

**RACIAL STEREOTYPES THROUGH CHARACTERS' RESPONSES TO
RACISM IN *DEAR MARTIN* (2017) BY NIC STONE**

THESIS

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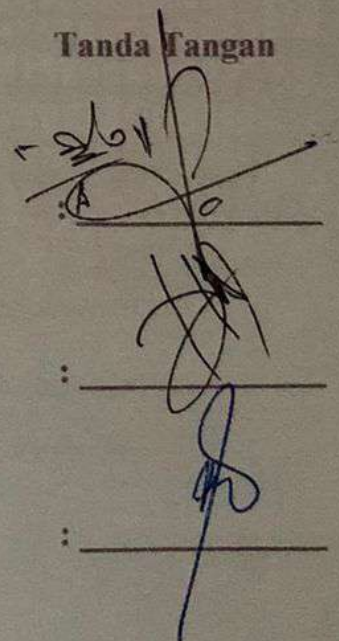
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ABSTRACT

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This research is an analysis of the novel by Nic Stone entitled *Dear Martin* (2017). The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of racial stereotypes on the response of characters in the novel. The characters in question are characters of white people and black people from teen to adult. This study used racial stereotype theory to analyze the novel. The data are taken from words, phrases, sentences, and quotations in the novel. The method used in this research is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach to gain a deep understanding, theory development, description of reality and social complexity. The results showed that racial stereotypes have an influence on the response of the characters in them.

Keywords: *racism, racial stereotypes*

ABSTRAK

Amelia, Linda. 2022. Racial Stereotypes Through Characters' Responses to Racism in *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone. Padang: English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang.

Pembimbing: Dr.Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

Penelitian ini merupakan analisis terhadap novel karya Nic Stone yang berjudul *Dear Martin* (2017). Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh stereotip rasial terhadap respon tokoh dalam novel. Karakter yang dimaksud adalah karakter orang kulit putih dan orang kulit hitam mulai dari remaja hingga dewasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori stereotip rasial untuk menganalisis novel tersebut. Data diambil dari kata, frasa, kalimat, dan kutipan dalam novel. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif analisis dengan pendekatan kualitatif untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam, pengembangan teori, deskripsi realitas dan kompleksitas sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stereotip rasial memiliki pengaruh terhadap respon karakter di dalamnya.

Kata kunci: *rasisme, stereotip rasial*

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The researcher realizes that the process of making this thesis still many mistakes. Therefore, the researcher asks for constructive suggestion and critic for this thesis and hopes this thesis will be gudance for some literary study.

Padang, Agustus 2022

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

America is a superpower country that upholds liberalism which is also one of the countries with a high level of racism. Even though America is a multicultural country, racism is a real situation that still happens and is considered normal. Racism can be said to be a belief or doctrine that biological differences or physical characteristics inherent in the human race or a group determine cultural or individual achievement—that one race is superior and has the right to dominate other races. Some authors use the term racism to refer to preferences for certain ethnic groups themselves (ethnocentrism), fear of strangers (xenophobia), rejection of racial relationships (miscegenation), and generalizations to certain groups of people (stereotypes).

Alo Liliweri (2005) claims that racism is an ideology based on discrimination against a person or group of people because their race has even become a political doctrine. While in Alleyne's book (2006) entitled 'Race and Racism (2006:1)' said that racism is the belief that humans are grouped into races and then added the belief that these races have different intrinsic values. Conditions that can cause racism in society also occur due to government policy decisions, culture and customs, economic inequality, facilities and infrastructure gaps, institutionalization of equality in every race that are interrelated with each other, and excessive love that causes jealousy in time, place and situations anywhere.

According to Harell (2000) and Jones (1972, 1999), there are many forms of racism that can occur, and they can occur at individual, community, and institutional levels. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission states that racism is an ideology that contributes to mythical statements regarding other racial and ethnic groups that demean that group or community. Meanwhile, C. Cox (2000) said that racism is an event, a situation that assesses various actions and values in a group based on its cultural perspective which views all social values of other societies outside themselves as wrong and unacceptable. It can be said in general that racism as an attack on attitudes, tendencies, statements, and actions that favor or are hostile to community groups, especially because of racial identity. Racism can be said to be the belief or doctrine that biological differences or inherent physical characteristics of a human race or a group determine cultural or individual achievement—that one race is superior and has the right to dominate other races. Racists judge a person or group of people based on their racial type. In other words also this is a hatred towards a person or group just because of their skin color, language, dialect, title, and place of birth or other factors regarding their nature. This has even become a stereotype held by people who reject or dislike a certain group of people.

