

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Boon defines that literature is a creative and universal form of expression that indicates the emotional, spiritual, or intellectual concerns of humanity (214). So, the world presented and represented in literature is adopted from the writer's experience of a social and historical reality (Dani and Mohen *ed* 276). Therefore, these explanations lead to an argument of Dawson toward literature, that literature as a primary artistic product has a creative sense and critical commentary (37). Emotional, intellectual, sense of humanity, social and historical reality will be seen in a work of literature. Commonly, the work of literature can be said as literary work.

Literary work is an integral unity of some elements which construct it. The elements which construct a literary work can be categorized into two aspects: form and content aspect. In this case, Budi Darma through a book *Babad Panjalu*, states that the form aspect of literary work is a way of the author in delivering his ideas and concepts. Then, the content aspect of literary work is the idea and concept that the author intends to deliver (Rosyadi, Kusumah, Aswan, and Udansyah 219). Therefore, there are some kinds of literary work, like drama, poetry, and prose that are used to deliver the ideas and concepts of the author.

In general, literary work is divided into several genres, they are drama, poetry, and prose. As Bloemendal, Eversmann, and Strictman, drama is a form of composition which is designed for performance in a theatre, where actors take the roles of the characters to perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue (1). It also involves a presentation of a situation which tells a story in the term of some kind of physical action (Hartley and Ladu 1). Therefore, drama is the practice of a written work of literature.

The further kind of literary work is poetry. According to Runco and Pritzker, that poetry is the oldest form of literature in which it is an arrangement of words in verse, and always rhythmical and rhymed (409). It is also made up of a distinctive form which uses short sentences in its lines, and contains of rhythmic pattern, rhyming words, and word repetition (Cowen and Cohen 407). As one of genre of literary work, for Webster through Lawrence's book, argues that poetry also functions to tell a story and express any kind of emotion, idea, or state of being (149). Therefore, poetry is a beautiful language arranged systematically and with specific pattern within, in which it tells a story designed by the existence of emotion and idea of the poet.

The last genre of literary work is prose. Mardalena defines prose as writing that is organized in sentences and paragraphs (1). It is also a free composition which is not banded with the principle of poetry, and it is usually used to describe an evidence and idea (Intisa 37). Therefore, prose is a piece of creative writing, in which its language is not in verse form, but it has a similar value. It makes the literary work in prose tends to be long as in novel.

Novel is a kind of prose. Jassin through Nurgiyantoro in Wicaksono's book, claims that novel is a work containing a story which plays within human world. Semi and Atas argue in the same sense of understanding that novel expresses a focus on life, and expresses a deeper aspect of humanity which is delivered smoothly (Wicaksono 76). Somehow, novel can also have its setting on a period of history and it can attempt to convey the spirit, manners, and social condition of a past time. This is what actually called as a historical novel (Kuiper 33).

One of the novels which has a relation to the historical events in the past time is *A Lesson Before Dying* which is composed by Ernest J. Gaines. The author, Ernest J. Gaines, was however one of Black American writers whose works were famous with the life of Black Americans. Ernest J. Gaines was born on January 15, 1933 on the River Lake Plantation nearby New Roads, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, and grew up there when the Southern society was racially segregated. As a boy, he worked in the plantation fields nearby Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He had been forced to work long hours toiling in the fields, and had arrived in California with just the skimpiest of education (Abrams 13).

A Lesson Before Dying is an America novel which is composed by Black American author. This novel attempts to reveal and fully presents the life of black Americans in the Southern. Ernest J. Gaines brings to the novel the same rich sense of place, the same deep understanding of the human psyche, and the same compass for people and their struggle (<http://aalbc.com>).

The novel tells about Black Americans life in the Southern, whom were called as Free Blacks. Free Blacks lived in the Southern, and were treated as second civil. As the novel told, that Black people in the novel had indicated that they had a right to live like other White people. It is proven in the novel that Blacks had been served proportionally by Whites who handed a wisdom. They can interact and meet the Whites, getting an education, being on societal participation, owing property, working on plantation, and getting a job as soldier unlike Black Slaves in the North.

The novel *A Lesson Before Dying* has a historical background that is related with the slavery and the abolition of slavery. It happens when the Civil War era. According to Hirsch Jr, American Civil War happened in 1861 to 1865. It was a conflict of the Union which was led by the President Abraham Lincoln with America Confederate States which was led by the President Jefferson David. The America Confederate State was a state of the United States which was constructed by the Southern states of America (255). In the case of Civil War, The Southerners which were a part of the Confederate State, claimed that the underdevelopment of the Southern was caused by the increase of North mastery. On the other hand, the Northerners which came from the Union, claimed that slavery was the first factor of Southern degradation. Whereas. Slavery was seen as very important for Southern economic.

Slavery and the abolition of slavery in the United States were seen to be the factors which acknowledged the American Civil War happened.

