

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Semiotic

Semiotic is the study of sign processes or signification and communication, signs and symbols, both individually and grouped into sign systems. It includes the study how meaning is constructed and understood. (Saussure, 1983, p. 127).

Similarly, Barthes in Chandler (2002, p. 22) stated that semiotics aims to find meaning behind signs, whether it is word in text, image, color, sounds, even gesture. When someone gives meanings to some signs, there are lots factors that need to be considered, such as the conditions where the signs take place.

Semiotic were formulated by American philosopher Charles Pierce in the nineteenth century and Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century. According to Martin (2000, p. 1) Pierce's principle of semiotic is devoted to the development of sign categories such as making distinctions between icon, index and symbol. Language and thought is very important in the process of sign interpretation. Sign meaning lies in the interpretation of perception and subsequent action based on that perception. Meanwhile, Saussure thinks that linguistic is connected to the study of sign. According to Saussure a sign is made up of signifier and signified. Signifier is a sound, image, or written word, while signified is understood as the concept that is evoked by those word or image

(Sturken, 2001, p. 29). The two side of linguistic signs which consist of signified and signifier is called Dualistic notion of sign.

Sign consists of signifier and signified. The signifier is interpreted as the physical form of the sign which can be touched, seen, heard, smelt, and tasted. Meanwhile, the signified is the concept of the object in people's mind. The figure above represents the correlation between the signifier and signified. For example, the word "Fragile" in the cardboard box is a sign which consist of a signifier and a signified. The signifier: the visual written sign on the box which consist of the word Fragile and a signified: that the goods inside the cardboard box are easy to be broken, so people need to handle or lift the box gently.

There are lots of things that can be raised as a semiotics problem. According to Krisyantono (2006, p. 44) current social issue, people, and cultural issues can be considered as signs. Current social issue, romance, or cultural issues can be seen through some literary work, such as novel, poem drama, and theaters.

2.1.1 Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

According to Barthes in Chandler (1967, p. 9), Semiology is a study which aims to take any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gesture, musical sounds, object, and the complex association which form the content of ritual, convention and public entertainment.

Furthermore, according to Barthes in Barker (2006, p. 72) when people talk about semiotic, people can talk about two level of meaning: denotative meaning and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning or denotation is a literal meaning of a sign. Connotative meaning is the second order of signification which uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches in an additional signified. To make it simple, Denotative meaning or denotation is the meaning which is provided in the dictionary. Meanwhile, connotative meaning or connotation is the historical, social, and cultural meanings which are embedded to the literal meaning.

Similarly, According to Cobley (2001, p. 174) connotation is a putative ‘second order meaning’, often a ‘cultural’ one, complementing denotation. The term “connotation” is used to refer to the socio cultural and personal associations like ideological and emotional of the signs (Chandler, 2002, p. 140). Wilden (1987, p. 224) described connotation as suggestive meaning that is derived from the sign and has more than referential meaning and be argued than signs more open to interpretation. To sum up, he also regarded connotations as an analogue code of language.

Denotation is the phenomenon of pure meaning, theoretically devoid of the culture influence (Cobley, 2001, p. 178). Chandler (2002, p. 143) adds the denotation meaning of a sign would be generally agreed upon by members of the same culture. Therefore, a sign of something in some respect of culture would only be understood by the member of the culture itself or another culture would be interpreting the sign differently.

Barthes (Chandler 2002. P. 142) explains that Connotation and denotation are often described in terms of level of representation or levels of meaning and there are two orders of signification. The first order of signification is denotation level. At this level, there is a sign consist of a signifier (words, images) and a signified (meaning). The second order of signification is connotation which takes denotative sign as its signifier that produce a new signified.

There are three models of sign which are convention, value, and association. Convention is a model of sign which indicates the correlation between the signifier and the signified. Convention meaning depends on the social, ethnic, and culture. So people have to learn it to know the meaning of the sign, for example: arithmetic number, code, alphabet letter and punctuation. Value is a model of sign which has a clear correlation between sign and other sign, for example: metaphors, portraits, and sound effect. Association is a model of sign where people can realize the correlation between signifier and signified by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or tasting something, for example: smoke, fire, thunder, screaming, odor, video and song (Chandler, 2008).