There are several racist indicators based on critical race theory. The first is institutional racism refers to institutions that intentionally harm or benefit one party on the basis of skin color. Institutional racism refers more to the realm of law or certain institutions. Institutional racism exists in political, economic, or legal institutions and systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate discrimination

on the basis of race. This leads to inequalities in wealth, income, education, civil rights and others. Interpersonal racism is racism between individuals. Within decades, interpersonal racism was open. People are no longer afraid of racist acts against other people. This is actually something that is not tolerated, but is considered normal by society. They tend to belittle, have bad stereotypes and discriminate against other people of different races. Meanwhile, Internalized Racism is racism towards one's own condition, one's own race, one's own ethnicity and so on. This racism occurs when the person feels insecure and starts blaming their own race, ethnicity, background.

This racist treatment can be categorized into Inhuman or degrading treatment. Under international human rights law, inhuman or degrading treatment is the treatment of a person that violates their dignity, but this treatment still does not constitute torture. It is forbidden by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment is also contained in the constitutions of many countries, such as the South African Constitution and the Brazilian Constitution. The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines degrading treatment as undignified and humiliating treatment. Whether that act is considered degrading is dependent on several factors, including the duration of the treatment; physical and mental effects on the victim; and the victim's age, race, sex, and vulnerabilities.

Racism is a real situation that still happens frequently. In most cases of racism in America, the acts of racism on black people is something that has happened for a long time and continues to this day. Black people is a term used in certain countries, often socially based on a racial or ethnicity classification system to describe people who are black in comparison to the rest of the population. Therefore, the meaning varies widely within and between communities, and depends on the context. Black people are a classification of people based on race, usually categories based on politics and skin color for a given population with dark to middle brown skin. Not everyone who is considered "black" has dark skin; in certain countries, often in the Western world's socially based racial classification systems, the term "black" is used to describe people who are considered dark skinned compared to the rest of the population. It is mostly used for people of Sub-Saharan African descent and Oceanian indigenous peoples. According to social norms in the USA and Canada, a person racialized as Black (which includes the subcategories African American, Black American, and Black Canadian) may originate from any country. Persons racialized as Black typically share darker skin shades, however they may have any shade of skin. Black here refers to "racial grouping" which in the US, is defined by government census, and is not the same as ethnic group and not synonymous with biological relatedness. Black is a social category and a person racialized as Black in one country may not be considered Black at all in a different country.

In America, white people are the main perpetrators of racist acts committed against black people. White is a racialized classification of people and a skin color

specifier, generally used for people of European origin; although the definition can vary depending on context, nationality, and point of view. In the United States, this term has at times been expanded to encompass persons of Mexican, South Asian, West Asian, East Asian, and North African (persons who are often considered "non-White" in other contexts in the United States). In the United States, it has also been alleged that Jews and people of Southern European or Irish descent have been excluded from this category, although this idea has been contested. White Americans are Americans who identify as and are perceived to be white people. This group constitutes the majority of the people in the United States. European Americans are the largest panethnic group of white Americans and have constituted the majority population of the United States since the nation's founding. The United States Census Bureau uses a particular definition of "white" that differs from some colloquial uses of the term. The Bureau defines "White" people to be those "having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa." Within official Census definitions, people of all racial categories may be further divided into those who identify as "not Hispanic or Latino" and those who do identify as "Hispanic or Latino". The term "non-Hispanic white," rather than just "white," may be the census group corresponding most closely to those persons who identify as and are perceived to be white in common usage; similarly not all Hispanic/Latino people identify as "white," "black," or any other listed racial category.

White Americans usually refer to black people as "African-American" to classify their race. This term occurs naturally due to the long history that has

occurred between them. The timeline of racism in America begins in 1619. This period is known as “America's Chat Slavery” which lasted for 246 years. Merritt in "The Triangular Trade" said that the continent of North America was successfully explored by France and Great Britain as a form of territorial expansion and was triggered by a sense of not wanting to be outdone by Spain and Portugal who had explored South America. The French ambition to dominate North America at that time was pushed back because it was unable to compete with the glory of Great Britain, until finally it led to a dispute between Great Britain and the Native Americans in pursuit of American Independence. After going through various feuds, Britain and the United States established mutualistic relations such as the United States being present as a supplier of weapons to Europe during World War I and the various trade cooperation they carried out, including the slave trade. At that time, both the United States and Europe both saw Africa as a developing region that had the potential for cheap labor. Seeing this opportunity, Europe moved to carry out trade diplomacy through West Africa and reached an agreement that Africa would supply labor, while Europe and the United States would supply the goods and services Africa needed in return. The agreement did not harm the United States and Europe at all, in fact they saw this opportunity to get workers at low costs.

Africans from West Africa were sold to European slave traders and transported across the Atlantic to the Thirteen Colonies. After arriving in America, they were sold as slaves to European colonists and put to work on plantations, especially in the southern colonies. This economic orientation was

colored with political goals, starting with the construction of ports on the west coast of Africa, because these ports functioned to facilitate trade between the three parties as well as become a sign of European foothold in Africa. With the opening of the entrance to Africa, the possibility of Europe and the United States conducting diplomacy aimed at bringing down Africa is slowly increasing. Some were able to achieve freedom through liberation or escape and establish independent communities before and during the American Revolution. After the United States was founded in 1783, most blacks continued to be enslaved, most concentrated in South America, with four million slaves only freed during and at the end of the Civil War in 1865. During Reconstruction, they gained citizenship and the right to vote; because of the pervasive policies and ideology of white supremacists, they were largely treated as second-class citizens and soon found themselves disenfranchised in the South. This situation changed because of participation in the military conflicts of the United States, massive migration from the South, the abolition of legal racial segregation and the civil rights movement seeking political and social liberties.

