CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter deals with the introduction of the research, the problem statement of the research, the objective of the research, the originality of the research, the benefit of the research and the previous study.

A. Background

Maya Angelou is one of the most renowned and influential voices of our time. Hailed as a global renaissance woman, Angelou is a celebrated poet, memoirist, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress, historian, filmmaker, and civil right activist. Born on April 4th, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri, Angelou was raised in St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas. In Stamps, Angelou experienced the brutality of racial discrimination, but she also absorbed the unshakable faith and values of traditional African-American family, Community, and culture. As a teenager, Angelou lovea toward arts won her a scholarship to study dance and drama at San Fransisco’s Labor School. At 14, she dropped out to become San Fransisco’s firs African-American Female cable car conductor. She later finished high school, giving birth to her son, Guy, a few week after graduation. As a young single mother, she supported her son by working as a waitress and cook, however her passion for music, dance, performance, and poetry would soon take center stage. In 1954 and 1955, Angelou toured to Euope with Production of the opera Porgy and bess. She studied modern dance with Martha Graham, danced with Alvin Ailey on television variety shows and, in 1957, recorded her first
album, *Calypso Lady*. In 1958, she moved to New York, where she joined the Harlem Writers Guild, acted in the historic Off-Broadway production of Jean Genet’s *The Blacks* and wrote and performed *Cabaret for Freedom*. In 1960, Angelou moved to Cairo, Egypt where she served as Editor of the English language weekly *The Arab Observer*. The next year, she moved to Ghana where she taught at the University of Ghana’s School of Music and Drama, worked as feature editor for *The African Review* and wrote for *The Ghanaian Times*. During her years abroad, Angelou read and studied voraciously, mastering French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic and West African language Fanti. While in Ghana, she met Malcolm X and, in 1964, returned to America to help him build his new organization of African American Unity. Shortly after her arrival in the United States, Malcolm X was assassinated and the organization dissolved. Soon after X’s assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Asked Dr. Angelou to serve as Northern Coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. King’s assassination, falling on her birthday in 1968, left her devastated.

Literature is a work of art, which expresses of human life and the problem on society, particularly concern with law, religion, norms, and value of society, economics and politics with qualities of the relationship among them (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972: 12, in Saputri, 2011: 13), Poem is a universal sign a long human history. Almost no nation in the world not related to the poem, even primitive to the most civilized nation, from the most simple like magic spell to chase the bad spirit away, and spells to reject the badluck till the form of the
poem convince into and Maya Angelou successfully tell the world about the racism.

This research investigates the meaning and the way Maya Angelou faces her pain and sentimental moment against racism represent from her collection of poem “The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou” (1994) written by Maya Angelou, there are thirteen poems analyzed based on structural analysis and sociological approach in racism perspective they are: *My Guilt, The Calling of Names, On Working White Liberals, The Thirteens (Black), The Thirteens (White), Harlem Hopscotch, Africa, America, One More Round, Ain’t that Bad?, Our Grandmother, Riot:60s and Sepia Fashion Show.*

Many researchers had analyzed Maya Angelou’s poem based on racism and identify it with different perspective but never go further into against racism and understand Angelou’s background as an activist and an African-American. Maya Angelou wants to tell people that it is not something that should be hidden, instead of it she writes it into poem beautifully, critically and very detailed that is being different or stereotype as weak cannot be used to make an individual or even a community in this case the black people be degraded. Besides that, the researcher also presented the following reasons; for the researcher herself, this research aims to find the deep knowledge about literature whether the author and the meaning of the poem. For the students, it is hope that understanding English not only about the grammar but also the culture in this case by understanding poem and it is meaning.
B. Problem Statement

The problem statement of this research investigates “Racism is reflected in Maya Angelou’s poems”. The main focus of the research is to analyze the following questions:

1. How is racism reflected in Maya Angelou’s poems?
2. What types of racism reflected in Maya Angelou’s poem?
3. Why racism is an important issue in Maya Angelou’s poems?

C. Objectives of the Research

This research intended to find out racism reflected in Maya Angelou’s poem. The details of the objectives are:

1. To describe how Maya Angelou’s poems against racism.
2. To describe types of racism reflected in Maya Angelou’s poem.
3. To describe why racism become an important issue in Maya Angelou’s poems.

D. Originality of the Research

The research related to literary work has been done previously by others researchers. Maya Angelou’s literary work also has been analyzed before with different theory and approach. This research is more specific to the poem itself and how Maya Angelou tries to tell the world against racism using sociological approach by her personal experience and her background as An African-American author, activist, poet and actress.
E. Benefit of the Research

1. Theoretical Benefit

The researcher expected that this research becomes one of the references for other researcher especially and for the reader generally. The analysis of Maya Angelou’s poems is hoped to enrich the field of library research on literature especially about poem analysis.

