

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In first chapter the writer will explain about the background of study which explains further the reason why the writer chooses the issues in her research and also about her problem of study which elaborates more about the problem related to her research. In addition to that, the writer will explain about her objective of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Literature has various works which are not only in writing but also in the visual and acoustic ones. As mentioned by Glarer (1999:1-2) literature is "the aesthetics or art of writing expressions including visual and acoustic elements".

Visual and acoustic here is the element that uses the senses of sight (visual) and auditory (acoustic). Literary works that use both elements is movie. Literature and movies have the same function, for example as a medium to express feelings or as a tool to express their thoughts on something. Movie is a work of literature that is very easy to be accepted and is widely favored. Movie is also a historical record that can bring us back to a certain period. By watching a movie people will be more aware of life and its different sides. The common issue that usually appears in movie is about race.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000. Page 198) in *The Key Concepts of Post-Colonial Studies* defined Race as a term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups. Those terms

implies the mental and moral behavior of human beings. Nowadays race become the makers of human identity, especially about the skin color as mentioned by Loomba (1998. Page 105): “While color is taken to be prime signifier of racial identity, the latter is actually shaped by perception of religious, ethnic, linguistic, national, sexuals and class differences”. Here Loomba emphasized about color as the signifier of racial identity where people have whites for the Europeans, blacks for the Africans, yellow for the Asians and Reds for the Americans. This kind of differentiation creates racism in our society. Racism is a kind of discrimination which leads to skin color or race. Marshall (1992, para 20) says:

“I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust... We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.”

From that quotation the writer can see there is a relation between race and America. In the *Outline of American History* (2005, page 123-144), it is explained that America is a superpower nation that now most of the population is black immigrants or known as Afro or Negro. Historically black people have experienced many events in the achievement of freedom. They got offensive treatment of most Whites in the past, in which many blacks were employed as slaves, laborers and servants for white people (as depicted in *The Help* movie). Blacks were also treated differently from whites, for example: they got different public facilities and their rights were also restricted. This condition can be called as racism.

Eventually, they gained freedom with the establishment of Civil Rights Movement. Civil Rights Movement was intended to remove segregation and grant freedom to the blacks. However, their history is not easily separated from the black and it is still there in people's mind. Somehow because of this Black's history lead some people to prejudice easily towards the Blacks. Prejudice comes from people's mind and its usually negative thinking of feeling. According to Allport (1957, p.7): "Prejudice as an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group". This definition shows that prejudice is an aversive or hostile attitude to a person who belongs to some group without any sufficient reason and trying to know the truth.

This kind of racism and prejudice is known as Racial Prejudice, where object of the racial prejudice is usually from the Whites to the Blacks, as portrayed in *The Help and The Blind Side* movie. Racial prejudice which happens between white and black in this movie continuously appear and become interesting to be studied more. Racial prejudice can happen to anyone, but the writer here more focus on how the racial prejudice happens to blacks people in America.

Thus, the writer tries to compare two different literary works which have the same issues about racial prejudice experienced by black people in America.

After searching and examining some literary works, the writer chooses two literary works in the form of movie to be used in this study. The movies for this thesis are *The Help* and *The Blind Side*.

The movie entitled *The Help* whose time setting is 1960 tells a story of two black servants, named Aibileen and Minny, who worked in the White family in the Olemiss, Mississippi. They had worked long enough as housekeepers and their job is passed down by their elders. They got an unpleasant treatment from their employers. Until one day, a white woman of the family interviewed them. She was Eugenia Phelan (Skeeter), a news writer who wanted to write a book that tells about the lives of black people. At that time there were rules which prohibited people to write books which proposed the social equality between the whites and blacks. So they did the interview secretly.

From that story the writer can see in detail how the black people lived at the time. At the end, the book was finally printed and it received unexpected reaction from white people. However, two helpers were fired from their jobs. Here the writer will try to find some prejudice action which made by the white to the black. For the object of prejudice the writer chooses Aibileen as the black who get prejudice from the white.

As time goes, people become more aware about humanity. The law which rules about segregation between Black and White change and suddenly disappear.

This condition makes the black people lived better. They received equal treatment from White. Such as, they can go to school with white and use same books with white. As portrayed in other film whose time setting around 2000. Kind of racial discrimination and segregation not really appear in those times. When in around 1960, kind of segregation and discrimination has been legalized by the government.

The Blind Side, whose time setting is around year 2000, tells about the life of a black man who came from a poor family but he could achieve success through sport. The man's name is Michael Oher or better known as Big Mike. His life was hard, especially his childhood. He often witnessed violence in his neighborhood and he was separated from his parents and relatives. It influences his state of mind, so that he became a quiet person and he was not easy to get along with others. His life was not as happy as the kids at his age. He did not go to school, he did only possess a few pieces of clothing. In fact he did not have a home to settle down because he was parted from his family.

Even his life changed after meeting a white family who adopted him as the child of Thuoy family. He was sent to white school, in that school he still received different treatment and some prejudice from his teacher. He could not easily communicate and make good friendship with his friend at school because of his blackness. Some white people in this movie could not easily receive the black, not only for children but also for the adult. Then the writer will study about this prejudice more from Big Mike.

The main characters of these movies have the same background, i.e. African Americans. However, they have different time setting. By using those movies, it is expected that this research can reveal the issues related to racial prejudice received by black people during 1960 and 2000.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The problem of this research is how are the differences and similarities of racial prejudice experienced by two main characters of the movies *The Help* and *The Blind Side* in 1960 and 2002?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find differences and similarities of racial prejudice experienced by the main characters of the movies *The Help* and *The Blind Side* in 1960 and 2002.

