



## **An Analysis of Racism in *Down Second Avenue* (2011)**

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### **Abstract**

Racism is one of the continually controversial issues in a society. Its victims suffer because of unequal distribution of resources, inequality in career chances, income, and access to opportunities. Therefore, studying about the effects of racism is the initial step to help readers understand and be more aware of it. This study focuses on the analysis of effects of three forms of racism: institutionalized, internalized, and intra-racial racisms, on the characters in a South African writer's, Ezekiel Mphahlele's, novel, *Down Second Avenue* (2011). This study aims to answer the question how the three forms of racism are reflected within the novel, through the characters and situations, by investigating an autobiographical novel written by a South African citizen who witnessed and experienced a series of racial discrimination himself. The data collection method of this study employs content and descriptive analysis as the instrument. The study applies the qualitative research methods to analyze and discuss the effects of the three forms of racism. The results of the analysis show that characters in the novel are most affected by and suffered from the consequences of institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism, respectively. The study serves as guidelines in examining forms of racism reflected in other literary works and media contents.

**Keywords:** Forms of Racism, Literary Criticism, Institutionalized Racism, Internalized Racism, Intra-Racial Racism, South Africa

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Background of the Study**

Equal opportunity to participate as a full and functioning part of the society is important. However, existing social and economic differences among racial and ethnic groups show that the society has yet to achieve this goal. Such racial differences are pervasive and may result in racial discrimination and differential access to opportunities. Racism, therefore, becomes one of the most significant social concerns in the modern world. It has influenced people worldwide and been one of the social problems.

Idris et al. (2014) defined racism as a social framework which artificially separates people of a society into groups based on physical characteristics (especially color), ancestral heritage, hereditary inheritance, ethnical classification, and economic and political needs, etc. in a period of time. Several factors may lead to racial differences such as differences in socioeconomic status, differential access to opportunities, and others. One factor that should be considered is racial discrimination as well as its effects. Overt discrimination against black Afrikaners and other minority groups characterized much of South Africa history; a question is whether and what types of discrimination exist the most and their effects on differential outcomes.

#### **2. Racism in Literature Works**

In regards to literary works concerning with racism, there are several famous black authors who have fearlessly considered cultural stigmas, described intimate life details, introduced new concepts and remarkable fictions through literary works. Example list of notable African-American authors includes Toni Morrison, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, etc. In addition to those African American writers, there are also African writers who have influenced and raised the concerns of racism, for example, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Nadine



Gordimer and Ben Okri. These people's works are not only rich with words and meaningful stories; they are also the speakers of black people's views and experiences during each period and place.

Racial discrimination has continually been one of the society's most unpleasant social issues. Judging people by the color of their skin instead of the content of their character could be a very dehumanizing experience which can lastingly effect on an individual's life and belief. The results of discrimination can be spread out like a deadly virus throughout a community and often lead to social problems.

### 3. About the Author and the Novel "Down Second Avenue"

Es'kia Mphahlele, original name Ezekiel Mphahlele (1919–2008) is the African novelist, essayist, short-story writer, and teacher (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). Es'kia is well-known for his notable novel *Down Second Avenue* (2011). The novel was first published in 2011 by Macmillan Readers. The book elaborates a severe poverty life and cruel police surveillance under the subjugation of an apartheid regime through a young's eyes. Apartheid is the system of legal racial segregation enforced by the government in South Africa in 1948–1994 which the rights of the majority 'non-white' inhabitants of South Africa were reduced and minority rule by white people was maintained. In this book, Es'kia tells his experience of living, studying and working during his childhood to maturity where he gradually learns and faces the consequences of racial discrimination. The story is told through his own aspects plus his surrounding people, especially his relatives and colleagues. Es'kia grew up in Pretoria, South Africa, and went to St. Peter's Secondary School and Adams Teachers Training College. Before being banned, because of his strong attitude against the apartheid legislation on education, his career was an English and Afrikaans teacher. He graduated a doctoral degree from the University of Denver in 1968. Es'kia was also the director of the African program at the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Paris (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.), as well as a founder and director of Chemchemi which is a cultural centre in Nairobi for artist and writers.

His other writings are such as *The African Image* (1962) and *Voices in the Whirlwind* (1972). These two books illustrate "Negritude", nationalism, and the image of Africa. *The Wanderers* (1971) and *Chirundu* (1979) are also ones of his notable novels. Es'kia has been "the illustrious author of two autobiographies, more than thirty short stories, two verse plays and a fair number of poems" (South African History Online, 2018).

The novel provides insight of the black Afrikaners way of thinking and living through the perspectives of the main characters. *Down Second Avenue* (2011) has been translated into several foreign languages, except African language indigenous to South Africa. The book was first banned in South Africa after its original 1959 publication, during apartheid area, for its protest against the law. *Down Second Avenue* is an original work of literature that gradually inspires activists today. Due to the fact that this novel has made him the father of black South African writing, it clearly addresses his experiences of growing up in segregated South Africa. The story includes the daily life of severe poverty and crucial police surveillance according to apartheid legislation. The book ends with Es'kia having a chance to move to the other country, Nigeria, leaving the readers think about how racism can considerably effect on the black Afrikaners. Regarding to those mentioned details, the researcher decided to study on this novel by emphasizing on the forms of racism reflecting on each of the character or situation in the story.