2. Practical Benefit

This research on the thirteen poems of Maya Angelou is hoped to give benefits the reader by her works, and understand the meaning of the poem specifically with the values. The other benefit is for the students, it is important for them to know English culture, in this case by English literature in Maya Angelou’s Poem. For the English teachers they can teach their students not only the understanding of English language but also the culture especially about American literature. For other researchers this research can be one of the resources for them to analyze the literature research specifically.

F. Previous Studies

Dealing with this part the researcher explains ten previous studies of other researchers which analyzed Maya Angelou’s poem in their research.

The first previous study was Kelly Wissman in “Reading and Becoming Living Authors: Urban Girls Pursuing A Poetry of Self-Definition” (2009). She investigates that Maya Angelou as one of the African American Writer survives as the Black Women from the depression, discouragement, and disappointment and inspires
her and the students to increase the Afro-American Curriculum. This research use to measure and find out the confidence of the students toward reading and understanding the life of an author and applied in the class room.

The second previous study was Tracy CarventerAeby and Victor Aebyentitled “Rewriting Families Stories During Successful Transition From An Alternative School: One Students Story of “Violent Female” to “Phenomenal Woman” (2009). They write that the case described in this article reflects a young woman's story of her personal struggle to stay in school and to participate in her family. Experiences of the student, reflecting serious personal and family problems, were limiting her ability to attend school and creating educational barriers. As a result, she was assigned to the alternative school where she re-scripted her story to make sense and give meaning to the assignment and her own identity and worth. Through interviews, family meetings, personal writings, poetry, and literature, she created a portfolio of school work, letters, and poems that told her story, past and present. With the help of the school social worker using the process of questioning in the narrative approach, the student was able to rewrite her story of violence and abuse and transform it into school and personal success. A year later, she found herself reflected in the mirror of MayaAngelou's poem “Phenomenal Woman.”

The third previous study was Joy M. Robbins and Dale-Elisabeth Pehrsson entitled “Anorexia Nervosa: A Synthesis of Poetic And Narrative Therapies In The Out Patient Treatment of Young Adult Woman”(2009). They focused on Current
trends for treatment of women with anorexia nervosa often focus on weight gain as the primary therapeutic goal without concurrently addressing psychological concerns. As a result of this singular focus, many women drop out of treatment before recovering. This research offers an alternate treatment model. A synthesized narrative and poetry therapy modality is useful in treating this population because it offers women an opportunity to create an expressive and assertive voice while shifting blame from the self to the disorder by use Maya Angelou Poem. The use of Maya Angelou’s poem is as a reinforcement of young woman confidence toward their self. It is known that Angelou’s poem is also related to empowering woman confidence and bravery to face the life. As in Still I Rise poem, it is explain and describe the confidence of woman toward their self and also the pressure from other people who misjudge them and their body. This poem also use as well in this research.

The four previous study was conducted by MamunaGhani and BushraMaz in their writing “Race, Feminism and Representation: An Inquiry Into Maya Angelou’s Poetry” (2009). The study focuses on Angelou’s poetry to capture the phenomenon of resistance in the background of post colonialism. As her poetry is an articulation of the process of struggle for national, racial, and lingual identity. She addresses the dichotomy of black and white, feminity and masculinity, minor and major, self and other, inferiority and superiority, and orient and occident. The analysis of her poetry helps to affix her amid subversive writers who question the dominance and subordination, dealing with the
imagery of interspersed themes of lost past, deteriorated present in a cultural context against the colonial enterprise.

The fifth previous study was Tiffany Simpkins Russel entitled “*Peer Trees and Poetry: Crafting Identity In A private Boarding School*” (2011). She investigates that this phenomenological study uses personal narratives to reveal the lived and shared experiences of two African American women who, as adolescents, attended Logan Academy, a private boarding secondary school. Revealing the experiences of myself and Malika, she shares how the private boarding school experience shaped of consciousness as African American female high school graduates. She uses womanism as a theoretical framework to share the high school reflections of the peer of Malika as well as to present her own at Logan Academy. The findings of this phenomenological study reveal themes of psychological injury, community, and the importance of African American literature in helping to manage the challenges of a predominantly white, private secondary school for us as African American students. One of the writers is Maya Angelou and her poem “And Still I Rise”.

The sixth previous study was S. B. Bhambar entitled “Reconstructions of Black Woman’s Image in the Autobiographies of Maya Angelou” (2012). He states that Maya Angelou, hailed as a global renaissance woman, is a celebrated poet, memoirist, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress and civil rights activist. She has acquired an important position in the literary scene of Afro-American writing. She has opened new vistas of black female suppression
through her autobiographies. She is known for her series of six autobiographical volumes focusing on her childhood and early adult experiences. Maya Angelou’s autobiographical statement is the most Afro-American of all Afro-American literary pursuits. The focus of her writing is concerned with the question of what it means to be Black and female in America. Her autobiographies introduce us to a world of prostitution and pimps, con men and street women, drug addiction and spiritual disintegration. She has revealed profound truths to any ear which can hear it. Her autobiographical statements present a powerful and authentic condition of Afro-American womanhood in her quest for understanding and love. She has publicly discussed her personal life. Her work centers on themes such as identity, family and racism. The present paper attempts a study of the six autobiographies to unfold Angelou’s reconstruction of the black woman’s image. Angelou’s autobiography believed affects the character and the confidence of woman statement.

