

Racial Discrimination Reflected in Series Drama *Tennou No Ryouriban* (The Emperor's Cook)

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Abstract

This paper discusses the discrimination that occurred in the life of Asian immigrants. Yellow Peril phenomenon occurred in 1882 in Europe and America, which resulted in racial discrimination toward immigrants from China and Japan. In this study, the author used the data source from a series drama entitled *Tenno No Ryouriban*. This series drama showed two immigrants from Japan named Tokuzo Akiyama and Shintaro Matsui who migrated to France. In their daily life, Tokuzo and Shintaro would frequently receive discrimination from white people. This study used the literal sociology approach suggested by Wellek & Warren and Dovidio discrimination theory. To obtain a description regarding discrimination, the author would analyze data in scene and dialogue excerpts taken from *Tenno No Ryouriban*. Furthermore, there was also support theory *Mise-En-Scene* to explain why a scene was shown in a particular manner by the film director. This study showed several scenes and dialogues excerpt that described discrimination in various forms, such as Explicit Discrimination & Implicit Discrimination, and Institutional Discrimination & Cultural Discrimination. The author found the cause of discrimination described in the series drama *Tenno No Ryouriban*, which related to race differences such as differences in skin color, the nation of origin and body height.

Keywords: Discrimination, drama series, literature sociology, yellow peril

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang diskriminasi yang terjadi dalam kehidupan imigran Asia. Fenomena Yellow Peril terjadi pada tahun 1882 di Eropa dan Amerika, yang mengakibatkan diskriminasi rasial terhadap pendatang dari

China dan Jepang. Dalam penelitian ini penulis menggunakan sumber data dari serial drama yang berjudul *Tenno No Ryouriban*. Serial drama ini menampilkan dua orang pendatang dari Jepang bernama Tokuzo Akiyama dan Shintaro Matsui yang merantau ke Prancis. Dalam kesehariannya, Tokuzo dan Shintaro kerap menerima diskriminasi dari orang kulit putih. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi literal yang dikemukakan oleh teori diskriminasi Wellek & Warren dan Dovidio. Untuk mendapatkan gambaran mengenai diskriminasi, penulis akan menganalisis data adegan dan cuplikan dialog yang diambil dari *Tenno No Ryouriban*. Selain itu, ada pula teori pendukung *Mise-En-Scene* untuk menjelaskan mengapa suatu adegan diperlihatkan secara khusus oleh sutradara film. Studi ini menunjukkan beberapa adegan dan kutipan dialog yang menggambarkan diskriminasi dalam berbagai bentuk, seperti Diskriminasi Eksplisit & Diskriminasi Implisit, dan Diskriminasi Kelembagaan & Diskriminasi Budaya. Penulis menemukan penyebab diskriminasi yang dijelaskan dalam serial drama *Tenno No Ryouriban* yang berkaitan dengan perbedaan ras seperti perbedaan warna kulit, bangsa asal dan tinggi badan.

Kata kunci: *Diskriminasi, serial drama, sosiologi sastra, bahaya kuning*

INTRODUCTION

Discrimination and prejudice have been a widespread issue in human history. Issues related to discrimination itself have spread to many parts of the world. Discrimination can arise because of the history of a society or nation in the past. Bringham (in Kuncoro, 2007: 11) states that discrimination is a different treatment because of membership in a particular ethnic group. The statement is in line with Fulthoni et al. (2009: 6), explaining that discrimination is an act of

mistreating others only because they come from particular social groups.

Discrimination is a form of action conducted by a group of people who have an enormous influence in the community where it can affect the social conditions. Furthermore, Fulthoni et al. (2009: 9) depicts various types of discrimination:

1. Discrimination based on ethnicity; race, belief and religion
2. Discrimination based on sex and gender

3. Discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS
4. Discrimination because of social caste

Before discussing racial discrimination, the definition and racial division are acknowledged. Feagin (1993: 20) defines race as a group of different people from other groups based on physical characteristics. Meanwhile, Liliweri (2005: 18) explains that race is a group of people characterized by physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair and height. De Gobineau (in Giddens, 2001: 245) classifies three racial divisions: white (Caucasian), black (Negroid) and yellow (Mongoloid). Also, O'Neil (in Liliweri, 2005: 25) categorizes Europeans and Americans as Caucasians, Africans as Negro race while Asians from East, Southeast Asia and Indian land as Mongoloid race. Of the many things that underlie a practice of discrimination, racial differences are among the most discussed topics. The practice of racial discrimination itself is a practice of discrimination that has existed for a long time and is difficult to eradicate.