#### **4. Research Objective and Research Question**

##### **4.1 Research Objective**

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the effects of racism on the characters in Ezekiel Mphahlele's novel, *Down Second Avenue*, focusing on three forms of racism: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism.

##### **4.2 Research Question**

How do the three forms of racism affect the characters in Ezekiel Mphahlele's novel, *Down Second Avenue*?

#### **5. Literature Review**

##### **5.1 Definition of Racism**

Racism is "the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics" (Anti-Defamation League (ADL), n.d.). Racism often results in discrimination and prejudice based on the race or ethnicity of people.

In the study by Sellers et al. (2003) about the direct and indirect relationships among racial identity, racial discrimination, perceived stress, and psychological distress; the results of the study showed that there has been some evidence of a direct relationship between racial centrality and psychological distress, and of indirect relationships for centrality and public regard through the impact of racial discrimination and perceived stress.

More recently, CRT (Critical Race Theory) has contributed to splinter groups focused on Asian American, Latino, and Indian racial experiences. The truth is that racism is still prevalent, depending on what forms it is. Research studies show a number of examples and cases associating with racial discrimination. A few has concluded the core levels of racism which can effectively illustrate the consequences of racism. This paper will review studies about the three levels of racism: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. Each level has its own causes, which can directly and indirectly effect on those who are believed as the victim of racism.

In the attempt to understand how the system of racism effects on individuals and communities, it is worth thinking about the concepts of its operation on three levels: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism which will be discussed in next section.

##### **5.2 Forms of Racism**

To eradicate racism, it's significant to understand the different types of racism that affect society. Racism can be classified into three levels: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. Each level has its own definition and effect on both individual and communities. In addition, each level has consequence in each other.

###### **5.2.1 Institutionalized Racism**

Institutionalized racism (also known as structural racism, state racism or systemic racism) is a form of racism expressed by governments, corporations, religions, or educational institutions or other large organizations with the power to have an impact to many individuals' lives. 'Institutionalized racism' is the collaboration between racist policies and practices in the institution level by which a society operates. Education, federal, state, and local governments are the examples of the aspects under institutionalized racism. Also, *the law*, both in terms of what is written on the books and how it is implemented by the courts and by police



officials; *health care*, which can be racially biased in everything from the allocation of research finance to the location of hospitals to the treatment of individual patients; and the *corporate world*, which often practices racial discrimination in its hiring and promotion despite whatever equal-opportunity policies it officially claims to have, are the other evidences obviously found as the effect of institutionalized racism.

Institutionalized racism is considered as the practices, procedures, and policies that operates for the sake of white people's benefit and to the detriment of people of colour, often unintentionally or inadvertently (3 Types of Racism, n.d.). It reflects in the gaps associating with wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other things. In order for racism to have any real force in a society, it must be supported in some way by that society's institutions, for instance, by the educational system, the judicial system, the entertainment and fashion industry, law enforcement policies, labour practices, and housing regulations.

Institutionalized racism is also believed as the racism by individuals or informal social groups, governed by behavioral norms that support racist thoughts and provoke active racism. It reflects in the gaps regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other things. Institutional racism occurs when a certain group is targeted and discriminated against based upon race, implicitly or explicitly (Miller, 2014).

Scholars have shifted from locating racism in individual beliefs and attitudes to considering it as primarily a phenomenon of higher-level entities (e.g. social processed and institution). A few alternative approaches to institutional racism are totalizing. For example, audit studies attempt to investigate racial discrimination at the company or organization level by sending equally qualified resumes or research participants to employers, creditors, landlords, etc. The results of those studies showed that racial discrimination still exists in hiring, credit, and housing markets (Quillian, 2006; Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

#### **Apartheid as an Institutionalized Racism**

**Apartheid** is "a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa between 1948 and 1994, with much of the legislation going out of effect by 1991" (Wikipedia, n.d.). Apartheid, an Afrikaans word, means "separateness", or "the state of being apart". The history of apartheid began when the Afrikaner National Party was able to gain a strong majority. Before that, England and Dutch in the seventeenth century colonized South Africa and took its property, diamond, which lead to the Boer War (the fight between the British Empire against the South African Republic and the Orange Free State. After the independence from English, these two groups had swayed power until the 1940's, and the National Party won the election. Apartheid was introduced as a means to connect their control over the economic and social system. (The History of Apartheid in South Africa, n.d.). This phenomenon caused the great inbound conflict resulting in protestation and a lot of resistances. Many leaders were suppressed and imprisoned. It seemed that the wider and the more severe the resistances were, the more severe counterattack the government would do. Its power in political system covered every side of life in South Africa from 1948 to 1991. Legislation classified inhabitants into racial groups: black, white, colored, Indian. Houses were limited by racial classification. Residential areas were segregated, sometimes by means of forced removals. The government segregated education, medical care, and other public services, and provided black people with services inferior to those of white people.

**Apartheid Legislation** includes 1) *The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949* banned marriages between persons of different races; 2) *Population Registration Act of 1950* formalized racial



classification and people would be treated differently according to their population group (black African, coloured, white, and Asian); 3) *Group Areas Act of 1950* excluded non-Whites from living in the developed areas which were restricted to Whites; 4) *The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950* prohibited any party that subscribes to Communism; 5) *The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951* established separate government structures for blacks and whites; 6) *The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953* separated public facilities i.e. transportation, hospitals or schools from whites to blacks; 7) *The Bantu Education Act (1953)* created a separate educational system for black South African students; 8) *The Black Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970* indicated a new phase in the Bantustan strategy changing the status of blacks into citizens of one of the ten autonomous territories, and so on.

