

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Literature is usually defined as expression of human in writing form. Klarer (1) says that in most cases, literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word.

Expanding the statement above, one work of literature cannot always be said to have merely pure imagination of the author who creates the work, but it sometimes contains something beyond imagination, in this case, fact or reality that really happens in life. Put simply, what is contained in one literary work does not always come from the world of the author's imagination, but also from real life in which the author lives in. It can be in the form of experiences that the author experience and also phenomena that happens in the author's life.

Regarding statement above, factual writing can still be called literature as long as the writing form has unique things. Eagleton (2) states that literature is definable not according to whether it is fictional or imaginative but it uses language in peculiar ways.

One of the kinds of literary works that the writer is interested in is novel. Novel is normally a prose work of quite some length and complexity which attempts to reflect and express something of the equality or value of human experience or conduct (Taylor 46). When it

comes to the question of why the writer is interested in such form of literature, it is because the story in the novel can give the reader a lot of knowledge such as portrait of human's character, message which the author want to represent through the story, and conflicts or social condition that happens. Even sometimes, the problems which happen in the novel are real ones.

One of novels that is worth reading and analyzing from some aspects entitles *Mean Spirit*. *Mean Spirit* was written by Linda Hogan who is a Native American writer. Thus, literary works written by her are mostly about Indian People. *Mean Spirit* is Linda Hogan's first novel and one of the Pulitzer Prize finalists. The genre of this novel is historical fiction. It means that the background of the story in *Mean Spirit* is inspired by incident in the past. According to Abrams (94) Literary prose narratives in which the fiction is to a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts are often referred to by compound names such as "fictional biography," the *historical novel*, and the *nonfiction Novel*.

Mean spirit tells about life of Hill Indian in Oklahoma in 1920s. Indian people lived with traditional way and they were still conservative in education and thought. It could be seen from the way they fulfilled what they need. Their daily necessities come from nature. For example, the use of rice field without giving bad effect to the environment. It was influenced by their belief. They were still adhere animism. It meant that they believed that the voice of nature, especially river, was really

important. So, all of message which they got from river must be heard and must be done in order to get better life than before. The message of river voice was like an obligation for Indian people. It was proven when they chose Lila Blanket as the chosen representative among the people of Hill Indian to hear all of message from the river and deliver message's meaning to the others.

“Her Mother, Lila Blanket was a river prophet which meant that she was a listener to the voice of water, a woman who interpreted the river's story for her people. A river never lied. Unlike Humans, it had no need to distort the truth and she heard the river's voice unfolding like its water across the earth.” (Linda Hogan: 05)

From that statement, it could be concluded that word *prophet* shows Lila here as messenger between Hill Indian people with river. In addition, river here is one of the sources to get a message which the people of Hill Indian made as guidance.

One important message from the river was that the children of Hill Indian must live in Watona. It must be done in order to prevent Hill Indian from the destruction done by white men. A message of river was like an obligation for them. So, with worried feeling and buried in great sadness, Lila tried to sincerely ask her daughter, Grace Blanket, go to Watona.

Life in Watona was really different. Watona was full of glamorous and modernistic. White men were the controller of city. As a major group, the hegemony was dominated by white men. The rule of nation was also authorized by white men. One of the rules was about the places where people of Hill Indian would live in. They only got

Allotment land. It meant that Hill Indian could live there and take benefits from it but they could not sell the land.

From the statement, it was known that discrimination happened to the people of Hill Indian that was done by the white men. The conflict between white man and Hill Indian emerged when Grace Blanket got Allotment land which had great potency in business; there was plenty of oil there. When White men knew about it, they tried to destroy and evicted all ways with some intrigues. White men did that to get all profit and benefits from that land. So, the differences between white man and Indian are flashier.

Mean Spirit is an interesting novel. It is because the novel can show the reader the portrait of life of two groups of people in Oklahoma. They are Indian as marginal and White people as mayor. Both of them have a lot of difference such as culture, belief, style, social status, knowledge and thought. It also makes the reader know the intrigue of people if they have big passion and obsession. Besides that, the interesting thing of this novel is increasing of empathy and awareness that all human have the same rights without inequality in social, beliefs and groups.

