



**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AS THE REPRESENTATION OF
AMERICAN SOCIAL LIFE IN 1970S IN MAYA ANGELOU'S
SELECTED POEMS**

THESIS

Written by:

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS
JEMBER UNIVERSITY
2015**



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THESIS

A Thesis Presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letters,
Jember University as One of the Requirements to Get
the Award of Sarjana Sastra Degree
in English Study

Written by:

**Zahra Mustavi
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2015**

DEDICATION

This Thesis is profoundly dedicated to:

- My parents, Iriyanto Azis and Ririt Citrawati.
- My beloved sisters, Dinda Zahra Mustavi, Namira Titana Viandra, and Buzaina Safira Azis.
- My Alma Mater.

MOTTO

People will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them
feel.*)



*Angelou, Maya. www.mayaangelouquotes.org (accessed on August 18th, 2015 at 10:45)

DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled “Racial Discrimination as the Representation of American Social Life in 1970s in Maya Angelou Selected Poems” is an original piece of writing. I declare that the analysis and the result described in this thesis have never been submitted for any degree or any publications.

I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any helps received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, 9 September 2015

The Writer

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Jember, 9 September 2015

Zahra Mustavi

SUMMARY

Racial Discrimination as the Representation of American Social Life in Maya Angelou Selected Poem; Zahra Mustavi; 100110101094; 2010; English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

This thesis is conducted to show how racial discrimination is represented through Maya Angelou selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*. Using Greenblatt's paradigm of New Historicism, this research tries to examine the discursive events related to racial discrimination in the poems leading to a description of American social condition in 1970s. Therefore, the analysis is not only dealing with the intrinsic elements but also the extrinsic elements of the poems.

To establish a discourse of racial discrimination in the poems, this research begins with observing the context of the poems; the phenomena involving the clash between white and black happened in 1970s and Maya Angelou's personal experience. Then, the analysis of the poems start with observing discursive events established by the poems; the white as the power controller, the weak black as the victim of racial discrimination, and the negotiation of freedom. Those events lead this research to make a conclusion that Maya Angelou is able to present the mental experiences of the black as the minor race in America in 1970s through her three selected poems.

This thesis use inductive method. It means the analysis runs from the specific matters to build a general understanding. It focuses more on data explication, interpretation and exploration since the data of this research are in the form of words, phrases, and sentences. Therefore this thesis applies qualitative research. Events which are unrelated to racial discrimination in America in 1970s are not discussed. The intertextuality data related to racial discrimination in America, Maya Angelou's personal experiences, and racial discrimination in the

poems lead this research to prove that Maya Angelou's selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise* represent social anxiety as the impact of racial discrimination in America in 1970s.



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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Freedom and equality have become the main goals of blacks since the first slave ship arrived in South America. Living as slaves, African-American people are prohibited to learn reading and writing. Slaveholders which are the whites rape the slave women and cruelly punished the rebellious slave (<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>). In 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued 'the Emancipation Proclamation' and in 1865 the slavery has officially abolished. However, the abolishment of slavery does not stop the racial conflicts in America; blacks are prohibited to eat in the same counter and sit in the same bus with whites (Stewart, 2009:15), blacks get the worse medical care and pay higher than the whites, whites get the better jobs than most of blacks (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 11), even most of blacks still work for white plantation or become maid in white houses.

The upheaval of civil right struggle put America in crisis in the middle 1960s. African-American people impose boycott towards public transportation and take over the counter lunch where it used to be reserved only for whites. Meanwhile, the black writers have their own ways in expressing their idea of American condition at that time. It is stated in *The Black Experience in America*, edited by Jeff Wallenfedlt;

“To black art writers, literature was frankly a means of exhortation, and poetry was the most immediate way to model and articulate the new Black consciousness the movement sought to foster” (2011:60)

This condition leads the renaissance of African-American literature in 1970s. Tony Morrison through her novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), tries to criticize the beauty concept made by the whites as it is symbolized by blue eyes and encourages the black

people to notice that 'black is beautiful' (Wallendelft, 2011: 64). *The Color of Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker inspires black woman to stand up for their right (<http://www.novelguide.com/the-color-purple/theme-analysis>). Maya Angelou whose autobiography, '*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*' and her collection of poems are regarded as the most widely read and taught book by African-American woman (Wallendelft, 2011: 67-68). Thus, this thesis focuses on observing Maya Angelou's works.

Maya Angelou is an African-American poet; she has achieved some awards for her great works such as Presidential Medal of Arts (2010), Presidential Medal of Freedom for the Nation's Highest Civilian Honor (2011) (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales), she was also requested to write and read her poem in Bill Clinton inauguration ceremony (Cox, 2006:92). These achievements are inevitably the evidences that her works have inspired people. They bring Maya to be a cultural icon as the representative of black people who experience social oppression (<http://literature.answers.com/biography/understanding-maya-angelous-i-know-why-the-caged-bird-sings>). Three of her poems are *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), *Alone* (1975), *Still I Rise* (1978). These poems are written in the same line period, 1970s, when civil right struggle tremendously crests in America. Maya Angelou, as part of African-American community who witnesses racial discrimination toward her people, joins other black writers showing their protest through their works.

The analysis of Maya Angelou selected poems uses an interpretative strategy to gain historical information about American condition in 1970s even though some people used to rely on other historical accounts which are considered as 'more factual' such as government documents, newspaper, magazines, drawings or photographs and discredit literary texts such as novel, drama script, and poetry. Tyson calls literary texts as cultural artifacts which give the reader information about how ideologies and social formations work in certain time and place when the works were created (2006: 291). Therefore, to observe the representation of history in the

literary works, this thesis uses new historicism paradigm. For it believes that literary text brings the signs of human behavior through the narration of the text and helps the observer to describe and to clarify social condition in certain time and place (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001: 27).

Hence, the portrait of America in 1970s is the major point of doing the research toward Maya Angelou's selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Alone,* and *Still I Rise*.

1.2 The Problems to Discuss

The core of this research discusses about racial discrimination toward African-American people which is portrayed in Maya Angelou's selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Alone,* and *Still I Rise*. There are two questions that will be discussed in this research:

1. How does racial discrimination in Maya Angelou' selected poems: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Alone,* and *Still I Rise* represent the portrait of social life in America in 1970s?
2. How is the racial discrimination described in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Alone,* and *Still I Rise*?

