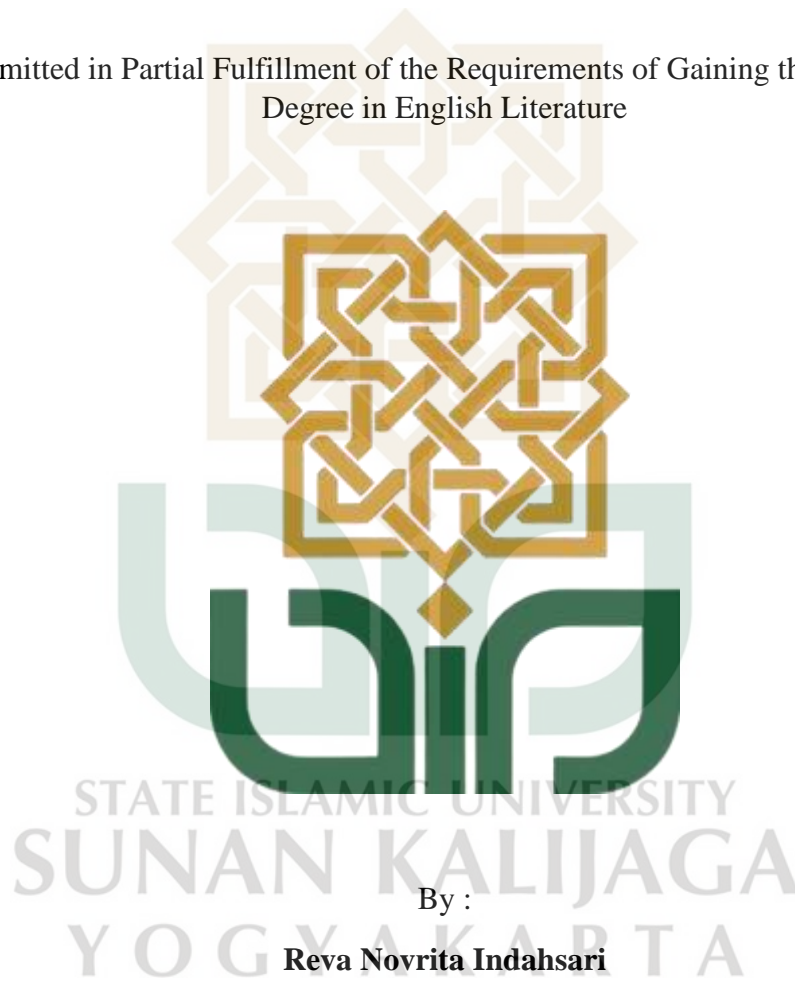**THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN *ROBIN HOOD:***
***PRINCE OF THIEVES* (1991)**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Gaining the Bachelor
Degree in English Literature

By :

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2023

A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writers' opinions or findings included in this thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

Yogyakarta, December 01, 2023

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Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

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kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

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MOTTO

"Life can be heavy, especially if you try to carry it all at once. Part of growing up

and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch and release. What I mean

by that is knowing what things to keep and what things to release. You can't carry

all things. Decide what is yours to hold. Let the rest go. Often times the good

things in your life are lighter anyway, so there's more room for them ."

-Taylor Swift-

DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My beloved parents

My lovely little brother and sister

My great lecturers

My dearest advisor

My gorgeous friends

My sweetie cats, Loki and Oki

And the last is myself.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I would like to say thank you to Allah SWT for all His blessing, help, and also His guidance in completing this graduating paper entitled "THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN *ROBIN HOOD*: *PRINCE OF THIEVES* (1991)".

On this occasion, I specifically give my deep thanks and appreciation to those who helped me. They are:

1. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Wildan, M.A., as the Dean of Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences in State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

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12. Last but not least, I want to be grateful for and proud of myself because I can do all the hard work through every second of my life. The last word for myself is thank you for being alive.

Finally, I realize that there are many errors in the writing of this paper. Because of that, I hope to allow all of the readers to give any suggestions to improve this paper.

THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN *ROBIN HOOD: THE PRINCE OF THIEVES* (1991)

By: Reva Novrita Indahsari

ABSTRACT

The research aims to demonstrate that *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) contains Muslim representation consucted through Azeem. The researcher examines the portrayal of Muslims in the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) through the character Azeem and their overall characterization. This film tells the story of a Muslim character from the Moors who helps Robin Hood fight until the end of his victory. This research aims to assess the portrayal of the Muslim Moors in the film. In analyzing this film, researchers used Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory with a signify and signifier approach and film theory as a supporting theory. This research is qualitative with descriptive data analysis techniques. The data obtained is in the form of scripts, dialogue, and film scenes related to Muslims. The researcher categorizes the depiction of Islam through the character Azeem and other Muslim characters into positive or negative representations. The result of this research is positive; the positive thing about Azeem's character is that he is a tolerant person. This film represents Azeem as a wise, loyal, and religious person. However, the film does not emphasize the negative aspects of Muslim Moors.

Keywords: Semiotic, Representation, Muslims, Characters.

THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN *ROBIN HOOD: THE PRINCE OF THIEVES* (1991)

Oleh: Reva Novrita Indahsari

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bahwa Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991) berisi representasi umat Islam yang dikonstruksi melalui Azeem. Penelitian ini membahas tentang seberapa baik gambaran Muslim melalui penggambaran karakter Azeem dan karakterisasi Muslim dalam film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991). Film ini bercerita tentang seorang karakter Muslim dari Moors yang membantu pertarungan Robin Hood sampai akhir masa kemenangannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui seberapa baik penggambaran karakter Muslim Moors yang direpresentasikan di dalam film. Dalam menganalisis film ini, peneliti menggunakan teori Semiotik dari Ferdinand de Saussure dengan mengindentifikasi melalui tanda, menandakan dan penanda dan juga Teori Film sebagai teori pendukung. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik analisis data secara deskriptif. Data yang diperoleh berupa naskah, dialog, dan adegan-adegan di dalam film yang berkaitan dengan Muslim. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa representasi Islam yang ditunjukkan melalui penggambaran karakter Azeem dan karakter Muslim, yaitu representasi yang positif atau representasi yang negatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah penggambaran yang positif, hal positif dari karakter Azeem adalah sebagai orang yang toleran. Azeem juga direpresentasikan sebagai seorang yang bijak, setia, dan taat dalam beragama. Sedangkan hal negatif dari Muslim Moors di film ini tidak terlalu ditonjolkan.

Kata Kunci: Semiotik, Representasi, Muslim, Karakter.

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YOGYAKARTA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

The term 'Islamophobia,' which refers to baseless negative feelings towards Muslims, has been widely discussed in academic and cultural circles since it was first mentioned in the 1991 Runnymede Trust Report. Although this phrase is relatively new, the negative sentiments it portrays are not. Muslims are frequently depicted in limited ways in Western films, particularly those from Hollywood, and are frequently associated with damaging stereotypes about violence and radicalism. This pattern reflects and, in some ways, increases the existing problem of Islamophobia. This research chooses Robin Hood: The Prince of Thieves (1991) to see the representation of the Muslim character, Azeem, unusually.

Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991) is one of the movies that gives a positive image of Islam. Released on June 14th, 1991, this movie was directed by Kevin Reynolds and written by Pen Densham and John Watson. It tells the story of Robin Hood and Azeem's journey to restore the glory of their kingdom and fight crime when the king is gone. Azeem is loyal in accompanying Robin Hood in the struggle to uphold justice. He is the only Muslim figure in the film, and he is from the Middle East, particularly the Moor. He can maintain his faith when the people around him tempt him to drink alcohol.

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Azeem is a very masculine figure and always adheres to his religion among the majority of British people who are non-Muslims. The movie tells that Robin Hood saved Azeem from slavery, and Azeem wanted to repay him by serving and protecting Robin Hood from the dangers he would face during his journey to his home. Initially, Robin Hood did not wish to respond to Azeem, but Azeem continued to follow him until Robin Hood agreed. Azeem is a tall, black Muslim; he was fiercely loyal to Robin Hood in carrying out his mission. The researcher focuses on analyzing how Muslims are portrayed in the film. The researcher has chosen this film because, typically, western movies negatively depict Muslims. However, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* paints Muslims in a positive light.

In this research, the author uses the theory of semiotics by Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, the sign is significant because it is the tangible representation of the concept of sound that is designated as a signifier. In other words, the idea of sound, or the main concept of language, has been found in both the signifier and signified systems of language. According to Saussure's analysis, the signifier and signified are the most important elements in the scope of the language concept.

