Comparative Analysis of Racism Patterns in Ngenest (2015) and Malcolm X

(1992) Movies

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MOTTO

"Hakuna Matata"

- Pumba and Simon

DEDICATION

With sincerity and gratitude, this research is dedicated to my parents for their endless love and support, my friends for their encouragement and laughter, my lecturers for their dedication and mentorship, and my past self for never ceasing to struggle. This work is a tribute to the sacrifices, moral support, guidance, and determination that have brought me to this point. May this work be tangible evidence of our journey and together efforts and a useful contribution to science and society. Thank you for all your love, support, and inspiration.

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FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I would like to emphasize that this research results from my independent research. I fully acknowledge that the opinions or findings of other researchers included in this research have been quoted or cited in accordance with applicable standards of academic ethics. I take full responsibility for the originality of this work, and I am committed to maintaining academic integrity by following the principles of honesty and credibility in research. I hope that the results of this research can make a meaningful contribution to the development of relevant fields of study.

Yogyakarta, 01 Juli 2024

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ABSTRACT

According to some scholars, racism can take different forms depending on the place, culture, and historical context in which it occurs. However, researcher found that there are similar patterns of racist behavior in two different cultural contexts, as seen in *Ngenest* (2015) and *Malcolm X* (1992) Movies. Using a qualitative approach. This research uses Dovidio's theory of racism, which identifies three main manifestations: stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Focusing on the main characters in both movies, the analysis reveals similar patterns of racism in both settings despite their geographical and historical differences. The results show that stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination remain core elements of racist behavior, regardless of social context or time. The findings implied that racism has a consistent pattern of forms that reflect deep social injustices in society.

Keywords: *Racism, Stereotype, Prejudice, Discrimination, Movie*

Comparative Analysis of Racism Patterns in *Ngenest* (2015) and *Malcolm X* (1992) Movies

Oleh: Muhammad Arkan Wibowo

ABSTRAK

Menurut beberapa peneliti, rasisme dapat memiliki bentuk yang berbeda tergantung pada tempat, budaya, dan konteks sejarah di mana rasisme itu terjadi. Namun, para peneliti menemukan bahwa ada pola perilaku rasis yang sama dalam dua konteks budaya yang berbeda, seperti yang terlihat dalam film *Ngenest* (2015) dan *Malcolm X* (1992). Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori rasisme Dovidio, yang mengidentifikasi tiga manifestasi utama: stereotip, prasangka, dan diskriminasi. Berfokus pada karakter utama dalam kedua film, analisis ini mengungkapkan pola rasisme yang sama di kedua latar meskipun terdapat perbedaan geografis dan sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stereotip, prasangka, dan diskriminasi tetap menjadi elemen inti dari perilaku rasis, terlepas dari konteks sosial atau waktu. Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa rasisme memiliki pola bentuk yang konsisten yang mencerminkan ketidakadilan sosial yang mendalam di masyarakat.

Kata kunci: *Rasisme, Stereotip, Prasangka, Diskriminasi, film*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

According to Fredrickson (2015), racism arises from the perception of certain groups as fundamentally and permanently different, leading to unequal power dynamics and barriers to equality. Racism also takes different forms in different societies. Scholars agree that racism is not universal. Racism manifests depending on location, culture, and time (Bowser, 1995; Hall, 1980; Hall et al., 1996; Wieviorka, 1991). However, Elias (2021) Argues that specific patterns of racist behavior remain consistent across different cultures, places, and times. The researcher seems to find similarities in how racism is depicted in *Ngenest* (2015) and *Malcolm X* (1992) movies, despite their differences in culture, location, and historical period.

The researcher's reason for choosing a movie as the object of research is because movie is an aesthetic representation and a mirror of the social and cultural reality around us. Movies not only create visual narratives but also depict a variety of social phenomena. As Kracauer (1997) points out, movie can record and communicate the reality that exists in the world around us.

Ngenest and *Malcolm X* movies carry the same theme of racism but have different settings. Researcher refer to the definition of film above, namely film as a picture of real life, which means that *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X* bring the issue of racism that occurs in real life. Therefore, researcher using both movies as material

for this study to find similarities in the acts of racism in two different places and cultures.

Ngenest tells the story of Ernest (Kevin Anggara/Ernest Prakasa), who is born into a Chinese family. He grew up during the New Order era in Indonesia when discrimination against ethnic Chinese was still intense. Bullying became his challenge living as an ethnic Chinese (*Ngenest*, 2015). There is so many scenes in this movie that shows the racism experienced by the main character, Ernest. One of the scene is when Ernest, who is still in primary school, is bullied by his friends because Ernest has slanted eyes and because he is of Chinese descent.

