

***THE REPRESENTATION OF RACISM IN THE “AMERICAN FICTION”
MOVIE SCRIPT (2023)***

TERM PAPER



By

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FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
DARMA PERSADA UNIVERSITY
JAKARTA**

2026

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Submitted in part-fulfillment of requirements for obtaining
Sarjana Linguistik (S. Li) degree



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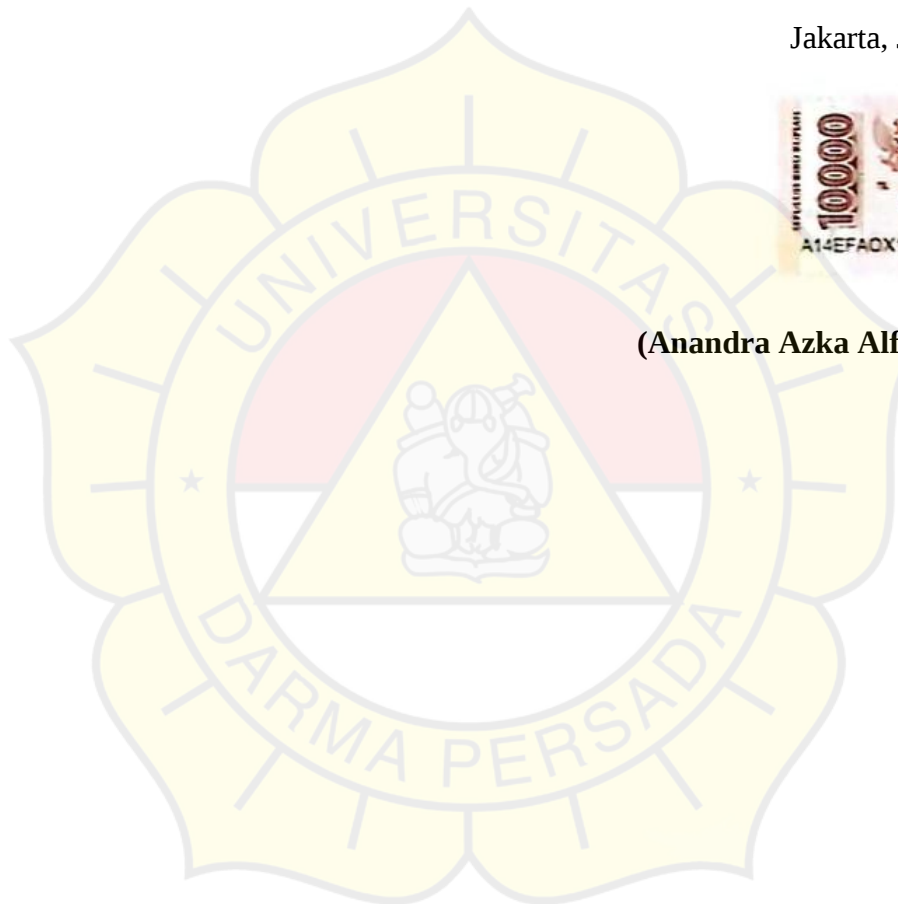
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT PAGE

I hereby acknowledge and declare that this paper is the result of my work and is not a plagiarism of other works, all its contents are under my responsibility. All sources that I quote or refer to have been correctly stated.

Jakarta, July 13, 2026



(Anandra Azka Alfazha Arwin)



LETTER OF APPROVAL

On recommendation of respective Supervisor, Academic Advisor, and Head of the Department, the term-paper submitted by Anandra Azka Alfazha Arwin entitled “The Representation of Racism in the “American Fiction” Movie Script (2023)” has been approved and forwarded to English Language and Culture Department, Dharma Persada University, for final evaluation before the thesis defense for obtaining Sarjana Linguistik (S.Li.) degree to the respective candidate.

