

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Poetry is included as one of the literary works. A good literary work certainly requires an imaginative and creative author. An author who writes any literary work certainly needs ideas that may not easily be obtained if the author does not occur on. A literary work produced by an author is usually the result of his or her experience, idea, emotion, and the outpouring of the heart that cannot be said directly.

A poem may begin with a lump in the throat, a home-sickness or a love-sickness. It is a reaching-out toward expression as an effort to find fulfillment. Some poets may be easily understood, while the others may be not, however it is only the author who can interpret the poem. According to Ollila and Jantas, "Poetry is any kind of verbal or written language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or express any kind of emotion, idea, or state of being. Poetry is used to achieve this artistic expression in several ways " (1).

In writing literary works, an author must pay attention to the intrinsic and extrinsic elements that build literary works. The author should also get literary understanding through the historical context between one literary work to another. The historical relationship in question can be either equality or contention.

Determining the relationship between literary works could be very complicated. There are elements such as; ideas, lines, and themes should be learnt in order to understand a literary work.

Langston Hughes' "*Negro*" and Maya Angelou "*Equality*" are poems that show the same background and tells a similar tragedy. Both poems describe the life of Black African-American and Racial Discrimination in the past, the two poems are intertextually related to each other intends to examine the intertextual relationship between "*Negro*" by Langston Hughes and "*Equality*" by Maya Angelou in terms background of themes, other intrinsic elements, and the writing style of the poem. In other words, the reason why the author chooses the poems as objects of research is because of the poems' has correlations and similarities, especially regarding the content and the historical background.

Intertextual approach is to understand a text as an insertion from other texts. Intertextuality is also understood as a process to connect texts from the past with the text of the present. According to Zengín:

Intertextuality suggests a range of links between a text and other texts emerging in diverse forms as direct quotation, citation, allusion, echo, reference, imitation, collage, parody, pastiche, literary conventions, structural parallelism and all kinds of sources either consciously exploited or unconsciously reflected. By so doing an intertext transforms or reproduces the texts preceding it (300).

When talking about literature it is impossible for not talking about the author. It means that literature has correlation with the important things as the author. Other literary works such as poems, for example, have a mission to improve the critic written a better life. Each poet expresses criticism or their protest in many ways such as invective, lament or irony and satire.

Regarding poets, there are African-American poets, especially those who revealed their social conditions there were many poems produced. The poets who have expressed the condition especially in poems are Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou, two African-American poets who are popular in that era and this era. African-Americans are also often referred to as Negroes, and explained below:

“Negro” is a very interesting word because, first of all, it comes from a Greek origin meaning something that is dead. Negro comes from the same origin as “necro” and “nekro.” In Greek there is no difference between these words. Some wise and devious white scholar knew what he was saying when he decided to call black people Negro (or necro). If the originator of this concept had been using the Latin or Spanish origin, as is often suggested, he would have called himself blanco, which means white. He did not call himself blanco; he called himself “white” and he called black people Negro, likely meaning necro. There is a semantic message hidden in this word and it seems that it might lie in its Greek origin intending to describe the Black person as a “dead substance.” The manifestation of the distorted African self found in the characteristics of the “Negro” is something that stands as a barrier to the real expression and real essence of the African person. The “necro” refers to a mentally, socially and culturally dead person. (Akbar 1)

“Blackness is still the main ‘criterion’ of a ‘lower’ racial origin. The ancient environmental meaning of black skin as being caused by sunlight is diffused together with the meaning of black as a negation, death, bad nature and even illness” (Hrabovsky 85). This can be seen in terms of Blackness which is very denigrated, they are not only considered as a low figure, but also discriminated against. The absence of justice for the difference made by whites as it said, that it is a natural poor African-Americans and even the cause of a disease. Blackness is also treated as a slave. “Black skin was regarded as ‘damned’ and as one of the reasons of enslavement since the launch of the slave trade in 1441” (Hrabovsky 66).

Some theorists explain, race and racism are sufficiently independent for the possibility of having the former without the latter. In addition, the relationship is so strong that the assertion of the distinction between the two becomes negligible, while the two are necessary consequences of each other. “Where there is racism, there is race; where there is race, there is racism” (Lewis, par. 5).

Racism is a hierarchy of superiority or inferiority along the line of the human. This hierarchy can be constructed and marked in diverse ways. “Westernized elites of the Third World (African, Asian or Latin American) reproduce racist practices against ethno or racial groups where, depending on the local or colonial history, those considered “inferior” below the line of the human can be defined or marked along religious, ethnic, cultural or color lines” (Grosfoguel 10). The emerging racism is the difference between the color of the

skin that causes the black race to feel distinguished and perceived by the white race. Moreover this difference leads to discrimination.

Racial Discrimination happened in African-American was taking apart in the history fact of African-American who arrives in America. The difference between the people brought issues of race in which the concept of race emerges racism. One of the major issues of African-Americans is racial discrimination and that gets them into a minority in the United States.

In this statement, the study is going to explain about Racial Discrimination to draw how the African-American treated unwell, including the social conflict and the descent of the greatest difficulty in Americans culture. "Of the nonwhite ethnic groups, Americans of Africans descent have had the greatest difficulty in becoming assimilated into the larger culture" (Edward 168).

This study is intended to examine Black African-Americans voices as reflected in Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou's poems, this study is entitled Racial Discrimination in African-American: An Intertextual Study of Maya Angelou's "*Equality*" (1990) and Langston Hughes' "*Negro*" (1922).

B. Problem Formulation

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

1. How is the depiction of Racial Discrimination in Langston Hughes' "*Negro*"?
2. How is the depiction of Racial Discrimination in Maya Angelou's "*Equality*"?
3. What intertextual relationship can be found in both poems?

C. Limitation of The Study

The poems tell about racial discrimination between Black African-American and White American. The study will only discuss the poems by Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou. The issue discuss about Racial Discrimination in African-American and the intertextuality between the two poems.

D. Objective of the Study

In this statement, the writer tries to present the following aims:

1. To depict Racial Discrimination in Langston Hughes' "*Negro*".
2. To depict Racial Discrimination in Maya Angelou's "*Equality*".

3. Explaining what the intertextual relationship between the two poems.

E. Significance of the Study

This study hopes to give benefits and will help the students of English literature, the teacher and the other types of readers who are interested in understanding the discrimination of race in African-American which is described in Langston Hughes' "*Negro*" and Maya Angelou's "*Equality*". In addition to this, this study attempts to reveal the intertextual relationship between the two poems. At last, this study hopes to be a helpful reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting further research.

F. Outline of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter describes the introduction. It introduces the study by giving a description of a reason for choosing the topic in the background of study. It also introduces the problem formulation, limitation of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, and the outline of the study.

Chapter two is reviews of related literature; it explains the portrayal of African-American in Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou's poem at that era. As additional information, the poetry is provided.

Chapter three contains research method which consists of research design and data organizing. The data organizing provides data collecting method, types of data, and analyzing the data.

Chapter four contains findings and discussion. It deals with the data that answers problem formulation in chapter one.

Chapter five contains the conclusion and suggestion to the students of English Literature, to the lecturers and to the readers.