

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Humans use literature as the medium to represent life. Despite it is sometimes imaginative or imaginary, literature is always made based on real life. Literary works cannot be separated from history, such as in Indonesia, every century genre of literature is always changing, agreeing to the circumstances that occurred in that century. Sometimes most of authors or poets portray the story about events that happened in the past or any future events in their works. It depends on the imaginary and thought of the author.

Novel has become a literary work which is favored because it can tell you many things in it like circumstances of time, places, events and issues. More texts inside can make the story in the novel more exciting to read, and the narrative and storyline can make our imagination work and put ourselves in the novel itself. Nurgiyantoro (1995:35) says that to read a novel the reader is required to reconstruct the problems between characters.

The Help is a novel that tells the story about African-American maids working in White Households in Jackson, Mississippi, during the early 1960s. The novel became phenomenon since it was published for the first time. *The Help* has been published in 35 countries and three languages. As on August 2011, it has sold five million copies and has spent more than 100 weeks on The New York Times Best Seller list. Furthermore we can simply see its difference. There were so many Black writers who had written literary works where the stories mostly

about the lives of Black people in 1960s or even older than that. They had poured their thoughts by their points of view about what happened, what should have happened, and what should have not happened in their works. For example Alice Walker with her *Color Purple* and other African- American women writers like Gayl Jones with *Eva's Man*, Toni Cade Bambara with *War of the Walls*, etc. On the other hand, *The Help* of Kathryn Stockett needs to be paid by attention, because by her work we can see the point of view of White people about the Black maids because she is basically a White American girl.

Human rights become a main topic in the story where discrimination and racism frequently appear. Kathryn Stockett's with *The Help* draws that situation word by word where it chronicles events from late summer of 1962 through 1964 the time where civil rights movement was intensively formed. Stockett puts some kind of events which occur and refer to discrimination and racism such as Black maid's house should be separated far away from White people's location and in White people's house, the Black maids should not use the same toilet with the White bosses. Stockett also depicts the hard-struggles of Black women who work as maids in the house of white people. The portraying is simple but the message is clear. She explained that the Black maids to their jobs wholeheartedly but they are not paid as they should have been paid. They neglect their children in their house and they raise their boss' children.

The struggles of women in history of Civil Rights Movement were as not as men. Dingemans (2015) argued that although women's actions were vital for the Civil Rights Movement, their contributions are largely neglected in the history

books. Stockett makes her novel different because this novel is about the Black women who work as the maids under the discriminations that occurred in the 1960s. That is why the researcher chose *The Help* novel because he wanted to see and reveal the struggles of the Black women in the 1960s through this novel.

The lives of Black people in the past might not be occurred in this era because the success of the civil rights movement activists. It brought a brand new view, where there no more the separated places between Black and White, moreover America now have an African-American president for the first time in history, he is Barrack Obama. But the election of Obama as the president seems make no effect to Black women's live. According to *Black Women's Roundtable* (2004:45) in sum, Black women's lives matter. Yet, the value of their lives is often diminished in the face of institutional and cultural structures that leave them overrepresented among those who either experience violence or find themselves entangled within the criminal justice system, but it seems, underrepresented among those whom are empowered with the right of self-defense. It means that the some of the past stories are still remaining nowadays. That is why *The Help* is a readable book even though the story inside is about the 1960s, but it is still containing the present events.

Stockett makes her novel become different by the characters, where there is a White girl who wants to help all the Black maids in Mississippi, she is Skeeter. Skeeter collects all the stories and experiences from all the Black maids in order to help them by publishing. She decides to write a book detailing the African-American maids' point of view on the White families for which they

work, and the hardships they go through on a daily basis. If there were mostly stories tell that Black people tried to help their communities, this one would be different because she is a white who able to help.

Armstrong (2012) has done the same thing. He discussed about the situation of Black domestic workers in The Civil Rights Movement, it is about how Black domestic workers negotiated their personal life with their public spheres in the workplace and in the Civil Rights Movement. This includes examining the social relationships between black domestic workers and white employees, the roles they played within the Civil Rights Movement, and how those roles affected their work and personal lives.

Seawell, et al (2014) analyzed the effects of general social support and social support for racial discrimination on African American Women's Well-Being. It examined the role of general and tailored social support in mitigating the deleterious impact of racial discrimination on depressive symptoms and optimism in a large sample of African American women.

Dingemans (2015) revealed the vital roles of black women by focus on how the Civil Rights Movement is memorized and how the contributions of Ella Baker, Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hamer shed another light on the master narrative. By their works Dingemans analyzed the roles they played in the era of Civil Rights Movement.

In the story of the novel, telling the stories to Skeeter is a kind of action that they do to get their voices delivered to the white people. When the voices are delivered, there will be some reactions from the white people, those are called the

consequences towards the actions. From that explanation the researcher concludes that this study concerns to expression, language, action, and consequences. Thus, the researcher would like to uncover the effects of the voices in the novel by applying speech act and focuses on perlocutionary because there will be consequences for every action that the black maids take. As Horn and Ward (2006) say that perlocutionary is a consequence or by-product of speaking whether intended or not. Perlocutionary acts consist in the production of effects upon the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the addressee(s) or other parties.

The researcher argued that the actions and sayings of the Black maids are the voices that they have to say or express. They have to face the consequences every time they do it, but the most consequences that they faced are the risk because they are the lower class. They collected the stories to a white woman and then published it. It means that the words they put in the book are their utterances, so when the White people read the book, they may have some responses.

B. The Problems of the Study

The problems of the study were formulated in the followings:

1. What do the Black maids do and say to realize their voices?
2. What are the consequences toward the actions?

C. The Objectives of the Study

Dealing with the problems of the study, the objectives of the study were:

1. To find out how the Black maids realize their voices.
2. To find out the consequences that the Black maids get from the White people.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was based on voices of Black maids in all their utterances in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*. Voice means the actions and sayings of the Black maids while they are enslaved by the White people. And the effects of the utterances were analyzed by using perlocutionary act.

E. The Significance of the Study

The result of the study was expected to be useful and relevant theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the findings are expected to the students or literature learners, to use the findings as their references to learn about Literature especially about Voice.
2. Practically, the findings of the study are expected to be useful and relevant for the researchers who are interested in doing research about Voice in Novel or any other literary works as a basis for further study.