

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

In the social life women are known as weak persons and men are as strong ones. In fact that “women have gender roles like taking care of children and family and organizing their households as the social construction in society.” (Fakih, 2001:11). Actually that domestic role can be done by men, but in reality only the women who do that roles, because it is believed as women nature. This facts make up gender differences.

Actually “gender difference is not a problem as long as it does not cause inequalities of gender” (Fakih, 2001:12). But, in fact that gender differences cause many inequalities. This phenomena causes many unfair treatment toward women like marginalization, subordination, violence, stereotype, negative judgment, economical poverty, etc (Fakih, 2001:12). The inequalities manifestation should be solved in order that woman can stand up their right.

One of the problems which is often faced by women is how to stand up their right and their male dominated society to define what it means to be women. Women themselves must show their capability, to prove who they are and what role they will play in society. Most importantly, they must reject the assumption that woman are inferior to men. Therefore, according to Mandell (1995: 5) that every person has equal opportunities and civil right and they

should be allowed to exercise freedom of choice without interfere of public opinion on or law.

According to Bonvillain (1995: 1), gender is “primary aspect at one’s personal and social identity and this identification begins in one earliest socialization through the way that a baby in handled treated and spoken to”. And then the concept of gender itself is “everything that can exchange women and man’s characteristics. It changes from time to time and has differences from one class to the other class” (Fakih, 2001:9). Gender relations can be characterized from equality to the complete domination of societies. According to Bonvillain (1995: 3), that “gender equality itself is not so easily specified, it is used to refer to a constellation of behaviors of both women and men”. Then Bonvillain (1995 :4) states that :

Women and men may have different economic, social and political roles, but the valuation and reward given to them are roughly similar. In such system, all people have access to equal right, prestige, and ability to make decisions from themselves and others, and autonomy in their households and communities. In contrast, gender inequality refers to denial of autonomy and equal rights to one group of people based on their gender.

The position of women in societies is still arising many questions because of the unfair treatment toward women. These phenomena cause many writers create literary work.

Literature has been an inspirable part within history of man. The creation of literary work is closely related to its author and in turn humanity, the author is conditioned by certain circumstances. So, literary work and social

problems are possibly represented on the basis of the author's background and experience or an example of social problems can be reflected in a movie.

One of the movies that has different opinion about women is *North Country*, which is directed by Niki Caro and starred by Charlize Theron that achieve greatness cinematic. *North Country* is emotionally packed stunner on drama that easily contends as the best film of 2005. The film was adapted from the true story of Case Jenson versus Evelith Taconite Co, and inspired by class action book created by Clara Bingham and Laura Leedy Gansler. The film released on 21 October 2005 and was shot in North of Minnesota (include the city of Evelith), Minneapolis and New Mexico. The film production is by Warner Bros Picture Inc Studios. And spend budget US \$ 35.000.000 for the best film of 2005. (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0395972/>)

*North Country* is one of the movies that wins Oscar, best written all over it, and it's worthy of the praise. Director Niki Caro gained international acclaim for debut film "Whale Rider" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0395972/>). This film, apart from the fantastic acting performances is a good film to look at. Caro and Theron can get the lion's share from the scriptwriters and ensemble actors in achieving the movie success. Frances McDormand, Richard Jenkins, Sissy Spacek and Jeremy Renner also do superb work in *North Country*. Their supporting performance are brilliant and really balance Charlize on screen and also make the film more frightening and powerful.

*North Country* set in 1989 and 1990 and inspired by a true story (<http://www.rottentomatoes.com /author-9531>). The main character of the film is Josey Aimes (Charlize Theron), she stars as abused wife. She and her two children live with a drunken husband in the snowy confines of Northern Minnesota in 1989. Josey decides to leave and escapes with her children to her parents' house, although Josey has bad relationship with her father (Richard Jenkins). Josey's oldest child Sammy (Thomas Curtis), was born while she was in high school, those make her father dislike her. In other hand Josey's mother, Alice (Sisy Specek), quietly supports her daughter.

