

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background Of The Study

Literature is a written or printed work which expresses feeling, attitude and life of human in society. So, essentially literature can also be called as a creative act of the writer's imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experiences in a written work. It also gives lesson from various aspects of human life such as religious, social, moral and also cultural.

According to Wellek and Warren (1977:94), literature represents 'life' and 'life' is a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary 'imitations'. It also reflects the imagination of the writer about life or everything they have thought about life. Most of novels are concerned with people and their problems in the societies in which they find themselves. The novels entitled *12 Years A Slave* is very interesting novel that expresses people and their problem in the society. The problem is dominantly related to racial discrimination that has tremendous effect to the social life of certain people.

Racial discrimination is a differential treatment on the basis of race that disadvantages or a racial group or treatment on the basis of inadequately justified factors other than race that disadvantages a racial group, Blank and Dabady (2004:4).

From the theory above, it is written that racial discrimination disadvantages a certain racial group. But the fact is, its not only disadvtages the certain group but also take away their right as human. This problem is very serious because it always leads destruction to certain human being and the society. People may take it easy because they dont know the destruction those discriminated people got. When those innocent people's human right are stolen by the majorities without any guilty feeling.

According to the 1965 UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, The term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

In addition to the characteristic of racial discrimination, E.U. Essien-Udom (1975:236) gives more explanation, he describes that Racism is existed only if three conditions are simultaneously presents, namely, the physical criteria; beliefs about the inevitable correspondence between the physical and cultural, moral, or intellectual differences among racial groups; and social actions based on those beliefs. From Udom's statement, we can conclude that being physically different plays a great deal in experiencing racial discrimination. But when we try to think it personally, theres no wrong for being different as long as we dont give any disadvantages to others. The

wrong one is when we act differently or treat someone unfairly just because they are physically different.

Racism has been part of the American landscape primarily since the European colonization of North America beginning in the 17th century. Many of the Africans brought to America starting in the 17th century arrived as slaves, kidnapped from their homelands in various parts of Africa. A number of them were known to be royalty and literate. African men, women, and children were stripped of their names and identities, forced to “Christianize”, whipped, beaten, tortured, and in many cases, lynched or hanged at the whims of their white masters, for whom slavery was key to maintaining their vast properties and land. Families were separated through the process of buying and selling slaves. While not all Africans in America were slaves, a large number were, particularly in the southern states. For those Africans in America who were free, discriminatory laws that barred them from owning property and voting, for example, as well as the belief in the intrinsic inferiority of dark-skinned peoples by the dominant white majority, held them back from full equality in the United States.

Thus, historically the social problem of racism and discrimination ended after the Civil War in 1865. Racism and ethnic discrimination in the United States has been a major issue since the colonial era and the slave era. Legally or socially sanctioned, privileges and rights were given to white Americans that were not granted to Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic and Latino Americans. European Americans were

granted exclusive privileges in many matters such as education, voting rights, citizenship, immigration, land acquisition, and criminal procedure over periods of time extending from the 17th century to the 1960s.

However, non-Protestant immigrants from Europe; particularly Irish people, Poles, and Italians, suffered xenophobic exclusion and other forms of ethnicity-based discrimination in American society, and until the 1960s were not considered white. In addition, Middle Eastern American groups like Jews and Arabs have faced continuous discrimination in the United States, and as a result, some people belonging to these groups do not identify as white. East and South Asians have similarly faced racism in America.

Even in this modern era, in 21st Century racial discrimination is still felt and experienced by some.. A 2014 study found evidence of racial discrimination in an American rental apartment market. Another study conducted in the Netherlands by Blommaert and published in 2013 found significant levels of discrimination against job applicants with Arabic-sounding names. Even a name could be a reason for someone for being a racist. If we let racial discrimination grow over and over again, it must spread to very little aspect in life and theres gonna be more and more destruction happened in this world.

Those things have become the reason of the writer to choose racial discrimination as the center of this analysis. So that young generation can open up their mind widely not to be a racist. The problem of racial discrimination remains an important factor in shaping contemporary patterns

of social and economic inequality. So this thing will cause a worse effect if people don't start to deny and solve this problem.

Since there are a lot of cases about racial discrimination, and its big impact towards human life, of course it has been the author's inspiration to make a story about it or he can be an author and also the victim of racial discrimination as the novel that the writer chooses, *12 Years A Slave* by Solomon Northup. It can be more interesting to find out the] form of racial discrimination and also the resistances from the perspective of the victim himself. The main concern of this novel is racial discrimination in the Northup's life, where Solomon is being tricked to go to Washington, D.C., where he was kidnapped and sold into slavery in the Deep South.

B. The Problems of The Study

According to the background of the research, the problems of this research are formulated as follows:

1. How are racial discrimination faced by the major characters in *12 Years A Slave* ?
2. How are the major characters' resistance to against the racial discrimination itself?

C. The Objectives of The Study

The objective of this proposal is to:

1. Investigate racial discrimination faced by the major characters in *12 Years A Slave* novel.
2. Explain the major characters' resistance to against the racial discrimination itself.

D. The Scope of The Study

The main concern of the analysis in this thesis is about slavery in *12 Years A Slave*. This research is going to reveal the forms of the racial discrimination and the resistance that the major characters do towards the racial discrimination by applying Intrinsic Approach.

E. The Significance of The Study

Significance of this study are expected to be useful for :

Theoretically :

1. This research would increase knowledge about racial discrimination that happened in America.
2. This research would support the existed theory so the truthfulness of the theory increases.

Practically :

1. For reader, this research could be a new reference which gives a better understanding about racial discrimination in the past that portrayed in *12 Years A Slave* Novel.

2. For students of English Department, who want to do a similar research about racial discrimination, this study is expected to become one of the references.
3. For the author so that she could really practice in avoiding any kinds of racial discrimination forms, whether from action or statement.