1.3 The Goals of the Study

The general goal of this research is to prove that Maya Angelou selected poems represent American social life in 1970s and to complete the description of racial discrimination in the selected poems of Maya Angelou which is not explicated in the prior researches. The particular goal in this research is to observe how the selected poems written by Maya Angelou describe racial discrimination.

CHAPTER 2. LITERARY REVIEW

2.1 Previous Researches

I choose previous researches which are divided in two categories; in the relation of the object material and in the relation of theory. Petra Janouskova's "*Theme of Survival in Maya Angelou's Poetry*" and Dian Rahmawati's "*The Image of Black Woman in Three Poems of Maya Angelou*" are the prior studies related to Maya Angelou Poems which are used as additional information for this thesis while Maria Ulfa's "*The Representation of NAZI Regime in German Civilization Seen from the Selected Sylvia Plath's Poems*" is related to New Historicism theory as the model conducting this research.

2.1.1 The Previous Research in Relation to Maya Angelou's Poems

Literary work is like a mansion with many rooms. There is always possibility for researchers to observe a same work with different perspectives. It is depicted in Maya Angelou's poems analyses which are conducted by Petra Janouskova and Dian Rahmawati. Therefore, the explanation below gives a brief description about which perspectives they focus on and how the results turned out:

a) **Petra Janouskova, "Theme of Survival in Maya Angelou's Poetry"**

Petra Janouskova is a student Faculty of Art in Masaryk University. She conducts a thesis entitled "*Theme of Survival in Maya Angelou's Poetry*". She analyzes several poems of Maya Angelou written before 1995 which touch the survival theme. The research studies the theme of survival that is portrayed through generational continuum and the theme of survival depicted through humor, music,

and religion (2005:8). Janouskova relates the poem to Maya Angelou's experience as a part of black community.

Maya Angelou poems; *The Detached, My Guilt, Mourning Grace* interrelates establishing a discourse about Maya's ability of enduring her disappointment towards her own people, the black, which do not care about the deaths of other black. It refers to the assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr in 1968, Maya Angelou considers that white is not the only one who responsible for their deaths but also the black (2005: 13) . In this research, Maya Angelou in the poems; *Still I Rise, Life Doesn't Frighten Me, Weekend Glory* tells how she still loves her life even though she has to bear any oppression and discrimination because of her position as woman and black as the minor resident in America. Through observing humor, religion, and music fragments in the poems; *Old Folks Laugh, Song For the Old Ones, Lord in My Heart, Caged Bird, and Worker's Song*, this thesis shows a description of culture which serves an important role in constructing human's identity.

b) Dian Rahmawati, "The Image of Black Woman in Three Poems of Maya Angelou"

Extrinsic elements are not merely the fascinating part of Maya Angelou works, a student of Letters and Humanities Faculty State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta does a research entitled "*The Image of Black Woman in Three Poems of Maya Angelou*" examining how the intrinsic elements of Maya Angelou's poems depict Black Woman. Rahmawati focuses her research on observing figurative language and imagery as intrinsic elements in *Still I Rise, Equality, and Phenomenal Woman* by using feminist perspectives.

The result of this research is that similes, hyperboles, symbols, verbal ironies, and metonymies cooperate with organic imagery, visual imagery, auditory imagery, and kinesthetic imagery to embody a description of black woman; independent, strong, brave, confident, explicit, and honest. Moreover, the repetition inside the poems such as 'still I rise', 'Equality, and I will be free', and 'Phenomenally, phenomenal woman, that's me' imply the exposition of woman's strength, woman's

right, and woman's body. Finally, this research construct an understanding that figurative languages and imageries in Maya Angelou's poems establish an image of black woman who is powerful, strong, and confident about herself.

The prior researches toward Maya Angelou's poems give this thesis very crucial contribution; even though they focus on different topics, they still talk about black's oppression and struggle in the poems intrinsically or extrinsically. Thus, they provide additional information and help me understand more about Maya Angelou and her works.

2.1.2 The Previous Research in Relation to Stephen Greenblatt's Theory

The following discussion is about the researches done by Maria Ulfa and Angga Hartono. Both try to see how poems represent phenomena in particular period. Maria Ulfa concerns with Sylvia Plath's selected poems to reveal the representation of Nazi regime in German civilization while Angga Hartono examines Langston Hughes' selected poems to see the portrait of racialism in Great Depression era. Both also use the same theory, which is Stephen Greenblatt's new historicism. Seeing their success to apply Greenblatt's theory to analyze poetry, I use these researches as the research model of my analysis:

a) Maria Ulfa, "*The Representation of NAZI Regime in German Civilization Seen from the Selected Sylvia Plath's Poems*"

The prior study related to Greenblatt's New Historicism is a research conducted by Maria Ulfa, *the Representation of NAZI Regime in German Civilization Seen from Sylvia Plath's the Selected poems*, who is a student of English Department Faculty of Letter Jember University. It examines the historical background behind three Sylvia Plath's poem; *Daddy*, *Lady Lazarus*, and *Marry's Song* to get further description about social and political condition in German civilization when Nazi regime takes place.

This research sees the attributes related to Nazi in the poems; German Language, Swastika, *Mein Kampf*, Aryanism, concentration camps, and Luftwaffe. German language is a form of German superiority crystallized in the poems, Sylvia Plath considers all people speaking German is same; bad and obscene while she regards herself as the Jews, powerless (2013: 31). Swastika (hooked cross), a symbol of Nazi, is personally designed by Adolf Hitler. Red, white, and black colors symbolize Nazi's social idea, nationalist idea, and the struggle of Aryan glory (2013: 32). *Mein Kampf* is Hitler's autobiography which replaces the position of God '*not God but a swastika*' for Aryan people in Plath's perspective. Aryanism is an idea of viewing Aryan race as the best race among Jew, gypsy, slave, homosexual, and labor. The names of concentration camps in Plath's poem; *Dachau, Auschwitz, and Belsen* refer to a place where Nazi used to kill people while Luftwaffe is one of Nazi's popular air craft (2013:37).