### 5.2.2 Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is the belief of the blacks as being inferior to the whites. Internalized racism, a term first coined by Black scholar W.E.B. DuBois in 1903, can be described as “accepting a white supremacist social order that places Black people at the bottom, and adopting society’s negative stereotypes about Blacks concerning their lack of abilities, inherent violence and low intrinsic worth” (Chengu, 2015). Internalized racism, defined by Robin Nicole Johnson in her book *The Psychology of Racism* (Johnson, 2008), is “an individual’s conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which whites are consistently ranked above the people of color” (167). Jones (2002) defined internalized racism as the acceptance by individuals of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth. It also includes the acceptance of limitations to one’s own full humanity, e.g. one’s spectrum of dreams, one’s right to self-determination, and one’s range of allowable self-expression.

There are empirical studies of internalized racism. Mamie Clark (1996) conducted an experiment which was in America at a time when black and white children were segregated. The doll experiment involved an African-American child being presented with two dolls that were identical apart from skin and hair color, one doll being white with yellow hair and the other being brown with black hair. The child was asked to choose one doll to play with and it was found that all children in the study obviously preferred the white doll. Another related study conducted by Davis (2005), the doll experiment was recreated in the form of an independent film, *A Girl Like Me*, directed when she was seventeen years old and produced by Reel Works Teen Filmmaking. She filmed girls in her school and asked them about their opinion on how dominant norms of beauty affect their self-images. After that, she had a ‘doll test’ on 21 African-American preschool children. It was found that fifteen of them chose white dolls over black dolls. Similar reasons were given as associated white with ‘pretty’ or ‘good’ and black with ‘ugly’ or ‘bad’. Moreover, the interview also showed that one of the participants said that “I used to think of myself as being ugly because I was dark-skinned.” The findings were disheartening; but not surprising. Davis further examined by giving black preschool children two dolls, identical except for their color. One was black, the other, white. She asked a little girl to pick the nice doll, the white one was held up. When the little girl was asked to choose the doll that looks bad, she held up the black doll. The reasons given by the girl explained that the black doll looked bad because it was black and the white doll was a nice doll because it was white. Davis asked the same girl to give her the doll that looked like her. She hesitated looking back and forth at both dolls. Looking a bit sad, she reluctantly pushed forward the black doll.



### 5.2.3 Intra-Racial Racism

Considering about racism, it is immediately taken to the thought of images of separation, usually with African on one side and Caucasians on the other. Even though this form of racism still exists nowadays, it is much more subtle than in past years. Another form of racism being highly presented today is intra-racial racism, racism that occurs within race (Tito, 2011). Within the black community, intra-racial racism is discrimination against the black themselves, e.g. those with darker skin or more African textures, such as hair texture and the shape of lips and nose. This form of racism can be more offensive, severe, and unapologetic than traditional racism because it consists of a common denominator of skin color. 'Intra-racial racism' is often resulted from internalized racism, which refers to discrimination within the black community against those with darker skin and more African features. Intra-racial racism is operating when black people believe, for example, that light-skinned black people are more beautiful or more intelligent than darker skinned black people. There are research studies showing that this form of racism still exists and is the most offensive, severe, and unapologetic over traditional forms racism.

Johnson (2006) has described in his article that in a University of Georgia study, light-skinned black men had the edge in hiring over dark-skinned black men, regardless of credentials. Light-skinned black male could have only a bachelor's degree and typical work experience. He was even preferred over a dark-skinned black male with an MBA and past managerial positions. It was possibly because the common belief that fair-skinned blacks probably have more similarities with whites than dark-skinned blacks, so that whites feel more comfortable around them.

While the economic hardship and social marginalization caused by 'institutionalized racism' are common knowledge, 'internalized racism' and 'intra-racial racism' illustrate the devastating psychological experiences that are also resulted from them. Intra-racial discrimination among blacks occurs in two forms: colorism and borderism (Jenkins, 2006; Smith & Jones, 2011; Turner, 2013). *Colorism* or skin color prejudice is a noticeable form of intra-racial discrimination among the blacks themselves which influences black identity (Turner, 2013 as cited in Busey, 2014). It involves notions of skin tone. The concept of *borderism* involves with those who cross the color line by choosing not to align themselves with perceived black behaviors or racial identity (Smith & Jones, 2011, p. 1568).

In sum, when a literary work discusses intra-racial racism or internalized racism, it cannot be avoided that institutionalized racism is implied as the part of the current reality in which the characters live, perhaps as part of the history of the society in which they live, or perhaps as both—even if it is not narrated. As explained above, institutionalized racism is the force behind the persistence of all forms of racism.

### 5.3 Literature on Racism

In regard to literature on racism, there are a number of authors who have written novels, short stories, and poems on racism. Those works reflect the truths in the view of the black people themselves who have faced and suffered their lives within the society full of racial discrimination. The authors' biographies are also important to be emphasized in order to visualize their position in the plots, political aims and literary approaches, concerning to the history in which they were active participants. In this section, the research will illustrate some examples of literature on racism as described below.



