

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter will discuss about the background, statement of research problems, objectives, significance, and scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the study

Gender role consists of activities that men and women engage in with different ways. Gender role deals with the behavior. Gender roles especially traditional gender role caused many discriminations and unfairness which harm the women. For example, women only do something which is related to the house and domesticity. In addition, if a man being mad so he is considered as assertive, but if a woman is angry, she is considered as emotional and cannot resist herself. The standard of value of the behavior of women and men are different, but those standard mostly judge and detrimental to women.

Based on Tyson (2006), “traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive” (p. 85). These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making position, paying men higher wages than women for doing the same job, and convincing women that they are not fit for careers such as areas as mathematics and engineering.

The shifting gender roles also happen today. In the previous era, a good woman is a woman who is successfully fulfill the traditional gender roles. They should be at home, nurturing children and husband, and they supposed to be weak, submissive, and dependent. Now, an ideal

woman means a woman who has a good career outside the house but still have time to do her duty at home. Moreover, there are some women who only focus on their career and let the house assistant to conduct their duty.

Those situation is also shown in a novel by Lawrence Hill entitled *Someone Knows My Name*. The main character in this novel is ever been forced by the society to maintain the traditional gender role. This novel makes the author wins several awards, such as CBC Radio's *Canada Reads*, Radio-Canada's *Le Combat des livres*, Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize in 2007 and Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 2008 for Best Book. This novel is interesting because it is related to the feminist movement in the enlightenment era.

The author, Lawrence Hill was born in Newmarket, Ontario in 1957. He is an American immigrant – a black father and white mother – who moved to Toronto from Washington, D.C., in 1953. He threw himself into writing in his teenage years and completed his first story at the early age of 14. Hill's nonfiction books include *Trials and Triumphs: The Story of African-Canadians* (1993), *Women of Vision: The Story of Canadian Negro Women's Association* (1996), *Black Berry, Sweet, Juice: On Being Black and White in Canada* (2001); *The Deserter's Tale: The Story of An Ordinary Soldier Who Walked Away from the War in Iraq* (2007); *Dear Sir, I Intend to Burn Your Book: An Anatomy of a Book Burning* (2013); and *Blood: The Stuff of Life* (2013). Hills's fictional works include *Some Great Thing* (1992), *Any Known Blood* (1997), and *The Book of Negroes* (2007).

The novel is set on the enlightenment era which happened in the 18th century. During this period, the development of ideas like individualism and rationality started to challenge women's relegated role in society. According to Wollstonecraft (1792), "throughout the enlightenment era, women found ways to combine the new intellectual movements evolving in the public sphere

with their appointed place in the domestic private sphere” (p. 78). During the eighteenth century, many women took advantage of new literary forms as a way to participate and contribute to society.

This study discusses the shifting gender roles which is portrayed in this novel. The word shifting means changing, it talks about how the gender roles are changing during the story of Aminata which is depicted in this novel and the respond of other characters to the changes of gender roles. This novel is chosen because it is portrayed the changing gender roles of Aminata from domestic, nurture, submissive, weak, and dependent become public, neglect, aggressive, strong, and independent vividly.

Early researchers on the novel have focused on many aspects, ranging from rememorized and rewoven the history of slavery (Christine Duff, 2011), the use of both the function and the value of history (Erin Aspenlieder, B.A; M.A, 2011), epic journeys of freedom (David Bornman, 2014), and counterculture of diaspora in Lawrence Hill’s *The Book of Negroes* (Agnel Barron, 2013).

Other researches focused on the intersection of history and literature in addition to the experiences of Africans in the diaspora (Oluyomi Oduwobi, Harry Sewlal, and Femi Abodunrin, 2014), explore the ways in which Hill’s protagonist and master narrator uses metatextuality and Hill’s intertextual method (Maimouna Siby, 2016), then slave narratives and neo-slave (Jessie Sagawa and Wendy Robbins, 2011). Therefore, this study concerns on the shifting of gender role which is portrayed by the main character in *Someone Knows My Name* by Lawrence Hill.

Generally, a literary work which present woman character can be analyzed using feminism approach. This study discusses the changing of gender role which is portrayed by woman character. The woman character in this novel is the main character. This study will

analyze the kinds of shifting gender role and the respond of others characters to the changes that is portrayed in this novel.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problems

This focus will be translated into 2 research questions as follow:

1. How are traditional gender role and the shifting of gender role portrayed by the main character in *Someone Knows My Name*?
2. How do other characters respond the changes?

1.3 Objectives

According to the research problems, this study explores:

1. How the traditional gender role and the shifting of gender role are portrayed by Aminata's character in *Someone Knows My Name*.
2. How other characters respond the changes.

1.4 Significance

This study is expected to be able to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the result of the study is expected to enrich reader's knowledge about feminist criticism especially about traditional gender roles. Practically, it is expected to become one of the examples of the way to analyze novel using feminism approach. To the society, it is expected that after read this study, it hopes that society especially women will be more sure to be what they want and the society learn to respect other person's choices.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study will discuss the shifting gender role which is portrayed by the characters of Aminata Diallo and Meena Dee in *Someone Knows My Name* by Lawrence Hill. The scope of this study is traditional gender roles. The limitations of this study are the author's narration the character's utterances in this novel which are related to the statement of research problems.

