

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF RACISM AND THE SPADES CARD GAMES IN TERRANCE HAYES' POEM "WE SHOULD MAKE A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT SPADES"

Danar Arief Amrullah ^{a)}, Shita Dewi Ratih M. Hum, ^{a)} Ni Made Widisanti S. M.Hum ^{a)}

^{a)}Universitas Pakuan, Bogor, Indonesia

^{*}Email Correspondence: danar.arief@gmail.com

Article history : accepted: July 06,2021 revised : August 10, 2021 approved : September 15,2021

ABSTRACT

The research "Correlation between The Elements of Racism with Spades Card Game in the Poem by Terrance Hayes "We Should Make a Documentary about Spades" " aims to find the correlation between the Spades game and the problem of racism in the studied poetry. This research uses descriptive methods and qualitative approaches to find correlations that have been mentioned previously. This study shows in several lines, the problem of racism experienced by the black race is described by the Spades card game. This study shows that the use of the Spades card game in the poetry is closely related to slavery during colonialism and the problem of discrimination against the black race during The Great Depression. The connection between the racial issues in these two periods with the Spades card game is in the connotation of the word Spades itself which is related to slavery that occurred during the colonial period and the Spades card game which is exclusive to the black race.

Keywords: Spades; Racism; Correlation; Discrimination

I. Background:

The United States is generally known as a country of immigrants. Because history records that the American continent is a place of escape for countries that have conflicts to escape and live in a more peaceful place. This can be proven in 1880-1924 where this mass immigration incident occurred due to industrialization which made the demand for new workers up to that time dubbed The Great Wave because the addition of immigrants reached 584,000 on average per year at that time. Because of this problem, the Immigration Act was issued to reduce the rate of immigrants. And which in the end and named the locals 'Indians' which after further exploration, Columbus eventually

succeeded in reducing the rate of immigration to 178,000 people on average per year. (Roy Beck, 1996: 95)

In the 15th century Europe was in high spirits of exploration and economic change. Fast sea routes for exploration to Asia, Africa, and India are also needed for this purpose. Christopher Columbus offered the kingdom of Spain to finance their journey. And with a miscalculation of the size of the earth, Christopher Columbus arrived at the island called San Salvador on October 12, 1492. Unknowingly, Christopher Columbus believed that they had found 'the Indies

became the first person to discover a new continent which was named "America".

After Columbus discovered the American continent, all corners of the European continent were frantically wanting to dominate the American continent. As a result, Spain took control of St. Augustine (now Florida), New Mexico, Central America and South America with their Catholic religion. The Netherlands and England followed and ended with England being the only colony that survived on the American continent with its Protestant teachings along with slaves imported directly from the African continent (Paul S. B.; 2012).

A few hundred years later in 1929 there was an economic collapse called The Great Depression. At this time, the collapse of financial institutions but activity in the financial markets soared which resulted in Wall Street collapsing (Eichengreen, B. J.; 1995) which resulted in a crisis and banking panic at that time. another consequence of that period was the high unemployment rate which affected the whole society (Wicker, Elmus; 1996). At that time, discrimination was still very strong. As a result, the black race is still marginalized compared to other races which makes job opportunities for blacks during the Great Depression more difficult than other races.

The race problem in the 1930s or the Great Depression can be summarized in four related theoretical factors according to John Brueggemann (2002) as follows:

- The process of industrialization takes place in a highly racial society
- The economic crisis of the 1930s changed the structure of political opportunity for advocates of civil rights and the interests of black Americans in general.

- The economic position of the black race changed because of this development

The economic differences in South America turned some of the political alliances into the kind between the Roosevelt coalition that directly affected the cause of civil rights in general and aid to the black race in particular.

The history of the Spades card game is difficult to find, it is still in the form of folklore. No historian has really looked for the history of the card game which is the main topic of this poem. The absence of the original history of the Spades card game is one of the things that complicates this research process. The existence of the history of the Spades card game is only in the blog.

Spades card game developed during The Great Depression where the game is a combination of another card game called Bridge and Whist. The card game Spades is found in college dormitories in the southern United States. This game was played from 1937 to 1939 and was popular during World War II because of its fast nature and could be stopped at any time which made the Spades card game suitable to be played in times of war (VIP Spades Official. (2021). Accessed 27 July 2021).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research begins by examining the corpus roughly. This is done in order to facilitate the collection and search of data. Poetry studies were carried out with a qualitative approach and with descriptive methods in the poetry studied to find a correlation between the Spades card game and the problem of racism in the US in the

poem "We Should Make a Documentary About Spades".

After observing poem thoroughly, the search for as much data as possible on this poem is done by using library research technique. Data search can be done online and offline. To go online, the researcher uses the pdfdrive.com website to make it easier to search for data through books. And a number of websites such as doaj.org, sci-hub, researchgate.com, and others to make it easier to find data through journals. Offline data searches can be done by visiting the National Library or Pakuan University Library.

