Haoyu Tian

Peof. Tarasenko-Struc

PHL 312

Dec. 3 2019

Interpersonal Recognition and the Moral Psychology of Racism

Confusion in the sense of racism has always risen from the inconsistency of its usage. Racism has had a historical variation with many different people differing on the conception of race and the social expressions that are characterized as racists. This paper is devoted to better understand the term racism from an intellectual and nonintellectual view and the views or arguments from different philosophers. Racism is rooted in beliefs, and it's necessarily wrong. Though nonintellectuals mainly justify racists beliefs, intellectual motives through the years have also contributed to the social acceptance of racism. Based on the nonintellectual view on racism, racists fail to see other humans as their equals as human beings. Racism is typically root in their hearts. The intellectual perspective on racism has always used science to justify and enact social policies, which are ideas related to superiority and inferiority.

To understand the term racism and its beliefs, we have to know its meaning and its origins. Racism in the behavior of acting discriminatory based on ethnically prejudicial beliefs based on ethnic stereotyping. Some forms of racism are worse than others since they harm more than others in all aspects. Black Americans in the United States have majorly been used as examples of the objects of racism around the globe. Racism can be traced as far as during the 1st world war in Germany when the Nazi party took over and hence implemented policies of systematic discrimination. This led to the persecution and mass murders of the Jews in Germany. North America and South Africa experienced racism, which indicated that different races, mainly black and white, should not mix. They believed that each race should have its institutions. In North America, racism fueled slavery. People with African descent were involuntarily enslaved and transported to the Americans. This then made the Americans view the slaves as lesser human beings in the United States with no human rights (Bowser).

Raymond Gaita's view on racism explains how racist views other humans as inferior to them. He argues that beliefs by the racist have not been proven rationally. Some of the racists' beliefs in ancient times were that slaves were not human beings. He explains what a slave owner means by saying that slaves are not human. However, this can't be justified since when a slave master defiles a slave, the guilt he feels is less compared to when he defiles a fellow slave of his kind. According to him, slaves should be treated equally as the rest of the people, as they are human beings as well. Raymond also states that "The slave owner was evilly mistaken about his slaves, but not as he would be if he started inventing empirically relevant differences between then and those he would not dream of holding as slaves." (Gaita, Good and Evil) Despite the differences, the slave master has some moral duties to treat his slave well per Christian teaching. By doing this, then he should consider himself a Christian. When a slave master defiles someone who is married sexually and feels guilty just because she is married, he then goes against morals as should be observed since rape is a crime and a sin. Raymond considers this as wrong since the master finds a suffering human being as an object. Failing to see the suffering of others just because of your physical differences should not be a thing in humanity as we have the same feelings, and our hearts are just basically the same. Our only difference is brought about by the attitudes in our hearts about other people. The slave owner should consider that the slaves also have feelings, interests, memories, and aspirations of the future.

Raimond goes to insist and explain the importance of common humanity and why it's essential to understand it as humans. A common sense of humanity rests on the belief or acknowledgment of all the vital things human beings have in common. According to him, if humans cannot realize that those differences are unimportant, then those same differences would be the cause of hatred between us. How to treat and speak to fellow human beings should be based on the thought that we are all the same as we require the same things to be in existence. In his book, Common humanity, Raymond insists that it is crucial to behave morally upright when dealing with other people though we may not share the same physical attributes (Gaita, Common Humanity)

