

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

We as human cannot live like what we are expected in every aspects. For example, in social life human always face social problems. One of social problems that still become a problem is racial discrimination or popular as racism. Racism is kind of social problem that still occur in our society nowadays. Racism makes superior community to harsh or discriminate inferior community. In our society there is some kind of standard that was created because of that situation. That standard often discriminate they who did not meet the standard. This situation also can be called as racism. Racism can be differentiated in term of skin colour, physical, and even beauty.

Racism in term of skin colour also called as racial differences. In this world we are divided into different skin colour. They are white, yellow, and black. White people or Caucasian are people who mostly from Europe. Yellow people or Mongoloid are people who mostly from Asia. And black people or Negroid are people who mostly from Africa. The differences of skin colour also lead to racism and discrimination in our society. White people in this era have more power over black or yellow people. Especially black people, they were discriminated, intimidated, and bullied in certain society.

In term of physical, in our society there is still occur when physical can be a racism problem. Sometimes, someone who has imperfect physical, they will get bad treatment in their life. For example in the school, fat students sometimes were bullied by their friends because of their imperfect physical.

The last is beauty. Beauty is a concept of determining someone's physical attractiveness. Beauty concerns with female physical attractiveness. Female physical attractiveness consists of eyes, weight, height, face, hair and skin colour. Beauty is relative for some people in deciding what they call as beautiful. In determining someone is beautiful or not, people always judge based on their perspectives. Those perspectives come from the existence of the standard of beauty. People can freely judge and make their own perspectives toward beauty.

The standard of beauty based on white perspective is more dominant in our society nowadays. Rokotnitz (2007) states that dominant white ethics define beauty in terms of light skin, light hair and blue eyes, The perspective on having white skin, blue eyes, blonde hair is more dominant to decide whether someone looks beautiful or not. Naturally, it cannot be denied that beauty is the concern of almost every woman, as further acknowledges that a woman's appearance influences her perceived ability to perform her work well, religion dictates the proper relationship to her own body, the desired body is no longer feminine and sexual, and there is a rash of violence against women as well as by women to their own bodies.

The nature of beauty is one of the most fascinating riddles of philosophy. According to Kant (1951), he thinks that finding something beautiful is different than merely liking it. It's a certain kind of liking, not dependent on your idiosyncratic tastes (like your preference for one colour or flavour or tone over another) or on your moral opinions. So, the nature of beauty is not determined by the certain term or aspect. Beauty is relative, it means we can decide by ourselves without having any standard to be considered.

Those are some aspects that often lead to racism in our society nowadays. Racism is social problem that still hard to be solved even in modern era. This problem can be solved when people have their mind set without looking at the differences. So, we as human can live together without intimidating, discriminating, and bullying others. Because human nature is social being, it means they cannot live without others.

Hence, human as social being cannot be separated from interaction, whether it is with other people or with a literary works. Interaction is not only in the form of oral interaction, but also in the form of written respond. In having interaction, human tend to deliver their mind, thought, opinion over some issues they interest with. Each person has their own opinion related to certain issue. Some of them prefer to pros or cons against a certain issue. The way people use their arguments to respond to certain issue can be different, it is called personal interpretation.

The different perspectives also occur when people make interpretation toward a literary work. Each person has their own perspective about a text,

whether it is good or not. It means that a text cannot be separated from a reader's contribution. Readers create an opinion as a measurement toward a text whether it is worth to read or not. A reader has important role in literature. Without a reader, a literary work cannot be judged whether it is a quality work or not. A reader can judge a literary work by criticize it and give some opinion on it.

The importance of reader in giving criticism toward a literary work cannot be denied. For a literary work, a meaning can be interpreted from readers' judgments. In here, a reader take a role as an active agent in which they can freely judge a literary work based on their own opinion. On the other hand, according to Selden and Widdowson (1993), authors are only passive agents who only rewrite texts based on the experience of previous texts which are available before. The interaction between readers and text is called reader-response criticism.

Reader-response criticism emphasizes on how the readers give their own perspective about a text and the meaning within it rather than the author's intention of the meaning of his/her work. According to Cuddon (1999), reader-response concerned with the relationship of a reader and a text, with the emphasis on the different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise after a reader read the text.

From Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* novel, the interesting issue is racism. In which, the standard of beauty is used to determine someone's position or superiority in a society. In society, the perspective about having white skin, blue eyes, blonde hair is the standard of beauty. It makes people with different colour of skin, hair, or eyes being discriminated. In *The Bluest Eye*, a black girl named Pecola Breedlove longing for having blue eyes as well as the standards beauty of the White communities. Her perspective towards the standard of beauty makes her to wish has blue eyes in order to escape from her daily life reality. She felt that if she has blue eyes, the condition around her can be changed.

From the day Pecola was born, she was told that she was ugly. Pecola's mother, Pauline Breedlove, is more concerned with the appearance of Pecola and she believes that her own daughter is utterly ugly. Then, by the time she grows up, she already knows the difference between becoming white and black, in terms of physical appearance and privilege. She is the only one who deeply feels colonized

by the White society that address the concept of beauty through only the eyes of the Whites.

There are some reasons why the researcher decides to choose this novel as the object of the research. First, *The Bluest Eye* novel is an interesting novel which tells about racism, child, and sexual abuse. It is reflected in our society that those social facts cannot be denied. From this novel we can learn about the cruelty of social phenomenon that sometimes we are not aware. Second, the novel tells us that those social phenomenon are hurtful for people who oppressed by it. Racism leads to trauma for person who experiences it. Besides, sexual and child abuse also leads to trauma that is hard to forget. And the last reason is the researcher wants to share about the readers' judgment towards racial differences that was influenced by *The Bluest Eye* novel based on the social fact that occurs in society. For this reason, the responses from the readers toward racial differences which occur in society are significant to analyze.

Based on all of the description above, the researcher proposes to conduct a research entitled THE INFLUENCES OF TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE* (1970) ON THE READERS' PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS RACIAL DIFFERENCES: A READER-RESPONSE ANALYSIS.

## **B. Problem Statement**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher intended to analyze the issue of how is the readers respond toward racial differences in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) such as:

1. What is the profile of the readers of *The Bluest Eye* novel?
2. How did the novel influence the readers?
3. Why did the readers respond to the racism issue?

## **C. Limitation of the Study**

The researcher focuses on the research in analyzing how the readers' perspective toward racial differences is influenced by Toni Morrison's novel: *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

## **D. Objectives of the Study**

To conduct the research, the researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To describe the profile of the readers of *The Bluest Eye* novel.

2. To analyze the factors that influences the readers' perspective toward racial differences.
3. To reveal the intention of the readers in giving their perspective toward racial differences issue.

#### **E. Benefit of the Study**

The researcher hopes that it can give benefits as follows:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefits**

The result of this study is expected to be able to give much information about racism as happened in our society and can be a good contribution for academic references. In addition it is would be an additional object in literature.

##### **2. Practical Benefits**

The study is expected to increase knowledge and experience of the researcher. This study helps the researcher in understanding some social issues that occurs in society. It can be applied for a real life to appreciate a contradiction in all aspects.

#### **F. Paper Organization**

This research paper organization is as follows:

Chapter I is Introduction, which consists of background of study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and paper organization.

Chapter II is Literature Review, which consists of underlying theory, and previous studies.

Chapter III is Research Method, which consists of types of study, types of data and data source, data collection method, data analyzing technique.

Chapter IV is Finding and Discussion, which consists of the problem statement analysis and discusses the analysis.

Chapter V is Conclusion, which consists of elaborates conclusion and suggestion.