Attributes mentioned above are fragments which construct a discourse about the superiority of Aryan people and allude to an ideology named Ultra-nationalism. This research shows that ultra-nationalism leads the annihilation toward minor races since this ideology views other races as the destroyer for nation, especially the Jews. They are stereotyped as the source of diseases in human body. Moreover, Adolf Hitler as the leader of Nazi does not only show his political and social attacks but also strengthen his movement by inserting Aryanism values in churches by obeying young Germans to take *Mein Kampf* as their handbook. Hence, Plath inserts religious fragments in her poems; Lucifer (fallen angel) and Lazarus (mythological figure). Her position as a woman is like the lady Lazarus who suffers anguishes similar with the Jews position while Lucifer is the analogy for Adolf Hitler. Therefore, this research provides a further description of Nazi cruelty toward minor communities, such as Jews, as the result of ultra-nationalism.

b) Angga Hartono, “The Portrait of Racism in the Great Depression Era Seen from the Selected Langston Hughes Poems”

Angga Hartono is also a student of English Department in Jember University. His thesis entitled *The Portrait of Racism in the Great Depression Era Seen from the Selected Langston Hughes Poems*. Every period brings different story even though racial conflict between the black and the white has been running for years. Hartono tries to examine how racism in the Great Depression era represented in Langston Hughes' selected poems by using Stephen Greenblatt's new historicism perspective.

Angga Hartono finds out that racial issue such as the problem of skin color, white's discriminative action, racial segregation and stereotypes crystallized in Hughes poems. Hughes explains that Great Depression era poses the black in a very bad situation. Black people's dream and hope to live in a better condition is obstructed by dominant discourse which operates in society. Hughes symbolizes racism discourse with a wall between me and my dream. Hartono's research also reveals the events in Hughes poem's '*Theme for English B*' which show the white's discriminative actions toward the black. The poem creates a discourse about institutional racism; there is a black student who is not well accepted in the university. He is not allowed to live in the dormitories because he is black. Hughes uses this poem to show his protest toward the white that the white and the black actually need each other and it means they are equal. Hartono connects this statement to anti-racism policy made by American government which actually just takes advantage from the black.

Moreover, Hartono also reveals segregation and stereotyping issues in Hughes poems. Hughes depicts a black as the white's darker brother who is always asked to eat in the kitchen whenever company comes. Hartono based on new historicism perspective views racial segregation as a success operational system of a dominant discourse created by the white. The reason why racial segregation keeps taking place in America is because people believe that the concept of black created by the white is

true. *I, too am America* becomes a poem created by Hughes which shows a counter of hegemony toward racialism. When the white regards segregation and stereotype are the best vehicle they ride for maintaining their power, Hughes tries to convey that people must not see any cases with a single interpretation and racial discrimination is actually the worst ideological system for maintaining certain race's power.

This thesis finally gains a conclusion that Langston Hughes' selected poems place the position as works which resist racialism in Great Depression era. He exposes how the black how to survive to be the shadow of the white and are not acknowledged as the part of American society and they have to bear segregation and stereotypes working in society. Through those poems, Langston Hughes tries to establish a new interpretation about the black.

2.2 Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism

New historicism stems from the resistance toward the idea of unitary story which depicts particular age. Greenblatt all together with literary critics and art historian believes that individuals own different characteristics, feelings, and inclinations. It means that everybody has different potential which leads them to create different creations (Greenblatt and Gallagher, 2000:6). Literature as form of human creation is seen as the establishment of human perception about historical events. Therefore, new historicism is a further study of 'a set of shared assumptions' in the relation between literary works and history instead of a mere system of interpretation (Baldick, 2001: 171). Literary work is the representation of history.

Author is not merely the agent who creates a canon work, there are powers which shape and suppress the author's way of thinking and make negotiation process happens (Tyson, 2006: 284). His/her perception toward certain historical phenomena leads the author to use language as media to articulate her ideas of certain case by creating a novel or poem. Michael Foucault as a French philosopher historian sees power as something constructed. There is an order which is invisibly arranged within

a text. This order contains doctrines as form of powers which affect the author's thought (Foucault, 2005: xxii).

Literature does not merely serve the reader a clear depiction of history, especially poetry as Riffaterre stated in 'Semiotics of Poetry' that concepts and things are expressed by indirection (1978:1), there are distorting, displacing and creating meaning which obscure the "meaning". New historicism notices the tension between doctrine and iconicity, tenor and vehicle, signified and signifier. They are regarded as starting point in new historicism analysis (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000: 26). Therefore, the interpreter begins selecting fragments related to symbolic behavior which head for larger social world in particular period. Then, deciphering the selecting fragments and connecting one fragment to other fragments (discursive formation) in order to examine the tensions happened in the poem which eases the interpreter to see the general discourse of the work. That discourse represents the history.

"Discourse, at least as analyzed by archaeology, that is, at the level of its positivity, is not a consciousness that embodies its project in the external form of language (langage); it is not a language (longue), plus a subject to speak it. It is a practice that has its own forms of sequence and succession" (Foucault, 2002: 188)

Foucault explains that discourse analysis conducted by archaeology is different with other discourse analysis. Discourse established from language which does not usually use, 'the external form of language', therefore the discourse depends on the interpretation and description of the researcher. Since new historicism is a theory which generates from Foucault ideas and explores objects which use 'the external form of language', the route of the analysis is similar.

Tension occurred in literary works leads 4 transformations in new historicism's operational system;

"(1) the recasting of discussions about "art" into discussions of "representations"; (2) the shift from materialist explanations of historical

phenomena to investigations of the history of human body and the human subject; (3) the discovery of unexpected discursive contexts for literary works by pursuing their “supplements” rather than their overt thematic; and (4) the gradual replacement of “ideology critique” with discourse analysis” (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000:17)

These transformations show that new historicism tries to broaden the boundaries of literary analysis. New historicism explore human subject as anthropologist does without ignoring the aesthetic values inside art. This broadness is an attempt to see the hidden ‘conflict’ and ‘dissent’ in certain period (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000: 46). Moreover it also places literary works (poetry, drama, and novel) as ‘significant artifacts’ or historical left traces to examine the spirit of an age.

