

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of general description of the paper. Those are background of the study, research question, research objective, and research significance as a part of introduction in this chapter.

1.1. Background of the Study

Racism and discrimination are two of the major problems facing the world today at such a large scale. The issue behind the diversity of human races has been a long serious issues or problems. It shall get more attention from the state, government, and society itself. Racism and discrimination have been around for centuries. It has always lead to driving force of slavery, social discrimination, segregation (barring or splitting), and racial violence, including genocide (racial destruction) action, such as which has been attempted by Adolf Hitler and the German Nazi party against the Jews.

Racism is a belief system or doctrine which states that biological differences inherent in the human race determine the achievement of a culture or an individual, the particular race is superior and has the right to govern the other. Racism is an emphasis on a race or racial considerations. Sometimes this term refers to a belief in the existence and importance of the racial category. The existence of racism causes by certain race ego (usually the dominant race in terms of numbers or population) who feel superior so they are entitle to regulate the minor race. One of the backgrounds behind the existence of racism is the

historical, cultural and religious background associated with the inherent racial diversity of every human being.

The case of applied the racism itself is actually different in each country, due to the influences of historical and each cultural background. In America, racism occurs because of the nation white skins feels superior to blacks. However, if formerly racial discrimination was so obvious and carried out on a minor race, racial discrimination is now present in a much more veiled form. Many people choose to deny the existence of racial discrimination in their lives and choose to assume that everything is fine. Though it is not the case. The existence of racial discrimination in our daily lives cannot be denied. Racism has taken root in various parts of our lives, namely the environment, community, and professional world of work. Like it or not, it is a fact and we shall be wise.

Colonialism is the one of racism or discrimination causes. Colonialism is a system where a state controls the people and resources of other countries but is still in contact with the origin country. It also refers to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system, especially the belief that the morale of colonists is greater than that colonized. This tendency is appearing to analyzed in the post-colonial view where in the colonial society there were some colonized and colonizer whom the colonized is always as an inferior class from the colonizer. This term indicates that the colonizer has power to control the indigenous society to much become pathetically an inferior from the colonizer. This colonizer could be named as the 'subaltern'. The subaltern means 'inferior rank' is adapted from Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the

ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power (Aschroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2013: 244).

Racism needs to be minimizing if it cannot be eliminated. Because racism will create a certain racial superiority and lead to oppression and restrictions. In fact, each race has its own characteristics, uniqueness, advantages, and of course its respective deficiencies, as it is mentioned in universal religious teachings, beliefs and agreements, indeed every human being is equal and there should be no distinction or limitation for certain races or classes, that every human being has the same dignity, dignity, and degree. One of racial discrimination which less attention is racism of Indian or Native American between white people. Colonization of native America still happened till today. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (1999, 83) says that to know something is to have power over it, and conversely, to have power is to be able to know the world in your own terms. This terms influences literature.

As depicted on *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* novel by Sherman Alexie, the main character is a young Indian who named Arnold Spirit, Jr. tries to against a colonialism and racial discrimination. He lives in Wellpinit, a Spokane Indian reservation. A daily activity that shows in the novel describe how suffering live in the reservation. Those miseries happen by the imbalance of Indian and white people in Reardan, a little city out of the reservation. Reservation becomes a representation of Indian in the real life. The imbalance that takes place between Indian and white people in the novel is occurred by Native American life which still ruled by white people with internal colonialism. Indian

becomes the subaltern (inferior rank) and white people are superior. Junior is a depiction of colonialism resistance when he made a decision to move his school in Reardan, white people school, to get a better life.

This is being important to analyzed how Junior as inferior rank against the hegemony of white people in the reservation and Reardan school. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all (Aschroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2013: 134). That is why in many ways; colonized is always being an inferior than the colonizer.

This research is focused on how race equality is reflected and the power of hegemony describe in the novel within the impact over the subaltern classes, how inferior class against a hegemony of white people. This is important because in general, the power has ruled the inferior class could be different in some ways. The colonizer will not just colonize the indigenous society with physical tendency, but also in the way of thinking or its ideology.

There are some related studies to know that this research is authentic and there is no some researcher who analyze in the same way, whether if it was the theory or the object applied in its research.

The related study which has chosen the post-colonial as a theory was Setiawan (2009). His research entitled *Orientalist Ideology in Two Novels' Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim and Nostromo* analyzed how Orientalist ideology applied and its purposes in Conrad's works. Prajamitha (2013) has chosen a post-colonial analysis as a theory applied in her research entitled *The Portrayal of East in Joseph Conrad's Almayer's Folly*. In her research, she explained the portrait of

East by the narration of the West people. She proposed three problems that relate to how East is portrayed by setting, characters, Malay language and Islam. Then, she used Said's *Orientalism* as the theoretical standpoint to analyze the issues that exist in the novel. After that, there was Nurhamidah (2005) entitled *The Authority of The White People Over The Black People in Two Novels; Things Fall Apart and Robinson Crusoe (A Post Colonial Analysis)* whom her research is capable to understand how the white people rule the black people—who portrait as an inferior over the white people or 'the West'—in two novels of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

The preview studies above, mostly analyze about the superiority from white people to black people and the different between Western people and Eastern people. Using the post-colonial theory, the researcher try to applied the theory into the working through superiority from white people to Indian people.

Finally, the lack of attention in native American makes an interesting point to analyze. Based on the related study and the researcher's background, this research will concern on analyzing race equality in the novel. This paper will be entitled as *Race Equality in Sherman Alexie's The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of the research above, it is important to know deeply about the text described how the main character can get a race equality. This term concludes the main issues of race equality with post-colonial and social

identity theory applied to analyze the depiction of power and the subaltern in the novel. Based on the statement above, this research describes about:

1. How are the powers and the subaltern described in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* novel causing Arnold Spirit, Jr. shall to struggle to achieve the race equality?
2. How does Arnold Spirit, Jr. achieve a race equality from the white people in Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*?

1.3. Research Objective

The purpose of this research will be contained for:

1. To identify the power and the subaltern described in Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.
2. To find out how Arnold Spirit, Jr. achieves a race equality from white people in Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.

1.4. Research Significance

This research is made to know how an Indian (Natives American) show an idea of the race equality and build a social awareness to respect a contradiction in a human race, culture, or social existence. This can be used as a knowledge and reference for the readers to change the readers view of different race and culture.

Practically, this research is for those who want to make some research especially for one of post-colonial as its reference to comprehensively influence in its practical research.