

## **A SYSTEMIC RACISM TOWARD ETHNIC MINORITY IN THE MOVIE “A UNITED KINGDOM”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the researcher examines *A United Kingdom*, a film written by Guy Hibbert and directed by Amma Asante. This film depicts prejudice between Seretse Khama, a black man, and white people, as well as his contentious marriage to a British white girl. In this study, the researcher discovered Systemic Racism Toward Ethnic Minorities in a United Kingdom Film. The researcher analyzed the data using racism from Chaney theory as a reference to address the study questions of issue identification. In this study, a sociological method was also applied. The researcher employed the writing approach to acquire data. The descriptive approach was utilized to analyze the data in this study. The data was acquired by the researcher from the screenplay and some scenes in the movie "A United Kingdom." Before gathering data, the researcher must determine how the information will be used. As a result of this research, three aspects of racism are represented in Amma Asante's *A United Kingdom Movie*: (a) intolerance, (b) discrimination, and (c) separation.

**Keyword:** Systemic Racism; Ethnic Minority; Movie

### **ABSTRAK**

Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti mengkaji "A United Kingdom", sebuah film yang ditulis oleh Guy Hibbert dan disutradarai oleh Amma Asante. Film ini menggambarkan rasisme antara Seretse Khama, seorang pria kulit hitam, dan orang kulit putih, serta pernikahan kontroversialnya dengan seorang gadis kulit putih Inggris. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menemukan rasisme sistemik terhadap etnis minoritas. Penelitian ini dirancang sebagai penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Peneliti menganalisis data menggunakan rasisme dari teori Chaney sebagai referensi untuk menjawab pertanyaan tentang identifikasi masalah. Dalam penelitian ini diterapkan metode sosiologis. Pendekatan deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisis data dalam penelitian ini. Data diperoleh peneliti dari skenario dan adegan dalam film "A United Kingdom." Sebelum mengumpulkan data, peneliti terlebih dahulu menentukan bagaimana informasi tersebut akan digunakan. Langkah-langkah berikut digunakan untuk memperoleh data untuk teknik penelitian ini melalui identifikasi, klasifikasi, analisis, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil dari penelitian ini, tiga aspek rasisme dihadirkan dalam Film *A United Kingdom* karya Amma Asante: (a) intoleransi, (b) diskriminasi, dan (c) pemisahan

**Kata Kunci:** Rasisme Sistemik; Etnis Minoritas; Film

### **INTRODUCTION**

Racism is a controversial topic to explore in the globalized era. It rises all year and is discovered in every nation. Racism is defined as giving one person unfairly worse than either (Saucier, 2010). Discrimination expresses itself as a result of racial, ethnic, or religious disparities. It indicates a bad attitude in which one individual or group is treated

unjustly by some other individuals or groups (Fox, 2003). Discrimination may also refer to a service that is inequitable to a certain person. Racial discrimination, in reality, contradicts human dignity since it brings great suffering to specific nations and races.

Literature is one representation of what individuals have observed in their lives that has been expressed via language, both orally and in writing (Swingewood, 1972). The author's goal is expressed

for aesthetic objectives through the author's work of literature. These works often portray a story in the first or third person, with plots and the usage of a variety of literary tropes related with their era. Fiction (prose, poetry, drama, and film) and nonfiction are the two genres of literary creation (biography, autobiography, essays, and literary criticism).

The movie is based on a well-known literary work. Cinema is a visual-aural way of communicating to convey a message to a large number of people who are gathered in one place (Boggs, 1991). The public communications on the screen might be anything depends on the objectives of the film. In general, films or movies may offer a variety of messages, as well as those of education, entertainment, and information (Gilmer, 1970). The idea of the film is communicated through the use of the device icon - a sign that occurs in the conscious imagination in the form of textual content, voice, speech, conversation, and so on. Several cinematic genres have been developed and utilized in various films.

The writer selected one of their works of literature, "A United Kingdom," as the topic of their analysis used in this study. The study selected the film "A United Kingdom" for this review since it is one of the works of literature that portray systemic racism. The researcher chose A United Kingdom for study because it is based on the true story of a former Botswana monarch and a British woman whose marriage caused an international outcry in the late 1940s, and A United Kingdom was incorrectly shelved.

Racism is a term that refers to terrible behaviors committed against underprivileged communities, which can be produced by the growth of various races that put their personal race as greater (Bennett, 2004). Good pigment color is a major factor for determining inferior facial features. People with pale skin believe that they are the pinnacle of human progression. As a result, they think they're special to other groups. The researcher will analyze racism in the film A United Kingdom in this study.

