

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of Study

Prof. A. Teeuw even said “Literature is not born without cultural studies”. In the other words, without culture impossible literature born, like culture of writing. Every human being has such an instinct to improve himself with create a literature. It is meaning that literature as one of art forms is assumption to represent the creation. According to Darma, creation is a man’s reach in art, while invention is in science and so discovery. Among those three, the purest one is creation. Creation has characteristic. It is very personal that nobody can replace it (qtd. in Muhsonati 1).

So literature is a work of human being called an author. Then the work of art is different from each author because literature is impossible born without the influence of the author’s feeling. If we are talking about literature it is impossible if we are not talking about the author. It means that, every literature always has correlation with the important things like relationship among the background, history, biography, environment, society, and personal experience of the author. Literature has correlation with human aspects such as the author’s historical, biographical, environmental, social and personal experience’s background (Prabu).

Based on the explanation above, literature is the expression of the author’s feelings on his experience. Literature shows the author’s soul. It becomes a media

for his subjective experiences. The author expresses it in his work of literature. Furthermore, there must be known close relation between work and the era of the work written or published, because every literary works covers its own historical background based on its period

Matthew Arnold said, "... Literature is "criticism of life, the mission of critics is improving condition, and the will improving is a message or moral of poet" (qtd in Muhsonati 6). So, a literary works, either poetry, prose or even drama has a mission of critic which is written improving to better life. Each poet expresses their criticism or protest in many ways, like: invective, jeremiad or irony and satire. Of course, that is caused not suitable condition between one or more aspect which makes the poet write the poem.

Related to the expression of author's feelings about their social condition, there are many literary works produced by Black Americans. Such as Black American experienced racialism in USA. As soon as we heard Black American or Negro word, immediately in our thinking there is common description of them. Dipoyodo said," Negro is a man with dark brown skin to dark black, a black and curling hair, a large and blunt nose and a big lips, they are varied in height, but commonly their height is above 1.5 m, ...".(20)

Here the writer chooses Langston Hughes as example of the author who has experience feeling or personal experience. Langston Hughes is one of the authors who expresses his personal experience in work literature especially poem. Hughes was unashamedly black at a time. He stressed the theme of "black is beautiful" as he

explored the black human condition in a variety of depths. His main concern was the uplift of his people, whose strengths, resiliency, courage, and humor he wanted to record as part of the general American experience (Kennedy and Gioia 430).

Langston Hughes is one of Black American poets who popular in Harlem Renaissance. His poetry and fiction portrayed his life of the working class blacks in America, lives he portrayed as full of struggle, joy, laughter, and music. Permeating his work is pride in the African-American identity and its diverse culture. "My seeking has been to explain and illuminate the Negro (Black American) condition in America and obliquely that of all human kind," Hughes is quoted as saying. He confronted racial stereotypes, protested social conditions, and expanded African America's image of itself (Rampersad 5).

In Harlem Renaissance Era predominantly African-American section of New York City in which it was born. In this era, many of artist, writer, poet, playwright, musician from African American community would achieve prominence not only in the arts but in many other areas of American society. Hughes is part of Harlem Renaissance, who writes many poems and one of them is poem entitled "Negro" which had written in 1922. (Worth 72)

In this poem, He tells the activity and the treatment of the Black community. They are treated unfairly. This may caused by racism. In the United States has been much more successful for white ethnic groups than for nonwhite ethnic groups. Of the nonwhite ethnic groups, Americans of Africans descent have had the greatest difficulty in becoming assimilated into the larger culture (Edward 168).

Racial discrimination happened in Black American is taking apart from the fact that history of Black American arrives in America especially in South. They came from the rural region and since they were very poor. Africans Americans were brought to the United States against their will to be sold as slaves. When African slaves arrived in America, they were displayed and sold to their future owners at slave markets. To control their large black populations, some colonies passed slave codes, or laws, that greatly restricted the lives of Africans. According to the codes, slaves were not permitted to learn to read or write. To prevent them from planning a rebellion, they were forbidden to assemble together (Worth 24). These laws locked most African Americans into lives of perpetual slavery. Finally, their owners had the power to treat their slaves as brutally as they wished. Black American often ran away to that condition, but because of their skin which easier to indentify they were found of coming back (Muhsonati 22).

Black American had no contact with White man, who always looked at Black man as animals. Then, the law said all of done by White man even that is wrong come to old slogan has is 'White is right'. Since it was impossible for them of becoming a White man, and since they knew how unfairly they were treated by White people. It makes the experience of slavery has left a deep impression on the personality of the Black American. (23)

The law of their place is formulated in order to make it clear in society and to know the origin Black. In Virginia Law at 1662 the very first dark status for Blackman American was referred to as "SLAVES". The law decided about the fate

of children born to parents of different race, proclaiming them to be a slave or free in their status.

“Negro were treated with greater severity in court of laws than were white indentured servants Negro are referred to as slaves for the first time in a Virginia Law of 1662. Another law the same year decided the fate of children born to parents of different race, proclaiming the child to be slaves or free in keeping with the second half on the seventeenth century, the laws and regulation promulgated in the most colonies. (Wagner 5-7).

Furthermore the African slaves escape from the South region to the North.

When former slaves arrived in the North, they discovered that life there was not as they might have expected. Although slavery had been abolished, but it is not same with the real condition African Americans lived under a crushing burden of discrimination. Many whites disliked African Americans, believing that they were inferior and incapable of being responsible American citizens. (Worth 50)

Henry W. Grady said in Jim Crow Laws “The supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the Negro race resisted at all hazards because the white race is the superior race.” (qtd in Worth 64). Of course, under the Jim Crow laws, black and white people in were kept separate. The Jim Crow laws were applied into many parts of Black society like they faced discrimination in railroad, school, public facilities and workplace.