2.3 Racial discrimination

“Discrimination: Practice of treating similarly situated individuals differently because of race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, or national origin” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 145)

It is a form of discrimination if someone or group of people are treated differently because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, or national origin. However, this thesis focuses on identifying forms of discrimination which are based on race. Race, in the perspective of Delgado and Stefancic, is more than just a ‘notion of biological type’. Race and races are socially constructed, they are ‘invented, manipulated and retired’ (2001: 7) .Meanwhile, literary works are considered giving the victims of racial discrimination voice to reveal and resist the idea of ‘racism and prejudice’. Therefore, language is a bridge that connects conception and imagination (2001: 44).

2.3.1 Racial Discrimination in America in 1970s

Racial discrimination still becomes the major issue in America in 1970s. Segregation keeps on existing in counter meal, public transportation and school. Segregated counter meal, for blacks, means that they sit in the back side or take the corner side of the restaurant while segregated school means that they get secondhand books and learn cooking and farming as their ancestor used to do. There is no reason for a black to be a doctor, architect, etc (Knight, 2009: xviii). Civil right organizations are dissolved while their members are imprisoned. Lynching and assassination fill in the black's heart with hatred, desperation, and anger. Riots inevitably burst out in some part of United States in order to demand American government supporting them in reaching equality and freedom.

Television soaps stay putting whites as the main actors while blacks take antagonist role or supernumerary actors. Internet websites show that white children story books are the results for 'popular children story books in 1970s' keywords while I have to type 'African-American children story books in 1970s' to look up the black children storybook. A popular video-sharing website named Youtube.com even records commercials in America in 1970s modeled only by whites. They prove that 'blackness' are not accepted in that period

Feeling insecure, disappointed, and ignored not only toward society but also government leads black writers to express their feeling by creating works. This movement is known as 'the renaissance of black writers'. Most of their works develop theme of alienation, oppression, segregation and the entire thing which related to black's experience. Among those incredible writers, Maya Angelou makes her own path in expressing black's stories. This research is intended to enrich the description of racial discrimination as the representation of American social life in 1970 in Maya Angelou selected poems without leaving the aesthetic values of the works. Therefore, Stephen Greenblatt's new historicism is needed to be conducted in this research as the theory regards literary work as the representation of history.

SCHEME OF NEW HISTORICISM'S PROCEDURE

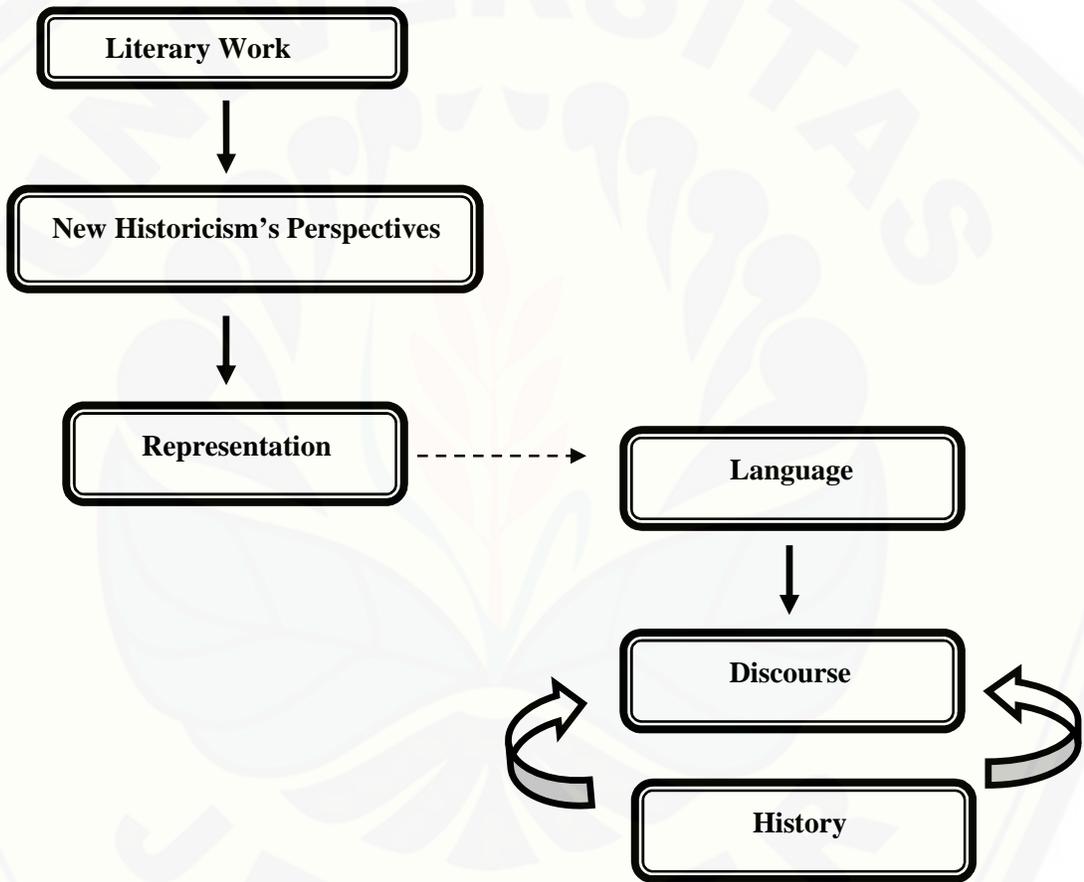


Diagram 1:

New Historicism views literary work as the representation of history. Perceptions, inclinations, and feelings of an author toward social phenomena in particular period and particular place become the powers which influence the production of her work. Therefore, new historicist believes that the main discourse established in the work provides an understanding about social condition of particular place in particular time.