Interesting things above make the writer wants to criticize and analyze *Mean Spirit* novel. The writer is sympathetic on postcolonial and conflict theory. It is because there are so many conflicts which happen in the story. The conflict here is not only happen between individual and individual or personal with personal but also between two ethnics, they are Indian and White Man. The conflicts can be included

into some categories. The first is about beliefs between them in which white people have adhered Christianity and Indian are still animism. The second conflict is about Racism in which both of them have different thought and behaviors. The third is about politics such as financial and authority. The last one is about culture. All of conflicts happen because of some reason. It can happen because of the white men as the majorities in Watona want to rule that location and they want to evict all of Indian from there. Besides that, conflict also can happen because there is discrepancy. Discrepancy is caused by the difference of human's group. In this novel, the conflict is shown by white men and Indian. White man feels superior because all of reins in their hand whereas Indian will be oppressed and they feel that they have no strength because they are minority there. Because of that, the clash will happen and it makes discrimination, violence and massacre to the Indian as a marginal or subordinate group although they are actually native people.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

- 1.2.1 What are factors of conflict that happened between white man and Indian?
- 1.2.2 What kind of conflicts that happened between white man and Indians?
- 1.2.3 What is the impact of that conflict for Indian's life?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Related to statement of the problem above, the objectives of study intend to describe the followings:

- 1.3.1 To know about the factor of conflicts in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*
- 1.3.2 To know the kind of the conflicts which are portrayed in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*
- 1.3.3 To know and identify the impact or influence of conflict especially to Indian People in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*

1.4. Scope and Limitation

In order to make this research focus, the writer gives the scope and limitation for the discussion. The scope of this discussion concerns about conflicts that happen in the novel.

Besides that, the writer also limits the discussion in social condition which happens. They are racism and exploitation which are done by white people to Indian because of some factors. The factors are different race, different culture, different religion and politics and different life.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Conducting this research, the thesis writer hopes that by exposing how the marginal people suffer, the readers will be aware of discrimination and racism that happen in society.

The last but not the least, the writer expects that this research can be useful for the readers or other researchers who are interested in this novel. Particularly, those, especially the students of English Department, who are interested to conduct researches related to the one that the thesis writer made but in different point of view. It is because there are a lot of focuses or

point of view in *Mean Spirit* which can be analyzed or criticized. It could be about the problems or conflicts that happen in the story, like racism or discrimination.

1.6 Research Method

This research discusses how the research to do. It has divided into four main sub chapters. They are research design, source of data, procedure of data collection, and procedure of data analysis.

1.6.1 Research Design

This research uses a library research based. It also uses Conflict approach and Post Colonial Theory to deal with the data. It is because the researcher uses Conflict theory especially conflict of groups by Roy Eidelson and Judith Eidelson because the conflict happens in two races. They are white man and Indian people. It also uses post colonial theory.

1.6.2 Source of Data

The source of data in this research to analyzed come from the text of the novel with titled *Mean Spirit* written by Linda Hogan. The data are taken by quoting the phrases, Sentences, paragraphs, and dialogues which is important in the novel and related to the problem of the study.

1.6.3 Procedure of the Data Collection

There are some steps which must be done by the researcher to collect the data. The researcher collects the data through library technique to make description of the data collection process is clear. So, the researcher uses some steps to do that. First, reading and finding Linda Hogan *Mean Spirit novel* to know and understand about the story and the content in the

novel. Second, selecting the data based on the problem of the study; in this study, the researcher limits on the social condition which is happen in the novel.

1.6.4 Procedure of the Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher represents analysis of the data. It is divided into some steps. First, the researcher classify some phrases, sentences, paragraph and dialogue which show some conflicts between white people and hill Indian. Then, the researcher will connect the theory with the data. The last, the researcher tries to interpret and make thesis statement from the analysis of data.

1.7 Key Terms

1.7.1 Postcolonial : The critical analysis of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers (Abrams 236).

1.7.2 Conflict : A state of discomfort or stress caused by an individual's experiencing two or more desires or needs that are incompatible (Encyclopedia Americana).

- 1.7.3 Racism : A system involving cultural message and institutional policies and practice as well as the beliefs and actions of individual (Tatum126)
- 1.7.4 Hegemony : Political rule or domination especially in relation between states (Williams 108).