

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The United States is a nation characterized by a diverse populace, encompassing a wide array of races, ethnicities, and cultures. With a very high level of race and ethnic diversity, it naturally forms a social structure consisting of a majority group and various race minority groups. Within a diverse societal structure, certain groups frequently attain a more dominant position. Consequently, groups occupying a less favorable social standing often experience inequitable treatment. In this context, African-American community frequently experiences a less advantageous position impact. They are often in a marginalized position and are more vulnerable to discriminatory treatment than other race groups. This situation contributed to the development of racist practices by the dominant groups towards African-American.

According to Wood, in 1619, the first group of Africans arrived in Jamestown and sold as slaves to the British colonies. In the early stages, they were not immediately placed in lifelong slavery, but were treated similarly to indentured servants, who were contract workers with a fixed term of service. Legally, their status at that time was not entirely clear and remained ambiguous (Wood, 1970:46). In 1699, all free Negroes in Virginia were ordered deported. From that day all blacks were presumed slaves, so that to be a Negro was to be a slave forever (Wood, 1970:49).

During the colonial period, poor white people were armed to hunt down escaped slaves, while slaves were prohibited from owning weapons. The government deliberately made poor white people feel superior to black people, then created rules prohibiting relationships between the two of them (Perry, 2007:111). The racial discrimination that happened to African-American was indicated as the effects of slavery or as the consequence to be slaves (Pratiwi & Permatasari, 2022).

Slavery is a situation in which a person is entirely controlled by another person, with the owner using complete authority over their rights (Allain & Bales, 2012). Slaves were mostly used and exploited as labourers in the production of tobacco and cotton. The enslaved person loses personal freedom and the right to move or relocate at will.

During the era of slavery, complete power was held by persons of non-colour over the lives of African-American. Slaves were under the oppression and power of whites, treated arbitrarily and governed without justice. Suffering had to be endured by slaves under such oppression. In addition, African-American in America were denied education, access to decent housing by whites. They were often victims of violence from slave owners. The slaves were forced to work from before sunrise until nightfall, under the threat of whips and chains, demonstrating complete white control (Feagin, 2006:23).

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, which marked a turning point in American Civil War and became an

important step towards the abolition of slavery. This proclamation did not immediately end the practice of slavery throughout the United States, but it paved the way for the 13th Amendment, which was ratified in 1865 and officially abolished slavery. Although slavery ended legally, racial discrimination continued throughout the 20th century and beyond (Putri et al., 2024).

The situations that has been described previously are depicted in *Alice* movie, which Krystin Ver Linden as the director. The film is inspired based on the true story of Mae Louise Walls Miller. *Alice* tells the story of a person of color woman named Alice who tries to escape from slavery on a Georgia plantation, she continues to live under the control of Paul, her master. Throughout her life, Alice was deceived by her master. However, after escaping her master's cruelty, she discovers that the world outside the plantation is in the modern era, 1973 to be precise. As a person of color, Alice was positioned as an individual who had no right to know the truth and determine her own life.

This study analyzed the depiction of racial prejudice and resistance in the film *Alice* (2022). It examines how Alice, a black woman living under slavery in the post-abolition era, experiences various forms of racial prejudice in her relation with her white master. This study examines how racial prejudice limits Alice's freedom through control, lies, and unequal treatment. In addition, this study also discusses how Alice shows forms of resistance to the oppression she experiences.

1.2 Research Questions

The writer observed that *Alice* (2022) addresses various social issues related to racial prejudice and forms of resistance experienced by black characters. Therefore, the depiction of racial prejudice and resistance that appears throughout the film raises several questions that form the basis of this study.

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What are the intrinsic aspects in *Alice* (2022)?
2. What kinds of racial prejudice are depicted in *Alice* (2022)?
3. What forms of resistance do the characters show against racial prejudice?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Following the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the intrinsic aspects of *Alice* movie (2022).
2. To identify the forms of racial prejudice portrayed in *Alice* movie (2022).
3. To examine the forms of resistance against the characters portrayed in *Alice* movie (2022).

