

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the study

In every corner of the world lives different groups of people each with their own unique customs and culture that has developed for hundreds or even thousands of years in those specific region or area that people lived in. Interactions between each different races and group of people with varying cultures become more common. United States of America is one of the best examples of this case. It is widely known that the country is built around the idea of immigration where people from different backgrounds of nations and races working together. United States of America becomes the very boiling point of interracial interplay. Racism tends to rise even in the smallest slightest disagreements because of interactions between different multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

Racism in the United States of America is the price of slavery that happens hundreds of years ago and transforms into what we widely see as racism in this day and age.

“The development of racism in America perfectly exemplifies that multiple causation which historians constantly observe. The factor of dark color, associated with night, dirt, evil, ignorance and so forth, easily reinforced the binary tendency to assume superiority of one's own culture and language, to say nothing of religion.” (Powell, 16)

Racism is the idea that there is a direct correspondence between a group's values, behavior and attitudes, and its physical features (Kuper, 843). It is appropriate to recognize that racism has various forms. Racism as we know it comes in wide range of seriousness or, severity. Racism would be able to be identified from what seems to be something as simple as an insult directed towards a particular person or a group of people where either from appearance wise or background culture's different from those who insulted them. In this case, the impact of such conduct which may still fall under racism, might considerably be less damaging compared to another oppressive attitudes which we are able to still witness to this day.

“Indeed, if the assertion of such a relationship were the only defining aspect of racism, its impact might be less damaging, though no less unacceptable. Instead, a more pernicious feature of racism entails the belief that some groups, those of a certain hue, with less power and low status, are inferior; others, of another hue, with greater power and high status, are deemed superior.” (Kuper, 844)

There are many kinds of racism. Out of the varying different types, racial stereotype and prejudice are arguably two of the most prevalent in daily lives. Although the terms often see its usage interchangeably and the definitions of the two terms may overlap, evidently racial stereotype and racial prejudice are different. Dovidio writes that stereotype can be easily recognized when a member of certain groups of people where they are linked with the stereotypes of their people is immediately seen to be generally similar in characteristics and attitudes

beyond their direct surface qualities or their actual personality. Such information would be used by those who believes in the stereotype to generate expectations and anticipates behavior for possible new situations or even confrontations (Dovidio, 7).

Discussing racial prejudice would not be complete without knowing what it is. Checking the fourth edition of the American Heritage College Dictionary, there are multiple definitions of racial prejudice written there. One of the written definition that the dictionary provides of said term is “an adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts”. The definition indubitably applies precisely in modern times. Typically arises from race based stereotypes, racial prejudice is more than often viewed as the results of individual bias, tendencies, and experiences. Other than that it is also likely that racial prejudice comes out of relations or past incidents between two individuals that belongs to different groups of people (Quillian, 586). It does show that there are indeed reasons behind one’s acts of hostility towards different groups of people and they are mostly personal as the aftermath of past incidents.

“Prejudice is a defensive reaction against explicit or (usually) implicit challenges to the dominant group's exclusive claim to privileges. This is not to say that all members of the dominant group respond to a challenge with prejudice. Members of the dominant group do share a sense of group membership and of their group's position relative to the subordinate group. The greater the sense of threat to their prerogatives, the more likely are

members of the dominant group to express prejudice against threatening outsiders.” (Quillian, 588)

Immoral values of racism, stereotype and prejudice are quite prevalent in the modern time specially in the United States of America that acts as world's number one immigrants destination which subsequently makes the country highly diverse ethnically, socially, and culturally diverse. In spite of certain people's tendencies to argue that acts of racism are mostly done by the group of majority, it is evident that every group of people do take parts in racial acts and it is done interchangeably. Such process is demonstrated in Paul Haggis's *Crash*.

*Crash* is a film that was released in 2004 and directed by Paul Haggis. This film features racial and social tensions in the USA. Presenting wide range of characters from various racial backgrounds from Asian, Middle-Eastern, and Latino, the film illustrate the harsh truth of systemic racism that happens in the country. While other films might only offer racial tensions between Caucasian-American and African-Americans, *Crash* gives distinctive perspective by adding more representation of different groups of people that better reflects the real life condition in America where every single individual member of certain groups could be on both ends of either racism, stereotype or prejudice acts that happens in daily life.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

The discussion on this study will be presented in the following problem:

1. How is racial discrimination experienced by various characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis?
2. How is racial prejudice experienced by the characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis?
3. How is racial stereotype experienced by the characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis?

## **C. Limitation of the Study**

This study will discuss about the racial discrimination that are experienced by various characters in the film *Crash* by Paul Haggis. The main concern that would be addressed is the depiction of racial discrimination. This study will also analyze the depiction of racial prejudice and racial stereotype experienced by the characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis.

## **D. Objectives of the Study**

From the problem formulation above, this study will be presented in the following objectives:

1. To describe the racial discrimination experienced by various characters of different racial background as depicted in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis.
2. To identify the racial prejudice experienced by some of the characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis.

3. To identify the racial stereotype experienced by some of the characters in the movie *Crash* by Paul Haggis.

#### **E. Significance of the Study**

1. This study hopefully can help the reader to understand the theory of racism.
2. This study hopefully can be used as reference for literature students regarding the study of theory of racism

#### **F. Organization of the Study**

In order to represent clear description about the study to the reader, this study represents a systematic organization as follows:

Chapter I is the introduction that contains of background of the study, problem formulation, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter II talks about synopsis and related theories. It contains of synopsis of the movie, and related theories including of racism, racial stereotype and racial prejudice.

Chapter III discusses about method of investigation which consists of types of research, data organizing, data collecting method, types of the data, and analyzing the data.

Chapter IV talks about the findings and discussions from the analyzed movie, *Crash* by Paul Haggis.

Chapter V talks about the conclusion of this study.

