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AMERICAN PREJUDICE IN JAMES DASHNER'S *MAZE RUNNER; THE DEATH CURE*

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Abstract

This research discusses American Prejudice portrayed in a novel entitled *The Maze Runner; The Death Cure*. The novel talks about the rebellion which destroys the power of an organization called “wicked”. The writer is interested in picking up the novel as the subject of the research because this novel shows a rebellion against a non-government organization. This research uses a sociological approach to analyze how prejudice occurs in society. The writer uses the concept of the nature of prejudice by Gordon W. Allport. In this study, the writer used the mimetic theory that related to the condition and reality that happened in literary works. In doing this research the writer applied qualitative and descriptive methods to explain and deliver the data of this research. The writer finally found that the effect of prejudice is a conflict and it ends in regret.

Keywords: America, prejudice, riot, regret

I. INTRODUCTION

Prejudice is one of the social problems in society. It creates misunderstanding between the group of people. As the result, there will be rebellion at one point of the place. When prejudice becomes big, there will be a victim. Unfortunately, not many people care about prejudice and prejudice growth as a big problem. For that reason, prejudice is one of the important to be a topic for this research.

Prejudice can be the act of making general assumptions of a person or a community based on limited understanding. According to Allport (1954), prejudice is an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or an individual because he is a member of that group. Prejudice is also an affective feeling towards a person or group member and can also be classified as a reaction to race and or/culture based purely on experience. prejudice is an idea or opinion that disregards basic facts. Prejudice in America often ends in discrimination or treatment based on someone's race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or other characteristics. It happened because there are many ethnicities with a different habitual group of people. The reason why the writer choose this topic is related to the major

problem of the novel, James Dashner's *The Maze Runner; The Death Cure*. There are many people nowadays who are not aware of the prejudice that exists in life. *The Death Cure* tells about rebellion. The rebellion is to destroy the power of an organization called "Wicked". They kidnap and use humans who have immune as specimens which causes the death of many humans. Besides, the rebellion's purpose is to save humanity from "Wicked" greediness. The environment to survive is unworthy and it is different from normal life. *The Death Cure* novel tells about life that is filled with dangers and threats. The presence of Flare which attacks the human brain makes people difficult to survive. In this case, James Dashner uses *The Death Cure* novel as the representation of rebellion and humanity. The chaos occurs because there is some rebellion which is demonstrated by Thomas and his friends, they think that "wicked" as portrayed organization to take the people as a subject to find the cure

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To analyze the problems that happened in *The Maze Runner; The Death Cure*, the writer uses a sociological approach that focuses on the social condition in the novel. According to Daiches (1981), the sociological approach tells about the structure of the society that

can evaluate anything people must know and it can help the work of literature. This sociological approach leads us to the chaos that comes in this novel because the person who is the main character has a prejudice against the “wicked”. “Wicked” itself is a non-government group that kidnapped and uses humans who have immune as specimens which causes the death of many humans.

The focus of the theory is the theory of prejudice. According to (Allport 1954) prejudice is the act of making general assumptions of a person or a community based on limited understanding. So that the writer uses the Allport theory about prejudice. Gordon W. Allport was an American psychologist that focus on the study of personality and environment. There are two concepts from Allport that will be used in this research such as attitude and beliefs and acting out prejudice.

The concept of attitude is the way of thinking or feeling about someone typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior. (Allport 1954) there must be an attitude of favor or disfavor, and it must be related to overgeneralized (and therefore erroneous) beliefs. It means when the way people think about someone or group of the people sometimes express the additional factor believes.

In the concept of acting out, prejudice does concern groups, like or dislike that is

not always directly to what they think. Allport (1954) The negative attitude tends, somehow, somewhere, to express itself in action. the more intense the attitude, the more likely it is to result in vigorously hostile action. it means that when prejudice itself comes from the out of groups because it depends on their action, the concept of acting out prejudice shows the prejudice itself is occurs because of the negative attitude that expresses in action toward others. This concept will answer the second and the third research question.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

To analyze the research, the writer has two supreme data. The first is the novel itself, *The Maze Runner: The Death Cure*. The novel becomes the most important data because the writer took the topic, hypothesis, and so on from the novel. The writer read it first and then tries to analyze the case of the data. Then the writer tries to match the data with the experts' theory and opinion that is suitable with the case that the writer can select.

Furthermore, qualitative is the method that the writer uses in this research. According to Denzin and Yvonna (2005), the word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency”. It directly stated that is a natural setting of the method

where the researcher does not need to bring the data to the laboratory to examine more. In the end, the researcher refers to a type of research question and analysis that will be applied to a given in topic of prejudice in the data *The Maze Runner: The Death Cure*.

To report this data the writer used the descriptive method. According to Gall,& Borg (2007), descriptive method is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics, this research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened. Therefore, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Causes of Prejudice

The causes of prejudice means the things that give rise to prejudice. In the society in America, prejudice becomes the issue that still exists among the people. Allport (1954) stated that prejudice is the act of making general assumptions of a person or a community based on limited understanding. It means that prejudice is an assumption of feelings towards a person or group member and can also be classified as a reaction to race and culture based purely on experience. This sub-title talks about two causes of prejudice which are lack of knowledge and experience.

