



**THE LEGAL INJUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM
TOWARDS BLACK PEOPLE AS DEPICTED IN *WHEN THEY SEE
US* (2019) MINI-SERIES**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for
The Bachelor Degree Majoring in American Studies in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

Submitted by:

Alya Ayu Kartika

NIM 13020117140088

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2023**

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer truly states that she complies this thesis entitled *The Legal Injustice and Institutional Racism Towards Black People in America as Depicted in When They See Us (2019) Mini-Series* by herself without taking any results of other researchers at S-1, S- 2, S-3, and in any university. The writer ensures that she does not quote any material from another publication or someone's paper except from the cited references.

Semarang, 24 May 2023



Alya Ayu Kartika

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

I've always seen life like a series of doors. Sometimes you get to choose the door you go through, sometimes you don't get that choice. But you still got to walk through. So you can either go kicking and screaming, or walk through with your head held high.

- Jay Pritchett (Modern Family)

Every time anyone accomplishes anything, they achieve it with the help of a thousand silent heroes.

- Alex Dunphy (Modern Family)

This thesis is dedicated to myself, family, friends, and those who helped me to finally be able to accomplish this thesis.

APPROVAL

**THE LEGAL INJUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM TOWARDS BLACK PEOPLE
AS DEPICTED IN *WHEN THEY SEE US* (2019) MINI-SERIES**

Written by:

Alya Ayu Kartika

NIM:13020117140088

Is approved by the thesis advisor

On October 2023

Thesis Advisor



Arido Laksono, SS, M.Hum

NIP. 197507111999031002

The Head of English Department



Dr. Oktiva Herry Chandra, M.Hum.

NIP. 196710041993031003

VALIDATION

**THE LEGAL INJUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM TOWARDS
BLACK PEOPLE AS DEPICTED IN *WHEN THEY SEE US* (2019) MINI-SERIES**

Submitted by:

Alya Ayu Kartika

13020117140088

Approved by

Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

On December 1st, 2023

Chair Person

Rifka Pratama, S.Hum., M.A.
NPPU. H.7. 199004282018071001



Member

Dr. Sukarni Suryaningsih S.S., M.Hum.
NIP. 197212231998022001



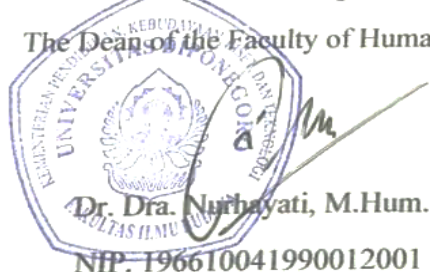
Member

Arido Laksono, S.S., M.Hum.
NIP. 197507111999031002



Accepted and declared in Semarang on December, 1st 2023

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities



Dr. Dra. Nurhayati, M.Hum.
NIP. 196610041990012001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah SWT, the divine entity, who has blessed the writer with the ability and resilience to complete the thesis entitled *The Legal Injustice and Institutional Racism towards Black People as Depicted in When They See Us (2019) Mini-Series*. This section is dedicated to expressing gratitude toward those who have given the writer support and encouragement throughout her academic pursuits and the completion of this thesis.

The writer declares her sincere gratitude to Arido Laksono, S.S., S.Hum., as the thesis advisor, for providing insightful feedback, patience, suggestions, and constant encouragement; without those, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible. The writer would also like to express appreciation to the following individuals:

1. Dr. Nurhayati, M.Hum, as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Oktiva Herry Chandra, M.Hum, as the Head of the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. All the amazing lecturers in the Department of English Literature, especially in the American Studies section of the Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, who have been very supportive to all of their students throughout their studies.
4. My supportive parents, sisters, and the rest of the family. Thank you for providing me with everything I need to finish my study.
5. My closest friends and PH BATAVIA UNDIP. Thank you for the unwavering support, reminder, and help. I would not be where I am right now if it was not because of you all.