Meanwhile, *Malcolm X* tells the story of the life and struggle of Malcolm X as an activist of the black people rights movement in America. This movie tells the story of Malcolm from his youth until he became an activist. When he converted to Islam, Malcolm found a different view on how he should deal with the racist system experienced by black people. Malcolm eventually fought to oppose the oppression that he and his people experienced and became a voice for those who did not have the right to speak (*Malcolm X*, 1992). This movie also has many scenes showing acts of racism. One of them is when a follower of Malcolm X, Brother James, is mistreated by the police. The police action occurred when Brother James was watching a street baseball game that ended in a riot. Without investigating what happened, the police immediately arrested and beat Brother James, regardless of whether Brother James had done anything wrong.

From these two movies, the researcher can see the acts of racism occurring in two different races and the background of different historical and cultural

landscapes. In *Ngenest*, the act of racism is happen mainly towards people who are ethnically Chinese. The form of racism expressed in is bullying and other forms of prejudice against them. Meanwhile, what happens in Malcolm X is that the act of racism happens toward black people. The form of racism is more extreme, leading to the stage of physical violence and even forms of injustice that occur in the realm of government structures. While there are apparent differences in the context and level of violence between the two forms of racism in both movies, there seems to be an underlying similarity. Both are acts of discrimination.

According to Dovidio (2010), discrimination is one of the three primary manifestations of racism; the other two are prejudice and stereotyping. Discrimination is the behavior of individuals that creates, maintains, or reinforces an advantage for some groups and their members over others and usually caused by stereotypes and prejudices toward other groups (Dovidio et al., 2010). These three concepts seem to be shown in the scenes where they show acts of racism in *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X* movies, which have different settings, cultures, and historical contexts.

Therefore, the researcher is using the theory of racism by Dovidio (2010) to examine the forms of racism in the two movies. In addition, the researcher will also compare the two movies. Comparative Literature defined by Remak (in Shamsuddin, 2022) is the study of literature beyond the boundaries of a particular country and it is the study of relations among the literatures and other scientific areas of knowledge and belief. Hence, this method allows for exploring

similarities and differences in the representation of racism in movies from different cultural backgrounds. By comparing *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X*, the researcher can analyze how racism is represented in different socio-cultural contexts.

1.2 Research Question

How do the forms of racism in *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X* movies, as potrayed in different cultural and historical contexts?

1.3 Objective and Significance of Study

The definition of racism is very diverse. This makes it very important to find a proper foundation to describe racism so as not to confuse the meaning of the word. The word "racism" first came into common usage in the 1930s, and subsequently, many other experts emerged who contributed to explaining the definition of racism (Fredrickson, 2015). In the third edition of the book "Racial Formation," Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2014) State, "Despite the legacy and a large number of racial theories, the concept of race remains insufficiently understood and explained."

This research aims to provide understanding to the community to simplify what racism is and what its patterns are. On the other hand, as discussed in the background, why this research was done because several expert opinions have agreed that racism can take different forms depending on where it occurs. Meanwhile, the researcher seems to find similar patterns of racism that occur in different cultures, histories, and places. In an attempt to prove this, the researcher compares two literary works in the form of movies, both of which address the

same thing that is racism, but the occurrence of racism in two different cultures, different places, and even different periods. The racism faced by the Chinese race in Indonesia through *Ngenest* movie and the racism faced by people of African descent in America through *Malcolm X* movie.

Suppose the researcher in this study succeeds in showing that racism is universal and has similar patterns of different practical forms of racism. In that case, the wider community will find it easier to identify and anticipate acts of racism.

1.4 Literature Review

Previously, researcher will provide previous research on the same object. The first is a study entitled "Critical Discourse Analysis of Tionghoa Etnis Discrimination in *Ngenest.*" by Erna Setyawati (2020). The author researched the discourse of Chinese ethnic discrimination in *Ngenest* using the critical discourse analysis method of Norman Fairclough's model. The author finds a discourse of discrimination shown through scenes of discriminatory actions such as bullying, differentiation, and exclusion in the movie. Ernest Prakasa, the director of this movie, develops the discourse of Chinese ethnic discrimination in this movie with a comedy genre. The discrimination of ethnic Chinese depicted in this movie is based on the results of the stereotypes of society towards ethnic Chinese that are still developing today. In this research, the author uses primary and secondary data as well as specific data collection and analysis techniques. This research concludes that ethnic Chinese discrimination still occurs in Indonesia, and *Ngenest* is one form of depiction of such discrimination (Setyawati, 2020).