Earlier studies on racism have been conducted by relevant previous researchers, and their findings validate this research work. Rozana from 2021 studies titled "The Racism Issues as Seen in a United Kingdom Film by Amma Asante." This research looks at A United Kingdom, a romantic comedy film created by Guy Hibbert and directed by Amma Asante. Racism is depicted in this film between Seretse Khama, a

black guy, and white people. This film exposes discrimination between black and white people, as well as Seretse Khama's controversial marriage to a British white girl.

Evi M et al from 2015 study about "Racial Discrimination is Seen in Tate Taylor's Film called The Help." This study was discovered by Aibileen, who is identified as a black person who has worked as a housekeeper in a white person's home and has faced racial discrimination from white people. This study was divided into three portions. The descriptive qualitative method is used in this investigation. To gain data for this study, the author used a document collecting technique and text analysis.

Ridho from 2018 study about "Racism Experienced by Solomon Northup is Seen in Steve McQueen's 12 Years as a Slave Movie." This study investigated racism and assessed by using George M. Fredrickson's theory of racism, which was then supported by a sociological technique. Using a qualitative research approach and descriptive analysis, the study found the situation and circumstances of the main character, Solomon Northup.

The thesis is named "Racism mirrored in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird" by Alviniani from 2019 studies. The study explores into the subject of racism. Based on structural elements, this study examines Harper Lee's novel To Kill a Mockingbird. There were two categories of data in this study: quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 1997).

According to the findings, there is racial bias in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird. As he pursues justice in the courts, Tom Robinson is a victim of racial prejudice. They based their decision exclusively on Tom's race, since black people have never won the case against white people.

Racism was acknowledged by all of the authors in previous similar studies. In this study, the researcher also examines racism and its impact. The number of studies used racism theory, which is similar to the research shown above. They are fundamentally equivalent, and another thing they have in common is that they all used the descriptive qualitative research technique (Huberman, 1984). To validate the hypotheses of the study, the researcher used the differences lay on the theory of the issues of racism and evidence from the research. Furthermore, to separate this analysis from the last one, the researcher applies

Chaney et al's racism theory, which is supported by a critical race viewpoint. These are the differences between the linked studies.

The researcher picked this topic because he is interested in literature and wants to understand more about racism issues and the impact of racism throughout that historical period. As a consequence, the researcher strives to examine, grasp, and assess the current status of racism in the United Kingdom. Racism is always a fascinating issue to debate, and Amma Asante's movie "A United Kingdom" is no exception. The researcher wishes to feel the racism concerns and the consequences of racism, as well as the racism experienced by the main character, Seretse Khama. The hardship and struggle of the main character to live in a racist society are also major factors that drew researchers to this film in order to learn why certain individuals engage in racism and the impact of racism on other people depending on race and skin color. Based on the background of the problem are described above, the researcher wants to examine about "A Systemic Racism Toward Ethnic Minority in The A United Kingdom Movie"

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Racism

Racism is a contentious issue all around the world. Racism can be defined as any behavior, activity, or reaction that degrades a specific group due to his racial group, where racial group is a human invention that splits individuals into numerous groups based on traits such as appearance. Racism presupposes physical and spiritual disparity among human races, as well as racial distinctions having a significant impact on human culture and traditions (Cheney, et al from 2006). All racial theories are based on the picture that was originally separated into higher and lower races. Throughout history, racism has been employed as an intellectual underpinning for violent conduct, expansion, governing, and exploitations.

### 2. Race Relation

Race is a social construct that separates individuals into various groups based on qualities such as appearance (particularly color), ancestral lineage, cultural history, ethnic classifications, and a current cultural, economic, and political demands at a given moment. The partnership, however, cannot always be seen favourably. Despite the fact that certain races are affected, the bond with mankind is unavoidable. This

connection can elicit two responses: acceptant or rejectant. Because rejection manifests itself in the form of discrimination, prejudice, segregation, and violence (Nelson., 2009).

#### a. Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as behaviors or implementing out by dominant participants or their supporters that have a differential and detrimental effect on the distribution of the society. To conclude, discrimination can be defined as unfavorable treatment in which the superior group acts as the culprit and the lower group acts as the victim. Actual behavioural prejudice against an individual based on the individual's group identify is described as discrimination. It may be apparent in activities when incentives and benefits are delivered unfairly cultural or ethnic socialization.