4.1.1. Lack of Knowledge

There are some causes of Prejudice discovered. As Allport state above, Prejudice happens it is because of making a general assumption of a person or community.

In the novel, one of the causes that caused prejudice is brainwashing. Brainwashing means is the attempt to change the thoughts and beliefs of another person against their will. It is generally loss of memory, including the memory of personal identity due to brain injury, shock, fatigue, repression, or illness. Brainwash is Coerced (being forced to do something) or manipulated by any number of social, intellectual, and psycho-emotional methods, to do or accept things you wouldn't have otherwise. It is often an extension of common, everyday persuasion, but goes beyond it to control the way a person thinks and responds, in general, to limit critical thinking itself, not simply selling a single idea or decision based on presenting information and choice. According to dictionary.com, (2012)

A method for systematically changing attitudes or altering beliefs, originated in totalitarian countries, especially through the use of torture, drugs, or psychological-stress techniques.

It can be seen in the quotation above brainwashing can be a symptom of several neurodegenerative diseases, people whose primary symptom is memory loss may even be aware that they suffer from a memory disorder. People who got brainwashed also find it hard to remember the past, memorize new information, and imagine the future. This is because it constructs future scenarios based on the collection of past experiences.

Thomas as the main character being prejudiced towards a non-government organization that is because “wicked” as the organization makes him being amnesia the type of amnesia that is hysterical amnesia which is the person can forget not only his past but also his identity. He may wake up and suddenly have no sense of who he is. The ability to remember usually returns either slowly suddenly within a few weeks but the memory of shock never comes back completely. The purpose of “wicked” is using humans who have immune as specimens which causes the death of many humans so that The process of “wicked” gathering all of these people is because they kidnapped them and kill their families. That is why “wicked” as the non-government organization makes the teenager being amnesia to make them purely as the people who just born and don't have any information about this part of life. It can be seen in the following monologue ;

“Boy, soon you’ll remember everything, and I have a feeling you’re going to regret a lot. In the meantime, there’s something you need to know—it might even bring you back to your senses.”
“And what’s that?” Thomas really had no idea what the man would say. (p 38)

The monologue above it shows that Thomas as the main character is being amnesia and doesn’t know about his past. This is the talk between the main character, Thomas, and the organization’s doctor in the camp. They talk about the main character will regret his decision against the organization since Thomas does not know anything or does not remember anything. The sentence *soon you will remember everything indicates* that he is confused about the time when he came to the glade because for the first time he come it was just a black box with his eyes close and cannot remember anything in the gliders. It means that he’s been amnesia for a long time. The sentence *Thomas really had no idea what the man would say* shows that Thomas has no idea what the man is saying, he is still confused about which situation is right or wrong. He is confused about whether he lives in the past or the present. It indicates that he does not know what happens to himself. Thomas is trying to believe what he believes because he experienced the bad

of his life in the glade he's still looking for "wicked" itself.

4.1.2. Lack of experience

Experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. The experience leads to prejudice because Thomas as the main character experienced how their friends were kidnapped from the glade by "wicked". This is related to the theory of prejudice by Allport. People often will not believe someone, because of social attitudes that skew their beliefs, such as against the right to live. In the novel, social attitudes such as kidnapping are experienced by Thomas and his friends. It can be seen from the quotation below:

How he'd rush forward and tackle anyone who came in, make a run for it, flee, escape. But those thoughts were almost for amusement more than anything. He knew that WICKED wouldn't let something like that happen (p 25)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Thomas and his friends are being kidnapped by the Wicked. The words *run*, *flee* and *escape* indicate that Thomas and his friends are trying to escape from the Wicked. They believe that by kidnapping them, they have a bad intention toward them. It shows the resistance that Thomas and his friends do to go out from the cage of the Wicked since they have an

assumption that the Wicked are bad because they are kidnapping them. It is believed that when a group has good intentions toward them, they would have asked them in good manners not kidnapping them. In other words, when a group has goodwill that involves them, the group will ask them to willingly participate.

It can be concluded that the causes of prejudice are brainwashing and experience where they are not memorizing the past events or what have happened to them, and their memory is only filled with the present event in which they see their friends being kidnapped without knowing the purpose which makes them having a prejudice toward the certain person, people, and group.

4.2. The Effect of Prejudice

The effect of prejudice means the consequence of action for doing prejudice. This sub-title talks about the effect of prejudice such as conflict. Prejudice leaves the whole in people's minds and hearts, it harms people. When people are doing prejudice, they trigger to create a conflict. Allport (1954) stated that a prejudice, unlike a simple misconception, is actively resistant to all evidence that would unseat it. It means that when people are having a prejudice toward such a group, they are eager to have a conflict between them.

