

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces several points. Those are background of the study, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Before the 1500s, the term race was rarely used. It only used to identify a group of people who have relationship with each other. The use of race term today is to identify groups of people based on physical appearance and characteristics. For centuries, the view emerged that white society was more intelligent, capable, and humane than a non-white community group. This is used as a justification with the existence of European colonialization and slavery of Africans. European colonies use the term white skin to identify people who look like them. It makes the term race and slavery become something inherent in the American colony in the middle of the 16th century, this assumption is still existing until now in America and Africa (Reed, 2020, p. 71). Race is defined as the result of thinking or relationship between one another. A group will classify another group based on what they see. It causes the existence of white supremacy between the emergence of races.

In the era of globalization, white supremacy has become a global issue to be discussed (Martinez E. 1990, p. 21). White supremacy always increases every year and often occurs in every country in the world. So, this is difficult to solve until now. Humans in this world are born with various kinds of differences from one person to another. No one can choose their appearance, including their skin color. They have their uniqueness. Differences must create much diversity that makes everything beautiful. The differences in this skin color between white and black people are only made unfair by white people because white people feel superior to black people, this mindset is called white supremacy. The belief favors the maintenance and defense of any power and privilege held by white people. The term

white supremacy has been used to describe some groups espousing racism. White supremacy groups often have relied on violence to achieve their goals.

White supremacy is a superiority of white people over other races in every aspect. This advantage does not just mean that they should be leaders of other races, but they can also be examples of a more righteous way of life and good humans (Tyson, 2006, p. 369). White people enforce their culture, perceptions, and ideologies on others through force assimilation, stigmatization of original beliefs, and other means under the white supremacy concept. White supremacy often involves white and black people. This becomes the main cause of racism, their way of thinking binary opposition that is "absolutely black-and-white" (Martinez E., 1996, p. 236). It means that people who discriminate against white people or black people because of their skin. This also qualifies as racism because black people can not make other people accept what they are. So, it works only for white people, but harms other black people.

White supremacy manifests itself in numerous types of discrimination and oppression directed towards non-white people and organizations. This includes institutional racism, brutality by law enforcement, acts of hatred, and discrimination from social, economic, and political prospects. White supremacy has additionally contributed to the marginalization and elimination of non-white communities' histories and cultures. It can harm one's mental health and well-being, as well as prolong intergenerational trauma. Overall, white supremacy has far-reaching consequences for individuals and societies. This problem has a huge impact on everyday life, especially for black people. Black people often get unequal and inhumane treatment from white people (Gonzales et al, 2021, p. 4). Through this treatment, black people do not have voting rights. They also look for jobs with substandard wages, which become objects of terror, and are not free to use public facilities compared to white people. The long history of the white race, who are predominantly black, makes them feel superior (Lake & Reynolds, 2008, p. 159). White supremacy has become a historical record recorded in books, films, and literary works.

The novel is one of the literary types besides poetry and short stories. The novel is depicted in real life and behavior at the time in which it is written (Wellek & Warren, 1977, p. 33). A novel is a repository for presenting a picture of social life and telling the story of a person at a time. Therefore, we can see how each character in the novel depicts people's behavior. In this study, the writer uses the theory of white supremacy because white supremacy is a never-ending global issue at the time (Reed, 2020, p. 71). It cannot be separated easily from human life. Therefore, this study chose white supremacy as the topic.

The Other Black Girl is a novel written by Zakiya Dalila Harris. She is an American writer and an editorial assistant before going out to publish some novels. Her essays and book reviews have appeared in *Guernica* and *The Rumpus*. One of her debut novels became a novel that readers were waiting for in 2021 and became a best-selling novel. The novel *The Other Black Girl* was released on June 2021 and received positive critical reception from outlets such as the *Washington Post* and *Kirkus Review* the *Guardian*. Now, the novel *The Other Black Girl* is in development for a TV adaptation alongside Tara Duncan, Temple Hill Entertainment, and Hulu. Being a famous author who wrote a best seller novel in 2021 is the reason why this study chose Zakiya Dalila Harris' literary work. In addition, the characters in this book experience discrimination because of their race, which still often occurs in their surroundings. Society still treats other people based on their race.