The next research by Dimas Triananda (2023) with the title "African American Civil Rights Movements in Response to Resistance from White Supremacists in *Malcolm X* Movie." discusses the themes of black feminist epistemology, the Civil Rights Movement, and Malcolm X's role in empowering the African American community. This research explains the historical context of racism and discrimination, the resistance strategies used by African Americans, and the impact of Malcolm X's persuasive rhetoric in challenging social norms and fighting for equality. Thus, this research provides an in-depth insight into Malcolm X's significant contribution to the civil rights movement (Triananda, 2023).

Several previous studies have uncovered acts of racism in different communities, including in Indonesia and the United States. These studies involved different racial groups and presented evidence of the discrimination they experienced. However, these studies have not thoroughly investigated similar patterns in acts of racism in these two different societies. Therefore, the researcher will compare these two movies to discover the similar patterns in acts of racism in these two different societies. By comparing the two movies, it is hoped that researcher and readers can identify similar patterns of racism and reveal how the social implications of racism in different social contexts can occur. This research is also expected to provide more insight into the acts of racism and contribute to reducing it in society. This research can help identify and understand patterns of similarities in acts of racism that occur in two different contexts. By analyzing and comparing the intrinsic elements in these two movies, this research expects to

reveal the factors behind the acts of racism in the form of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Comparative Literature

This research will compare *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X* movies. According to Remak (in Shamsuddin, 2022) Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the boundaries of a particular country and it is the study of relations among the literatures and other scientific areas of knowledge and belief.

1.5.2 Racism

Dovidio (2010) The definition of racism is a systematic structure of privilege and prejudice that systematically disadvantages specific individuals based on their perceived racial identity. This classification is often based on physical appearance, ethnicity, or religion, with people attributing observed characteristics to presumed genetically inheritable traits. Three basic components define racism. First, it involves a culturally shared belief that members of a group share certain racial characteristics. Second, the perception of inherent racial characteristics in another group deems it inferior to one's own. Third, racism goes beyond negative attitudes and beliefs to encompass social power that translates into unequal outcomes that disadvantage certain groups while providing unique advantages to one's group at the expense of others. In essence, racism is closely linked to concepts such as discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping.

Dovidio (2010) argued that there are three concepts, as mentioned before: prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. Each concept is crucial in understanding how racism is manifested and expressed in various social contexts. Prejudice involves an individual-level attitude, whether subjectively positive or negative, towards groups and their members, creating or maintaining hierarchical status relations between them. Stereotypes are associations and beliefs about the characteristics and attributes of a group and its members, shaping how people think about and respond to the group. Discrimination is characterized by individual behavior that creates, maintains, or reinforces advantages for some groups and their members over others.

1.5.3 Movie

In movie studies, understanding mise-en-scene is crucial to capturing how a movie conveys meaning through visual elements. Mise-en-scene encompasses everything visible in a movie, from sets, props, lighting, costumes, and character actions. It also includes cinematography, which includes the selection of camera angles, visual effects, and other photographic techniques that shape the final images on screen (Sikov, 2010). Cinematography is integral to conveying meaning in movie, with different types of shots having specific meanings (Sikov, 2010). The types of shots are as follows:

- **Wide Shot (WS) or Long Shot (LS):** This shot shows a wide scene, such as a football stadium full of spectators or a vast natural landscape. It is usually used to show the location or environment where the scene takes place. A wide shot can give the viewer a broad overall picture.

- **Close-Up (CU):** This shot shows a face or object in great detail. Close-ups are usually used to capture a character's expression or essential details of objects in the scene. Close-ups can provide an emotional focus or detail on something important in the scene.

- **Medium Shot (MS):** This shot shows a character from about halfway up their body, usually from the chest up. Medium shots are often used to show characters' interaction or important body movements in the scene.

- **Extreme close-up (ECU):** This shot is very close to an object, such as a character's eyes or a specific small object. Extreme close-ups highlight small details that may be important in the scene. The use of extreme close-ups can create a sense of intimacy or emphasize the importance of the detail.

- **Over-the-shoulder shot (OTS):** This shot is taken from behind the shoulders of one of the characters, showing the other character in front of them. Over-the-shoulder shots are often used in conversations between characters to show their interaction and dynamics.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Type of Research

This research will use the qualitative research method. According to Cresswell (2018) Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views

of information, and conducts the study in a natural setting. The use of this descriptive qualitative type of research is very suitable for the purpose of this research, which is to see how acts of racism are shown in both films and whether there are differences or similarities in their manifestations. Therefore, the researcher chooses the type of qualitative research.

