

THE PORTRAYAL OF GENDER AND RACE IN CARS TRILOGY

Penggambaran Gender dan Ras dalam Film Trilogi *Cars*

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Abstrak: Sebagai film animasi paling sukses secara komersial, trilogi *Cars* produksi Pixar Animation Studios dipilih untuk diteliti karena dampaknya sangat luas terutama terhadap persepsi mengenai gender dan ras. Mengingat intoleransi dan ketidakadilan berbasis gender masih banyak terjadi, diskusi mengenai penggambaran ras dan gender, terutama melalui media film, dinilai penting. Penelitian ini bertujuan membahas masalah bagaimana gender dan ras digambarkan dalam trilogi *Cars*. Penggambaran gender diteliti menggunakan konsep immanence dan transcendence oleh Beauvoir dan tema maskulinitas Finklea. Penggambaran ras diteliti dengan konsep multikulturalisme kritis McLaren. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif analisis interpretatif. Data yang dianalisis adalah tokoh, dialog, dan plot. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa laki-laki dan perempuan ditampilkan sejajar, meskipun stereotipe terhadap gender tetap masih terlihat. Laki-laki ditampilkan tidak hanya berani, tetapi juga percaya diri. Ketertarikan romantis laki-laki termanifestasikan secara heteroseksual, dan bos lelaki didorong oleh profit. Perempuan dapat sukses dalam balapan jika ia berani mendobrak birokrasi atau jika diberi kesempatan oleh lelaki. Aksentuasi bahasa Inggris yang berbeda dianggap sebagai kelemahan dan karakter berkulit putih tidak semua ditampilkan tanpa masalah.

Kata-Kata Kunci: gender, ras, immanence, transcendence, multikulturalisme kritis

Abstract: As the most commercially successful animated film, *Cars* trilogy, produced by Pixar Animation Studios, are opted to be analysed due to its impact on formulating perception of gender and race. Considering that intolerance and gender-based injustice still happens within our society, any discussion about gender and race portrayal, particularly through films, becomes urgent. The study aims at investigating how gender and race are portrayed in *Cars* trilogy. Gender portrayal is analysed through Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence and Finklea's themes about masculinities. The portrayal of race is investigated using McLaren's critical multiculturalism. The study uses the descriptive analytical interpretative method. The data analyzed are the characters, dialogue, and plot. The result shows that men and women are portrayed as equal but the stereotypes are still visible. Men are portrayed not only brave but also confident. Males' romantic interest is manifested in heterosexual desire and male bosses are driven by profit. Women can be successful in racing if she dares to intervene the bureaucracy or is given opportunity by men. Different accent of English is seen as less capable and white characters are not always portrayed unproblematic.

Key Words: gender, race, immanence, transcendence, critical multiculturalism

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INTRODUCTION

A lot of studies had been conducted to analyze the portrayal of gender and race in films and literary works. My focus will be on the investigation of the portrayal in Pixar's Cars trilogy. The first Cars film was released in 2006 and it made \$461 million as the global box office, Box Office Mojo in (Finklea, 2014). The merchandising of Cars characters showed a successful marketing manifestation. The film had been endeared not only by children but also by adults. Because of its popularity, Cars trilogy is chosen to be the sample of the research. Heryanto (2012) analyzed that pop culture had power to relieve the tension between Indonesia and Malaysia heated political relations since mid-90's. When academicians think that mass culture or pop culture is less important, it serves as the main interest for many people¹ so that it would be a massive medium to deploy or mirror the constructed socio-political beliefs in society. The power pop culture possesses makes it significant to be analyzed. Giroux in Finklea (2014) even stated that "entertainment is always an educational force" then Cars trilogy may also serve its purpose as the media for children to see how gender and race are portrayed in the films.

Films, TV programs, as well as online videos can show the audiences on how gender is ideally depicted in society. As a leading animation studio, Pixar produced blockbusters with clock-like regularity, Price in (Finklea, 2014). This phenomenon makes Pixar animated films instantly popular among children and even adults. Since Toys Story became the first full length animated film in 1995, Pixar popularity defeated Disney as the leading children-film producer. The popularity of Pixar animated films triggered further investigation about the gender and race portrayal

that will be focused on its depiction in Cars trilogy.