One of Zakiya Dalila Harris' best seller novels in New York is *The Other Black Girl*, which tells about white supremacy based on the character's skin color. The novel explores the encounter of two young black women, which is the striking white backdrop of a New York City book publishing. Nella Rogers and Hazel were two black people in the Wagner Books office in New York City's book publishing house are all white. They got unfair treatment in the workplace. On average, all white people are very often. Nella, one of the main characters in the novel, got unfair treatment. Nella was not allowed to be interviewed at her workplace because the interview only applied to white people. The novel *The Other Black Girl* consists

of two black people, namely Nella and Hazel, and the other people are primarily white, including Owen, Sophie, Kimberly, Maisya, and Vera. *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris is an exciting debut novel that delves at race, power, and the competitive world of publishing. Nella Rogers, a young editing assistant at Wagner Books, is overjoyed to see another black woman, Hazel-May McCall, join the team. However, as Hazel advances through the ranks and earns favor with the upper-level management, Nella notices weird events around the office, such as mysterious notes on her desk and strange phone calls. As Nella investigates further, she discovers a sordid history of prejudice and exploitation within the sector.

In the novel *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris, there was many white supremacies, especially among white people and black people in some plots. Moreover, the correlation of the white supremacy theory is used in this study. This novel represents a black character in an oppressed position with an inferior mentality. In addition, white figures are represented as superior. In this study, the writer uses the term white supremacy to analyze acts of discrimination committed by white people against black characters in their novels. Fredrickson argues that racism is ambiguous to denote the precession of establishing white privilege and white domination in two societies (Frederickson, 1981, p. 21). In comparison, white supremacy feels very appropriate to describe the situation presented in the novel *The Other Black Girl*.

There are several previous studies related to this research. The first research is done by Melinda Retno Mayani from English Literature Study Program, State University of Surabaya. The title of this research is *White Supremacy and Racism in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing*. Melinda (2016) focuses on the notion of white supremacy and racism. She uses Frederickson theory. The second previous study is *White Supremacy and Structural Racism in The Shawshank Redemption* by Frank Darabont written by Erni Rahmawati and Gustaman Saragih from English Language Education at the University of Indraprastha PGRI in 2021. They study about white supremacy and structural racism in the film *The Shawshank Redemption*. The theory used is the theory of racism from Fredrickson. The third is

White Supremacy Symbolization and Representation in The Great Wall and Doctor Strange Movies by Ra'idah Azyyiyati Fauziyah and Joesana Tjahjani from the Department of Literature, University of Indonesia. This research focuses on depicting white domination presented in the movie. The theory used in this study is the theory of structural semiotics by Roland Barthes. The fourth, *The Representation of Whiteness in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man*. This article was written by Alya Zulfikar and Ahmad Bukhari Muslim from English Language and Literature, Indonesian Education University, in 2019. They focus on the construction of whiteness as a racist act in society. The theory used is the Leucorrhoea Representation theory from Young and Garnier. The last researcher is *The Supremacy of White People in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life Among the Lowly as Children's Literature*. The thesis was written by Andre Iman Syafrony from the English Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, and State University in 2012. The focus of this research is to identify white supremacy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life among the Lowly as Children's literature and understand how it is constructed in the novel and its dangers. The theory used is the theory of white supremacy by Fredrickson.

According to the previous studies mentioned before, it can be seen that this research is similar with the previous studies which focus on the white supremacy. The writer uses white supremacy theory proposed by George M. Fredrickson. The different aspect of this study compared with the previous studies in the source of data. In this research, the writer uses *The Other Black Girl* novel written by Zakiya Dalila Harris.

1.2 Research Question

Related to the background of the study, this study has the following formulation:

1. What the forms of white supremacy are presented in the novel *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris?

2. How do white people oppress the black people presented in the novel *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the writer provides the objectives of the research as the following:

1. To find the form of white supremacy in the novel *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris.
2. To find how white people oppress the black people presented in the novel *The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Significance of the study is separated into two sections. Those are theoretical and practical. This study is intended to deliver knowledge about White Supremacy.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to support the theory about white supremacy theory by George M. Fredrickson.
2. Practically, this study is anticipated to provide the next researcher with a better knowledge of white supremacy. This study is also intended to be beneficial to other students who utilize white supremacy as their theory framework of reference and use Zakiya Dalila Harris' novel entitled *The Other Black Girl* as their source of data.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is the analysis of a novel by Zakiya Dalila Harris entitled *The Other Black Girl*. This study focuses on white supremacy that is experienced by the characters in Zakiya Dalila Harris' novel *The Other Black* which is analyzed using white supremacy theory by George M. Fredrickson.

The limitation of this study is not all components of the novel are considered. This study only investigates the forms of white supremacy from the

characters experienced and the ways white people oppressing the black people. The data used in this study are in the form of characters' utterances and narrator's narration related to the research questions which are mentioned in the previous subchapter.