shape the readers’ awareness so as to better understand and appreciate pieces of literature about prejudices and racial discrimination among Whites and Blacks.
2. The study will provide a better understanding of the racial concept that is based mainly on the traditional beliefs about Blacks and theories of Carolus Linnaeus, Sir Francis Galton, and Darwinism.
3. This study can be used as a guidance to help the audience be able to analyze other kinds of prejudice.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study covers the following:

Paul Laurence Dunbar's "The Lynching of Jube Benson" focusing on the racial prejudice against the main character.

Definition of Terms

1. "Prejudice" refers to dislike or distrust of a person, group, custom, etc that is based on fear or false information rather than on reason or experience, and that influences one's attitude and behavior towards them (Oxford, 909).
2. "Blacks' images" refers to common perceptions of Blacks that Whites create to justify black inferiority.
3. "Ideology" refers to a set of ideas or beliefs held by white supremacists to form the bias against Blacks.
4. "White supremacy" refers to the belief that Whites' race is better than other races and Whites should control them.
5. "Lynching" refers to a form of execution perpetrated by a white mob assuming the role of judge, jury, and executioner to punish wrongdoers, specifically Blacks.

Procedures

This study is an analytical research to be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Accumulation of Information

Information was collected on the following topics:

- 1.1 The biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar.
- 1.2 The research on racism.
- 1.3 The concept of race that is based mainly on the traditional beliefs about Blacks and theories of Carolus Linnaeus, Sir Francis Galton, and Darwinism.

2. Information Analysis

- 2.1 The text of “The Lynching of Jube Benson” was examined.
- 2.2 The main character was analyzed according to the concept of race that is based mainly on the traditional beliefs about Blacks and theories of Carolus Linnaeus, Sir Francis Galton, and Darwinism.

3. Report of Findings

Findings of the study were discussed in expository form.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Studies

Conclusion was drawn from the findings and suggestions were made for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This review of related literature is organized in three parts: the biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar, research on racism, and the concept of race. The first part presents Dunbar's biography covering his life, education, and literary works. The second part provides insights from previous research on racism in different areas. The final part focuses on the concept of race. This part provides some fundamental information explaining reasons why Whites have such negative views on Blacks.

PART I: PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR'S BIOGRAPHY

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born to Joshua and Matilda Murphy Dunbar on June 27, 1872, in Dayton, Ohio. Both were slaves in Kentucky. Joshua was a fugitive slave who had fought in the Union Army. Matilda was an ex-slave who earned her living in Dayton as a servant. She encouraged Dunbar's literary talents. Dunbar attended Public Elementary School, Dayton Central High School, and graduated in 1891 with academic honors. His academic achievement surpassed all his white friends at his same level. Born to a poor black family, he could not further his study in college. His blackness permitted him to work as an elevator operator at Dayton's Callahan Building. Dunbar married Alice Ruth Moore, a Creole teacher and a writer, and separated from her in 1902. In 1906, after separating from his wife, Dunbar went on a lecture tour through New York State. Later he went to Denver. He drank too much, suffered from tuberculosis, and died on February 9, 1906 at the age of thirty-four.

Dunbar began writing verse at the age of six. Some of his early poems were written while he was working as an elevator operator. With the help of his white friends in 1893, he published his first book of poems, Oak and Ivy, which was sold mainly through his own effort. William Dean Howells favorably reviewed his second book of poems, Majors and Minors, published in January 1895. Because of the favorable review, this book of poems brought him much public attention. In 1896, Dodd, Mead And Company, New York, published the third book of poems, Lyrics of Lowly Life with an introduction by Howells. This book of poems established his national reputation. Following Lyrics of Lowly Life, Lyrics of the Heartside was published in 1896, and later followed by Lyrics of Love and Laughter (1903) and Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow (1905). Apart from the poems, Dunbar produced four novels: The Uncalled, The Love of Landry, The Sport of the Gods and The Fanatics. Also, he produced three short story collections: Forks from Dixie (1898), The Strength of Gideon (1900), and The Heart of Happy Hollow (1904).

Booker T. Washington called Dunbar the Poet Laureate of the Negro Race (Perkins 898). He was best known for poetry in the Negro dialect. The poems in dialect were of a higher quality, than his other verses. Dunbar poetic talents tempted many writers, both Whites and Blacks to imitate him.

PART II: RESEARCH ON RACISM

Since the short story that is used as the primary source to be analyzed in this research contains the theme about racial prejudice, it is crucial to review research in terms of racism. The researcher will then be able to enlarge the research beyond what has already been done.

The research identified four sources dealing mainly with racism in different areas.

In the area of history, Rakesh Narpat Bhandari studied "The Racial State: Racism, the New Social Darwinism and the Demise of Social Democracy." Bhandari pointed out that racism originally rose from a historical analysis of hereditary ideologies and was organized structurally on the ideology of social Darwinism including Darwin's ideas and the consequent judgements.

In the area of psychology, Darryl J. Mar studied "Whiteness as Experienced by People of Color: An Empirical Phenomenological Study." Mars said that racism against non-white people still prevailed and remained a significant problem in the Twenty-first century. Mars studied racism against non-white people by examining the meanings of whiteness. Results showed that personal encounters with whites by three non-white participants evoked anger, confusion and fear.

The researcher found two sources in the area of literature. These studies were conducted on two novels and two pieces of short fiction that were concerned mainly with racism.

In "Shades of Racism in American Literature (Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Jacobs)," Edwina Lynn Walton revealed that modern writers like Nella Larsen and Spike Lee had made efforts to present the color caste system based primarily upon shades of

skin tone among African Americans. After a careful reading of Harriet Beecher's Uncle Tom's Cabin and Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in Life of Slave Girl, Walton found that the didactic purpose of these writers to display the insidiousness of slavery was made less effective by the presence of caste system that treated mulattoes better than American slaves.

In "An Exploration of Racial Bias in the Short Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," Andrea Willis Godwin found that O'Connor portrayed racism negatively in her short fiction. She was accused of using racially inflammatory language that ultimately resulted in its being censored. However, the study revealed that there was no authorial voice that used racial slurs through the characters.

Obviously, there is no research focusing on racial prejudice or racial discrimination in Paul Laurence Dunbar's literary works. The research focusing on racial prejudice embedded in the lynching context has never been conducted. The researcher therefore proposes to conduct a study focusing on racial prejudice in Paul Laurence Dunbar's "The Lynching of Jube Benson."

PART III: THE CONCEPT OF RACE

The concept of race presented in this chapter mainly includes traditional beliefs about Blacks and is based mainly on theories of Carolus Linnaeus, Sir Francis Galton and Darwinism.

The origin of blackness can be traced through writings in the ancient Greek, the Jewish law and tradition, and in the Bible. In the ancient Greek, the origin of blackness

was caused by the Phaeton, who drove the chariot sun wildly through heavens and threw the sun on Ethiopians, who later were turned into Blacks (Jordan 11). During the seventeenth century, the record of this story was still left as evidence.

