

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

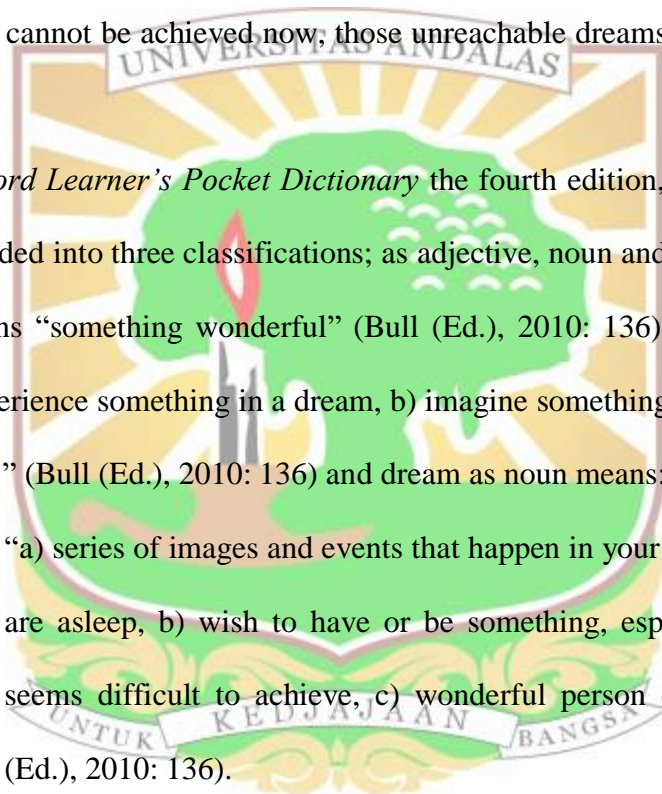
1.1 Background of the Research

Dreams are made to influence and motivate the life. However, some of the dreams are still unreachable because of some factors such as; the limitation of technology, class discrimination, law of country, financial problem, and so on. Although they cannot be achieved now, those unreachable dreams are still dreamt by some of us.

In *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary* the fourth edition, the meaning of dream are divided into three classifications; as adjective, noun and verb. Dream as adjective means “something wonderful” (Bull (Ed.), 2010: 136), dream as verb means “a) experience something in a dream, b) imagine something that you would like to happen.” (Bull (Ed.), 2010: 136) and dream as noun means:

“a) series of images and events that happen in your mind while you are asleep, b) wish to have or be something, especially one that seems difficult to achieve, c) wonderful person or thing.” (Bull (Ed.), 2010: 136).

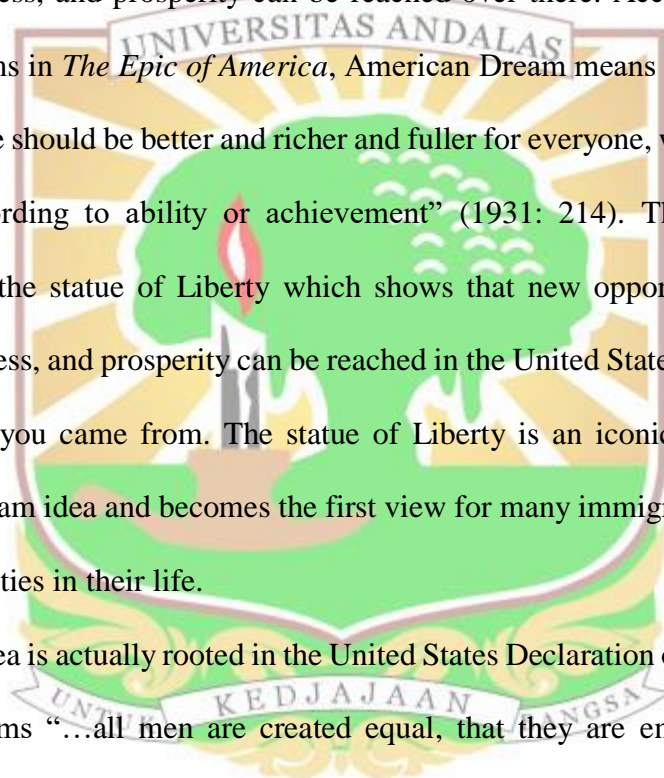
The readers may conclude that —although it has various meanings, the readers may get one straight line— dream refers to some beautiful things. These beautiful things usually do not belong to us yet so the only way is imagining them to become true.



