CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the background of the study, questions of the study, objectives of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Every human being has a unique perspective on the social environment in which they live. This unique viewpoint on the social environment affects not just the individual themselves but also how they interact with others. An Individual different cultural backgrounds and personal experiences might influence the way individuals interact with one another (Sam & Berry, 2010:472). When each individual in a social framework holds similar viewpoints, it can create a community culture that influences social behavior.

The community culture that evolves from these similar viewpoints has the potential to increase neighborhood solidarity however it may also limit diversity. It can lead to a standardization of thinking and behavior, which may then affect issues in the community, as other people feel pressured to fit in with the dominant viewpoints. There are common views within society about certain groups, including the belief that one group has an inherent inferiority or superiority, which can result in structural discrimination. The relationship between racial identity and social class is an issue that comes up consistently in society.

Both race and social class are social constructs that are influenced not only by biological outcomes but also by historical and cultural contexts. As a result, people's views on race and social class have a profound effect on experiences and events for a particular individual and may shape a social hierarchy that significantly affects the availability of opportunities, accessibility and resources, especially in the society. Additionally, it creates a highly restricted and unfair view of certain groups in the community. These kinds of views may lead to persistent social differences and exacerbate stereotypes.

In the 18th century, these racial and social class issues started to take shape and receive a lot of attention and then continued to increase throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. These events gave rise to many social movements banded together to fight against racial prejudice and defend their rights. People's consciousness was raised as well by the numerous literary works that started to appear in the 19th century and highlighted social injustice. But even in this 21st century, these issues continue. The 21st century, also known as the digital age is defined by the rapid development of social media and technological media. In addition to reflecting social reality, the media also influences how we understand social issues (Croteau et al., 2021). As a result, modern media like film and television series have a significant impact on how we see and understand the world around us.

These modern media work such as film and television series have an ability to influence how the general public views of various social groups, including how race and social class are viewed in society. Literary works have also been adapted into films and television, which have also had a great influence and shaped the way people thought and behaved (Chen, 2024:4). Film and television have also developed into media that not only offer entertainment, but also provide knowledge and shape public perceptions that may reflect social, political, and cultural conditions. In addition, films and television are frequently inspired by true stories or re-adapt historical events into more interesting storylines. Furthermore, film and television as a modern may function as how literary and historical works, both accurate and fictionalized, are inserted into modern stories.

One of the most watched television shows is the Bridgerton drama series, which debuted in December 2020. The Bridgerton series, which airs exclusively on Netflix, is a period drama adaptation of Julia Quinn's popular novels. In addition to receiving positive reviews from critics, the series swiftly gained popularity and captivated a worldwide audience because of its compelling story, complex characters, and gorgeous production design. Because of its popularity, several follow-up seasons were produced, each of which focused on a different story. Additionally, Netflix released Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story, a spin-off prequel that chronicles the origins and growth of Queen Charlotte, one of the Bridgerton characters in the series.

The series Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story, released on Netflix on May 4, 2023, is a fictional television series based on history. Not only does it offer romantic drama, but it also explores how racial identity affected social status and acceptance in British aristocratic society in the late 18th century. One of the heavily emphasized themes is how the expansion of race within the aristocracy invited debate and reacted negatively from the public, who were previously accustomed to the dominance of white groups within the aristocracy.

As a result, the Netflix drama series "Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story" may try to explore and assess the issues raised up. In this study, dialogue and interactions between characters are the main focus because there are various dynamics related to race and social class that can be analyzed more deeply. In addition, this research can deepen understanding and provide insight into issues of race and social class in a broader context. W.E.B. Du Bois' social race theory is used in this study to examine these issues. The social race theory of W.E.B. Du Bois is used in this study to examine how media narratives adapt and reinterpret historical reality. This study situates itself within the broader discourse of literary adaptation and postcolonial studies in English Literature.

The study on the above have been discussed, such as a study on race conducted by (Zulfa, 2022) which is about “Analysis of Racism Experienced by the Main Character in Get Out (2017) Movie”. Then the studies related to the drama series Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story, as conducted by (Amani & Setiarini, 2023) is about “Expressive illocutionary speech acts used in Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story Series” and study by (Nabilah & Candria, 2023) is about “Charlotte's language style in Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story series (2023)”. The next study related to the theory used, such as that conducted by (Basid et al., 2023) which is about “Racism in the novel ‘Dear Martin’ by Nic Stone based on the perspective of W.E.B” Du Bois”. And a study about social class, which is about “A Reflection of Social Class and Discrimination in the Movie Saltburn” by (Panjaitan et al., 2024).

Based on the description above, it is clear that there is an opportunity to analyze the drama series by using the approach of W.E.B Du Bois' race theory as a study object to analyze the dynamics of race and social class. Therefore, the novelty of this

study is to discuss social issues through objects in the Queen Charlotte Drama Series: A Bridgerton Story, while previous studies focused on linguistics. However, there are several studies that have explored issues of race and social class in visual media, with differences in the use of theories used and as well as a study that applies the theory used with differences in the novel as the object of analysis.

The implications of this study are very important, because it may provide new insights into how representations of race and class in visual media not only reflect social reality, but also shape social perceptions, and encourage broader discussions about these issues. Accordingly, based on the above study, the researcher titled this study “An Analysis of Race and Social Class in the Netflix Drama Series ‘Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story’ Using W.E.B Du Bois Social Race Theory"

1.2 Questions of the Study

1. How race and social class are represented through the narrative dialogue in the Netflix Drama Series “Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story” by using the concept of W.E.B Du Bois
2. How do race and social class relations affect the character development of Lady Danbury and Queen Charlotte?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the representation of race and social class in narrative dialogue in the Netflix Drama Series “Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story” by using the concept of W.E.B Du Bois
2. To explore how race and social class relations influence characterization in the Netflix Drama Series “Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story”

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to expanding the scope of critical race theory approaches in literary studies by examining narratives and characters through the lens of black theory. This study also serves to enrich media representations by highlighting the dynamics of power, identity, and racialized experiences of black characters in the context of a fictitious aristocratic society and can provide insights into how race and class interact and shape individual experiences. Therefore, this study can provide benefits to the author and readers both theoretically and practically.

1.4.1 Theoretically

This study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of race and social class studies by highlighting the relevance and applicability of the theoretical concepts put forward by W.E.B. Du Bois in the analysis of visual media and modern literature. As a result, this study not only expands the understanding of socio-cultural dynamics in contemporary works, but also enhances the position of Du Bois's thought as a theoretical foundation in interdisciplinary studies that include media studies, literature, and sociology.

1.4.2 Practically

This study has the potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of social representations in the media, which is particularly relevant to the development of English literature studies. By analyzing the relationship between media representations as well as historical and cultural dynamics, this study also plays an important role in raising readers' critical awareness of how media shapes and reflects social constructions in society. As a result, this study not only expands interpretative discourses in literary studies, but also enhances interdisciplinary understanding of the relationship between media issues, history, and collective perspectives.