SCHEME OF NEW HISTORICISM IN MAYA ANGELOU'S SELECTED POEMS

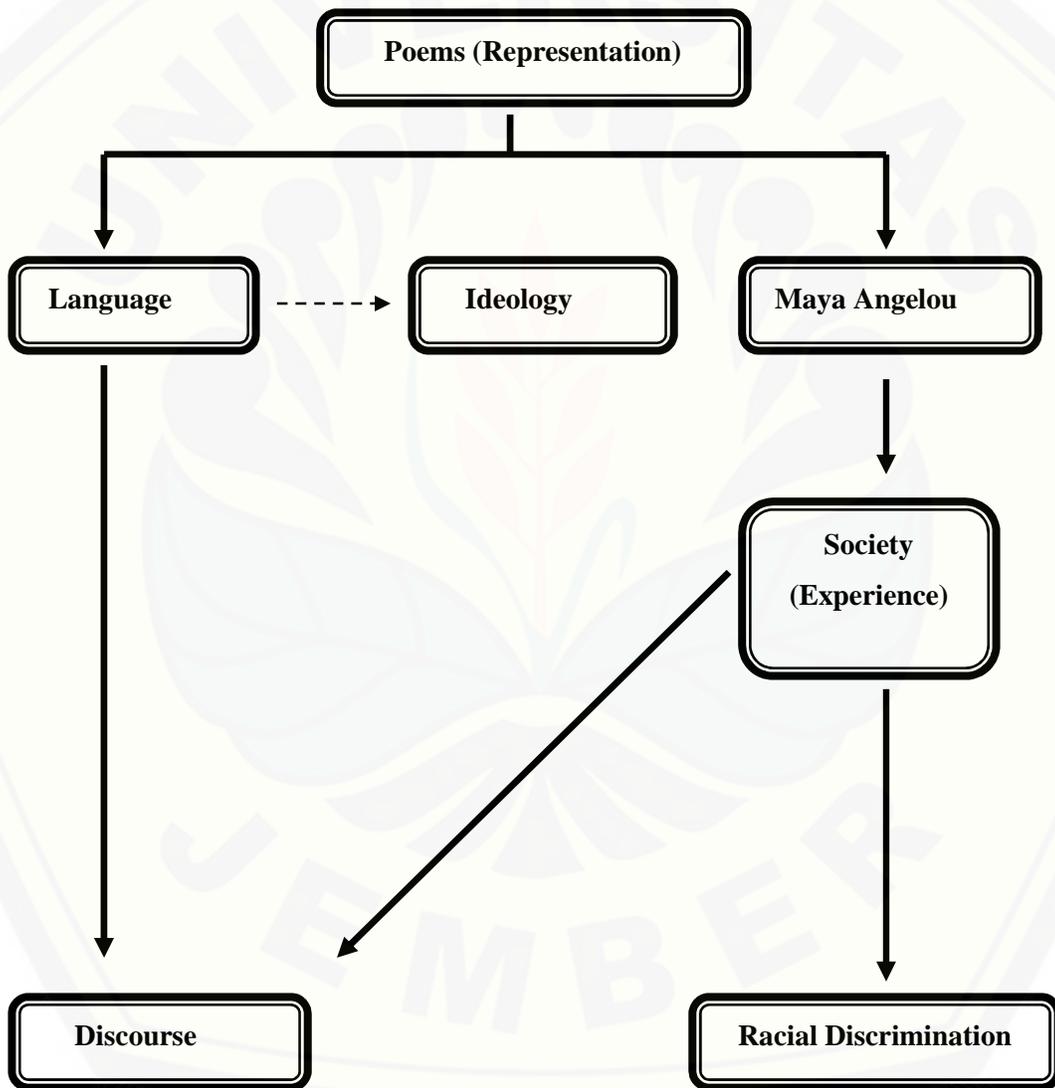


Diagram 2:

The observation of racial discrimination discourse according to new historicism perspectives runs intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic analysis means this research examines how language works to imply the ideology which influences Maya Angelou to create three poems which construct racial discrimination discourse. Meanwhile, extrinsic analysis means the investigation about issues happened in America in 1970s and Maya Angelou's personal experiences which stimulate her to represent racial discrimination discourse in her poems. Therefore, the discourse of racial discrimination as the representation of American social life in 1970s in Maya Angelou's selected poems is revealed.

CHAPTER 3. RESEACH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Research

This thesis uses qualitative research, it concerns on finding information primarily on non numeric data. The propensity of doing qualitative research is doing exploration and explication toward text as detailed as possible (Blaxter, 2006: 64). Hence, the data used in this research are in the form of words, phrases, and sentences about racial discrimination instead of number since it does not involve calculation but interpretation and description.