### 5.3.1 Institutionalized Racism in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940)

Richard Wright (1908–1960) was a novelist and short-story writer to protest white treatment of blacks. His notable works, *Native Son* (1940), illustrates the effect of racism on the oppressed in 1930s America. The story shows the ways in which white racism makes blacks into pressed state of mind. The main idea of this novel is to manifest the inequity of the American criminal justice system of the writer's time. Bigger, the main character – Black, will finally react with violence and hatred. Wright emphasizes the effect of racism through Bigger's violence stems from racial hatred which only increases the racism in American society. *Native son* not only illustrates the effect of racism on the oppressed, the oppressors are also affected. Many white characters in the novel feels that blacks are less than human.

In the study of Mu'in F. (2016) titled *Experiences of African-Americans as Reflected in Richard Wright's Native Son 1940*, it was concluded that Bigger Thomas (the representative of Black People or African-Americans) was repeatedly under the dilemmatic condition leaving him without any options. There were always negative consequences for whatever he chose. The story happens when after the Civil War in which later called Independence Period. When the slavery was abolished, the black people have been still treated unfairly by the white people.

### 5.3.2 Internalized Racism in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

The African American writer, writer, and Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison (1931– ) is well known for the genre of neo-slave narratives, elegant language and rich African-American characters' details. Written in the perspective of a black feminist, the novel gives considerate meditation on the complexity and pain of black women. *The Bluest Eye* is the story about a black girl named Pecola whose mother prefers the little white girl over her. The novel consists of multiple stories told by each character to make sense of their lives. However, Pecola seems to suffer most from white beauty standards due to the fact that she believes that being white will be beautiful and loved. She thinks that if she had blue eyes, her life would be better. Her desire for blue eyes instead of lighter skin is because she wants to see things differently as much as she wants to be seen differently. She is also raped by her own father which is the repetition of the sexual humiliation that he experienced under the gaze of two racist whites. This part also illustrates that racism distorts black girlhoods. (Morrison, 2002)

Maleki & Haj'jari (2015), in her study of *Negrophobia and anti-negritude in Morrison's The Bluest Eye*, has clearly summarized the tale of Pecola as one of humiliation, marginalization, and alienation (p. 80). She further explained the symbolization of the blue eye as the trauma of not being loved. Khan & Rahman (2014) have given an example of internalized racism from the novel which is when Geraldine, a black mother, puts Jergens Lotion on her son's face to keep the skin from becoming ashen. This situation reflects the fear of any identification of blackness. Therefore, this fear shows that the blacks surrender to the racist notion (p. 27).

### 5.3.3 Intra-Racial; Racism in Wallace Thurman's *The Blacker the Berry* (1929)

Wallace Thurman (1902–1934) is an American Harlem Renaissance author. He experienced with colorism, a type of intra-racial racism, due to the fact that he was very dark. He died young of tuberculosis, worsened by the long fight with alcoholism; but his works left behind are very outstanding and *The Blacker the Berry* is one of those. The story is about a girl named Emma Lou, a darkest skinned girl, being suffered in the lack of family love. Emma's parents divorced because her father is a darken skinned black. She



decides to get marry again with another man who is mixed-race. Later, Emma becomes an outsider member of her own family and society due to her skin colour. She eventually leaves her family and travel to another city in order to make new black friends. Unfortunately, she finds out that she is banned from sororities and social situations because of her skin colour. After getting heartbroken, she decides to move to Harlem; however, she is still suffered from colorism.

In the study of Thompson & Keith (2001), it was found that skin tone effected on women and men. It was further suggested that skin colour is an important predictor of perceived efficacy and of self-esteem for Black women (p. 351). The novel was published in the mid-twentieth century when there was the call for Black Power and Black is beautiful. Ironically, intra-racial racism has been continued.

## Methods and Materials

### 1. Research Design

This study applied the qualitative research methods to analyze and discuss the effects of the three forms of racism including institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism, on the characters and situations in the Ezekiel Mphahlele's *Down Second Avenue* (2011). The book is an autobiography of the writer, Ezekiel himself, who was a young African man struggling with racial discrimination in South Africa. The characters' experiences and situation were analyzed and discussed relating to the forms of racism which could be an example of the effect of racial discrimination. The data collection method of this study employed content analysis as the instrument.

### 2. Text for Analysis

The researcher will examine the social problems (e.g. education and work problems in Black Africans) caused by racial discrimination in the novel "*Down Second Avenue*" by Ezekiel Mphahlele (2011). This book was written from the author's early life experience during 1924–1957 when he lived with his maternal grandmother, and then moved to live with his paternal grandmother, in Second Avenue. During his early life, he learned and faced a lot of experiences relating to racial discrimination and apartheid in South Africa.

The story begins with Ezekiel Mphahlele as a boy who lives in the rural village of Maupaneng (later its name has been changed to Polokwane), not far from Pietersburg. Ezekiel, nicknamed Eseki, has one younger brother and one younger sister. The three children are sent to live with their paternal grandmother who is not a loving and gentle woman. Later, twelve-year-old Eseki and his brother and sister are retrieved by his mother to live in Marabastad, Pretoria, with a father who is a drunken and did not support the family. One day their parents have a brutal fight, so the mother and her children move for Second Avenue to stay with her mother. The family consists of Eseki's grandmother, Aunt Dora, three of Aunt Dora's husbands, Eseki's mother and her three children.

