



ELIMINATING SEGREGATION IN SHARON M. DRAPER'S NOVEL “STELLA BY STARLIGHT” (2015)

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Abstract

The purpose of this analysis is to expose the issue of eliminating segregation which is done by an 11-year-old girl and to know the contribution of the setting, plot and character in revealing the eliminating segregation. This analysis is related to the concept of orientalism by Edward Said and the concept of self-determination by Ryan and Deci, that is supported by the text and context based interpretation. The result of this analysis shows the protagonist to eliminate the segregation by breaking the stereotypes and developing relatedness.

Key words: Segregation, African-American, orientalism, *self-determination*.

A. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are equal with the same right and degree. All human being have their own right to be free to get the same treatment in their life. People do not have to apart the other people just because of different race or ethnicity. Every race or ethnicity has its own unique characteristics. People supposed to respect to the other's right and never marginalize them in society. However, not all people think that human beings are equal. Some people think that they are better than others and act as the dominant one. The superiority makes the dominant people to control the weak. As the result, the dominant rules the society by creating the segregation to the inferior. The segregation has been done by Whites toward Blacks.

According to Merriam-Webster (2018) segregation is the practice or policy of keeping people of different race, religions separate from each other. Segregation is a kind of discrimination applied in social structures by separating a group from other groups. The separated group has a lower status in the society. As the inferior group, they do not have opportunity to get the same rights as the dominant group.

White people tend to consider themselves as the dominant group to Black people. They think that they are better than Black people in many aspects; social,

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economic and education. The superiority brings White people believe that they have power to rule Black people based on their skin. They think that Black people are dirty, uneducated, and uncivilized group.

Segregation makes African-Americans cannot use their rights as an American. White people do strict segregation in public school and public facilities such as restaurants, transportations, restrooms, and churches. Moreover, African-Americans do not have a right to vote in the elections. This separating and isolating made African-Americans cannot free to express themselves in America. They have to limit their move to do not cross the boundaries between White people and African-Americans.

Segregation also makes African-Americans aware of their unfair treatment. Since early, they always notice to their children to get a good education. African-Americans aware that education always be better key to open a new better future. The African-Americans children never give up to getting a good education even though they have to study in segregated school and hard to get a good book as a reading source.

The effort to eliminate the segregation of African-Americans also can be seen through the protagonist and the roles of African-Americans in the novel *Stella by Starlight* (2015) by Sharon M. Draper. In the analysis, eliminating segregation refers to the effort of African-Americans to change the separation and show that they have equal life as American. The eliminating segregation is represented by the protagonist, Stella, an 11-year-old black girl. The eliminating segregation in the analysis can be seen from the character by breaking the stereotypes and developing relatedness. Through her intelligence, spirit and bravery, the protagonist struggles to prove that the Whites and African-Americans are equal.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis of novel *Stella by Starlight* (2015) is done through text and context-based interpretation. The fictional devices such as character, plot and setting are needed during the process of analyzing. Character is used to reveal the act to eliminate the segregation by analyzing character belief, attitude and behavior or action. Action/plot is used to acknowledge the conflicts the character faced. Furthermore, setting is also crucial device as it is situation, atmosphere, and conditions exist in the drama in order to help in revealing the meaning. These elements are analyzed based on the concept of orientalism by Edward Said, the concept of self-determination theory by Ryan and Deci.

C. DISCUSSION

This chapter analyses the fictional devices such as character, action/plot, and setting to reveal the issue of *eliminating segregation*. Eliminating segregation refers to the effort of African-Americans to eliminate the separation and show that they have equal life as American. The effort is represented by the protagonist,

Stella, an 11-year-old black girl. In order to eliminate the segregation, she proves that African-Americans can also have an equal life with White people by breaking the stereotypes and developing relatedness.

Breaking the Stereotypes

Breaking the stereotype is one of the protagonist strategies in eliminating segregation. The process of breaking the stereotype happens when the protagonist see the unfair treatment from White society to African-American people. Breaking the stereotype also happens when the protagonist has a habit to read the newspaper for getting the information. Through the newspaper, the protagonist understand the situation that faced by African-American people. She is also aware about African-American people being segregated by White people. Since the protagonist read the newspaper regularly, she has critical thinking. She has a lot of stuff in her mind and she puts it in her journal. And last, she has the ability to deals with negative thought that makes she's brave to stand up for herself and break the stereotype.

