

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the research

Colonialism is a product of systematic repression, where the colonizers are expropriating from the colonized (Quijano, 169). Post-colonial literature regarding human rights shows the representation of human rights violations after colonialism. Also, the colonization itself include violence (Krieken, 297). Post-colonial criticism regarding human rights shows the effect of White supremacy on human rights violations. Ferdinal claims that "the existence of post-colonial theory cannot be separated from the wish of its theorists to challenge the supremacy of colonial ideology (Western ideology) which penetrates the vessels of heart and culture of the colonized people" (2). It proves that post-colonial literary criticism usually talks about Western or White ideology, making a hole in the colonized rights. The supremacy of White ideology influences human rights for their advantages in the post-colonial world (Brown, 6).

Human rights are subjected to many serious criticisms (Shafiev, 106). It is because even though human rights are said to have universal validity, they originate in the West and reflect Western interests (Shaheed, 17 October 2018). "But everyone must be born somewhere and everyone is born in a context: this context is his inheritance" (Baldwin, 454). There are many ways human rights could be seen as the rights to particular communities (Lamont, 151). It is because

White ideology influences human rights and shows human rights violations. As post-colonial criticism challenges the supremacy of White ideology, this research believes that analyzing post-colonial literature from the White perspective is essential for revealing human rights violations. *The White Earth* by Andrew McGahan is one of the post-colonial literature written from the White perspective. It is written by White Australian from the perspective of White descendants in Australia. Also, this novel is written with the absence of the land's original inhabitants, Indigenous people (Ley, 1 May 2004). It makes *The White Earth* the impeccable selection to analyze human rights violations from the White perspectives.

Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth* sets in Queensland, Australia, from the 1910s until the 1990s. This novel was published in 2004 written from the old William's flashback at first, then Andrew McGahan felt that it was a wrong way to tell the story. He then changed it with the young William in the 1990s and John McIvor in the 1910s perspectives (Klomp, 16 November 2016). An American novelist, journalist, and professor, Valerie Miner, claim this novel is "absorbing, disturbing, almost gothic, by turns, as McGahan depicts the inextricability of family and the primal hunger for finding and naming home" (5 February 2006). This novel tells about a young white boy named William whose father died because of an explosion in his wheat fields. Then, he gets visited by a man known as his great uncle, John McIvor. His uncle then takes him and his sick mother to Kuran Station, the center of political matters years ago. In Kuran station, William learns much, especially about the Native Title act.

The White Earth tells about issues after colonialism, which is a land dispute between Indigenous people and White descendants. Native Title act is considered as the solution from the government, where Indigenous people could get their right to the land. This novel tells the effect of the Native Title act on the White descendants of Australia. Said is known as the essential theorist in post-colonial criticism with his book *Orientalism*. Said talks about how White ideology impacts the post-colonial world, which initiates human rights violations. McGahan pictures the ideology by including the values of individual, universal, and modernity. Because of the strong uphold of those three values, they forget the existence of human rights. They ignore Indigenous rights and take extreme ways to develop and spread their values. For example, they strongly uphold individual value, which is proven by John McIvor burns essential evidence for his good. John said that people must never have the proof they need (McGahan, 364). They embrace universal value extremely by not inviting Indigenous people to a vital rally (132). He thinks that he could apply universal standards to every people. They also extremely adhere to modernity value by expelling Indigenous people from their land for modernization. They judge Indigenous people as 'primitive' and need modernization. The strong uphold to those three values lead to their violation of human rights.

Andrew McGahan (10 October 1966 – 1 February 2019) was one of the White Australian authors. Andrew McGahan was the ninth of ten children born and raised in Dalby, Queensland, surrounded by the family's wheat fields. He studied in St Columba's and St Mary's colleges in Dalby and then Marist College

Ashgrove in Brisbane. McGahan also studied Arts at the University of Queensland but dropped out halfway through, in 1985, to return to the family farm and focus on his first novel, which was never published. Then, he spent the next few years working in plenty of jobs until 1991 and started writing his first novel titled *Praise*. McGahan is then best known for the Brisbane-grunge story, *Praise*, which became a movie, and his Miles Franklin Award-winning, *The White Earth* (Walker, 7 May 2012). He has won other literary awards like The Australian/Vogel's Literary Award for *Praise* (1992) and the Aurealis Award for *Wonders of a Godless Worlds* (2009). Not only the Miles Franklin Literary Award, but *The White Earth* also won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the South East Asia and South Pacific Region, The Age Book of the Year (Fiction), and the Courier Mail Book of the year. As one could see, *The White Earth* is the most spectacular novel that Andrew McGahan has ever written based on his literary awards record (Magee, 23 January 2006). Stephanie Green states that *The White Earth* has pulled in intrigued from readers and critics for its representation of the profoundly unresolved nationalist discourse encompassing ownership and occupation of the country, its engagement with Australian public history, and its unflinching yet sympathetic portrait of the self-made autocrat, John McIvor (84). The 1992 Mabo judgment becomes the critical reference of this novel.

