

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Research

Understanding the poems is therefore to get involve in the process of completion of the poems. In order to do so it means to appreciate every part of the poems (Reaske, 1966:9). Emerson (in Adams, Hazard. 1992: 2134) said, "Half the reality of man is what he expresses through every medium such as language and so on". Poem as one of the literary works is reflective interpretations that people do in life, and then they reflect it by the medium of language as they choose.

There are various definitions about poetry; many experts and practitioners give the definition based on their experience and deepness of their knowledge. However, the maze of definition will give us the enlightenment points that will lead us before exploring the poetry.

According to Abrams, poetry is in fact not a simple opus, but it is a very complex organism. Poem is created with various esthetics and language elements. Accordingly the poem is formed with the integrated formation of all sort of meaning; it means that poem is the idea that is formed with the formation, affirmation and representation of all items and elements of its component and it represents one beautiful union (in Djojuroto, 2005:11) .

A.S. Hornby said, poem is piece of creative writing in verse form; it is expressing deep feeling or noble thought in beautiful language, composed with the desire to communicate an experience (1987: 644). Thus, poem is the expression of

idea that awakens the feeling, stimulating the imagination of five senses, and it is the recording and interpretation of human experience.

Based on the explanation above, poetry is a replacement of human life; therefore, in understanding poetry, the reader at least has to know about the intrinsic elements of poem. As Richard said that, 'a poem contains 'whole meaning' as synthesis of sense, feeling, tone and intention'. (in Tarigan, 1986, 9-10). According to Djojuroto (2005 : 15) poetry consist of two parts, that is physical structure and inner structure. Physical structures of poem are such appearance of the used figurative language and rhyme, while inner structures of poem are constructed by theme, tone, atmosphere, and message.

Physical structures of poetry there are :

1. *Diction*. According to Tarigan diction is words selection, it means that poet selects the word that will be used in the poem accurately and systematically to produce the appropriate diction related with the atmosphere (1986:30)
2. *Figurative Language*. In general figurative language is that kind of language which departs from the language employed in the traditional, literal ways of describing persons or objects (Reaske, 1966 : 33).
3. *Imagery*. Brooks said that imagery is the calling to mind of something perceived by the senses, or all things that ever felt and experienced imaginatively (in Tarigan, 1986:30).

4. *Rhythm and Rime*. Morris said that rhythm is the result of systematically stressing or accenting words and syllables, whereas rime is the repetition of similar sounds in some apparent scheme (in Tarigan, 1986:34)

While inner structures of poetry are :

1. *Theme*. Theme is the fundamental idea that is told by poet through the poem. According to Djojuroto theme usually expressed human being problem with characterize the real problem, such as: love, fear, happiness, sorrow, miserable, justice, truth, the infinite, social criticism and protest. (2005:24)
2. *Tone*. According to Tarigan tone is poet's attitude toward his reader. Tone is expressed by poet; corresponding to senses and feelings which are contained in the poems (1986:17-18). Tone that is expressed by poets is also related to theme which contains in poems, for example, it's discordant if a poem talks about unhappiness but its contained happiness tone.
3. *Feeling*. Tarigan said that feeling is the poet's attitude toward his subject matter; in poetry, poet can express his feeling such as, happiness, sorrow, afraid, love, abhorrence, compassion etc.
4. *Message*. Poem contains message or intention that the poet wants to convey to his reader.

Poet is a thinker in creating his works, which owns acuity of feeling and strong intuition to involve life secret and existing mystery in life. On that account, poems have hidden meaning which must be translated by reader.

Furthermore, poetry is one of literary works. Marianne Moore said about poetry: "Poetry is 'imagery gardens with real toads in them'". It means that poetry is something full of imagery, but it is the expression of the poet's feeling. The poets try to express what actually they feel and what come up in their mind. The poets also express their feeling based on their experience in reality. One of writer's experiences expressed in their literary works is racial issues. Racial issues can not be separated from the experience of racism and discrimination. Racism has close relation with different color of skin between white and black.

As one of the poets who wrote about racial issues, almost all of Langston Hughes' poems explore about racism, especially black. One of the black person, who tried to prove that the black were not inferior, was Langston Hughes. Langston Hughes is one of the most famous writers and thinkers of Harlem renaissance. He had strong sense of racial pride. In his works, Langston Hughes promoted equality, condemned racism and injustice. He said, "...We build our temples for tomorrow, as strong as we know and we stand on the top of mountain, free within ourselves." (Biography of Langston Hughes, 2008: 30).

The statement above shows that he was very proud of being black, and he believed that they would reach their dream. Hughes is also a poet who wrote about racial issues. Using his own characteristic in poetic language, Langston Hughes explores his point of view toward Blacks's life condition. He believes that black people are actually able to reach their dream, get many things like what white people get, do many things like what the white do. He writes poems that expresses his pride of being black. Based on the explanation above, the writer is

interested in exploring further Langston Hughes poems that expressed his racial pride. The research is focused on finding out how Langston Hughes expresses his pride through his poems. Thus, the writer entitled this research, **“THE VOICE OF RACIAL PRIDE OF BEING BLACK IN LANGSTON HUGHES’ POEMS”**

### **1.2.Statement of Problems**

The research is a study of literature. Therefore, to overcome bias on this study, the writer focuses on analyzing things that are still related to literature. The writer only works in the frame of literature study. Though Hughes poems have visual aspect that may also have deeper meanings, the writer does not focus on analyzing the visual arts deeply, for it can be analyzed only by using the theory of visual arts. As mentioned in the background, the most interesting part of Langston Hughes’ poems is that how he packs the racial pride inside his poems. Therefore, to explore Hughes poems, the writer has formulated questions as a main framework. The questions are:

1. What are the racial pride found in Langston Hughes’ poems?
2. How does the voice expresses racial pride through Langston Hughes’ eight poems?

### **1.3. Purposes of the Research**

Based on the answers expected from the research questions as the focus of the study, the purposes of the research are:

1. to describe what the racial pride found in Langston Hughes' poems,
2. to describe the voice expresses racial pride through Langston Hughes' eight poems.

#### **1.4. Significances of the Research**

The writer hopes that the research will give benefits as follows:

1. giving an input to the readers one of the alternatives in understanding Harlem-Renaissance of American poetry, especially Hughes' poems
2. giving input to the next researchers studying related subjects.

