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English 102

5 June 2024

Society and Its Secret Discrimination Tactics

How often does racial discrimination occur every day? Some people like to believe it hardly ever happens given the amount of effort put in to prevent it. However, it is much more common to be discriminated by discreet methods compared to the obvious hateful language and actions some people think this bigotry is only known for. This can range from being denied a better life to being labeled as something hateful without so much of a word of defense in retaliation. In “Inequality, Race, and Remedy” Alan Jenkins uses logos, pathos, and counterexamples to demonstrate how discrimination happens in many aspects of our society right beneath everyone’s noses.

Jenkins uses logos as his first rhetorical device by explaining the multiple studies performed regarding racial discrimination and its effects on everyday people. “Résumés with white-sounding names were 50 percent more likely than those with black-sounding names to receive callbacks from employers... In Milwaukee, whites reporting a criminal record were more likely to receive a callback from employers than were blacks without a criminal record” (Jenkins 8). Racial discrimination is often thought of as hateful language or actions towards another race, but it can also be something as simple as choosing one person over the other based on stereotypes. The study about stereotypical names is a perfect example about how easy racial discrimination can occur with nothing but someone’s name. It’s no surprise to say there are

people with racist views, but what can be surprising is the discreet methods used to show that bias.

Alongside this study the author uses another piece of logos to describe how discrimination can happen without the victim realizing it ever happened. “Research by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shows that people of color receive less information from real-estate agents, are shown fewer units, and are frequently steered away from predominantly white neighborhoods” (Jenkins 9). The issue has evolved from a name on a piece of paper to entire families being denied a second option to live their lives to the fullest. The idea of a better school, job, or community can all be taken away by steering people of color to other areas that are not as desirable as mainly white neighborhoods can be. To make matters worse some people don’t even realize they hold this prejudice against others because of how much the media portrays certain races in certain situations.

Jenkins follows up his logos with pathos, and the terrible damage mainstream media has done to the image of poor people. “Gilens found a generally unflattering framing of the poor, but the presentation of poor African Americans was more negative still. The most “sympathetic” subgroups of the poor—such as the working poor and the elderly—were underrepresented on these shows, while unemployed working-age adults were overrepresented” (Jenkins 17). It’s ludicrous to think that our main source of information would allow such misinformation to spread, but unfortunately it seems to be all too common of an occurrence. “Gilens found, for instance, that while blacks represented only 29 percent of poor Americans at the time he did his research, 65 percent of poor Americans shown on television news were black” (Jenkins 17). There is no other reason that this information should be presented as such other than racial discrimination. It can be a very eye-opening experience to those that are unaware of how much

bias exists against certain races, and this text goes into great detail for African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and even Native Americans.

The final rhetorical device used by Jenkins is the counterexample which can be seen all throughout the text, and even the text itself is a counterexample. “Experience shows, moreover, that reductions in poverty do not reliably reduce racial inequality, nor do they inevitably reach low-income people of color. Rising economic tides do not reliably lift all boats” (Jenkins 3). Despite what newscasters or expert Wall Street followers say about the economy’s fluctuations there can be little to no change in neighborhoods with deep poverty. Jenkins carries this same counterexample sentiment all throughout the text and argues against what common perceptions might contain. From media representation, equality in job and home applications, government failure to uphold obligations, and an overall examination of poverty rates between races Jenkins proves that racial discrimination still has an ugly hold on our society.

Not all hope is lost however, as Jenkins lays forth his ideas of the measures to be taken against this inexplicable injustice towards people of color. These changes include programs that assist in preparing those in poverty for better jobs and better education. Along with those changes there must be a plan for reconstructing the healthcare system to be more affordable and more effective. At the very core of this work is addressing the connection between race and poverty and bringing light to other issues that may not be as easily noticeable as poor healthcare. We as a society cannot hope to begin tackling these issues if we attempt to solve it individually, but with the combined efforts of the millions of citizens across the country we still stand a chance. With the use of logos, pathos, and counterexamples Jenkins is able to take the first step in a very long path towards finding a solution for poverty.

Works Cited

Jenkins, Alan. "Inequality, Race, and Remedy." *Central Arizona College Rhetoric with Readings: English 101-102*, edited by Kolette Draegan, et al., revised ed. 2021, Fountainhead P., 2018, <https://app.tophat.com/e/423231/content/course-work/item/1204467::d527f608-8927-4e03-ba71-c57f100892c7>