

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the background of the study, problem of the study, limitation of the study, purposes of the study, and the significances of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Slavery is a serious problem that happened in many countries since long time ago, one of them is in America. America has slavery history since the 16th century that happened to Black people. They initially employed Black people to help them manage plantations, especially helping in doing things that tend to be tough. Some of them began to be willing to employ Black people so that many victims fell from time to time because of the inhumanly work.

Due to the increasing number of slavery casualties in America, the government issued a regulation to abolish all types of slavery that existed in 1807. In 1808 it was hoped that this regulation could begin to be implemented and the death toll would decrease, but the reality was very different. The slavery was still occur and even increased, especially in South America until it caused a civil war in 1861-1865 (Ridho et al., 2018).

Slavery is a work system, with only brief interruptions to eat, where the work takes up most of one's time (Foner, 2013). This human exploitation in America that lasted for nearly 200 years has awakened the slaves to fight for their rights. The social situation related to the dissatisfaction and despair of slavery that occurs is caused by the status imposed by compulsion and reforms in the social hierarchy

prevailing in the southern white circle which states that slaves have the right to be owned (Gray et al., 2004). Many stories about slavery have been told in written form, and one of them is the novel *12 Years a Slave*.

The novel *12 years a slave* tells the story of deception, violence, and heartless neglect of human rights. Solomon Northup is one of the few survivors to tell this story. It was published in 1853, which was the year Solomon Northup saved. This novel is not the first exposure written by a former slave because in 1825, fugitive William Grimes published his story to raise money to buy a way out of his job. Meanwhile the best-known slave memoir is the *Life Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, who has emerged in 1845. However, Northup's disclosures made his book an important document for the abolition of slavery in the last decade of American slavery (Wilson, 2014).

The author of a literary work must have their own ideology or thoughts about something they write and pour into a literary work. Ideology in literary works according to Marx is awareness, belief, ideas, and ideas that can be trusted by society in relation to the form of material activities of society. This is where literary works are then placed as an ideological production system for a particular class. Apart from that, everyone's ideology is different. It is in literary works that ideologies are stated in the form of a series of sentences which are then interpreted by readers according to their respective understandings and judgments.

Similar with the author, the readers certainly have other points of view of a literary work. What one reader gets is not necessarily the same as another reader. This is due to differences in the way a person perceives something, especially in work. A literary work can produce various meanings and understandings of various

things. This is in line with Derrida's statement in his deconstruction theory of meaning in a work. According to Derrida, the emphasis of deconstruction is about the plurality of meaning. In other words, text may include many meanings that are different from one another or in similar characteristics (Balkin, 1995-1996).

The novel *12 Years a Slave* got so many positive responses or reaction from its readers out there. It sold 30,000 copies in its first year and became a bestseller. In 1960s, it became a bestseller again after extensive research by Eakin. Moreover, some parties think that this story is very interesting to know by many people. Steve McQueen even tries to transform this story of novel into the movie with the same title. The movie released in 2014 and became one of successful movie. *12 Years a Slave* was labeled the best film of 2013 by several media outlets and critics, and it gained over \$187 million on a production budget of \$22 million. *12 Years a Slave* was later named the 44th greatest film since 2000 in a BBC poll of 177 critics. It such a presumes that Solomon Northup's slavery story is very inspirative and can be the role model for people who is still struggling with their problem (Lacob, 2014).

However, many readers perhaps forgot to pay attention to the cause of the slavery that change Solomon Northup's life. The researcher sees that there is something wrong with this story, especially the image of Solomon Northup as the struggling person as pictured in the novel.

In general, deconstruction is a way to read the hidden meaning behind the existing concepts, in this case the text. Deconstruction encourages to find something that has not received attention and to release it from something that is considered universal. According to Sutisno (2017, cited from Umar Junus, 1996:109) views

that deconstruction as a new perspective in literary research. Deconstruction shows that in every text there is always an assumption that is considered to be absolute. Whereas, presumption is always contextual, does not refer to the final meaning.

A text in the deconstruction's view will always present many meanings, so that the text can be very complex. The meaning in a text can be very complex. This allows the reader to guess meanings. Meaning is plural, alive and developing. Deconstruction leaves the text ambiguous and does not challenge all possibilities. (Tasnim, 2014)

Therefore, the researcher is interested to deconstruct the 12 Years a Slave ideal meaning or in Derrida's term is *eidōs*. This study is aimed to give another perspective in defining the story of Solomon Northup. Therefore, from the explanation above, the researcher had conduct a research with the title "Eidos Deconstruction of 12 Yearsa Slave Novel by David Wilson"

1.2 The Problem of the Study

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the problem of the study as follows:

1. What were the *eidōs* of the novel 12 Years a Slave by David Wilson?
2. What were the *eidōs* deconstruction of the characters in the novel 12 Years a Slave by David Wilson?

1.3 The Limitation of the Study

To prevent the extension of the study in this research, the researcher limits the problem about the *eidōs* of the five characters of the novel 12 Years a Slave by

David Wilson, that are: Solomon Northup, Eliza, Mr. Ford, and Bass, because those characters were reflect the title of the study.

1.4 The Purposes of the Study

Based on the problems that the researcher mentioned above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To know the *eidos* of the novel 12 Years a Slave.
2. To know the *eidos* of the characters in the novel 12 Years a Slave.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The researcher hopes that this research will give a good effect. The researcher divided the significance in this study into the theoretical and practical uses.

1. Theoretically, the researcher hoped that this research can be useful for the next researcher as a reference to help their research in order to make their research better.
2. Practically, the researcher hoped that this research can be useful to other as additional information and knowledge about deconstruction or *eidos*.