

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, which covers the background of the research, the research question, the aim of the research, the significance of the research, the research's clarification terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of Research

Until today, the issue of racism is still happening. Back into the age of slavery, White enslaved the non-white. The aftermath of slavery can be seen in how society was then constructed. White define themselves as “The Self” and assign the non-white as “The Other”. White is influential because they have the advantage to define people of different skin color as a result of the construction of their whiteness; they exercise their power to discriminate the non-white. As history shows, White used to enslave the non-white and also used to colonize other countries of the non-white. Nowadays, although the colonial era has ended, discrimination to the non-white are still happening. Some of the White still think that they are superior because they are white. It is apparent that White is giving unequal rights to the non-white. This issue is often raised in the literature, as “Literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity,” (Barnum, 1866, p.13) express that literature is one of the mediums to raise humanity issues because everyone can relate to literature.

One such work is Ralph Ellison's (1952) *Invisible Man*, which brings the issue of racism by showing the discrimination towards Black in American society. Set in New York City, the major center of African-American culture. The narrator, who is a black man, is portrayed as the invisible man. The term “invisible man” in the novel does not refer to a person who is physically invisible or has the power to be invisible in front of other people. It refers to someone who is invisible in the eye of the majority members of the society who are White. His invisibility is mainly because of his skin color.

White, in the story, exercise their power of being White by discriminating Black through racist acts which dehumanize them as a human. They look down upon Black and treat them as non-human being. The issue of racism, which is done by White in the novel has attracted the writer to conduct research on this issue because the issue of racism done by White is interesting to be further investigated. A particular term used in this issue is Whiteness.

Whiteness is the idea of being white and of having inherent privileges of being white. This privilege of being white has created inequality or injustice among other races in society. More specifically, the practice of racism done by white is called as white racism as coined by Hill (2008). White racism refers to practices of racism which is done by White, and it is not only a mere American history, but it is organized by white-dominated institutions and White as an individual.

White racism is derived from the construction of whiteness in society, and it leads to a racist act. Glasgow (2009) states that the racism derives from disregard, more generally, as a form of ill will towards the other races. Thus, racist actions will be hostile and disrespectful for the victims. Berman and Paradies (2010) note that racism can be expressed through stereotype (racist beliefs), prejudice (racist emotions/affect), and discrimination (racist behaviors and practices). According to Rosado (2012), disregardful actions are only classified into prejudice and discrimination because prejudice already includes stereotype. As this novel raises the issue of racism done by White toward the Black, the theory of Whiteness is best implemented to show how the novel represents Whiteness. Garner (2007) categorized the kinds of Whiteness into four forms: Whiteness as terror and supremacy, Whiteness as a kind of absence, Whiteness as contingent hierarchies, and Whiteness as values, norm, and cultural capital.

This research also employs the theory of representation in examining the data. regarding the issue of whiteness. Hall (1997) explains that representation is the process of meaning-making by which meaning is produced between members of a

culture; the process of the meaning-making itself covers the use of language, signs, and images which represent an object. The theory of representation is best applied to support the research in examining the representation of whiteness as it helps to establish a better understanding of the issue. Young (1999) states literary works can also be a source of knowledge through the theory of representation. He further explains there are three types of literary depiction that helps to examine the represented issue. Thus, the use of the theory of representation helps to portray how whiteness in the novel *Invisible Man* and to present understanding of how the issue of whiteness is exercised in society.

There have been many researchers who conducted studies on the issue of racism that is represented in literary works. Wilson (2014) found that there remains the overrepresentation of White and invisibility of racial minorities as an impact of racial representations in children's picture books. Szulkowska (2017) studies the relationships between White character and Black character in Katherine Stockett's *The Help*, specifically about racism experienced by African Americans. She then found that through *The Help* people are aware of the problem of white supremacy and the damage of racism towards the Black. Rezazade and Zohdi (2016) analyze color blindness in the case of racism in Nelle Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and found that being color-blind is one of the solutions to the issue of racism, as color-blindness is the ability to see with the transparent eyeball and preventing the act of racism. Pfeifer (2009) found that the white and black function as a profound metaphor or binary opposition. Pfeifer found that the Dark Continent is an explicit symbol of the opposition between forces of 'civilization' and images of 'savagery' and dark primitivism. These symbolisms presume the dualistic splits of White/non-white.