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TERM PAPER VALIDATION

On August 3rd, 2026. this term paper has been academically tested and defended in front of:

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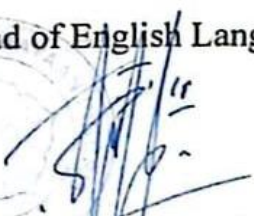
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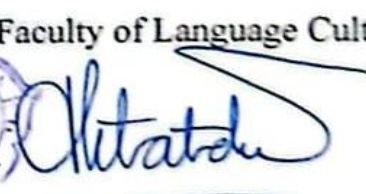
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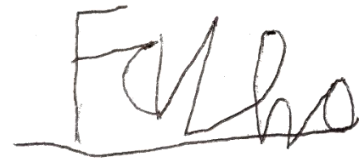
I am deeply thankful to Allah SWT for his endless blessings, which have helped me in successfully completing this term paper. As a partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the Strata One (S-1) degree, this term paper, titled “The Representation of Racism in The American Fiction Movie Script (2023)” is submitted to the English Language and Culture of Darma Persada University. I would like to give my heartfelt appreciation towards everyone who have guided and supported me in completing this term-paper. I would like to state my gratitude towards those who have supported me throughout this journey:

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Finally, I realize that this term paper is far from being perfect. Therefore, I would be grateful to accept any constructive comments and suggestions for the betterment of this term paper.

Jakarta, August 6, 2026

Writer,



(Anandra Azka Alfazha Arwin)



ANALYZING RACISM IN THE “AMERICAN FICTION” MOVIE SCRIPT (2023)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the monetization of racism and Black trauma in Cord Jefferson’s satirical film, *American Fiction* (2023). Based on Frantz Fanon and Toni Morrison’s “White Gaze” theory, as well as Derrick Bell’s Critical Race Theory, the analysis focuses on the protagonist’s use of satire as an effort to rebel against the “White Gaze”. This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive method by making use of textual analysis of selected scenes and lines of dialogues. The findings display that Thelonious "Monk" Ellison is fed up with the media’s efforts in using diversity and inclusion as a way to gain profit. To send his point across, he writes a “joke” novel called “FUCK” with the inclusion of every Black stereotype imaginable. Despite the novel being made as a joke, the publishing world and critics claims his work as a masterpiece. This research will provide a deeper study into the theme of racism in literature, emphasizing how people of color are not safe from the act of discrimination in the publishing world. This is because marginalized identities kept being exploited to fulfil the market’s demands for performative representation. “Trauma Economy” is what the publishing and film industries operate under, hence why Monk felt compelled to perform a psychological and professional “Double Bind” to appeal to his publishers. This “Double Bind” exists in the form of a hyperbolic caricature of “Stagg R. Leigh”, which supposed to be every Black caricature compiled into a single person. In order to please his publishers, Monk decided to put on his “Stagg R. Leigh” persona in public spaces. Turns out, his publishers and audience are in love with this caricature. Even though people believe that “Stagg R. Leigh” is an authentic representation of African-Americans, most people have no clue of what colored individuals really like in the United States. Monk’s publishers want him to write stories that revolve around “authentic” Blackness to satisfy the non-Black audiences, which is why they want the story to be as narrow and trauma-centric as possible instead of trying to shape the story into something complex. Fundamentally, “American Fiction” critiques how Black cultural production is being gatekept by systemic bias, consumer demand, and economic incentives. Which is why contemporary media industries desperately need both structural and cultural shifts.

Keywords: Racism, Black Trauma, White Gaze, Critical Race Theory, Black Stereotype

ANALISIS RASISME DALAM SKRIP FILM “AMERICAN FICTION” (2023)