6. All my classmates and friends of Diponegoro University. Thank you for the sweet memories of things that we have been through together.

7. All the ones that got away. Thank you for the love and support.

The writer acknowledges that she is susceptible to errors while completing this thesis, as she is just a human being who is far from perfection. Thus, constructive criticism and suggestions hold significant value for her. Despite its imperfections, the writer hopes that this thesis will have potential usefulness to the readers.

Semarang, 24 May 2023



Alya Ayu Kartika

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE LEGAL INJUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM TOWARDS BLACK PEOPLE AS DEPICTED IN <i>WHEN THEY SEE US</i> (2019) MINI-SERIES	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	i
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL	iv
VALIDATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF PICTURES	x
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Problems	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	3
1.4 Previous Studies	3
1.5 Scope of Study	4
1.6 Methods of the Study	5
1.6.1 Methods of Research	5
1.6.2 Methods of Approach	5
1.7 Writing Organization	6
CHAPTER 2 THEORIES	7
2.1 Theoretical Framework	7
2.1.1 Intrinsic Elements	7
2.1.1.1 Narrative Elements	7
2.1.1.2 Cinematographic Element	9
2.1.2 Extrinsic Elements	11
CHAPTER 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION	17
3.1 Intrinsic Elements	17
3.1.1 Themes	17
3.1.2 Characters	17
3.1.3 Settings	22
3.1.4 Conflict	25

3.1.5 Plot	27
3.2 Extrinsic Elements	30
3.2.1 Legal Injustice	30
3.2.2 Institutional Racism	36
CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION	42
REFERENCES	44

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 3. 1 (00:59:25)	16
Picture 3. 2 (00:21:12)	18
Picture 3. 3 (00:21:14)	18
Picture 3. 4 (00:21:57)	19
Picture 3. 5 (00:33:02)	20
Picture 3. 6 (00:33:05)	20
Picture 3. 7 (00:47:38)	20
Picture 3. 8 (00:19:09)	21
Picture 3. 9 (00:24:09)	22
Picture 3. 10 (01:01:03)	22
Picture 3. 11 (00:04:53)	23
Picture 3. 12 (00:44:42)	23
Picture 3. 13 (00:24:09)	24
Picture 3. 14 (00:03:45)	24
Picture 3. 15 (00:21:49)	25
Picture 3. 16 (00:33:04)	25
Picture 3. 17 (00:33:07)	25
Picture 3. 18 (00:20:09)	26
Picture 3. 19 (00:01:13)	27
Picture 3. 20 (01:06:45)	28
Picture 3. 21 (01:02:59)	28
Picture 3. 22 (01:15:15)	29
Picture 3. 23 (00:06:49)	30

Picture 3. 24 (00:16:09)	32
Picture 3. 25 (00:26:27)	33
Picture 3. 26 (00:44:06)	35
Picture 3. 27 (00:07:20)	37
Picture 3. 28 (00:49:26)	37
Picture 3. 29 (00:24:30)	38
Picture 3. 30 (00:19:23)	39
Picture 3. 31 (00:22:37)	40

ABSTRACT

The study examines how legal injustice and institutional racism affect Black individuals as depicted in the popular Netflix series *When They See Us* (2019). Utilizing Abrams's objective approach and library research as the primary method, the study takes a deep dive into the experiences of the Central Park Five, a group of Black and Hispanic boys who were falsely accused of raping and assaulting a white woman in 1989 by examining the intrinsic aspects of the series. The author also utilizes sociological approach in film to analyze racial stereotypes, prejudice, and institutionalized racism, which negatively impacted their arrests, interrogations, trials, and overall treatment by the criminal justice system in the series. The study finds that there are significant impacts of institutional racism and legal injustice towards the Central Park Five, such as wrongful conviction, racial tension, and lack of trust towards law enforcement, which all lead to a flawed justice system.

Keywords: legal injustice, institutional racism, central park five, prejudice, racial tension.