The matter of land has been at the heart of White settler and Indigenous relations since the nation was first founded (Hocking, 196). On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia decided that *terra nullius* or 'land belonging to no one' ought to not apply to Australia. *Terra nullius* denied the fact that Indigenous

people had a connection to the land. Thus, the decision, known as the Mabo decision, recognized that Indigenous people have rights to the land because they were the first human beings in Australia.

"The Mabo decision was named after Torres Strait Islander Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo, who led the fight to change land laws to recognize Indigenous connection and traditional ownership of land in Australia. The Mabo decision led to the Native Title Act in 1993, which created a framework that recognizes Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander people have rights to, and interests in, certain land because of their traditional laws. It allows access to land for living, traditional purposes, and hunting or fishing" (Indimiller, 25 October 2020).

After ten years, there are 37 successful claims (21 full and 16 partial) under the Native Title act. Unfortunately, there were no successful claims in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania. Also, one successful small claim in NSW. (Foley, 98). However, the colonization has special pain for the colonized since their inheritance involves a colonial past that holds memories of defeat, subjugation, and indignity (Nelson, 30). Nevertheless, their acceptance of this complex past is essential to see themselves "...as part of an historical process, as entrusted by the past with a legacy for the future" (Shere, 93).

The writer chooses this topic because she is interested in human rights issues. In Australia, unfair treatments happen to Indigenous people. Many Indigenous people were killed by Native Police (Flood, 111). Moreover,

Indigenous children were taken away from their families due to various government policies from 1910 until the 1970s (Behrendt, 295). One of the stolen generation children states, "We were very confused as children, not knowing who we were. In the Home we were classified as white kids, but at the school we were 'niggers'" (Terszak, 13). The stolen generations' rights are then discussed in *Bringing Them Home* report in 1997. In 2008, Kevin Rudd became the first prime minister who apologized to the stolen generations (Barta, 204). Unfortunately, there are still unfair treatments happening to Indigenous people. Nowadays, police often arrest young Indigenous people. It is proven by the number of Indigenous people in youth detention, which takes up 53 percent (Raworth, 17 July 2020). The writer also realizes that human rights from the White perspective are rarely studied in literary criticism.

Karlina and Syafei (2013), in their article entitled "The White Claim in Andrew McGahan's Novel *The White Earth* (2004)," reveal the effort of claiming property rights concerning Native Title act issues. They assume that,

"The positions of the settler in Australia are threatened by this issue because Aborigine may take or claim the land again. Law and culture must base on Aborigines. For the settler, Aborigine doesn't have the right to the land, for they never build the land. The white people claim the land belongs to them" (35).

This article shows that White descendants in Australia have many ways to claim what they think is theirs. The researchers conduct the research with divides how White Australian claims it into two aspects; government and family.

This research will extend the study's scope by revealing the supremacy of White ideology, which initiate human rights violations. Moreover, this research will talk about the representation of human rights violations in the novel. The writer chooses this topic to widen knowledge from the White perspective in post-colonial literature.

Moreover, Andrew McGahan thrillingly depicts human rights violations. He delivers the story with two perspectives of White Australians, making this novel delightful to read since it contains fine detail. The writer hopes this research will enrich the readers' insight into post-colonial criticism from a White perspective about human rights violations depicted by Andrew McGahan in *The White Earth*.

Finally, the writer would discuss how White ideology affects human rights based on Said (1977). The writer also would picture how Andrew McGahan depicts violation of human rights based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. Based on this research background, the writer entitles this research as "Human Rights Violations in Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*."

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Shaheed claims that human rights have limitations by saying, "...though human rights are said to have universal validity, they originated in the West, reflect Western interests and are, therefore, a weapon of cultural hegemony or a new form of imperialism" (17 October 2018). Brown statement also supports the limitation of rights by saying,

"Therefore, say post-colonial theorists, evaluating the ability of the colonized to adhere to human rights ideals which they had no part in formulating represents yet another dehumanization of the colonial subject and a continuation of colonization in the post-colonial world" (12).

