

Chapter 1

Introduction

Basic Consideration

Poem is one of the sub subject for students to learn about language, and literary. In learning language whether English or Indonesia, students in school usually get the subject of poem. Even the students in college also have to learn poem which include in language or literary subject. Especially for students in English/ Indonesia department and literary department, they also have to learn poem. Learn poem as same as learn literary, because poem is one of the part or unsure of literary especially in literary work.

Poem is made by some authors by using some rhythm language. In poem's part of body have high art values, it can be seen from the language style and diction word. Wolosky (2001, p.3) said that poetry is language in a various of elements, word and word order, sound, image which have significant among of them. Commonly poem is always talking about the experience of authors or the fact which occurred around the author's life. One of the content which had been talking about in poem is racism.

"Racism is operationally defined as beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation" (Clark et al., 1999, p.805). That is actually the real definition of racism based on their race, but people think about racism in different ways nowadays. They think about the negative way of racism such as discrimination between white and black people and negative prejudice toward black people.

The view of this negative way about racism, can be seen from Brandt; Garcia and Van Soest.. They said that racism is the real form of racial classification which occurred from some violence or act of discrimination and prejudice (as cited in National Association of Social Worker, 2007, p.7).

Discrimination can bring bad impact to some people and also good impact for another one.

Practice of discrimination in this case refers to discriminate two categories people that are white and black people. Actually, this discrimination based on human's physical differences, which make white and black people more separate each other.

One thing that makes white and black people more separate is prejudice. A lot of prejudice began to enter human's brain about those differences. They think more about bad prejudice than good prejudice. Moreover, both of prejudice and discrimination happened because there are differences among human being. Thus it means that racial classification can build discrimination and prejudice. Racism is one of the phenomenons which still occurred nowadays. Racism has occurred since many years ago period in some countries. One of the countries which administered the view of racism is United States. Racism began from the slave trade in U.S. This slavery had been brought by Europeans to U.S in early 1600s. Almost all of the slavers came from population of black African. Since that the slave trade had been rooted in U.S, racism is more develop than before. (Magar, 2011)

Beside slavery, there are some things which make the racism in U.S more developed, that are discrimination and segregation Ergüner, (2009). Discrimination is related to the society, such as higher education, poor education, employment, judicial or civil right discrimination, health and social service etc Ergüner, (2009, p.1). So, it means that a lot of things can make the differences between black and white people in U.S seem clearly. Moreover all of them are the phenomenon of racism of black African American in U.S.

There are many of authors that had been created some literary work especially poem, include of the African American authors. All of their literary work or poem contained with their experiences, facts, and feeling of black people towards racism. Through their poem African American authors want to tell and share their story of being black people. The other notable writers from black people are George Morse Horton, Joshua McCarter Simpson, Langston Hughes and many more (Sherman, 1997).

Langston Hughes is one of the writer or author of literary work in U.S that have been created several

literary work contained with racism.

Langston Hughes was born on February 1, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. He was the great-great-grandson of Charles Henry Langston, brother of John Mercer Langston, who was the first Black American to be elected to public office, in 1855. Langston Hughes is the only son of James Nathaniel Langston and Caroline Mercer Langston. But later his parents had been decided to divorce and separate from each other. While his father gone and his mother has to be seeking employment, little Langston grew with his maternal grandmother Mary Patterson Langston in Lawrence Kansas (Hughes, 2012, p.2).

Langston Hughes has many literary works especially poems. His poems are divided into three parts that is; single poem, group poems and group translation poems (Young, 2002, p.99). From his entire poem, there are several poems which contained with the racism. Why? Because he was an African American who had felt and experience with discrimination. Moreover, he also wanted to share and express what has happened and how the racism against all Black people in U.S. One of the poems which have contained with racism is “Justice”.

“That justice is a blind goddess”
“Is a thing to which we black are wise”
“Her bandage hides two festering sores”
“That once perhaps were eyes”

The first line of that poem means that justice is something pureness and cannot be dirty. It indicates that justice in human view is something that can make fair judged to everyone without see who they are. The second line means a thing can make the black people wise in another way. It indicates that with all of the result of judge can make them wiser.

