

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Maya Angelou and Benjamin Zephaniah are two of the black poets whose works have been known in the literary world. I choose both poets because they have something in common: they are both black and dream of equality without having to lose their identities and their roots as Blacks.

I purposefully choose poets from different nationalities. Angelou is an Afro-American and Zephaniah is a black Englishman. What interests me most about Angelou's works are partly because she is an important figure in the American Civil Rights Movement. She experienced discrimination against African-Americans and racial segregation in the United States of America. However, since Angelou is a woman there is a strong sense of feminism in some of her poems. While Zephaniah is a British dub poet who once grew up in Jamaica but now lives in England and becomes well known in contemporary English literature. In addition, they both are of

different genders so it will be interesting and tempting to get their viewpoints about Blackness through their poems from their sex perspectives.

I choose four out of many Angelou's poems as well as Zephaniah's. Angelou's "Equality", "Still I Rise", "Million Man March Poem", and "Touched by an Angel" are poems which have a strong sense of discrimination. Two of the four poems convey feminism as well. Angelou's way of writing these two poems is so special, that is by combining the two senses into one without losing the points she wants to convey. In Zephaniah's "Neighbours", "SOS (Save Our Sons)", "The Race Industry", and "White Comedy", he shows his points of view about the feelings of being black in an explicit way. It makes the readers easily understand his poems which are mostly about the black people in England. Each of Angelou's and Zephaniah's poems has its own special issues which make it different from another, even though they keep the same subject which is talking about black people.

What I am going to analyze is the theme of those poems. I choose theme as the subject to be analyzed because I think it is interesting to try to get the ideas and find the similarities from the eight poems which come from two different poets, different nationalities, different genders, and different eras. I think it will be interesting to find out the notions and ideas about black people in this study by revealing the theme. According to Edgar V. Roberts, a theme "... should be a short, accurate, and forceful presentation of ideas or descriptions, well contrived as a totality or unity" (8). It is expected that the theme itself will give insight about what happens with black people in their society at their time.

In analyzing the poems, I am going to use formalism. The reason why I choose this approach is because I think that this approach is representative in this study of analyzing the theme. Since I use the formalism, I will analyze these poems through the diction and other intrinsic elements.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problems I will discuss in this thesis are as follow:

1. What is the theme of each poem?
2. How is the theme revealed in each poem?
3. What is the purpose of the poets in writing the poems?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

There are three purposes of this study:

1. To show the theme of each poem.
2. To show how the theme is revealed.
3. To show the purpose of the poet in writing the poems.

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In doing my analysis, I do library research and consult book altogether with the reliable internet websites as my references.

## **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

In organizing my thesis, I put first the Acknowledgment and Abstract in Indonesian. After that, there will be Chapter One that consists of the Introduction, Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methods of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. It is followed by Chapter Two which is the Analysis of Maya Angelou's Poems and Chapter Three, the Analysis of Benjamin Zephaniah's Poems. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, in which I put the Biographies of the poets and their poems.