#### b. Separation

Separation can be de jure (established by legislation) or de facto (made by practice). In the early 1920s, both forms of segregation came to characterize racial issues in the United States. Separation impeded African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans' civil, political, economic, and social rights across the country. Whites utilized segregation to distinguish themselves from nonwhites as Americans reinterpreted race. During the first decades of the twentieth century, Americans developed the contemporary notion of race based on skin color, stressing the view that any non - white person was superior.

#### c. Intolerance

Intolerance is an emotional reaction that is based on assumptions about people or groups due to their cultural, a group, or group members. Intolerance is a cultural bias based on negative biases, or it is often used to represent to predetermined, usually negative, thoughts and emotions toward people or a person because of their gender, sexual identity, ideologies, beliefs, socioeconomic class, maturity level, mental impairment, faith, sex life, racial group, or other personal traits.

### 3. The Critical Race Approach Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a philosophical ideology that seeks to comprehend how white supremacy is generated and perpetuated as a legal,

cultural, and political state, primarily in the United States (Garza, 2019). CRT emerged as a development and critique of specific legal studies (CLS). It was also an extension of Marxist critical theory, which criticized the rationality, integrity, and goal of the system of justice. According to both CRT and CLS, the legal system is a political and philosophical institution that, in part, normalizes and validates the authority of the state.

#### 4. Movie

A movie is a story written through audio and visual images that is displayed in a cinema or on tv. The film is determined by literary approach; similarly, writing activity acquires unique traits as a result of the film's effect (Boggs, 1991). Camera shot, editing, montage, slow and fast motion - all of which are separate methods of display in films - highly comparable or may be explained in text. Movies, also referred to as flicks, are a kind of audiovisual communication that uses visual content and music to tell stories or offer information (help people to learn). People all over the world watch a film as a form of amusement and recreation.

#### B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a literary study that employs a Critical Race Approach Theory. The data was acquired by the researcher from the screenplay and scene's from the film "A United Kingdom." The researcher took the following stages in gathering data for the technique's realization: 1) Download the film and the script from Google 2) Repeatedly watched the film A United Kingdom 3) Read the script and identify the problems 4) Analyze it based on the formulation of the problem for which the researcher seeks for answers. Before gathering data, a researcher must first determine how the information will be used. The following steps were used to acquire data for this study's technique through identification, classification, analysis, and conclusions.

#### C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Using the Chaney et al theory, the researcher discovered three problems about racism in the movie A United Kingdom by Amma Asante. It may be observed in the following discussion:

##### Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is

treated badly because of their race, whether the treatment is real or perceived. To summarize it, discrimination is a sort of psychological treatment in which the dominant group acts as the victim and the lower group acts as the victim. This film demonstrated prejudice and discrimination towards black people via its plot. This statement's type of prejudice may be noticed in the upcoming chapters:



**Picture 1** A United Kingdom Movie,  
Duration (00:27:07 – 00:27:09)

This picture explains prejudice. Discrimination is not always about behavior, but also about sign in this film, including the hotel's "Only Whites" sign on the wall. It meant that only white people could enter the hotel, as well as segregate white people and black people, and that only a king from the black people could enter the hotel, but through a different house than whites. With such a sign, there was indirect discrimination. Seretse and Ruth relocated to Bechuanaland after marrying, according to another discussion.

*Ruth : It's poison, and it's already affecting you here. That's sign outside.*

*Seretse : You have those in England too*

*Ruth*

*: I know, no blacks, no Irish, no dogs. But I didn't expect it in your country.*

When they arrived in Bechuanaland, they went to the British government office and met some people there to discuss their marriage, and then they went to a hotel to rest. Ruth was taken aback by what she seen on the way to the motel. She discovered several indicators indicating racial segregation. She had no idea if there was discrimination between whites and blacks in blacks' own territory. She believed that separation only existed in England or in Europe since in England, black people and Irish people face prejudice and are treated as if they were dogs. Meanwhile, separation exists throughout Africa, particularly in her husband's nation.



**Picture 2** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:56:46 )

We can observe a distinction between whites and blacks in the images above. Whites can enjoy a movie in the theater, sitting on comfy chairs in front of the monitor with a serene mood while the blacks push each other just to see the film. They are surrounded by a wall in order to maintain their distance from whites and avoid disturbing them. It was systematic discrimination of black people.



