

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent days, the equal rights movement has been showing its significance for everyone. Only a few places still have conflicts regarding race and religious differences, yet white people are no longer the main superiors and threats in this problem. However, it is often overlooked that white people will always find another way to continue their supremacy over other races in the world. One of the forms of this supremacy is colonialism.

Colonialism can be defined as another form of imperialism (McLeod 2010). The difference is that colonialism is specific to certain places and times. Colonialist also aims to invade and settle in the colonized country to exploit their resources and attempt to govern the indigenous people. Colonialism started as a commercial venture of western nation such as Britain, France, Spain, etc. in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century (McLeod 2010). This venture is essential to gain wealth and establish control over international market. Some of this act even dated back to the ‘voyages of discovery’ where Christopher Columbus ‘discovered’ America in trying to find the western sea route to the Indies. Their desire to control the international market then motivated them to seize the foreign land to government and settlement. This then will help them to secure the natural resources and labor power with the cheapest cost for Europeans. However, this act will not last for long. The indigenous people are not always

settled with the way of the colonizer. They often put up a force to refuse the inequality relations of power between the colonizer and the indigenous people. In some cases, the colonizer finally failed to invade the colonized country and forced back to their home country but some of them may stay in the once colonized country as a 'settler'. This phenomenon leads to the emergence of postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism is a set of theories and studies written in English in a country that used to or still colonized by other countries (Bressler 2007). The postcolonial study aims to understand how colonialist and anticolonialist ideology works. Since colonialist and anticolonialist ideologies exist in any literary text, work is not supposed to necessarily labeled as postcolonial work to be analyzed by postcolonial criticism.

The ideology of colonialist or discourse to relate it with language where the colonialist thoughts are expressed based on the assumptions of the colonizers' superiority that contrasted to the inferiority of the original inhabitant of the invaded land. The colonizer believes that their Anglo-European culture is more advanced and civilized (Tyson 2006). Hence due to this believe that their technology is well developed, they saw themselves as the very center of this world. On the contrary, the native people which are the original inhabitant of the land they invaded are described as underdeveloped and savage. This view makes colonizer to ignore and even belittle the religions, customs, and codes of behavior of the native people. This feeling of superiority is what then called as 'White Supremacy'.

White supremacy is the superiority of white people over other races in every aspect. This superiority does not only mean that they are supposed to be the leader of the other race, but they can also be an example of the right way of living and the righteous human being (Tyson 2006). There are some studies about white supremacy and one of the distinguished studies is Orientalism.

Edward Said is one of the Orientalism scholars that discusses white supremacy. In Edward W. Said's Orientalism, white supremacy is reflected through their way to describe or explain about people from other races. In this study, the writer recognizes the whites as the occidental and the other race as the orient (Said 1979, 1). The position of the whites is considered superior to the orient due to their claim that they are the ones who know better about the other race than themselves. They describe the other race solely based on their perspectives or how they perceive the other race, without asking the people of other races directly or let those people represent themselves and explain their culture. By doing so, the occident has control over how most people see or understand a certain culture. They use every possible means to spread their way of thinking to the world and claim it as the truth. In this globalization era, it is not a difficult thing to do since people depend on technology to gain information worldwide. They can use the media to help them spread their understanding of the world. One of the media that is plausible and often used to spread their knowledge and understanding is through movies.

There are a lot of west movies that depict white supremacy. One of them is *The Last Samurai* (2003). In this movie, a former US Army Captain Nathan

Algren is asked by his former commanding officer, Colonel Bagley, to train the Imperial Japanese Army. In the end, Algren may not entirely win the war for the samurai, but he wins their enemy's respect as someone who reminds them of their tradition.

Another movie that has a similar issue is *Avatar* (2009). This movie is set in 2154 where humans have depleted Earth's natural resources which lead to a severe energy crisis and this leads to a severe energy crisis. Then, they find another resource from a planet called Pandora. The resource called the Unobtainium is found beneath a giant tree called the 'Home Tree' and used as a living compound of the Na'vi, a species of 10-foot tall (3.0 m), blue-skinned, sapient humanoids. To reach the resource, they have to go and face them directly, so they would understand the RDA's intention. Since the atmosphere is poisonous for humans, they have to use an Avatar, a hybrid of human and Na'vi, to be used as a second body, to explore the planet safely and freely and this is where Jake Sully, a former Marine, is invited to replace his brother's place in the Avatar since his brother is already dead. Jake Sully is ordered to spy in Na'vi tribe, but he is in love and becomes part of the Na'vi. RDA then thinks that Jake is no longer useful to them and decides to attack the Hometree. Jake then loses the Na'vi's trust because they think Jake is lying to be part of them. To regain their trust, Jake becomes a Toruk Macto, a rider of Toruk that the Na'vi, indigenous people of the planet, honors and fears. He speaks to unite the clan and fight for their homeland. The Na'vi finally wins the war with the unexpected help from the creature of the forest and the humans are sent home with the exceptions of Jake, a scientist

named Norm and few others. On Jake's birthday, he permanently transfers his consciousness to his Na'vi avatar and lives as a Na'vi forever.