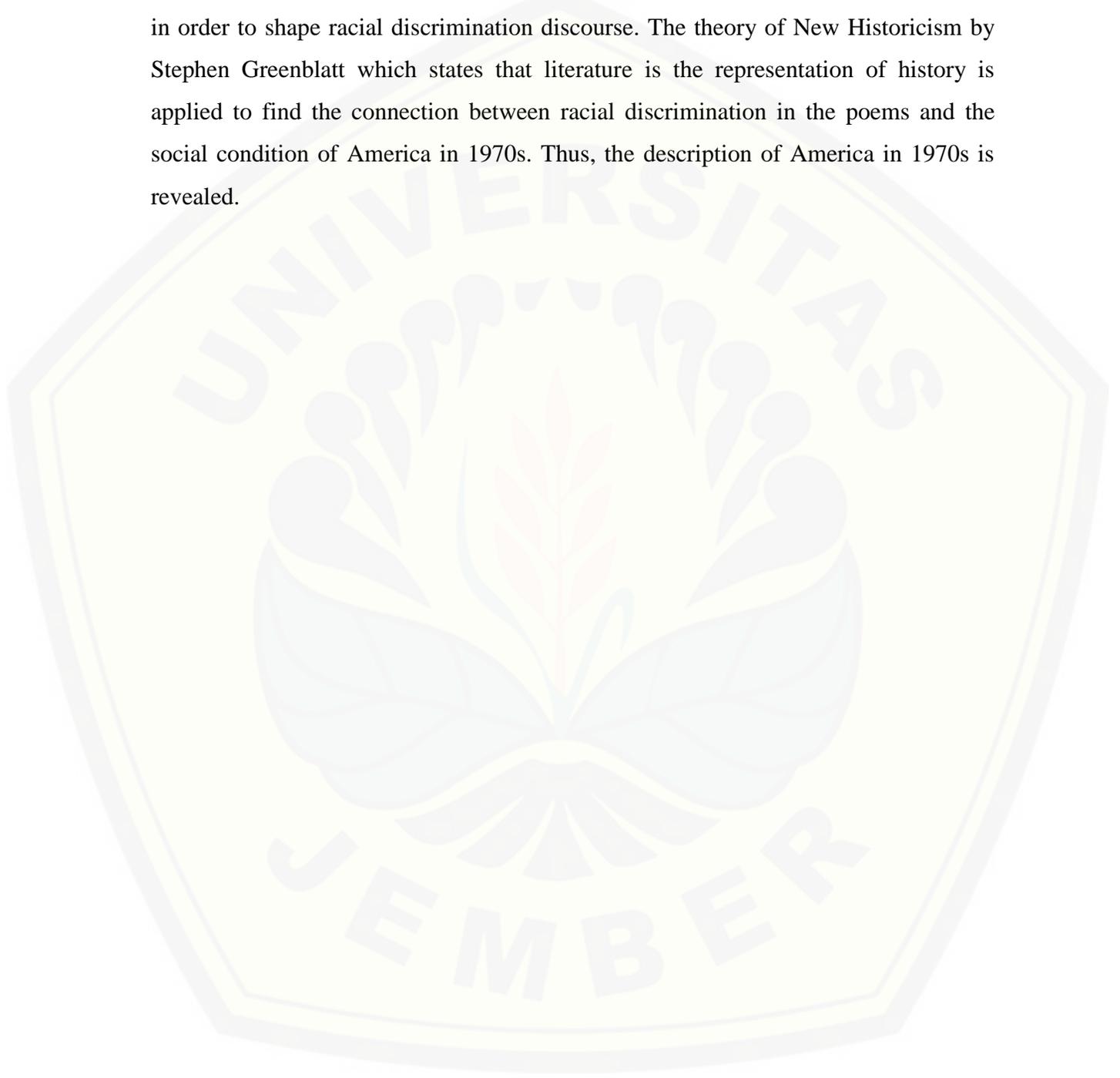
3.2 Data Collection

The primary data of this research are facts and information related to racial discrimination taken from the selected poems of Maya Angelou; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*. Moreover, the secondary data as the supporting data I use in this research are facts and information about racial discrimination in America 1970s from African-American history books, photographs, biography of the author, journals, and documentary articles.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

This research applies inductive method as method of analysis in this research. It establishes a general truth from the specific to the general. Firstly, I use close reading and documentary technique to gather facts and information related to racial discrimination in America in 1970s and Maya Angelou's personal experiences which stimulate her to create poems with racial discrimination theme. Then, I continue the

analysis by collecting dictions implying racial discrimination events and deciphering the discursive events in the selected poems and connecting one event to another event in order to shape racial discrimination discourse. The theory of New Historicism by Stephen Greenblatt which states that literature is the representation of history is applied to find the connection between racial discrimination in the poems and the social condition of America in 1970s. Thus, the description of America in 1970s is revealed.



**CHAPTER 4. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AS THE REPRESENTATION OF
AMERICAN SOCIAL LIFE IN 1970S IN MAYA ANGELOU SELECTED
POEMS**

Greenblatt argues that new historicist notices the social codes appeared in literary work to establish a discourse of the representation of history without any intention to ignore the artistic representation (2000:12). This research, based on new historicism perspective, also concerns on obtaining the social codes of racial discrimination in 1970s in three Maya Angelou's selected poems without denying the poet's genius in creating such great masterpieces. Therefore, the intrinsic and the extrinsic elements go hand in hand in this thesis resumed in three subchapters; American social life in 1970s, racial discrimination in the poems, and the position of those poem toward racism.

The first subchapter is American social life in 1970s. This subchapter presents the facts related to racial discrimination in 1970s and information about some causes which lead Maya Angelou to choose racial discrimination as the theme in her three poems. The second subchapter is the explication of racial discrimination in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise* which are divided into three points; the white as the power controller, the weak black as the victim of racial discrimination, and the negotiation of freedom. The first and the second subchapters provide important data which determine in which position those poems stand toward racism. Hence, the last subchapter is the main point of this research.

4.1 American Social Life in 1970s

America as a multicultural country faces racial problems. The racial problems which have happened for a long time in America are between the black and the white. The problem roots from the slavery in America which emerges the continuation of social aches even after the abolishment of slavery. The Emancipation Proclamation in 1865 even cannot stop stereotypes, segregation, and oppression which have embedded in American social life (Stewart, 2009:15). The failure of emancipation proclamation inevitably stimulates the black to do riots demanding their equality and freedom as Americans. However, equality and freedom cost higher than the death of African-American who struggle to reach them.

The black faces deep condolence when Martin Luther King is assassinated in 1968. He is well known as a figure who believes that the black and the white can live together in harmony rooted from Mahatma Gandhi's concept (Knight, 1974: 286). He inspires the black to join in non-violent movement. He is known as a good speaker in injecting his ideas by using biblical figures, African-American history, and literature in his speeches (Knight, 2009: 296). The success of his movement is the removal of racial segregation in Montgomery buses, and the end of all Jim Crow's laws (Knight in Rucker and Upton, 2007: 312). Desperation spreads over the black after King dies. His assassination proves that the white rejects his views about equality for all Americans. Being haunted by the white's brutality, the black activists turn to be militant; they exclude their white members within their organizations and bring weapon walking along the road (Hall in Rucker and Upton, 2007: 312). This change regrettably emboldens the stereotypes labeled the black and gets the black to be more alienated.

United States is still canopied by the black's condolences in 1970s. There are two incidents happen in 1970; Kent State University Incident (May 4th, 1970) and Jackson University Incident (May 14th, 1970). Students from anti-war group gather up in Kent University to protest Vietnam War and racism. This protest ends tragically when four black students were shot by police officer. Ten days after the incidents,

students re-assemble in Jackson University to struggle against racial conflict and create confusion between the students and the police which result two students killed and twelve wounded. Even though the event is tumultuous, American government and media decide to cover up Kent and Jackson incidents (Tradecraft Rucker and Upton, 2007:27). These incidents make the black more aware that the white has a big power in controlling society.