Furthermore, it is also relevant to the semiotic theory to comprehend how the meaning of the moviemaker's concept is produced. Thus, in this study, the researcher proposes using the semiotic theory because it is appropriate for exploring how poor and excellent the representation of Muslims is in the film and to decipher signs around Azeem that construct his character as a Muslim in the movie. The researcher is interested in finding out about Muslims through Azeem's

representation. Lastly, based on what the researcher mentioned above, examining Muslims as represented in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) is important to determine how positive the representation of Muslims is through Azeem.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher discusses the following question:

- How does *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* show Muslims through the character of Azeem?

1.3. Objective of Study

The main objective of this research is to investigate how the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* depicts a Muslim character, Azeem. The researcher's specific goals are as follows:

1) Examine Cultural Representation: The researcher investigates how the film portrays Muslim culture through Azeem. Is it a true and respectful depiction of Muslim customs and beliefs?

2) Compare with Real Muslim Identities: This study connects Azeem's character to real-life Muslim experiences and identities. This is to determine whether there are substantial similarities or variations between the film's portrayal and genuine Muslim lives.

This study focuses on these characteristics to provide a detailed examination of Muslim representation in a popular Western film as well as its further implications.

1.4. Significances of Study

This research is important for a variety of reasons, particularly in understanding how films like Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves influence people's perceptions of diverse cultures and people. This study is relevant in particular because:

1) Literary Contribution: It provides useful insights for people studying literature and film, particularly how Muslims are portrayed in Western films. This could be an important resource for future academic research in this field.

2) Addressing Stereotypes and Promoting Diversity: The findings of this study can add to broader discussions regarding diversity and media representation. It can assist us in better understanding how film portrayals can either challenge or reinforce prejudices, which is critical in encouraging a more inclusive and varied cultural scene.

1.5. Literature Review

The researcher found one research study that analyzed the *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) drama script. The similarity of this research with previous research is that this research uses *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) as the object of research. The difference between this research and previous research lies in the theory and focus of the research.

The first research is a research paper entitled *Islamic Values in Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows Novel* by Saryoto from the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in 2013. In his research, he observes the Islamic values that exist in the novels Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows by using the descriptive qualitative method and semiotic theory by Pierce. The results of this research consist of three dimensions of Islamic values: the dimension of the world, the dimension of the afterlife, and the last dimension of the world and the afterlife.

The second research is a graduation paper named *A Contextual Meaning Analysis of One Republic Songs Lyric Counting Stars and Apologize* by Arif Bahtiar from the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga in 2018 that investigates the contextual meaning in the lyrics of One Republic songs. In his research, he uses Pateda's concept of contextual meaning. The findings of this study include twenty-six lyrics derived from words, phrases, and sentences that have contextual meaning in One Republic's chosen song lyric.

The third research is a research paper entitled *A Semiotic Meaning Relation Haris Jung's Selected Song Lyric on Salam Alaikum Album* by Afuni Nur Safitri from the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in 2021. The results of this research show that there are hidden meanings to each of the four Harris Jung's selected song lyrics based on the analysis of the signs inside. Furthermore, the four chosen lyrics have meanings that relate to humanity and Allah as their God.

The fourth is a graduating paper of Erika Estinia Okaviyani from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta (2022) entitled *Contesting Masculinity Between Robin Hood And Azeem As Seen In Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* (1991). The purpose of this research is to investigate the masculine characteristics of the Muslim figure in the film. Although the object used is the same as the author, the theory used is different.

Because the researcher identified the same object and theory analysis in the previous research, the researcher chose those references as the major references to help the analysis of this paper be more structured and well-received. Even though there are many variations in the references used in this study, such as the difference in object and theory of analysis. The use of the same analysis object and semiotic theory in previous research makes this research relevant. While other references in the previous research simply evaluated the signs that appear in the movie *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), this research additionally analyses the meaning behind the sign to complete the previous analysis. This research also uses sign analysis to find hidden meanings based on Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory. The researcher also contributes to the difference. In this research, the significance of the selected movie that was employed as the analysis object was analyzed. With the support of those primary references, the researchers believe that this research complements earlier research by generating more specific results that are relevant to the previous researchers.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1 Semiotic Theory

In this research, the researcher used Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics analysis to identify the issues discussed in this paper. Semiotics is a theory that analyzes the reversed meaning of various items or phenomena, such as a fictional product, painting, video, movie scene, movie, specific people's condition, and more. Numerous specialists offer definitions of semiotics. Ferdinand de Saussure is a linguist who discovered and developed several linguistic theories that are used to address issues related to the language system. The semiotic theory is one of such theories that is still employed today: Semiotics, according to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), is the study of the role of signs in the language system. Saussure stated that language is an example of a sign system that subsequently forms and has meaning within that exists, with signifier and signified being the major elements in the sign system. The tangible characteristics of a language system that are related to what is spoken, what is heard, what is written, and what is seen in a certain phenomenon or object studied are referred to as signifiers. This could be a word, an image, or a sound. While indicated is a broad concept or idea found in a language system.

