

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Immigration is an ancient phenomenon as it pertains to humans, ever since the homo sapiens became fully developed and walked the face of the earth, (Falola, 2007). The migration process has been ongoing for a very long time, and those who migrate are typically referred to as immigrants. There are many reasons why immigrants relocate to a new location and nation, and they undoubtedly do so to achieve their objectives. People who move to a new place typically care about having enough stuff and the chance for a better future. (Clark. 2003).

The term immigrant can be defined as individuals born in one country but have chosen to settle permanently in another (James, 2012). Although leaving one's country of birth is frequently a last resort, it is increasingly common for people in impoverished nations (David Henderson, 1994). The socio-economic situation is not the sole reason immigrants are compelled to move to a new land. A defining feature of forced migration is the recognition that one's home country either decides to or is no longer capable of offering sufficient protection (Owen, 2020). Immigrants can be classified as diaspora when identified in their country of origin, or homeland (Barabantseva & Sutherland, 2011).

Fairly interpreted, diaspora refers to a collective of people whose current place of residence or host country differs from the geographical location where they were born, commonly referred to as their native residence. (Délano & Gamlen, 2014). In this context, the idea of a geographical boundary is considered

a limitation at the national level. From the perspective of cultural and postcolonial studies, Bhabha (1994) defines diaspora and the experience of living away from one's homeland as a "community in discontinuity." The diaspora has provided a multitude of experiences related to leaving, immigration, and exile. Discussions about diaspora are structured in binary forms of dilemma, creating a bridge of culture and history between the two destinations, as stated by Dr. Madhushri Kallimani (2022). This dynamic interaction between cultures and histories creates a bridge that connects disparate destinations and fosters a sense of identity and belonging among diasporic populations. The term dynamics itself has a meaning to describe the activities, processes, operations, and changes that transpire in groups (Forsyth, 2010).

Dynamic systems within diaspora communities evolve over time, reflecting the fluid nature of human interactions and societal structures. In light of the evolving nature of diaspora experiences, the notion of post-diaspora emerges as a stage of evolution from traditional diasporic conditions to a more nuanced entanglement between the homeland, hostland, and diasporic community (Naxolo, 2010). This connection also sometimes becomes disadvantageous for minorities, being part of the diaspora means living as minorities in a new environment. William Safran (1991) defines diaspora as 'expatriate minority communities', and the minorities often encounter discrimination.

According to Dovidio (2010), discrimination is behavior that establishes, sustains, or strengthens advantages for a certain group and its members over another group and its members. Discrimination becomes a delicate matter as it can

potentially create a negative impression on the victims. It results in minority individuals being subjected to discriminatory attitudes in their daily lives (Joo, 2012: 189). According to Horton and Hunt (1984), discrimination is defined as involving actual behavior, where one person is favored or penalized based on their ethnic status. Following this concept, discrimination can be logically understood as a concrete action that grants an advantage to someone based on their ethnicity. This behavior arises because the dominant group refuses to treat the subordinate group equally. Various forms of discrimination exist, with racial discrimination being a common type. "Racial discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on their race or ethnicity" (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). This implies that racial discrimination involves the "higher" race unfairly treating the "lower" race, resulting in inequality.

Representation of diaspora and racial discrimination can often be found in modern cinematic landscapes like movies. "Film (movie) incorporates the separate technologies and discourses of the camera, lighting, editing, set design, and sound all contributing to the meaning" (Turner & Duckham, 2006). As per Vilarejo (2007), movies not only evoke sensations, perceptions, and responses over time but also resonate with our memories and archives of what we know, have known, and have experienced. Turner (2006) says that "film's (movie's) meaning is not simply a property of its particular arrangement of elements; its leaning is produced about an audience, not independently" The cross-cultural substance contained in diasporic stories serves as the focal point of the narrative, in which this notion is the key of relevance for international audiences (Corrigan & White,

2012). Bringing elements of diaspora into cinema places films into a contextually bounded art form, rather than simply treating them with an art-for-art approach which results in a closed and structural analysis (Do Nascimento, 2019). “Producing movies that are loosely based on actual events can be a tough challenge.” (Pulla, 2022).

The researcher wants to conduct an analysis of *the Elemental* movie and how the movie represents the aspect of diaspora and racial discrimination. The previous research was conducted by Atmantika (2022) with “ Analysis Of Racial Discrimination Aspects Based On Gordon Allport’s Theory Depicted In Fruitvale Station Movie (2013)” only focused on the racial discrimination aspects and type of racial discrimination based on Allport's theory, this research concludes that there are 4 types of racial discrimination that can be found in Fruitvale station movies. The difference between previous research and this research is that the researcher will also consider the diaspora aspects by analyzing the aspects of diaspora that can be found in elemental movies.