2.2 Discrimination

On the basis of our history, discrimination is emerged when somebody claims him/herself as superior group and of course there are some people judged as inferior group. The difference of life strata is also a reason why superiority and inferiority are

emerged. This concept which scholars think power and authority cannot be separated because it is bond to the concept itself. The Anti-Discrimination Forum called NSW (2011) reviewed that discrimination is treating someone unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people or have a particular characteristic. Based on the statement of NSW, there are two ideas of discrimination; first, discrimination is an act and second, it happens for a particular group or particular characteristic which means another group is not accepting them. So, discrimination is an unfair gesture from certain group who are not accepting the difference of another group.

NSW also review types of discrimination, there are ten types of discrimination: sex discrimination, race discrimination, age discrimination, marital or domestic status discrimination, homosexual discrimination, disability discrimination, transgender discrimination, carer's responsibility discrimination, employment discrimination, and social class discrimination. From those types above, this study found race discrimination and social class discrimination in Maya Angelou's six poems. Race or racial discrimination is not only about a difference of skin color but also about ethnicity. Ethnicity is a cultural background of a person, and it is absolutely different from one another; this kind of difference can emerge discrimination. Racial discrimination includes cultural background, how they (particular group) behave, eat, dressed, and communication are factors that can emerge discrimination. Thus, social class discrimination cannot be separated from racial discrimination; the reason is another group that thinks they are better than that different group claims that their social status is higher than them. So social class discrimination is about life statuses, it can be

measured from how high their education, communication, how well they behavior and dressed. In addition, Bodenhausen and Richeson (2010, p. 341-343) reviewed that there are also a big three action of discriminatory: prejudice, stereotype and discrimination, those three acts are consider as human nature that followed by their power and authority.

Racial discrimination is smaller phenomenon than racism. It is specifically strives to the acts which conducted by superior group. Ontario Human Rights Commission (2005, p. 15) stated that there is no fixed definition of racial discrimination and society's understanding of what constitute racial discrimination will continue to evolve over time. So we may know that racial discrimination is a form of act of racism. In this study, the writer will explain about four racial discrimination acts: slur, harassment, stereotype and segregation; which related to his study.

Slur is an unfair remark about somebody that may damage other people's opinion of them. Slur is in mild level of discrimination. Slur is not only a verbal form in racial discrimination but also in social class discrimination, for instance, white kid makes a joke for black kid by called him bald. Even it's in a joke form, slur is difficult to be avoided. This is should be bold that slur is a form of discrimination, whether it classified on the basis of racial or social class discrimination; depend on how the person did it to others. Harassment is an act to annoy or worry somebody by putting pressure on them or saying or doing unpleasant things to them. Harassment as stated by Grey (2003, p. 5) is also commonly understood as behavior intended to disturb or upset, and it is characteristically repetitive. Its repetitive act will make the target feel degraded due

to their race or ethnicity. Racial harassment gives deeper effect than slur, for instance, white teen is calling black teen as monkey and fake its act. Harassment is not only in racial discrimination but also in social class discrimination. This inequality treatment should be bold as one of forms of discrimination itself.

Stereotype is a fix idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality. Ontario Human Rights Commission (2005, p. 18) stated that stereotype is a process by which people use social categories such as race, color, ethnic origin, place origin, religion in acquiring, processing, and recalling information about others. They added it typically involves attributing the same characteristic to all members of a group, regardless of their individual differences (2005, p. 18). In most cases, stereotype ascribes negative characteristic of group. It includes an assumption that racialized persons of a whole or specific racialized groups are: unintelligent, lazy, unreliable, dirty, uncivilized, promiscuous, submissive, more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol, of questionable moral character, more likely to engage in criminal activity. Segregation is an act or policy of separating people of different races, religions, or sexes and treating them differently. Moreover, racial segregation gives a deepest effect than slur, harassment and stereotype. For example, the online website (www.politic365.com) captured that there is a separation between drinking fountain of white and black people. Thus, there is not only in separation drinking fountain, but also a separation in using restroom of white and black people. Segregation is the most severe discrimination related to this study. This form of discrimination is seen boldly in the 1960's when black people are considered as

second class by white people. So, on the basis of superiority, white people made a separation with black people. On the basis of those four types of discrimination, this study will depict those types through the figurative language such as metaphor by using the semiotic theory.

Social class is related to the material substances. So there are many definitions of social class that defined them as a wealth category. Social class is influenced by two factors; there are material resources, and social class rank. Kraus, *et all* (2012, p. 4) defined material resources are education, income, occupation status; and social class rank are perceptions of rank by the others. On the basis of those two factors, Kraus, *et all* divided into two groups; there are lower class group and upper class group.