Talking about dreams lead us to remember the American Dream concept; where the goal is to make the United States of America becomes one free nation for anyone in the world. This American Dream concept is being questioned even until today by the American people's mind; especially those minor groups of people who always being underestimated.

American Dream is a national ethos of the United States which saying that freedom, success, and prosperity can be reached over there. According to James Truslow Adams in *The Epic of America*, American Dream means that “dream of a land which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (1931: 214). This idea is also supported by the statue of Liberty which shows that new opportunities such as freedom, success, and prosperity can be reached in the United States of America no matter where you came from. The statue of Liberty is an iconic symbol of the American Dream idea and becomes the first view for many immigrants to hope for new opportunities in their life.

The idea is actually rooted in the United States Declaration of Independence which proclaims “...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jayne, 1998: 175). Actually, this idea has been started since nineteenth century and still believed until nowadays. This idea influences many aspects of life such as economy, politic, social, and lifestyle.



One of the most poets who writes about dream is James Langston Hughes. He was born in Missouri, February 1st, 1902 and died on May 22nd, 1967. He was a famous American poet in Harlem Renaissance era during 1920s until 1940s. He was one of the earliest innovators of jazz poetry and also the motor of Harlem Renaissance movement in the United States of America during the modern period (Rampersad (Ed.), 1995: 8-10). At that time, the class exploitation of African American people by the white American people became one problem that never end since nineteenth century. Langston Hughes then tried to empower African American people with his poems so that they kept fight and struggled for their dreams. Langston Hughes wrote 74 of 879 poems that explicit references to dreams, which five of them will be discussed in this thesis; *Dream Variations, I too, Dream of Freedom, Our Land* and *I Dream a World*.

The writer decides to analyse Langston Hughes as the only author in this research because his voices of dream through poems. His voices of dream influenced the social condition in the United States of America during the civil rights movements and kept the African American people stronger to face the discrimination. The book which collected Langston Hughes's poems titled *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* got good comments, one of them is from Boston Globe which claims that "The ultimate book for both dabbler and serious scholar....[Hughes] is sumptuous and sharp, playful and sparse, grounded in an earthy music.... This book is a glorious revelation." (Rampersad (Ed.), 1995). It shows that Langston Hughes is a smart poet who can write serious matter but enjoyable.

Therefore, the writer will discuss about Langston Hughes's dreams which seen in these selected poems. The power of dream and the persona of the author have caught the writer's eyes so that the writer wants to do this research. The writer loves to discuss about poems because a quiet short poem may say everything. These poems above show the great spirit of African American people and the author's voice of dreams. By analysing these poems, the readers will be able to see what happened in the United States of America during the early twentieth century period. These poems help the African American people to face their hard times in United States of America and ask them to keep dreaming, eventhough they knew that it is hard to accomplished.

These Langston Hughes's poems then will be discussed in this research with title *American Dream in Langston Hughes's Selected Poems*. The writer will show how good the Langston Hughes's poems are, how bad discrimination for humanity, the condition faced by the African American people during the early twentieth century and what American Dream supposed to be.

The writer makes this research in order to answer the society's problem of being equal and hopefully this research can make a better world to live. The writer wants to show the power of dream to the readers, by making this research, and to warn the readers to stop discrimination.

The writer makes hypothesis that the selected poems illustrate the social condition and the voice of African American people about dream of freedom, equality and humanity for the better world.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The main problem to be discussed in this research is the discrimination happened in the society during Harlem Renaissance era and what American Dream supposed to be. Langston Hughes's poems bring the readers to hear the sound of the African American people. Therefore, this research will try to discuss and describe the sound of the African American people via poems to find just and be equal during the early twentieth century in the United States of America.