1.4 Scope of the Study

The writer limits the scope of this study to issues that focus on social issues, particularly racial prejudice and forms of resistance experienced by the characters in *Alice* movie. To keep the analysis deep, this study only focuses on three main characters who have the most dominant roles and appear frequently

in the film's storyline. The selection of these characters is based on their involvement in important scenes that show racial prejudice and resistance to it. In addition, this study also analyzed the intrinsic elements of the film, such as characterization, setting, and conflict, as parts that shape and reinforce the representation of racial prejudice and resistance in the overall narrative of the film.

1.5 Previous Study

There are several studies analyse the phenomenon of slavery and racial discrimination that correlates to the conducted thesis. The first study is a thesis came from Muhammad Bahy Fauzan (2021) titled *Explicit Discrimination Against Main Character and Social Impact of Slavery as Seen in 12 years a Slave Movie*. The author analyzed the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of *12 Years a Slave* movie, focusing on the racial discrimination experienced by the main character, Solomon Northup. Using Rebecca M. Blank's theory of racial discrimination along with exponential and social psychology approaches, this study finds that Solomon experienced explicit discrimination in the form of verbal antagonism and physical attacks that impacted his life as a slave. In addition, this study also discusses the social impact of this discrimination on Solomon's behavior and attitude.

The second study was written by Putri Ayu Pitaloka (2022) on her thesis titled *Racism in the Film Blackkkiansman (2018)* The author analyzes various forms of racial discrimination experienced by black and Jewish characters in

the film using Stuart Hall's theory of representation and Fred L. Pincus's concept of discrimination. The results of the study show that there are two forms of discrimination namely individual discrimination that manifested in prejudice, verbal abuse, and stereotypes also institutional discrimination as demonstrated through the practice of lynching and the Ku Klux Klan organization.

The third study was written by Dipo Haris Halimi (2022) titled *Racial Discrimination Portrayed in 12 years a Slave movie by Steve Mcqueen*. The author examines the racial discrimination experienced by the main character Solomon Northup in the film 12 Years a Slave. The results of the identification found three main forms of racism that appear in the film, namely discrimination, segregation, and prejudice. Discrimination is seen in the loss of freedom, the giving of slave names, and the prohibition of learning, segregation is shown through the separation of facilities and places of residence between whites and people of color, while prejudice is shown in the unfair judgment and dislike of white people towards people of color.

The fourth study was written by Deden Dailami Majid (2023) on his thesis titled *Racial Discrimination and Resistance in Judas and the Black Messiah Film*. The author used racial discrimination theory by Rebecca M. Blanks and Marilyn Dabady to examine the racial discrimination against the black characters. The results of the study show that black characters face racial discrimination in three forms, namely explicit discrimination, statistical and profile discrimination, and organizational processes. The struggle of black characters in facing unfair treatment and government oppression also reflected

through various strategies of resistance against racial discrimination. These strategies include political education, coalition building, direct actions and protests, and empowerment through leadership.

The fifth previous study is a thesis written by Izaz Ahlanda Putra (2023) titled *Slavery, Race, and Gender Discrimination in Gerard Bush and Christopher Renz's Film Script Antebellum*. The study examined the issues of slavery, race, and gender discrimination as experienced by the main character, Veronica Henley. Veronica endures major racial discrimination, including as segregation, speech limitations, and verbal abuse. She also experiences gender discrimination in the form of marginalization, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. The thesis emphasizes the psychological trauma that Veronica endures as a result of her enslavement.

Previous studies have mostly focused on discrimination as the primary issue. Different from previous studies, this study views discrimination as part of the stages of prejudice proposed by Gordon Allport. In this theory, prejudice develops in stages, beginning with negative attitudes or views and leading to more extreme actions. Therefore, this study not only focuses on discrimination, but also examines the forms of prejudice that emerge before discrimination occurs. In addition to the difference in research focus, the selection of *Alice* movie as the object of study also distinguishes this research from previous studies.

