

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this research which includes background, problem, purpose, and significance. As a result, this chapter will provide a solid foundation for understanding the context and purpose of this research, as well as how this research will be conducted to achieve the stated objectives.

1.1 Background of Research

Gender is complex and is always linked to other identity differences. Gender is linked to race, religion, and other identities. Therefore, perspectives in gender studies are not singular. For instance, American women of color do not have the same fate as white American women. In fact, American men of color may not necessarily have a better fate than white women in America or in a region that applies apartheid. This understanding shows the intersection between gender and race.

Race and Racism in the United States have been shaped by centuries of conflict between white dominance and resistance from people of color. The history of racism in America dates to the colonial period when Europeans established the transatlantic slave trade in the 15th to 19th centuries which had a significant impact on the social structure and racial dynamics of the country.

Racism has been entrenched in the history of colonialism in the United States. When English immigrants first landed in this country in 1600, they immediately faced one racial "problem" in the Indians. A few years later, they triggered another problem when, in 1619, immigrant ships arrived in Virginia carrying Africans who were made slaves. The occurrence of slavery in America at that time was due to one of the black workers who wanted to escape from his work, this caused him to be sanctioned as a slave. Meanwhile, white people who tried to escape were only subject to an additional three years of hard labor for the colony. This then started the legal differences between whites and blacks.

People of color experienced segregation called Jim Crow which occurred in the 19th century until 1960. Jim Crow was a law created to justify white supremacy or segregation. People of color experienced radical racism at that time, white southern people did various things to African Americans. black people were associated with being

very primitive and backward by white people. The legacy of slavery and the belief in the uncivilized nature of Africans created the white supremacist myth that Black people were a backward race, incapable of integrating into the modern world as an efficient and productive nation.

The women of color and women laborers always worked hard in the fields and factories and received worse salaries and treated worse. Black women were also victimized by sexual harassment, white men casually raped Black women. It was not unusual for Black men to rape Black women. This is because Black people of color are considered sub-human and therefore should not be granted any human and legal rights at all.

In the early twentieth century, the struggle for the right to vote intensified. The right to vote for women was not only considered a major step towards equal legal status, but also a non-negotiable prerequisite for achieving social reform, on the basis that there should be no legal distinction between men and women and thus the feminist movement emerged. However, this was not enough to secure the rights of women, and eventually many people regarded feminism as an irrelevant ideal.

In the twentieth century the number of women who were employed as manual laborers continued to increase. women who were married and chose to work were taking work away from a male breadwinner. This is different if it happens to middle-class white women, it is because middle-class white women are only considered to violate social status and prevalent cultural attitudes, but it is quite different if this happens to black women, if black women who practice this are considered unusual (Taylor, 1998). Because of this, black women are not very demanding of the feminist movement, particularly lower-middle-class black women. They think that fighting for racial rights is more important, since black women are in the last position, after white men, white women and black men.

Race is an important issue to consider in feminist analysis, as the experiences of women of color are often overlooked or ignored by feminist movements dominated by white women. Smith argues that racism is an integral part of the social structure of the United States and cannot be separated from the experiences of Black women. She highlights how racism is interconnected with sexism and other systems of oppression, and how racism can affect the lived experiences and opportunities for individuals from the Black community.

Smith highlights forms of racial discrimination experienced by American people of color such as Discrimination in the Justice System: Emphasis on the injustices of the justice

system that tend to discriminate against individuals based on their race, including racial profiling by police, disproportionate arrests, and harsher sentences for Black individuals, Discrimination in Education: A discussion of inequities in the education system, where black children often face limited access to the same educational resources as their white peers, Discrimination in the Workplace: A look at racial discrimination in the workplace, where Black individuals often face difficulties in securing gainful employment and are treated unfairly in terms of pay, promotions, and working conditions, Discrimination in Housing: A discussion of discriminatory practices in housing, such as housing seclusion based on race, limited access for Black individuals to adequate housing, and discrimination in mortgage lending, Stigma and Stereotypes: Emphasis on how Black individuals often face stigma, negative stereotypes, and racial prejudice in society, which can affect their experiences in various aspects of life (Smith, 1978) As explained above, racism has been recorded in history with its pervasive occurrence and adverse experiences for people of color, especially women of color. Women of color experience the intersection of race and gender, they experience double discrimination. This gave rise to the theory of intersectionality.