4.2.1 Conflict

A conflict is a serious disagreement and argument about something important. In the case of prejudice in this novel conflict has related with the main character and non-government organization. It is a serious difference between two or more beliefs, ideas, or interests. According to Dehrendorf (1959):

Social class shall be understood such organised or unorganised collectivises of individuals as share manifest or latent interest arising from and related to the authority structure of imperatively coordinated association. It follows from the definitions of latent and manifest interests that social classes are always conflict group. (p.149)

It can be seen that social conflict occurs when an individual or group of people has a different mindset to other such as a person towards a group of people. Prejudice predisposes a group of people to behave negatively toward certain people because of the group to which they belong. And when prejudice reaches the intensity of hatred, it becomes bigotry.

From the theory of conflict, it is stated that social class has always created a gap in society. In means that social class always make a conflict. In this novel conflict as the triggers to make something being serious when having deals has not got way. It can be seen in the quotation below :

The group crouched low, their bodies pressed against each other tightly. It seemed impossible that they could fightback from such a position. “They’ll flank us any second,” Jorgecalled out. “We need to start shootingback!”

From the quotation above, it can be seen that conflict is resulted by doing prejudice. The phrase *fight back, bodies pressed against each other* indicates that conflict cannot be avoided when someone doing prejudice toward someone else or when one group doing prejudice toward another group. In other words, the conflict will remain. The sentence *we need to start shooting back* shows that each group is willing to kill or to finish another one to stand on what they believe is true or to stand on their own belief. It also shows that when it becomes bigotry, there will be hard for each side to lower their tension and to finish the conflict. Even worst, the conflict is always bringing some deaths as a consequence.

4.2.2 Riot

Riot is commonly characterized by a group lashing out in a violent public disturbance against authority property or people. In the novel, the riot is the second thing that leads to conflict as the effect of prejudice is portrayed by Thomas and his friends in which they are as a specimen. When they are believing that the group

which is called wicked has done something bad to them, they are creating a clash or a conflict toward the group. It can be seen from the quotation below:

Thomas still didn't have a plan other than finding his friends, but at least he was one step closer to that. And even though he had no idea what to expect, at least he was out of that room (p.49)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Thomas and his friends already create conflict toward the group which is called wicked. The sentence *he was out of that room* shows that they have set a conflict toward the wicked by going out from the room where they are being observed. In other words, they are breaking the rules of the wick. It means that they have made war between them and the group. The sentence *finding his friends* indicate that Thomas is trying to embrace all the specimen to do the rebel or to fight the group.

The prejudice is creating a conflict which is the group fights for the belief that they keep. Riot will lead Rebellion is one of the conflicts that they are creating in the novel where they are doing massive demonstration toward the group that they believe doing something bad, inhumanity toward them. It can be seen from the quotation below:

Thomas and his friends had spread out in a line between the dwindling crowd of

prisoners and the guards. The others in Thomas's group were searching the floor for anything they could find to use as a weapon—pipes, long screws, the jagged edge of a metal grid. Thomas spotted a warped piece of thick cabling that ended in a spike of rigid wires, as deadly looking as a spear. He grabbed it just as another explosion rocked the room, sending a huge section of the metal shelving crashing to the floor (p.803)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Thomas and his friends are doing massive demonstrations toward the group of the wicked. The sentence *Thomas and his friends had spread out in a line* indicate that they have gone wild and surrounded all the buildings. They have spread conflict in the corner of the buildings toward the employee and the bosses of the wicked. The word prisoners show that Thomas and his friends want to create a massive demonstration by involving prisoners, meaning that the people who are good at destructing many things and killing people. They are spreading the chaos by embracing the prisoners to fight the wicked. The things like *pipes, long screws, and jagged edge of a metal grid* illustrate that the rebellion uses as many things as possible to harm the wicked as they want the group to set them free since they believe that the group had done something bad toward them. The word *explosion* shows that they are truly

massive as they explode the building into the crash. This action, of course, leads to the conflict between the wicked with Thomas and his friends.

It can be concluded that when people are having prejudice over a certain person, people, and group, they will be eager and trigger to create a conflict between them since they think the group, people, or person are doing something bad, inhumanity and irrelevant

V. CONCLUSION

America is one of the countries that have many people come from different ethnicities live side by side. As a result, people are having prejudice or bad assumptions toward a certain group, people, and person. Since some people do not like the idea of living side by side with another ethnicity, religion, and so on. Also, some people do not like the idea of having a certain group that they do not familiar with. In the novel, prejudice is portrayed by Thomas and friends who are the specimen of the Wicked group in finding the cure of the flare since it is believed that the human has a better immune than the other living things.

The prejudice that Thomas and his friends do is caused by Amnesia and the experience that they have. They cannot remember and memorize anything, so they do not know if the group tries to help them. Then, since they are amnesia and in the

present time, their thought has been filled with the events which make them hate the Wicked even more such as kidnapping their friend as a specimen. These causes of prejudice have led them to create a conflict between them and the wicked group. In other words, the effect of prejudice is conflict, since people are eager to create a conflict because of prejudice. As a result, they are regretting having a prejudice toward a certain person, people, and group. Thomas and his friends are regretting having prejudice over the wicked group. In other words, the result of prejudice is regret.

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