The two bottom lines of that poem “her bandage hides two festering sores” and “that once perhaps were eyes”, indicates that the symbol of justice have bandage which hides two eyes of her eyes. Her eyes have bandage so she cannot see people based on their background. Thus, she can judge

people without discrimination. Actually this symbol is the face of how justice work and judge someone fairly. But the fact in Hughes' period, justice is not work properly for the black people in United States (America).

In this poem, he stresses the title with "Justice" to explore the Black condition about justice. He said that "justice is blind" because the fact in his period an injustice seems clear and only happened to Black people. Actually in the meeting or plenary session, the justice have to fair for all people without discrimination. Unfortunately, in Hughes' period, justice stood on the side of white people. Justice is not able to see and reach black people.

Langston Hughes has one poem which famous and inspired the other black people, that is "Let America be America again". In this poem Langston Hughes says indirectly that he never became a part of America one time. It can see from his lines in that poem.

"Let America be America again"
"Let it be the dream it used to be"
"Let it be the pioneer on the plain"
"Seeking a home where he himself is free"
"America never was America to me"

The word of 'America' in the first line refers to all people/American citizen, the land of America, and America country itself. In first line describe about the wishes of Langston Hughes to let inside of America like people, land and the country become America again. The next lines describe about the wishes of the author and all black people to letting go their dreams that used to be, their dreams of being America. Let the new people to live for a plain life and looking for the place or home which make them free. Unfortunately, the author still felt America never was America to him. Hughes and the other black people cannot feel the freedom and equality. The lines "(There's never been equality for me, nor freedom in this 'homeland of the free')". In that line showed that the author never felt the equality between black and white rights. 'Homeland of the free' is refers to the places in America that used to be free for all people. Hughes also never feels freedom in some places in America.

It includes the other black people feeling and experiences.

“O, yes”

“I say it plain”

“America never was America to me”

“And yet I swear this oath”

“America will be!”

In this second end of that poem describe how America still never was America to Langston Hughes. He admits that fact and swears to make America become America again to him. Even though America never was America to him, he will make sure with his oath that someday America will be America again o him and all black people. In those lines there are message to all black people to believe and fight for their live in America, so their existence of being American will admitted by white and all people in America.

The author realized that America used to be is not America again, and he feels this America never become America to him. So, he will make America be America to him. That is the one of Langston Hughes poem contained racism which inspired black people to make their existence visible to white people.

This research is to analyze the poems which contain with interaction of people in America based on their race. The races that apply in there refer to negative way and it makes white and black people more different. By because of those differences, some bad interaction happened to black people. The interaction of people through their race and the talking about something that happened to black people makes me interest to know more about them.

From all the explanation above I can take a conclusion that racism is one of phenomena in United States (America) which separate people into groups based on race. Actually that’s the real definition of racism is beliefs, attitude or acts that tend to separate people into two groups black and white. However, this racism refers to negative way, like discrimination, segregation and bad prejudice. One of African American notable is Langston Hughes who created poem, novel, drama, and short story.

His poem has characteristic and contained with racism.

Based on the explanation above, I am interested to find out and describe what the meaning of Hughes's poem and how his poem can reflect about racism in U.S. Therefore, in this research I took the title "**An Analysis on Racism in Langston Hughes's Poems**".

Problem Statement

The problem statement in this research is "How is the racism portrayed in Langston Hughes Poems?"

Scope of Study

This analysis is limited on the racism which reflected in Langston Hughes' Poems, (Children Rhyme, Cross, I Too, Merry Go Round, The Negro Mother, and Dinner Guest: Me).

Research Question

The research questions in this analysis are:

1. What is the imply meaning of Langston Hughes's Poems?
2. How the racism as individual prejudice, individual discrimination, institutional policies and practice or discrimination in Langston Hughes's Poems?
3. How the racism reflected in Langston Hughes's poem link with the fact of life or experience of author and black people in America?

Objective of Study

The objective of study in this research is to describe the racism as portrayed in Langston Hughes' Poems.

Significance of Study

The significances of this study are:

1. This research can give contribution of knowledge to understand and to know more about

poems and also can give experience of reference in analysis of racism for literary works which focused on poem.

2. This research can give information for the reader about racism. Thus, the reader can get lesson from racism and appreciate people without discrimination and bad prejudice.
3. This research can give an inspiration for someone to make other interpretation in literary works, especially in poem.