



**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS BLACK PEOPLE AS  
DEPICTED IN THE MOVIE *REMEMBER THE TITANS***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Sarjana Degree Majoring  
American Cultural Studies in English Department Faculty of Humanities  
Diponegoro University**

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SEMARANG  
2020**

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that he compiles this final paper by himself without taking any data and results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and diploma degree of any university. The writer also did not quote any material from other publications except for the references mentioned in the bibliography.

Semarang, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Adhitama Setia Rahmawardhana

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

*Let tomorrow be your second chance to prove that you are better than today and yesterday*

**Ritu Ghatourey**

*This paper is dedicated to*

*My dearest family and friends.*

# APPROVAL

## RACIAL DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS BLACK PEOPLE AS DEPICTED IN THE MOVIE *REMEMBER THE TITANS*

Written by

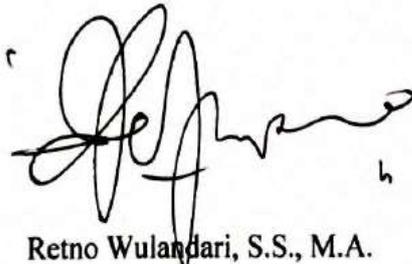
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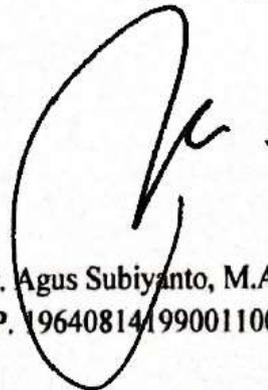
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise to God Almighty the Lord of worlds who has given me strength, health, and spirit to me, so this final project entitled “Racial Discrimination Towards Black People as Depicted in The Movie *Remember The Titans*” came to a completion. On this occasion, the writer would like to thank those people who have contributed to the completion of this final project.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation are addressed to Mrs. Retno Wulandari, S.S., M.A. as my project advisor for sharing her guidance, expertise, and supported me in finishing this final project. The writer would also like to express his gratitude to these following people:

1. Dr. Nurhayati, M. Hum as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A as The Head of English Department Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. My dearest family at home for their undying love and support.
4. All the lecturers of English Department for teaching and giving me knowledge.
5. My English Department friends from 2015 who I shared the most time with.
6. My other friends, blessed their path.
7. My comrades from Audacity who I adores so much.

The writer realize that this final project is far from perfect. Therefore, he will be glad to receive any critics, suggestion and recommendation in order to make this paper better. The writer hopes this final project will be useful for the readers

Semarang, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Adhitama Setia Rahmawardhana

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## **ABSTRACT**

Racial discrimination has existed since the earliest of time due to various reasons and it still has exists until this day. *Remember The Titans* show discrimination towards Black people after the desegregation where Black and White people share the same facilities. Therefore, the writer would like to acquire the answer on why the discrimination towards Black people still exists on *Remember The Titans* even though both races already share the same facilities. Close viewing and library research theory by Elmer E. Rasmuson library will be used to analyze the data from the film. By showing the results of the analysis, this paper proves that there are different impacts on the victim of discrimination because of the verbal and non-verbal discrimination.

**Keywords:** *Black People, Discrimination, America, Remember The Titans*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The United States of America is a big country with many various races about 63.4% Non-Hispanic white, 15.3% Hispanic and Latino, 13.4% Black and the remaining ones are Asian and Native American. It becomes one of the biggest countries with many diversities. With that condition, it often leads to disputes, prejudices, and also discrimination as a common problems in America since the time before the Civil War until modern days. Black people have a bitter history of their races. According to Irving L. Gordon in *Review Text in American History*, African people began migrating into the United States in the late 1600s and were brought to the colony of Virginia in Jamestown in 1619 (1968: 315). Black people were brought into America to become slave and work for the White people. Therefore, Black people were considered inferior and therefore started the discrimination towards them.

With that condition, the writer would like to use the movie *Remember The Titans* as the main object of discussion because there are a lot of discrimination towards Black people in the movie itself. *Remember The Titans* takes place in the 1970s where discrimination towards Black people still exist. It is based on a true story of African-American football coach Herman Boone who teach at a School of mixed race and no segregation. He lives in Black only neighborhood in Virginia and often mocked by White people stated that they are slaves of a superior race.

