

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the analysis of the data. The writer applies the theories as stated in chapter II to analyze the data, and to find out the answer of research question as stated in chapter I. The data is collected from short stories written by Zora Neale Hurston under the title *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*. The data collected from the words, phrases, sentences and utterances that refer to gender inequality conflict and the female character struggle to gain gender inequality.

#### A. Gender Inequality Conflicts in *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits*

According to Cecilia gender inequality is unequal treatment applied by the society that differentiates men and women. “Gender inequality is unequal idea in material resources and power about who man and woman are and how they are in their society” (Cecilia, 2011:127). Meanwhile, Conflict is one of very important element in a story which makes the story interesting to read. Conflict is an important events and essential element in developing plot in literary work. Conflict means something horrible that is happened inside the story either in the main character or the major character. It is state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values or interest (Singleton, 1966:261). Further, Graham Little (1966:83) writes the conflicts as follows: “the conflict may be one of man against man, man against nature, man against society as force, a man against himself and, man against the destiny or fate”.

This part is going to discuss the gender inequality conflict faced by the main female character of the two short stories they are Delia Jones and Missie May. The setting of *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits* is during nineteenth century in Eatonville, Florida.

#### 1. *Sweat*

The story of *Sweat* illustrates about how Delia Jones, who experience gender inequality conflict in the society. Gender inequality happens as the cause of the different treatment based on gender which applied by the society. In this short story, the researcher found that there is only one kind of conflict consist in this short story that is external conflict which can be described as a kind of

conflict that is happened between a character against another character. This external conflict happened between Delia Jones and her husband Sykes Jones and the society.

In this part the writer presents the finding of the research by presenting the conflict, they are types of external conflicts man vs. man, and man vs. society.

### **1.1. Man vs. Society**

Gender issues are related to sex and people's point of view and also affect society in treating men and women. Sexual stereotypes are what people usually use to base their treatment to others. Referring to the theory of conflict by Stanford, the external conflict is divided into four types one of them is man vs. society: this external conflict exists when characters struggles against the moral of their culture and government (Stanford, 1999:41). In this sort story this kind of conflict occurs in the very beginning of the story. Hurston describes the treatment based on gender applied by the society. The stereotyping in the society is described as follow:

It was Sunday. Any other night, Delia Jones would have been in bed for two hours by this time. But she was a wash-woman, and Monday morning meant a great deal to her. (p. 1022)

According to Patel and Parmentier (2005:33) that traditionally women's work has been linked with the household word, protecting their children, and reproduction. The data above shows that Delia Jones is a wash-woman. At that time the women only got opportunity to work on household jobs like did laundry. Stereotypes about men and women makes women underestimated causing not all jobs employing women.

### **1.2. Man vs.Man**

According to Stanford, man vs. man conflict occurs when a character struggles against another character (Stanford, 1999:41). This kind of conflict happened between Delia Jones and her husband Sykes Jones. In the beginning of the story Hurston obviously shows the terror that is done by Sykes to Delia by using snake. Sykes does know that Delia is scared to death to snake. In the very

beginning and the final of the story Hurston shows the terrors done by Sykes to Delia. Delia is shocked by the whip which is long, round, limp, and black like a snake.

Just then something long, round, limp and black fell upon her shoulders and slithered to the floor beside her. A great terror took hold of her. It softened her knees and dried her mouth so that it was a full minute before she could cry out or move. Then she saw that it was the big bull whip her husband liked to carry when he drove.(p. 1022)

"Look in de box dere Delia, Ah done brung yuh somethin'!" (p. 1026)

This is a classic case of sexism, it is something that Sykes likes to do quite often to Delia. Just like what happened in the beginning of the story. This scene Sykes shows his dominance to Delia by terrorizing her with something like a snake.

The gender inequality that always happens in the society does exist in *Sweat*. Men are described as aggressive, dominance, rational, high sexual interest, and physical strength, while women are described as passiv, submissive or meek, emotional, nurturance, modesty, physical weakness (Tyson, 2006:85). In this short story, Hurston wants to show the issue of sexism, that is the presence of gender differentiation. Sexism is the conflict in this short story. The stereotypes which differ men and women are applied in the main characters of Delia and Sykes Jones.

He stepped roughly upon the whitest pile of things, kicking them helter-skelter as he crossed the room. His wife gave a little scream of dismay, and quickly gathered them together again. (p. 1023)

In this scene Hurston wants to show a big difference between the sexes in "Sweat" the men make messes and women are left to clean them up.