Films have been seen as mediated mirror (Jeffords, 1994; Lang, 2002; Malin, 2005; Strate, 1992; Trice & Holland, 2001) but the cultural reflection seen in this mediated mirrors does more than just show us what our culture looks like; rather, this reflection also creates culture by reinforcing norms and mainstream cultural standards, Malin in (Finklea, 2014). (Lugo-Lugo & Bloodsworth-Lugo, 2009) stated films (can) provide children with necessary tools to reinforce expectations about normalized racial and sexual dynamics. In addition, Pixar animated films had particularly promoted altruistic, caring, and communal masculinity, reported Gillam and Wooden in (Decker, 2010) and portrayed strong, assertive, capable women in many roles and with a variety of character traits almost unseen in other children media (DeFife, 2009) in (Decker, 2010). However, is the depiction of more equal female characters not unproblematic? This question is going to be investigated further based on and in contrast with the masculinity themes appeared in Pixar animated films (Finklea, 2014) that can be found in Cars trilogy.

Even though the first Cars (J. Lasseter, 2006) release was very popular, its sequel Cars 2 (John Lasseter, 2011) could not trace the previous film's success, but Cars 3 (J. Lasseter, 2017) which was released in 2017 could finally revive its fans' lost interest as the racing focus was highlighted again. However, my concern rotates around the portrayal of its female characters that were shown as independent and smart. Even though the characters of the trilogy appeared to be cars, but the anthropomorphic features can be seen as the differentiation is vividly depicted which characters have male

traits and which ones expressed as female.

This study focuses on the portrayal of gender and race in Cars trilogy. The previous researches about gender and race were conducted in terms of Disney films (Matyas, 2010), (Towbin, Haddock, Zimmerman, Lund, & Tanner, 2004), whose female characters are portrayed as fragile and troubled. The female characters in Pixar films are represented more empowered, even though they are not always displayed in the form of human beings. The analysis on Pixar animated films were still limited, yet the work by Finklea (2014) about masculinities in Pixar 13 picture-length films as well as the analysis of gender portrayal in Pixar animated films by Decker (2010) was chosen to be the base of my analysis. From the discussion of Finklea, the contrasting role of male and female characters is scrutinized. Gender portrayal was discussed by Decker (2010) in the light of content analysis, which involved quantitative approach, while my study will be constructed under the concept of immanence and transcendence by Beauvoir (1961), McLaren (1995) critical multiculturalism, and Finklea (2014) ideas of masculinity themes, and hence, highly qualitative.

The study investigates how gender and race are portrayed in Pixar's Cars trilogy. The paper aims at examining the way gender and race are depicted in the trilogy as well as its cautious significance in shaping children's perception on how to act and behave in the midst of pluralistic society. The analysis is conducted under Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence. It is also analyzed against Finklea (2014) themes of masculinities that appeared in Cars trilogy, i.e. males are successful when taking part as a teamwork; males are naturally brave; males romantic or sexual interests manifest as heterosexual

desire; and male bosses are shown as greedy and driven by profit to discover the gender portrayal in the trilogy. The portrayal of race will be closely scrutinized by the features of critical multiculturalism promoted by (McLaren, 1995).

De Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence discussed in her book *The Second Sex* in 1949 (translated to English in 1953) to point out how women were bound to their reproductive nature, that made them residing in domestic spheres, and how men positioned themselves as the 'self' against women as the 'other.' It indicates that de Beauvoir criticizes the association of women as passive body and men as active mind in (Waugh, 2006). Therefore, de Beauvoir challenges the schism in human experience: that **men and women**² are both immanent and transcendental beings (p.322). It is paramount to highlight her idea of emancipation that is when women break free from their biological limitation. The immanence and transcendence as apparent in Cars trilogy will then be observed in terms of female characters' involvement in the outside world as active beings both physically and mentally. Due to the anthropomorphized female car characters, which do not have any reproductive organ like human, the paper focuses on the occupation and roles of the female characters throughout the trilogy instead of the biological strains.

Gender reflection must also include the representation of male characters. Therefore, the study identifies the recurring masculine themes based on Finklea's research on masculinities in Pixar films. The recurring masculine themes in Cars trilogy out of Pixar's 13 feature-length films that are used in this scrutiny are: 1) males are successful when taking part in teamwork; 2) males are naturally brave; 3) male romantic or sexual interest manifests as

heterosexual desire; 4) male bosses are driven by profit.