One form of racial discrimination is the yellow peril appearance that occurred in Europe and America around 1882. This phenomenon

arises because many immigrants from China and Japan came to the mainland of Europe and America. Two factors trigger the arrival of immigrants:

1. The discovery of a gold mine in America,
2. The construction of a railway that required many labors

In 1914, yellow peril had become a frightening phenomenon among Europe and America because it impacted lifestyle changes. French (2015: 15) states that immigrants from the Asian Continent could lead to lifestyle changes and homogeneity of the white nation. This anxiety grew because of the negative issues surrounding Asian immigrants, such as opium use and large-scale gambling.

One example of racial discrimination practices is *Tenno no Ryouriban* by director Yuichiro Hirakawadan Shingo Okamoto that launched on April 26, 2015, to July 12, 2015. The drama *Tenno no Ryouriban* tells the story of a character named Tokuzo Akiyama. Tokuzo is a chef of the Japanese Empire from the *Taisho* era to the *Showa* era. Before becoming a Japanese imperial chef, Tokuzo learned about Western cuisine in Paris, France.

In the *Tenno no Ryouriban* drama series, there are various forms of discriminatory practices in Europe. In this series, the characters Akiyama Tokuzo and Shintaro Matsui represent this practice. Therefore, the various forms of discrimination portrayed in the *Tenno no Ryouriban* drama series can be analyzed using the literary sociology theory Wellek & Warren (1997) and the discrimination theory proposed by Dovidio (2001). The theory explains Explicit and Implicit Discrimination and Institutional and Cultural Discrimination (discrimination in institutions and discrimination due to cultural differences). Both discriminations are related to formal regulation in an institution based on different ideologies, cultural history, and normative behavior.

According to the background discussed, the study's research problem is how racial discrimination against Akiyama Tokuzo and Shintaro is reflected in *Tenno No Ryouriban* (*The Emperor's Cook*).

This study aims to describe the forms of racial discrimination committed by white Europeans against Japanese people represented by Akiyama Tokuzo and Shintaro Matsui's drama series *Tenno No Ryouriban*. The study's result is

suggested as an additional reference study of literary sociology theory by Wellek and Warren to prove that literary works reflect social problems. According to the study results, the theory of discrimination by Dovidio can explain the acts of discrimination found in the *Tenno No Ryouriban* drama series.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sociology of Literature

Literature is the result of human culture, which appears through the language system as the language itself is an element of culture. Kurniawan (2012: 3) explains that literature is the result of the creation of "thought" and "taste" in the form of artifacts, which are generally the embodiment of culture. Cultural manifestations in the form of value systems, thought systems and action systems exist in literature.

One matter that cannot be separated is that literature is a cultural artifact described as humans' thoughts and feelings as to social beings. Literature has a distinctive relationship with the social and cultural system based on the author's life. Therefore, literature is always alive and lived by the community and society as objects of sociology. Studies confirm the relationship between

kinds of literature as a scientific discipline with sociology as another scientific discipline. The following explanation will discuss the notion of sociology as a field of science.

Abercrombie (in Kurniawan, 2012: 5) argues that sociology analyzes the structure of social relations formed through social interaction. Therefore, sociology is the study of society that expresses human behavior in groups with all existing activities. Sociology and literature have the same object of study, which is society. Sociology discusses society in real life, whereas literature studies society created by the author's imagination. Sociology is useful to understand the social phenomena in the literature, both the people depicted in literary works or readers with current conditions reflected in society.

By looking at the relationship between sociology and literature, Wellek and Warren (1977: 100) portrays three classifications (paradigms) in literary sociology:

1. Sociology of the author; the problems related here are the basic economy of literary production, social background, the author's status, and the author's ideology as seen from author activities outside of literary works.
2. Sociology of literary works; the second sociological analysis departs from literary works; the contents of the literary work, the objectives and implicit things in literary work itself related to social issues.
3. Sociology of the reader includes problems of readers and the social impact of literary works. This study leads to the sociology of readers.

The sociology paradigm includes the author's approach, literary works, and readers as a community from the sociology paradigm description. In conducting this research, the researcher will utilize the second point of the sociology paradigm, the sociology of literary works. The sociological approach of this literary work studies literature as a document as a social portrait in society. Wellek & Warren (1997: 122) explain that literature can record the characteristics of the era. Through the sociology of literary works, the writer will address society's problems in the *Tenno no Ryouriban* drama series. In this study, the paradigm that will be utilized is the sociology of literary works. In this case, the object of research is racial discrimination.

