

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introduction of the research which includes the background of research, the statement of the problem, research objective, research significance, definition of key terms and organization of writing.

#### **1.1 Background**

Human beings have the equal rights because they have freedom to live in this world. The skin color, gender, race, nationality is a gift from God so people cannot choose what they want to look like. Even though all human is equal there must be an unequal condition where there are human rights violations in this life caused by racism. Hakim (2014:2) states that there are three biggest cases of human right violations; racism, discrimination and slavery. Those biggest cases are had a relationship, slavery happened because racism and discrimination. Hakim also states that the colored people believed as inferior and deserved to be the bottom of society and the whites as the superior. It means that the race becomes a problem when a group feels its position is higher than the others. In this case, the colored people are considered as the lowest caste and it causes slavery.

Around seventeenth until nineteenth centuries, there was slavery in United States. Slavery is known as one of the shocking phenomena of our world because it has violated human right. The slaves are the colored people which are as the

minority in the country. United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN UDHR) as cited in Hakim (2015: 55-56) stated in the article 2 that,

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.” (UN UDHR as cited in Hakim, 2015: 55-56)

The quote “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” above means that everyone has freedom regardless of what is in a person and status is do not matter. Unfortunately, in the case of slavery, there is no freedom because the colored people were discriminated by the skin color or race. It certainly makes the slaves behave differently when with their colored friends and with the whites as Fanon (1986:8) states that the slavery makes the colored people has two dimensions, one with his fellows, which are other colored people and the other with those who are whites.

In the life of the slaves, there are slave trade, physical tortures, forced labour and so forth. The individuals of slaves are owned by the masters who control them for what they do. The slaves are forcibly working and always get a torture if they do something wrong. The cruelty in slavery is cannot be deny as Sowell (1989:253) states that in America, slavery is cruel because caning is a common, separating children from their parents or separating men and their wives and other cruelty. Franklin (1948:42) on his book states that “as a matter of fact, slavery was

widespread during the earliest known history of Africa as well as of other continents. Doubtless there was cruelty and oppression in African slavery as there was anywhere that the institution developed”. It means cruelty and oppression in slavery occur because of the supportive environment.

Human is not something that can be traded nor kidnapped to be the slaves. Slavery which makes the life of the slaves getting worse then became a serious problem. The slaves must obey their masters’ orders and must live dependent on their master to make their life well regulated (Sowell, 1989:254). They could not deny it at all or they will get the punishment like the physical torture. Scott (1959:3) stated on his book, “a form of torture which is psychological in its trend. It may exist in addition to physical torture”. According to him, the torture received by slaves is not only physical but also psychological.

One of colored people that escaped from the slavery, Solomon Northup, then writes a memoir about his 12 years experiences of being a slave in the southern of America. How he survived as the human property of several different masters. This memoir was adapted into movie in 2013 titled *12 Years a Slave* as the original of its book. *12 Years a Slave* was first published in 1853, the year of the author rescued. It is written by Solomon Northup, a colored man who was born free and kidnapped then sold into slavery in 1841. He survived for 12 years in the southern of America until he finally rescued by his Northern friend named Mr. Parker. This memoir tells about the life of the slaves which suffered greatly because the slaves are suppressed by the whites where they are traded, having masters differently, always being tortured and so forth.

There are some studies or research that discussed the same topic. The first is a paper conducted by Robiah Al Adawiyah (2015) titled *Racism against African American Slave in Solomon Northup's Twelve Years as a Slave* discusses the struggles of slaves against the racism as portrayed in Northup's book. She used a sociological literary criticism to find the reflection of sociological condition of society in real life at that time. As the result, she concludes that Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* reflects racism against African American in nineteenth century proven by the similarity between Northup's book and phenomenon in that period.

The second study is a research that the discussion of the study has little common with this research. This preview studies are the undergraduate paper by Bagus Ardian Hakim (2015) titled *Human Right Violations in 12 Years a Slave* analysing the human right violations found through in setting and plot with the new historicism theory used. It focuses on nine violations including employment, law, social status, identity, family, education, mobility, speech and basic needs. As the result, he found violations based on those categories related to the articles in the Preamble UN UDHR and prove that there are a lot of violations that occurred at that time and did not consider gender, age or anything else. The point is colored people are deserve to receive those violations.