This has caught the writer's attention about the discrimination in the post slavery and the way white people still thinks they are a superior race among others and thus sparks several question from the writer about how Black people dealt with the discrimination but still keep moving forwards neglecting the harsh environment that they live in everyday. In order to prevent a wide matter, the writer will be focusing on the form of discrimination, in this case the writer will take the form of harassment and the object is race (Black people) both direct and indirect discrimination in the early 1970s based on the movie *Remember The Titans*.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Racial Discrimination**

Racism refers to one race superiority, inferiority, and purity based on moral, intellectual and physical characteristic aspect of a race that makes them different (Tyson, 1950:360). It is a relationship between social group that is unequal to each other due to the socio-political dominance by a certain race (the one that act superior) to produce an action such as segregation, domination, and persecution to the other race (the inferior one).

### **2.2 Racial Segregation**

Segregation is an act of separating two different contracted elements in order to maintain and control and because of that, it often leads to discrimination between races (1994:6). Therefore, it can be concluded that the main reason of segregation is to make it easier to control because they put the object to a certain area and isolate them. In this case, the object is the Black people.

### **2.3 Jim Crow Laws**

The Jim Crow Laws began sprouting in the early 1865 and was originally called Black codes. The law itself is to limiting the freedom of Black people activities and separate them from the White people that has more freedom than them (1993:4). One of the example according to David K. Freemon, is how they separate public transport sitting where the Black people has to sit in the back of the bus and cannot mingle with the Whites. Public services such as restaurant, bar and even

some hospital refused to serve Black people no matter what the circumstance is  
(2000:2)

## RESEARCH METHOD

### 3.1 Method of Data Collection

In order to fulfill this final project, the writer uses library research method to collect the data. According to Elmer E. Rasmuson Library (2014), library research involves step-by-step process in order to gather information to write a paper, complete a project, or make a presentation. It is also imperative to make revision, give more material to it, create a back up or even change the intended topic completely. By using this method as data collection, the writer collects the data and puts it all into research document and cites for the reference of the research. In this case the writer uses *Remember The Titans* as primary source of research and other source from the internet.

### 3.2 Research Approach

Method of approach is also needed to analyze the main problem in *Remember The Titans*. As for this final project, the writer uses sociological approach to discuss the racial discrimination in the movie. Stryker (1980) states that sociological approach is needed to understand the identities of one's self. It means that it is imperative for a person to understand the society in which the person lives and act in it because the person must remember that he/she always acts in a social setting where other people does exist and have their own roles. That is why the writer uses sociological approach because the issue in *Remember The Titans* happens directly in the society and has impact to the society in the movie.

## DISCUSSION

*Remember The Titans* is a 2000 biographical sport film directed by Boaz Yakin based on a true story of African American football coach Herman Boone, a Black man who teaches at newly desegregated school TC. Williams High School. Being a Black man who holds the authority of a head coach leads to an outrage where the community do not agree with that decision thus leading it into discrimination towards the Blacks.

The writer will analyze the main topic of discussion based on Friesel's theory about discrimination and separates it into two parts, direct and indirect discrimination. Friesel (2015) states that there are two kinds of discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination but all of them have the same purpose to insult, criticize, and denouncing another person forcefully with the intention of looking down on the other person.

### **4.1 Direct Discrimination**

There are two kinds of direct discrimination, verbal and non-verbal discrimination but both of them has the same intention to look down upon individual or group directly (Friesel 2015).



Picture 1: Anti-Black riot (44:00)



Picture 2: Anti-Black riot (44:07)



Picture 3: Anti-Black riot (44:12)

The evidence above shows a protest by White people because they do not agree with desegregation busing where Black and White people sit on the same side on public transportation because they feel that White people are superior to Blacks and do not want to mingle with them.