There should be at least two indications in the language system. According to Saussure, linear and arbitrary properties are primal (Budiman, 1999, p. 38). The sign is significant, according to Saussure, because it is the tangible expression of the concept of sound that is identified as a signifier. In other words, the concept of

sound, or the main concept of language, has been found in the two systems of language: signifier and signified. According to Saussure's analysis, the clement that is truly significant in the span of the language notion is the signifier and signified. A signifier is meaningless if there is no signified inside since the two are not separated.

The researcher used research objects from the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) in the study. The researcher uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis to identify and explain the concerns described above. The theory is chosen by the researcher because it analyses the sign and meaning that can express a condition, opinion, feeling, or idea about something, which becomes the specific meaning of the analysis object made with words. Semiotics is fundamentally the study of how individuals comprehend things. The semiotic idea of Ferdinand de Saussure has become a reference since the study explains about word construction that provides some meaning through signified and signifier and can be properly comprehended by the readers.

1.6.2 Film Theory

Film theory is used in this research because the object of analysis of this research is a movie. In this research, the researcher applies the term mise-en-scene. According to Sikov in his book (2010:16), mise-en-scene describes the primary feature of cinematic representation. It is used as the first stride to understanding how film produces and draws meaning. Everything in film can be described by mise-en-scene. It is also written (2010:16) that the mise-en-scene consists of all the

elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed: settings, props, lighting, costumes, make-up, and figure behavior (meaning actors, their gestures, and their facial expressions). The camera's angle and cinematography are also included in mise-en-scene. It means photography for motion pictures.

According to Barsam (2010:156), a film's mise-en-scène subtly influences our mood as we watch, such as the decor, lighting, smells, and sounds that can influence our emotional response to a real-life place. Cinematography is the technique that is used to analyze everything related to the camera and its moving. "Cinematography refers to what to do with the camera when it shoots an object. It is the camera distance, camera angle, camera's movement…" (Villarejo, 2007:36). "Every placement of the camera can be analyzed in terms of the distance between the camera and its object(s)…using the human body as the reference point for each designation (2007: 38):

a. The extreme long shot (ELS) distinguished the human figure from the wide environment;

b. The long shot (LS) is focused on the subject, but the background is still visible;

c. The medium long shot (MLS) framed the human from knees up;

d. The medium shot (MS) framed the subject from the waist up;

e. The medium close-up (MCU) framed the human from the chest up;

f. The close-up (CU) framed the human, especially the face;

g. The extreme close-up (ECU) framed the human's facial features.

The researcher has analyzed the representation of Muslims as seen in the *movie Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* using the two theories described. The evidence derived from the data has been used to explain the analysis, representing what the researcher thinks in the movie.

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative method that can analyze the subject. Qualitative methods are a method for exploring and understanding the meaning of human or social problems (Cresswell, 2008:4).

The researchers selected a qualitative research method for this study. This method is more suited to our research for various reasons:

1. Why Choose Qualitative Over Quantitative Data:

a. Analysis Depth: Qualitative research enables the researcher to thoroughly examine the film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, particularly the representation of the character Azeem. This strategy is better for comprehending complicated issues such as cultural representation, which cannot be easily quantified.

b. Flexibility: This approach allows the researcher to investigate diverse aspects of the film and its impact, which would be impossible with a quantitative method based on statistical data.

2. Assurance of Reliability and Validity:

a. Reliability: To ensure the research's reliability, the researcher employs consistent methodologies throughout the investigation. The researcher, for example, analyzes the film using the same criteria for each aspect of Azeem's portrayal.

b. Validity: The findings are validated by the researcher by comparing them to current literature and ideas on cinema representation. This allows the researcher to determine whether the conclusions are consistent with other academic work on this topic.