Unfortunately, the writer rarely finds human rights literary criticism from the White perspective while they are the source of the problem. At the same time, the limitation of rights shows human rights violations. Then, the writer finds out that Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth* is written by White Australian with the absence of Indigenous people, which supports Shaheed and Brown's ideas about the limitation of rights, leading to human rights violations. The writer realizes that human rights issues in the novel happen because of White ideology, as discussed in Said's *Orientalism*. The strong uphold to individual, universal, and modernity values in *The White Earth* creates human rights violations by killing, expelling, and unhearing the Indigenous people.

1.3.Review of Related Studies

Several studies have been conducted on human rights violations in Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*. Some researchers analyze *The White Earth* by McGahan with different theories. Others apply post-colonial theory but with different literary works and focuses. Unfortunately, the writer is unable to find a post-colonial perspective on human rights. Moreover, to give a contribution to the studies, the writer selects and reviews seven related studies.

The first study is an article written by Karlina and Syafei entitled "The White Claim in Andrew McGahan's Novel *The White Earth* (2004)." This study is related because it analyses the same novel but with a different theory. The researchers analyze the novel with Althusser's ideology, white supremacy, and fictional devices. They state that the character in the story, John McIvor, demands property from two aspects, government and family. John expresses his denial of the Native Title act from the government aspect with his illegal newsletters. From the family aspect, John expels his daughter because she opposes his greediness. This study helps the writer a lot in understanding the novel since it uses fictional devices. Unfortunately, this study does not provide the impacts of white supremacy.

The second study is written by Delrez entitled "Twisted Ghosts: Settler Envy and Historical Resolution in Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*." This study is related because it uses the same novel, *The White Earth*. It tells that the novel sets out Australia's traditional ghost story, which usually indicates possession. It explains that both Indigenous victims and the settlers take roles to the foundational trauma of Australia. It is to show that the settlers also belong to

the nation. Delrez states that the main character is possessed by the trauma of his culture. He adds, "McGahan writes against, and thus steps outside of, a literary tradition which celebrates mystery or mysticism so as to legitimize settler claims to belonging" (203). This study makes the writer realize that the settlers also belong to Australia even though their ancestors committed human rights violations. However, the settlers must pay for what their ancestors did because Indigenous people deserve justice.

The third study is Dolin's article entitled "Place and Property in Post-*Mabo* Fiction by Dorothy Hewett, Alex Miller, and Andrew McGahan." This study is related because it analyses the same novel but with a different theory. The researcher analyses place and property in Dorothy Hewett's *Neap Tide*, Alex Miller's *Journey to the Stone Country*, and Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*. She realizes that rights and relationship to land became a source of intense controversy between European and Indigenous Australians in the wake of the *Mabo* decision in 1992, a situation fomented by some governments and industry peak bodies' actions. She examines all foreground symbols of changing their titles and reinforces their critiques of the settler-colonial regime of property by incorporating an abandoned or decaying great house into their settings while decentring it as the privileged space of the narrative in favour of a sacred site. These novels register the paradigm shift in property law and imagine an alternative way of understanding the land. This study helps the writer widen knowledge about Indigenous people's right of land. This study would be perfect if

the researcher includes all of the human rights violations found in the novel, such as right to life, right to be heard, and right to prevent their culture.

The fourth study is by Amelya and Hafizh entitled "The Curtailment of Human Rights in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide*." This study is related because it also talks about human rights. The researcher analyses *Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh with a text-based and context-based approach. The result of this study shows that there are three aspects of the curtailment of human rights. They are education, medical service, and domicile. This study would be perfect if the authors clarified the causes of the curtailment of human rights.

The fifth study is written by Maliyana entitled "Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the Representation of the East in *Gardens of Water* by Alan Drew." This study is related because it uses the same theory, orientalism. Maliyana analyses Alan Drew's *Gardens of Water* with Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Maliyana states that the representation of non-western people and cultures confirms the orientalist point of view that puts the East and the West in a binary opposition and represents the East as inferior to the West. She also believes that Drew uses typical stereotyping in representing the East and the West in the novel, such as untrustworthy, rude, barbaric, and traditional, and also exposes the issue of patriarchy which is usually pinned into the East Culture. She finds out that this representation of the East leads to the justification of the West's imperialism and colonization toward the East. This study should have provided the causes of the stereotypes.