There are not many white people in Marabastad. The white people never come here, unless there is something that they are in charge to do. Police are an ever-present danger. They beat black people severely. They catch people for brewing beer. And every night, they are on the prowl at curfew time, demanding people for their passbooks. The passbooks will be used by the authorities to trace the whereabouts of non-white people.

Life in Marabastad, people in the location live in a poverty condition as they have to queue for hours to get water at a communal tap. Eseki also goes there to get water for the family due to the fact that his mother lives in another city where she works, so it falls to him as the eldest child to cook and do housework. He also



helps Aunt Dora collecting clothes from people in the white suburbs for Aunt Dora's laundry business. Aunt Dora is a hard woman who is readily challenged those who try to cheat her.

In his education life, Eseki does not like school when in Maupaneng. Thinking of school makes him think of pain because teachers sometimes beat students with a stick. Nonetheless, his family still wants him to learn. Moving to Marabastad, he is regarded as a backward child; however, he eventually proves himself as an exceptional student obtaining a first class pass in the external examinations at the end of Standard Six. He later moves to St. Peter's School in Rosettenville, Johannesburg, where he gains another first class pass at the end of Standard Eight. While studying there, he has experiences concerning with racism such as being rejected to use the double-decker bus service for Europeans. After passing the examinations, the students have a certificate framed and hung up on the wall. One of his friends, Thomas, gives a fake surname while registering for the examination, giving a reason that if his certificate was in his real name, he would not be allowed into the Coloured and Indian Normal College for teacher training. The reason why this college is better is because if he finishes in an African college, he will get a very low salary when he becomes a teacher. Eseki then further studies at Adam's College in Natal where he qualifies as a teacher.

He completes matriculation examination and then enrolls for the B.A. at University of South Africa in English, Psychology and Native Administration. This makes his salary up to £42 a month. By the time of his successful life, he has the first son with his wife Rebecca, named Anthony. He does not stop pursuing for knowledge, as an external student – meaning that he has to study at home and then take examinations, he also obtains master's degree in English and is the very first student to receive an M.A. in English with distinction. His thesis subject is *The Non-European Character in South African English Fiction* (Mphahlele, 1956). The main idea of this thesis is about the view of various literary stereotypes employed in the 'white' South African English writing in order to characterize black subjects. This thesis is then an outstanding work in South African and African literary aesthetics.

Since he is an outspoken critic of Bantu Education, he is banned for teaching. He is against the 'Code of Syllabuses in Native Primary Schools'. He explains that it is the code for creating slaves and making slave a slave forever. Losing his job as a teacher causes him find other jobs apart from teaching. He is a messenger among other things, until he finally gets a position as a sub-editor of Drum Magazine. He is also looked down upon by his white co-workers who never accept his intelligence. However, he manages to get seven of his short stories published in the magazine. His short stories present a realistic which is not the nature of the magazine, crime and love stories one.

At the end of the book, he becomes an expatriate looking for a better life in a new country. He has struggled in the country where he calls "tyranny of place" (Kock, 2008), he finally escapes the apartheid South Africa.

In conclusion, *Down Second Avenue* (2011) seems to be the most famous autobiographical evidence to tell the outer world about how exactly the tyranny of place in South Africa felt and looked. The book is regarded as a classic South African work of its classic life-writing form, South Africa's greatest literary genre, and its chart of a historical destiny. The story illustrates the trajectory for an entire generation: rural upbringing, migration to an apartheid place (Marabastad), encounters with internalized and institutionalized forms of apartheid brutality.



*Down Second Avenue* is a foundation work of literature which still inspires activists today. Therefore, characters, Black Africans and others, from the novel have different points of view and beliefs according to the consequences of racial discrimination in each city. Those points of view and beliefs were analyzed into each type of racism. As a result, the autobiography, *Down Second Avenue* (2011) was employed as the evidence to discover the forms of racism which really happened in South Africa. The researcher used descriptive analysis to describe the findings of the study.

### 3. Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study will focus on three forms of racism: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. There is a number of studies investigating the effects of racism in the U.S.A, Australia, and England; but a few has investigated the influence of it in South Africa. In addition, a few empirical studies have categorized racism into these three levels in order to crystalize the image of racial discrimination both institutional and mental aspects. The forms of racism which will be discussed in this study include institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. Learning the history through novels is an enjoyable way for learners. They will not only be able to enjoy the story, but also learn the situations and morals embedded in the fantasy way. Racial discrimination affects both physically and mentally those inferior groups. Institutionalized racism obviously has effect on the victims because it denies equality of resource distribution. It can psychologically affect the inferior group by the devaluation of non-white people. Institutionalized racism is the foundation of the next two forms of racism: internalized racism and intra-racial racism. These two forms of racism mentally influence the victim. The internalized racism affects the inferior group by making the blacks to believe that they are inferior to the white people; and therefore try to modify themselves to be closer to the white. The intra-racial racism divides the black people by causing discrimination within the black community; those who are darker belong to a lesser class of people and are disdained by those who possess lighter skin. Therefore, this conceptual framework is a useful and comprehensive tool to examine the complex and intertwined issues of racism in “Down Second Avenue.”