In this research, the problem will be identified with sociological approach. Although, there are many ways to discuss this research, the writer decides to discuss them by using sociology of literature. According to Wolff, sociology of literature is unshaped science, undefined well, it has several empirical studies and several try outs of theories which more general but in other hand each of them has similar objection; the works and the society (qtd. In Faruk, 1994: 3).

The writer will deal with the social situation when the poems released, the cause and effect of the poems toward the society, states what the dream concept in the author's mind that written in the poems and answering the point of American Dream's goal because the fact is the African American people are still discriminated although they are American.

To solve these problems, the writer will show some facts and data found on some books and journals. These data will help this research more concrete and factual.

1.3 Scope of the Research

This research will be scoped or limited theoretically and practically to discuss the problem seen in the main analysis. In this research, the writer will analyse the Langston Hughes's selected five poems extrinsically and intrinsically. The writer will focus to see the social condition of the African American people in the United States of America during the early twentieth century as the extrinsic analysis on the chapter two and relates it to the main analysis on chapter three. The writer will analyse the five selected poems intrinsically and supported by the facts written on chapter two. The writer will not discuss anything out of the research questions below.

1.4 Research Questions

The research question applied in order to describe the main question which will lead the main topic in this thesis.

1. How the selected poems reflected the dream of equality and freedom of the African American people.
2. How the selected poems reflected the dream of happiness of the African American people.
3. How the selected poems reflected the dream of prosperity and success of the African American people.

1.5 Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to show how the Langston Hughes's selected poems empower the African American people in fighting against the discrimination along 1920s until 1940s in the United States of America. These

selected poems voice the dream of freedom and equality which are what the African American people wanted. They also illustrate the social condition of the United States of America during the early twentieth century from the African American people's perspective.

Specifically, this research aims at how the Langston Hughes's selected poems reflect the social condition happened during that era, how the white American people discriminate the African American people, and show the relation between dreams in Langston Hughes's selected poems and the American Dream.

This research hopefully be able to help the other students and lecturers to analyse Langston Hughes, his poems and American Dream concept. Also, this research hopefully can help the equality problem which appear in the society and remind the society about being equal in the name of humanity. This research may also remind us the history of the United States of America and be a reminder so that this event will not happen again in the future.

1.6 Review of the Related Studies

The writer found solely one similar thesis which discuss the American Dream in Langston Hughes's poems. The writer also found two thesis, one dissertation and one journal which almost similar to this research.

The only one thesis which similarly discussed about American Dream in Langston Hughes's poems is written by Istianah (2010) from UIN (Islamic State University) Jakarta entitled *Black American Dream in I Dream a World and Democracy by Langston Hughes*. This thesis analysed the figure of speech, symbol and theme contained in two poems written by Langston Hughes. She concludes that

the black American Dream influences the symbol and theme building of the poems. Furthermore, the intrinsic elements of the poems illustrate the visual condition of the society clearly as the event happened.

Although similarly discuss the American Dream through Langston Hughes's poems, this research is different than her research. Istianah's research applied two poems while this research provides five poems, where *I Dream a World* will be the only similar poem applied by both writers. Istianah's research mainly analysed the intrinsic elements of the poems while this research offers both intrinsic and extrinsic discussion.

The writer also found two thesis which almost related to the topic; they are Štěpán Boček from Masaryk University Brno (2013) entitled *Racial Issues in Langston Hughes Poetry* and Aladin Silitonga from Andalas University (1992) entitled *Analisis Beberapa Aspek Dualisme Sebagaimana Yang Direfleksikan Dalam Beberapa Puisi Langston Hughes*. The writer also found a dissertation written by Phillip M. Royster from Loyola University of Chicago (1974) entitled *The Poetic Theory and Practice of Langston Hughes*.