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis monetisasi rasisme dan trauma orang kulit hitam dalam film satir karya Cord Jefferson, *American Fiction* (2023). Berdasarkan teori "White Gaze" Frantz Fanon dan Toni Morrison, serta Teori Ras Kritis Derrick Bell, analisis ini berfokus pada penggunaan satir oleh protagonis sebagai upaya untuk memberontak terhadap "White Gaze". Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan analisis tekstual dari adegan dan dialog yang terpilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Thelonious "Monk" Ellison muak dengan upaya media dalam menggunakan keragaman dan inklusi sebagai cara untuk mendapatkan keuntungan. Untuk menyampaikan keinginannya, Monk menulis novel "lelucon" berjudul "FUCK" yang mencakup setiap stereotip orang kulit hitam. Meskipun novel tersebut dibuat sebagai lelucon, dunia penerbitan dan kritikus mengklaim karyanya sebagai mahakarya. Penelitian ini akan mengkaji lebih dalam tema rasisme dalam sastra, dengan menyoroti bagaimana orang kulit berwarna tidak luput dari tindakan diskriminasi di dunia penerbitan. Hal ini terjadi karena identitas yang terpinggirkan terus dieksploitasi demi memenuhi tuntutan pasar akan representasi yang bersifat performatif. Industri penerbitan dan film beroperasi dalam kerangka "Ekonomi Trauma"; itulah sebabnya Monk merasa terdorong untuk melakukan semacam "dilema ganda" (*double bind*)—baik secara psikologis maupun profesional—demi memikat penerbitnya. Dilema ini mewujudkan dalam sosok karikatur hiperbolis bernama "Stagg R. Leigh", yang dirancang sebagai gabungan dari berbagai stereotip karikatur orang kulit hitam yang disatukan dalam satu sosok. Demi memuaskan penerbitnya, Monk memutuskan untuk menampilkan persona "Stagg R. Leigh" tersebut di ruang publik. Ternyata, pihak penerbit maupun khalayak sangat menyukai karikatur ini. Meskipun banyak orang menganggap "Stagg R. Leigh" sebagai representasi autentik warga Afrika-Amerika, sebagian besar dari mereka sebenarnya tidak memahami seperti apa kehidupan orang kulit berwarna yang sesungguhnya di Amerika Serikat. Penerbit Monk menginginkan cerita yang berkulat pada sisi "autentik" kehidupan kulit hitam demi memuaskan audiens non-kulit hitam; itulah sebabnya mereka menghendaki narasi yang sesempit dan sefokus mungkin pada trauma, alih-alih mengembangkan cerita yang lebih kompleks. Pada dasarnya, *American Fiction* mengkritik bagaimana produksi budaya kulit hitam dibatasi oleh bias sistemik, permintaan konsumen, dan insentif ekonomi. Oleh karena itu, industri media kontemporer sangat membutuhkan perubahan, baik secara struktural maupun kultural.

Kata kunci: Rasisme, Trauma Kulit Hitam, Pandangan Kulit Putih, Teori Ras Kritis, Stereotip Kulit Hitam

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT PAGE.....	iii
LETTER OF APPROVAL.....	iv
TERM PAPER VALIDATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
ABSTRAK.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the Problem.....	1
1.2. Identification of the Problem.....	4
1.3. Limitation of the Problem.....	4
1.4. Formulation of the Problem.....	4
1.5. Objectives of the Research.....	5
1.6. Benefits of the Research.....	5
1.7. Systematic Organization of The Research.....	5
CHAPTER 2: THEORITECAL FRAMEWORK.....	7
2.1 Intrinsic Approach.....	7
2.1.1 Characterization.....	7
2.1.2 Plot.....	8
2.1.3 Setting.....	9
2.2 Extrinsic Approach.....	12
2.2.1 Sociology of Literature.....	12
2.2.2 Racism.....	13
2.2.2.1 Critical Race Theory.....	13
2.2.2.2 The White Gaze.....	14
2.3 Previous Related Studies.....	15
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD.....	16
3.1 Time and Location.....	16
3.2 Research Approach and Method.....	16
3.3 Research Data and Object.....	17

3.4 Data Collection Technique.....	17
3.5 Data Analysis Technique.....	18
CHAPTER 4: ANALYZING RACISM IN THE “AMERICAN FICTION” MOVIE SCRIPT.....	19
4.1 Intrinsic Approach.....	19
4.1.1 Characterization.....	19
4.1.2 Plot.....	45
4.1.3 Setting.....	51
4.2 Extrinsic Approach.....	53
4.2.1 Racism.....	53
4.2.2 Racism Experienced by the Character of Thelonious “Monk” Ellison.....	54
4.2.2.1 Instances of Racism in the “American Fiction” Movie Script.....	54
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	72
REFERENCES.....	74
APPENDIX 1 SCHEME OF THE RESEARCH.....	76
APPENDIX 2 POSTER OF THE RESEARCH.....	77
APPENDIX 3 PRESENTATION SLIDES.....	78
APPENDIX 4 TOEIC CERTIFICATE.....	80
APPENDIX 5 CERTIFICATES.....	81
APPENDIX 6 TERM PAPER COUNSELLING FORM.....	82
APPENDIX 7 TURNITIN RESULT.....	85
APPENDIX 8 CURRICULUM VITAE.....	87