

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general description of the research paper. It is divided into some parts which constitute of background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, definition of key terms and organization of writing.

1.1 Background

In the life of society, harmony is the most important thing in order to create a comfortable environment to be a peace place. If there are harmony, tranquility and mutual respect, it can be created in neighborhood life and it will be the very small probability that causes conflicts even though there are many different ethnics in the neighborhood. However, if mutual respect for such differences does not present in the environment, the greatest risk will arise hates each other's distinct groups and the rise of beliefs over another which considers that others are lower classes, while they are the higher classes. In the multi-ethnic society, disunity will be the greatest risk. The split is in the form of bullying against people who have different skin colors, different physical bodies and different cultures to the most extreme of division that leads killing the people from different races, skin colors, and different religions. The attitude reflected from society is

caused by their family or their area. It is rooted to the next descendants. Benedict (1960: 18) argues that:

"The life history of the individual is first and foremost an accommodation to the patterns and standards traditionally handed down in his community. From the moment of his birth the customs into which he is born to shape his experience and behavior. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities".

America becomes the most vulnerable country with the split between different racial groups. However, America is a country that many inhabited by many ethnics from Asia, America Latin, Europe, and Africa. It is not wrong that in the 90s there was a great racial divide in America between whites and blacks. Until Asian people who have yellow skin and narrow-eyed are also inseparable from the intolerance between groups in the multi-ethnic country. Fighting towards races and ethnics created the separating between groups with different culture, skin color or religion. The events about racial issues made lot of literary works that discussed about that problems, one of them is *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell.

The Freedom Writers Diary by Erin Gruwell is one of the literary works in non-fiction prose. It is written based on real circumstances in multi-ethnic American people. That literary work describes the state of the adolescent in America who dropped each other when they found something different from the other group. The teenagers began to bully someone's physical or killing each other to defend their territory. It stems from a term known as the American dream. The

American dream is a statement of people who moved from their country and moved to America to get what they want. In fact, many of them are illegal immigrants, because they believe that America provides many life-changing expectations. However, they have forgotten the greatest risk they will face in the future: the acceptance of the long-lived local communities in America as well as the residence settlement as they have to start trying again. Until many people from their country are rich, while living in America those immigrants become people with simple life. Dhingra (2007: 49) claimed that immigrants encountered a set of prejudices against their background based on their racialized position: wanted primarily for their labor yet labeled as perpetual foreigners. These experiences, in turn, shaped how immigrants hoped their communities would adapt. It shows that the immigrants should adapt in their circle if they want to survive.

Blacks are known as the people who suffered a lot of oppressions in America, because in the past time, black people were parts of the violence of slavery. Therefore, they used to get bad treatments from other people, especially from white peoples. Fanon (in Bhabha, 1994: 108) argues that:

“The Negro remains a Negro’—his race becomes the ineradicable sign of negative difference in colonial discourses. For the stereotype impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of ‘race’ as anything other than its fixity as racism. We always already know that blacks are licentious, Asiatics duplicitous...”

In America as the big country which has many groups of the ethnics from around the world, it is known that there are oppressions to others except white people. It is the form of stereotype from whites to blacks that the blacks are

always about the slave, fool and brutal. However, not only blacks which oppressed by whites. But also Asians and Latinos which are categorized as color people. Delgado (2001: 67-68) said that:

“American racial thought today is whether the very framework we use to consider problems of race reflects an unstated binary paradigm or mindset. That paradigm, the black-white binary, effectively dictates that nonblack minority groups must compare their treatment to that of African Americans to gain redress. The paradigm holds that one group, blacks, constitutes the prototypical minority group. "Race" means, quintessentially, African American. Other groups, such as Asians, Indians, and Latinos/as are minorities only in so far as their experience and treatment can be analogized to that of blacks”.

The racial issues make the world uncomfortable to live whereas, there are always the solutions to face this reality to the best life. One of the things which can change the future begins with the education. It will contribute to the families, their societies or their school. Educational process can take place in various ways, among them is to socialize good literary works, such as *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell. It is the product of the multi-ethnic society there are racial discriminations. Erin Gruwell is the author of *The Freedom Writers Diary* and a teacher in Wilson High School in Long Beach, California where her class got the problem of tolerance among their students. They were intolerant to the people from the different races. Therefore, Gruwell as the teacher was looking for the ways to resolve the problems in her class, until she succeeded to unite her students. *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell as literary work inspired the students and the teacher to become the agent of change for stopping the racial discrimination in America (Cai, 2002: 87). It showed that *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell was not only as literary work and cultural product, but also

as the lesson to other people that together with the others from the different races are not problems.

The researcher chooses *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell as the object of the research, because this book is truly based on author's experience directly from the events recounted in her literary work which is in the midst of children who experienced the racial discriminations in 1994 in America, because her literary work is non-fiction which is a bundle of the diary from her students and her experiences.