Kimberle Crenshaw first revealed the theory of intersectionality argues that due to intersectional identities as women and people of color in discourses shaped in response to either of the two, women of color are marginalized in both.

According to Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1995), the black woman's position of oppression is analogous to traveling at an intersection that allows her to come and go from four directions. Discrimination is like an intersection that flows from one direction to another. If there is an accident at that intersection, it will affect vehicles from many directions. Same with the black woman: because she is at the intersection, she has an accident and will be injured because of sex and race discrimination coming from four directions. The essence of intersectionality is to recognize the interaction between gender and other forms of discrimination, such as race, age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender or sexual identity, religion, or ethnicity.

Intersectionality is defined as the theoretical approach and political critique that aim at making visible the identities and interests of women of color who have been marginalized (Lépinard, 2020) In line with that quote, the theory of intersectionality

emerges to voice the voices of marginalized women of color. Intersectionality is essential to recognizing and addressing the unique struggles faced by marginalized communities.

According to (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) Intersectionality is a combination of sources of oppression such as race, gender, class, and others that the dominant party plays in various settings. As the quote suggests, this intersectionality means a combination of intersecting forms of oppression and is done with the consciousness of the domination to increase oppression.

Intersectionality is a study within the realm of feminism that is devoted to exploring and deepening discrimination against women. The study expanded to be used to analyze literature related to feminism (Mustaqim, 2018)

Intersectionality's core insight: namely, that in each society at a given time, power relations of race, class, and gender, for example, are not discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but rather build on each other and work together (Collins, 2020). In line with this quote, in certain social lives and times, the power relations of race, gender and class build on each other and work together. This happened during the Jim Crow era, the Harlem Renaissance, and the contemporary era.

Literary works reflect what happens in the social life of society. What is written in literature is a picture of what happens in society. literature is a "social document" or a "mirror of society" and, by examining it, an accurate and objective knowledge of social relations can be acquired (Ahmadi, 2021)

Literary works are written from the author's concerns about what is happening in society. Through prose, drama, or poetry, thoughts and feelings are conveyed uniquely based on the elements of each literary work.

Poetry is a one of medium of expressing and resisting the racism and intersectionality faced by people of color. The themes written in poetry are often based on the experiences, feelings or concerns of the poet. Many poets have raised the theme of intersectionality in their poetry. The intersectionality approach is used by poets in writing their poems to describe how the image of women in society intersects with race, and various other discrimination and oppression that occur in women's lives. Many writers use the experience of discrimination as an object in their work due to various conditions that arise in society.

Poetry is a literary genre with a different form of writing from other literary genres, and in terms of meaning, poetry has a deep meaning. Poetry is unique among the arts, for the

sensuous medium of poetry is language, the natural vehicle of thought (Hutchison, 1907) This means that poetry is unique, with language strung together in such a way that feelings and thoughts are written.

According to (Perrine, 2018), Poetry is the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words. Based on the quote, through the dense and concentrated language formed in the writing of the poem, the reader can understand one theme of the poem.

From the Jim Crow era, the Harlem Renaissance to the contemporary era, many writers have written down what happened in their social life into a work of literature. It gives voice to their experiences, raises awareness, and fights for social change that is more inclusive and equitable.

In the Jim Crow era, many African American women poets experienced double discrimination and through poetry, these experiences were voiced. As explained above, the Jim Crow era was an era when people of color experienced racial segregation and it became a legal racial segregation law in the South of America.

The racial violence that occurred under Jim Crow laws encouraged African Americans in the South to move north (Great migration). They fled in the hope of finding better social and economic conditions. New York City, especially Harlem, became one of the main destinations of this migration, resulting in the Harlem renaissance. In this era, many African American women poets wrote poetry to voice their experiences.

Racism still occurs today, one of the causes is the legacy of history. The racism structured in American history, including slavery, racial segregation, and Jim Crow laws, has left a deep imprint and continues to affect society. The discriminatory systems and policies of the past have long-lasting effects that are difficult to erase completely. And to this day, African American women of color still experience double discrimination. In this contemporary era, many African American women poets voice their experiences through poetry.

