

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an introduction part of the research. It is divided into several parts. They are the background of the research, statement of the problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, and scope and limitation of the analysis. Each part is described as the following:

1.1 Background of the Research

Literature can be considered as an illusion of reality. Literature is used as reflection to express an imagination of human thinking. Literature is not only imitation reality, but a reality that has been interpreted by the author's life in surrounded them. As a work of art, literature has beauty to encourage the reader to read and enjoy a literature. Literature can be divided into fiction and nonfiction. The author creates a fiction works through their idea, experience, creativity and imagination that is in the form of a novel.

Novel is as a part of fiction that described about dramatized of human experiences. Reeve, 1785 in Ellis (1996: 202) point out that the novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times it was written. It can be seen that novel portrays

the activities of human life such as feeling, emotion, desire, ambition, problem, etc. One of novel shows a growing issue in society is *The Help* novel. The author usually provides theme in every novel such as race.

Race is serious problem in the world. According to Ponterotto, Shawn,O., & Paul (2006: 6) explains that race has a biological and genetic basis. In addition, Simpson and Yinger, 1985 in Ponterotto, Shawn,O., & Paul point out that race is skin pigmentation, nasal index, lip form, color distribution and texture of body hair (*ibid*). Based on the statement above, race is group or individual who have physical characteristic and biological differences from other people. Racism may be viewed as any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of his or their color (Hesburg, 1970:5). From the statement above, it explains that racism is human attitude that subordinate one person and other person seeks another person from their skin color. Differences of race cause discrimination based on skin color. Racism develops in the beginning in sixteenth century. Racism becomes a factor which caused the discrimination. In America, black women become victim of discrimination from white people. Discrimination has a very bad in African America history for

their life; for example black women get serious injustice treatment from white people. According to Allport (1954: 51) in Hengkel, John F., & Samuel L. (2006: 101) argued that discrimination is defined as a selectively unjustified negative behavior toward members of the target group that involves denying individual or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish. Based on the statement above discrimination is an action that treats a person or group unfairly. Besides, it deems black women as inferior group and powerless.

Racial discrimination is a result from the emergence of stereotypes in human beings. Stereotypes is a form of racism which relate to one's perception in assessing a person or other group's the attitude or behavior. Stereotypes was rigidly held by people as a protection against having thought about individual differences among member of hated out groups (Scheineider, 2004:10). In addition, stereotypes as a generalization about group of people whereby we attribute a defined set of characteristics to this group based on their appearance or our assumption

www.pestalozzi.ch/fileadmin/empower/why_do_we_stereotype.pdf.,(accessed on July 24, 2015). The different factors cause people doing stereotype each other. It is caused by inability and

unwilling to obtain all the information that we need to make judgment about people. Stereotypes arises because the attribute characteristics about person that it seen based on appearance and their stereotypes has not basis in fact. An example is black people. We usually deem that black women are lazy, dirty and diseased and other negative things. It is called stereotypes which be belief that group or individual have negative characteristics. Whereas, black women's behaviors or attitudes are not like stereotypes that develop from the past until present time. This assumption arises because there is no deeper communication between people to other people or group and individual in the society. Thus, it causes poor information between them. This knowledge usually comes from our parents, from our peers, and from the media (Nelson, 2009: 8). The stereotypes happens toward member of group is very harmful and bring bad effects toward black women. White people claim their race as power holding and superior.

This research focuses to analyze a novel under the title *The Help*. This novel tells about social status and racial discrimination of African-American black domestic working in white household during the Civil Rights Era in 1960s, in Jackson, Mississippi, America. At the time, black women are

still deemed as minority by white people and many black women working in the whites' home in Mississippi. This novel is written by Kathryn Stockett and release in 2009. She is an American Novelist. She was born in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi. She studied creative writing and English for her undergraduate course from University of Alabama. After that, she moved to New York City. She worked in magazine publishing and marketing for nine years. This is her first novel (Stockett, 2009: 201). She finished write this novel for five years, and finally *The Help* novel published in 2009. It is not easy for her to find agent to represent her work. Eventually, agent Susan Ramer agreed and wanted to release this novel after rejection from 60 literary agents (Calkin, 2009). This novel is very famous in America. A few months *The Help* included on *The New York Times* Best Seller list. On August, 2011 five million copies of the books have been sold in thirty five countries and use three languages. Moreover, the novel was adapted into film by Tate Taylor (Williams, 2011).

The Help is an inspiration of Stockett's own childhood. Her childhood memories are only black women as domestic help for white people that she supposed to traditional issue. She shared her childhood experiences that black women help in her

family and other Southerners. She closed with a black housekeeper, Miss Demetrie who was underprivileged and treated like a slave (Stockett, 2009: 199-200).