1.7.2 Data Source

The researcher uses two data sources. They are primary data and secondary data. They are:

a. Primary Data: The film itself is the primary source of data. The researcher meticulously examines *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* and takes thorough notes on how Azeem is portrayed in narrations, dialogs, and situations.

b. Secondary Data: As secondary sources, the researcher also analyzes books, journal articles, and other academic studies on film representation and Islamophobia. These support the researcher in comprehending the context of the researcher's findings and comparing them to those of other studies.

1.7.3 Data Analysis Technique

The qualitative description method is used to look at the data in this study. This methodology is employed by the researcher due to the linguistic description rather than the numerical data that is used in this study. Polkinghome (1983) defines the qualitative research method as a distinct collection of approaches that includes discourse analysis, grounded theory, empirical phenomenology, ethnography, protocol analysis, and grounded theory. All of these approaches are linguistic and utilize meaning-based reasoning as opposed to statistical data analysis (Elliot 1999: 147).

In the data analysis technique, the researcher depends on several stages. The first phase is data preparation. The researcher has to peruse and comprehend the drama script to collect the data. From then, the researcher has to classify the primary data into several variables. The next step is to explain the correlation of required data to specified variables. The last step is concluding the data.

The researcher hopes to contribute to the academic knowledge of cultural representation in film by employing this method to provide a complete and comprehensive examination of the representation of Muslims in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves.*

1.7.4 Data Collection Technique

This research uses the documentation method to collect the data. The writer watches the movie to identify the representation of Muslims through

Azeem. The writer also collects supporting data from books and the internet related to the current research topic.

1.8. Paper Organization

This research consists of four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. It contains the background of the study, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter is the intrinsic elements of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991). The third chapter delivers an analysis of the representation of Muslims as seen in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) and also the film theory. The last chapter is the conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

From what has been analyzed in the previous chapter, the conclusion that can be drawn from this research contains Muslims representation, as seen in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), which can be divided into two. This film describes Muslims in different ways. There are negative and positive images of Muslims. The negative image of Muslims that the researcher finds in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) movie is that most of the English people thought that the Moors were murderers during the Crusades War III. The negative portrayal relates to past conflicts, such as the tragedy of Crusade War III and the international network of islamophobia. Meanwhile, the positive image of Muslim Moors shown in the movie is their tolerance. Besides, through the character of Azeem, Muslims are portrayed as patient, polite, wise, faithful, and religious.

This film is analyzed using the theory of Semiotic and uncovers a great deal of information. In this film, Azeem, as a Muslim, is represented positively. Firstly, Azeem is a wise man who always advises Robin. Secondly, Azeem is a pious man. It can be seen in any situation that Azeem always speaks and asks for help only from Allah. Thirdly, Azeem is polite. Azeem is a person who is careful about other people's needs and feelings. Azeem also means having or showing manners or respect for other people. Lastly, Azeem is a faithful person. Azeem is always there besides Robin. He always follows Robin's plan, even though it is dangerous. He

always keeps his promises to Robin. In this movie, the construction of Muslims is represented through the representation of several Islamic groups and Islamic culture and the attitude of Westerners towards Islam.

The movie also states that we shouldn't stereotype Muslims based on the color of their skin. Many assumptions portray black Muslims as murderers, whereas Azeem is shown in the movie as a Muslim with dark skin but a positive outlook. This movie gives a good insight to the audiences about several perspectives of Islam

4.2 Suggestion

While this research gave insights into the representation of Muslims in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), it is acknowledged that there is always potential for future investigation and improvement. This is due in part to knowledge gaps, limited data sources, and other constraints. Given the depth of the film's substance, there are several other issues and situations that merit further examination.

Future researchers who are interested in this film ought to investigate a variety of theoretical frameworks for gaining diverse insights. Theories such as binary opposition, critical discourse analysis, and post-colonial theory may provide new perspectives. Each of these hypotheses has the potential to reveal new layers of significance and interpretation within the picture.

Binary opposition could be applied to investigate the film's opposing depictions of many cultures and ideas. Critical discourse analysis may shed light on how the film's language and dialogue reflect broader social and political

circumstances. Postcolonial theory may provide a framework through which to evaluate issues of power, race, and cultural hegemony.

This study report should be beneficial as a starting point for further research. It establishes the foundation for a more in-depth knowledge of film representations and their implications for society. Future studies can contribute to a more comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of cinematic portrayals and their impact on society's perceptions and attitudes by building on current research.

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