In Štěpán Boček's thesis, he looks upon Langston Hughes's poems and historical sources in order to show the racial segregation happened in the United States of America around nineteenth until the first half of twentieth century. He concludes that the poems reflect the social condition of the Afro-Americans who get discriminated by others. This research is mainly aimed to show the connection between poems and historical records. Although similar in context which seeing the Langston Hughes's poems and relate them with the actual social condition, they are

different in the number of poems and which poems are applied. The only similar poem is entitled *I, Too* from both of the researches. Štěpán Boček is mainly discussed the racial issues shown from the poems, while this research will also relate them with the American Dream idea.

In Aladin Silitonga's thesis, he applied the study of dualism in order to analyse Hughes' poems. Although similarly discuss about Langston Hughes' poems, this thesis will not talk any dualism. Aladin Silitonga specifically discussed the poems intrinsically while this thesis will also discuss the poems extrinsically. Moreover the selected poems to be discussed are not similar. Silitonga's thesis published in Indonesian language, while this thesis precisely published in English language. This thesis is published in 2017, while Silitonga's thesis is published in 1992; both thesis are separated in years.

Phillip M. Royster's research is about the techniques and theories applied by Langston Hughes in writing poems. He concludes that the theories of Hughes's poetry are congruent with his poetic practice. It is influenced and developed by the author's own writing, but also influenced by Hughes's surroundings. Hughes's writing, then, because of his own experiences and the Black American people. Although Phillip M. Royster named several poems written by Langston Hughes, only *Dream Variations* is similarly applied. Phillip's dissertations is aimed to answer the techniques and theories applied by Langston Hughes in making poems, while this thesis is aimed to answer the black American's voices of American Dream.

Xu Wei in journal entitled *Canadian Social Science* wrote *Use of Dreams* in Hughes's Poetry, volume 3 number 5 which is published on October 2007. In her essay, she discussed some poems written by Langston Hughes in the poems collection titled *Montage of a Dream Deferred* and *The Dream Keeper*. Xu Wei analyses the themes of the poems and shows the dreams that dreamt by Langston Hughes. She concludes that dreams cannot be deferred, human beings need to have the dreams to achieve a better world. Xu Wei, then, analysed the poems briefly and concludes the themes of the poems. This research will see the themes of the poems and the social condition. Both poems selected which discussed by Xu Wei are different with this research.

This research investigates the Langston Hughes's selected poems by using sociology of literature. The writer will relate the voice of the African American people via poems and the social condition at that time. This research will touch history, economy, race, and biography generally in order to support the analysis. American Dream and Harlem Renaissance will be the context related by the writer to analyse the research.

1.7 Theoretical Frameworks

According to Tanaka, micro literary research is the study of literature which believes that literature can stand alone by itself without the help of other aspects, on other hand macro literary research is the study of literature with the help of the outer aspects (Endraswara, 2013: 9).

By the quotation above, therefore this research is included into macro literary research because it is connected to the outer aspects. This research applied the context-oriented approaches analysis according to Mario Klarer:

The term context-oriented approaches refers here to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do not regard literary texts as self-contained, independent works of art but try to place them within a large context. Depending on the movement, this context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality, or gender (Klarer, 2004: 89).

It means that the text itself is also related with the extrinsic elements such as history, social and political background, and so on. Hence, the context of the text may be analysed as not only intrinsically but also related with the extrinsic elements.

Etymologically, "literature" word came from the Latin word "litteratura" which derived from the word "littera" which means "letter" (Klarer, 2004: 1). Literature deals with written expression of author through medium such as poem, novel, or drama to show what the author felt, what the author wanted to say and why. Literature made from creativity of human to entertain and colour the world.

Literature itself is the mirror of society. It reflects the society through fiction, poems and play as the medium. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren stated in their book titled *Theory of Literature* "...furthermore, literature "imitates" "life"; and "life" is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary "imitation." " (1949: 89) which define the relations between text and society.

From the quotation above, the readers may understand the connection between literature and the society. Literature can be the reflection of the society; it means that the society causes the author to make the works. Or in reverse, it can also be the one which influence the changes in society.

Sociology of literature is a general theory which appear to connect society and literature. It is classified as reflective theory. This theory is possibly to be discussed because sociology is a study about human, and literature is an expression of human life which cannot be separated from society. Therefore, sociology and literature are connected from one to another.

