

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Secret Life of Bees is a movie about race relation. The screenplay of this film is adapted from the novel with the same title written by Sue Monk Kidd. Sue Monk Kidd is an American novelist and author of non-fiction who was born on August 12, 1948 in Albany. She is most famous for the novel *The Secret Life of Bees*. This novel becomes nomination for the Orange Prize England and it chosen as Good Morning America's Read This Book Club. Other novel that filmed is *The Mermaid Chair* (2005). She also writes the books such as *God's Joyful Surprise* (1988), *When the Heart-Waits* (1990), *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (1996) and *Traveling with Pomegranates: A Mother-Daughter Story* (2009). It has been noted that Sue Monk Kidd has written two novels and four books.

The Secret Life of Bees movie is directed by Gina Prince Bythewood, an America director and screenplay by Gina Prince Bythewood too. She was born on June 10, 1969 in America. Bythewood lives in South California with her husband, Reggie Bythewood. Movie by Gina Prince Bythewood are *Love and Basket ball* (2000), *Disappearing Acts* (2000) and *The Secret Life of Bees* (2008).

The Secret Life of Bees is a movie about a young white girl, Lily Owens. The movie opens in 1964, during the civil rights movement. Lily is

fourteen years old; she has a father and no mother. The first scene is opened with Lily's voiceover, "I killed my mother when I was four years old, that's what I know about my self. She was all I wanted and I took her always. Nothing else much mattered". In the night, Lily sees many bees in her room and she tells her father. Her father can't believe and yells at her to go back to bed. Frustrated, Lily runs to their peach tree and digs up a box she buried there. The box contains her mother's gloves, a small photograph of mother and a flat wood carving of the Black Marry or Madonna.

The next morning, Rosaleen the black housekeeper surprises Lily with a cake for 14th birthday. On TV, they see that the civil rights bill passed. Rosaleen says to T-Ray that she is going to take Lily to town to buy a training bra. When Rosaleen and Lily walk down town, they are confronted by three racist men who result Rosaleen and ask her, if she can spell her name. Rosaleen pours her jar of spit to spell out her name on their feet. She is beaten up and arrested. Suddenly, the police are invited Rosaleen to the hospital colored word. Lily goes to the hospital colored word to find Rosaleen. They run away to a town where Lily's mother was thought to have once lived called Tiburon. They find a honey jar with the same picture of the Virgin Marry that Lily had. They are leading to the house of August Boatwright on her sisters, June and May Boatwright. Boatwright's family who made the honey jars with Black Mary's picture. Lily questions August as to why she uses black Mary's picture. August claim that Mary was set by God to help Africa-Americans have peace and quality.

One day, Lily meets Zachary Taylor, a young black man in the Boatwright's house and they become friends. They go to town for delivering honey. After that they decide to watch the movie together, but Lily sits in the colored section. Suddenly, the police are invited Zach to the police office. The police say to Lily that she is Negro lover. Lily shows August the picture of her mother and August recognizes her as Deborah Owens. Lily says to August that she was killing her mother. Later on, T-Ray comes to Boatwright's house looking for Lily. T-Ray gives August permission to take care of Lily for as long as in Boatwright's house. Lily's voiceover states that she thought as T-Ray drove off saying "Lily, you'll be better off her with all of these mothers". Lily gets meaning of life from Boatwright's family. Lily also gets value of tolerance from Boatwright's family.

The secret Life of Bees was made January 7, 2008. This film was taken for 48 days, which is the setting of place at Tiburon, South Carolina USA and setting of time is summer season, 1964. The film runtime is 110 minutes, released in VCD and DVD distributed by Fox Searchlight Pictures. In United States it is played in 18 weeks from it firstly released on October 17, 2008. The successful of *The Secret Life of Bees* also happens in Philippines played 2 weeks. The good response from public makes *The Secret Life of Bees* which only had \$11,000,000 for their budget; finally gain \$38,105,395 for their world wide gross.

The good acceptance does not only come from the market, but also from the film expert. Wesley Morris (2008) said that this film a powerful

drama of racism and redemption. Queen Latifah and Alicia Keys play the black women who are looking out for Lily very well. Gina Prince Bythewood as director and writer a screenplay applies historical intelligence by having these ways to racial climate around them. Taylor Collin (2009) also said that this is the story of a young girl's journey toward healing and of the intrinsic sacredness of living in the world. The cast actor in this movie is an interesting actress. Taylor always supports the black actress for playing another movie.