Defenders of the Union then went to war against the Confederacy, in which opened the way for antislavery people to demand the complete abolition of slavery (Nolen 1). Therefore, when Abraham Lincoln decided that slavery was to be banned, the land owners in the Southern resisted it. The land owners in the South planned to secede from the United State government or the Union which was at the time led by the President Abraham Lincoln.

In April 12, 1861, the Civil War was started by the shoot of cannon. In April 14, 1861, the Confederate State was success to occupy Sumter Fort in South Carolina. The collapse of Sumter Fort made some states like Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina affiliated with the Confederate State (Turner 31). Due to this, the President Abraham Lincoln commanded a big recruitment of war volunteer and blockade surrounding the Confederate State area (Thompson and Jones 40).

In July 1851, a war with a big scale between the United Stated army and the Confederate State happened in Bull Run River. It ended with a conquest of the Confederate State army (Bradford 109). Michelle and Howard told that due to the collapse of the Union in the war, the United States parliamentary proclaimed a resolution that the war which opposed the Confederate State did not intend to abolish slavery, but it was done to keep the integrity of country (6). This resolution was proposed to make the slave states which still became the part of the Union, were supposed to affiliate with the Confederate State.

The American Civil War resulted myriad of impacts like the abolition of slavery system, the nation was reunited and the Southern states were not allowed to secede, the Southern was placed under the military rule and had to apply for readmission to the Union, the Federal government proved its supreme over the states, reconstruction (a plan to rebuild America after the war), and the industrialization began (<http://www.socialstudieshelp.com>).

In addition, almost all slaves who had been born in North America still strove for surviving in subjection. As in the fact that ninety five percent of slaves who lived in rural places, usually raised cotton, sugar, tobacco, and rice. The size of the master's plantation influenced the slaves' life (Schneider & Schneider 78). Although they were employed in their plantation, some masters gave them Saturday off, and almost all their masters allowed them free Sunday. This dispensation might be sufficiently comfortable for them to do the tasks of their daily life like hunting, fishing, gardening, and taking a care of their health. On the other hand, slaves' most important holidays happened just before harvesting and at Christmas (101).

The life of Blacks as slaves in a life of Whites faces imbalance. Sometimes, slaves resisted, and that they used their skills in everything which could protect themselves and expanded their independence within the system ruled by Whites. They also asserted their freedom by discovering the ways to exercise their choice, and reclaimed their own identities, and cultures. It was proven that slaves established their families, constructing churches, choosing community leaders, and excavating a realm of independent economic

program. They cared for each other, covering each other, and supporting each other when a trouble came. That was the way they possibly did to survive within the life and system of Whites (98).

As referring to the novel, *A Lesson Before Dying* is somehow telling a portrait of Southern Blacks' life. The Blacks in the Southern were called as free Blacks. They were treated in different way. They were sometimes hanged for minor offense, and judges which sentenced those who accused of minor crimes to slavery. In addition, when a free Black left some states, he or she was not allowed to return to the origin place. Luckily, it was unbelievable that White and free Blacks often did a business one another like harvesting crops, founding churches together, and joining in spousal unions (Hargis and Griffin 115). It indicated that the free Black in the Southern did not get fully a bad treatment by Whites, but they also had a better life when they interacted with Whites. It is because of their uncertain status in the Southern.

Over all the comfortable life of Blacks as free Blacks in the Southern, a discourse of discrimination can still be identified in the novel. Although free Blacks in the novel experience a sufficient good life, but they are still under the mastery and law of Whites. As the story in the novel runs, Blacks are still restricted by a law. A restriction of law is in the interaction between Blacks and Whites, getting an educational facilities, and rights on societal participation. It is in line with the argument of Freeman who states that free Blacks experienced the restriction of law in educational, economic

opportunities, political and legal rights (465). Thus, these cover how the restriction of law in some previous cases are evidently portrayed.

A historical fact proves that Blacks in the Southern have no right to vote. According to Bentley, Brindenthal, and Yang say that free Blacks in the Southern may not have been slaves, but they held an uncertain status, because they were not White (96). Uncertainty of status leads them to think whether they are slaves or free blacks. Thus, it is explained that Blacks in the Southern live in the nuance of discrimination.

The discrimination towards Black Americans in the Southern leads to the discourse of hegemonic discrimination. It means that Black who were treated as in the novel received the treatments done by White Americans within the novel. Hegemonic discrimination is adopted from the theory of hegemony by Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. One of Gramsci's ideas is the concept of ideological domination. It is said that when one ideology dominates, it suppresses any other ways of explaining reality. In his idea, Gramsci adds another dimension of hegemony, that is a domination by consensus. A consensus contributes an equilibrium for the social maintenance (Saifuddin 326).