#### **4.1.2 Verbal Discrimination**

Verbal discrimination is an act of disrespecting an individual or a group by the word that comes from a person's mouth with the intention to look down upon them (Friesel, 2015:44). It is the most common form of discrimination that the writer finds throughout the movie *Remember The Titans* because words are easy to say yet have powerful impacts. The first example of verbal discrimination during the 3rd minute of the movie where Herman Boone, a newly appointed Black coach for TC. Williams High School introduces himself and a group of Black students that will be joining the team when an unnamed White student do not want to play in the team anymore because the new coach is a Black man.

White Student : I did not want to play in this team anymore, I mean look at them they are so ugly and I don't want to play with animals.

(*Remember The Titans*, 03:34)

The unnamed White student calls the Black students animals implying that he do not acknowledge them as a fellow human being but an animal claiming that he is superior than them.



Picture 4: Bonding Session (25:48)



Picture 5: Bonding Session (25:52)



Picture 6: Bonding Session (25:57)

The evidence above shows a conversation between Petey Jones, a Black student and Ray Budds, a White student during the team bonding session. Ray Budds said that Petey Jones's father did not have a job and leave his family. He said that Black people always run away from responsibilities whether it is work or family matters. Petey Jones claims that these questions are normal for him and if he (Ray Budds) wants to offend him, he should try harder. Petey Jones's answer hinted that these kinds of questions are normal for him.

Later in the movie before the semi-final state championship, Andrew Lewis High School's Coach Herbert brings a statement that his team is better than the Titans because his team consists of White people; therefore according to Herbert it will bring more harmony between teammates implying that a team full of White people are superior than a team with a Black people in it.



Picture 7: Pre-Game Interview (01:17:35)



Picture 8: Pre-Game Interview (01:17:17)



Picture 9: Pre-Game Interview (01:17:40)

Interviewer : Coach Herbert how do you feel going up against the infamous Titans for the semi-final?

Coach Herbert : I don't know about you but I think my team are better, we have the best athlete from our school with the same races and background creating the best harmony among teammates.

Interviewer : And how about going up against the head coach of TC. Williams Herman Boone?

Coach Herbert : I don't care about that monkey.

*(Remember The Titans, 01:17:35)*

From the evidence above, Coach Herbert thinks that his team of White people is better than the Blacks, he even calls Herman Boone, a monkey because he is a Black man. Both of them are head coaches of representative team but he did not want to acknowledge Herman Boone just because he is a Black man. From all the example that the writer finds, Black people responds to verbal discrimination by ignoring it. It also do not have a significant impacts on them because they just ignore it implying that they've already used to it.

### 4.1.3 Non Verbal Discrimination

Non-verbal discriminations are more discreet but still shows direct discrimination towards its victim. Commonly using a gesture and body language but the purpose is still the same, to look down upon its victim (Friesel 2015). It is the second common form of discrimination that the writer finds in the movie *Remember The Titans*. Sometimes, a body language speaks more than a word that comes out and that is what the writer finds in *Remember The Titans* about non-verbal discrimination. The first example of non-verbal discrimination during the 5th minute of the movie where Herman Boones just moves in into his new house where his distant neighbors look at the window and feel uncomfortable with Herman Boone's family presence implying that they did not want another Black people in their neighborhood.

Another example from the movie during the team meeting for Black students in the 13th minute of the movie when suddenly Bill Yoast and his White students break-in.



Picture 10: First Meeting  
(13.12)



Picture 11: First Meeting  
(13.16)



Picture 12: First Meeting  
(13.22)

The evidence above shows the first meeting between Black and White students and their representative coaches. The White students does not speak a single word but they look at Black students aggressively as if they are looking on an enemy. Both of them never met before, they do not know each other but the White student already sees the Black students as a threat just because they are different from them. The Black students respond by looking back at them aggressively but Herman Boone breaks the tension before it becomes even worse.

Later in the movie after the Titans win their second game, Black and White students become more friendly with each other and slowly forget about their differences. But when Julius Campbell, a Black student visits a White student Gerry Bertier's house, Gerry's mother shows an uncomfortable look when Julius arrives at her house. Julius greets Gerry's mother, but she really hesitant to respond and feels really uncomfortable with his presence. Her gesture makes Julius feels insecure about it and makes him want to leave. Before Gerry plays in TC. Williams, their family do not like the Black people, his mother always said to him that Black people are bad.



