

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Twelve Years a Slave movie is based on a true story written by Solomon Northrup. This movie is about slavery among black people back in 1800's. Solomon Northrup, the author, labored for twelve years under several masters. When he regained his freedom, he wrote a memoir of his years as a slave after making a little interview from other ex-slaves to enrich the story (Northrup, 1855). Although slavery enabled a profitable economic system in the South, it had very negative effects on the slaves.

The South, like other slave societies, did not develop urban centers for commerce, finance, and industry on a scale equal to those found in the North. Southern cities were small because they were not able to develop diversified economies (Davis, 1972). The main income of the Southern usually came from local planters and farmers. These planters and farmers were those who need labors to work in the fields, and cheap labors were slaves.

According to Paul E. Lovejoy (1981), in his book *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa*, slaves were property, but they were also human beings. All human beings are born with fundamental rights and they can do whatever they want for their life, not because someone else chooses it for them. However,

back then in the 1700s, if someone were born at the bottom of society, he/she would have to work hard to survive in poverty. This person can be owned by other people who had goods or money.

In this thesis, besides Salomon, the writer also wants to put her focus on Patsey's character. To put it simply, Patsey is a young female black slave who was frequently beaten and abused that made her depressed and thought of suicide. She is the "property" of Epps, the white man who acts as her master. Patsey is brutalized in many ways. Epps regularly comes into her quarters and forces her to have sex with him.

Slavery is terrible for men, yet it is more terrible for women. In 1700s masters rapping his own slave is not considered as rape at all, a master is free to do what he likes with his own property (Schneider & Schneider, 2007). The brutal treatment is the start of enslavement rape culture, when woman's body does not belong to woman anymore (White, 1999). On Patsey's experience, the movie does not only show Patsey as the victim of the master but also the victim of the master's wife. As the master sexually assaults her, her white mistress, instead of sympathizing with her sufferings, abused her emotionally and physically.

The sufferings of Salomon and Patsey attract the writer to know more the conditions of slaves in 1870 as represented in *Twelve Years a Slave* movie. By analyzing the movie, the writer aims to describe the situations by slavery. During that time, between 1790 and 1860, black slaves live in a society that constantly reminded them that they were not treated as human being (Schneider &

Schneider, 2007). They were treated like an object of satisfaction. Especially for a black woman slave, she had to fight for her life every day and lived in fear of what might happen. If a master raped his female slaves, the society would say that it was his privilege. Black woman slaves kept quiet about the rape since they had been blamed for all the pains they went through. *Twelve Years a Slave*, however, did not only expose the brutality of the masters to their slaves but also showed the audience the relationship between white mistress and black slaves. The mistress brutalized the black woman slave with savagery because she was humiliated by her husband's sexual attraction to the slave.

In this study, the writer will discuss the slavery and the discriminations experienced by the slaves. The writer would like to see the discriminations experienced by Solomon and Patsy. The writer will also compare the discrimination experienced by them. Furthermore, the writer will also discuss Patsy's and Solomon's reactions towards the discriminations.

1.2 Field of The study

The field of the study is Literature especially on discriminations found in the film.

1.3 Scope of The Study

The writer concentrates on the discriminations that happened to black people in America, Solomon and Patsy.

1.4 Problem Formulation

Here are the problems formulated by the writer to give a better understanding about the *12 Years a Slave* movie: what are the discriminations experienced by Solomon and Patsey in *12 Years a Slave* movie?

1.5 Objectives of The Study

From the problem formulation, the writer formulates an objective: to find out the discriminations experienced by Solomon and Patsey in *12 Years a Slave* movie.

1.6 Significance of The Study

This study is expected to give a better understanding to the readers about the discriminations experienced by black American slaves through the characters of Solomon and Patsey in *Twelve Years Slave* movie which is based on a true story by Solomon Northup.

1.7 Definition of Terms

A. Slavery

The status or condition of a person over whom any or all the powers attaching to the right ownership are exercised. A form of personal, corporeal domination, by the slaveholder or his agent, based on the exercise or threat of not only physical but also psychological violence. It is characterized by the absolute power (in practice) of the master over his slave and become an extension of the will and household of the former (Allain, 2012) .

B. Discrimination

Discrimination can be defined as any unequal treatments of individuals or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical attribute such as race, ethnic, religious or social class (Theodorson, 1979).