According to Talmudic and Midrashic, which was the Jewish law and tradition, the origin of blackness was found in the story about the curse upon Ham. This Jewish tradition was accidentally dispersed in Christendom. In the Bible, Blacks' blackness was found in Genesis Nine and Ten from which the story about the curse upon Canaan derived. This story occurred after the flood. Canaan was cursed because Ham looked on Noah's nakedness in the tent. In the story, Noah was drunk and became uncovered in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his nakedness and told to his two brothers, Shem and Japheth, who were outside. Shem and Japheth covered their father's nakedness without looking on it. When Noah woke up and knew that Ham had done to him, he cursed Ham's son, Canaan, that " he would be a servant of servants unto his brothers" (Jordan 17). This Christian belief connected Canaan to Blacks who were enslaved by Europeans.

Originally, the identification of distinct human groups involving differently physical appearance can be traced to prehistory. According to Christian European presupposition, Christian Europeans considered themselves as a different group from other human groups. They considered themselves as "children of God" or "complete human beings" whereas other human groups were considered as "others" or "heathens". This presupposition not only set Christian Europeans apart from other racial groups but it also helped pave the way for racial prejudice and racial discrimination.

In the sixteenth century and seventeenth century, Europeans reflected the meaning of blackness in such intense sentiments. According to Oxford English Dictionary at that period, blackness meant:

Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul....Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister....Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked.
...Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc.

(qtd. in Jordan 7)

For Europeans, blackness was the cause of inferiority, bestiality, brute creation, evil, devil, and wickedness, which hindered Europeans from accepting Blacks as human species and consequently set them apart from Whites.

The concept of race was later reinforced by the traveler tales. After the arrival of European explorers in the Western Hemisphere around the early sixteenth century, European explorers encountered Blacks who lived among apes (Jordan 229). As Blacks had a close relationship with apes that possessed human-like traits, the European explorers came to the conclusion that Blacks were descendants of apes. This story was retold to other Europeans and later became traveler tales. These tales influenced European thoughts during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.

In addition to the traveler tales, the concept of the Great Chain of Being that originated by Aristotle also had a tremendous impact on European thoughts in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. According to this concept, all living organisms from the higher beings to the lower beings of the world were placed in different ranks on the chain. God was ranked at the highest, whereas men were ranked

between angels and animals. The lower beings had to serve the higher beings. This concept was later revived by Carolus Linnaeus, a Swedish biological scientist who believed in a set of hierarchy among living organisms. He later published his theory, General System of Nature, in 1735. This theory gave details about the identification and ranking of living organisms. Owing to the influence of his theory, apes were placed between men and other living organisms. This idea went together well with the traveler tales that later led to the notion that Blacks had a close affinity with beasts. At this point, the biological concept about race and the distinction in the categorizations fundamental to racial structure and racial discourse began to appear. Moreover, the connection of the traveler tale and the concept of the Chain were correlative: the fact that “Negroes and apes sometimes had a beastly copulation or conjecture” (Jordan 229). This served to account for the affinity of Blacks and beasts and had much influence on European thoughts to justify Blacks as brutish, bestial, or beastly.

In the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the scientific criteria played a key role to manifest the natural basis of racial hierarchy. Natural basis of racial hierarchy impacted knowledge providing explanation about human complexity. At that time, Charles Robert Darwin, an English naturalist, set a hypothesis to explain the development and the evolution of each species of living organisms under the surroundings that kept changing over time. This was called the “Theory of Evolution” by natural selection to which many scholars paid much attention. According to this theory, each species of living organisms had to adapt themselves to best suit to the changing environments so that they could survive. This idea was later known as “The Survival of the Fittest.” Through his theory, Darwin revealed that races of men had evolved over

hundreds of thousands, even millions of years, and that races of men had diverged while adapting to the particularities of local conditions (Bergman). Under the natural conditions, men had to struggle for survival and those who survived were considered as the fittest. This idea led to the notion that later was called Social Darwinism. By this notion, it came to the conclusion that the fittest possessed favorably racial traits indicating superiority to other races of men. These racial traits were worthy and had to be maintained. Here endless number of primitive races that possessed unworthy racial traits would be eliminated under the struggle for existence and eventually be replaced by superior races. Also, Social Darwinism concluded that the fittest race was Caucasian whereas the weakest race was African (qtd. in Bergman). This account spurred many scientific racists to form knowledge to prove the superiority of white race and the inferiority of black race. According to scientific racists' views, Blacks' race was defined as "a species of men (sic) as different from ours... as the breed of spaniels is from that of greyhounds" (qtd. in Omi and Winant 63).

In addition, scientific racists in that period maintained that black race was less civilized and developed than other races. Compared to Whites', Blacks' skulls were much smaller and much closer to apes' skulls (Landrine and Klonoff, 6). By the consequence of this notion, Blacks were justified to possess underdeveloped brain that resulted in their deficiency in intellectual and mental properties. Under the state of being deficient in intellectual and mental property, Blacks were ignorant, immoral and lost self-control. This account had a tremendous impact on Whites to hold views on Blacks that: "Blacks' understanding ability was greatly inferior to Whites. Blacks lacked faculty of idea application and seemed to form neither the advantages nor the abuse of philosophy"

(Omi and Winant 63). Similarly, Blacks were also believed to be ignorant, downright stupid and were defined as “a creature and object of the action and domination” (Hoover 34). The ignorance and stupidity caused Blacks’ destitution of artistry and rationality. It made them incapable of being instructed and gaining understanding. Under these circumstances, Blacks did not deserve prestigious jobs. Their inability to be engineers and architects was assumed by Europeans, so they were only placed doing hard physical works.

Moreover, Thomas Jefferson, the U.S. president and the prominent supporter of the Enlightenment doctrine of “the rights of man” expressed his attitude towards Blacks as follows:

“Blacks’ appearances seemed to signify scandal rather than reputation. Their faculty in memory seemed to be equal to whites’, but their reasoning ability was much more inferior. They were stupid, savage, abnormal and devoid of imaginative ability and they were inferior to whites although they were considered a different race, or made distinct by time and any circumstances.”

(qtd. in Omi and Winant 63-64)

The influence of the biological concept separated Blacks from Whites and placed them in a lower rank, inferior to Whites intellectually and physically.

Apart from Jefferson, Sir Francis Galton, an English eugenicist who supported Darwinism’s theory asserted that heredity could have effect on individual and racial characteristics resulting in inherited superiority in one race and inferiority in another (Landrine and Klonoff, 6). On the basis of this notion, the superior racial characteristics

resulted from the blood's quality of civilized races and vice versa. The blood of civilized races kept prospering but it would be degenerated when the blood of inferior races tainted it. Being primitive and inferior, black race, according to Galton, was considered innate characteristics that could be genetically transferred to relatives (6). These racial characteristics represented animal traits and savagery hindering black race from developing their own culture and civilization.