Kraus, *et all* (2012, p. 8) stated that lower class group is classified in working class group and upper class group is classified in middle group. Working class group is also known as labor. In this study, this working class related to black people in labor condition. They had discrimination form such as slur, harassment, stereotype and segregation. Those four acts are not only happened in racial discrimination, but also in social class discrimination.

The study found social class discrimination is a variable which should be depicted to enhance people about it. Especially in this era which strata is one of the main point of life style, social class discrimination may come from a different strata or statuses which made inequality life hood. Thus, related to this study, the writer is not found a specific form of social class discrimination. So this explanation is only to show

the definition of social class discrimination. Those four acts of discrimination is similar from racial discrimination because of the cause are same. So it should be clear about the act of discrimination – slur, harassment, stereotype, segregation – it just only depend on how the superior group did the act in what classification of discrimination – racial and social class discrimination.

2.3 Figurative Language

Generally, according to Study Island (2009, p. 2) figurative language is a set of literary devices that authors use to bring the reader into their literary works, especially in the poem. The literary devices use language in such a way that what is being said is different from the actual literal meaning of the words. It is similar with Granted (2001, p. 14) where he defines figurative language is any language that goes beyond the literal meaning of words in order to furnish new effects or fresh insights into an idea or a subject. Study Island (2009, p. 5) also review for the significance of figurative language – that helps the reader to get a clearer picture of what is happening, and they can also be used to simply entertain the reader or they can also be used to convince the reader. On the writer topic convincing the reader is what Maya Angelou done in her poem. She used some simile, metaphor, and imagery in the poems.

According to Gernbacher and Robertson (1999, p. 23) the most common figurative language used in poem are metaphor, simile, imagery, hyperbole, symbolism and personification. Study Island (2009, p. 9) reviews metaphor is a type of comparison

between two objects that are not thought of to be the same, it is quite similar to a simile; but it does not use the words “like” or “as”. Moreover, Evans (2008, p. 25) reviews imagery as kinds of figurative language that deals with the sense, it is language which describes something in detail but it appeals to the sense. For example, *the wind blew through the window and painted the walls with frost* is another way of saying the room was cold; it plays on the sense of touch by describing a feeling in visual terms. Evans also review about simile, it is a comparison between two unlike objects using the words “like” or “as” or directly compare the things. Thus, Evans also review about symbolism; it is when certain objects or images are used in place or to represent other ideas, a symbol is usually something tangible or visible (something you can touch or feel) but the idea it symbolizes may be something abstract or universal (2008, p. 26). Personification is also as a form of figurative language, Study Island (2009, p. 23) reviewed that personification is a figure of speech in which things are endowed with human qualities or are represented as possessing human form.

2.4 Maya Angelou

She is one of black feminists who struggled for freedom for anyone who has discrimination of race, gender and class. She is the first woman who read her poems in John F. Kennedy presidential inauguration. Angelou has some names that effected to her writings such as Shakespears, Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and Matthew Arnold. Angelou express her experienced of discrimination through poems

As a black woman Angelou accepted the racial discrimination. She had already accepted unequal treatment in her life hood. She also had an abusive treatment by her uncle. She moved to California and attended California Labor School. Year by year, she moved to New York and joined with Harlem Writers Guild to produce and direct *Cabaret for Freedom*. On the basis of discrimination that she has experienced, Hooks (1990, p. 161-167) stated that black women are empowering their freedom and equality through some organization movements

In 1993 Angelou received the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame award and Best Spoken Word Album in her first Grammy. Selected by President Bill Clinton, U.S National Council on the arts gave her National Medal of Arts in 2000 for her contribution in arts and culture. President Barack Obama gave her The U.S highest civilian honor in Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2010. In 2012 Angelou also received Black Cultural Society Award given by Elon University in North Calorina for humanitarian contributions for the promotion of world cultures. National Book Foundation gave her Literarian Award for enhanced the literary world during a lifetime of service in 2013. In the same year The Norman Mailer Center and The Norman Mailer Writers Colony gave her Norman Mailer Prize (Lifetime Achievement).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The writer focused on analyzing the expression of Maya Angelou in her three poems, they are *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, *Weekend Glory*, and *Still I Rise*; to

know more on how did the discrimination whether racial or social class discrimination depicted in the poems. In order to reveal on how discrimination whether racial or social class discrimination are depicted in Maya Angelou poems, the writer uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as an approach to analyze each three poems. The writer analyzes the signifier and signified (connotative and denotative meaning) of expression – simile, metaphor, imagery - which are found in the data. From the analyzed signified meaning, the writer unveils the discrimination which are depicted in three Maya Angelou's poems.