

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

*Dreamgirls* is a film directed by an American director and screenwriter, Bill Condon (2006). He was born in New York in 1955. Condon creates the best films related to the drama genre. *Dreamgirls* itself is a film based on a true story set in the 1960s to 1980s America. It is a film adaptation of a 1981 Broadway musical composed by Tom Eynen and Henry Krieger. Besides that, the story tells about the history and evolution of American R&B music, this film also contains the satiric life and career of Motown Records, a record label company owned by the Universal Music Group (Condon, 2006).

The main characters in the *Dreamgirls* are three Afro-American women named Effie White, Deena Jones, and Lorell Robinson. They have golden voices and are members of a vocal group, "Dreamettes". Each of them has her specialty. Effie White is a woman with a strong (Mezzo-Soprano) voice; Deena Jones is a woman with a Mezzo voice so that she is placed in the center and becomes the star of the vocal group; Lorell Robinson is a woman who has a lower vowel (Soprano voice). They are all special because they are few Afro-American singers among White singers in the entertainment industry of America.

Since these three women are Afro-American, they experienced discrimination. According to Collins (2000), black people, the Afro-Americans, experience

discrimination based on sex and race. Afro-American women, especially, are discriminated because they are women and they are black. Furthermore, Crenshaw (2018) maintains that black women regularly face discrimination in ways that are equal to those faced by white women, and they sometimes have experiences that are quite equal to those of black men. The discrimination faced by these black women as women and as black people is called double discrimination.

Other scholars have studied double discrimination. One of them is the work of Wohangara (1998) entitled *Double Discriminations: Racism and Sexism Against Black Women as Seen in Alice Walker's The Color Purple*. This work deals with racism and sexism against black women in certain parts of the United States and Africa in the novel *The Color Purple*. In addition, Azizah's (2020) study entitled *Black Women's Struggle in Facing Workplace Discrimination in Theodore Melfi's Hidden Figures* deals with the double discrimination of Afro-American women in the job place. It can be observed from limited opportunities for career promotion and limited credibility in the job.

The writer's reason to conduct this study is to describe the double discrimination experienced by the three women in *Dreamgirls* (Condon, 2006), as women, and as black people. This study is not the same as the previous studies, in terms of the object of analysis.

## **1.2 Field of the Study**

The field of this study is literature, especially films related to double discrimination.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The writer concentrates on the double discrimination occurring to three Afro-American female singers.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The research question is “What kind of double discrimination do the three Afro-American women in *Dreamgirls* encounter?”.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study is “To represent the kind of double discrimination against the three Afro-American women in *Dreamgirls*”.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study aims to find out how the double discrimination against black women is described in *Dreamgirls*. It is expected to give a better understanding to the readers of the discrimination experienced by three Afro-American women, Effie White, Deena Jones, and Lorell Robinson. The topics of race and women discriminations are still relevant for Indonesians because those discriminations happen in Indonesia as well. This study provides an entry point for other researchers to further conduct studies of similar or relevant topics in the future.

### **1.7 Definition of Term**

Some terms are frequently used in this study. To avoid misunderstanding, clear definitions of the terms are provided. Those terms are:

### 1. Double discrimination

Double discrimination refers to Afro-American women who had experienced abuse in the era of slavery, this racial community had to face majority rule by white people in American society and patriarchal capitalism (Azizah, 2020, p. 2).

### 2. Black People

Black people refer to the lower class in society and obey the white people as superior (Ika & Christianingrum, 2018, p. 36).