The seventh previous study was carried out by Silvania Krisna and Lilik Sulistyo in the essay entitled “Black Power in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise”, “Phenomenal Woman” and “Weekend Glory”” (2013). This research discusses the Black Power’s ideas of three poems of Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise”, “Phenomenal Woman”, and “Weekend Glory”. Maya Angelou was highly respected as a spokesperson for Blacks and women. The struggle of the author as a powerless Black woman can be seen from Angelou’s poems. This research tries to find out in what ways Black power is revealed in Maya Angelou’s three poems mentioned.
above. Moreover, Black power movement concept and figurative language are needed to reveal the idea of Black power in each poem. The analysis shows that there are differences of ideas of Black power in each poem. The Black power idea is the way to survive in the society, the way to express someone’s thought, and the ability to accept one’s identity as a Black woman. In the end, it can be concluded that the author is a powerful Black woman.

The eight previous study was by Laksmi P. Ananta in the journal entitled “Maya Angelou’s Negritude” (2013). She stated that Maya Angelou is an outstanding and amazing artistic genius. She has furnished colossally to the evolution, potency and significance of African American literature. The global obstacles and plights experienced by the Blacks in all the ages are replicated by Maya Angelou. A humanistic mindset of creativity is pursued by Maya Angelou. Her aesthetic theories are firmly based on her personal experiences, thoughts and feelings. A style unique of black consciousness and Negritude is devised by Maya Angelou. To uphold her racist policies, she maintains and strengthens her policies on race by overthrowing the negative images introduced by the Whites. Her ideas are the repercussion of her virtuosity as a writer. Her œuvres are repositories of clarity of vision, range, depth, scope and dynamism. Hence they are the hallmarks of her originality.

The ninth previous study was Elisabeth M. Bertera and Sandra Edmonds Crewe entitled “Parenthood in twenty-first century: African American Grand Parents as Surrogate Parents” (2013), African American grandparents serve
important roles as surrogate parents. Historically they are honored and recognized for their extraordinary service in augmenting the child welfare system. This article provides a contemporary view of the significant number of African American grandparents who serve as surrogate parents. Their assets and challenges are discussed. Following on the work by Dr. Linda Burton and collaborators in 1995, this article addresses the relationship between temporal context, developmental context, and ethnic/racial context of the life course as it relates to grandparenthood in the twenty-first century. In addition to the discussion of African American grand-parenting trends, challenges and benefits in the twenty-first century, the article presents implications of these contexts for the surrogate parenting by older African Americans relative to social work education, research, and policy and the Maya Angelou’s work is one of the references they use as the example of African-American life which can explain the surrogate life as Angelou life separately from her parents.

The tenth literature review was Tecnan Yoon entitled “Listening to ESL students’ real voice: A case study of multicultural English Language Arts (ELA) classroom” (2013) he stated that In this case study, the researcher investigates the language used by the classroom teacher, texts, and students within literacy events, and to explore how the interaction in literacy events contributes to shaperacial identities for cultural and linguistical diverse students using critical race theory, cultural identity theory, and racial literacy theory. The researcher also explores the cultural models that are represented in the texts used in the
class, the context of the classroom itself, and the effect they have on students’ formation of identity and construction of racial relationships. The literature model was Maya Angelou’s work as one of the example of diversity of race.

**G. Research Paper Organization**

This research consists of six chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction of the research. It deals with background of the research, problem statement, objective of the research, the originality of the research, benefit of the research, previous study and the research paper organization. Chapter II is dealing with the notion of sociological approach from Rene Wellek, Diana Laurenson, Meyer H. Abrahms and Mario Klarer perspective. Related literature review about the notion of racism, the notion of poem and the element of poetry, the biography of Maya Angelou and theoretical application. Chapter III is about research methodology, it deals with type of the research, object of the research with formal object and material object, technique of selecting data, type of data, data source, technique of data collection and technique of data analysis. Chapter IV deals with the structural analysis of Maya Angelou’s poems such as the speaker, the spoken to, rhythm and meter, rhyme, tone, imagery and symbol, diction, figurative language and theme of the poems. Chapter V deals with the discussion of racism in the text of Maya Angelou’s poem indicates from the diction, imagery, and symbol. It is also discuss the criticism toward the types of racism in Maya Angelou’s poems. The last part discussed about the sociological background of Maya Angelou and what is influenced her poems. Chapter VI as
the last chapter discusses about conclusion, pedagogical implication and suggestion.