Race is presented in its presence among different kinds of background, Luigi and Guido resemble European-White but their English mixes with Italian accent, Flo's physical characteristic shows that she resembles Afro-American, Francesco Bernoulli is Italian, while Cruz Ramirez resembles Hispanic-American. They are living together with other American-White characters, reflecting how critical multiculturalism intersects. Three out of four critical multiculturalism features by McLaren in (Nylund, 2006) are taken to inspect race representation in the films. Those features include 1) recognizes the sociohistorical construct of race and its intersection with class, gender, nation, sexuality, and capitalism; 2) creates pedagogical conditions in which students (in my case, viewers) interrogate conditions of "otherness"; and 3) makes visible the historical and social construction of whiteness.

METHOD

The study uses the descriptive analytical interpretative method. The data analyzed is the characters, dialogue, and plot of Pixar's Cars trilogy. De Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence and the masculinity themes of Finklea (2014) are incorporated to examine how gender is portrayed in the text, which in this case is in the form of animated films. The way race is portrayed is investigated by the help of McLaren's critical multiculturalism. Pixar's G-rated films make Cars trilogy an object of investigation as (Giroux, 2011) suggested that "film combines entertainment and politics, and a claim to public memory, though in contested ways given the existence of distinctly varied social and cultural formation." Due to the paramount function

film embodies, its impact in shaping the audiences' viewpoint on how gender and race differ should be closely scrutinized.

The data consist of characterization, plot, and dialogue that occurred in Cars trilogy which serve as the primary data. The data collection and analysis include reading closely through each separated film to support the primary data, making notes, forming initial codes, analyzing the immanence and transcendence of the characters in the films, observing the dialogue among the characters against Finklea's masculinity themes and finally fathoming the race representation guided by McLaren's critical multiculturalism.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of the analysis is initiated with De Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence to study the depiction of female characters. The next analysis describes the portrayal of masculine traits among the male characters which will be based on Finklea's masculinity themes recurring throughout the three films. The reflection of race in Cars franchise will be put afterwards, using McLaren's features of critical multiculturalism.

Tracing Immanence and Transcendence from Female Characters' Occupations

The concept of immanence and transcendence that need to be possessed by women so that they will be seen as individual, or the active subject, is shown in the characterization of anthropomorphized automobiles in the Cars trilogy. The list of female characters with their occupations can be seen in Table 1.

Following De Beauvoir's concept of immanence and transcendence, the listed female characters that do not fit in

with the concept is only Mia & Tia. They were depicted as twins who were initially Lightning McQueen's (the leading protagonist) fans, changing idol to Chick Hicks (the leading antagonist). When the writer stated that their occupations were racing fans, it might not be the sole or the main occupation, but the way they were shown led the viewers a single identity depicted, i.e. as racing fans. The way they were presented shows how shallow women were, changing idols easily and marking their existence by mere screaming on the audience seats during the racing game.

The rest of female characters show independence and wit, as what has been proposed by De Beauvoir. Even though her concept of emancipation is signified by women who take part in the world which had been taken over by men for long, i.e. outside home-making, the female characters' independence reflects the reality they still yet to tackle. In *Cars 3*, Cruz Ramirez was always taught to dream small and even though she struggled hard to achieve her dream as a racer, she could not make it after all because the world is full of bully and verbal violence to women. One of which is seen in the dialogue stated by Jackson Storm to Cruz Ramirez before the race began, "That you can dress up all you want, but you'll never be one of us." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

The disclosure that makes Ramirez explain her position among the already constructed roles for women, her parents kept reminding her to *dream small or not at all*. After Lightning McQueen's, the lead protagonist's disguise as muddy Chester Whipplefilter was unveiled, he was consumed by the disappointment due to his failed incognito. He claimed that Ramirez did not have any idea what being a racer was for McQueen. The heated argument ended up with Ramirez resigned as McQueen's

trainer. Before leaving, Ramirez uncovered her biggest dream to be a racer which forced her to deviate from her initial journey to be a trainer instead.

"Ask me if I got up in the dark to run laps before school every day... Ask me if I saved every penny to buy ticket to the races when they came to town... I wanted to become a racer forever. Because of you." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

In addition, towards the end of *Cars 3*, Ramirez was still looked down upon, her individuality was reduced to be only '*the girl in the costume*.' (J. Lasseter, 2017).