1.6 Method of the Study

1.6.1 Data and the Sources of the Data

The data in this study are dialogues and scenes taken from the film *Alice* (2022). To collect these data, researcher used the library research method. George (2008:6), in his book *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*, explains that library research is the process of searching for, identifying, and utilizing valid and relevant sources of information related to the research topic. This method enables researchers to obtain a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation for analyzing the issues under study.

The primary source for this research is the *Alice* movie, focusing on its scenes and dialogues as the main objects of analysis. Meanwhile, secondary sources include scholarly journals, books, theses, and other relevant research materials are used to support the study's findings.

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

In this study, the author applied several stages of data collection and analysis. The first step was to repeatedly watch *Alice* (2022) to identify dialogues and scenes related to issues of racial prejudice and resistance. During this process, the author observed and noted the parts of the film that were relevant to the focus of the study. The second step was done by selecting the scenes and dialogues that had been noted, then converting the audio-visual data into written data to simplify the analysis process. Next, in the third step, the collected data was classified based on the research themes and issues. The final

step was to interpret the data using secondary sources, such as books, scientific journals, and previous studies, to support the analysis and strengthen the research findings.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

In this study, the writer used objective approach to analyse the intrinsic elements of *Alice* movie. According to Abrams, the objective approach views literary works as something that stands on its own, so that analysis focuses on the intrinsic elements within the text, without linking them to the author or conditions outside the work (Abrams, 2009:63). In this study, the writer examined the intrinsic elements of *Alice* movie such as, characters and characterization, setting, conflict, theme, plot.

In addition, socio-psychological approach is used to analyse the racial prejudice experienced by characters in *Alice* movie. According to Michael A. Hogg and Graham M. Vaughan, social psychology is the part of psychology that studies human interaction: its manifestations, its causes, its consequences, and the psychological processes involved (2010:2). According to Hogg and Vaughan, social psychology defined as scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others (2010:2). This approach highlights the relationship between psychological and social factors in shaping human behavior. It examines how individual attitudes, emotions, and perceptions interact with social norms, values, and power relations in society. Through this perspective, the study seeks to examine how racial prejudice influences

interactions between characters and how their social experiences shape their responses and actions.

The writer used Gordon Allport's theory of racial prejudice that explained in his book *The Nature of Prejudice*, which divides prejudice into five stages, including anti-locution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, and extermination. This theory can help the writer identify acts of racial prejudice that occur against black characters in the movie. In addition, Ann E. Cudd's theory also used to analyze how the characters responded to racial prejudice through acts of resistance. In this study, resistance is understood as an effort to escape from the oppression that limits the characters' freedom of life.

In addition, the analysis in this study is not only directed at narrative aspects, but also at the atmospheric nuances and emotional intensity built into each scene. To enrich this analysis, cinematic elements as described by Bordwell and Thompson are utilized, including camera shots, dialogue sound design (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013:2).

1.7 Organization of the Writing

1. Chapter one contains background of study, previous studies, research problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, research method and organization of the writing of the thesis.
2. Chapter two contains intrinsic aspects. The author discussed characters and characterization, setting, conflict and cinematic elements such as camera shots, sound aspects, and dialogues.

3. Chapter three contains extrinsic aspects. The discussion in this chapter covers the theories used to examine racial prejudice and resistance, as portrayed in *Alice* movie.
4. Chapter four contains the discussion both of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the film. This chapter is the main section of the study, which examines the characters and characterization, setting, conflict, and cinematic elements in the film. In addition, the extrinsic analysis explores racial prejudice and the characters' resistance using the theories of Gordon Allport and Ann E. Cudd to examine how prejudice arises and how resistance is portrayed as a response.
5. Chapter five contains a conclusion of all the elements that have been discussed in the previous chapters.