### 4. Data Analysis Process

In this study, the researcher analyzed the character’s experiences and feelings, as well as some situations stated in Ezekiel Mphahlele’s *Down Second Avenue* (2011) based on the conceptual framework of three forms of racism. The data analysis processes were conducted as following:

1. Literature Review: related studies on forms of racism and racism in literature have been reviewed to understand the definition and effects of racism in each area and era.
2. Forms of racism classification: the researcher has classified the forms of racism based on institutional and mental consequences: Institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism.
3. In the final step, the researcher read and analyzed the situations and the character’s experiences and related them to the conceptual framework. Those results were then explained in the next section.

## Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the effects of racism on the characters and situations in Ezekiel Mphahlele’s novel, *Down Second Avenue* (2011), focusing on three forms of racism: institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. It is aimed to answer the question how the three forms of racism are reflected within the story. The researcher has researched several studies on it, but there

seemed to lack of studies about racism of South African people within South Africa. In order to fill the gap, analyzing situations concerning racism in South Africa was the objective of the study by looking through an autobiography written by a South African citizen itself who witnessed a lot of cruel situations and experienced the racial discrimination. The researcher used descriptive analysis to analyze all of the situations and experiences of the characters in *Down Second Avenue* (2011) based on the three forms of racism including institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. To eradicate racism, it is important to understand the different forms of racism that affect society. Each form has its own definition and effect on both individual and community levels. In order to understand the forms of racism as initially stated, the researcher has summarized the brief definition of those forms and a few sampled scenes as found in the book (Table 1).

**Table 1** Definitions of the Three Forms of Racism and Examples of Scenes in the Novel

Forms of Racism	I (Institutionalized Racism)	II (Internalized Racism)	III (Intra-Racial Racism)
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressed by governments, corporations, religions, or educational institutions or other large organizations with the power to have an impact to many individuals' lives.</li> <li>collaborated between racist policies and practices within the society operates.</li> <li>apartheid is a system of institutionalized racism (1948–1994 in South Africa). It is the policy that benefits white people in the country. The government segregated education, medical care, and other public services, and provided black people with services inferior to those of white people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black people accepting a white supremacist social order that places Black people at the bottom, and adopting society's negative stereotypes about Blacks concerning their lack of abilities, inherent violence and low intrinsic worth.<sup>a</sup></li> <li>An individual's conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which whites are consistently ranked above the people of color<sup>b</sup></li> <li>Results in low self-esteem, color prejudice or colorism, stereotyping, or self-hatred.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A discrimination within the black community against those with darker skin or more African features (hair texture, shape of the lips or nose)</li> <li>Believed that light-skinned black people are more beautiful or more intelligent than darker skinned black Americans.</li> <li>Often resulted from internalized racism.</li> </ul>
<b>Scene from the Novel</b>	People in Johannesburg were forced by the government to move out because there was going to be the factories built. Those who denied would be killed (p. 53).	Ezekiel's grandmother told him when he was young to respect the white people because they protected the African people in Pual Kruger's time (p. 47).	Ezekiel's mother, working for white families, has refused to learn Afrikaans. She learnt English instead and worked only for white families (p. 46). This is the reflection of blacks looking down upon their own identities, culture and worth. It also reflects that the black community only let black women do the labor works.

**Note:** **I** refers to institutionalized racism, **II** refers to internalized racism, and **III** refers to intra-racial racism

<sup>a</sup>Chengu (2015); <sup>b</sup>Johnson (2008)

As defined in Table 1, more situations of institutionalized racism found in the Ezekiel's *Down Second Avenue* are explained below.



### **Institutionalized Racism**

At the beginning of the story, Eseki talked about Old Segone who was a story teller of the village. One day while people were waiting in queue for the water, he told a story as usual. Old Segone told the villagers a story about Thema, a boy from a Christian family who learned that Jesus was a brother and that he died for us all. Thema then discovered after he came back from work for a white man at the city that men were not brothers in the city. Thema has explained that black men had to enter the white man's house through the back door. They cleaned the streets but were not allowed to walk on the pavement. They built houses for white men but could not live in them. They cooked the white man's food, but they only ate what was left over (pp. 12-13). The case of Thema reflects the different ways of living between the blacks and whites. It shows that blacks are only for laboring jobs and inferior life conditions. It can also be explained that even though people share the same religion and belief, they are still different based on skin colors. At his fifteenth, Eseki was given old newspapers and magazines by the white family that his mother worked for. The truth was that they were not really interested in Eseki as a person of who can read. They only gave him those old newspapers and magazines. Eseki was disappointed because he hoped that they should be interested in someone who want to be educated like them (p. 36). That the white family ignores his interest in reading shows that the whites do not care or see the blacks' existence. This is the fundamental case of being a racist and it will implicitly institutionalize within their mind.

In the early nineteen thirties, there was a depression in the area. This phenomenon had a negative effect on black people's quality of life. A number of young boys, uneducated and unemployed, formed a group called 'knife-happy' / 'bright boys'. The group usually used knife to rob people on the street, undress them and sell their clothes (pp. 40-41). This situation is a consequence of being unemployed and poverty, which is the result of institutionalized racism. The boys needed money; but instead of working, they robbed. This situation is perhaps because of the inequality of education, the boy did not find a decent job to make a living. The education is the foundation of people to have a better life. This is obvious what those black boys lack.

