

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents five sub chapters which are required to be informed in this study, namely; background of the study, statements of the research problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Long time ago (before 1900s), there is a stereotype that women are regarded as weak person, think irrational, emotional person, and etc. It is based on the Traditional Gender Role in Tyson book, “*Traditional Gender Role* cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive” (2006:83). Therefore, women are always getting different treatment from the society, such as only men who can go to school whereas women cannot. They are expected to stay at home and learn to be good wife and mother.

Nowadays (after 1900s until now) women position are more notable than men position in the society. It is because now women can show their own aspiration to the society which used to forbidden things to do. Besides, people in the society started to change the way of thinking. They think that women are weak and cannot be equal with men but it is wrong since women try to make some movements. As an example of

women movement, many women in this world can be a leader in many countries. Such as Maria Estela Martinez Cartas de Perón, she is the first woman who could be a leader and she comes from Argentina, Megawati as the fifth President of Indonesia, also Corazon Aquino as president of Philippine, and many others.

As a reaction toward the condition of the society which regards women as weak and inferior person, some women make movement to get equality with the men, such as equality in work, in education, in politic, in social power and etc. The women movements develop since 1960's and endure until now (Showalter, 1985: 3). But, this movement is not the first movement. It is only renewed the women movement before 1960s. As stated in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, "the women's movement of the 1960s was not, of course, the start of feminism. Rather, it was a renewal of an old tradition of thought and ..." (Barry, 2009:121).

In 1960s women in America start to work in the company, but, women get lower payment than men even though women can do the same job as men do. Tyson said in her book, "paying men higher wages than women for doing the same job (if women are even able to obtain the job)" (2006:83). It shows that women get inequality in the job. In this kind of condition, women with the same ideas, experiences, and feels are bound together, which is known as sisterhood. It is very interesting to discuss

about this topic because sisterhood helps the women to struggle and strive for their rights.

As stated above, sisterhood not only bound women with same race but also different race. Because of sisterhood does not notice the skin color, the race or the class system of those women, but sisterhood tied all women together. In relation to that, sisterhood among black women can be taken into example. Sisterhood among black women is tied based on their same experiences and feeling. Black women experience many bad treatments from their master (white people). For example, black women regarded as a thief when white people lose their jewelry even though it is unsure that black women who took the jewelry.

Black women also treated as inferior person by their husband. Black men like to hit black women repeatedly when they are drunk. Actually the relationship between white and black women long time ago are not like nowadays (white and black can have better relationship, even they can be friends). It is because black people always regarded as lower class and inferior people by the white people. Many reasons that make white and black women are separated, such as black people always be a maid or helper in white's house. Besides, black people or black women do not believe to the white women, because black women think white people are evil who always treat black people as subordinate. Even though between white and black women have contrast in some situations and things, however, sisterhood can tied white and black women as friends.

Regarding the interesting topic about sisterhood, *The Help* a novel written by Kathryn Stockett has succeeded to attract many readers attention. It is proved by this novel which becomes best seller and get many awards and honors that this novel gets, such as *New York Times* Best Seller (as a fiction book in 2009 and 2011), Townsend Prize for Fiction in 2010, Christian Science Monitor Best Book (as a fiction book in 2009), International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award Longlist in 2011, and many more. Some of readers state that this novel is a great book. For example is a statement from Dorothea Benton Frank, “A story that made me weep as I rejoiced for each of humanity’s small but steady triumphs over hate and fear. I will never forget this wonderful book” (Stockett, 2010).

However, sisterhood was not a common for women with the different race in around 1960s. As the statement before that white people treated black people as inferior and they only appropriate as maids or worker. Nevertheless, the author tries to shows to the readers that it is possible for the women characters in the novel to be tied together and make improvement for their life. From the white woman character named Skeeter, the author represents a woman that has different characteristics with her white friends. She has a dream to be a writer although other white women in her society only dreams to be a wife of successful men and have many children. However, she carried out her own movement by writing a book. A book that needs black people (African American people) helps to share their experiences as a black one of slave, maid or help in white

women house. With the help from Aibileen and Minny (both of them are maids of Skeeter's close friends), Skeeter can get at least twelve black maids who want to share their experiences in the book. It is because between black women there is a solid relationship or called as sisterhood. Afterwards, Skeeter and Miss Celia can be friend with the black women in the novel. Therefore, it is very interesting to discuss about sisterhood depicted in *The Help*.

Based on the previous statement, this study will use feminism theory to analyze the novel. This theory is chosen because this study discusses about sisterhood among women characters. Sisterhood among women characters becomes very interesting topic from this novel. The meaning of sisterhood based on Maggie Humm in Imaniar is the same ideas or experiences that women have and it will bind them into a relationship without notice their class, race, or their origin. Then, the differentiation will disappear between them because of the equalization. (2009:5). Sisterhood between women will make them strong than before, because they have similarity in their differentiation (race, class, skin color, etc.), it can be the same ideas or experience that they have.

Since discussion on women movement or feminism is very interesting, there have already been some studies that discuss about feminism. Those are, first is Natalia Fontes de Oliveira (2011). In her study, she discussed about the sisterhood among women characters with the different race. Second is Syarifah (2013), her study focused on the

main female character by using radical feminism theory. The last, Jenny Sanyoto (2001), she focused her study on the search for self-identity of main women character use feminism theory. While, this study gives more emphasize on sisterhood among women characters in *The Help* novel. The first study have same topic with this study, but the data which are analyzed is different. The second and the third study only have similarity in the theory covering the study.

1.2 Statement of Research Problems

Based on the background of study, there are two statements of research problems that discuss about sisterhood among women characters in *The Help*, those are;

1. How is sisterhood among the women characters portrayed in *The Help*?
2. What are the effects of sisterhood among women depicted in the novel?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the statements of research problems above, the aims of this study are:

1. To explain the sisterhood among the women characters.
2. To elaborate the effects of the sisterhood among women characters.

1.4 Significances of the Study

From this study, hopefully it give contribution for the next writer in analyzing novels using theory about feminism. This study uses feminism theory, since this novel explains about sisterhood among the women characters in the novel. Moreover, practically, this study give addition understanding about sisterhood for the readers especially students of English Study Program of University of Trunojoyo Madura.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is focused on the feminism theory especially on the discussion about sisterhood among the women characters in the novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. Furthermore, this study is limited on the utterances of the three main women characters and the utterances of the supporting women characters.