Discrimination

The term between racial discrimination and discriminatory treatment is often used interchangeably. Theodorson & Theodorson (Fulthoni, 2009: 3) explains discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals or groups, and it is usually categorical. The difference between the two is that prejudice is a belief, while discrimination is an action. Fulthoni (2009: 5) says that discrimination occurs when the belief in prejudice has turned into action. According to Fulthoni (2009: 5), discrimination is often based on incomprehension in “their” groups. From the lack of understanding, *in-groups* often generalize about “them”. It is this discrimination between *in-group* and *out-group* that can later lead to the emergence of racial discrimination. Jones (in Kuncoro, 2008: 12) explains that discrimination based on racial differences is an action of differentiating aspects of a culture accepted by many people who encourage competition, power differences and judgemental treatment of other group members.

Forms of Discrimination

Dovidio (2001: 10) categorizes discrimination into two forms:

1. Explicit and Implicit Discrimination (clear and subtle discrimination)
2. Institutional and Cultural Discrimination (discrimination within an institution and discrimination caused by cultural differences)

Faizo (in Dovidio, 2001: 10) explains that discrimination is two different attitudes, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicit discrimination is an action that is performed consciously, while implicit discrimination is an unconscious response that has to categorize people as out-group. According to Dovidio (2001), Institutional and Cultural Discrimination is related to formal regulation and policy in an institution based on different ideologies, cultural history and normative ways of behaving.

In this study, the author utilizes the theory of discrimination, according to Dovidio (2001). Racial discrimination often resulted from a perspective about differences in physical characteristics. Different treatment and competition between *in-group* and *out-group* are often used as a source of discrimination problems. By looking at the understanding of racial discrimination that experts have elaborated, racial discrimination can be interpreted as any form of

discrimination, restriction, and blamed based on racial differences. This difference in treatment can be manifested individually or through official social structures and institutions.

The following will explain the types of discrimination, according to Dovidio (2001).

Explicit and Implicit Discrimination

Allport (in Blank & Dabady, 2004: 56) suggests some actions that lead individuals to wrong action on other racial members. These actions are verbal antagonism (verbal antagonism), avoidance, interpersonal discrimination, physical attack, and extermination (murder).

Verbal antagonism (verbal abuse) includes insults and comments that underestimate other races regardless of whether or not there are targets of hostility. Dovidio (2001: 10) mentions that verbal abuse and subsequent non-verbal rejection indicate actual discrimination. Avoidance can be a continuity action in which members of the in-group feel comfortable with the group and create tension in the in-group members. The in-group will close themselves from other groups. In social life, in-group

groups tend to choose whether to socialize with other groups or not. As a result, many in-group group members will separate themselves due to racial differences.

Interpersonal discrimination is a continuity action of *explicit discrimination* in which someone mistreats others because of the difference. Feagin (1995: 13) says that this discrimination refers to individuals with other individuals. People against others do this since they are not a member of the group. Green et al. (in Blank & Dabady, 2004: 58) explain that *segregation supporters usually carry out physical attacks*. In other words, segregation supporters will usually be the perpetrators of physical assault. If this stage happens then, there is a high probability that this behavior will turn into an extermination stage or murder.

In addition to acts of tangible or intentional discrimination, there are also acts of discrimination that are carried out automatically, smoothly and unintentionally, namely implicit discrimination. Fiske (in Blank & Dabady, 2004: 59) explains that discrimination can also be subtle discrimination that is done automatically because *in-group* members have unconsciously categorized *out-groups* based on

race, sex, and age. The response is a reflection of the subconscious awareness of *in-group* members. Faizo in Dovidio (2001: 11) says that some acts of discrimination are subtly contained in a “habit” perpetrated by group members repeatedly. Jackson in Dovidio (2001: 15) also says that acts of discrimination clearly and subtly are two treatments that explain different actions towards individuals or groups.

Institutional and Cultural Discrimination

Referring to Benocraitis in Feagin (1995: 18), discrimination in an institution refers to norms, rules, and practices within social institutions’ scope. This discrimination treats individuals or groups differently from the rules and norms that apply within a social institution. Apart from discrimination in an organization, there is discrimination due to cultural differences, where a person or group has a view of culture that is different from another person or group. Dovidio (2001: 22) says that cultural discrimination is created by differences in ideology, customs, literature and even small things like music and painting. Someone or group who influences ideology or customs different from other groups will be exposed to acts of

discrimination that can harm the person or group to be addressed.