The protagonist has a reading habit. She reads the newspaper regularly. The newspaper contains many things in the world she never knows before. Every morning, the protagonist will reads newspaper to gain the information. It can be seen by the following quotation:

Stella couldn't remember when she'd started liking reading the news, but maybe it was because she lived in such a small speck of a town, and she liked how the newspaper helped her feel like she was part of something bigger. Maybe it was because the words on the walls had always been there. She slid both papers closer, taking in events that had happened all over the country—to white people. Colored people were rarely mentioned in those two newspapers. (p.10)

The sentences *couldn't remember when she'd started liking reading the news* shows the protagonist's strong desire to know many things in the world. Reading newspaper becomes her habit and her routinity every morning. She realizes that the newspaper is really powerful because through reading it the protagonist can get much information and gain her knowledge. She believes that she can learn something from the newspaper. The words *she was part something bigger* in the quotation shows emphasis about her feeling. Her firmness to read the newspaper shows through her feeling, it proves that by reading newspaper the protagonist can extent her view to see something more than her surroundings because the newspaper is a window to know the world. The protagonist knows that if she reads the newspaper, she will not leave behind in White society. Through this information, she break the stereotypes. She show that African-American are also educated person by reading newspaper regularly to gain the knowledge.

Since she reads newspaper regularly, her brain has a lot of stuff to think. She has many ideas in her mind and makes her become a critical thinking. She has a critical thinking from her habit reads newspaper. She spends night to practice writing and to express her feeling. She puts it into her own diary. It can be seen by the following quotation:

“I come out here to practice, Mama. I’ve got stuff in my head, but I don’t know how to get it out. I try to write it down sometimes, but I’m not very good at it. It’s like my brains are dumplings in somebody else’s soup.” She looked up toward the stars, but even the sky had turned murky. (p.38)

The quotation shows the protagonist’s critical thinking. The utterance *I come out here to practice* shows her desire to put her thought into words. The sentences *I’ve got stuff in my head* show how the protagonist has so many idea after looking at her surroundings. She thinks about the situation faced by African-American people deeply. She tries to write down in order other people will know about African-American condition. She thinks many stuff and keep it her mind. To release it, the protagonist realize she has to write into words and express her emotion. .

The way of protagonist breaking the stereotypes also can be seen from her ability to deal with her negative thought. The protagonist tries to not afraid and brave to stand up for herself. It could be seen in the following quotation:

“I’m thinkin’ she don’t need that there cookie,”
Smitherman said to Johnson.
“I’m thinkin’ she must stole that there cookie,”
Johnson said to Smitherman.
“Maybe she went in there and voted for the cookie,”
Smitherman said with a cruel laugh.
Johnny Ray, with two huge steps, was beside Stella.
He snatched the cookie from her hand.
Stella could take no more. “You give that back!” she
exclaimed. Even though she would never have put the
cookie in her mouth now that he had touched it, she
added, “You can’t just steal other people’s stuff!”
(p.97)

From the quotation above show that how the protagonist to stand up for herself. The utterance *she don’t need that there cookie, she must stole that there cookie*, and *she went in there and voted for the cookie* give the explanation how bad white people treat African-American and accuse them something that they didn’t do. White people tend to give African-Americans people a judgment without know whether it was right or wrong. The sentence *You give that back!* and *You can’t just steal other people’s stuff!* show that the protagonist brave to fight

back to something that she didn't do. She brave to stands up for herself. She brave to deal with her negative thought; to not afraid of something that accuse her wrong.

In summary, from all quotations above, the protagonist has shown her effort to eliminate segregation. She has a reading habit. She reads newspaper regularly every morning. She reads it to get the information about what happens in the world. She also gains the knowledge from the newspaper. Since she reads the newspaper regularly, she has critical thinking. She has a lot of stuff in her mind and she put it into words in her diary. Thus, she has the ability to deals with negative thought. To deals with negative thought she has to brave to stand up for herself. The setting in this analysis refers to the confuse atmosphere and unexpected situation that encourage her to face it. The conflict mostly comes from the character itself when she has to face her own bad thought.