Josey, crushed by her father's harshness, then she takes her family to stay with a high school friend, Glory (France McDonmand) and her husband Kyle (Sean Bean). Glory is the only female truck driver in the Pearson Coal Mine. Most of the mine employees are men, including Josey's father. Josey decides to take control of her own destiny and support her children by herself. She, along with a few other women, is hired by the mine.

The mine is a roughly place to work. The women are hated and despised by the men. They constantly treat them with pranks and aggressive sexual behavior. Josey has it worst. She is the prettiest and is known as a tramped. It turns out her immediate superior, Bobby (Jeremy Renner), is her ex. boy friend when she was in a high school. He targets her, aiming her brunt of his sexual advances.

Life at Pearson Mine becomes intolerable for Josey. Josey decides she has to take action for herself and the other women, then she enlist the aid of

Bill White (Woody Harrelson), a lawyer a good friend of Glory's husband. Bill suggests Josey to take class action. After she gets support from her friends she succeeds in her class action. Finally they get compensation and the most importantly, equality for the women workers in Pearson Mine have law protection.

Relating to the previous description, the writer intents to conduct a study entitled; "STRUGGLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN NIKI CARO'S *NORTH COUNTRY*: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE".

## **B. Literary Review**

As long as the researcher knows, there is no research which has been conducted to study the movie "*North Country*" of at least among the students in all around of Surakarta.

## **C. Problem Statement**

The main problem of the study is: "How struggle for gender equality is as reflected in Niki Caro's *North Country*?"

## **D. Limitation of the Study**

To take it easier for the writer to conduct the study, she gives limitation of the problem on the struggle for gender equality emphasized on *North Country*, viewed from the feminist perspective, particularly liberal feminism.

### **E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the movie in term of its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on feminist perspective.

### **F. Benefit of the Study**

By presenting this research paper, the writer hopes that it will give some benefit as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits
  - a. To give some information which can be used by the other researchers who are interested in analyzing this literary work.
  - b. To give a contribution to other literally research especially in the study of movie "*North Country*"
2. Practical Benefits
  - a. For getting deeper understanding about feminist issues in movie North Country.
  - b. For getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Department.

### **G. Research Method**

#### 1. Type Of the Study

Based on the problem statement and discussion, this study can be classified as descriptive qualitative research. It is suitable with Surahmat's opinion about descriptive method. He states that one characteristic of

descriptive method that the data are collected, described and the analyzed (1994: 146).

In brief, descriptive qualitative research is research employing the method collecting, describing, classifying and analyzing the data and the drawing conclusion. The data can be sentences, discourse, picture, diary and memoranding. By using the descriptive method, this research is aimed to describe struggle for gender equality as reflected in the movie *North Country* through feminist perspective.

## 2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is movie entitled *North Country*, which is directed by Niki Caro. The movie was adapted from the five true story of a case by Jenson Versus Evelith Taconite Co. The duration of the movie is about 116 minutes. The movie was released on 21 October 2005 that was produced by Warner Bross Picture Inc Studios.

## 3. Type of the Data and Data Source

In this study, here are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data source.

### a. Primary data

Primary data are taken from the dialogue and the action of movie *North Country*.

### b. Secondary data

Secondary data are gained from author biography, essay, comment, historical information, the other books and thesis that are related to the research.

#### 4. Technique of Data Collection

The collecting data technique is done through library research. The data are collected from books and articles related to the topic. In order to make the data more complete the writer conducts some procedures. The necessary steps are as follows:

- a. Watching movie and finding out the important sentence on the dialogue and it's classified.
- b. Reading the books that are connected to the research.
- c. Browsing to the internet to get some information article that related to the research.
- d. Finding out the important data
- e. Arranging the data into several parts based on its
- f. Developing data that are provided

#### 5. Technique of Data Analysis

The data are analyzed by using descriptive qualitative analysis. This is an interpretation of the text and content analysis to get characteristics of the data for feminist analysis at the movie North Country.

### **H. Research Paper Organization**

Research paper organization is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which consist of the background of the study, literary review, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study,

research method and paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory, which consists of notion of feminism, liberal feminism and also theoretical application. The third chapter consists of social historical background of American society in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The fourth chapter consists of discussion, consisting of the analysis based on structural element. The fifth chapter consists of analysis based on feminist perspective, and the last chapter is the conclusion and suggestion.