Kendall (2012) in "White Superiority" explains that there is a tendency for the superiority of white groups to allow them to carry out policies that bring down Africa, especially white groups who consider themselves as "masters" for black groups who work as laborers on their land. The reasons they enslaved Africans were: (1) Black people came from a distant continent and could not easily escape or be saved; (2) skin color made black people distinguishable from whites and thus easily separated as slaves; and (3) Europeans used biblical texts to support

black slavery. Status as immigrants and slaves with low wages for hundreds of years made black people often viewed as human or a low group to the point of being discriminated against based on their race. This view is called a stereotype. In the research of this novel, the stereotype in question is racial stereotypes with means view or judgment of white people towards black people. They will compare races with each other according to their preconceived notions and stereotypes, and then claim that theirs is the best.

In Longman Exams Dictionary (2006), racial is relating to the relationships between different races of people who now live in the same country or area. Robbins and Judge (2010) in the book Organizational Behavior state that when we judge someone based on our perception of the group to which he/she belongs, we use a shortcut called a stereotype. Meanwhile, Cardwell (1999) in the Dictionary of Psychologists says stereotypes are general beliefs about certain categories of people. Most white people have the belief that the black group is not part of the group so that there is racist treatment of black people, both towards teenagers and adults. For some individuals, communities, and other countries, "black person" is also considered a derogatory or other derogatory label, and as a result is used to mean it. Some people regard "black" as a derogatory, outdated, reductive, or unrepresentative label, and consequently do not use or define it, especially in African countries with little or no history of colonial racial segregation. The racist treatment that appears can come from anywhere such as schools, workplaces, public places and especially where the victim's environment is located. Because of this, various struggles emerged in the name of the emancipation of black groups to

fight discrimination in society. Simply put, to escape the existing stigma, black groups must develop their potential to be balanced with white groups. Not all opportunities are given equally to black groups because of the socially applicable white privileges, as if there were restrictions on black groups to develop their potential, especially in the economic field.

1.2 *Dear Martin*

Racial stereotypes are one of the themes that are often indirectly introduced and discussed in a literary work. *Dear Martin* is Nic Stone's first novel published in 2017 that carries the theme of racism. The protagonist in the novel is a black teenager named Justyce McAllister (Jus) from Atlanta who gets racist actions from several white characters and some black characters in it. These racist acts can be in the form of distrust, making fun of, insulting and even killing someone. This novel shows how the characters in it have racial stereotypes that actually affect the actions they make and the responses they make when they see racist acts. The racial stereotype believed by the white characters in *Dear Martin* (2017) is that they believe that the black race is a race that is unequal or no better than white people. Some of the black characters in this novel also agree with this stereotype and believe that no matter what they do, the dominant white race will always be in control. The racial behavior in this novel creates divisions between humans and certain groups in it, and also has an effect that makes the mental characters of black people down.

Dear Martin (2017) is a novel written based on a true story and represents racism that is still common in life. Racism not only causes chaos or physical

suffering for people who are victims of racism, but can cause mental trauma and can affect victims psychologically. Racism will never disappear from life as long as there are still many people who do not try to eliminate stereotypes about the black race that are not necessarily true. This issue is important to discuss because it will help people to understand what racism is and how the long history of stereotyping the black race until they are discriminated against.

1.3 Focus of the Problem

The focus of the problem that arises from this novel is the act of racism that occurs to the main character in the novel, namely Jus (and several people of the same race) where Jus also tries hard to achieve the highest position or honor so that people don't underestimate him just because of his race. This study also focus on how racial stereotypes influence the responses of the characters in this novel, especially the responses of black people, white people, teenagers and older.

1.4 Research Questions

The focus of the problem in this literary work raises several problem formulations to be discussed, such as:

1. How do white and black characters in the novel *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone responding to racism?
2. What are the differences between teenager and older charaters in the novel *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone responding to racism?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand how racial stereotypes affect white characters and black characters in *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone responding to racism in

the novel. In addition, this study also aims to see how the differences between teenager and older characters in *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone responding to racism.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study discusses the issue of racism and how racial stereotypes affect the responses of characters in the novel *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone. This study aims to understand the influence of racial stereotypes in existing social conditions. This study reveals what racism is and the influence of racial stereotypes in the novel through understanding the theory and concept itself. To support this research, the researcher uses the theory of racial stereotypes to explore how racist stereotypes affect the responses of the characters in *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone.

