

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**BETWEEN PASSION AND HERITAGE: THE PRACTICE OF SYSTEMIC
RACISM TOWARDS AFRICAN AMERICAN IN *MA RAINEY'S BLACK
BOTTOM* (2020) MOVIE**



By

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SURABAYA**

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Sarjana Degree
of English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Airlangga**

By

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2022

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I declare that this undergraduate thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Sarjana Humaniora (S.Hum) of the English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Airlangga is entirely my own work and has been solely the result of my own original research. Hereby, I confirm that:

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Surabaya 11.11.2022

Chandra Devana
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I dedicate this thesis to Allah SWT, my beloved family, and dearest friends.
Without their company and support, I would not be able to become the person I
am today.

APPROVAL SHEET

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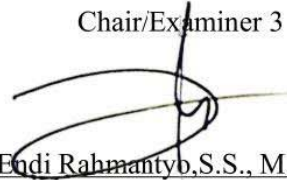
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“Because time is cruel to all, and crueler still to artists. Because visions weakens, and voices wither, and talent fades. Because happiness is brief, and history is lasting, and in the end everyone wants to be remembered”

— V.E Schwab, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUTSIDE COVER PAGE	i
INSIDE COVER PAGE	i
DEGREE REQUIREMENT	iii
DECLARATION PAGE.....	iv
DEDICATION PAGE.....	v
APPROVAL SHEET	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
EPIGRAPH.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	xii
ABSTRACT	xiii
ABSTRAK	xiv
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	9
1.3 Objectives of the study	9
1.4 Significance of the Study	9
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Theoretical Framework	11
2.1.1 Racism.....	11
2.1.2 Systemic Racism.....	14
2.2 Review of Related Studies	20
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	24
3.1. Research Approach	24
3.2. Data Sources.....	25
3.3. Scope and Limitation	25
3.4. Technique of Data Collection	26
3.5. Technique of Data Analysis	26

3.5.1. Narrative and Non-Narrative Aspects	27
CHAPTER IV RESULT AND DISCUSSION.....	28
4.1 The Movie and Its Context.....	28
4.2 The Practice of Systemic Racism.....	31
4.2.1 The White Racial Frame and Its Imbedded Racist Ideology	31
4.2.2 Alienated Social Relations.....	33
4.2.3 Constant Struggle and Resistance.....	37
4.2.4 Racial Hierarchy with Divergent Group Interest	41
4.2.5 Discrimination in All Aspects.....	43
4.2.6 Whites' Unjust Enrichment.....	44
4.2.7 White Economic Domination	46
4.3 African American's Response to Systemic Racism Practiced.....	51
4.3.1 Ma Rainey.....	51
4.3.2 Cutler.....	52
4.3.3 Toledo and Slow Drag	53
4.3.4 Levee.....	55
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES.....	60

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Six key features of systemic racism (Feagin 2006)	15
Figure 2 Ma Rainey being accused of assault and battery	32
Figure 3 Irvin giving money to police officer	33
Figure 4 Dark path of woods.....	34
Figure 5 Path leads to Ma Rainey's tent concert.....	34
Figure 6 Band crew going downstairs.....	35
Figure 7 Waiting room condition	35
Figure 8 Small window seen in the basement waiting room	36
Figure 9 Ma's struggle as an African American singer.....	37
Figure 10 Ma's clothing as a form of resistance.....	38
Figure 11 Ma's clothing as a form of resistance.....	38
Figure 12 Ma's clothing as a form of resistance.....	38
Figure 13 Toledo explaining African American's fate	40
Figure 14 Levee showing his new songs to Sturdyvant.....	41
Figure 15 Levee's pain and trauma	43
Figure 16 Sturdyvant and Levee's business transaction.....	44
Figure 17 Sturdyvant and Levee's business transaction.....	44
Figure 18 Ma Refusing Levee's version of the Black Bottom song.....	46
Figure 19 Ma's feelings towards the Blues music	48
Figure 20 White men singing Levee's song	50
Figure 21 Ma's tired expression	51
Figure 22 Cutler's response towards systemic racism.....	52
Figure 23 Toledo's stew analogy.....	53
Figure 24 Levee's story about his father's revenge	55
Figure 25 Levee's new shoes.....	56
Figure 26 Levee stabbed Toledo	56

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how systemic racism towards African-American is practiced in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (2020) movie and how African-American respond to the racism they received. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* depicts racial based discrimination in Chicago 1920s where African Americans used music such as blues to get away from the cruel environment. However, the form of discrimination done by white Americans evolved to exploitation of African American culture, namely blues music. Thus, this study discusses the systemic racism African Americans have to go through in music industry. The data for this study is obtain by using narrative and non-narrative approach along with the six key features of systemic racism theory proposed by Joe R. Feagin to examine the data found. The result reveals that systemic racism occurs due to the power disparity between African Americans and white Americans. Even though blues music is known to be born from African American community, it does not stop white Americans from turning it into commodification and use it to their liking. Furthermore, there's a difference respond towards systemic racism practiced between the old and the young generation of African American.

Keywords: *African-American, Systemic Racism, White Economic Domination.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana rasisme sistemik terhadap orang Afrika-Amerika terjadi di dalam film *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (2020) dan bagaimana orang Afrika Amerika menanggapi rasisme yang mereka hadapi. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* merupakan film yang menggambarkan diskriminasi berbasis rasial pada tahun 1920 di Chicago di mana orang Afrika-Amerika menggunakan musik seperti *blues* untuk bertahan dalam lingkungan yang kejam terhadap mereka. Akan tetapi, bentuk diskriminasi yang dilakukan oleh orang kulit putih berkembang menjadi eksploitasi budaya orang Afrika-Amerika, yaitu musik *blues*. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini membahas rasisme sistemik yang dilalui oleh orang Afrika-Amerika di industri musik. Data untuk penelitian ini diperoleh dengan menggunakan metode naratif dan non naratif beserta dengan enam elemen utama dari teori rasisme sistemik oleh Joe R. Feagin yang digunakan untuk meneliti data yang ditemukan. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa rasisme sistemik terjadi karena adanya kesenjangan kekuasaan antara orang Afrika-Amerika dan kulit putih. Meskipun musik *blues* dikenal lahir dari lingkungan Afrika-Amerika, hal ini tidak menghentikan orang kulit putih untuk menjadikan musik tersebut sebagai komodifikasi dan menggunakannya sesuai keinginan mereka. Selain dari itu, terdapat perbedaan respon terhadap rasisme sistemik yang dialami oleh generasi tua dan generasi muda Afrika Amerika.

Kata Kunci: *Afrika Amerikan, Rasisme Sistemik, Dominasi Ekonomi Kulit Putih.*