

Good example of
essay on short
stories- there are 8
topics to choose from
what ev...

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



There is a vast sea of inequality stretching infinitely across borders, flowing freely throughout our so-called society. Inequality comes in different shades and hues: masters and slaves, feudal lords and peasants, males and females, bourgeoisie and proletarians, Christians and Jews, Westerns and non-Westerns, and whites and blacks – just name it, our society has it. In the context of a highly polarized society, deep-rooted culture of discrimination becomes air that we breathe; coupled with a varying degree of violence, it has been a part of life in a protracted way, as if of an essence. Wars such as the Civil War, Thirty Years' War, World War I and II, and so forth are an account of events written on our old, probably termite-infested history books and may be a mere thing of the past for many of us. But we can never deny the fact that bloods were shed and lives were lost—it happened before, it can happen again. If we go on with our blatant disregard of eradicating this culture of discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, religion, race, class or colour, wars that we consider a thing of the past can one day materialize in just a blink of an eye.

In the US, for instance, discrimination based on race has been a major social issue that predates back to the Colonial era. There is a general notion that the inferior blacks are the subject, not only of prejudice or hostility by the superior whites in particular, but also of disenfranchisement in general. However, instead of dwelling on the exploitation and discrimination endured by the blacks or accentuating how unjust and inhumane whites are, this composition aims to refute the notion that social groups on the “oppressed” end of the spectrum, or the blacks for this matter, are always the underdogs. In actuality, there is a reversal of role in history as the blacks, to some

extent, are beginning to assume the post of the oppressors. Using satire as a literary device, Wolff's " Say Yes" and Packer's " Brownies" illuminate how history is becoming a history of human hostility, not only by the oppressors, but also by the oppressed as a result of blind vengeance and retribution. The theme of racism is manifest in both of the abovementioned short stories. In the one hand and as discussed earlier, the white race takes on the role of the oppressors in the perceived black-white divide in US. These people makeup the dominant class, and they seem to get all the good things in life. If they are tributes in the annual Hunger Games, the odds are ever in their favour. For instance, according to the United States Census Bureau only 12. 7 percent of whites live below the government's poverty line, as compared with 27. 1 percent of blacks in 2012. Apparently, whites are believed to spawn all the bad things in life for the blacks, a discriminated class predisposed to all sorts of racial disadvantage and social deprivation. With a third person point of view, Wolff's Say Yes depicted the sense of indifference most whites have for the blacks through the character of a racist white husband not named in the story. His white wife, Ann, brought up the subject on whether or not he would still marry her had she been a black person. Unfortunately, the husband firmly believed that white people must not marry black people. In his view, they " could never really know each other" because black people " don't come from the same culture" and have " a completely different background." Hence, " most of those marriages break up." I find this argument of him as futile and weak, of which he purported to be backed up by statistics. I mean, come on, not all countries experience the black-white divide, and yet the experience of a break up is still rampant and

universal; this only tells us how insignificantly colour could affect the propensity of marriages not working out. If anything, the husband only demonstrated how well he was in exhibiting the symptoms of ethnocentrism. Finally, the author made an interesting way of presenting the dramatic ending of the story. The partners' confrontation resulted in Ann projecting the indifference her husband had for the blacks. Despite his sincere expression of regret, Ann proved herself successful in putting her husband in the shoes of the black people by making him feel what it is like to be estranged. At the end of the story, Wolff described the couple's relationship post their racist argument as comparable to the skin of Ann's thumb - bruised. To be fair with the husband, I do not understand why Ann would quarrel with her husband over this subject. In my opinion, it is outright counterproductive to deal with counterfactuals. Why does it matter to Ann whether or not her husband would still marry her if she were black? It is not like she would ever wake up one day and turn into a black. It is highly unlikely, if not improbable, for such transformation to occur. I understand the importance of having sense of security knowing that the person you are with will love you no matter what; however, I do not find it logical to put up such a fight at the expense of " the years they had spent together, and how close they were, and how well they knew each other." Nobody knows where this argument led to for the author left the readers with a hanging ending. Nevertheless, provided they add up to the statistics of marriages that break up, may I just ask: Ann, is it worth it?

On the other hand and as discussed earlier, the black race, widely believed to be the oppressed class in the black-white divide, begins to come out as

the oppressors by engaging in a series of retaliation. For instance, based on statistical tables of Federal Bureau of Investigation 51% of hate crimes were motivated by ethnicity bias, of which blacks are 39 times more likely to commit a violent crime against whites. With a first person point of view, Packer's Brownies strongly supported the claim that the black-white divide is not so much about the distinction between the oppressor and the oppressed; rather, it is becoming a matter of mutual dispensation of undesirable harm from both parties. In a camp out at the Camp Crescendo, the troop of black elementary students collectively known as the Brownie troop welcomed a group of white girls by making fun of them and calling them names. Ironically, these white girls who are ideally the oppressors were not doing anything bad to deserve such treatment from the blacks. Moreover, the Brownie troop planned a conspiracy against the troop of white girls, or the Troop 909. Arnetta, one of the mean girls of the Brownie troop, reported she heard someone from Troop 909 called Daphne a nigger. It turned out that the Brownie troop made false accusation because these white girls from Decatur Children's Academy were "delayed learners" and "many of them just have special needs." It is either these black people were suffering from severe paranoia or they were intentionally fabricating a story, a proof how much inferiority complex was taking over their life. Moreover, such cruelty was practiced not only by these black kids, but also by the parent of Laurel, the narrator, himself. The Mennonites, or the group of "white people dressed like Puritans but weren't Puritans" abide by a rule requiring them to do any favour that were asked of them. Apparently, Laurel's father took advantage of such rule and made the Mennonites paint their porch because according

to his father, it was the only time that “ he’d have a white man on his knees doing something for a black man for free.” It probably felt so liberating for Laurel’s father to have a white person as his slave, even for an instant. Worse, the racist father reciprocated the Mennonites’ act of goodness by not bothering to thank them at least.

In this day and age, racism has resembled what land, money, or gems were in the past – it has become an inheritance passed on from generation to generation. Back in the 1800s, Marx and Engels asserted “ the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.” Funny how this still applies today, and it only becomes a cycle taking on different forms across time—a sound manifestation of a long-standing struggle out of unending vengeance and retribution between the dominant and the subordinate classes. Packer ended his story with a very pessimistic conclusion that “ there was something in the world that I could not stop.” Our society is not a hopeless case. Hopefully, one day people would learn to adhere to the principle of multiculturalism.

So Ann, will it be worth it? There were more than 625, 000 deaths brought about by the Civil War, over 500, 000 brought about by the World War, and there were million other deaths caused by inequalities, struggles, indifference, apathy, blind vengeance and endless retributions – truth be told, there could be more; with this in mind, I’d say yes.