After all data has been collected, data matching with the results of the corpus studied using a descriptive analysis approach will also be carried out to produce conclusions from the research conducted. The matching referred to here is that the researcher describes rows/arrays that are separated per stanza to be studied intrinsically and extrinsically until all the arrays and stanzas have been described and the symbols and their meanings are found. Then, all the symbolic forms of the poetry studied will be matched with the data that has been obtained to get answers to the researcher's questions at the beginning of this chapter.

III. DICUSSION

Elements of Racism

- *Of calling someone who is not your brother or sister*

An array that has an element of racism about the N – Word (Nigger/Nigga) is always used to vilify the black race. In the

end, the word signifies that the superiority of the white race is still circulating among the white race, some of whom still do not accept racial equality.

- *As she says, "The two of Diamonds trumps the two of Spades"*

The element of racism in the context of the white race is considered a race that is superior to other races including the black race because of their history of slavery. The line above also clearly indicates the superiority of whites, because the context of "diamond" and "spades" are also different.

- *You feel watching someone else's humiliation. Slapping*

The context in this line is the feeling of shame when black people turn away from the problem of racism that befell their ethnic brothers. Or in other words it's a shame if some of the black race lose empathy to help their brothers of one race to defend against discriminatory acts from other races.

- *Tournaments on the anti-cruise ships bound for the Colonies,*

This line tells the story of the beginning of slavery of African descent starting from European colonizers for the benefit of their kingdom. Broadly speaking, this array explains how slaves were treated on ships before they became a large-scale diaspora in their colonies around the world.

- *Where Jesus and the devil are Spades partners traveling*

This line tells how the church passed regulations passed by law in several countries to forcibly baptize slaves in order to sanctify

them. African slaves were easier to get baptized because of their lack of religious education in their time. That's why the majority of African descent, including those living in the US, are Christians.

- *Would win if Booker T and MLK were matched against Du Bois And Malcolm X in a game of Spades? You say don't talk*

The four figures in two lines explain how these four figures are figures from the black race who are very important for the struggle for racial equality which at that time had not been obtained by the black race and the struggle of racism committed by other races against the black race.

- *We are here because we are lonely in some acute diasporafied*

This line discusses the loneliness felt by people of African descent away from their home country. Because the meaning of the word diaspora itself when translated from Greek is traumatic migration. This can happen because of two things, firstly because they really want to move from their country of origin or secondly, namely the slavery of people of African descent who circulated throughout the colonial colonies.

- *My mother did not drink, which is how I knew something Was wrong with her, but she held a dry spot at the table When couples came to play. It's a scene from my history*

These three lines indicate how the masters treated their slaves arbitrarily. The cruel treatment of the masters of the slaves at that time was carried out to signify their dominance over the slaves. This is also done so that they do not dare to defect. Some of the violence committed by their masters were The slaves were whipped, threatened to be killed with firearms, and even humiliated.

The Use of Spades Card Game

- *And here is all we'll need: a card deck, quartets of sun people Of the sort found in black college dormitories, some vintage*

These two lines actually tell the beginning of the Spades card game being created along with what to prepare before playing. Spades was created in a black college dorm and requires four people to play Spades.

- *Across the table. Pay attention to the suits being played*

This line describes one of the rules in the Spades game. The rule referred to in this line is that if the first player discards a card with a heart symbol, the next player must issue their card with the same symbol.

- *The object of the game is to communicate invisibly With your teammate. I should concentrate. Do you suppose*

These two lines also explain part of the rules of the Spades game. Because the Spades game is a team game and the partner is facing each other, the two teams are not allowed to discuss strategy in the middle of the game.

- *Bid a number of books. Each team adds the bids*
Of the two partners, and the total is the number of books

These two lines also discuss the rules of Spades in which all four players must bid. The bids of the four players will be accumulated according to their team. The bid in question is how many tricks can be taken. Trick and bid must match the trick mentioned. If the trick is taken in excess, the trick that is more than the bid will be counted as a bag. And if the bag has reached ten, then the score obtained in the last game will be reduced by 100 points. If the number of tricks is less than what was stated during the bidding, the trick obtained is the amount that must be reduced by 10 points per trick. For those who do not understand tricks, when discarding cards, the player with the card that has the highest value (lowest number 2, highest Ace (with a value of 13)) when discarding cards, then the player has the right to take all four cards which are counted as one trick.

- *Damn near anything. When I say maybe slaves held Spades*

Tournaments on the anti-cruise ships bound for the Colonies,

The problem of slavery in these two lines is illustrated by the poet's statement that perhaps the slaves held a Spades tournament in the colonial ship. The poet presupposes - if at a time when slaves played the card game Spades when they were brought to the colonies from their respective lands

- *As she says, "The two of Diamonds trumps the two of Spades"*

The problem of racism in this array is packed with card levels in the Spades game where in this array the grandmother in this poem emphasizes that the diamond symbol has a higher level than the spade symbol. This is against the Spades rules, the spade symbol is higher than the diamond symbol. This symbolizes that the grandmother's statement is a statement that their race is better than the black race.