Highly masculine world of racing may seem unproblematic if it was seen from men's point of view. The different notion, however, can be attained when Ramirez uttered that:

"the other racers didn't look like me. They were bigger, stronger, and so confident... I wish I knew what it felt like." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

Ramirez's despair was a tool to reflect where men have always been believed to be, i.e. *bigger, stronger, and so confident*. When de Beauvoir proposed the integration of immanence and transcendence, she wished to see women as an active subject and independent as their male counterparts. Once independence gained, women can leave their lot as mere objects. The paper tried to investigate women's active involvement in the highly masculine world of racing as can be seen in *Cars 3*. Lou, still from *Cars 3*, was portrayed as not only fast but also fearless female racer by the dialogue uttered by a veteran racer called Junior. She exposed the discriminating masculine field of racing by stating,

"The second I saw my first race I just knew I had to get in there. Of course

the fella in charge didn't like a lady racer showin' them up, so they wouldn't let me have a number... I stole one." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

Lou's courage to steal a number to get in the race seemed like a bad thing. However, without the intervention to the already established racing bureaucracy, Lou's talent and skills would be forever hidden. Unfortunately, the dialog shown that the ones which prevent women from showing their potentials were men who were afraid to see women interfere their rigid patriarchal culture.

The inability of men to accept that women promising potentials in racing was seen in the following dialogue between Lou and Junior. Even though Lou shown skill and expertise in racing, the highly masculine world, which was represented by Hudson Hornet, could not accept such fact. When Junior talked about how Lou grew fond of the racing star the Fabulous Hudson Hornet, which became McQueen's mentor in Cars, Lou reflected on how she was treated by Hornet, "Hud didn't like fast women and that left me out." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

Miss Fritter, a demolition derby star, was made the strongest survival. She possessed the physical features of those male cars. She was strong and confident and brave. The demolition derby in Thunder Hollow even made her the central spotlight with her '*Fritter Time*' when she would attack other cars to be the last one surviving the demolition show.

In the whole Cars trilogy, Pixar Animation Studio tried to create more women's empowered representation. The majority of female characters were independent in Cars, Cars 2, as well as Cars 3. They were independent, witty, caring, friendly, and confident as can be discovered in the characters of Flo, Sally,

Kori from Cars 3, and Shiftwell and Certain from Cars 2. Some others were constructed as strong, brave, and confident, such as Lou the racer and Miss Fritter from demolition derby in Cars 3. It suggests that these films can set an example on how more women stand on their feet and that the old rusty statement that said women should stay at home is no longer valid.

However, no matter how ideal Pixar tried to reconstruct the position of women in the highly masculine world of racing, it is tragic to see women's struggle that had to be initiated in stealing number, or in Ramirez's case, to be allowed to race by characters in position of authority to the power of patriarchy (Finklea, 2014). Ramirez, towards the final scene of Cars 3 could demonstrate her ability only after McQueen, the lead protagonist, gave her opportunity. McQueen, in the brink of his helpless old age, brought Ramirez her chance to take part in the race against Jackson Storm, the antagonist: "Today's the day, Cruz. You're getting your shot! (it is) my last chance **to give** you your first chance." (J. Lasseter, 2017).

The transformation that Ramirez went through was never going to happen without the involvement of the members of patriarchal system. Even so, the other members still rose to bring back Ramirez to the audience seat. Such was done by Storm when he said to Ramirez in the final lap of the race, "you don't belong in this race." Ramirez's determination culminated when she refused to be treated as mere object by hopped across him and answered, "Yes, I do." that makes her win the race.

The paper provided two perspectives in this light, either Pixar tried to promote women's potentials or it simply portrayed the stark reality that must befall women, i.e. patriarchal system still interfering women's growth to

show that they too can be active subjects in racing field or other highly masculine working circumstances. Apparently, immanence and transcendence which were possessed by the female characters were not enough to create an open and equal opportunities for them.

This shows how strong the message in animated films can actually be. Children can begin to sharpen their awareness about normalized gender inequality around them. Adult can help them grasp the specific message about it. Consequently, education must start at home to spread a deeper understanding and promote friendly cooperation between men and women both in social and professional life. From this little

effort, it is probable that a more inclusive professional and social circumstances be achieved.