The Secret Life of Bees got award from Black Reel Awards for Queen Latifah as Best Actress, Phoenix Film Critics Society Awards for Dakota Fanning as Best Performance by Youth-Female, People's Choice Awards as Favorite Movie Drama Hollywood Film Award Ensemble Action of the Year, Image Awards for Gina Prince Bythewood as Outstanding Directing in a Motion Pictures and Young Artist Award for Dakota Fanning as Best Performance in a Feature Film-Leading Young Actress.

Besides the good response, *The Secret Life of Bees* also gains some protest. Martin Joseph (2010) said that "Movie's purpose was to mislead God's people by saying it was alright to worship a carved image. In fact, if you take your own life, you will go to the fiery pits below also know as hell". Gabriella Williams (2010) said that "Mary should be worshipped, since Jesus said he is the only way to take the further. Mary was not African-Americans, but she was Jewish". Gabriella would not watch the move again.

In *The Secret Life of Bees* movies, tolerance between difference race can be shown from Boatwright's family especially August Boatwright. For

example, when Lily Owens comes out from her home, August gives a help to Lily. August Boatwright always struggle for black community from racial discrimination. She has a high tolerance to white people like Deborah Owens and Lily Owens. In the Boatwright's family, Lily can get value of tolerance and true life. As these cases occurred in the real life, make this film is interesting to be watched.

The Secret Life of Bees is an interesting movie; there are three aspects that make this movie really interesting. The first is *The Secret Life of Bees* has uncommon story; about racial discrimination. The story is about racial relation between a white girl and a black's family. This story is not only racial discrimination; it is also a meaning of life and tolerance between a white girl and a black's family. Human are challenged not only by the staggering acts of cruelty they see, but by the equally staggering acts of kindness. Besides that Gina Prince Bythewood makes the audience amazed when the egoist and critical black woman like June Boatwright can change her attitude to love Lily Owens.

The second aspect is the visualization and the cast of the movie. In this film, Dakota Fanning who plays very well as Lily Owens makes the character of Lily alive. Dakota Fanning as Lily, a white girl who is looking for the meaning of life from the black's family. Fanning gets award from Phoenix Film Critic Society Awards as Best Performance by a Youth-Female from this film. Sophie Okonedo also plays May Boatwright very well. Her act is successfully representing the woman as fragile mentality. *The Secret Life of*

Bees is not only well acted, but technically superior. Regier Stoffers is thoughtful color cinematography helps evoke the world of bees portrayed. Terilyn A. Shrapshire's editing makes the movie move at light speed. Mark Isham's poetic score combined with judicious use of other music, including Orchestra, Jazz and Christianity's song add layers of meaning to the story. But as good as they see, it is not the act, the camerawork, or the music that makes *The Secret Life of Bees* so special. It is the meaning and love that Gina Prince Bythewood puts to every frame.

The last is the passion for humanity that is reflected in this movie. August Boatwright is a smart and creative black woman. No black woman likes August Boatwright; she struggles for her community from racial discrimination. She has a high tolerance to white skin like Deborah Owens and Lily Owens. August Boatwright is a smart black woman and she produces the honey jar with the Black Mary's picture. August is like the goddess to her family and black community. More than anything else, *The Secret Life of Bees* is an uplifting affirmation of the human spirit. It shows to the audiences that even black family's love. Gina Prince Bythewood gives the audiences a greater understands of how this tolerance could be having possibly happened.

Based on the previous reasons the writer observes *The Secret Life of Bees* movie by using Marxist Approach. So, the writer constructs the title **VALUE OF TOLERANCE IN GINA PRINCE'S *THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES* MOVIE (2008): A MARXIST APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

The first study about *The Secret Life of Bees* is conducted by Carrisa Smith (2009), a writer at Entertainment Weekly entitled “*Spirituality and Position of Woman in The Secret Life of Bees: A feminism Study*”. In this paper she uses the life of August Boatwright as a study for demonstrating how is the spirit life and the position of black woman in the civil rights. The result is that love, justice, freedom and the passion of humanity, succeed to arouse August Boatwright from isolation and racial discrimination in the civil rights.

The second research is conducted by Rachelle Bretagne (2008), a Senior Manager at Helium Website, entitled “*Struggle’s Lily Owens to Get True Life: An Individual Psychological*”. Bretagne uses the life of Lily Owens for demonstrating how Lily’s struggle to get true life from black family. The result is that love, freedom, tolerance and future, succeed to arouse Lily from her trauma. The outcome of the paper shows that the struggle of Lily who wants to get true life, brings her into positive impact that influences her character.