Besides, the affinity between Blacks and apes was interpreted not only in terms of racial line but also in terms of sexuality. Because Blacks were found among apes, which were assumed to be their progenitors and have strong sexual desire, they were regarded to have strong sexual desire. This account was made reasonable by the conjecture that Blacks and apes sometimes had beastly copulation (Jordan 229). Edward Topsell, a compiler of the *Historie of Four-Footed Beasts*, maintained that: "Men with low and flat nostrils were lustful like apes. Their thick lips which the upper ones hanging over the lower resembled Asses' lips or apes' lips. This resemblance signified foolishness" (qtd. in Jordan 30). Whites believed that lechery could be found among heathen, savages, and beast-like men. With this account, the image of Blacks possessing strong sexual desire was made more vivid in European views. Moreover, Jean Bodin, the famous sixteenth century French political theorist, added that: "Venus was chiefly worshiped in Africa where the constellation of Scorpion pertaining to pudenda dominated" (qtd in Jordan 34). Since both Venus and constellation of Scorpion signified sexuality and passion, they enormously helped to shape European opinions about Blacks' strong sexual desire. Likewise, another anonymous commentator who agreed with the notion about Blacks' strong sexual desire mentioned that: "The concealment of Negro's nakedness signified

his lust and cheekiness. His great member led to lust that caused in his trouble with the Pox” (Jordan 35).

Obviously, the notion about Blacks’ strong sexual desire had much influence upon Europeans and led them to justify and denounce Blacks as sexual predators as well as black beast rapist. Because of these accounts, black men were often accused of criminal rape.

After the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the black population increased tremendously in the white communities, especially in the Deep South of America. This made Whites anxious about the purity of their blood. They considered pure blood supreme, and might be tainted with that of Blacks. According to Clare Eby, Whites believed that even a single drop of a Black’s blood could make a White become a Black. In 1896, the Supreme Court of the America declared that: “one eighth Negro ancestry could be identified as Negro” (Ginsberg 7). In order to prevent a Black’s blood from mixing with Whites’, miscegenation was not allowed. Furthermore, Blacks were segregated in specific areas and were not allowed to associate with Whites. Lynching was performed mainly by white supremacists to intimidate and prevent Blacks from wrongdoing and flirting with Whites.

In short, European tradition played a crucial role in distorting images of Blacks. Blacks could not be equal to Whites both intellectually and physically. Found among apes, Blacks were viewed as beast and savages. These negative images caused Whites to have intense racial prejudice against them. Also these negative images were used as a means to justify Whites’ maltreatment of Blacks. Moreover, the white supremacy ideology stimulated Whites to intensely hate Blacks and exploit them.

All aforementioned details are reflected in and are essential to the analysis of the racial prejudice against the main character in “The Lynching of Jube Benson.”

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher examines the racial prejudice against the main character, Jube Benson, according to the concept of race underpinned by traditional beliefs and the racial concept. The analysis of this chapter is divided into four parts: the myth of inferiority, the myth of criminality, the myth of black rapist, and the lynching.

The Myth of Inferiority

In this part, the researcher examines the main character's inferiority depicted in "The Lynching of Jube Benson." As discussed in chapter two, black inferiority can be traced back to the Bible in Genesis Nine and Ten chapters. This story concerns itself with the curse upon Canaan, Ham's son. In the story, Noah was drunk and naked. He lay in his tent. Ham, Canaan's father, saw his nakedness. When Noah woke up and knew that what Ham had seen him, so he cursed Canaan to be a servant of servants. The story of Canaan plight was later connected to Blacks who were enslaved by Whites. This religious belief signified that Blacks were inferior, so they could only be servants who served Whites.

In the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century, the traveler tale had immense impact on Whites associating Blacks with apes. Because European travelers first found Blacks among apes, so they believed that Blacks were descendants of apes. Believed to be descendants of apes, Blacks were assumed to be inferior animals like apes.

Moreover, in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the connection of Blacks to apes was fostered by the notion of the Great Chain of Being theory. This indicated that apes were placed on the chain between men and other living organisms. As a consequence of this notion, Blacks were placed between other races of men and apes. The belief that Blacks had a close relationship with apes seemed to be true when Darwinism indicated that races of men had diverged from anthropoid apes in the early nineteenth century. Darwinism provided a scientific basis to speculate that the black race had apes' characteristics making Blacks a savage. Scientific racists asserted that the small skulls of Blacks appeared similar to that of apes'. This similarity indicated Blacks' defective intellectual property. Blacks therefore were believed to be ignorant. In consequence, they were incapable of using rationality, applying ideas, imagining, being instructed and gaining understanding. This defective property was later believed to be innate characteristics that could be transferred to relatives. All these accounts clearly indicate that Blacks are innately inferior.

As portrayed in "The Lynching of Jube Benson," Jube, a black man, is inferior to all Whites in the small town of Bradford. As Jube is believed to be inferior, so he is considered as a servant in the society of Whites. In the story, Jube is described as "the black man of all work about the place" (Dunbar, 526). Because Jube is not intelligent, so the best status for him is being a servant. Considered as the black man of all work about the place, Jube does all types of work in order to please Annie and other whites.

Jube works at Mr. Daly's house and fetches and carries for Annie, Mr. Daly's beautiful daughter. Jube pays respect and loyalty to her. In the story, Jube is described: "...a fellow whom everybody trusted; an apparently steady going, grinning sort, as we

used to call him. Well, he was completely under Miss Annie's thumb, and would fetch and carry for her like a faithful dog" (526). A comparison of Jube to a faithful dog clearly illustrates that Jube is inferior in the society of Whites. Although he treats Annie very well, he can be only "a faithful dog".

Dr. Melville, a white physician, later moves to Mr. Daly's house and rents two rooms of his house for his office. After staying there for a while, Dr. Melville begins to care for Annie. When Jube realizes that Dr. Melville cares for Annie, he also becomes loyal to Dr. Melville. Dr. Melville says, "As soon as he saw that I began to care for Annie, and anybody could see that, he transferred some faithful allegiance to me and became my faithful servitor..." (526). Jube helps Dr. Melville with his office work and then pays respect and loyalty to him.

As a white man, with his status as a doctor, Dr. Melville becomes a respected person among Whites and Blacks. Hence, he gains power over ordinary Whites and Blacks. Consequently, he becomes an intimidating person. Compared to Dr. Melville's status and other whites', Jube's status is very inferior to theirs. Jube is a black man whose duty is serving Whites. He is powerless and is under the control of Annie and Dr. Melville. Obviously, Jube's role as a black man of all work about the place and Dr. Melville's role as a physician crystallize the idea that Blacks intellectually inferior to Whites. The inferiority leads Blacks to be dominated by whites. Jube himself realizes his inferiority and simultaneously feels fear of white power. He therefore submits to Dr. Melville. Jube's allegiance to Annie and then to Dr. Melville is precisely ascribed to the dominance of Whites over Blacks.

Besides, Dr. Melville and other Whites consider Jube as a different member in their society. This can be attributed to white assumption that Whites were “children of God” whereas other races of men were “others.” This separates Whites from Blacks. As a black man, Jube along with other Blacks are considered as “others” in the Whites’ views. The portrayal of otherness of Blacks can be perceived through Dr. Melville’s expression: “Here I boarded and here also came my patients-white and black- whites from every section, and blacks from ‘nigger town’” (525). Clearly, Dr. Melville separates Whites from Blacks and Jube, as a black man, is excluded from being a member in the society of Whites. Beyond this, Whites have a profound belief that Blacks were savage. Because of savagery, blacks therefore are unreliable to associate with. As a sense of not belonging to the white society, along with his inferiority, Jube is degraded as a faithful servitor, and dog.