Additionally, there is another movie that depicts white supremacy which has a similar issue and plot, but with a different outcome. That movie is *Doctor Strange* (2016) which has won several awards for its visual effects such as DFCS (Denver Film Critics Society), Annie, and Empire Awards UK. Directed by Scott Derrickson, it tells about an arrogant neurosurgeon that is proud of his ability to perform delicate surgery with 100% accuracy. One day, he gets into an accident that makes him lose the function of his hands. After following seven different medical procedures but fails, he then tries to find another way to heal his hands. He learns that one of his patients, Jonathan Pangborn, who he refuses to handle because of his severe injury, has healed. He asks Pangborn's method, and it leads him to Kamar Taj in Kathmandu. In Kathmandu, he meets Mordo that helps him go to Kamar Taj and meets the Sorcerer Supreme. Strange learns about the mystical power beyond the universe and masters the knowledge by reading books and practices it every day. Once he starts to master the knowledge, he questions every teaching he knows, even breaks the rules set by the people in Kamar Taj. One day, he uses the Eye of Agamotto to practice the manipulation of time from the book of Cagliostro. He almost ruins the balance of the dimensions when Mordo and Wong come to scold him and finally explains to him about the truth of their duty. After he learns the truth about their real duties, one of the former masters in Kamar Taj, Kaecilius, attacks the sanctums that protect the world from Dormammu, the evil creature from the dark dimension. Strange, Mordo, and

Wong join forces to protect the sanctums, though Sorcerer Supreme dies in the process. She tells him that everything that happens around him is not only about him and that he is destined to do something bigger than what he already did. Strange finally defeats Dormammu by using the magical power of the East to manipulate time which is considered the power of the West.

In *Doctor Strange* (2016) movie, the characters are mainly the characters surrounding Doctor Strange (Americans) are, Master Mordo (African-American), Wong (Chinese), The Ancient One (White Celtic Woman) and Kaecilius (White Man). The position of the Occident here is portrayed by Doctor Strange as an American neurosurgeon. For the position of the Orient is portrayed by Master Mordo, Wong, The Ancient One and Kaecilius as masters and disciples of Kamar Taj.. Looking back, the US and China have established economic or trade relations. China is ideally considered almost equal in political power to America, but still somewhat inferior. Therefore, they tried to be recognized by adopting American behavior in their social life(Suzuki 2014). Meanwhile, the relation between America and Africa was gained through slavery since 1619. The first African was brought to America to help the production of tobacco. Until this day, Africans are still considered inferior because of their former slave identity. Whereas, the relation of China and Africa can be seen through China's commodification of natural resources in Africa that leads them to be more superior to the African(Ibonye 2017). These relationships then are reflected in the representation of the characters in the media.

The present study aims to reveal the underlying supremacy through the representation of Doctor Strange as a hero from the west who uses the power of the east to save the world. The writer decided to use Edward Said's Orientalism because of the different races presented in the movie. In this movie, the representations of races are divided as the west and the others.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

Based on the issue stated previously, the problem that arises is formulated as follows:

- How does Doctor Strange character represent white supremacy in *Doctor Strange* (2016) movie?

1.2.Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study is:

- To describe the representation of white supremacy in Doctor Strange's character.

1.3.Significance of the Study

Doctor Strange (2016) is a worthy movie to be analyzed because of the concept of white supremacy that still exists and, in some cases, we are not aware

of it. In this movie's storyline, the main character, a white man, is depicted to lose his hope in using Western methods, so he decides to try the Eastern method even though it is frequently considered as 'irrational' and 'supernatural'. He finally masters the Eastern method by using his Western way and in the end Dr. Strange as the Western could save the day. Not only do the Western people acknowledge his superiority, but they also believe that the Western man is meant to be the savior of mankind. The writer expects that this analysis will give the reader insight into white supremacy and how this issue should be acknowledged by everyone, including Indonesians. Indonesia as one force colonized countries should be well aware of this issue. The writer also hopes that the implementation of Edward W. Said's Orientalism will provide some insights to other students of Cultural Studies, especially in English Department of Universitas Airlangga, who wish to take this theory to analyze the objects of their studies.

1.4. Definitions of Key Terms

Occident : the Western race or Caucasian. It refers to any Western country such as the USA and Europe (Said 1979, 41-42).

Orient : the Eastern race (Said 1979, 1-2), or every race other than the Caucasian (Barker 2003)

Orientalism : the differentiation of the knowledge of the East or the Orient and the knowledge of the West or the Occidental (Said 1979, 2).

Postcolonialism : the phase undergone by the Third World countries after the decline of colonialism (Guerin 2005, 303).

White Supremacy : The superiority of the white race towards other races (MacCann 2002, xxv-xxvi).