The third study about *The Secret Life of Bees* conducted by Lisa Wade, a Nevada State College (2009), entitled “*A Psychoanalytic Study of August Boatwright’s Reasons To Save the Whites In Gina Prince’s The Secret Life of Bees*”. She uses psychoanalytic to analyze the data. The aim of the study is to find how the superego of Boatwright overcomes her id and her ego. The result of the data shows that Boatwright’s id is dominant and the imbalance of August Boatwright’s id, ego, and superego does not always end in bad things,

but it can result in good things as Boatwright does. She tries to give a moral message through this novel that life is about love and respect.

The fourth research is conducted by Camerin Courtney (2008), a writer at Christianity Today entitled "*Independent Black Woman: A Feminism Study*". Courtney uses the life of August Boatwright for demonstrating how the black woman struggle to achieve her independent in the civil rights. The result is that freedom, glory and future, success to arouse Boatwright's family from racial discrimination in the civil rights.

The last research is conducted by Kelly Budd (2009), a writer at Heartwarming Read entitled "*Struggle's The Blacks to Get Freedom: An Individual Psychological*". Budd uses the life of August Boatwright for demonstrating how the struggle's Boatwright to get freedom in the civil rights. The result is that love, tolerance, respect and future, success to arouse August Boatwright from isolated and racial discrimination in the civil rights.

The differences between the writer and the five previous writers are the theme and perspective. Carrisa Smith writes about the spirituality and position of woman by using Feminism Perspective. Rachelle Bretagne writes about the struggle's Lily Owens to get true life by using Individual Psychological Perspective. Lisa Wade writes about the reasons why August Boatwright saves the Whites by using Psychoanalytic Perspective. Camerin Courtney writes about independent black woman by using Feminism Perspective and Kelly Budd writes about the struggle of black people to get freedom by using an Individual Perspective, while the writer means to analyze *The Secret Life of*

Bees movie based on Marxist perspective. The writer analyzes the value of tolerance in Gina Prince's *The Secret Life of Bees* movie by using a Marxist Approach.

C. Problem Statement

Knowing that the problem is the important part of research, the writer proposes, "How is the value of tolerance reflected in *The Secret Life of Bees* movie?"

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this research to analyze the value of tolerance in Gina Prince's *The Secret Life of Bees* movie based on a Marxist Approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze Gina Prince's *The Secret Life of Bees* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
2. To describe the value of tolerance in Gina Prince's *The Secret Life of Bees* movie based on Marxist approach.

F. The Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is hoped to give a new contribution and information to larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *The Secret Life of Bees* movie and novel.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is hoped to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another Universities who have interest with literary study on the movie from Marxist Approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In analyzing *The Secret Life of Bees* movie, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which result the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object.

2. Type of the Data and the Data Sources

a. Type of Data

The data of this study are scenes and dialogue in *The Secret Life of Bees* movie by Gina Price Bythewood.

b. Data Source

- 1) The Primary Data Source are the film and script of *The Secret Life of Bees* movie by Gina Prince Bythewood.
- 2) The Secondary Data Source are the biography of the author, the websites in the internet about the movie and the other resources that support to analyze.

3. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *The Secret Life of Bees*, directed by Gina Prince Bythewood which was produced in October 17, 2008.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The method of data collection in this study is documentation. The writer views the primary data repeatedly to reach more understanding of source. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies other data into same categories and develops them into a good unity.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The first step in analyzing the data of thus research is clarifying the obtained data by selecting the necessary ones. Secondary steps are analyzing data based on Marxist theory.

H. Research Organization

The research paper organization of “*Value of Tolerance in Gina Prince’s The Secret Life of Bees Movie (2008): A Marxist Approach*” is as follows: Chapter I is introduction; it consists of Background of the Study,

Literature Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefits of the Study, Research Method, and Paper Organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory; it consists of Nation of Marxism, Major Principles of Marxism, Value of Tolerance, Structural Elements of Drama, and Theoretical Application. Chapter III is social historical background of American society which covers social aspect, economic aspect, science and technology aspect, religious aspect, cultural aspect, political aspect, industries aspect and the life of Gina Prince. Chapter IV is Structural Analysis; it consists of Structural Elements of Movie and Technical Elements. Chapter V is the Marxist analysis, Chapter VI is Conclusion and Suggestion.