Contrasting and Comparing Men and Women's Portrayal in Pixar's Cars Trilogy

The researcher started the comparison and the contrasting of men and women's portrayal based on the listed characters on Table 1.³ The characters listed on the table were put because they were visible throughout the films and that their appearances helped forming the perspective of gender portrayal in the trilogy.

Table 1. List of Cars Trilogy Characters and Their Occupations

NO.	Characters' Name	M	F	Occupation
1.	Lightning McQueen	√		Racer
2.	Mac	√		Carrier truck
3.	Mater	√		Tow truck
4.	Mr. The King	√		Racer
5.	Rusty and Dusty Rusteze	√		Initial Rusteeze owner
6.	Hudson Hornet	√		Racer
7.	Chick Hicks	√		Racer
8.	Ramone	√		Painting shop owner
9.	Sheriff	√		Police car
10.	Flo		√	Gas station owner
11.	Sally Carrera		√	Motel owner
12.	Lizzie		√	Souvenir shop owner
13.	Sarge	√		Surplus store owner
14.	Kori Turbowitz		√	Field reporter
15.	Mia and Tia		√	Racing fans
16.	Luigi	√		Tire store owner
17.	Guido	√		Tire store mechanic
18.	Red	√		Firefighter
19.	Harv	√		Racing agent
20.	Finn McMissile	√		Spy
21.	Holley Shiftwell		√	Desk diagnostic turn field spy
22.	Francesco Bernoulli	√		Racer
23.	Miles Axlerod	√		Fuel company owner
24.	Professor Zundapp	√		Experiment lead
25.	Uncle Topolino	√		Luigi's uncle
26.	Mama Topolino		√	Luigi's aunt

Table 2. List of Cars Trilogy Characters and ... (continue from p. 81)

27.	Jackson Storm	√	Racer
28.	Cal	√	Racer
29.	Bobby	√	Racer
30.	Cruz Ramirez	√	Trainer turn racer
31.	Miss Fritter	√	Demolition derby winner
32.	Natalie Certain	√	Statistical analyst
33.	Mr. Sterling	√	The new owner of Rusteeze

The first and second themes about masculinity which Finklea suggested were *males are successful when taking part in teamwork* and *males are naturally brave*. They can be seen in the plot of the first Cars film. Cars focused on the brave and confident Lightning McQueen's journey from being an arrogant and selfish rookie to be mature, caring part of a team work. He thought that to be on top means a one-man show until he was lost in a forgotten town of Radiator Springs and met the inhabitants there. His encounter with the Radiator Springs dwellers transformed his selfish point of view. The psychological journey was assisted by the help of Sally Carrera, a Porsche who was a lawyer and owned a motel. It was Sally, who assisted McQueen through his psychological transformation. She was created not only as independent and intelligent being, her kindness and caring features tamed McQueen's arrogance and ignorance. Males romantic interest that manifests in heterosexual desire occurred particularly in the part when McQueen fell for Sally.

Doc Hudson Hornet played a paramount role as well. His appearance helped to shaped McQueen's personality to appreciate others as a part of a team. McQueen forced Mac to drive on while he needed rest, but even when he was ill-treated, Mac still dedicated his loyalty to McQueen. Mater was innocent rural tow truck who believed in friendship. After the help of Sally, McQueen realized the importance of friendship so that Mater was finally acknowledged as his best

friend. Mr. The King reflected wisdom of the experienced, while Chick Hicks represented the blind ambition and ignorance of other's rights as he was depicted as able to do anything to win the race including make other cars crash. Ramone, Sarge, Red, Luigi, Guido, Flo, Sheriff, Lizzie were equally supporting characters that transformed McQueen individualistic nature into a social being. They turned into McQueen's family as well. The family for McQueen means his friends, not anyone related to him by blood.

Kori the reporter and Mia & Tia the racing fans served different roles. The one was portrayed intelligent and independent, the others were the racing decorations. Harv the agent was shown prone to McQueen increased fame since he was reported lost.

In Cars 2, racing was not the main focus. The plot concentrated on the spy game of revealing the sabotage of alternative fuel industry, starring Mater, not McQueen, as the main character. Finn McMissile was illustrated as a tough, witty, strong, and resilient. Holley Shiftwell, McMissile's desk analyst was forced to be field spy and she did it with terrific skills. Once again, the order was made by man. Shiftwell was just another form of object to which man's power transferred.