**Picture 3** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:12:29 – 00:12:52)

*Free Men : Look it's a coon, out of the zoo for a night.*  
*Ruth : Scum!*  
*Free Men : Who's talking! cheap slut?*



**Picture 3** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:12:29 – 00:12:52)

*Free Men : Look it's a coon, out of the zoo for a night.*  
*Ruth : Scum!*  
*Free Men : Who's talking! cheap slut?*  
*Seretse : That's enough (push free men)*  
*Free Men : Oi! get your black hand off what's ours!*  
*Free Men : Black bastard (they are fighting)*

When Seretse Khama and Ruth were walking in the middle of the night, they encountered with some men who disrespected them, as described in the conversation. Because Seretse is black and Ruth has a black partner, the guys were ridiculed. Following that, the males attempted to assault them in the street in order to demonstrate their hatred for black people. Not only despised the color black, but they also compared Seretse to a wild animal and demanded that he take his hands off of whites or Ruth as what they saw. It is also based on skin color discrimination.

### **Intolerance**

Intolerance is the second topic of discussion when it comes to racism. This indicates a terrible event involving individuals of different races. White people are typically prejudiced against persons of race. Intolerance is defined as white people's hatred of persons of other races, and it is a popular source of study. They may be biased without reason. Based on existing group generalizations. Individual perceptions are frequently filtered via the lens of collective perceptions. In this statement, consider

the following example. It may be seen in the parts below:



**Picture 4** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:11:54 – 00:11:58)

*Ruth's Sister* : Father will hate him on sign. He's clever then him and he's black.  
*Ruth* : (smile)

According to the conversations above, "He is clever then he is blacks," Ruth's family is against her marriage with Seretse because he is black, as Ruth's sister stated in the dialogue that their dad would not like the man because he is black, which means that if he introduced distinctions in skin will lead to racism. In the exchange, it is also said that her father dislikes when a guy is smarter than him, implying that his father want to teach his son that no one can compare with his brilliance.



**Picture 5** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:54:53 – 00:55:06)

*Mr. Nash* : Only whites allowed I hear.  
*Seretse* : And kings. Even black ones.  
*Mr. Nash* : Why do you come? To something like this. There's not a blackface in sight outside of the waiters and maids.

The preceding conversation takes place in a movie theater when Mr. Nash, a white guy, tries to explain why black people couldn't go to the movies, he was met with silence, with just waiters and maids from black people there. However, Khama stated that it was permissible for monarchs to attend the movies. This is a racist act perpetrated at Seretse because he rejected white people's behavior as human.



**Picture 6** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (00:27:48 – 00:28:04)

*Mrs. Alistair* : What would like to drink Mrs. Khama?  
*Mrs. Khama* : Gin and lime would be lovely  
*Alistair* : We have lemonade for you, Mr. Khama.  
*Alistair* : You aware of the prohibition of alcohol for blacks in Bechuanaland.  
*Mrs. Khama* : Well, if my husband is having lemonade, then I will have lemonade.

The researcher can study not just schools, hospitals, and churches, but also alcohol, based on the discourse above. Black people, unlike whites, are unable to consume alcohol. They can only sip lemonade or pre-made beverages. It is a distinction

created by white people to live separately from the blacks.



**Picture 7** A United Kingdom Movie, Duration (01:14:45 – 01:14:54)

*Alistair* : We know the actions against Mr. Khama are affectively introducing the principle of a color bar to British politics, separating blacks from whites.

In the previous debate, Alistair, the British government official, stated that if the law prohibits separation of blacks and whites from being together, then a leader of Bechuanaland gets engaged with a white girl. Where they adhere to the authority of law in regards to the apartheid government, which entailed separation of whites and blacks. So, it was a separation based on British laws about apartheid laws, dividing individuals based on skin color and race.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions above, the researcher concludes that there are three instances of racism in the film A United Kingdom. Discrimination, intolerance, and separation are examples of these. First, discrimination is the unfavorable behavior of black people by white people. Discrimination was implemented by the expropriation of individual rights. Second, white people showed bias to persons of color for no apparent cause. The black people, particularly the main character Seretse Khama, frequently accept

intolerance based on race. The last one is separation, which was provided to the black people by white people in the form of a large division between whites and blacks. White people have churches, hospitals, and schools, which is known as ideological segregation, but black people do not have any public amenities, cannot attend to the movies, and can't even consume alcohol.

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