Dealing with the issue in the novel, the hegemony of White Americans in the Southern can be identified in the aspect of law, which will then influence to other aspects of life. In the novel, it can be seen that the Black Americans did not have any rights to acclaim for their rights, and it is seen when one of Black American Jefferson was sentenced to death by

electrocution, and that the other closed Blacks, like Grant Wiggins, Miss Emma (Jefferson's godmother), Reverend Ambrose, and Tante Lou could not acclaimed for their rights as civil to declare their respond to the decision of the trial to sentence Jefferson through electrocution.

Therefore, it is true that the Blacks were allowed to meet Whites, but there is a restriction that Blacks should obey. The Blacks, as in the story within the novel, when Grant Wiggins, Miss Emma, and Tante Lou visited Henry Pichot's house, they passed through the back door, by which the back door was directed to the kitchen of the house. These cases lead us to the issue which goes beyond the sufficient comfortable life of Blacks.

By knowing the issue of both Black and White Americans in the novel, the writer intends to present a research on Black and White Americans social matter in the novel by the proposed title *Hegemonic Discrimination as Seen in Ernest J. Gaines's A Lesson Before Dying*. The novel is chosen due to an interesting part which is available in the novel that although Black people in the Southern within the novel were treated as being discriminated by White people, the Black people receive it without any rebellion. They do so, because they realize that the surviving under the hegemony of Whites tastes sufficiently comfortable for their life in the Southern.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of the study above, there are several problems arisen in this research, which will ease readers to understand the

discussion in this research. The problems are formulated in the following statements:

- 1.2.1 How is the treatment of White Americans towards Black Americans as narrated in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*?
- 1.2.2 How do Black Americans accept the treatment of White Americans in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*?
- 1.2.3 How is the effect of the treatment toward Black Americans in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

The purpose of the study will be classified as in the following purposes:

- 1.3.1 To identify White Americans' treatment to Black Americans in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*.
- 1.3.2 To identify Black Americans' acceptance on White Americans' treatment in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*.
- 1.3.3 To identify the effect of White Americans' treatment toward Black American in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying*.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of The Study

The scope of the study is made to make the discussion of the research clear and systematic. Therefore, the research stands on the scope or coverage area of hegemonic discrimination seen in Ernest J. Gaines's *A Lesson Before*

Dying. The hegemonic discrimination is chosen due to the fact that the setting of the novel is the America Southerner, in which free blacks are hegemonized.

Furthermore, the limitation of the study is trying to make the research focused on the specific discussions which the writer chooses. Therefore, the study intends to give a limitation of the research on the discussion of hegemonic discrimination in the aspect of law as seen in Ernest J. Gaines's *A Lesson Before Dying*.

1.5 Significance of The Study

Through an analysis towards Black and White life in one population which depicts hegemonic discrimination, it is expected that this research would give readers an understanding on the life of human with different race and nation in a state. With an expectation, that this research would be much more benefit for readers to respect other people who come from different race and nation who live in a state of a large population belongs to the host. Thus, finally this research with the title *Hegemonic Discrimination as Seen in Ernest J. Gaines' A Lesson Before Dying* is supposed to be useful for further study in literature of English Department Faculty of Letters and Humanities State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya in broadening the knowledge of literature.

1.6 Method of The Study

In this part of thesis, method of study tries to discuss about how the research is done scientifically. Therefore, there are several steps used in this

study, they are research design, source of data, procedure of data collection, and procedure of data analysis.

1.6.1 Research Design

Due to the need of analyzing the object discussed, the study applies descriptive qualitative research method. According to Raco, the data in descriptive research will concern to text (60). This research does not take any concern on data counting, but it concerns on the interpretation and analysis on the object with some helps of library research. Thus, the study applies for qualitative research method based on library research.

1.6.2 Source of Data

Due to the methodology of research used is qualitative research method, therefore, the data will be taken from the text of the novel entitled *A Lesson Before Dying*. The research will then take some quotations in the novel involving both dialogue and prologue which is related to the statement of problem.

1.6.3 Technique of Data Collection

Technique of data collection is a strategic step in a research. In this case, the technique of data collection can be done in various settings; as sources and as procedures. As Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman's statement quoted by Sugiyono that "the basic methods relied on by qualitative researchers for information gathering contains at least several procedures are participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interview, and document review" (225). Therefore, due to the methodology of research used,

1.6.4.2 Analyzing the impact of hegemonic discrimination as narrated in the novel *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines

1.6.4.3 Making an overall brief conclusion according to the analysis.

1.7 Definition of Related Key Terms

In this phase, the research cedes several clues which will help the readers to understand the topic and problem discussed in this thesis. The clues are formulated in the form of key term in which it would be defined clearly in order to be a useful point in reading the thesis. Therefore, those related key terms would be in the following below.

Hegemony : The domination of one group over another, and often supported by legitimating norms and ideas (Budd 2013).

Discrimination: Imbalance treatment towards individual and group based on race, nationality, religion, or other social classes (<http://www.gurupendidikan.com>).