

CHAPTER I

INTRODUACTION

A. Background of the Study

Gender inequality or gender discrimination is an aspect that still needs to be more concerned in almost countries in the world. Cecilia (2011:127) explains that “gender inequality is unequal idea in material resources and power about who man and woman are and how they are in their society”. Abraham Lincoln has announced to abolish slavery, but in fact the main impact of slavery still exists today. The idiom "All men are equal" does not mean anything. Men are still superior to women. The Whites are superior to the Blacks. Here, black women have two constraints at once, sexism because they are women, racism because they are black.

Gender issues are related to sex and people's point of view and also affect society in treating men and women. Stereotypes about men and women makes women underestimated causing not all jobs employing women. Sexism can influence people to treat others in a gender-based way rather than personal traits or capabilities. Emotional assignment and ability for all men and women based on physical sexual identity are called sexual stereotypes. Sexual stereotypes are what people usually use to base their treatment to others. In the International Encyclopedia of Ethics, Roth (1995:794) explains the masculine and feminine stereotypes. “The masculine stereotype includes the characteristics of aggressiveness, achievement orientation, dominance, rationality, independence, high sexual interest, and physical strength. The feminine stereotype emphasizes passivity, submissiveness, emotionality, nurturance, modesty, low sexual interest, and physical weakness”. Gender differentiation leads to the presence of sexism.

Various works either in the form of prose, short story, drama, and film have been produce. Short story is a literary work that is produced in a form of paper. Like other literary work, Guerin (2015:116) says “a short story is a piece of fiction connected with few characters with only one major situation, which achieve its climax and solution then quickly comes to an end. It is one of the

literary works related to human life and activity”. Our daily lives are often described in short stories with different points of view. Racism and sexism do exist in human history. Therefore, it is found in some short stories such as sexism and racism that already exist in reality.

The short story under the title *Sweat* written by Zora Neale Hurston was published in 1926 in a magazine named, “Fire”. It is one of many works written by black female authors revealing of black women in America who fight against gender inequality for their lives. The story tells us about how Delia Jones, a black woman, was oppressed by her own husband, Sykes Jones, who also flirted with another black woman, Kennedy and Gioia (1999:496). say that “This powerful story of unhappy marriage turned murderous was particularly note-worthy for having the characters speak in the black country dialect of Hurston’s native Florida”. Hurston, in his short story *Sweat*, tries to portray the life of a black woman Delia fighting for her life and for her freedom in the fight against gender inequality.

In addition to *Sweat*, other short stories of Hurston will be used as a comparison to see the fight of black women against gender inequality *The Gilded Six-Bits* was published in 1926 in a story magazine. It is one of Hurston's short stories that tells us about a black family. In this short story, the female character, Missie May, negotiated her sexual and spiritual purity and emotional rejection after her husband Joe caught her in the act of adultery with Slemmons, a new man from Chicago. Hurston's harsh marriage took place and supported him in writing According to Howard in the American Literature Research and Analysis Site, *The Gilded Six-Bits* depicting marriages full of infidelity and hatred. “Perhaps the marriage in this short story was a reflection of Hurston's difficulties in Hurston own marriage, she saw marriage as an important institution capable of providing possibilities in life”. (McMahon, 2011:5).

The researcher is interested in studying two short stories written by Zora Neale Hurston under the title *Sweat* (1926) and *The Gilded Six-Bits* (1933) as the object of research for some reasons. Firstly, these short stories are some of many works written by Zora Neale Hurston who is more well-known by her

spectacular novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Secondly, this story's dialogue is written in the black vernacular or known as African-American Vernacular English which challenge the researcher in reading and understanding the whole story. Thirdly, these works has inspirational story which explore the tangle of sexual power and personal oppression which can characterize relationship between men and women. The representation of conflict in these stories related to the gender inequality which is the key-term of this study. Besides, the writer concerns to analyze the gender inequality conflict of the main female character. the writer also wants to analyze Delia Jones' and Missie May's struggle get gender equality.

This study is bringing to the feminist literary criticism. Feminist is one of literary school which is talking about the female and male characters. In this study the researcher uses it in Zora Neale Hurston's selected short stories *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*. These short stories talk about female as the main character which is oppressed by the male character and the female character struggles to get out from the oppression. Freedman (2001:12) states that "Women were judge to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotions". It clarifies that men are stronger than women because women are using their emotion. The argument explains image of female character in short story against the male. That is the reason why this study brings it into feminist.

B. Research Question

Due to the focus of the study above the research question is formulated as follows:

1. What are the gender-inequality conflicts illustrated in Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*?
2. How do the main female characters in Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits* struggle to gain gender equality?

C. Scope and Limitation

As stated on the background above, the researcher focuses on Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits* short stories and limit merely in

analyzing the gender inequality conflict and the main female characters' struggle to gain equality based on the feminist perspective.

D. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are stated as follows:

1. To analyse the gender-inequality conflicts illustrated in Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*.
2. To find how the main female characters in Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits* struggle to gain gender equality.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of this research is expected to give some deep information in recognizing the two short stories written by the author Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*, especially the gender inequality conflict faced by two main female characters and their struggle to gain gender equality in the stories. It is expected that this study benefits for the writer himself and so to the readers especially the students of English department:

1. For the reader, at first the researcher hopes the reader can analyze and find the gender-inequality conflicts illustrated in short stories which was written by Zora Neale Hurston under the title *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*. And the second, the researcher hopes that the reader understand how the female characters in Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits* struggle to gain gender equality. Besides, the reader can also see the fact of power of woman in the social life. Then, the teenagers especially the girl can place themselves to the certain position and realized about the characters itself.
2. For university student of english departement, this study is wished to enrich the literary studies in understanding conflict of gender inequality and gender struggle to gain gender equality. It could be as references for other students who analyze related study with this study.