As discussed above, the notion that Blacks are inferior is used by Whites to justify the power exercised by them over Blacks. Controlled by the Whites’ power, Blacks are made subordinate and powerless. Jube’s role in the white society reflects the plight of being subordinate and powerless. Being subordinate and powerless, Jube’s destiny depends on whites who exercise power of life and death over him. As portrayed in “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” Jube is hunted after Annie dies and eventually is captured by a white mob in which Dr. Melville participates. After Jube is captured, Dr. Melville strikes Jube but Jube does nothing as a reaction. What Jube can do is just claiming that he is innocent. Jube exclaims, “ ‘W’y, doctah,’ ‘w’y, doctor! I ain’t store nuffin’ o’ yo’n, an’ I was comin’ back. I only run off to see my gal, Lucy, ovah to de centah’ ” (529).

Jube's reasons used to claim that he is innocent cannot prevent Dr. Melville from giving up taking his revenge against him.

It is apparent that Blacks' inferiority causes them to be dominated by Whites. This belief rises from the idea that Blacks are innately inferior. Whites are originally conditioned by the religious belief that Blacks are created by Noah's curse in order to serve Whites. This belief is later reinforced by the racial concept indicating that Blacks have defective intellectual property. On the basis of this account, Blacks can only be servants in the white society. In addition, Blacks are not considered to belong to a white society. They are considered "others" who are exploited by Whites. This leads to the inequality that results in caste status between white race and black race. As a black man, Jube is not equal to Whites socially.

The Myth of Criminality

The consequence of the belief that Blacks are inferior not only causes Whites to degrade Jube but also to speculate him as a criminal. In "The Lynching of Jube Benson," despite the fact that Jube has become Dr. Melville's loved friend, Dr. Melville still speculates that Jube possesses criminal characteristics causing him to commit a crime on Annie. When Annie is found injured, Dr. Melville believes that Jube is a person who commits a crime on her. This belief can be connected to Whites' belief that black race was inferior, so Blacks did remain savage. Blacks' savagery resulted in deficiency in mental property. Because of the deficiency in mental property, Blacks were believed to

be immoral. The state of being immoral caused Blacks to have criminal characteristics and lose self-control. Blacks, therefore, were brutish and bestial.

Before Jube is accused of committing a crime, Dr. Melville realizes Jube's help through Dr. Tom's statements. Dr. Tom is his friend who cures him when he is sick. Dr. Tom tells him about Jube's help after his recovery and Dr. Melville expresses his feeling for Jube's help as follows:

“...I was cared for as tenderly as a baby. Tom, that was my physician and friend, told me all about it afterward with tears in his eyes. Only he was a big, blunt man and his expressions did not convey all that he meant. He told me how my nigger had nursed me as if I were a sick kitten and he my mother”. (257)

Dr. Melville's expression not only reveals his appreciation for Jube's help but also indicates how faithful and gentle Jube is. He later accepts that he has grown to love Jube. Dr. Melville says, “Why I grew to love him, love him, oh, yes, I loved him as well-oh, what am I saying” (527).

Moreover, Jube is a messenger for both Dr. Melville and Annie and then becomes an important person who helps their relationship develop considerably. Dr. Melville expresses his gratitude to Jube: “It was now that Jube proved how invaluable he was as a coadjutor” (526). Most importantly, Dr. Melville feels impressed that Jube helps keep any young men from meeting Annie. To Dr. Melville's view: “Jube was a perfect Cerberus, and no one on earth could have been more effective in keeping away or deluding the other young fellows who visited the Dalys” (526). This shows that how deeply Dr. Melville feels grateful to Jube for all his help.

However, his appreciation for Jube's help, along with his love for Jube does nothing to deter him from thinking that Jube is the real criminal.

In "The Lynching of Jube Benson," when Annie is found injured and then dies, Jube is believed to be a criminal. Because Jube is absent when Annie is found injured so his absence becomes solid evidence for whites in the town to accuse Jube of committing a crime. Before dying, Annie exclaims, "that black ____." After Annie dies, Annie's father says, "It is enough. Jube has disappeared" (528). Even Dr. Melville believes that Jube is the real criminal. This can be discerned through Dr. Melville's sentiment: "As if by intuition the knowledge had passed among the men that Jube Benson had disappeared, and he, by common consent, was to be the object of our search" (528).

According to Dr. Melville, Jube is a gentle demon whereas whites are fairies. The portrayal of this comparison can be perceived through Dr. Melville's statement: "To my chimerical vision there was only a black but gentle demon that came and went, alternating with a white fairy, who would insist on coming in on her head...(527). In addition, Dr. Melville says, "I experienced as I went out that night to beat the woods for this human tiger" (529). The comparison of Jube to the human tiger clearly illustrates Dr. Melville's notion that Blacks still have criminal characteristics causing them to be brutal like tigers. Also, the belief that Blacks are symbols of a monster, a devil and evils is embedded in Dr. Melville since he was a child. He expresses his false belief as follows:

"Why did I do it? I don't know. A false education, I reckon, one false from the beginning. I saw his black face glooming there in the half light, and I could only think of him as a monster. It's tradition. At first I was told that the black man would catch me, and when I got over that, they

taught me that the devil was black, and when I had recovered from the sickness of that belief, here were Jube and his fellows with faces of menacing blackness. There was only one conclusion: this black man stood for all the powers of evil, the result of whose machinations had been gathering in my mind from childhood up....”(529)

Conditioned by this belief, Dr. Melville feels that Jube stands for a monster, a devil and evils. This belief has become tradition that has been taught to Dr. Melville since he was a child. He has absorbed this tradition unconsciously, and then it has become ingrained value. Therefore Dr. Melville believes that Jube stands for a monster, a devil, and evils. Although Jube is very good to him and helps him a lot, he still denounces Jube as a criminal.

In addition, as portrayed in “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” Jube is believed to be sly. The belief that Jube is sly can be perceived through the white sentiment that Blacks are distrusted. This sentiment also has influence upon Whites to speculate that Blacks’ slyness signifies their criminal characteristics. In spite of his being gentle, Whites still speculate that Jube is sly. Even Mrs. Daly who visits her neighbor and sees Jube stepping out behind the house thinks that Jube is sly. She says, “I reckon that black rascal’s a running off somewhere” (528). The sentiment that Blacks are sly is not only expressed by Mrs. Daly but also other Whites. Before Annie is found injured, all Whites rely on Jube. Dr. Melville describes: “Fully a dozen of the citizens had seen him hastening toward the woods and noted his skulking air, but as he had grinned in his old-good natured way, they had, at that time, thought nothing of it ”(528). After Annie is found being painful, whites regain the consciousness of Blacks’ slyness. The portrayal of

this sentiment is found through Dr. Melville's expression as follows: "Now however, the diabolical reason of his slyness was apparent. He had been shrewd enough to disarm suspicion, and by now was far away" (528).

Jube then is searched for in order to be captured and brought back for punishment. Also, Dr. Melville expresses his desire to capture Jube after Annie dies. Dr. Melville portrays his desire to capture Jube as follows: "'To the wood! To the wood!' that was the cry, and away we went, each with determination not to shoot, but to bring the culprit alive into town, and then to deal with him as his crime deserved" (528). Under the influence of the belief that Blacks have criminal characteristics, all whites agree that Jube is brutish and bestial so he is considered as the real criminal.