The last is a paper by Agustina Indah N.K (2015) titled *A Study of Post-colonialism Analysis in Solomon Northup's Twelve Years a Slave* discuss the process of colonial in Solomon Northup as a free man. She also discusses the process of colonial based on post-colonial theory such as ambivalence, mimicry,

hybridity and otherness. The result of this study is show the sacrifice of African American in slavery. The ambivalence shows Solomon Northup's feeling when he becomes a slave. The mimicry talks about imitate the whites. Hybridity comes from the dominant power of white people. Otherness comes from the tortured of African American by the whites American.

Those preview studies give a contribution to this present research that gives an inspiration for doing the research and it can be an additional reference. There may be a lot of works concerning on the same topic. There may be not much paper that discussed *12 Years a Slave* as a research in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. In this opportunity, the researcher chooses Solomon Northup's *12 Years a Slave* as the object of research in order to improve the comprehension of literature research in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Furthermore, this research focuses on the life of the slave that there are much of violence and the perspective from the author as the former slave.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Human wants to live in the world with the same rights as the others. No matter the race, ethnicity or nationality they have to get the same rights. The colored people are struggling to fight their rights as human being. As the author and had an experience of being a slave, Solomon Northup sees the cruelty of slavery and he knew exactly how poor the life of the slaves is. *12 Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup is actually his real experiences of being a slave. He was born as a free man but then being kidnapped and sold into slavery. *12 Years a Slave* shows us that

racial discrimination is ever happened until nowadays. In accordance of the problems, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How is Solomon Northup's perspective as the slave presented in *12 Years a Slave*?
2. How does Solomon Northup describe the life of the slaves in *12 Years a Slave*?

### 1.3 Research Objective

Based on the research questions above, the research can be formulated as follows:

1. To find out Solomon Northup's perspective as the slave presented in *12 Years a Slave*.
2. To find out Solomon Northup description about the life of the slaves in *12 Years a Slave*.

### 1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to contribute both academically and practically. In academically, this study is expected to be a reference of literature studies and become a reference for the scientific development of the field of English Language and Literature or literature research further. Practically, there are some contributions. The first is for the readers who are interested in literature study. The results of the research examined as comprehending or learning in accordance with the purpose to understand literary works which is particularly is "The Life of The Slaves in Solomon Northup's Memoir *12 Years a Slave*: A Perspective from Within".

The second is for the Department of English Language and Literature Faculty of Adab and Humanities, the results of this study can be a learning material as well as a further knowledge of “The Life of The Slaves in Solomon Northup’s Memoir *12 Years a Slave: A Perspective from Within*”. The last is for the society, this research expected to increase the knowledge and insight about “The Life of The Slaves in Solomon Northup’s Memoir *12 Years a Slave: A Perspective from Within*”.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

In order to give the reader comprehension of the terms in this research, the researcher presents several definitions of key terms as follows:

**1. Slavery;** Slavery is a system where people treated as a property to be bought and sold, and forced to labour (Brace, 2004:2). In the practice of slavery, those slaves are the colored people because they are considered as the lowest caste.

**2. Slavery in United States of America;** Slavery in United States is an activity where most Africans sold to Virginia, US to be the slaves by white masters and it happened around seventeenth until nineteenth centuries.

**3. Slave Trade;** Slave trade is an activity of buying and selling transactions against humans to be the slaves.

**4. Physical Torture;** Physical torture is an activity in which people is tortured and have a physical scar on their body.

**5. Forced Labour;** Forced labour is a job forced upon people to fulfil a compelling desire.



**7. Post-colonialism Theory;** Post-colonialism is the study after colonialism and this theory was born when the colonized state had gained its independence.

### **1.6 Organization of Writing**

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. It consists of the background of research, the statement of problems, research objective, research significance, definition of key terms and organization of writing. The second chapter is a foundation of theory. It contains theory related to the study (the life of the slaves and the perspective from the author which is the slave itself, Post Colonialism by Frantz Fanon). The third chapter is research methodology. It consists of research design, sample of data, source of data, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data. The fourth chapter is the analysis of the life of the slaves and the perspective in Solomon Northup's 12 Years a Slave. The last chapter is the conclusion and suggestion.





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