Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course Name

Instructor’s Name

Date

**Ways in Which Bob Jones Supported, Developed, or Rejected the Ideas of Martin Luther King and Washington**

Robert “Bob” Jones, the main character in the novel written by Chester Hime published in 1945 titled “*If He Hollers Let Him Go”*, through his words or actions either supports or rejects ideas of two supplementary historical readings namely “*A Speech Before the NNBL”* by Booker T. Washington, and “*Nonviolence and Racial Justice”* by Martin Luther King (MLK). The novel describes the harsh truth of black life and the effects associated with the concept of racism where Bob Jones, a black man, lives every day in fear of being black in the white land. Effects of racism plague him on the way he behaves, thinks, and feels especially at the end of the novel where he is accused of a serious crime that he did not commit. Booker T. Washington was Africa-American who was selected to be the spokesperson during a white predominantly white audience in Atlanta on September 18, 1895. In his speech, he addressed the issue of racism where he suggested that African-Americans should not focus on political and social equality, but rather they should work hard, earn respect, and acquire vocational training to play a central role in the economic development as it was the way for them to gain respect from the white society and be granted rights in full citizenship. On the other hand, MLK’s reading summarizes that nonviolence methods are in a better position to solve the issue of racism rather than using violent methods. One of his famous quotes is that “*Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.*”. In several circumstances, Bob Jones's actions supported the two readings. For example, as stated by MLK, courts tend to rule in favor of the white society and in this case the court ruled in favor of the white even though Bob Jones was innocent. Also, a lot of white people worked together to bring Bob down, which can be linked with Washington's speech where he stated that racism can cause a lot of hands to pull against you. On the contrary, Bob's action differed from MLK's idea on solving the racism dispute by winning the friendship and understanding from the opponent. This paper analyzes ways in which Bob Jone's words or actions either supported or rejected the two supplementary historical readings.

The actions that happened to Bob clearly provide enough reasons to oppose one of the five MLK`s ideas of solving racism through winning friendship and understanding from the opponent. According to MLK, the resister of racism should not seek to defeat or humiliate his/her opponents, rather one should try to create a friendship with them by creating understanding through showing cooperation as it can result in redemption and reconciliation and later create a beloved community. However, utilizing this idea in Bob`s case shows inadequacies. When Bob explained his frustrations and fears to Alice while they were having lunch, he proposed to her and decided to do things that will make her happy such as resuming work, apologizing to Madge, and getting his old job back so they can begin their happy life together. Although he was ready to win friendship and understanding from Madge through apologizing for trying to rape her, things did not turn out as expected. Instead of Madge reconciling with him, she tried to force him to have sex with her and when he turned down her offer, she screamed saying that a black man was raping her. This caused a group of white men to beat him to a pulp and later he was charged with rape although he was innocent. Therefore, from the treatment Bob received while trying to use MLK`s nonviolent way of resisting racism by creating understanding and friendship with his opponent, the idea does not provide full details to show how in some cases it may increase racist exploitation.

On the other hand, Bob's actions support MLKs ideas concerning using violence to resist racism. In his reading, MLK argues that when one uses physical violence as a method to resist racism, not only does it not solve the problem but also creates hatred that results in a new and more complicated problem. He went ahead and said that when victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence, their legacy will be an endless reign of chaos (King Jr 166). When Bob was promoted to be the leader of the shipyard and became the first black man to have that position, he faced a lot of oppression from the white coworkers. In one circumstance where he needed help, he was referred to a white woman from Texas called Madge Perkins whose response angered and hurt him. She said, “I ain't gonna work with no nigger!” (Himes 29). After that incident, he is knocked down by a white man (Johny Stoddart) when he tried to strike white men who refused to give him his money after he had defeated them in a gambling game. These two incidents motivated Bob to resist the issue of racism in violent ways. In the rest of the novel, Bob tries to plan methods of revenging on white people by killing Johnny and raping Madge. As proposed by MLK, the violent ways never helped Bob to resist racism. Instead, the method only triggered anger and hatred among the parties which led to the false accusation that he raped Madge, for which he was found guilty. The violent incident caused him one catastrophe after another. Therefore, Bob's actions support MLK`s ideas that violence should never be used as a method of solving racism as it only magnifies the issue; violence killed his hope of achieving the American dream as he was forced to join the military.

Furthermore, Bob`s actions can help in the development of Washington's ideas on effects that can be witnessed when a certain group of people join together either to stop or encourage racism. In his speech, he said, “Nearly sixteen million of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third [of] its intelligence and progress,” (Louis 585). He was highlighting the benefit that can be enjoyed when people regardless of their races come together for good purposes such as promotion of business and industrial prosperity as well as the challenges that can arise when different races develop hatred among others. Examples of these challenges are death, economic stagnation, depression, and enmity. In the novel, Bob faced a lot of challenges from all his white workmates when he was promoted in his job. His white superiors denied him vital information and resources that were critical in the operation 0f the business, which not only affected him at a personal level but also the general performance of his team and directly reduced the productivity of the whole team. Also, his workmate refused to assist him whenever he needed help with a project. This later triggered grudges between him and the white people to a point he was planning to kill and rape some of his colleagues.

Moreover, Bob's actions can help to develop and support the point where Washington requested the white people to work together with the black people. In his speech he said, “To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, Cast down your bucket where you are,” (Louis 584). At this point, he persuaded the white people to embrace a culture of helping and encouraging black people who cleared their forests, tilled their fields, built their railways and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth. Similarly, when Bob was promoted, he viewed the chance as one that will lead to his success and prosperity. He needed help and encouragement from his white superiors and workmates that could have enabled him to achieve all his goals. However, due to racism, he received oppression and hatred from the group that was supposed to help him. This did not end well because it resulted in him ending in the wrong career against his will when he was forced to join the military after Magde falsely accused him of rape. From this incident, it is noticeable when both white people and black people work together, both parties grow, develop, and succeed together unlike when they operate against each other because the inferior party will be disadvantaged.

**Conclusion**

Therefore, in various ways, Bob's words or actions as shown in the novel, are either supporting, developing, or showing inadequacies or errors of the two supplementary historical readings about racism by MLK and Washington. In MLK`s reading, the major theme is on the important nonviolence methods that can be used to help in solving racism. Additionally, he figured negative effects that can arise when violent methods are used. In the novel, Bob`s actions both opposed and supported MLK's ideas because Bob's action showed that violence does not solve any problem but only creates more problems as claimed by MLK. Contrarily, Bob's actions revealed that MLK's ideas in some ways are one-sided as they only focus on the positive outcomes that may arise from his nonviolence methods but do not highlight any negatives that may arise. On the other hand, Washington issued a speech to African Americans where he addressed the reason why they should focus on working together with all races, earn respect, and acquire training as one way of gaining respect from white people. Bob`s action can help to strengthen his point that when people from other races pull against you, results tend to be negative on individuals, organizations, and development.

Works Cited

Himes, Chester B. *If he hollers let him go*. NV: New American Library, 1971.

King Jr, Martin Luther. "Nonviolence and racial justice." *Christian Century* 74.6 (1957): 165-67.

Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 3, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 583–587.