Eseki helped Aunt Dora collecting customers clothes for Aunt Dora's laundry service for the whites. One day Eseki went to a customer's house to collect clothes, there was a white boy saying to his mother in Afrikaans meaning "Mummy, the washing Kaffir has come" (p. 46). This situation reflects how racist attitude can be institutionalized since young. White children grow up in a white family will usually believe that they are superior to the black families and this belief will continue to consistently stay with them. It manifests how racism can start early if it is allowed to do so. In this situation, the white boy was not blamed or stopped. Both Eseki and the white boy were only children, but the little boy already knows how to use an offensive word against the black boy.

In 1938 when he worked as a messenger in a lawyer's office, Eseki had to run up and down the stairs in buildings where blacks were not allowed to use lifts. He also said that he was often ignored by the whites there and sometimes they did not care what his name was and called him 'John', 'Jim', or even 'boy' (p. 63). Institutionalized racism is not only caused by an organization policies or rules, it can be also a result from a group of people's behaviors which shape the phenomenon of being a racist. This situation, for instance, shows that those white co-workers did not care what his name was and did not even care to ask. They did not see him as a person, he was just one of many. Institutionalized racism makes it possible for discriminatory policies to be



inherently blended into organizations. As a result, the blacks feel forever devalued, as Eseki explained that he sometimes woke up during the night remembering an unpleasant experience with whites during the day (p. 64).

In Chapter 12, Eseki mentioned about Hertzog Bill, the law that causes bitterness amongst the Africans. The blacks were given a separate voters' roll, just for blacks. They could only vote for the white representatives in Parliament and for the Native Representative Council (NRC) which was a black Parliament outside the main one (p. 64). According to his narration, it can be explained that this law removes the right of voting of the black Africans who are still enfranchised in the Cape, South Africa. Hertzog Bills are the laws about the complete segregation on all levels: economic, political, etc. (p. 9). This situation is the signal of the evisceration of black political rights. People can only vote for white representatives in Parliament. This Bill also results in the most important law about residential segregation, Native Land Act of 1913 where a black man could only buy land in certain areas.

Another example of institutionalized racism found in the novel is in the case of Dinku Dikae, a black father of Rebene – Eseki's friend. Dinku Dikae was sentenced to death for killing a white police man. The situation started when the white police man came to his house at one night when he and his daughter were both asleep. The father was on one side of the room and the daughter on the other. The policeman came and blamed that he was sleeping under the same blanket with Rebene. While the policeman was pulling off the mattress and sheets, Dinku Dikae took a breadknife and pushed it deep into the side of the policeman's neck. He told his daughter to tell the whole truth and Rebene did in the witness box in court. He also said in his defense that he had killed that policeman because he insulted him and his family (p. 66). The death penalty of Rebene's father reflects the way of punishment of the blacks in South Africa. It is legalized to protect white against black criminals and white political antagonists. However, later in 1930s – 1950s – at the time Dinku Dikae was sentenced to death, it was a punishment that white state officials inflicted on black condemned. In Turrell (2004), he has concluded that the practice of mercy was racist, sexist and this was the use of politics (p. 230). Death penalty usually occurred when murders were considered to have been premeditated, or involved extreme levels of violence or financial motives, and in those murders, which targeted colonial authority or involved inter-racial killing, especially black-on-white (Hynd, 2008, p. 405). From this statement, it is obvious that it only relates to the last issue, the inter-racial killing, with no consideration of being premeditated or not.

The examples above show that institutionalized racism can be found in various social areas, for example, in education, career, etc. Institutionalized racism can be the basis of other two forms of racism: internalized and intra-racial racism. The next two discussions are the analyses of the two forms of racism found in the story. Internalized racism is the belief of black people that they are inferior to the whites.

### **Internalized Racism**

Due to the fact that institutionalized racism causes the system of structural advantage which is called white privilege, internalized racism results in the system of structural disadvantage which is called internalized racism for people and their communities of color both at the inter-level and intra-level.

As a boy at one winter morning, Eseki was cycling home from collecting Aunt Dora's laundry customer's clothes. He had a large bundle of washing on the handlebars and it was so cold that he could not control the bicycle very well. There was a group of white boys cycling from the other direction towards him. Unable to control the handlebar, he crashed into the first boy who fell onto the next boy and then fell onto the other boy. Eseki was cursed and kicked by the boys before they rode away. Eseki told his friends about this situation, but



they laughed (p. 23). Instead of feeling pity to what Eseki has faced, his friends laughed and told him that this was his first lesson and he had to go to the town with his eyes open. This expression of this friends shows that whether a black boy is right or not, they have to be more careful when confronting with whites. This is because they accept that they are inferior to the whites, they cannot fight them back.

