

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.6 Background of the Study

Literature is closely related to human life because literature is the work of human being, even the life of human can be pictured as a work in literature. Edward Jones states that “Literature is simply another way we can experience the world around us through our imagination” (1968: 1). The conclusion is literature is a tool to express people’s thought, feeling, and attitude by written language from the true story and imagination of people.

Literature, in its broadest sense, includes all written material. Into this general grouping historical books, philosophical works, novels, poems, plays, scientific articles, dictionaries, directories, instructional manuals, travel folders, magazines, school textbooks (Jones, 1968: 1).

On the other hand, literature has many forms of human works, while literature itself has the function to give the knowledge, insight, and entertainment to people.

Moreover, Hudson says that:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is through the medium of language (1965: 10).

The statement clarifies that literature can be seen as the reflection of human life in the time. The authors create literary works with the purpose to show the situation in the time, and they express it by using the arranged language and

words into some forms of work. Those can be in the form of history, prose, drama, and poem.

Poem is one kind of literary works that has the suggestion and theme inside to be told. People can learn it and try to analyze everything about the poem through the study of poetry. Poetry is a form of literary art which uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language to evoke the meanings. Kennedy states that “Poetry is a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude; design to surprise and delight, and to arouse an emotional response” (1966: 411). It means that poetry is a kind of literary work that has been arranged with the beautiful form through the arrangement of words, which can express feelings, imaginations, and themes.

Hudson asserts that “Poetry is simply the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach” (1965: 64). This statement means that poetry is the interesting and simple literary work. The form is written with the words which are uttered to reveal the deep meaning.

All the statements above imply that poetry has the similar meaning, that is, poetry is a work that has the art value which can express the feeling and message through the words that have been chosen. Poetry can also amuse the reader and raise the imagination.

The poems entitled “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, by Maya Angelou are interesting to be analyzed. These two poems are talking about racial discrimination which is experienced by African Americans who live in America. One of African American people is Maya Angelou. She

expresses her experience through many works. Almost all of her works are about her experiences and social criticism. Besides that, she is also best known for her autobiographical books. Maya Angelou is an author, poet, historian, songwriter, playwright, dancer, singer, and civil rights activist. As a poet, she has created many poems. All of her poems are interesting.

“Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” are two of her famous poems. “Still I Rise” is a poem about racism, criticism, and personal obstacles. “Still I Rise” is about overcoming oppression with grace and pride, having no sympathy for the oppressor and giving the validity to the reasons for oppression. While, the poem “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” also has the similar theme to “Still I Rise”, that is about racism and segregation in America. Because there are many acts of discrimination, Angelou tries to overcome those obstacles, hence why these poems are still famous and read today.

In general description, imagery is a language that evokes sensory images. Imagery in the poem is needed to give imagination for the reader in order that the reader can understand the theme or the message told in the poem. Therefore, it is necessary to talk about imagery in this research dealing with racial discrimination in Angelou’s two poems.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

The poems “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” are about racial discrimination. The statements of the problems are:

1. What are the imageries dealing with racial discrimination in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”?
2. How do the imageries dealing with the racial discrimination constitute some symbols in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”?

1.8 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

2. To explain the imageries dealing with racial discrimination in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”.
3. To explain the imageries that constitutes some symbols in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”.

1.9 Limitation of the Problem

The themes of the poems entitled “Still I Rise” and “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” are about racial discrimination. In analyzing these poems, the discussion is limited on the imageries dealing with the racial discrimination. The kinds of imageries are auditory imagery, visual imagery, tactile imagery, kinesthetic imagery, olfactory imagery, gustatory imagery,

and organic imagery. Besides that, this research also talks about the symbol which is constituted from imageries related to the racial discrimination.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is about imagery in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" and "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings". It focuses on the imagery because it has the purpose to picture the condition of racial discrimination as the theme of the poem and as the background of the poet's experience in making the poem. Hopefully by analyzing the imagery in "Still I Rise" and "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings", the reader knows about racial discrimination in Angelou's era in America. Besides that, by analyzing the imagery in these poems can be known how Angelou expresses the oppression of racial discrimination attractively. While for other researcher, this research can be the reference.