Glickberg assumes “all literature, however fantastic or mystical in content, is animated by profound social concern, and this is true of even the most flagrant nihilistic work” (qtd. In Endraswara, 2013: 77). The statement from Gilckberg supports literature as the mirror of the society. It shows that all literature will influence or had been influenced by the society. These influences will affect the readers and the society and the literature itself. It makes the society and the authors react and make another literary works which probably create a new culture as the revision of the previous one.

Hippolyte Taine concludes that sociology of literature can be reflected to three things; race, moment, and society (*milieu*). If the readers consider these three things, we can understand the atmosphere of the society which give a birth to the author and the work (qtd. In Laurenson & Swingewood, 1971: 31). Race means the condition of the author which he or she got since was born. Moment means the situation happened in the society. Society means the place where the author has

been living. Society also includes the climate, social interaction and norm. Therefore, literature is not only as the mirror of literature but also possibly be a recorded history of society if the moment had been passed.

The writer will analyse the poems written by Langston Hughes with sociology of literature analysis. The writer is interested to see the social interaction between text and society. However, the connection between text and society is endless to talk because text produced to be critiqued by the society (readers); whether it is a good comment or bad comment.

Etymologically, poetry closely derived from the term “lyric” which is from the Greek “lyra” or “lyre” which means harp. Mario Klarer states “The term “poetry,” however, goes back to the Greek word “poteo” (“to make,” “to produce”), indicating that the poet is the person who “makes” verse.” (Klarer, 2004: 27-28). By the etymological term of poetry here, poetry is the art of verse which has meaning implied in its lyric to tell.

Poetry probably the simplest and shortest literary work in literature. Some poems are published shorter than drama or novel. However, one simple line in poetry can even be defined by the readers into several topics or meanings. There are two major categories; lyric poetry and narrative poetry (Klarer, 2004: 27-28).

In this research, the oldest literary work will be analysed with extrinsic theory named Sociology of Literature where the work itself will be connected to society, either personal, group, reader or author. There are five poems mentioned in this research; *Dream Variations*, *I too*, *Dream of Freedom*, *Our Land* and *I Dream*

a World. These selected poems are implied the American Dream idea; the African American people's dream of equality and happiness.

American Dream means that “dream of a land which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (Adams, 1931: 214). This quotation states that American Dream is an ideology to motivate the United States of America to be a successful free nation where everyone inside is happy and rich. Otherwise many people see the American Dream as an ideology where all American people dream to success in a free nation way. This national ethos is still applied by its citizen until nowadays. The improvements of the United States of America show how this ethos is applied effectively. It has become the main inspiration to people who lived in United States of America to be success and happy.

Therefore, the writer will relate the American Dream as the national ethos with the dream of African American people which voiced by Langston Hughes's poems. These poems will be analysed line per line. The writer will show how Hughes's poems inspired the African American people and illustrated the event.

1.8 The Methods of the Research

The writer applies three steps to construct this research; collecting data, analysing data, and presenting data. These steps are applied in order to make a good research.

1.8.1 Collecting Data

The writer has applied the library research in collecting the data; from English Department's library, Andalas University's library, and American Corner's

library. Those data are divided into two categories; there are primary data and secondary data. Primary data are the main source used to discuss the topic while secondary data are the supporting sources. In this case, the primary data are the Langston Hughes's five poems and the secondary data are any kind of articles, essays, journals, and books that related to the topic.

1.8.2 Analysing Data

The writer analyses the Langston Hughes's five selected poems with the sociology of literature. The writer shows the social condition of the African American people in the United States and relates it with the five selected poems. After analysing the data, the writer will present the data as the final action.

1.8.3 Presenting Data

This research is presented qualitatively and descriptively. According to Creswell, qualitative research is not seeing the numbers as the main analysis, but the depth quality of the work itself and analysing it by the individual, event, or cultural sharing behaviour (2009: 177). Therefore, the writer presents this research by seeing the quality of the works which reflected to the social condition of the African American people in the United States of America in twentieth century.