## **2. *The Gilded Six-Bits***

This short story illustrates the happy family between Missie May and her husband Joe. Different from Delia Jones, Missie May has a soft and affectionate husband named Joe Banks who loves her very much. They have

been married more than a year and they haven't had a child yet. Hurston, through this short story pictures the different kind of family. She wants sexism that still exist even in a happy family to be highlighted. She wants to show that gender inequality is still experienced by anyone.

Gender inequality happens as the cause of the different treatment based on gender which applied by the society. Conflict means something horrible that is happened inside the story either in the main character or the major character (Singleton, 1966:261). This part the writer present the finding of the research by presenting the external conflict man vs.man they are as follows:

### **2.1. Man vs. Man**

According to Grossman (2009:4) stated that "Gender inequality persists in basic institutions of civil society, such as the family, the workplace, educational entities, and public institutions, such as elected office".In this short story the main female character Missie May actually never feels comfort in the way Joe treats her.

"Tain't. Move yo' hand. Woman ain't got no business in a man's clothes nohow.Go way," (p.1012).

It seems like it is a perfect family but in reality, the gender inequality conflict in this family is still exists. According to United Nation Human Right

"Inherent to the principle of equality between men and women, or gender equality, is the concept that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudice" (United Nation Human Right, 2014:35).

It can be seen that in this short story. Joe's treatments are closely related to sexism. He is so stereotyping. It is obviously seen that Joe differs men and women It is seen when he warns Missie May not to reach his pocket. Another scene that shows the gender inequality conflict is when Joe and Missie May are talking during the meal.

Very little talk during the meal but that little consisted of banter that pretended to deny affection but in reality flaunted it. Like when Missie May reached for a second helping of the tater pone. Joe snatched it out of her reach.

After Missie May had made two or three unsuccessful grabs at the pan, she begged, “Aw, Joe, gimme some mo’ dat tater pone.”

“Nope, sweetenin’ is for us menfolks. Y’all pretty lil frail eels don’t need nothin’ lak dis. You too sweet already.” (p. 1013)

It can be seen that even it is a small case, tater phone. Joe differentiates men and women’s business.

Roth 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” (Roth, 1995:794).

In this case this conflict is also shown when Joe allows Missie May to do what he thinks she has rights to do. He has Missie May to go to the ice cream parlor owned by Otis D. Slemmons, a new comer from Chicago. Joe wants her to go as his property.

Joe smiled pleasantly. “Yeah, he’s up-to-date. He got de finest clothes Ah ever seen on a colored man’s back.”

...

Joe looked down at his own abdomen and said wistfully: “Wisht Ah had a build on me lak he got. He ain’t puzzlegutted,

honey. He jes' got a corperation. Dat make 'm look lak a rich white man. All rich mens is got some belly on 'em." (p. 1013)

This shows the issue of sexism. Joe wants her to do whatever he asks her to do. Missie mayas a wife, is fully controlled by her husband, she can not do anything she wants to do. Joe shows his dominance in the family.

## **B. The Female Character's Struggle To Gain Gender Equality In Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat* and *The Gilded Six-Bits***

This part is going to discuss how Delia Jones, the female character in the story of *sweat* and Missie May, the female character in *The Gilded Six-Bits* struggles against gender inequality.

### **1. The Female Character's Struggle in *Sweat***

*Sweat* is illustrating about women struggle to gain gender equality. Delia Jones is the main female character in the short story of *Sweat*. She is described as a black woman who marries her husband Sykes Jones and lives in Florida. She reflects women struggle to gain equality because of gender inequality conflicts in her home town that is mentioned in the previous discussion. Through this short story, Hurston means to explore the idea of gender struggle to gain gender equality. In this story the main female character Delia Jones is struggling in gaining her gender equality in the situation of unhappy family. In order to be equal with men she does her struggle in the following discussion:

#### **1.1. Praying**

Referring to Hooks "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2000:1). In this short story Hurston describes Delia as a religious woman. She is a member of the church in Florida. In full days of work, she always gives her time to go to the church.

