CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is an author's reflection on life and living. One of the genres of literary works that is most often studied with the study of sociology of literature is the novel. According to Klarer (2004) in most cases, literary works are referred to as whole written expressions, with the limitation that not all written documents can be categorized as literary works in a more exact sense of the word. The literature of modern life that can occur within our social reality encompasses all aspects of human activity expressing emotions, feelings, thoughts, and ideas (Setyaningrum and Samanik, 2018). Literature is a form of art, a significant experience, capable of expressing a person's nature. Literature is a creative art that allows us to express our thoughts, feelings and expressions.

Literature through, its expressive side conveys the attitude and tone of the author (Wellek and Warren, 1963). These relationships of things lead many researchers to analyze all the issues that affect or influence human life, starting with social, political, and even psychology (Fithratullah, 2021). Wellek and Warren (1963, p. 22) stated *"Literature is also produced by the imagination of the author. Literature is not just a collection of real events, but real events can happen in real life. Literature creates its own world as a product of limitless imagination."* Literature that exhibits some kind of meaning or idea through content, message, and purpose within the text (Afrianto, 2018).

All events that become the background in literary work are the result of reflection of the social conditions of the people who are behind it. Thus, this novel is delineated based on Celeste Ng experience in her life. The story begins in the 90s with chaotic reports of Richardson's house burning in ashes and townspeople arguing about it. The youngest of the Richardson disappeared and became a suspect. When Mia and Pearl moved to the town of Shaker Heights and rented Richardson's parents' home, they went back a few months ago. Pearl approaches Richardson's son, Moody. They spend time together and Moody introduces Pearl to his family. For some reason, Pearl enjoys her moments with Richardson's family. Mia worries that Pearl might be influenced by the Richardson family's lifestyle, and when Mrs. Richardson asks Mia to help her as a housekeeper, Mia agreed to see Pearl, and At this point, Mia meets Richardson's family scapegoat, Izzy.

One day, a friend of the Richardson family, McCulloughs, wants to adopt a child. She is an American from China. Later, it turned out that Mirabel was actually May Ling, a child of Bebe, a colleague of Mia. Bebe left Lynn at the fire station because of financial problems, she wanted to take care of her baby, the news exploded, and the conflict also split the townspeople into two. Mrs. Elena Richardson knew that Bebe had heard this information from Mia, so she tried to find her past life in Mia. Later her wife Richardson learns that Mia is a surrogate mother for a couple who cannot have their own children. Eventually, Bebe's side gains her rights and loses in the custody battle to take care of May Ling. Later, tensions between Mia and Mrs. Richardson increased, and Mia and Pearl began to leave the rented house. This novel is indicated to have racial bias issues.

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Racial bias is when you believe the attributes are characteristic of people with an appearance, you characterize a race without sufficient evidence. This research has two kinds of racial bias, explicit racial bias and implicit racial bias. Explicit racial bias is largely conscious and implicit racial bias is largely unconscious. Explicit racial bias is those who actively discriminate against members of minorities are aware of their own discriminatory views. Implicit racial bias that the person is likely unaware of the biased relevance. Implicit racial bias can cause individuals to act in deliberately discriminatory ways. This does not mean that the person is overtly racist, but rather that their perceptions are shaped by experience and that those perceptions can lead to biased thinking and behavior.

The characters of the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* usually can be found in our real life. This study has experienced Celeste Ng life as an American-Chinese in America. This biography is the basic source of information for this study and can be extended to include various aspects. It can also find out the writer's reasons on racial bias among White American society of Celeste Ng through *Little Fires Everywhere* novel. Therefore, because this study was selected to portray, to some extent, the influence of society on literary works, racial bias can have social effects on audiences who enjoy literary works. Racial bias still exists around us, so for the writer it is very important to discuss this issue. Because, the writer wants to know racial bias causes that happens all around us. The writer applies the sociology of literature theory by Laurenson & Swingewood to support the discussion.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the above background, the author designated question at

to limit discussion of the novel.

How is racial bias delineated by Celeste Ng in the novel *Little Fires*

Everywhere?

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this study deals with a research question formulated as follows :

To find out how racial bias is delineated by Celeste Ng in the novel *Little*

Fires Everywhere.

1.4 Use of Study

This study helps understand the racial bias of this novel, where such things are still common in the world. Therefore, the usefulness of this research can be divided into the following aspects:

1.4.1 Practical Use

This study aims to provide more information about racial bias of White American society experienced by Celeste Ng. This research can increase public awareness about the racial bias White American society delineated by Celeste Ng in *"Little Fires Everywhere"* novel. This novel tells about the treatment of racial bias that developed in Ohio environment in which are black, white, and Asian people are in it. Information written in this study can be used by future researchers to analyze novels on the same object/subject.

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1.4.2 Theoretical Use

This study aims to use an approach to sociology of literature theory by Laurenson & Swingewood. Goldman's applied theory in genetic structuralism. *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng, this study explains racial bias among White American society in *Little Fires Everywhere* novel. The information of racial bias, in this study can be used by other researchers to conduct a deeper analysis in other literary works or the same topic.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study only focuses on the exploration by Celeste Ng of racial bias among White American society reflected in the *Little Fires Everywhere* novel. This study applied sociological approach theory by Laurenson & Swingewood. This study discussed racial bias in more detail about racial bias. To analyze racial bias among White American society in *Little Fires Everywhere* novel. Further, this study has limitations to the problem according to the writer's analysis in the novel *"Little Fires Everywhere."*