Eseki narrated about his acceptance as an inferior when he was helping his family hide brewed beer because black families were not allowed to make beer. His narration was “it was always like this. You are on the white man’s land; you must do his washing; you must buy bread from him with the money he pays you; you must live in houses built by him; he must control your area” (p. 24). According to his narration, Eseki noticed the effects of racism and unfair treatments; however, he thought that the things he saw around him were normal. It was just the way things usually were. This shows that he accepted that black people would always be ruled by white people and his family accepted this too. He also addressed in the story that everybody knew that schools in countryside were not very good (p. 26). Affected by The Bantu Education Act of 1953, schools in the countryside were not well equipped or developed. People there already knew it, but they still got their children to school because they had no better choice but accepted it. Eseki once told stories of Aunt Dora’s white customers of her laundry service. As a boy, he collected the white customers’ laundry for Aunt Dora at their houses. One was at Mrs Singer’s house where he was allowed to wait in the kitchen. While waiting, he smelled some good quality food and saw a dog having better food than him (p. 35). This situation reflects how he felt about his condition of poverty. He could only watch those white families having good food and better conditions of life. Eseki unconsciously accepted it because he did not complain or thought that his life could have been better at that moment. The depression in the early nineteen thirties also causes the black men’s poverty worse. It was because there was still only one proper road for the white men to drive; and there were still no electric lights in the house. Moreover, the payment given by the whites was not as much as it used to be. Those black workers who used to gain nine pence for carrying vegetables for five miles to a suburb had to get only six pence for the same job (p. 40). This situation manifests that those who are in the laboring level would not ask for higher payment, they only did their jobs without complaining or questioning. It can be implied that they accept their status.

### **Intra-Racial Racism**

Apart from the two forms of racism which have been discussed earlier, the last but perhaps more offensive, severe, and unapologetic than those traditional ones which will be later presented is called intra-racial racism. As internalized racism is also a mental racism, intra-racial is way different. It is the discrimination within the black community themselves. Black people may act differently according to the situation but there is some evidence showing this type of racism among themselves. Examples of intra-racial excerpted from the novel are explained below.

Boeta Lem, one of the worst young men stealing and doing bad things, robbed a black teenage girl and raped her. He was taken to the police station but then bailed by his father’s help. Some people in Down Second Avenue claimed that if he had raped a white girl, he would have been kept in the police station and then hanged (p. 42). In this case, Boeta Lem raped a black girl instead of a white one. This may be because he believed that black women were weak and easy to threaten. This show that even black men themselves believe that black women are weaker and have no prestige to be respected.



Eseki said that his mother, working for white families, has refused to learn Afrikaans. She learnt English instead and worked only for white families (p. 46). This circumstance can reflect how an African woman thinks about the sustainability in working and making money. She devalued her own language by denying studying Afrikaans. In this case, looking down upon her own culture is also in intra-racial racism since language is also one of the characters that people of the particular culture should be proud of.

When Eseki and his friends were on their way back to school from the city. They pretended that they were Coloreds, not Africans, in order to attempt to make a journey on a segregated bus (p. 58). The reason Eseki and his friends pretended that they were coloreds, not Africans, was to try to make a journey on a segregated bus. The racial segregation in South Africa tempted Eseki and his friend to be dishonest about themselves. This case is also an example of looking down upon their own race. Even though they have done it in order to get on the bus, their behavior reflected that they did not respect themselves as being black Africans.

In 1937, Eseki and his friends got a first-class pass in final examination. Those who got the first-class pass would receive the certificate. His friend, Thomas, changed his surname into 'Benner' which was not his real African name. He claimed that if he had kept his real name on the certificate, he would not have been allowed into the Colored and Indian Normal College for teacher training. This was because a Colored or an Indian teacher received four-time higher payment than an African teacher with the same qualification (p. 62). In Thomas' case, it was not common to change one's name in the African culture because in African culture, black people's name or nickname is important as a means of connecting them to their culture and to the past. Thomas denies his real African surname and change it into an English surname because want to get closer to being white.

From the examples of intra-racial racism in the novel, we can see that black people look down upon their pride and cultural heritage, apart from the color of skin. Intra-racial racism causes black people to yearn for a lighter skin and also at the same time, to ignore their honor as an individual.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, black-skinned South African characters in the autobiographical novel suffer the consequences of the three forms of racism. Given that the forms of racism have been daily experienced by most African people, racial issues are major concerns in a society shared by black and white people. Therefore, the economic, social, and psychological problems caused by racism have been continuously portrayed in literature by black writers. Eseki has well told and summarized his experiences since his childhood to adulthood, and the way he became gradually aware of the injustices, poverty and fear which are typical for black children in South Africa at that time. The text can be considered an antiracist text since it portrays the detrimental effects of white supremacy and racism. However, the text does not show or offer a solution to the problems it raises. Since the main character goes into exile in the end, the severity of racist issues in the country has not been relieved. The main character's escape from the problem does not have any negative impact on white supremacy. This is also the limitation of the novel as an antiracist text.

*Down Second Avenue* shows readers the effects of racism in all three forms: institutionalized, internalized, and intra-racial. All forms of racism correlate with one another with institutionalized racism as the fundamental cause leading to the other two forms of racism. Institutionalized racism is the systematic separation of resources, power and opportunity for the benefits of white people and the exclusion of colored people. If we want equality in society, we should start with an attempt to first eliminate institutionalized racism. What cannot be achieved in



the text might be passed on to the readers to achieve it. Writing, reading, and analyzing the detrimental effects of racism is an effective way to raise our awareness in creating a mutual goal for us to fight for a world free of racism. This study serves as guidelines in analyzing the three forms of racism and its consequences and effects reflected in other literary works and media contents.

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