The notion that black criminality is the result of their savagery allows Dr. Melville to believe that Blacks have criminal characteristics. This has become an ingrained belief for him and makes him denounce Jube as a criminal. Furthermore, it is apparent that Dr. Melville's strong relationship with Jube dramatically declines and then is taken over by the desire to take revenge against Jube. Accordingly, Jube is judged guilty as charged with committing a crime on Annie.

Here Paul Laurence Dunbar shows audiences that Jube is actually innocent but whites are guilty to murder him. Jube does nothing to be guilty about but only his black skin, along with the false belief about Blacks makes Whites to judge him guilty. Instead of Jube, Whites, therefore, are real criminals who murder an innocent black man.

The Myth of Black Rapist

As discussed in chapter two, the black rapist myth rises from the belief that Blacks originally had affinity with apes. As discussed in chapter two, Blacks were first found among apes by European travelers. Because of the relationship between Blacks and apes, European travelers concluded that Blacks were descendants of apes. In addition, apes were placed between men and other living organisms. Under the influence of this notion, black race was placed between apes and other races of men on the Great Chain of Being. This crystallized the notion that Blacks had a close relationship with apes. Also this notion was reinforced by Social Darwinism. Darwinists believed that men had evolved from anthropoid apes.

Since Blacks had a close relationship with apes, so they were believed to have strong sexual desire like apes. According to Clare Eby, the big nostrils, flat nose, massive jaw, protruding lip, and kinky hair represent the animal marks over the proudest intellect and the rarest beauty of any other race. Therefore, Blacks; specifically males, were considered to crave for white women.

In addition, the racists believed that white race could be degenerated if interbreeding with black race occurred. Later this concept was fostered by ideology of white supremacy. Based on this ideology, Whites had to maintain their white supremacy and dominance over Blacks. As a result, Whites had to do every thing to prevent sexual relationship between Whites and Blacks. This caused Whites to persist in maintaining their purity of their blood and take revenge against Blacks who were accused of raping

white women. Due to the fear of miscegenation, white supremacists tried to get rid of Blacks who were accused of raping white women.

In “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” Annie is found injured and her dress is torn from fighting after Dr. Melville returns from visiting his friend, Dr. Tom. Before Annie dies, Dr. Melville asks her that who is a criminal. Before dying, she exclaims “That black_____.” Because of the word “That black_____,” everybody agrees that Jube is a person who rapes Annie. The cause of this accusation is that Jube once works for her and cares for her secretly. Moreover, he is only a black man who goes in and out Annie’s house to work for Dr. Melville. Most importantly, because he is a black man, so he is accused of raping Annie. The word “black” has immense impact on Whites to assure them to believe that Jube is the rapist. According to white views, the word “black” have become their ingrained value that represents a devil, evil, wickedness, and lechery. As discussed above that Blacks have strong sexual desire like apes, therefore Blacks are lustful like apes. Blacks’ lust causes them to be rapists. With the absence of Jube when Annie is found injured and her dress is torn from fighting, everyone is certain that Jube is the real rapist.

After Annie dies, a white mob including Dr. Melville sets out to search for Jube. At dawn they sees him crouching in the corner of the fence. After a white mob levels their guns to Jube, Jube rises and comes towards them. By his innocence, Jube says, “ ‘I t’aught you wa’n’t gwine see me.’ ‘I didn’t mean no harm’ ” (529). After being surrounded by a white mob, Jube says to Dr. Melville, “ ‘I’s moughty glad you’s hyeah doc’ ‘you aint’t gwine let’em whup me’ ” (529). By Jube’s instinct, Jube tells that Dr. Melville will not let anyone whip him because he has become his love friend who used to

help him with his office work as well as taking care of him when he is sick.

Nevertheless, there is no sympathy for Jube from Dr. Melville. According to Dr.

Melville's expression:

“My heart smoldered within me like a coal, and I went forward under the impulse of a will that was half my own, half some more malignant power's. My throat throbbled dryly, but water nor whisky would not have quenched my thirst. The thought has come to me since that now I could interpret the panther's desire for blood and sympathize with it, but then I thought nothing”. (529)

As convinced by the belief about the black rapist, Dr. Melville is certain that Jube is the real criminal who rapes Annie. When Jube asks for help from Dr. Melville, Dr. Melville says, “ ‘Whip you, you hound,’ ‘I'm going to see you hanged,’” (529). Obviously, Dr. Melville's statement that “I am going to see you hanged ” clearly indicates that Jube is guilty of committing rape.

The Lynching

Lynching was a form of execution, which originated from the lack of application of existing law that resulted in further crimes. It was perpetrated by a white mob who assumed the role of judge, jury, and executioner (Palermo, 128). The term “lynch law” originally derived from Col. Charles Lynch, who made his own rule to stop crimes during the American Revolution. Lynching emerged as a way to punish offences as well as an intimidating tool for social control.

Most victims of lynching were Blacks rather than Whites. According to Cammie Michelle Sublette, "Historians note that as the slavery ended, the lynching of black Americans began to rise, reaching its peak in the 1890s" (3). Lynching occurred often in areas of high black population, especially in the Deep South, where Whites were more threatened by higher numbers of Blacks. In lynching, the victims, specifically black men, were not only hung but sometimes whipped or beaten, and shot thousands of times in front of thousands of watchers. Victims were occasionally put on fire prepared by a lynching mob and were shot by watchers who had rifles and handguns. To some victims, before being lynched, their fingers and toes were cut off, and teeth pulled out by pliers. For male victims, they were always castrated before being lynched. After being lynched, corpses were mutilated, cut into pieces so that they could be taken and kept as souvenirs. Obviously, this practice reflected that "lynching was not only a mere punishing measure but a ritual practice perpetrated by a white mob who controlled both forces of laws and orders in their society" (Zangrando).

Blacks actually could be lynched for the following offences: registering to vote, organizing with a white man, disrespect to white women, shoplifting, drunkenness, elopement, insulting Whites, refusing to give evidences, and vagrancy. Later, lynching became a means to punish black men who were alleged to have raped white women. Lynching gave rise to white mythology that Blacks were lynched because they dare to touch the bodies of white women. This mythology caused many black men to become scapegoats.

During the Jim Crow Laws in 1896 to 1965, lynching was fostered by the ideal of white supremacy, encouraging Whites to terrorize and control Blacks and then was

accepted publicly by Whites to be used on Blacks. Because the white public accepted lynching, the white mob gained much power and authority to lynch Blacks who were accused of wrongdoing and raping. Here lynching was not a mere measure to punish Blacks who were accused of wrong doing and raping, but it was a way for Whites to manipulate their power over Blacks. Lynching, according to Blacks' views, was the most horrible punishing tool, which caused Blacks suffering and death, and made them to be obedient and submissive to Whites. Lynching, henceforth, was not a mere punishing tool for suppressing crimes but a way to control Blacks and a crucial tool for Whites to exercise their power on them.

