

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Racial conflict is virtually a global phenomenon, affecting widely separated societies at all levels of political and economy development. Although it seems most frequent and most intense in black white relations, racial conflict occurs wherever people of different race or colors must share a common homeland. In America, white people are regarded be long to the higher class than that of colored people (black). Black has tended to live in segregated, crowded, low-quality housing. The fact that black are usually poorer than white is one reason housing for blacks is relatively inferior (Moris, 1975:25).

Based on the phenomenon, the crucial factors happened in society also influence the development and characteristic of human work. Human work, here, refers to work of art. There are many kinds of work of art, such as music, dance, drawing, statue and literature. That can be found in the forms of drama or plays, poem, novel and short story (Pujiarto, 2005:1).

Wellek (1956:20) stated that literature as a social product has a close relation to the society. Mostly, a literary work is often a reflection of the social condition in society or community. One of literary work is poem. The world of poem derives from the Greek "poises" which means creating. Poem is a work of literature or competitions which describes life and human activity and

presenting by language. Mostly, poem is created because the life experience of what the poem “stopping by woods on a snowy evening” emphasizes the beauty of nature. It also relates people and the nature. Poem has relationship between people and society, for example, Langston Hughes’s works. Mostly his works are to expose his people’s condition black people (Bergman and Epstein, 1987:435)

From the statement above, the writer is interested in Langston Hughes’ poems. James Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was born on February 1902 in Joplin, Missouri as a black boy. He wrote not only poetry, but also plays, song lyric, short stories, and later was known for his engagement with the world of jazz, focused on his poems. The collected works of Langston Hughes are divided into three volumes. Volume1 (1921-1940) : *The Weary Blues* (1926), *Fine Clothes to Jew* (1927), *The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Felicitations* (1931), *Dear Lovely Death* (1931), *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems* (1932), *Scottsboro Limited=Four Poems and a Play* (1932), and *A New Song* (1938), *Let America be America Again* (1938). Volume 2(1941-1950): *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942), *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* (1943), *Freedom’s Plow* (1943), *Will V –Day Be Me Day, too?* (1944), *Field of Wonder* (1947) and *One Way Ticket* (1949). Volume 3(1951-1967): *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1957), *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (1959), *Ask Your Mama; Poems of Our Time* (1967) (Choriroh,2005:2).

These poems describe about the condition black people in America. The writer chooses five poems of Langston Hughes, they are: *Let America be*

America Again, Will V-Day Be Me-Day Too?, Freedom's Plow, Freedom Train, and Democracy. On the other hand, those poems also describe slavery and inequality for black Americans. That is exactly what the writer wants to do trying to analyze how Langston Hughes's poems describing black people life reflected in the inequality and slavery. As the writer knows, inequality and slavery always bring bitterness, sears, pain, sorrow, immorality and inhumanity.

Motivated by the fact above, the writer is interested in conducting this study. Therefore the writer uses sociological approach as the appropriate approach in this research, because this poem is a social poems with a perpetual relevance in exploration of human efforts in reconcile personal aspiration with social norms and social value. It is an approach which gives attention to the work related to the author and his social background. This research is entitled: ***BLACK AMERICAN LIFE REFLECTED IN LANGSTON HUGHES' POEMS: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH***

B. Literature Review

In modern America literature although Langston Hughes is one of famous black poets, the writer does not find a research which analyzes his poem in great quantities. In Surakarta, the writer finds *EGALITARIANISM IN LANGSTON HUGHES' POEMS: A GENETIC STRUCTURAL APPROACH* conducted by Umi Choriroh from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (2005). It is a research done in order to find out the poems about

egalitarianism in langston hughes. It deals with the necessity of fighting for freedom, justice, and equality. He also illustrates that freedom, justice and equality are not granted but should be strungled. Therefore the writer uses genetic structural approach, it is It is the study about the influence by the society and social condition in which particular literature work appears with egalitarianism.

In different scope, the writer found a thesis *THE AMERICAN AS A DREAM PLACE FOR BLACK AMERICANS* conducted by Vena Komalasari from AKI University of semarang (2005). This thesis is describe that America is a dream place that people want to have is wrong paradigma. The writer to analyze the relation within the social community of black people with the poems.

Meanwhile, in this research the reseacher intends to study the sociological approach of the poem being researched. It will be done by discovering the form of black american life that is reflected in the poems especially concerning with american society in early twentieth century from sociological approach. Moreover, this research describe about a perpetual relevance in exploration of human efforts in reconcile personal aspiration with social norms and social value.

C. Problem Statement

The problem statement will be focused on: “How does black American life in existence of inequality and slavery reflected in Langston Hughes’ poems on sociological approach?”.

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the poems based on its structural elements
2. To analyze the poems based on sociological approach

E. Benefits of the Study

The benefits affected from the study are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give contribution to the development of knowledge, particularly the literary research in the study of Langston Hughes’s *Let America be America Again*, *Will V-Day Be Me- Day Too?*, *Freedom Plow*, *Freedom Train* and *Democracy*.

2. Practical Benefit

To get a better understanding about American Paradox reflected in Langston Hughes’ poems.

F. Research Method

1. Type of the Research

Research method used is qualitative research. In analyzing the data, the writer applies sociological approach

2. Type of the Data and the Data Source

The type of data used in the study is text consisting of primary data source and secondary data source.

a. Primary Data Source

Primary data are the text of Langston Hughes's poems entitled *Let America be America Again*, *Will V-Day Be Me- Day Too?*, *Freedom Plow*, *Freedom Train* and *Democracy*. taken from selected poems of Langston Hughes.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data source are other sources such as essay, comments, historical information, biography of Internet and other relevant information

3. Method of the Data Collection

There are two steps namely selecting criteria and data gathering procedure

a. Selecting Criteria

Those poems are categorized based on the theme and gotten five poems which are fully appropriate to the Langston Hughes's concept of sociological, namely *Let America be*

America Again, Will V-Day Be Me- Day Too?, Freedom Plow, Freedom Train and Democracy.

b. Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering the data, the writer takes some procedures, by repeatedly reading the five poems which have been chosen and taking notes from the important part in both primary and secondary data source.

4. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive. This is an interpretation of the text and content analysis to get the characteristic of the data in sociological analysis.

H. Research Paper Organization

This study consists of six chapters. The first chapter is introduction which contains background of the study, literature review, problem statement, research limitation, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method and paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory, major principles of the sociological perspective and structural elements of poetry. The third chapter is historical background of the American society and the biography of the author. Structural analysis of the poems is presented in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter is sociological analysis. Finally, conclusion and suggestion is presented in chapter sixth.