So she collected the soiled clothes on Saturday when she returned the clean things. Sunday night after church, she sorted them and put the white things to soak. (1022)

Praying in church is one of Delia's way to struggle. By praying and building a close relation to God, through God's blessings she is struggling to

achieve anything she wants to achieve. She realizes that she is just a human and believes that God will help her struggles in facing her husband's treatments. In this short story her struggle is also shown when everynight before sleeping, she does meditation and wondering the better life. She always prays and she believes that her struggles will succeed. Hurston writes,

Somehow, before sleep came, she found herself saying aloud: "Oh well, whatever goes over the Devil's back, is got to come under his bally. Sometime or ruther, Sykes, like everybody else, is gointer reap his sowing." After that she was able to build a spiritual earthworks against her husband. His shells could no longer reach her, Amen. (1024)

The above quotation indicates that by doing meditation and deep reflection, Delia builds her own fortress to defend herself from her husband's terror. She surrenders her destiny to God. By doing this she believes that she is not alone in her struggle. By doing the reflection, she can give all the power she has to struggle against Sykes' violence and discrimination.

## **1.2. Being Calm and Staying Quiet**

According to Potter, he defines "feminism as perspective that seek to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities, and the injustice because woman suffer from sexual discrimination. This perspective is also called as the woman struggle" (Potter, 1999:27). Delia, in this short story is an obedient, although her husband has treated her so bad. She is very patient to her husband's treatments in her house and prefers not to fight his husband Sykes back. When Sykes is grinding dirt to clean clothes and menaces her, Delia does not fight but she only asks him to stop.

"Sykes, you quit grindin' dirt into these clothes! How can Ah git through by Sat'day if Ah don't start on Sunday?"

"Ah don't keer if you never git through. Anyhow, Ah done promised Gawd and a couple of other men, Ah aint gointer have it in mah

house. Don't gimme no lipneither, else Ah'll throw 'em out and put mah fist up side yo' head to boot."

"Delia's habitual meekness seemed to slip from her shoulders like a blown scarf. She was on her feet; her poor little body, her bareknuckly hands bravely defying the strapping hulk before her "

"Lookaheah, Sykes, you done gone too fur. Ah been married to you fur fifteen years, and Ah been takin' in washin' for fifteen years. Sweat, sweat, sweat! Work and sweat, cry and sweat, pray and sweat!" (1023)

Being calm and staying quiet is all Delia can do to avoid worsen condition of her family. Her silent does not mean she does not struggle. But, by being silent, she does struggle. She expects her relationship with her husband will not be worst than what she has now. She struggles against Sykes's bad treatments not by fighting him back. But, she has her own way.

### **1.3. Defending Her Houseand Herself**

Delia's a bad marriage does not make her weak but she struggles to survive. She keeps on working to afford their lives and never asks for divorce. Referring to Wood's explanation that "feminism is a perspective to create a radical social change for woman in order to get equal opportunities in life, equal access to resources and power, and equally save and secure from harm" (Wood, 2014 par.7). In this short story,the oppressions that Delia faced in her marriage make her tough to keep on struggling against the gender inequality she is experienced.

Delia came home one day and found Sykes there before her. She wondered, but started to go on into the house without speaking, even though he was standing in the kitchen door and she must either stoop under his arm or ask him to move. He made no room for her. She noticed a soap box beside the steps, but paid no particular attention to it, knowing that he must have brought it there. As she was stooping to pass under his outstretched arm, he suddenly pushed her backward, laughingly. (1026)



This can be the reason why she is not asking for a divorce and leaving her rude husband Sykes. It is not because of her deep love to him but this is the way she struggles to defend her house and gains freedom. The house which she builds with her own sweat. She will never leave the house to Sykes.

#### **1.4. Being Tougher and Braver**

Delia does the best she can. But Sykes seems never stop bothering her live. Beating and treating Delia rudely will never enough in practicing his violence to Delia. Referring to Hooks "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2000:1). This time, Delia faces his terror differently. She has power to explore all her feelings.

Delia pushed back her plate and got up from the table. "Ah hates you, Sykes," she said calmly. "Ah hates you tuh de same degree dat Ah use ter love yuh. Ah done took an took till mah belly is full up tuh mah neck.

...

"Ah don't wantuh see yuh 'roun' me at all. Lay 'roun' wid dat 'oman all yuh wants tuh, but gwan 'way fum me an mah house. Ah hates yuh lak uh suck-egg dog."

This shows us her struggle to defend herself. The way Delia speaks at this time shocked Sykes and he almost does not believe that she is Delia. The terrors and depression that she experiences form her to be a new Delia. The silentness that she might think end up Sykes' terror and oppression does not work at all. She then finds another way to end this gender inequality. Then she struggles in action. She transforms herself from a quiet and calm woman into a brave woman who has power to fight against his dominance. She shows her anger directly in front of Sykes.