- *Would win if Booker T and MLK were matched against Du Bois*
And Malcolm X in a game of Spades?
You say don't talk

These four characters are juxtaposed to play Spades where the poet actually wants to explain that there are two opinions from these four figures of equality of the black race. on the one hand Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King with pacifism and Malcolm X with W.E.B Du Bois with

reasoned sure action only real action will change everything.

- *Was wrong with her, but she held a dry spot at the table
When couples came to play. It's a scene from my history,*

The race problem in this line uses the background of a location in a bar where the poet's mother works. These two lines tell the story of how her mother rushed to clear the table for her customers who wanted to use the table to play Spades. This explanation is a sign that there was a sense of oppression during the time the poet's mother lived.

- *You feel watching someone else's humiliation. Slapping
A card down must be as dramatic as hitting the face of a drum*

Statements that express feelings of shame are like being slapped if someone betrays his brother from one race who becomes a discriminatory victim of another race. The problem is wrapped in how Spades players discard cards during the game.

- *In Spades. Spades is a game our enemies do not play*

This array confirms that most of the Spades players are black race. What the poet means by this is that the enemies of the black race are discriminatory people who do not want to feel what it feels like to be a black race who is always the target of racism.

- *To be black, tonight I am ready to master Spades. Four players*

The readiness meant by the poet here is the readiness to understand what it's like to be a black group and the culture that circulates around the black community in the US. The poet's readiness in this line is illustrated by the poet's desire to understand the Spades game.

- *You say there may be the sort of outrage induced
By liquor, trash talk, and poor strategy, but it will fade*

The way the Spades game becomes a medium to explain how the debate is to fight for the equality of the black race. The struggle is filled with the pros and cons of the white race that dominates the welfare of life which is supported by the laws of the government in that country. The problem is described perfectly by the poet. Because during the struggle for equality of the black race, it was also filled with anger and hate speech from the dominant race.

- *I suspect winning this sort of game makes you feel godly.*

This line describes how it feels to win the Spades game, feeling strong and powerful. It is used by the poet to describe the feeling of getting the right to be equal with other races in terms of employment opportunities, economic welfare, and so on.

Marriage, and Ethnic Brotherhoods.
doi:10.1086/668659

IV. CONCLUSION

The European Colonial Period which formed the beginning of the cruel slavery of the African black race for the benefit of their colonial country. At that time that formed the blasphemy against the black race in the future. This is what forms the bad connotation of the word "Spades" which became the name of the game.

The birth of the Spades card game which was developed in the southern United States at the same time as The Great Depression has a unique correlation between the two. Because their correlation lies in one location, namely the southern United States which is the birthplace of the card game Spades and the location where black workers are fired first due to the fall of the United States economy.

REFERENCE

- Barry E., (1995), *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919- 1939*, Oxford University Press
- Blackwood, Kevin et al. (2017). *Card Games All-in-One For Dummies*. New Jersey. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Brueggemann, J. (2002). *Racial Considerations and Social Policy in the 1930s*. *Social Science History*, 26(1), 139-177.
- Casares, A. M., & Delaigue, C. (2013). *The Evangelization of Freed and Slave Black Africans in Renaissance Spain: Baptism, Marriage, and Ethnic Brotherhoods*. doi:10.1086/668659
- Molina, Anthony Louis. (1991). "Spades Players" and "Senators": An Ethnography of Black Subcultures in a Community College. Louisiana. Louisiana State University
- Moore, M. (1939). *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. *The Sewanee Review*, 47(3), 457-460. Retrieved June 14, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27535588>
- Official, VIP Spades. (2021). *History of Spades*. <https://vipspades.com/blog/history-of-spades/>. Access at 27 July 2021.
- Paul S. B., (2012), *American History A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press
- Rahman, J. (2011). *The N Word*. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 40(2), 137-171. doi:10.1177/0075424211414807
- Roy B., (1996), *The Case Against Immigration: The Moral, Economic, Social, and Environmental Reasons for Reducing U.S. Immigration Back to Traditional Levels*, Norton
- Sutch, R. (1975). *The treatment received by American slaves: A critical review of the evidence presented in Time on the Cross*. *Explorations in Economic History*, 12(4), 335-438. doi:10.1016/0014-4983(75)90019-4

- Tinker, G. E., & Freeland, M. (2008). *Thief, Slave Trader, Murderer: Christopher Columbus and Caribbean Population Decline*. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23(1), 25–50. doi:10.1353/wic.2008.0002
- Tölölyan, K. (2007). *The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies. Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(3), 647-655.
- Van Wormer, K., Sudduth, C., & Jackson III, D. W. (2011). *What we can learn of resilience from older African-American women: Interviews with women who worked as maids in the deep south*. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 21(4), 410-422