1970s is also known as the period when urban riots tremendously happen. This riot happens as the impact of the great migration which ends in 1970 (<http://www.history.com/topics/blackhistory/greatmigration/print>). The increasing population of the black causes the competition for job and living become fierce and emerges an assumption that criminality rises because of the black. The white finally decides to leave the city and create exclusive suburbs around North America, this event used to call as White Flight (Rucker and Upton, 2007: ii). The black unfortunately has to create their own place in the center of the city which usually calls as ghetto. The condition of ghetto is far from decent; bad air circulation and low quality water become the main reason why the black easily catches diseases.

North America introduces institutional racism to the black; the institutions including government institutions negatively treat particular ethic group or race which considered as inferior (2000: 532). The negative treatments experienced by the black are the higher cost for medical care, the secondhand books in school, and the police brutality. In 1973, a police brutality incident happens in Dallas. A twelve year old Mexican-American man named Santos Rodriguez is shot by a white police officer as he is suspected vandalizing a soda machine. Two days after Santos dies, Dallas residents reveal that the fingerprint remained on the soda machine does not belong to Santos. This incident leads people to riot by burning two police motorcycle and robbing stores.

Lewis notes that 1970s is a period when American loses their faith toward American government (<http://www.colorado.edu/AmStudies/lewis/2010/anxiety>). The increasing number of corruptions done by government officials adds the list of

American's disappointments toward the government; poverty, sex abuse, and low salary jobs which are still unsettled. The greatest scandal happened in 1970s is the involvement of President Richard Nixon in Watergate scandal in 1973. President Nixon is proven playing major role to cover up the stealing information incident from his rival party, Democratic Party in Watergate building. This incident successfully fades people's faith toward American government.

The events happened in American social life influence literary development in 1970s, especially for African-American people. Literary works are not merely a craft of someone creativity but also a way to express disappointments and to criticize social phenomena happened in the period. African-American names this movement as Black Art Movement. Among all literary texts, poetry is regarded as the most immediate way to articulate critic and protest as stated by Gallagher and Greenblatt;

“...a text- notion we got more from Geertz and the structuralists than from the historicists- is powerfully attractive for several reasons. It carries the core hermeneutical presumption that one can occupy a position from which one can discover meanings that those who left traces of themselves could not articulate...” (2000: 8)

Based on quotation above, texts especially poetry tends to saying something indirectly. People have multi-interpretation as the impact of this indirection. This indirection is presented to obscure the real message. This message is the aspect of reality which is hardly shown by other text (non-literary text). Racial discrimination, class struggle, and gender inequality in literature are not presented explicitly as the relation between the white and the black, upper class and lower class, or man and woman. There is no exact meaning so that the white, the upper class and the men have no capability to blame the poet for creating such a poem so the message is freely delivered to the lower class people, the black, and woman. When the ideas brought by the poem successfully inject and affect people's way of thinking, they are unconsciously invited to do social rebellion. This excitement also attract black American writers in 1970s to use literature especially poems as something more than just an artistic representation. One of those black writers is Maya Angelou.

Maya Angelou is a poet, activist, novelist, and lyricist who actively write in 1970s. Her first autobiography novel entitled *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* brings a great success followed with other autobiography novels and several volumes of poetry. Maya Angelou is known as a black woman who speaks about survival in her works (Janouskova, 2005:7). She considers that to overcome is African-American honorable tradition. Moreover, DeGout states that Maya Angelou's works also help the healing process for its speakers, especially African-American readers who experience the loss, the despair and the hardships in their life (Bloom, 2009:129). Delgado also states that stories written by marginalized community are the cure for silencing as many racial discrimination victims becomes introvert blaming themselves for their condition (2001:43).

Maya Angelou shows her contribution as African-American activist when she joins Harlem Guide Writers in 1959. She meets other black writers and artists conducting a play '*Cabaret for Freedom*' which is intended to help Martin Luther King in fundraising for South Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Seeing her capability in organizing the play, King finally appoints Angelou to be the Northern Coordinator for SCLC in 1960 (Cox, 2006:48). Even though her role as coordinator in the organization does not stay long since she follows her husband to Ghana, she still shows her contribution supporting King who holds a speech in Washington DC in 1963 by organizing demonstration in front of American Embassy. 1968 becomes a very devastated period for Maya Angelou; Martin Luther King is assassinated when she prepares for her birthday party;

“Life stopped for me for a few days. It was terrible. I couldn't believe that this great man, this great dream, this great dreamer, this person who dared to love everybody, could be killed”

<http://www.cbc.ca/strombo/videos/web-exclusive/maya-angelou-on-the-death-of-martin-luther-king-jr.-it-was-terrible>

Maya Angelou becomes more concerned in her writings than her role as an activist after King dies. However, Loomis states that Maya Angelou shows her resistances toward prejudices through her works (Cox, 2007:69). It means that Maya Angelou's

personal experience as an activist influences her in creating works. Pierre A. Walker states that Maya Angelou's works are created to give particular political impacts to raise the black's position in American society (Bloom, 2009: 18). Her decision to express her protest of the black's position in American society by using politeness and respect in her works is regarded as a strategy of subtle resistance (Bloom, 2009:22). At this state, Maya Angelou supports Greenblatt and Gallagher statement about the attraction of a text. It departs from subtle protest from literary works and leads an active protest in the real social condition.

Finally, the explanation above is the preceding discussion which is intended to help the reader establishing the racial discrimination discourse in the analysis of racial discrimination in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*.

4.2 Racial Discrimination in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*

The analysis of Maya Angelou's selected poems intended by new historicist aims to get the thick description (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000:21). Thick description is the understanding of the complex symbolic systems and life patterns of racial discrimination in America in 1970s through the relation of between racial discrimination events in the poems and the history of America in 1970s. Therefore, this research notices there are three core events explained into three subchapters trying to be presented in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*; 1.) The white as the power controller is the subchapter observing how the interest of power becomes the motif behind the white's domination toward the black, 2.) The weak black as the victim of racial discrimination presents the black's sufferance as the impact of the white's ambition, 3.)The negotiation of freedom shows how the interaction between the black and the white in the poem determines the black's action in demanding equality and freedom.