The climax point of Delia's transformation shown when she transformed from a lovely and patient woman to be a cold woman who has no heart when the tragedy happens. Hooks (2010) in his book *Feminism is for Everybody* he says

“Feminism is a bunch of angry women who want to be like men”. The struggle this time occurs when she lets the snake bites Sykes and she does not try to help or ask somebody for help. She runs away from him and finds a safe place to hide. She does not want to answer Sykes’ calls for help. It is obviously describes in the last chapter.

She saw him on his hands and knees as soon as she reached the door. He crept an inch or two toward her-all that he was able, and she saw his horribly swollen neck and his one open eye shining with hope. A surge of pity too strong to support bore her away from that must, could not, fail to see the tubs. He would see the lamp. Orlando with its doctors was too far. She could scarcely reach the Chinaberry tree, where she waited in the growing heat while inside she knew the cold river was creeping up and up to extinguish that eye which must know by now that she knew.

The new Delia who is cold and sadistic proves that she is not like old Delia who was obedient and lovely. She learns from all her experiences. Her transformation is caused by the oppression and terrors from her husband, SykesJones. These obstacles transform her to betougher and braver. By letting her husband, Sykes, dies, she does her struggle. Delia struggles to set herself free from the terror and oppression of Sykes.

## **2. The Female Character Struggle in *The Gilded Six-Bits***

Missie May is the main female character in the short story of *The Gilded Six-Bits*. She is a young and back woman. She is described with “Her dark-brown skin glistened under the soapsuds that skittered down from her washrag. Her stiff young breast thrust forward aggressively, like broad-based cones with the tips lacquered in black” (p. 1011).

### **2.1. Sacrificing Her Marriage**

According to Hooks “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (Hooks, 2000:1). Through this different kind of family, Hurston means to explore the idea of gender struggle. In this story the main female character Missie May is struggling in gaining her gender equality in

different kind of situation in her family. The struggle of Missie May in gaining gender equality was not regardless from sacrifice. She sacrifices her marriage. She betrays her husband Joe because of Slemmons' richness. Hurston does not clearly declare the affair between Slemmons and Missie May. She describes:

There was a quick, large movement in the bedroom. A rustle, a thud, and a stealthy silence. The light went out. What? Robbers? Murderers? Some varmint attacking his helpless wife, perhaps. He struck a match threw himself on guard and steeped over the doorsill into the bedroom. The great belt on the wheel of Time slipped and eternity stood still. By the match light he could see the man's legs fighting with his breeches in his frantic desire to get them on. He had both chance and time to kill the intruder in his helpless condition—half in and half out of his pants—but he was too weak to take action. The shapeless enemies of humanity that live the hours of Time had waylaid Joe. He was assaulted in his weakness. Like Samson awakening after his haircut. So he just opened his moth and laughed. (p. 1015)

Missie May is persuaded by Slemmons' richness. Her relationship with Slemmons is actually a form of her struggle to get rich in a very easy way. She assumes that money will solve the gender inequality by her husband Joe. She thinks that when she already has her own money, she will become independence and Joe will not dominate her anymore. She wants to show that she is not Joe's property by having the affair with Slemmons. She wants him to know that she is a human and has rights to choose which the best for her life. She struggles to get the right and freedom to think and act.

## **2.2. Refuse to be Rolled**

Referring to Hooks "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2000:1). In this short story this movement occurs after the tragedy. Missie May realizes that she is being a fool. Their marriage relationship becomes worst. They sleep in silence. They never speak to one another. Joe spends more time in his work place. Missie May stands quiet and

keep on thinking. But, this time she feels like she is gaining fresh air. It is described:

The hours went past on their rusty ankles. Joe still and quiet on one bed rail and Missie May wrung dry of sobs on the other. Finally the sun's tide crept upon the shore of night and drowned all its hours. Missie May with her face stiff and streak toward the window saw the dawn come into her yard. It was a day. Nothing more. Joe wouldn't be coming home as usual. No need to fling open the front door and sweep off the porch, making it nice for Joe. Never no more breakfast to cook; no more washing and starchin of Joe's jumper-jackets and pants. No more nothing. So why get up? (p. 1016)

It is shown that Missie May is gaining her gender equality. She feels free from her jobs. She does what usually her husband forbids her to do and doesn't do what he usually allows her to do. Joe forbids her to chop the woods but she does it.