

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Harlem Renaissance is a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement in America that kindled a new black cultural identity (“Harlem Renaissance”). It begins in 1920s and 1930s. Black people experienced discrimination by the white people. Discrimination is “the practice of treating somebody or particular group in society less fairly than others (because of somebody’s age, race or sex)” (“Discrimination,” def. 1). One kind of discrimination is racism. Racism is “the hatred of one person by another – or the belief that another person is less than human – because of skin color, language, customs, place of birth or any factor that supposedly reveals the basic nature of that person” (“Racism”). Racism is done by the majority towards the minority. One of the writers in Harlem Renaissance, who also experienced discrimination is Langston Hughes.

Langston Hughes is one of the American black writers who have written some works about racism. Hughes wrote about his reflections on political injustices, racial oppression, poverty, the black experience, family, and work.

He is most famous for literature works which are among others a poetry collection entitled *The Weary Blues* (1925), a novel entitled *Not Without Laughter* (1930), and a short story collection entitled *Laughing to Keep From Crying* (1952).

I have chosen Langston Hughes' poems "As I Grew Older," "The Negro Mother," and "Mother to Son" to be analyzed in this thesis. The literary element I will discuss is theme through diction. "Diction can be defined as style of speaking or writing determined by the choice of words by a speaker or a writer" ("Diction"). In poetic diction, figure of speech is included as a device of comparison. Figure of speech is "a form of expression (as a simile or metaphor) used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener" ("Figures of Speech"). "Theme is the central, underlying, and controlling idea or insight of a work of literature" ("The Literary Superpower Tool of Theme").

Statement of the Problem

The problems I am going to discuss are stated as follows:

1. What is the theme of three poems by Langston Hughes?
2. How does the diction help to reveal the theme of these three poems?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the theme of three poems by Langston Hughes.
2. To show how the diction helps to reveal the theme of these three poems.

Method of Research

I conduct library research for my thesis. First, I read the three poems. After that, I analyze these poems through the diction. And then I search for a number of suitable references from books and Internet websites. At the end, I draw a conclusion from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters, preceded by the Acknowledgments, the Abstract and the Table of Contents. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the theme analysis of three of Langston Hughes's poems through diction. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain Langston Hughes's poems and his biography.

