The whiteman's burden

The Whitemans Burden by Winthrop Jordan Review Among Jordan W.'s work is a book, Whiteman's Burden, written in the year 1974. Jordan is a young, philosophical black American who is extremely concerned about racism. His main objective is the historical origin of racism in America in which the blacks are discriminated by the whites. In his writing, Jordan gathers information from the initial contact between Europeans and Africans. Winthrop Jordan starts his study way back in the year 1812 during which the current notions were established. He offers different assumptions on discrimination against the blacks in America (Jordan, 1974). To start with, Jordan portrays and associates African with evils in America simply because of their skin color. He relates his work to Elizabeth's belief whereby according to Elizabeth; blackness is portrayed to have a negative meaning of being ugly, dirty as well as the symbol of the devil and evil. Further, he notes that Elizabeth's beliefs are also associated with those of Shakespeare who also associates blackness to devilish actions in the society.

Secondly, Jordan argues that chauvinism in color made Black men fit to be slaves, poor, farmers and low class people making them inferior as compared to the rest of common white men. As a result, the blacks were treated as slaves because of their low status in the society, and are perceived to have originated from an ape and a human being (Jordan, 1974). These are beliefs of Caucasians as Jordan indicates in his book that make black people more inferior because they are compared to apes like monkeys and gorillas. Additionally, this belief of Africans' origin from apes is strengthened by the belief that African or black men are sexually aggressive just like apes.

Thirdly, Jordan notes the various theories about the history of racism as

perceived by different communities in America, for example, the Quakers. In America, Quakers were powerful abolitionist who opposed slavery in the country, but they also argued that whatever a white man owned should never be taken away from their ownership. They did this by quoting verses from the bible to justify that blacks were to be slaves and never own any property. Their justifications include; in the beginning, God created all human races white, blacks were created black as a curse from God. Second, blacks were black as a dangerous disease called leprosy attacked them. Their last justification is that of the climate in Africa being of brilliant sunlight, and once Africans moved to reasonable temperatures, they could be white as the rest of the white community. However, these theories are wrong but were used by Quakers to justify themselves (Jordan, 1974).

Lastly, Jordan notes the positive beliefs about blacks in America, which he observes from people like Thomas Jefferson among others. He notes that according to Jefferson's belief, blacks are equal to whites, and both are human beings created by God, but contrary to this, he doubts if blacks are as intelligent whites. In conclusion, The White Mans Burden is a very insightful book that is easy to be read and understood by anybody who desires to have a general knowledge about the origin and history of racism. This is because the book is divided into specific parts, which are important and interesting covering all the information about the history of racism.

Reference

Jordan, W. D. (1974). The Whitemans Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States Oxford: Oxford University Press.