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ENGW 102-23

October 31, 2019

The Color of an Awkward Conversation Critical Response

In Chimamanda Adichie's *The Color of an Awkward Conversation*, Adichie explains her view and complicated relationship with the concept of race in America and her explanation of different levels of racism. One of the major concepts of the excerpt is that she believes the word racist is often misused in America these days. Adichie boldly claims "The word racist should be banned. It's like a sweater wrung completely out of shape; it has lost its usefulness"(pr 9). I do somewhat agree with her in her racism definition. That some situations are labeled racist when they might not necessarily be. Such as the example she uses of the little boy that, "Ran down the stairs and stopped halfway. "She's black," he said to his mother and stared silently at me before going back upstairs"(p 3). She says that this situation is not racism but ignorance. I think that situation is ignorance and possibly even racism. It all really depends on how his mother painted the picture to him of black people behind closed doors. She either explained to him the concept of race or taught him bad things about black people. So, in this way I agree that it could just be innocent however, it can also have a deeper secret behind it. I believe that ignorance is in a different category than racism because ignorance leads to racism. I see that racism can be deliberate or not meant but regardless a racially charged statement is still racist. So, saying that someone is ignorant and doesn't know any better doesn't necessarily make them not racist. What I think our disagreement is, is that I think there are different severities of racism and she believes that the more heinous acts can only be defined as racism. I believe the word racism is strong and

is sometimes misinterpreted and overused. However, I do feel that it is still quite necessary to define more often than not, a lot of these situations. I believe that this word is still very useful and important.