The third theme that stated *male romantic or sexual interest manifests as heterosexual desire* can be seen through the lenses of the equally brave Francesco Bernoulli and McQueen in their racing

game. Bernoulli was depicted as *brave* and confident. He challenged McQueen as he was self-assured with his speed. Sally was portrayed a fan of Bernoulli and that made McQueen heated. Sally, a woman, was still depicted as a trigger for men's racing rivalry.

The last theme Finklea suggested that recurred in Cars trilogy was *male bosses are predominantly shown as greedy and driven by profit*. It can be seen in Cars 2 from the portrayal of Sir Miles Axlerod and in Cars 3 by the reflection of Mr. Sterling. Both business owners only cared about profit. While the first took racing into game of preserving fossil fuel industry, the other wanted McQueen's racing career to be shifted into merchandise selling.

The bossy Sterling can also be related to the power of patriarchy and capital owner, as he treated Ramirez as his worker and thus did not give her opportunity to even watch the racing, not to mention let her show her racing talent. When Ramirez uttered, "*I want to stay and watch.*" Sterling commanded her to "*just do your job*" After saying, "*That's not gonna happen.*"

Professor Zundapp and Natalie Certain from Cars 2 reflected both wit and intelligent, but for different sides. One used science to terrorize, while the other to help unveil crimes. Uncle Topolino stood for wisdom while Mama Topolino mirrored typical Italian mothers who solve every anxiety with food.

The theme of males' bravery occurred in Cars 3 by the representation of a promising high-tech rookie, Jackson Storm. Because of the fancier technology, Storm underestimated the skills of veteran racers such as McQueen, Cal, and Bobby. The theme declaring *males are successful when taking part in teamwork* challenged by the coming of newer version of racing car. Teamwork could not bring any success without the most

recent version of technology. Ramirez stood up for what she believed in, i.e. to be a racer. However, it only happened by the motivation given by her male coach, McQueen. Male roles in the case of Ramirez's opportunity that was given not achieved was rather ambiguous. The bravery was not a feature identical with male characters only. Miss Fritter's powerful and brave nature was constructed as the demolition derby unbeatable winner. Natalie Certain's stance can be seen when she is compared with Chick Hicks. Hicks carelessly called Certain 'professional number cruncher' while she was actually a statistical analyst. Chick's ignorance can be easily found to those who are in power. Chick with the history of powerful patriarchal culture would straightforwardly get misled and give his female counterparts 'names'.

Race Portrayal in Cars Trilogy

To examine the portrayal of race in Cars trilogy, it is important to highlight what Fuller in Waugh (2006) called the root of critical multiculturalism that comes from the view that the site of the struggle is textuality: representations of race and ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality are part of larger ideological struggle that are subject to displacement and play but are also embedded in a transformative agenda. The textuality in this case is represented by Cars trilogy through which the viewers can reflect about how other races are treated by the majority in real world. Cars trilogy characters speak predominantly American English as the setting reflects the U.S areas, such as Los Angeles, Florida, and Route 66. Afro-American English accent is seen performed by Flo; English with Italian accent is seen through Luigi, Guido, and Francesco Bernoulli. Cruz Ramirez is visible through her name as Hispanic, although she speaks American English fluently.

The social construct of whiteness is implied through the scene where Guido was mocked by Hicks' pit crew, which echoed how Italian-American was looked at. When Guido prepared to change the tires, Hicks' crew stated, "Hey, Tiny. You're gonna clean the windshield?" Guido's talent was looked down upon by his fellow American crew. Children who watched this might be guided by their parents or adult that such act must raise their awareness of 'otherness' and thus create more compassion to the difference they find in real life. Because according to (Towbin et al., 2004) "without parental assistance in interpretation, children can become passive recipients to these repeated messages, some of which, if viewed repeatedly, may become internalized beliefs."

Cultural difference was embodied just before the Porto Corsa World Grand Prix. Francesco sympathized to McQueen's gloomy face and accused him of homesick. Bernoulli told McQueen that he must have been homesick if he happened to race outside Italy while McQueen's sadness was actually driven by his guilt to Mater. Friends were family for McQueen while family was the central focus for Bernoulli. American and Italian culture were set face to face but friendship could still be preserved even though they were different.

