

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Afro-American is an ethnic group in the United States whose ancestors came from Africa in Sub-Saharan and West. Commonly, Afro-American ethnic people are bloodlines African, European and Native American. There are some terms that refer to these ethnic groups. They include negro, blacks, nigger, colored, Afro-Americans. In the 15th century Afro-American people migrated from Africa to America. They were brought from their African homelands by force to work in new world. Their opportunity and right were really limited and they were denied a rightful share in economic, social and political. (www.britannica.com)

They stayed there and became slaves for white people. Being minority makes Afro-American often get conflict and discrimination from other people, especially white people. Discrimination can be happened on the Afro-American people because of history in the past, their ancestor came to America for the first time as a slave. People can be discriminated because of their identity, such as : race, gender, physic, religion, sex, and politics.

Identity is a volatile and complex issue for blacks because of the intimation that identity was given to them, rather than made by them. Identity is the names given, thought of who they are, the origin of that people and also their story in the past. Identity is also what kind of people they are, how are their position and how they can gather or how their relationship in society. Thus, everyone has their own identity. Identity is the characteristics that distinguished person to other. Someone's identity will not be the same as the others identity. Identity is

reflection of a person that is coming from family, gender, culture, ethnic and socialize process. Identity refers to someone's and other's perception on our self. It can be the differences between person to other. The easiest way to recognize someone's identity is through physical appearance. "Identity is people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others." (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; 318).

In 1963 there was a protest in United States. Martin Luther King Jr. and some other people who are being the leaders of this incident started a nonviolent protest campaign to desegregate public facilities in Birmingham, Alabama. Additionally, he was a baptist minister and lation in the United States. He was also the one who gave many efforts through his activism and inspirational speeches. He played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of Afro-American civil-rights activist. Starting from the mid-1950s he had a seismic impact on race rean citizens in the United States. How big the effort they have for getting freedom and equality of positions, unfortunately, their identity is still give influence to how white people treat them.

According to Howard F. Taylor, one's race is defined by a combination of some aspects. They are one's physical appearance (biological definition such as by the skin color), by social construction (any definition arising out of the process of human interaction such as how those around define you), as an ethnic group, as a social class rank, as racial formation, and by one's own self definition. Racial minorities have a lower life expectancy than Whites. They have less access toward everything and burdened with cronic, life threatening and illness. (Taylor, 2006; 53)

Racial minorities also get lower annual incomes relatively than Whites although they have same level background of education. Thus, Afro-American people have greater odds being poor than Whites. Eventhough the Afro-American have same social class with Whites, but Whites still get a better treatment and higher position in society than Afro-American. In fact they are seen as essential to the group identified by stereotype. Sociologist called this as essentialization: such as negative stereotypical traits are regarded by society as inherent to the character of any person identified by the stereotype. Then, negative stereotype and negative essentialization are applied far more to Afro-American than Whites.

Afro-American issue could appear in some literary works, in Smith's novel *On Beauty* that published in 2005. She is a British author, a daughter of a White Englishman father and a Jamaican mother. Her novel tells about Howard Belsey a liberal and atheist White English man. He has been married for thirty years to Kiki an Afro-American woman. In their marriage, Mr. Belsey has affair with some women. The reason is physical appearance particularly through the Afro-American female character Kiki inside the novel.

Kiki is described as a fat and black woman. Her size and skin color make her feels out of the place in Wellington which has Eurocentric beauty standart. The discrimination issue that appeared is not just racial discrimination but also in the physic or "color". It happens because all of people around her are Whites then, Kiki feels isolated as the wife of white professor. Once she sees a black woman and that woman becomes her new cleaner.

Although the slavery has been ended longtime ago, but the Afro-American people still feel the impact of that incident. Their identity and history in the past still lead the discrimination toward them. This novel also describes about that issues. For that reason the writer interests to analyze this novel with the issues inside; identity, color (physic) and position. The writer analyzes the Afro-American woman that appeared in *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith.

1.2 Research Question

Referring to the background of the study that has been explained above, the writer has formulated the problem that will be discussed in this paper:

How is the discrimination toward Afro-American reflected in the *On Beauty* novel?

1.3 Research Objective

Dealing with the problem which has been formulated, the writer states the objective of the study in this paper:

To reveal the potrayel discrimination toward Afro-American reflected in the *On Beauty* novel.

1.4 The use of the study

1.4.1 Theoretical Uses

The writer wants to provide the knowledge about analysis of discrimination issue. It can be reference for the students or researcher of literary work, especially in socio-historical field. Not only to be reference but also will be usefull to give

more knowledge to the readers who are interested in analyzing the same object or topic.

1.4.2 Practical Uses

The writer analysis provides contribution, information and knowledge for students or researchers who want to do the same analysis. Therefore, this research makes the other researcher to do the similar research easily.

1.5 Scope of Study

The writer focuses on the analysis of Afro-American discrimination issues such as; identity, color (physic) and position in the *On Beauty* novel by Zadie Smith in 2005.