

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

The history of slavery in the United States of America happened for a long time. The reality is a disadvantage to black people because they become in the lowest class in society, caused by the segregated social class based on skin color. Black people were paid to perpetuate the pernicious myth that dark skin was inferior to light skin, and that African ancestry was inferior to European (Schermerhorn, 2018:3). It is common knowledge that society made unwritten rules where people who had lighter skin color occupied the higher social class. The social construction of race has contributed to skin color bias within the African American community, resulting in systemic injustice in society and causing the situation where dark skin color has become associated with low status (Parrish, 1946:20). Moreover, the condition has become more brutal for black women since they also had to face the inequality position among men within the society which surrounded by black community.

At the moment when women are beginning to participate in the creation of the world, this world still belongs to men: men do not doubt this, and women barely doubt it (Beauvoir et al., 2011:30). He adds that even among the working class, men tried to oppose women's liberation because women were becoming dangerous competitors, primarily since women were used to work for low wages. De Beauvoir also argued there are deep analogies between women and blacks: both are liberated today from the same paternalism, and the people in master caste

such as white American and men wants to keep women and blacks “in their place” which is the place chosen for them (2011:32).

The common problem among women of color in black society is well shown in an American TV series on Netflix directed by Kasi Lemmons titled *Self Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker*. The writer chose this series which contains 4 episodes as an object of the study since it depicts the struggle of Madam C.J. Walker as a black woman who fights to receive fair treatment from black people in society. Likewise, the unequal treatments depict in the series are caused by her skin color and gender identity. It also portrays a black woman who pursues social and gender equality, represented by her career’s growth, which determines her social class. Even though the journey is not easy, the series also brings the audience to witness her efforts in fighting inequality to reach her goal of equality.

Racial discrimination and gender inequality issues of an African-American woman are visible in the series. Hence, the writer outlines the issues in the struggle to achieve social and gender equality as the main topic. As we know, social equality is a social condition where people can achieve equal rights and treatment regardless of physical appearance or personal identity. The concept of social equality, as stated by Miller & Walzer (1995:65), represents a social ideal, the ideal of a society in which people regard and treat one another as equals, in other words, a society without status divisions that allow different people to be placed in hierarchically ranked categories, such as different classes.

Meanwhile, gender equality is an equal treatment presented by society that is projected for both; men and women regardless of gender in all aspects of life. Gender equality, according to the *Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts* by UNICEF (2017:3), refers to a concept in which women and men have equal possibilities and opportunities for achieving their full human rights and potential, as well as to contribute equally to national political, economic, social, and cultural development; and benefit equally from the outcomes.

In this study, the writer will analyze the struggle of the major character, Madam C.J. Walker, to achieve social and gender equality as an independent black woman. The series depicts the story of Madam C.J. Walker, who fights against the social system that has placed a dark-skinned woman like her in the lowest class and forced her to face several unequal treatments from the same member of the black community. The writer will use the concept of social and gender equality and the other theories or concepts to support the discussion. Consequently, the writer will also analyze the cinematography of the series to support the narrative elements. The narrative elements will cover both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

1.2. Research Problems

1. How are the narrative elements and cinematography depicted in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020)?
2. What are the challenges that Madam C.J. Walker faced to outreach social and gender equality in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020)?

3. What is the scope of Madam C.J. Walker's efforts in achieving social and gender equality in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020)?

1.3. Objectives of The Study

1. To elaborate the narrative elements and cinematography depicted in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020).
2. To explain the challenges that Madam C.J. Walker faced to outreach social and gender equality in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020).
3. To examine the scope of Madam C.J. Walker's efforts to achieve the social and gender equality in Netflix's Miniseries *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020).

1.4. Previous Studies

There are several previous studies that the writer identified in the process of researching and arranging this study which related to the topic and the object of this study, the struggle to reach social and gender equality by Madam C.J. Walker in *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker* (2020). The writer will also choose to apply a broader topic that is still related to the main topic to search the previous studies because the writer had difficult time to discover the previous studies that discuss about the chosen literary work along with the main topic of the study. However, the writer chooses the previous studies presented in this part to support the scope of this study, which focus on the sociological and feminism aspect of the series, including the main topic about pursuing social equality and

the other aspects that are still related in *Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker (2020)*.

The first previous study is *American Social Class Inequality as Reflected in Nick Cassavetes' Film Entitled Notebook* written by Tri Setyorini from Semarang State University in 2009. This study aims to investigate the social class inequality in the chosen literary work, the causes of social class inequality in America, and also to describe the impacts of American social class inequality on the main character and society as well as the solution to solving the social problems.

The second previous study is *Black Feminism Struggle Reflected by Female Slaves in 12 Years A Slave (2013) Series* done by Azmi Luthfiana from Diponegoro University in 2017. This study aims to show the struggle life of black women in the slavery era reflected by female slaves by using the black feminist theory by Bell Hooks. Azmi adds that black women's struggle is depicted through the unfairness of life as women and human beings perceived by the characters. Azmi finds out the result of the study that shows the female slaves faced some bad treatment from women and men.

The third previous study is *Analysis of Gender Equality and Feminism of Main Character in Colette Series* written by Lintang Ursita from Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika in 2019. The writer of this study finds that there is the action of gender equality that was done by the main character as well as feminism movement in order to get gender equality. Lintang also states that the series gives a lot of moral values that could be implemented in real life.

The fourth previous study is *Gender Inequality Issues as Depicted in Mimi Leder's On The Basis of Sex* done by Juniar Chassy Ferrara from Diponegoro University in 2020. This study focuses on analyzing gender inequality in the main character of the chosen literary work using Lorber's concept of gender inequality and Mill's concept of liberal feminism. The result of this study is that the main character of the series portrays liberal feminism values in fighting gender inequality.

The last previous study is *The Representation of Women's Empowerment Depicted in the Series Raya and The Last Dragon (2021)* done by Feronica Ambarwati from Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an in 2022. This study analyzes women empowerment and the impact of women empowerment on the main character represented in the chosen literary work using women empowerment by Rowland and Kate Young as the grounded theory. Feronica finds that the impact of women empowerment has a significant effect on the main character in the series.

After researching the relevant previous studies, the writer concludes that none of the previous studies above discussed social and gender equality throughout the chosen literary work of this study. Therefore, the gap between this study and the previous studies is the absence of an analysis of the major character's struggle to achieve social and gender equality.

1.5. Scope of The Study

The discussion of this study will be limited to specific topics to make the research's distinct purposes as boundary so that the writer will not step out of

topics and not broaden the discussion beyond its scope. In this study, the writer will analyze the narrative element and cinematography of *Self Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker*, from episodes 1 to 4. The narrative elements will cover intrinsic aspects such as character, setting, and events and extrinsic aspects which are social and gender equality. Meanwhile, the cinematography will cover the camera distance, camera angle, mis-en-scène, and sound. The extrinsic aspect will discuss the struggle to achieve social and gender equality by the major character, Madam C.J. Walker. The writer will also discuss Madam C.J. Walker's challenges and efforts to pursue social and gender equality as her goal. This study will use several theories: social equality, gender equality, social stratification, and feminism.

1.6. Organization of The Writing

To obtain a complete and systematic discussion, the writer uses the organization of the writing in the study that comprises to four chapters.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six sub-chapters. They are the background of the study, research problem, objectives, previous studies, scope of the study, and organization of the writings.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

The writer mentioned the theories and the research methods used to analyze this study. The theories contain the narrative and cinematography of the chosen film.

CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION

This chapter is the main part of the study which contains a discussion of both narrative elements and cinematography of the film.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the result and summary of previous chapters that have been done by the writer.