1.6.2 Data Sources

This research takes a dual data source approach, using primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection is a very involved process. On the other hand, secondary data collection process is quick and easy. Primary data sources include surveys, observations, experiments, questionnaires, personal interviews etc. on the other hand, secondary data collection sources are government publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records and so on (Mesly, 2015). Primary data in this research is in the form of scenes and dialogues that contain act of racism in the two selected movies. Researcher choose the scenes that contain act of racism is because so that they can be compared and looked for differences or similarities. Meanwhile, the secondary data is in the form of books and relevant previous research about racism or movies that related. This secondary data is needed to support the results or analysis obtained through the main data.

1.6.3. Data Collection Technique

In this research, researchers will use the documentation method in collecting data. According to Sugiyono (in Nilamsari, 2014) documentation is a data collection method in which the data source is used to complete the research, either in the form of written sources, films, images (photos), works of art, and monumental works, all

of which provide information for the research process. Here the researcher in the documentation method at the first stage will make observations by watching the two films first. Then the researcher will collect scenes in the film that contain racist behavior. The last step is to categorize the scenes into three categories: stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

1.6.4 Data Analyzing Technique

Data analysis is the process of discovering important information, drawing conclusions, and making decisions by examining, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data (Kudyba, 2014). First, After the researcher has collect data by watching both movies and taking scenes that depict scenes of racism in them, Then, the researcher will analyze the scenes or dialogues from each movie using Dovidio's (2010) theory. The theory categorizes racism into stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Each categorize has 2 data scenes from each movie. When it has been analyzed, the researcher will compare the two scenes from the two movies that both contain acts of racism. After that, the researcher will look for differences and similarities between the racist acts in both movies.

1.7 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four parts. The first part will discuss the background of the research, problem formulation, purpose and significance of the research, theoretical framework, and research method. Then, in the second part, the researcher will discuss the intrinsic elements of the two movies, such as theme, setting, plot, and characterization. In the third section, we will come to discuss how racism is portrayed in these two movies and whether there are differences or even

similarities in the patterns of racism that occur. Finally, in the fourth section, the

researcher will provide conclusions about this research and suggestions that will be

given to support further research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on a comparative analysis of racism in *Ngenest* and *Malcolm X*, it can be concluded that although racism occurs in different cultural, historical, and contextual settings, these patterns of racism are universal. Both movies show that stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are significant elements in the manifestation of racism. In *Ngenest*, stereotypes towards ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are reflected in the discriminatory treatment of the main character, Ernest. Similarly, in *Malcolm X*, negative stereotypes towards black people are reflected in the various discriminatory situations faced by Malcolm's character and his peers.

In terms of stereotypes, both movies show how society's view of certain groups can shape the negative perceptions on which racism is based. In *Ngenest*, stereotypes about Ernest's physical appearance, which are seen as characteristic of Chinese people, become an excuse to bully him. In Malcolm X, negative stereotypes about black skin color and the assumption that they are incapable of specific achievements are revealed in various situations, such as the discriminatory treatment of Malcolm at school.

Prejudice also appears in both movies, where characters are confronted with either positive or negative subjective attitudes toward their group. In *Ngenest*, prejudice against Chinese people is evident in Meira's father's rejection of the relationship between Meira and Ernest. Similarly, in *Malcolm X*, the main character faces degrading prejudice about his relationship with a white woman.

Discrimination in both movies is not limited to the individual level but also includes political and structural dimensions. In *Ngenest*, discrimination is evident in Ernest's unfair treatment at school, while in *Malcolm X*, arbitrary legal policies and police actions against the black community reflect systemic discrimination.

In conclusion, racism is indeed universal in its patterns of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, although its forms can vary from the individual level to government policy. This research highlights the importance of understanding that racism is not limited to a particular cultural or historical context but has common roots in the form of prejudices and stereotypes that disadvantage certain groups. Efforts to combat racism must, therefore, be based on a deep understanding of these universal patterns, regardless of geographical or contextual boundaries.

4.2 Suggestion

For future research on the same topic, it is advisable to broaden the scope of the analysis of racism in more diverse cultural, historical, and local contexts. Research can explore different movies or literary works from different countries or communities facing the challenge of racism. The research can deepen understanding of the variations in patterns of racism that can emerge in different social and political contexts. It is also essential to consider the impact of time on changing patterns of racism and changes in social norms and public policies. In-depth research into how racism is replicated or evolving in modern society can also provide valuable insights. In addition to using visual literary works such as movies, subsequent research can explore narratives from various sources, including literature, mass media, or documentaries that reflect social and cultural realities. In

this way, future research can make a broader contribution to understanding racism as a universal phenomenon constantly evolving and requiring concerted efforts to overcome.

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