Meanwhile, the novel itself has been analyzed by some researchers. Lamm (2003) analyses the issue of visibility and Black masculinity, which focus on the visual representations of the black male. Wilcox (2007) analyses the issue of Black power, which leads to the idea of the prototype for a Black cyborg subject. Another research

regarding the novel is Widyana's (2006) research on the issue of discrimination. She focuses on the race relationship between White and Black. Most of the researchers focus on the issue of invisibility, discrimination, and racism. None of the research specifically focuses on racism done by White.

The previous studies on this novel have already examined specific issues that are raised in the novel. It includes racism in general, identity, alienation, color blindness, and the impact of racial representations. As most of the previous studies only focus on the issue of racism in general, the main focus of this research is the issue of whiteness. The research is expected to provide information on the issue of whiteness, which is represented in the novel by showing its construction in society and how it is exercised as a racist act.

1.2. Research Questions

This research attempts to analyze the novel by using Young's (1999) theory of representation and Garner's (2007) theory of whiteness. To guide the research, the writer formulated the research question as follow:

- How is whiteness represented in the novel *Invisible Man*?

1.3. Aim of the Study

The study aims to discover how is whiteness represented in the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison as a racist act toward the non-white and to explore how it is constructed in society.

1.4. Scope of the Study

Invisible Man, published in 1952, was written by Ralph Ellison. The present study focuses on the issue of whiteness as a racist act toward the non-white. The analysis focuses on the life experience of The Narrator as a black man in a white-dominated society, thus revealing the impacts of the presence of whiteness in the novel. The representation of whiteness is divided into three types of literary depiction as

proposed by Young (1999) and connected to the theory of whiteness proposed by Garner (2007).

1.5. Significance of the Study

The issue of racism is a crucial issue that is needed to be addressed by many people; scholars are no exception. This research may have an impact on the awareness of racism issues and helps other people to extend the scope of racism studies.

1.6. Clarification of Key Terms

Here are some clarifications of key terms that are used in this paper:

1. Whiteness

Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white (Kivel, 1996).

2. White privilege

The fact of people with white skin having advantages in society that other people do not have (Cambridge Dictionary).

3. White supremacy

The belief that people with pale skin are better than people with darker skin (Cambridge Dictionary).

4. Verbal depiction

In verbal depiction, instances of what sorts of things people say (or think) are used in representing their characters, states of mind, or other of their characteristics (Young, 1999).

5. Descriptive depiction

In descriptive depiction, descriptions of an object are used, not to make statements about it, but to represent it by means of examples (Young, 1999).

6. Formal depiction

A representation uses formal depiction uses the formal properties of the literary text to represent some object. The formal properties of the text have some relevant property in common with what is represented (Young, 1999).

1.7. Organization of the Paper

1. ABSTRACT

This section function as the summary of the paper, presenting brief information of the content that will be elaborated in the next sections.

2. CHAPTER I

This chapter presents the introduction of the research that covers seven parts which are the background of research, research question, aim of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

3. CHAPTER II

This chapter covers the literature review of the research. It contains the two theory that is employed in this research as its foundation.

4. CHAPTER III

This chapter covers the description of the methodology employed in the present research which consists of the research question, research design, data source, data collection procedure, data presentation, and data analysis.

5. CHAPTER IV

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the research, and it consists of the findings of the research. The findings in this chapter are elaborated by the writer by using Young's (1999) theory of representation and Garner's (2007) theory of whiteness.

6. CHAPTER V

This chapter presents the conclusion of the present research and suggestion for future research.