“The Lynching of Jube Besnson” is set up during the Jim Crow Laws. According to Gayl Jones:

“... the author sets up the popular feeling of the time of the Jim Crow codes and legislation at home and encroachments abroad in the Pacific and Caribbean, extending the convolvulus of white supremacy-a time when lynchings were advertised in newspapers under amusements....” (35)

In the “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” after Annie is found injured, many men gather around Annie’s house in order to know who is the real criminal. After Annie dies, Mr. Daly announces her death to those men. Those men become angry and begin assembling. Knowing that Jube disappears, they agree that Jube is the real criminal. Then they set out to search for Jube. Dr. Melville narrates, “I heard the angry roar without swelling up like the noise of the flood, and then I heard the sudden movement of many feet as the men separated into searching parties... (528). After being captured, Jube

then is tied upon a horse. A white mob fires a few shots to announce the capture. Later many Whites come from all directions and follow the mob to Annie's house. When reaching there, Jube is taken into to behold Annie's body. After beholding it, Jube screams as he realizes why he has been captured. All Whites then help each other to carry Jube outside to the yard where the rope is prepared on the tree. Then Dr. Melville, along with Mr. Hiram Daly and other whites pull upon Jube. This clearly portrays how the white mob has much power and authority over Blacks who are alleged to be guilty. Without any trial, the white mob thinks that they have right to punish Jube who dares touch a white woman. Dr. Melville narrates the atmosphere of lynching as follows:

No one was masked. We know each other. Not even the culprit's face was covered...."

We were tying the end of the rope to a tree, where the dead man might hang as a warning to his fellows, when a terrible cry chilled us to the marrow. (530)

After Jube is lynched, Ben, Jube's brother, along with another Negro brings Tom Skinner, a white ruffian to the mob to prove Jube's innocence. Tom Skinner who blackens himself to imitate Negro's is captured in the barn. Upon the emergence of Tom Skinner, the rope is cut down and Jube has already died. To Dr. Melville, the emergence of Tom Skinner causes him to resuscitate Jube and simultaneously to inspect the body of the rape victim: Carefully, carefully, I searched underneath her broken finger nails. There was skin there. I took it out, the little curled pieces...It was the skin of a white man, and in it were embedded strands of short, brown hair or beard" (530).

This indicates that lynching is a way used to terrorize and prevent black men from committing rape on white women. For a black man, no evidence can be used to prove his innocence if being accused of raping a white woman. Clearly, in “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” Jube portrays the mythology of lynching and the power of Whites who persist in establishing dominance over Blacks. Jube is also one black who is under Whites’ power and who becomes a scapegoat in lynching.

After examining the skin, Dr. Melville finds that it is the skin of a white man. This makes Dr. Melville realize Jube’s innocence and he simultaneously feel guilty for lynching him. So, he does not dare announce the truth to the crowd who is outside. The cry of the crowd “Blood guilty! Blood guilty!” regains the full understanding of his guilt all the time. At this stage Dr. Melville is aware of his prejudice against Jube that caused him to judge Jube guilty as charged with committing a crime and raping on Annie. He eventually promises to two white murderers sitting between him that this lynching is his last one.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Conclusion

In “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” Jube, the main character, is judged guilty as charged with committing a crime and raping a white woman because of the following myths.

First is the myth of inferiority. This myth derives from the racial concept that Blacks have a close relationship with apes, so Blacks are believed to be savage like apes. Considered as savages, Blacks are believed to have defective intellectual property. Based on this myth, Jube is degraded in the white society and then is a servant who fetches and carries for Annie as well as other Whites. Jube, therefore, is considered the man of all work about the place. Thus, Jube becomes powerless and is beyond the protection of the laws. In consequence, he is easily exploited by Whites and cannot fight against Whites to prove his innocence, though being alleged guilty.

Second is the myth of criminality. This myth rises from the racial concept used to prove black race’s inferiority. According to this myth, Blacks are believed to be savage like apes. The savagery indicates animal characteristics causing Blacks to lack moral sense. Under the state of immorality, as a black man, Jube is believed to be a criminal.

The last is the myth of black rapist. This myth rises from the belief that Blacks do retain apes’ characteristics one of which is strong sexuality. Owing to the similarity of black physical traits to apes’, Blacks are believed to have strong sexuality like apes. This

is used as a reason to accuse Jube of raping Annie. Considered to have strong sexual desire like apes, Jube, as a black man, is believed to be a person who rapes Annie, a white woman.

Moreover, after the Jim Crow Laws were enacted, lynching emerged and was made legitimate and acceptable to the public. At this period, lynching was a tool to control Blacks. Because of the accusation of committing rape, Jube is searched for and brought back to be lynched. It is apparent that racial prejudice has an immense impact on the main character to be accused of committing crime and rape and causes him to be the victim of lynching.

After conducting this research, the researcher found that this research is beneficial to both readers and the researcher. This research has a didactic purpose explaining that racial bias should not exist in the society that is composed of many races of men. Racial bias leads men of different races to encounter conflict and social instability. Men of different races tend to seek ways to defeat each other so they will live their lives in the society without happiness. To the researcher, this research teaches that looking only at one side is not a good thing. Judging someone should be based primarily on behavior and thinking not ones' physical appearance. In other words, physical appearance cannot be solid evidence to judge anyone but one's behaviors and thinking are considered to be most important.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Points suggested here for further studies not only deal with “The Lynching of Jube Benson” but also deal with Dunbar’s other literary works relevant to lynching.

“The lynching of Jube Benson” can be studied beyond the subject matter concerned racial prejudice. This study can be analyzed in terms of realism. That is, what is the cultural logic of lynching? What does lynching represent realistically?

Lynching is also depicted in another Dunbar’s poem, “The Haunted Oak”. In this poem, Dunbar used personification as the literary device. The poem depicted an oak tree that was able to speak and its branch on which a lynching rope had hung withered. What does personification of an oak tree symbolize? Why does the oak’s branch on which a lynching rope hung wither?

Moreover, Dunbar is well known for the use of Afro-American folklore and irony both in his poems, novels, and short stories. The purposes of using these literary devices can be discussed. Why are these literary devices used? What do they symbolize or reflect? Also, a comparative study between Dunbar’s literary works using folklore and irony with other authors’ literary works should be studied. What differences and significance are there between Dunbar’s literary works using folklore and irony compared to other authors’ literary works.

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APPENDIX

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The Lynching of Jube Benson

"The Lynching of Jube Benson" was first published in Dunbar's collection of stories *The Heart of Happy Hollow* (1904). That a lynching story should be included in a volume bearing such a seemingly benign pastoral title suggests something of the fierce, if disguised, irony in much of Dunbar's fiction and verse. In 1903, he expressed his anger more openly in the widely reprinted essay "The Fourth of July and Race Outrages":

"Every wire, no longer in the South alone, brings us news of a new hanging or a new burning, some recent outrage against a helpless people, some, fresh degradation of an already degraded race". Dunbar was not exaggerating; between 1889 and 1918, more than 2,500 lynchings of African Americans occurred, principally but not exclusively in the South. Given the political urgency of the situation and the outrageous nature of the crime, Dunbar's careful modulation of this narrative demonstrates remarkable artistic control of his material. The white narrator speaks out of a well of unwanted recollection and sad acquaintance with his own barbarity, and the consequences of his "blood guilt" are betrayed by the gray hair and lined face of a man barely thirty years old. Jube Benson is lynched by ordinary citizens who too casually disregard common virtue and whose racism stems from a perversely easy and traditional way of thinking about blacks. This seems to be the understanding the narrator wishes to convey when he says, "All human love and gratitude are damned poor things....The truth is a nasty thing to stand."