Exactly, a lot of the issues of racial discrimination has been studied by previous researchers. However, every work has the characteristic that can be found something new, including this research which the researcher has being completed. In this research, the researcher considers the previous studies.

The first, the research from Asep Gunawan in 2012. His research is titled *The Portrayal of Racial Discrimination After Civil War in Pearl's The Dante Club*. He explained about the racial discrimination from white people in America after civil war. Although their father or their mother from white people. It makes confused to define the cultural identity and that researcher uses the qualitative method. Thus, his finding was racial discrimination of the Black, especially referred to the historical background of Post-Civil war.

The second, the research from Dian Purnama in 2013. Her research is titled *Racism and Ambivalence in J. M. Coetzee's Disgrace*. She explained about prejudice and stereotype of white people to black people in South Africa society

with using post-colonial theory. Therefore, her finding was racism in *Disgrace* novel. That racism marked by the belief of race's superiority.

The third, the research from Ninda Martiyani in 2015. Her research is titled *Delineation of Racism toward Black American in Sue Monk Kidd's The Secret Life of Bees*. She explained about the form of racism presented in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* and the process of mimicry discloses the effect of racism. She used postcolonial theory and descriptive qualitative method. Therefore, her finding was black people imitate various points in order to be equal with white people and disclosed the resistance of white racism colonizing.

Based on the studies above, the researcher determines to use postcolonial theory and qualitative approach to reveal the problems of the research topic in this research. This research is different from the previous studies above. Because, the object of the racial discrimination in this research is not only from white people as the majority, but also from some ethnic groups such as African American as black people, Latinos and Asian as color people.

1.2 Research Questions

As stated above, the country with multi-ethnic societies will always have the problems from its people such as in America. Many people are getting discriminations and bad treatments from others. However, there are the solutions to stop it. Among them is *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell. *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell as the best literary work based on New York Times need to reveal the superiority in eliminating the racial discrimination

problems in that book. In this research, the researcher limits that problem with the following questions:

1. How are the racial discriminations portrayed in *The Freedom Writers Diary*?
2. What are the factors of the racial discriminations occurrence in *The Freedom Writers Diary*?
3. What are the solutions offered by Erin Gruwell to overcome the racial discriminations as portrayed in *The Freedom Writers Diary*?

1.3 Research Objectives

Any activity or research has the purposes, as well as this research. Thus the researcher aims:

1. To find out the portrayal of racial discriminations in *The Freedom Writers Diary*.
2. To find out the factors of the racial discriminations occurrence in *The Freedom Writers Diary*.
3. To find out the solutions offered by Erin Gruwell to overcome the racial discriminations in *The Freedom Writers Diary*.

1.4 Research Significance

The writer is the student who studies disciplines the knowledge of literature. Therefore, the researcher feels relevant to conduct research about the racial

discriminations in *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell with using the theory of post-colonial which the studies of racism. The theoretical benefits, is to apply the knowledge of literature that has been studied in college, in English Literature Department. And the practical benefits of research, that the researcher will gains knowledge about the issues of the racial discriminations in *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Racial Discrimination: Racial discrimination is unfair treatment of someone because of their race (Cambridge Dictionary).
2. Racism: racism is meant any claim of the natural superiority of one identifiable human population, group or race over another. By 'scientific racism' is meant the attempt to use the language and some of the techniques of science in support of theories or contentions that particular groups or populations are innately inferior to others in terms of intelligence, 'civilisation' or other socially-defined attitudes (Rose in Rattansi, 2007: 94).
3. Stereotype: stereotype is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations (Bhabha, 1994: 107).

4. Prejudice: prejudice is an unfavorable attitude toward people because they are members of a particular racial or ethnic group (McLemore, 1980: 121).
5. Discrimination: discrimination is an unfavorable action toward people because they are members of a particular racial or ethnic group (McLemore, 1980: 121).
6. Multiethnic: multiethnic is made up of people of various ethnicities (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

1.6 Organization of Writing

This paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. This chapter consists of background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, definition of key terms and organization of writing. The second chapters is explaining about the theories that has relation with the topic of the research which involves explanations of the concept of multicultural literature, the relationship between multicultural literature and post-colonialism, postcolonial theory as literary criticism, the theory of racism and the theory of ambivalence. The third chapter is research methodology, this chapter consists of research design, the data, source of data, technique of collecting data, technique of analyzing data. The fourth chapter is findings and discussions, this chapter related with the portrayal of racial discriminations, the causes of occurs the racial discriminations and the solutions offered by Erin Gruwell to overcome racial discriminations. The fifth chapter is conclusions and suggestions which is the final chapter that extends the conclusions and suggestions of the research.