Yellow Peril Phenomenon

In the mid-19th century, the conversation about race, migration, and national security became a conversation between nations across America’s plains, and Europe is no exception in Canada. The subject was talk of global migration by Asians and the alleged threat posed by such migration. Asians, mostly immigrants from China, Japan and immigrants from South Asia, are large-scale immigrants considered dangerous to Caucasian people in different economic, disease and moral competition (Lee 2007: 538). From intercountry talks emerged a phenomenon concerning discrimination and stereotypes based on race known as the Yellow Peril phenomenon. Witchard (2015: 4) explains in more detail that a Yellow Peril phenomenon broke out in the plains of Europe in 1914, where the subject of this phenomenon was regarding opium, gambling and interactions that took place in embroidery houses belonging to Chinese immigrants.

“Yellow Peril” itself is an offensive term given to Chinese and Japanese immigrant workers who migrate to Europe and America’s

plains. Martin (2004: 10) states that the word “yellow” refers to the color of the skin of East Asians. In this case, Chinese and Japanese immigrants belong to the Mongoloid race. While the word “peril,” according to Yang (2015: 4), means a potential threat from the population of Asian immigrant workers who will outperform Western culture. Yang further (2015: 4) explains that the yellow peril phenomenon itself is a phenomenon of Chinese and Japanese immigrant workers carried out by the white working-class due to fear of job loss, which would later affect the white’s economic downturn workers.

Yellow Peril in France

The problem of low birth rates in France in 1890 gave rise to a concept of threats from immigrants from Asia, especially Japan and China. Cook (2014: 25) mentions that *Peril Jaune* (Yellow Peril) in France is a negative view of differences in French birth rates with birth rates of Asian immigrants. Based on this cynical view, fear arises that one-day Asian immigrants will “flood” France. Unlike the case in Canada and America, in France, the phenomenon of *Peril is* only limited to stereotypes and prejudices and does not lead to physical contact between the two

parties. However, Cook (2014: 185) adds that given racism, the press in France deliberately exaggerates the concept of Yellow Peril during the war between Russia and Japan, where Russia is portrayed as a hero for defending the Caucasian against the attack of the yellow race (Mongoloid) in this case the Japanese nation.

Mise-En-Scene

Mise -en-scene comes from French, which means “staging action”. *Mise -en-scene* is anything that is located in front of the camera captured in a film. *Mise -en-scene* is the central aspect other than actors that appear in a frame to create the desired atmosphere (Prastita, 2008: 61).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out in qualitative research with descriptive method. According to Gunawan (2013: 82), a qualitative approach is an approach to construct knowledge statements based on perspective-constructive (for example, meanings that originate from individual experience, social values and history, to construct theories or particular patterns of knowledge) or based perspective-participatory (for example, orientation towards

politics, issues, collaboration or change).

Data source

In this research, primary data sources were dialogue, narration, footage of scenes and depictions of the main characters in the drama series *Tenno No Ryouriban* works of director Yuichiro Hirakawa and Shingo Data Okamoto. Secondary data sources came from previous scientific papers, journals and several books on sociological theory literature associated with racial discrimination.

Data Collection Technique

The technique of data collection itself was done by observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation. According to Marshal & Rossman (1995: 63), related to this research, the author used the documentation method because the documentation technique is one of the data collection methods used in a qualitative study.

Data Analysis

This study's data analysis technique was a qualitative data analysis technique with an analysis based on the data obtained, then developed into a pattern. Conclusions

were drawn, and data verification referred to data analysis using discrimination theory according to Dovidio (2001), which aims to show the form of racial discrimination in the *Tenno No Ryouriban* drama series. The author also used Mise en Scene's supporting theory because the research object used was a drama series.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A phenomenon known as Yellow Peril is the cause of discriminatory acts carried out by white races (Caucasian) against Akiyama Tokuzo and Shintaro Matsui figures belonging to the Mongoloid race. The Yellow Peril phenomenon began to spread in the plains of Europe and America in 1914 due to the large number of immigrants coming from China and Japan who migrated to the European plains and America and Canada.

In the *Tenno No Ryouriban* drama, Japanese immigrants' stereotype is reflected in white chefs' discriminatory actions belonging to the Caucasian race against Tokuzo, a member of the Mongoloid race. This racial difference caused Tokuzo to be treated with discrimination and injustice when Tokuzo became a chef.