Whiteness itself was not a single matter. However, even German professor was constructed as the antagonist. He stated "Guten tag!" when opening a meeting of criminal sabotage of alternative fuel business and "Wunderbar" when informed that the British spy, McMissile was dead. Non-American white was made a villain in this case. Most good characters were set for American white, while non-American can be fallen as villain.

The case of *multiculturalism as a socio-historical construct of race and its*

intersection with class, gender, nation, sexuality, and capitalism can be seen in Ramirez's conflict. Multiculturalism and its intersection with gender reflected by the way she was seen as not capable of becoming a racer, particularly through Storm's statement, "You can play dress up all you want but you'll never be one of us." And its intersection with gender, class, and capitalism by Ramirez's employer's statement, "She'll damage the brand. She's only a trainer!" when she was appointed by McQueen to finish his racing. In this light, Ramirez's conflict can also be seen as the effort to show *the social construction of whiteness*. Both American McQueen and Sterling possessed power to dictate Hispanic Ramirez what to and what not to do.

Most American anthropomorphized cars were portrayed positively as good, cooperative, and confident, kind, and intelligent as we can see from the characters of McQueen, Hudson Hornet, Sheriff, Mater, and Mr. Tex. Some of them were portrayed bad, cunning, pretentious, and arrogant such as shown by Sir Miles Axlerod, Jackson Storm, Chick Hicks, and Mr. Sterling. However, the social construction of whiteness does not necessarily mean that it has no flaws. The antagonists were part of them. In cars it was Chick Hicks in Cars 2 it was Sir Axlerod and Zundapp, and in Cars 3 it was Jackson Storm. The demonization of other races was not visible in the trilogy. Nonetheless, the demonization of other nations was observable.

The case of racial differentiation in Indonesia might lead to the Dutch colonialism era, where there were different categories for Chinese, Arabic, and Indian foreigners apart from European and native Indonesians. The racial discrimination can also be traced back from post-Soeharto age, where anti-Chinese movement broke in 1998. However, the intersection of discrimination is not limited to

discrimination of races only but to ethnic group as well. The occurrences of children mocking other kids because of different accent, which is brought along their upbringing in specific ethnic group, is hoped to be prevented, if not eradicated, through their familiarity with multicultural society that is accepted through the microcosm of social sphere in the film. Unemphatic treatment to those who are from different ethnic groups or races must then be obstructed from our children's multicultural environment. Film is not solely meant to teach, but it acts as a reflection of reality, which enables the viewers to gain insight to the feeling of the underappreciated or ill-treated because of ethnicity difference or racial variance.

CONCLUSION

The way in which gender and race are portrayed in Cars trilogy shows that women can achieve any position that men grasp. However, the opportunity to be in such position must be grabbed either by stealing chances or being given by men. Masculine features were also visible throughout the films, such as males are not always naturally brave but also confident as shown by McQueen, Mr. The King, Hicks, Hudson Hornet, Bernoulli, and Storm. Males are successful if they are a part of a team shown by McQueen, The King, Bernoulli, and Storm. Male romantic desire is heterosexual as depicted by McQueen and Sally. Male bosses are driven by profit was illustrated by Sir Axlerod and Mr. Sterling.

Cultural problem of being underestimated occurred to Italian America Guido in Cars⁵. While different cultural values were represented between family-bound Italian, Bernoulli, and friends are family viewpoint of McQueen as seen in Cars 2. Hispanic female character Ramirez was set as the heroine in Cars 3

while not all white characters portrayed positively.

McLaren's critical multiculturalism can also be applied to evaluate majority's viewpoint in Indonesia as the recommendation to handle difference with deeper understanding and, thus, tolerant treatment. The normalized name-calling to women or those who are in a weaker position than the majority social members can be reduced, if not eliminated, by learning through pop culture or other cultural products, such as animated films, that come across our daily lives.

As film serves a role as media for children education, it is pivotal that children be accompanied by adults who understand the value of critical multiculturalism within the scope of a nation. It hopefully can initiate the inclusive understanding and create more appreciative community and put an end to bullying that is triggered by unfamiliarity toward one's customs.

¹ Ibid.

² The writer's emphasis

³ The characters were listed based on their occurrences in Cars to Cars 2 and Cars 3 respectively.

⁴ The bolded word is done by the writer in order to highlight Sterling's position against Ramirez as the employer and employee. The class is different and that was justified by Sterling to prevent Ramirez from watching the race.

⁵ Cars refer to the first Cars film that was produced in 2006

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