Bertrand Russell, in his article, approved of there being such an escape from conventional morality from the religion point of view. The reaction to repressive morality motivated his excellent critique of traditional religion. Russell practiced a Christian culture in which he experienced moralistic attitudes, which is evidenced by the controversies surrounding his own moral life in the eyes of many of his followers. His views about sexuality reflected his own broader ethical outlook. He was in the front-line advocating for personal freedom in matters involving religious beliefs, personal morality, and intellectual freedom. In his argument, he stated that "In our day, there has been too much of a tendency towards authority and too little care for the preservation of initiative. Men in control of large organizations have tended to be too abstract in their outlook, to forget what actual human beings are like, and to try to fit men to systems rather than systems to men." He invoked the concept of God, arguing that it does not rest on theological belief. According to him, it was dangerous to allow politics and social responsibility to take over what consists of our achievement, which he said could mean something close to Christian ethics. He insists that we ought to obey God, just like Socrates said. By following God, we get to treat everyone like he is a part of us and not prejudicing on the merit of social status or race. By using the example of the love of God, we ought to love our neighbors as ourselves. By having this emotion, we fulfill our duty to God, which he says cannot be termed s theological belief.

In his philosophies, Russell suggests that a relationship with God is key to freeing individuals from the social pressures of conventional morality. By having a relationship with him, you get to treat people right without stressing over having to follow specific laws or authority. For him, self-control would be a cure to materialism and immorality. According to him, nothing but freedom would reduce the obsession with racism and social attitudes towards other people.

In my opinion, Russell's idea of individual liberty may not be an excellent way to minimize racism and social misfits. His approach should be used together with the law that has been enacted on the consequences of racism. People will obey an authority where they know some results willingly follow a rule on self-control, which does not have immediate effects. Not every person can exercise restraint when it comes to their behaviors. People need to learn on the teaching of God toward other people and at the same time, have a law that enforces the same lessons on land since not all are blessed with self-control and considerations of other people they may live with. For instance, if slavery were still a present thing not many masters would be up for the idea to let their slaves be Christians and worship together with them. If there were a law back then enforced by the authorities on how slaves are supposed to be treated, then the black slaves would not have had it as rough as they did. This is evident since the Latin American slaves did not perform the duties as African slaves did. The masters of the African slaves had the freedom to exercise self-control and treat their slaves' rights, but they didn't. Instead, they treated them s inferior beings.

I agree with Jorge Garcia, who defends the volition concept of racism, which explains that racism is rooted in necessarily wrong beliefs (Shelby). According to him, racism is more aligned with non-cognitive feelings, attitudes, and motives. In my view, racism should be viewed more like a disregard for the welfare of individual people. This kind of approach primarily involves the heart of the racist since it involves his or her wants, hopes, intentions, and fear. The human sentiments and attitudes brought by racism are what makes it wrong. The primary outcome of racism is to harm the other party, which is viewed as inferior compared to the racist. Garcia describes racism as a type of individual moral vice since it's opposed to the virtues of benevolence and justice, which is a view I agree with.

I believe that racism is rooted in the heart of the racist. The heart infects the act of a racist since racists attitudes are rooted there. I agree with his moral philosophy on racism as the heart guides our actions, and that explains the actions of a racist against another person he feels superior to. That explains why racism is necessarily evil as it affects other human's sentiments and attitudes negatively. For instance, analyzing a murder by another human being due to racial differences explains why racism is wrong. Pain is caused as a life of value is lost, and this causes suffering to the bereaved.

Racism, since its inception, has become global cancer, which needs serious intervention for it to seize. Even with the philosophers' analyzing of racism and its meaning, we must make it less confusing by grabbing what is positive and what can impact a neighbor's life positively as well. We can use Bertrand Russell's teaching to change our behaviors and act with self-control when dealing with people with different physical features like us. The 20th and the 21st century have fueled more racism cases, with the Muslims also being sidelined for the fear that they might be terrorists. Racism is still a pressing social concern as it was before, and we can change it if we change the attitude we feed our hearts just like Raymond Gaita's view on racism explains.

# Works Cited

Bowser, Benjamin P. "Racism: origin and theory."." *Journal of black studies* 48.6 (2017): 572-590.

Gaita, Raimond. *Common Humanity*. London and NewYork: Routledge, n.d.

*Common Humanity*. London and New York: Routledge, n.d.

*Good and Evil*. London and New York: Routledge, n.d.

Shelby, Tommy. "Is Racism in the "Heart." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33.3 (2002): 411-420.