

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Literary works cannot be separated from human life, because literary works are created based on the imagination of the author and generally reflect social conditions, which use the social environment as a basis. Wellek Warren (1973:39) argue that the literary work itself justifies all our interests in the life of an author, in this social environment and in the whole literary process. Through literary works which usually reflect our lives, we can experience through our imagination and also learn about humans. Literary works include short stories, prose, drama, novels, and poetry.

Accordingly, this research discusses poetry. Poetry is a branch of literary work that represents language style, psychological situation, and it can be seen from the author's performance. In accordance with Wordsworth in Peck and Loyle (1984), poetry is the spontaneous overflow of strong feelings, emotional expression, and always in touch with ordinary people attention, with the problems of everyday life. Rido (2020), he states that language is also an effective tool for conveying an idea or a desire. Language can also be used to express an argument in a writing or in a speech (Unggul and Gulo, 2017). Kuswoyo and Siregar (2019), argues the substance and meaning of a text can be transmitted through language. Poetry is usually reserved for expressing something special in an artistic way. The language of poetry tends to be more expressive, with comparisons, rhymes, and rhythms contributing to different sounds and feel. One of the characteristics of poetry is that

poetry is a unique language that combines and uses words to convey meaning and communicate ideas, feelings, sounds, gestures, signs, and symbols. It is also a vehicle for thoughts, feelings, and souls wrapped in words that are often very subtle, vague, mysterious, and have several layers of meaning.

A voice in literature is the form or format through which narrators tell their stories. It stands out when a writer puts himself into words, and gives the impression that his character is a real person, conveying a certain message the writer wants to convey. Every piece of literature has its own unique characteristics. The work occasionally portrays the main character's suffering throughout the entire story (Amelia, 2019). In fact, the voice in poetry expresses the emotions, attitudes, tone, and point of view of the narrator or author through the careful and well thought out use of words. The voice of a poem directly contributes to its tone and mood, helps the poet create the effect he or she wants from his or her words on the reader. Voice is an important part of the way a story or piece of writing is delivered. Literary works need a voice to help them stand out in style and convey stories and content in the most effective way possible.

It is noted that, the relationship between meaning, sound, and movement intended by the poet is sometimes difficult to identify. As Perrine (1977:9) points out, poetry has at least two levels of meaning, literal language makes poetry interesting, and especially vivid descriptions of imagination. In order to know the voices of the poems, in this research, the writer must do more than just hear the voice of the poem to identify the speaker. As we know that poetry is difficult to be interpreted because it consists of serious compression of information in very few words, and it requires

the reader to be very attentive to detail. Then, it is important to examine other elements of the poems, one is by using figurative language. Figurative language, however, belongs to the language phenomenon that is interesting to analyze because it is a product of creative imagination. Although figurative language does not offer a literal explanation, it can be used to compare one idea to a second idea to make the first idea easier to visualize. Therefore, it helps the writer in analyzing a literary text, which in this research the literary work is poem by Audre Lorde.

Many literary works, one of them is poetry, which talks about women and conveys women's voices in it. One of the female poets who explores woman as the subject in her work is Audre Lorde. As black feminist, Audre Lorde has portrayed women oppression in her poems. She wrote her poetry based on her experiences and emphasized the importance of understanding women struggle against patriarchal society. Furthermore, Lorde empowered herself by elevating positive images, rejecting negative human thoughts in life. Lorde was oppressed because of her race and gender and she overcomes oppression, energizes other women to fight discrimination culture.

Gender injustice often occurs in the lives of women in the 1960s, stereotyping the role of women complicates understanding of women themselves. Gender stereotypes are broad generalizations regarding each gender's roles. Afri and Nurmaily, (2017) stated, gender roles are neither positive nor negative in general; they are just erroneous generalizations of male and female characteristics. Because each person, regardless of gender, has unique desires, ideas, and feelings, these stereotypes are overly simplistic and do not accurately depict the characteristics of

each gender. Women skin color limits their ability to show what they are capable of because of the stereotype of black women in society who always look down and see them as helpless women. The dominant member of society classifies black women to be inferior and submissive. This assumption is used by white women to treat black women arbitrarily. White women control the image and spread negative myths about black women (Collins, 2009). Further, Efrilia and Setiawan, (2020), gender discrimination may be the outcome of a human life assumption that cannot accept differences, and it occurs because they have the authority as a majority, allowing them to control someone's life because they have the power to control others.

In this research, the writer purposely intends to analyze poems about women's voices written in selected poems by Audre Lorde. Lorde's poems touch on so many aspects of life, such as black liberation, and to promote women's empowerment, each with a purpose and message. Most of Lorde's works are concerned with two subsets that concerned her primarily race and sexuality. The writer chooses three selected poems by Audre Lorde entitled "*A Litany for Survival*", and "*A Woman Speaks*". The writer is interested to analyze the poems written by Audre Lorde, because there is a valuable relationship between the women's voice and her poems. There are so many women feel that they cannot be both beautiful and heard, but through a poem, words can be pretty and powerful. Then poetry is a powerful item that can be used to be an alternative for women to express their feeling. This research will further elaborate on how women's voices are portrayed in Audre Lorde's selected poems, because most of her poems discuss issues related to feminism, as well as explore the identity of black women. In discussing the voice

of poetry, it is necessary to understand several terms related to poetry discussion. In addition to discussing the intrinsic elements of poetry, the message of the poem is also analyzed by using figurative language.

1.2 Problem of The Study

Based on the background, during the analysis process, it is important to make a specification of the problem to be analyzed. In this research, the writer finds and decides some problems that needed to answer further. They are:

1. How are the women's voices expressed in Audre Lorde's selected poems?
2. What messages are delivered through Figurative Language in Audre Lorde's selected poems?

1.3 Research Objective

According to the problem statements above, the objectives in this research are as follows:

1. To find out the women's voices expressed in Audre Lorde's selected poems.
2. To understand the messages expressed through figurative language in Audre Lorde's selected poems.

1.4 Scope of The Study

Audre Lorde wrote some poetry in volumes, her early collections of poems include *The First Cities* (1968), *Cables to Rage* (1970), *From a Land Where Other People Live* (1972), *New York Head Shop and Museum* (1974), *Coal* (1976), and *The Black Unicorn* (1978). In this research, the writer limits to two selected poems by Audre Lorde entitled "*A Litany for Survival*", and "*A Woman Speaks*". Both poems are from Lorde's collection *The Black Unicorn*. These selected poems

were chosen because it is relevant to the discussion in this research which focuses to discuss women's voices in the poems and also to identify the messages expressed in the poems by using figurative language because both of the poems expose the problems with expressing one's identity and pride as a Black woman.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The writer takes two significances of the research as follows:

1. Theoretically

This research is expected to enrich the study of English Literature, especially in figurative language, and to help more understanding the meanings or messages in poems.

2. Practically

The significance of this research is expected to give a contribution to students majoring in Literature. After reading this research, hopefully, the students desire to give their attention to the literature learning and add their habit to read a poem and give a contribution to the larger body of knowledge and be useful for the reader especially to the students who want to make the next research about figurative language or Audre Lorde's poems as references. This research also expects the general reader to be aware of any issues of racism so that they can avoid any racial behaviour towards others, in particular against women.