The Help presents about the individual experiences which portray the experiences of black women living in America become a domestic help. It depicts reality that happens toward black women in America. The black women get discrimination from their boss. This novel has been narrated of two main characters by Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson. Aibileen tells her experiences as a black maid to one of journalist, Skeeter. She is young white woman. Aibileen works for the Leefolt's family. She is a baby nurse who name May Mobley. Mobley is the first child of Leefolt's family. Aibileen gets minimum salary when she works in Leefolt's family. Her best friend is Minny Jackson who is an outspoken black maid. She has worked for longtime for Hilly Holbrook family. She is Elizabeth's friend. Minny is the second main character. She has five children. Leroy is her husband who works in a factory. He is a drunk. Miss Hilly is very cruel to Minny.

Hilly is a figure who makes problems in this novel. She tells to her friends to make separate bathroom in outside. This problem is not only separate bathroom, but also in housing,

school, hospital, library and public transportations. The author shows Abileen and Minny's home which is far from her boss' home. Miss Leefolt does discrimination to Abileen when she has to eat in the kitchen and her dining tools must be separate from the others. Miss Leefolt asks her to go home when she is sick because Miss Leefolt worries she can spread the diseases. Moreover, Minny is accused as a thief by Miss Hilly because she is a black poor. After that, Miss Hilly fires her and she works for Miss Celia. In her new job, she gets a big salary. It shows there is discrimination that white people have a stereotype against the black people but it does not Miss Celia. The white people consider black people are weak and inferior.

Racial discrimination is one serious issue that still exists until present time. It can be described as oppression of a group people based on race, color, and religion. Discrimination occurs in many aspects of life including in public service, such as in housing, public transportation, hospital, library, and education. It is strongly illustrated in this novel when white people as boss and become superior while black women as maid. In this case, white people assume that black women are dirty and have diseases. The black women have bad experiences. African Americans have suffered discrimination on ground of race,

initially through the system of slavery, and then through a pattern of exclusion and segregation, both informal and formal (Banks, 2012:66). Based on the statement above, it means that black women suffer because of racial discrimination such as they have to use separate facilities and obey every rules of white people.

It shows that in 19th century in America, black women are likely to be victimized in this society and the role white people may play in the maintenance and perpetuation of that victimization (Hooks, 1984:2). It is clear that black women become victim in society and white people as controlling a game for black women. In addition, According to Hooks (1984:1) black women was more fulfilling to be a maid, a baby-sitter, a factory worker, a clerk, or a prostitute, than to be a leisure class house wife. Based on the statement above, the condition of black women is bad. It is used to emphasize there is different social status between white people as rich and black women as poor. Black women are in the lower class and their job as a maid. Thus, they work as maid, baby sitter, clerk, factory worker, and only allowed care with their family, especially their children. Whites do not care to black women. As an example, Aibileen is

major character who works as maid and takes care of white babies.

The researcher chooses this topic to be analyzed because it is very interesting. The title of novel is interesting because it describes the whole story of the novel. Besides, *The Help* novel based on true story about racial discrimination which is very famous topic until present and the major figure is black women who always get unequal and injustice treatment. This novel is a powerful because it can demonstrate the pain experience of black women when they become a domestic help in America. In addition, the plot makes the story more alive. It can give the researcher and reader more animate and aware about social condition that happens in society, in which it forces us to think to solve this problem.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The analysis focuses on racial discrimination as represent in *The Help* novel. Racial discrimination happens because white people feel superior over black women, stereotype and segregation. Based on the background of the research above, the researcher has two questions of the research as the following:

1. What is the background of white people's stereotype over black women in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*?
2. How racial discrimination is described toward black women in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*?

1.3 Objective of the Research

1. To find out the background of white people stereotype over the black women in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*.
2. To describe racial discrimination toward black women in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research is about racial discrimination as a representation of black women in America through the novel of *The Help* written by Kathryn Stockett in 2009. The researcher hopefully that this analysis has benefit and will be useful as references, to give some contributions and additional information and enrich knowledge about literary study in the English Department, especially Muhammadiyah University Surabaya. In addition, the researcher also hope that it can be useful as input for the other researcher in analyzing *The Help* novel in different approach.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Analysis

As the topic above, this research is aimed to analyze sentences in *The Help* novel written by Kathryn Stockett in 2009. It is limited to analyze background of white people's stereotypes against black women and racial discrimination that is described toward black women as the main problem in Jackson, Mississippi in 19th century in order to make easier to readers to understand the aim of the research.