Explicit Discrimination

There is a scene depicting Verbal Antagonism (verbal slur



and verbal hate), which is an act of discrimination in the type of explicit discrimination.



Figure 1. Explicit Discrimination

The treatment of Verbal Antagonism (verbal slur and verbal animosity) is seen where this scene illustrates the situation when Tokuzo had just worked at the Majestic Hotel. When he wanted to get to know another chef, Tokuzo was reviled by a chef named Albert. The humiliation carried out by Albert received support from other chef members, as other chefs laughed at the term “Yellow Monkey” given by Albert to Tokuzo.

Humiliation can be a manifestation of a precise type of explicit discrimination, namely Verbal Antagonism. Verbal antagonism supported by nonverbal expressions can create hostile environments in educational institutions, workplaces or target residences (Feagin in Blank & Dabady, 2004: 56). Verbal hostility is the first step in the existence of discriminatory acts experienced by a particular race.

The nickname “Yellow Monkey” given to Tokuzo by Albert refers to the Yellow Peril phenomenon where the word “yellow” shows the color of the skin of Tokuzo, which is a Mongoloid race like immigrants from Asia, especially China and Japan. As Martin said (2004: 10) that the word yellow itself refers to the skin color of the Mongoloid race like that of Asian immigrants, mostly Chinese and Japanese, who migrated to the plains of Europe and America around the mid-19th century.

Implicit Discrimination

The scenes above show acts of subtle discrimination or implicit discrimination. Pettigrew (in Blank & Dabady, 2004: 59) explains that prejudice does not directly make the in-group blamed the out-group on shortcomings in the disposal. The response reflects the subconscious awareness of in-group members.

Faizo in Dovidio (2001: 11) says that some acts of discrimination are subtly contained in a habit that has been perpetrated by group members repeatedly. Ambivalent out-group

can be valued but in a demeaning way. Members of out-groups have to work harder with in-group members and not force something on in-group.



Figure 2. Implicit Discrimination

Institutional Discrimination

Acts of discrimination reflected in the scenes above show acts of discrimination within an institution or institution. Benokraitis in Feagin (1995: 18) explains that discrimination in an institution refers to norms, rules, and practices

within social institutions' scope. Often discrimination within institutions occurs because of neutral decisions regarding race, sex and sexual orientation but ends with different consequences for members of out-group groups.



Figure 3. Institutional Discrimination

Cultural Discrimination

The action taken by Albert was an act of discrimination because of cultural differences due to differences in the use of dining tables, but the satire that

Albert carried was felt to be very detrimental to Tokuzo's self-esteem because of the Japanese way of eating using a small table instead of on the floor. Waswo (2013: 85) stated that a traditional Japanese dining room is

based on *tatami* and using *chubudai*. *Chubudai* is a traditional Japanese table that has short legs. As a result, the differences in tableware used make Albert see a gap to commit an act of discrimination against Tokuzo.

In the chapter of this discussion, there are various forms of racial discrimination in *Tenno No Ryouriban*, discriminations done by the chef and white Parisian

people against Tokuzo and Shintaro are Explicit Discrimination to Implicit Discrimination based on responses from the subconscious of *in-group* members. It does not stop there. Shintaro and Tokuzo are also discriminated against due to cultural differences or cultural discrimination and discrimination within an institution or institutional discrimination.



Figure 4. Cultural Discrimination

CONCLUSION

The acts of discrimination in the *Tenno No Ryouriban* drama series are acts of discrimination based on the origin and racial differences. The development of the yellow peril phenomenon, which is a stereotype of hatred of Chinese and Japanese immigrant workers carried out by the white working-class due to fear of job loss, will affect the white working-class economy's decline. These are the cause of ideas for discrimination against Akiyama Tokuzo and Shintaro Matsui in the *Tenno No Ryouriban* drama

series. Acts of discrimination will worsen if an out-group member is incorporated into the in-group for a long time. Furthermore, some acts are unintentionally and subtle innuendos committed by white people who are included in the act of implicit discrimination. Meanwhile, institutional and cultural discrimination was also found when Tokuzo worked as a chef at the Majestic Hotel.

To sum up, it is easy to say that discrimination in this drama series occurs because of racial differences between in-group and out-group. In

this case, the out-group is Tokuzo and Shintaro, while the in-group is white people.

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