All the experiences of the Black American then contributed a big influence to Hughes afford in keeping their bitterness through the art. The writer knows through his poem “Negro” Langston Hughes wants to erase racialism apartheid in all aspect like education, politics, public facilities, economic, segregate housing and social decision. He wanted people in the world to be aware of condition of Black

American. It is clear in our entire mind the struggle of Blackman who Black minority in America. According to Dipoyodo:

“...They never have rights neither in economic and social as White have. That is apartheid politic attempt to keep and ensure race identity between Black and White. By the politics, they were separated into groups, based on race in any aspect of social and economic life. Apartheid means race discrimination, and unjust for majority people” (qtd in Muhsonati 9)

However, the expression of Langston Hughes in poem Negro which depicts the racial discrimination of African America in this era looks interesting enough to discuss. The writer want to describe the racial discrimination which happened in USA when the poem Negro written by Langston Hughes. Then, he expresses his emotional experiences with diction which uses in his poem make the reader think about what exactly it was like to live his life during that time.

Starting from this point, the writer is interested in discussing racial discrimination between Black and White American in USA which tells in poem “Negro” by Langston Hughes poem in early twentieth century. The writer intends from interpretation this poem will know the expression of the author who showed in his poem. Exactly, it will be interesting for us, as a literary teacher, student and all people to get more intellectual information about it.

## **1.2 The statement of the problems**

Based on the background stated above, the problems are stated as follows:

**1.2.1** What expressions used by Langston Hughes in this poem?

**1.2.2** What kind of discrimination experiences by Black American in USA is described in this poem?

### **1.3 The Objective of study**

Through this study, the writer tries to present the following aims:

**1.3.1** Describing the expression by Langston Hughes in this poem.

**1.3.2** Depicting kind of discrimination experienced by Black American in USA in the poem.

### **1.4 The significance of the study**

The writer hopes this study will help students of literary class also a literary teacher and any readers who is interested in literature to understand the discrimination of race in Black American which is described in Langston Hughes's poem "NEGRO". It is also expected that all reader will be able to catch the deep meaning and the morality of his poems. Also, the writer hopes this study can be a helpful reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting further research.

### **1.5 The Scope and Limitation**

Langston Hughes created so many poems but only one poem from Hughes with the title "NEGRO" will be analyzed in this thesis. This poem tells about racial discrimination between Black and White American which is written in early twentieth century. The writer limits kind of discrimination only on workplace, education and social life (segregate and public facilities) as expressed in the poem. The conflicts appear when Black American does not get freedom as White in all

aspect of life. It makes Black American faced bitter lives in USA. Through this poem, the writer wants to show the author's expression about racial discrimination.

## **1.6 Method of The Study**

Research method presents the ways of the thesis writer analysis her topic. Research method is the way how the writer conduct this study to answer the problems stated. First, I analyze the expressions and diction used by the author in his poem "NEGRO" and finds their meanings. Second, after analyzing and getting the meaning of the expressions used in the poem, I try to relate them with the social condition of USA when the poem was written. Third, draw a conclusion what the poem tries to tell the readers.

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

This study is a library based research. It uses qualitative descriptions the purpose of qualitative description is to get real and valid description about the poem. The writer will use the expressive approach to explain that the poem is meaningful because it is the expression of the author about his suffers during racialism in USA. Then, the writer uses racial discrimination theory which then can be related with Hughes expressions.

### **1.6.2 Data Source**

The main data are taken one of James Langston Hughes's poem entitle "Negro". It is taken from book entitled "The Collected Poems of James Langston Hughes". The poem Negro is one of Hughes poem which collected in 1921 – 1930. Whereas the supporting data are the references related to the main data. Those are

collecting poem and historical of Black American, discrimination of race in USA and author's biography from books, magazines, and journals. And the references from internet sources basically taken from website that in detail cited on bibliography and the video of Langston Hughes's poem entitle Negro in YouTube which edited by Edwin Maldonado.

### **1.6.3 Data collection**

The data collection is method by using the qualitative descriptive method. The writer uses documentary analysis to collect the data. The writer collects some documents which have similarity in idea. Specifically, to collect the data is done by closing reading, taking note, and discussing them. After data collecting, the next step is analyzing them. The data analysis follows the following steps.

**1.6.3.1** Finding and understanding the meaning of each expressions used in the poem

1. Investigating the biographical sketch of the author to see the relationship between his life and his works
2. Making use the historical approach, to see if there is any relationship between the societies, the period with Langston Hughes' poem.
3. Providing historical facts discrimination of race on Black American happens in struggling for equality.
4. Draw a conclusion of the study.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

- Racial discrimination : The separation of people through a process of social division into categories not necessarily related to races for purposes of differential treatment. (Wikipedia)
- Racism : Racism involves the belief in racial differences, which acts as a justification for non-equal treatment (which some regard as "discrimination") of members of that race. (Wikipedia)
- Expressive Form : concept of organic form and gave the view that it was not possible or desirable artistically to express or describe the disintegration of a belief or a civilization in a chaotic form. The fallacy of expressive form refers to the ideas that if a poet feels with sufficient intensity then this will be enough to create a successful poem. But, if a Poet depends only on inspiration, then this will not be adequate. He or she must also judge, compare, analyze. (J.A. Cuddon: 298)