* * *

Gordon Fairfax's library held but three men, but the air was dense with clouds of smoke. The talk had drifted from one topic to another much as the smoke wreaths had puffed,

floated, and thinned away. Then Handon Gay, who was an ambitious young reporter, spoke of a lynching story in a recent magazine, and the matter of punishment without trial put new life into the conversation.

“I should like to see a real lynching,” said Gay rather callously. “Well, I should hardly express it that way,” said Fairfax, “but if a real, live lynching were to come my way, I should not avoid it.”

“I should,” spoke the other from the depths of his chair, where he had been puffing in moody silence. Judged by his hair, which was freely sprinkled with gray, the speaker might have been a man of forty-five or fifty, but his face, though lined and serious, was youthful, the face of a man hardly past thirty.

“What, you, Dr. Melville? Why, I thought that you physicians wouldn't weaken at anything.”

“I have seen one such affair,” said the doctor gravely, “in fact, I took a prominent part in it.”

“Tell us about it,” said the reporter, feeling for his pencil and note book, which he was, nevertheless, careful to hide from the speaker.

The men drew their chairs eagerly up to the doctor's, but for a minute he did not seem to see them, but sat gazing abstractedly into the fire, then he took a long draw upon his cigar and began:

“I can see it all very vividly now. It was in the summer time and about seven years

ago. I was practicing at the time down in the little town of Bradford. It was a small and primitive place, just the location for an impecunious medical man, recently out of college.”

In lieu of a regular office, I attended to business in the first of two rooms which I rented from Hiram Daly, one of the more prosperous of the townsmen. Here I boarded and here also came my patients-white and black-whites from every section, and blacks from 'nigger town,' as the west portion of the place was called.

“The people about me were most of them coarse and rough, but they were simple and generous, and as time passed on I had about abandoned my intention of seeking distinction in wider fields and determined to settle into the place of a modest country doctor. This was rather a strange conclusion for a young man to arrive at, and I will not deny that the presence in the house of my host’s beautiful young daughter, Annie, had something to do with my decision. She was a beautiful young girl of seventeen or eighteen, and very far superior to her surroundings. She had a native grace and a pleasing way about her that made everybody that came under her spell her abject slave. White and black who knew her loved her, and none, I thought, more deeply and respectfully than Jube Benson, the black man of all work about the place.

“He was a fellow whom everybody trust; an apparently steady going grining sort, as we used to call him. Well, he was completely under Miss Annie’s thumb, and would fetch and carry for her like a faithful dog. As soon as he saw that I began to care for Annie, and anybody could see that, he transferred some of his allegiance to me and became my faithful servitor also. Never did a man have a more devoted adherent in his wooing than did I, and many a one of Annie’s tasks which he volunteered to do gave her

an extra hour with me. You can imagine that I liked the boy and you need not wonder any more than as both wooing and my practice waxed apace, I was content to give up my great ambitions and stay just where I was.

“It wasn't a very pleasant thing, then, to have an epidemic of typhoid break out in the town that kept me going so that I hardly had time for the courting that a fellow wants to carry on with his sweetheart while he is still young enough to call her his girl. I fumed, but duty was duty, and I kept to my work night and day. It was now that Jube proved how invaluable he was as a coadjutor. He not only took messages to Annie, but brought sometimes little ones from her to me, and he would tell me little secret things that he had overheard her say that made me throb with joy and swear at him for repeating his mistress's conversation. But best of all, Jube was a perfect Cerberus, and no one on earth could have been more effective in keeping away or deluding the other young fellows who visited the Dalys. He would tell me of it afterward, chuckling softly to himself. ‘An,’ Doctah, I say to Mistah Hemp Stevens, “ ‘Scuse us, Mistah Stevens, but Miss Annie, she des. gone out,”an' den he go outer de gate lookin' moughty lonesome. When Sam Elkins come, I say, “Sh, Mistah Elkins, Miss Annie, she done tuk down,” an' he say, "What, Jube, you don' reckon hit de-" Den he stop an" look skeert, an'I say, “ feared hit is, Mistah Elkins,” an' sheks my haid ez solemn. He goes outer de gate lookin' lak his bes' frien' done daid, an' all de time Miss Annie behine de cu'tain ovah de po'ch des' a laffin' fit to kill.’

“Jube was a most admirable liar, but what could I do? He knew that I was a young fool of a hypocrite, and when I would rebuke him for these deceptions, he would give way and roll on the floor in an excess of delighted laughter until from very

contagion I had to join him-and, well, there was no need of my preaching when there had been no beginning to his repentance and when there must ensue a continuance of his wrongdoing.

“This thing went on for over three months, and then, pouf! I was down like a shot. My patients were nearly all up, but the reaction from overwork made me an easy victim of the lurking germs. Then Jube loomed up as a nurse. He put everyone else aside, and with the doctor, a friend of mine from a neighboring town, took entire charge of me.

Even Annie herself was put aside, and I was cared for as tenderly as a baby. Tom, that was my physician and friend, told me all about it afterward with tears in his eyes. Only he was a big, blunt man and his expressions did not convey all that he meant. He told me how my nigger had nursed me as if I were a sick kitten and he my mother. Of how fiercely he guarded his right to be the sole one to 'do' for me, as---he- .called it, and how, when the crisis came, he hovered, weeping, but hopeful, at my bedside, until it was safely passed, when they drove him, weak and exhausted, from the room. As for me, I knew little about it at the time, and cared less. I was too busy in my fight with death. To my chimerical vision there was only a black but gentle demon that came and went, alternating with a white fairy, who would insist on coming in on her head, growing larger and larger and then dissolving. But the pathos and devotion in the story lost nothing in my blunt friend's telling.

“It was during the period of a long convalescence, however, that I came to know my humble ally as he really was, devoted to the point of abjectness. There were times when for very shame at his goodness to me, I would beg him to go away, to do something else. He would go, but before I had time to realize that I was not being ministered to, he

would be back at my side, grinning and pottering just the same. He manufactured duties for the joy of performing them. He pretended to see desires in me that I never had, because he, liked to pander to them, and when I became entirely exasperated, and ripped out a good round oath, he chuckled with the remark, 'Dah, now, you sholy is gittin' well. Nevah did hyeah a man anywhaih nigh Jo'dan's sho' cuss lak dat.'

"Why, I grew to love him, love him, oh, yes, I loved him as well oh, what am I saying? All human love and gratitude are damned poor things; excuse me, gentlemen, this isn't a pleasant story. The truth is usually a nasty thing to stand.

"It was not six months after that that my friendship to Jube, which he had been at such great pains to win, was put to too severe a test. "It was in the summer again, and as business was slack, I had ridden over to see my friend, Dr. Tom. I had spent a good part of the day there, and it was past four o'clock when I rode leisurely into Bradford. I was in a particularly joyous mood and no premonition of the impending catastrophe oppressed me. No sense of sorrow, present or to come forced itself upon me, even when I saw men hurrying through the almost deserted streets. When I got within sight of my home and saw a crowd surrounding it, I was only interested sufficiently to spur my horse into a jog trot, which brought me up to the throng, when something in the sullen, settled horror in the men's faces gave me a sudden, sick thrill. They whispered a word to me, and without a thought, save for Annie, the girl who had been so surely growing into my heart, I leaped from the saddle and tore my way through the people to the house."