The sixth study is "The Representation of Indonesia as a Third World Country as Seen in *The Year of Living Dangerously* by Christopher J. Koch" by Aviseno. This study is related because it uses the same theory, post-colonialism. Aviseno analyses Christopher J. Koch's *The Year of Living Dangerously* with post-colonialism and orientalism as the theories. Aviseno states that the novel is written based on Koch's sibling experience who lived as a journalist in Indonesia in the 1960s. He also states that the research focuses on representing Indonesia's condition from political and socio-economic aspects. The study finds that western people still claim eastern people as inferior with political and socio-economic elements as the parameter. This study helps the writer to widen knowledge about the aspects of Western stereotyping Eastern countries.

The seventh study is written by Rahim entitled "The Allegory of British Colonization in the Relationship of Ovid and Tomis People in David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*." This study is related because it uses the same theory, post-colonial. Rahim analyses *An Imaginary Life* by David Malouf with mimetic, post-colonial, orientalism, and allegory. Rahim states that Ovid represents early British people in Australia, and Tomis people represent Australian Aborigines. This study helps the writer in writing about representation.

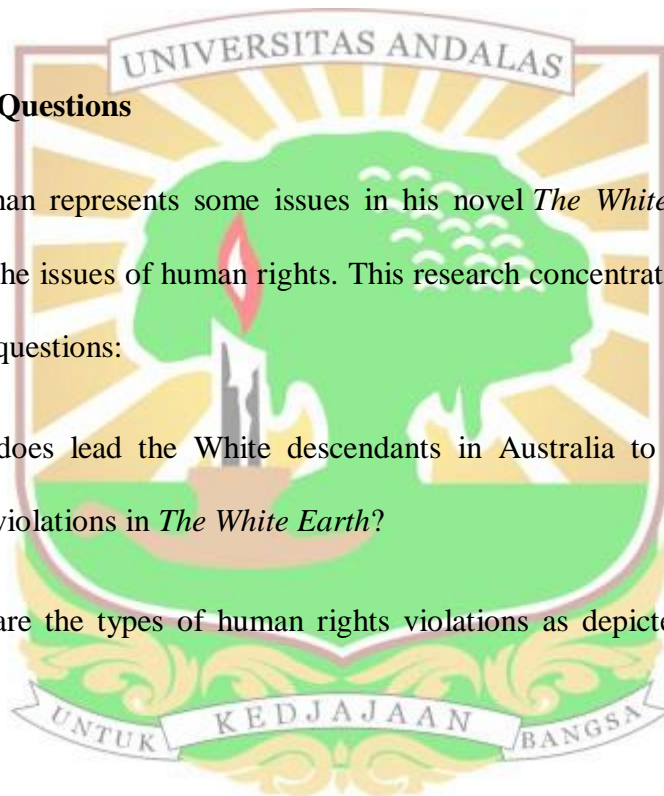
From the related studies that the writer reads and reviews, the writer desires to study *The White Earth* by Andrew McGahan with post-colonial theory. The previous studies on *The White Earth* concentrate on white supremacy in claiming the land and the foundation of Australia's ghost story. The other researchers that discuss human rights analyze their object through a text-based

and context-based approach instead of post-colonial. The other researchers that apply post-colonial theory just focus on the representation of reality in the novel. As one could see, the previous researchers have not demonstrated a post-colonial perspective on human rights, especially on McGahan's *The White Earth*. Therefore, the writer will examine the "Human Rights Violations in Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*."

1.4. Research Questions

McGahan represents some issues in his novel *The White Earth*. Among them include the issues of human rights. This research concentrates on answering the following questions:

1. What does lead the White descendants in Australia to commit human rights violations in *The White Earth*?
2. What are the types of human rights violations as depicted in *The White Earth*?



1.5. Scope of the Research

This research will focus on the post-colonial perspective on human rights in Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth*. The writer then limits this research to two discussions. Firstly, the writer will focus on revealing why the White Australian commits human rights violations as depicted in the novel. Based on

Said, the writer realizes that it is because they are extremely uphold to the values of individual, universal, and modernity. Secondly, the writer will also reveal the types of human rights violations McGahan depicts in the novel based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.

1.6.Objective of the Research

This research aims to reveal the fictional representation of human rights violations. Specifically, the objectives of this research are: to identify what lead White Australian to commit human rights violations as represented in the novel and to study the types of human rights violations portrayed in *The White Earth*.