Picture 13:  
Uncomfortable Look  
(01:14:00)



Picture 14:  
Uncomfortable Look  
(01:14:0)



Picture 15: Uncomfortable  
Look (01:14:08)

The evidence above shows an uncomfortable look towards Julius when he is about to cross the road. Two White people look upon Julius as if he is a threat to them. Julius tries to greet them but they do not greet back and keep on walking while giving an uncomfortable look toward Julius. Their behavior makes Julius feel insecure, he ask himself if there is something wrong in him. He just taking a walk outside like any normal people and do not do anything wrong, but the behavior of those two White people makes him feel that there is something wrong with him.

Non-verbal discrimination may be more discreet than the verbal one but it has more impact as the writer finds in the movie, the reaction of the victim where people look at them differently makes them feel insecure and lower their self-esteem rather than being called monkey directly where they just simply ignore it.

#### **4.2 Indirect Discrimination**

Where there is a rule that applies for everyone with no restriction but to some individuals or group it behaves differently, that is indirect discrimination (Friesel 2015). The last form of discrimination that the writer finds in the movie *Remember The Titan* is indirect discrimination. The first example of indirect discrimination in the movie during 53:55 when the team celebrates their victory and wants to spend their time in a bar.



Picture 16: White Only Bar  
(53:55)



Picture 17: White Only Bar  
(54:02)



Picture 18: White Only Bar (54:07)

Bar owner : Sorry folks but the table is all full.

Sunshine : What are you talking about? There are empty table everywhere!

Bar owner : My business, my rules!

*(Remember The Titans, 54:10)*

The evidence above shows that the bar only serves White people. The bar owner also talks to the White student only and ignores the two Black students that come with Sunshine, he do not even bother to look at the Black students at all as if they did not even exist. The bar is not full and there are still empty tables available but the owner said it is full just because he did not want to serve Black people.

Another example that the writer find is during the semi-final state championship where the opponent team bribes the referee with a word of hate towards Black people.



Picture 19: Unfair Match  
(01:18:14)



Picture 20: Unfair Match  
(01:18:16)



Picture 21: Unfair Match  
(01:18:20)

Herman Boone : Hey ref! That is clearly a foul!.

Referee : I don't see any foul coach, hold your horses and sit back.

*(Remember The Titans, 01:18:25)*

The evidence above shows that the whole game between TC. Williams High School against Andrew Lewis High School is an unfair match. Andrew Lewis High School's player tries to cripple TC. Williams Black players by attacking their legs to incapacitate them. During 01:16:02 of the movie, Andrew Lewis player clearly kicks one of the TC. Williams Black student and that should be a foul because it is so obvious that he kicks the left leg and not even bother to take the ball from him. However, the referee said it is not a foul and the game must continue.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the writer finds that discrimination in the movie exists because White people still think Black people as an inferior race due to their dark history as slaves in America. It is related to Wason and Johnson-Laird's theory about discrimination stating that people will always look down upon to feel superior.

The writer also finds different impacts to the victims based on the type of discrimination. Firstly direct verbal discrimination where the victim in the movie responds it by ignores their words. To them their intention is clear enough, for example when people call them animals. It did not leave a significant impact on the victim because to them it is just another normal day to be called animals and ignores it. The next one is direct non-verbal discrimination. One of the evidence above shows that the victim feels insecure because a person he did not know at all looks at him as if he is a threat to them with no clear reason. He did not have any bad intention nor any means to harm others but why do people look at him as if he wants to do bad things to them? This makes the victim confuse because he did not do anything and the only reason why people look at him like that because he is Black.

Finally the writer finds that indirect discrimination is very discreet, it does not attack the victim directly but it has the worse impact among other types of discrimination. One of the evidence above shows that a bar owner refuses to serve Black people. A bar is a place where you can buy their service as long as you pay

for it. But this one particular bar refuses to serve Black people just because of who they are. The bar owner even refuses to look at the Black people as if they did not even exist in his eyes. It breaks the victim's heart because he is just another human who wants to enjoy a night at the bar but due to his racial background, he cannot enjoy it and makes them feel more insecure just because of his racial background.

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