In this study, researchers analyzed literary works by choosing poetry as the object of analysis. The poems that the researcher analyzed were poems from the Jim Crow era, Harlem Renaissance and Contemporary. These poems are selected poems by African American women. The poems are poems written in the span of the 19th century to the contemporary period.

This research uses Barbara Smith's intersectionality theory. This research focuses on the intersections between gender and race in *The Selected Poems from The Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, and Contemporary Eras* by African American Women Poets.

Smith's thoughts led to the concept of intersectionality, which refers to the ways in which different forms of inequality and discrimination (such as sexism, racism, social class, etc.) are intertwined and interact in individual experiences. She argues that racism is an important part of the overall system of inequality, and that understanding intersectionality is key to understanding the experiences of individuals in societies structured by such inequalities.

The theory of intersectionality developed by Barbara Smith highlights the importance of struggling for gender equality while considering the influence of racism and other systems of oppression. It underscores that racial oppression cannot be separated from gender oppression, and these two issues must be fought for together.

This research was inspired by several previous studies. This study has some similarities with some previous studies that discuss similar topics. The first previous researcher is a study entitled "Monstrous 'Others': The Legacy of Race, Hybridity, and Intersectionality in the Nineteenth-Century Novel" by Valerie Beth Oualline, her research discusses the concept of 'Others', how this concept manifests in various contexts of gender, class, and race. That there was intersectionality that occurred in European society in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The second previous study is "Intersectionality in Zadie Smith's fiction: Race, gender and class" by Sercan Hamza in the journal *Critical Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities*. This article discusses intersectionality in Zadie Smith's fiction using a textual approach.

The last previous research is "Tracing Intersectionality, Individual and Familial Struggle in Morrison's Novels: A Digital Humanities Study" by Zafar Ullah et al. This research discusses the intersectionality contained in Morrison's novels using hermeneutic theory and this research uses mixed method techniques because the data has qualitative, statistical, and visual characteristics.

The author's thesis has similarities with the three previous studies above in terms of the object of study, namely intersectionality. However, this thesis has a difference in the subject of analysis used. This research uses The Selected Poems

From The Nineteenth To Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, And Contemporary Eras By African American Women Poets as the object of analysis. This research focuses on the intersection of gender, race and other identities experienced by women of color from 14 selected poems, consisting of 3 selected poems of the Jim Crow era, 5 poems of the renaissance era, and 6 poems of the contemporary era.

Based on the explanation that the researcher has expressed above, the researcher chose the title *Intersectional Feminism in The Selected Poems from The Nineteenth To Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, And Contemporary Eras By African American Women Poets*, because this title already represents the researcher's research.

1.2 The Statements of Problem

Based on the description above, the problem in this study is Intersectional Feminism in The Selected Poems from The Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, And Contemporary Eras by African American Women Poets. It is formulated by two questions, there are:

1. How do the intersectionality represented and explored in the selected poems by African American women poets from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries, including the Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, and Contemporary eras?
2. What are the key differences in the representation of intersectional feminism in the selected poems by African American women poets from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries, including the Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, and Contemporary eras?

1.3 Research Purpose

Based on the Statement of Problem above, this research aims to analyze Intersectional Feminism in The Selected Poems from The Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, And Contemporary Eras by African American Women Poets which has several objectives, namely:

1. To interpret how the intersectionality are represented in The Selected Poems by African American women poets from the Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, and Contemporary eras.
2. To explain the key differences in the representation of intersectional feminism in the selected poems by African American women poets from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries, including the Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, and Contemporary eras

1.4 Research Significance

Based on the background, statement of problem and research objective above, the primary goal of this research was to yield theoretical and practical benefits. It aimed to contribute to the field of English Literature analysis, especially regarding Intersectional Feminism in The Selected Poems from The Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries: Jim Crow, Harlem Renaissance, And Contemporary Eras by African American Women Poets. By analyzing poems through the lens of intersectionality, especially on the dimensions of gender and race, this research provides a new perspective that combines the study of these two identities in literary works. This is expected to enrich theoretical and analytical understanding in the field of literature and intersectionality studies. While practically, the benefits of this research for readers are to improve the ability to understand literary works, that literary works often reflect what happens in society and are also expected to increase readers' awareness that in social life, gender and other identities are interrelated, that people around us often experience injustice and double discrimination between gender identity and race or other identities.