Developing Relatedness

Developing relatedness is the second way to eliminate segregation that is done by protagonist. Developing relatedness is the protagonist's way to show that African-American people are not same as White people said about them, such as barbaric and uncivilized. She shows that African-American people are civilized people, either with White or Black. There are three ways to shows that her strategies in developing relatedness. First, she has the ability to mingle with people either White or Black. Second, she cares for her family. Third, she likes to help people.

The protagonist has the ability to mingle with people easily. She can makes friend with either White or Black. She's making jokes and laugh with them. It can be seen in the following quotation:

Because they visited the store so often, Stella felt comfortable enough to say hi to Thelma. "It sure must be nice having a mom who owns a candy store," she said this morning.

Thelma laughed. "I probably get less than any of you—Mommy's pretty strict!" She handed Stella a Bazooka Joe bubble gum when her mother wasn't looking. (p.5)

The text shows that the protagonist has the ability to mingle with White people. The utterance *visited the store so often* indicate the protagonist has a good behavior, so White people accept her in their store and treat her friendly. The sentence *Thelma laughed* shows how the protagonist can create the atmosphere with her white friend pleasantly. She even can make her white friend laugh and it prove that she has good behavior to developing relatedness toward other people.

The second way of protagonist developing relatedness is that she cares for her family. She helps her parents to take care of their house. It can be seen in the following quotation:

Stella had just cupped her hand around the last egg in the nest, the chicken huffing and fluffing its feathers, when her father came into the coop on Saturday morning.

“Stella, your mama wants you to go get Doc Hawkins, and then run on over to the general store,” Papa said. “Jojo still isn’t feeling well.”

.....

“I’ll hurry, Papa,” Stella said, taking note of the worry on his face. She tucked the egg into the basket and handed it to him. (p. 94)

The text above shows how Stella cares for her family. The sentence *Stella had just cupped her hand around the last egg in the nest* shows that Stella helps her parents to do the farm-work. She also does the household to help her parents. The utterance *I’ll hurry Papa* shows that her understanding on her responsibility. It also shows how she cares her family and how good is her behavior.

The third way to show her strategy in building relatedness is from the way she helps people who are in danger. She helps them either they are White or Black people. She helps them without think any risk that can makes herself in danger. It can be seen through quotation:

So Stella peered carefully into the shadows, her only light the flickering remains of the burning house. She stumbled over the roots of a massive, eighty-foot oak that towered above her and landed on her knees. She started to pick herself back up when something occurred to her. The tree’s roots, thickly twisted and fanning out like huge, grasping fingers, snaked out from its base.

Snakes! Hazel said her hiding place had snakes!
(p.73)

The sentences *Stella peered carefully into the shadows, her only light the flickering remains of the burning house* shows that the protagonist has strong desire to help her friend by herself. She puts aside her fear and shows her bravery by going to the forest to save her friend. The conflict can be seen when she cannot see clearly in the dark night, and woods is not a safe place for children to go in there. The protagonist uses the flames of burning fire to give light in the dark woods and try to help her friends from danger.

In summary, from all quotations above, the protagonist has shown her way to eliminate segregation by building relatedness. She proves it from her ability to mingle with people either White or Black, she cares for her family, and she helps people in danger. First, she has the ability to mingle with other people either White or Black. She can create the comfortable atmosphere between them and makes them also treat her friendly. Second, she cares for her family. She helps her parents in the house. Moreover, she helps people who are in danger. She faces the

unexpected situation and makes a good solution by herself. It means that she is intelligent and brave even though she is an 11-years-old girl. The setting in this analysis refers to unexpected situation that encourage her to face it. The conflict mostly comes from the character itself when she has to face her own fear.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Novel *Stella by Starlight* (2015), written by Sharon M. Draper, reflects the issue of eliminating segregation. The analysis of this novel deals with the concept of orientalism by Edward Said and the concept of self-determination by Ryan and Deci, that is supported by the text and context based interpretation. The result of this analysis shows the protagonist to eliminate the segregation by breaking the stereotypes and developing relatedness. Thus, eliminating segregation refers to the efforts done by protagonist, the protagonist, Stella, an 11-year-old black girl, to show the effort of African-Americans to change the separation and show that they have equal life as American.

Note: This article is written based on the Suci Mei Khelly's thesis under the supervision of advisor Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A.

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