It was Annie, poor girl, bruised and bleeding, her face and dress torn from struggling. They were gathered round her with white faces, and, oh, with what terrible patience they were trying to gain from her fluttering lips the name of her murderer. They

made way for me and I knelt at her side. She was beyond my skill, and my will merged with theirs. One thought was in our minds.

“Who? I asked.

“Her eyes half opened, 'That black___, She fell back into my arms dead. “We turned and looked at each other. The mother had broken down and was weeping, but the face of the father was like iron. “ ‘It is enough,’ he said; ‘Jube has disappeared.’ He went to the door and said to the expectant crowd, ‘She is dead.’ “I heard the angry roar without swelling up like the noise of a flood, and then I heard the sudden movement of many feet as the men separated into searching parties, and laying the dead girl back upon her couch, I took my rifle and went out to join them.

“As if by intuition the knowledge had passed among the men that Jube Benson had disappeared, and he, by common consent, was to be the object of our search. Fully a dozen of the citizens had seen him hastening toward the woods and noted his skulking air, but as he had grinned in his old good-natured way, they had, at the time, thought nothing of it. Now, however, the diabolical reason of his slyness was apparent. He had been shrewd enough to disarm suspicion, and by now was far away. Even Mrs. Daly, who was visiting with a neighbor, had seen him stepping out a back way, and had said with a laugh, ‘I reckon that black rascal’s a-running off somewhere.’ Oh, if she had only known.

“To the woods! To the woods!’ that was the cry, and away we went, each with the determination not to shoot, but to bring the culprit alive into town, and then to deal with him as his crime deserved.”

I cannot describe the feelings I experienced as I went out that night to beat the woods for this human tiger. My heart smoldered within me like a coal, and I went forward under the impulse of a will that was half my own, half some more malignant power's. My throat throbbed dryly, but water nor whiskey would not have quenched my thirst. The thought has come to me since that now I could interpret the panther's desire for blood and sympathize with it, but then I thought nothing. I simply went forward, and watched, watched with burning eyes for a familiar form that I had looked for as often before with such different emotions.

"Luck or ill-luck, which you will, was with our party, and just as dawn was graying the sky, we came upon our quarry crouched in the corner of a fence. It was only half light, and we might have passed, but my eyes had caught sight of him, and I raised the cry. We leveled our guns and he rose and came toward us.

" 'I t'ought you wa'n't gwine see me; he said sullenly, 'I didn't mean no harm.' ,

" 'Harm'

"Some of the men took the word up with oaths, others were ominously silent.

"We gathered around him like hungry beasts, and I began to see terror dawning in his eyes. He turned to me, 'I's moughty glad you's hyeah, doe,' he said, 'you ain't gwine let'em whup me.'

" 'Whip you, you hound,' I said, 'I'm going to see you hanged,' and in the excess of my passion I struck him full on the mouth. He made a motion as if to resent the blow against even such odds, but controlled himself."

‘W’y, doctah,’ he exclaimed in the saddest voice I have ever heard, ‘w’y, doctor! I ain’t stole nuffin’ o’ yo’n, an’ I was comin’ back. I only run off to see my gal, Lucy, ovah to de Centah.’

“ ‘You lie!’ I said, and my hands were busy helping the others bind him upon a horse. Why did I do it? I don’t know. A false education, I reckon, one false from the beginning. I saw his black face glooming there in the half light, and I could only think of him as a monster. It’s tradition. At first I was told that the black man would catch me, and when I got over that, they taught me that the devil was black, and when I had recovered from the sickness of that belief, “ ‘here’ were Jube and his fellows with faces of menacing blackness. There was only one conclusion: This black man stood for all powers of evil, the result of whose machinations had been gathering in my mind from childhood up. But this has nothing to do with what happened.

“After firing a few shots to announce our capture, we rode back into town with Jube. The ingathering parties from all directions met us as we made our way up to the house. All was very quiet and orderly. There was no doubt that it was as the papers would have said, a gathering of the best citizens. It was a gathering of stern, determined men, bent on a terrible vengeance.

“We took Jube into the house, into the room where the corpse lay. At sight of it, he gave a scream like an animal’s and his face went the color of storm-brown water. This was enough to condemn him. We divined, rather than heard, his cry of ‘Miss Ann, Miss Ann, oh, my God, doc, you don’t t’ink I done it?’

“Hungry hands were ready. We hurried him out into the yard. A rope was ready. A tree was at hand. Well, that part was the least of it, save that Hiram Daly stepped aside

to let me be the first to pull upon the rope. It was lax at first, and I felt the quivering soft weight resist my muscles. Other hands joined, and Jube swung off his feet.

“No one was masked. We knew each other. Not even the culprit’s face was covered, and the last I remember of him as he went into the air was a look of sad reproach that will remain with me until I meet him face to face again. “

We were tying the end of the rope to a tree, where the dead man might hang as a warning to his fellows, when a terrible cry chilled us to the marrow.”

“ ‘Cut’im down, cut’im down, he ain’t guilty. We got de one. Cut him down, fu’ Gawd’s sake. Here’s de man, we foun’ him hidin’ in de barn!’ “Jube’s brother, Ben, and another Negro, came rushing toward us, half dragging, half carrying a miserable-looking wretch between them. Someone cut the rope and Jube dropped lifeless to the ground. “ ‘Oh, my Gawd, he’s daid, he’s daid!’ wailed the brother, but with blazing eyes he brought his captive into the center of the group, and we saw in the full light the scratched face of Tom Skinner-the worst white ruffian in the town-but the face we saw was not as we were accustomed to see it, merely smeared with dirt. It was blackened to imitate a Negro’s.

“God forgive me; I could not wait to try to resuscitate Jube. I knew he was already past help, so I rushed into the house and to the dead girl’s side. In the excitement they had not yet washed or laid her out. Carefully, carefully, I searched underneath her broken finger nails. There was skin there. I took it out, the little curled pieces, and went with it to my office.

“There, determinedly, I examined it under a powerful glass, and read my own doom. It was the skin of a white man, and in it were embedded strands of short, brown hair or beard.

“How I went out to tell the waiting crowd I do not know, for some thing kept crying in my ears, ‘Blood guilty! Blood guilty!’ “The men went away stricken into silence and awe. The new prisoner attempted neither denial nor plea. When they were gone I would have helped Ben carry his brother in, but he waved me away fiercely, ‘You he’ped murder my brotha, you dat was his frien’, go’ way, go’ way! I’ll tek him home myse’f.’ I could only respect his wish, and he and his comrade took up the dead man and between them bore him up the street on which the sun was now shining full. “I saw the few men who had not skulked indoors uncover as they passed, and I-I-stood there between the two murdered ones, while all the while something in my ears kept crying, ‘Blood guilty! Blood guilty!’ The doctor’s head dropped into his hands and he sat for some time in silence, which was broken by neither of the men, then he rose, saying, “Gentlemen, that was my last lynching.”

VISTA

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