The source of data for this research is the script of the movie *Elemental* and the aspect of the diaspora can be found in the dialogue of the character in this movie, it was from the dialogue of Cinder (mother of Ember) to Ember, she was explained to ember the reason why her family move to Element City,

Cinder : There is a reason we left Fire Land.....Oh, Ember. We loved it there so much. Most everyone had a Blue Flame, and it connected us all together.. It was hard living, but your father began to build a life for us. We put everything into it. But then a great storm came.... All was lost for us... Your father understood... (painful memory, but resolute in the decision) we had to leave..everything. Our home.”

In the dialogue above, Cinder explains to Ember the reason they became part of the diaspora. They left their hometown due to a great storm that destroyed their home. In this case, they left the Fire Land and moved to the Elemental City. The aspect of racial discrimination is seen in this movie, one example of that it was in the story that Ember tells to Wade, the story about her childhood and the response from the citizens when she wants to visit the Garden Central station to see the Vivsteria tree.

Ember : When I was a kid, my dad took me there because they had a Vivisteria tree. I'd always wanted to see one. It's the only flower that can thrive in any environment. Fire included. I was so excited. But they said our fire was too dangerous... and they wouldn't let us in.

Guard : Go back to Fire Land.

Ember : My dad was so angry...

Museum geors : Burn somewhere else!

Museum geors : Get outta here!

The responses from the Wood Citizen and Water Citizen further illustrate the discrimination. They tell Ember to "burn somewhere else" and to "get outta here," which implies that they believe Fire Land residents are not welcome in their area simply because they are a Fire race. The dialogue above includes one example of the type of racial discrimination that is called segregation, Segregation is a component of discrimination. It is termed segregation when individuals from a disadvantaged racial group are deliberately kept out of resource allocation and denied access to institutions. From the data above Ember and her father were prohibited from entering Garden Central Station because they were was a Fire race.

The *Elemental* movie was directed by Peter Sohn. This movie story is set in a world where natural elements of earth, fire, water, and air coexist in a New York-style metropolis, each representing different social classes, and the main focus in this movie is the Ember family, that was an immigrant family from Fire land, and a young water, Wade. This movie is based on director Peter Sohn's life with his parents immigrating to the USA from Korea – not speaking English and settling into the Bronx. Sohn's family also opened a grocery store named Sohn's Fruits and Vegetables – similar to Ember's family in the movie. Thus, the research seeks to explore the racial classes that guiding to racial racial discrimination in the *Elemental* movie.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The researcher identifies diaspora and racial discrimination issues in *Elemental* movie with the question :

1. What are the causes of the diaspora depicted in the movie *Elemental*?
2. What are the effects of the post-diaspora depicted in movie *Elemental*?
3. How is the racial discrimination experienced by the diaspora in *Elemental* movie?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows :

1. To find out the causes of the diaspora depicted in the *Elemental* movie.
2. To find out the post-diaspora effects depicted in the *Elemental* movie.
3. To describe the racial discrimination experienced by the diaspora in the *Elemental* movie.

1.4 Scope of the Study

According to the background of the study above, this research focuses on the topic of diaspora and racial discrimination issues that are shown in the *Elemental* movie. The main focus is to analyze the causes and effects of diaspora. And the discrimination received by the Fire race and this research will only focus on the Ember family. The researcher uses the theory about diaspora by R. Cohen (1997) which explains the causes of the diaspora and the theory from Alba & Nee (1997) that explains the effects of post-diaspora and the theory about racial discrimination by Allport (1954) explains types of racial discrimination to support the ideas about the issues.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1. Theoretically

This study will add the understanding of diaspora and racial discrimination in movies. A theoretically significant research study on diaspora and racial discrimination could delve into understanding how diasporic communities impact and are affected by racial discrimination. This research, by looking at how racial discrimination develops within diasporic communities, could help us better understand the diaspora communities and their interactions with the larger society. It may lead to more advanced models and frameworks for tackling racial discrimination, which could, in turn, guide policies and practices aimed at promoting fairness for diasporic groups.

2. Practically

- a. For future research, this research can be used as a reference in preparing a thesis, especially those related to diaspora and racial discrimination.
- b. For educational resources, educators can use the findings to develop educational materials that address the themes of diaspora and racial discrimination in movies. This can help students understand these complex issues and foster empathy and tolerance.
- c. For critical media literacy, for the public, this research can promote critical media literacy. It can encourage viewers to analyze the portrayal of diaspora and racial discrimination in movies and engage in thoughtful discussions with their families and communities.

