

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF DISCRIMINATION ON THE CHARACTERS AS SEEN IN *ON THE COME UP* BY ANGIE THOMAS

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the writer analyzes the act of discrimination and its psychological impacts on the victims as reflected in *On The Come Up*. This novel depicts social life in the United States, where discrimination is a social problem with a psychological impact that cannot be avoided. Kite et al categorizes discrimination into three types, such as blatant discrimination, subtle discrimination, and covert discrimination [1]. Morgan states that the impact of discrimination may lead to mental health outcomes [2]. There are still many people in the world experiencing discrimination and dealing with the impact of the unequal treatment they face. Experiencing discrimination is an unpleasant thing. Therefore, the writer considers the discrimination and psychological impacts they receive are essential to be studied.

METHOD

The data is taken from a novel *entitled On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas. The research is done by doing close reading and interpretation techniques. Jacobus clarifies that close reading examines details; interpretation aims to establish the overall meaning of a work [3]. In conducting the research, the writer collected data on the discrimination experienced by the characters. The writer classified these data into three types of discrimination and interpret the data. The data showing psychological impacts were then put into classification and interpreted. Data are analyzed based on the theory applied.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The act of discrimination found in *On the Come Up* fulfill all types classified by Kite et al. All the data are taken from *On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas [4].

Blatant discrimination is experienced by Brianna, who is a high school students. Blatant discrimination happened at school and in public places.

I stroll through after him. The metal detector doesn't beep, but Long puts his arm Putin front of me. "Go back." "Why?" I ask. "Because he said so," says Tate. "But it didn't beep!" I say. "I don't care," Long says. "I told you to go back through." Fine. I go through the metal detector again. No beep. "Hand over the bag," Long says. (43-44)

From the way, the two guards treat Brianna, Long, and Tate, blatant discrimination has happened. The function of a metal detector is to detect any metal or dangerous things being brought to school. As shown in the above quotation, the metal detector did not give out any alarm as Brianna walked through it. She should be permitted to enter, but instead is forced to go through it for the second time. The unpleasant treatment continues as the two guards ask for her bag. The two guards without hesitation have intentionally targeted Brianna as their victim. Tate's statement "because he said so," and Long replies, "I don't care" to Brianna's question and protest strengthened how this treatment is regarded as intentional. Furthermore, this incident is visible to many students' eyes as they are also queuing along with Brianna.

Subtle discrimination is experienced by Brianna. This type of discrimination happened in school and done by Mrs. Burns, a teacher. The following data shows subtle discrimination done by a teacher to a student.

Fiction class. Mrs. Burns was talking about the literary canon, and I rolled my eyes because all the books sounded boring as shit. She asked if there was a problem, and I told her exactly that, just without saying "as shit." She sent me to the office. I mumbled something under my breath on the way out, and she wrote me up for aggressive behavior.(48-49)

Instead of giving advice like she does to other students, the teacher sends Brianna to the principal's office with a note of "aggressive behavior." The teacher's action is unfair and dangerous. She is unconscious of doing discrimination to her student. Covert discrimination is experienced by Brianna. It mostly happened in school. This data shows covert discrimination occurred at school.

She turns to Rhodes. "Since when is candy contraband? Why did they come after my daughter in the first place?" "The security guards have the right to conduct random searches. I can assure you that Brianna was not 'targeted.'" (47)

During the so called "random searches" at school, Brianna is caught bringing candy in her bag. Bringing candy is not prohibited, yet for Brianna to get punishment, the school officials deliberately accused her of selling contraband. This indicates their aim in making Brianna face disciplinary action.

The acts of discrimination result in the victim undergoing emotional difficulties, anxiety, and lack of concentration. One of the emotional difficulties shown by Brianna is anger.

Can't no good come,
From this hoodlum.
Nah. Fuck that word.
Fuck that school.
Fuck all of this. (49)

After being insulted by Long by calling her hoodlum and the incidents of discrimination at her school, Brianna pours her anger in her song lyric. Her anger was seen when Brianna used the word "fuck." The anger Brianna felt was triggered by unpleasant events and injuries caused by school guards and school staffs. This is the result of blatant and covert discrimination that occurred to her at school.

Another psychological impact of discrimination faced by the character is anxiety as pictured below.

I stand on my tiptoes. Long ushers a student through the metal detectors, as if he never left, and Tate checks a backpack nearby. My whole body tenses up. (156)

Brianna's past experience of being discriminated by Long and Tate made her feel anxiety. Her anxiety arose when she saw Long and Tate at the gate of her school returning to work. The feeling of tension felt by Brianna shows that she is very anxious seeing Long and Tate. This is the result of the blatant discrimination experienced by Brianna.

The third psychological impact of discrimination is lack of concentration. Brianna's lack of concentration affected her work as a composer.

Doc sits back with a smile. "Let 'em know how you feeling then." I sit in a corner with my notebook and my pen. Doc's got the beat on repeat. It gives the floor a pulse, making it thump slightly beneath me. I close my eyes and try to soak it in, but every time I do, Long and Tate sneer back at me. (75)

It can be seen that Brianna's memory of being discriminated plays a great deal on her concentration. She is having difficulty in focusing on writing the rap lyrics for her first song. The decrease in Brianna's concentration is the result of blatant discrimination.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of this study indicate that blatant discrimination is the type of discrimination mostly experienced by the characters. Blatant discrimination experienced by the victims occurred frequently at school. The discrimination experienced by the characters is caused by their family background, environment, image, and economic incapability. Only two characters show psychological impact as the result of discrimination. Both of them experienced emotional difficulty which is seen through their anger. Only one character suffered anxiety and lack of concentration. Among all these psychological impact anxiety affected the character the most. Further study on this novel through other psychological perspectives is suggested to gain more insights on how discrimination affects the lives of the characters.

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