4.2.1 The White as the Power Controller

Maya Angelou's selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise* are written in sequence from the beginning, the middle, and the end of 1970s. Starting from the observation of discursive fragments describing the white as the power controller, this research digs out the cause and effect behind the white's domination through the poems. Since this research uses new historicism perspective which notices the importance of human perception, the description of the white as the power controller is explicated based on Maya Angelou's lens as the representative of the African-American people.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is Maya Angelou's poem which presents the white and the black relationship through metaphors; the free bird and the caged bird. The first stanza becomes the introduction of the white as the free bird;

A free bird leaps on the back of the wind
And floats downstream
Till the current ends
And dips his wing
In the orange sun rays
And dare to claim the sky (*first stanza*)

This stanza generally describes a winged animal, bird, which spend its time by leaping on the back of the wind, floating downstream, and dipping his wing in the orange sun rays. 'Free' as the bird modifier gives stressing effect that it is impossible for the bird which is not free to do such activities. Freedom lets the bird to bravely claim the sky. However, sky is the biggest and the highest visible object which is impossible to be claim by anyone or anything except God. The ignorance of the free bird toward the existence of God shows there is power that influences the free bird to think that he can own the sky. Gallagher and Greenblatt, adopting Foucault perspective, state that literary work is 'the residue of the struggle between persons and the power that would subjugate or expel them' (2000:68). New historicist believes that everyone is hold by powers which determine everyone's way of thinking

and action. However, people usually regard themselves as the holder of power instead of being realized that they are just the vehicle of power.

The white gets an honor to be represented as the free bird because power has successfully creates knowledge historically, socially, and institutionally that the white is the brave, confident, and skillful one. Those terms works and establish a dominant discourse which circulates in American society. Greenblatt notes that most of American history books and canon art works pose the white as the major character while other race's works remains to be minor (2000:10-11). Stefancic and Delgado even marks that doctors, professor, architect, and technician is mostly the whites while the black takes the role as maid, labor, and other menial jobs (2001:11).

Maya Angelou also describes how the white is treated better than other race in the fourth stanza;

The free bird thinks of another breeze
And the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
And the fat worms waiting on dawn-bright lawn
And he names the sky his own (*fourth stanza*)

The description of the free bird in the fourth stanza of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* shows that the bird is different with other common free bird. The free bird considers breeze and trade winds as something pleasant since the free bird expect for 'another' while other birds do not have feeling about such things. The surprising statement appears in the third line of this stanza, 'the fat worms waiting on dawn-bright lawn'. The common birds usually compete for food. However, the free bird in this poem is provided by 'fat worms' by his society.

Christian believes that bird and other winged animals as the representation of soul in paradise (<http://www.signology.org/bird-symbol>). The stanza above also describe that society treats the white like living in the paradise. The white does not face difficulties to fulfill their needs as it is implied by 'fat worms'. When other birds compete for food, the free bird does not need to face the competition since the worms wait him; the white is welcomed with many chances and choices in their lives.

Moreover, breeze, the trade winds, and the fat worms are served on the dawn bright lawn. Lawn refers to the white's living place. Maya Angelou tries to describe that the white lives with prosperities. 'Think of another' means the white expects the same condition in the future. Moreover, it signifies the white's intention to keep the black unfree from their domination. Delgado and Stefancic have stated that the effort for equality is always blocked by the interest of power.

The following stanzas show the white's strategies to maintain their position. The first thing they do to the black is by making limitation for African-American to advance their livings;

But a bird that stalks
Down his narrow cage
Can seldom see through
His bar of rage
His wings are clipped and
His feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sings

This stanza introduces the second character in this poem, the caged bird, which represents the black. This bird is not free since it lives inside the cage. This cage consists of bars which do not only limit its movement but also obstruct its sight. However, clipping wings and tying feet is still added to complete the sufferance. At this state, the only activity that the caged bird can do is 'singing'. From this point, the stanza indicates hidden motives behind why the bird needs to be caged. Maya Angelou mentions 'think another' as the expectation of the free bird to have the same position in the future and then describes a bird which lives isolated. It means that the caged bird is considered as a threat for the stability of the free bird's life.

The black's condition depicted through the caged bird becomes the proof that dominant discourse pushes the black to stay inferior. The success of certain discourse is determined by the willingness of its victim to stay in his/her position. Racial discrimination in America continuously happens because the white surrenders voluntarily under the power which controls their mind, racism. With the terms

‘clever, diligent, strong, and brave’ sticking around the white, they have no other choice than maintaining their position as the dominant defeating their humanity. Equality opens power-sharing and means the deconstruction of dominant discourse which has run for years placing the white in their highest position.

Furthermore, new historicists notice that to maintain the power, someone has to make his power circulates in numerous discourses. It is difficult to wield the power without ensuring people to support the white’s actions. Therefore, the stanza below shows how dominant discourse is historically constructed;

You may write down in history
With your bitter twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise

‘You’ refers to the second person who refers to someone whether man or woman in particular time and particular place. May write down in history means ‘you’ is allowed to write down in history. With your bitter twisted lies is the information about how you is allowed to write, unfortunately the author put ‘bitter’ as the quality of the ‘lies’ makes the phrase unexplainable. Then, ‘you’ is also allowed to tread ‘me’ in the very dirt. The existence of ‘me’ illuminates the previous line that what ‘me’ is the object of ‘you’ in writing the history. Trod me means ‘crush’ or ‘destroy’ me. In the very dirt is the place where you crush me on. But still, like dust, I’ll rise ‘shows the effect of the first person’s permission; you may write down (about me) in history with your bitter twisted lies but I’ll rise, you may trod me in the very dirt but still I rise.

New historicism rejects the objectivity of the history. As stated above, the black considers the history written by the white is lie. Even though the history is a lie, it is powerful enough to trod the black in the very dirt. This tragedy happens because people tend to regard history as something taken for granted. They rely on the truth which is intentionally constructed. Greenblatt argues that dominant discourse have a great role in constructing human ideology through history (1988:5). He analogizes

history as a monument which only the victors who have rights to decide how it has to be built. In this case, the white as the social winner constructs the history which places the black as inferior.

The impact of people's unawareness is presented in 'trod me in the very dirt'. The stereotypes labeled the black embolden and encourage people to permit racial discrimination over African-American. Furthermore, the worst thing happens when the white-written history books become the lesson model in American schools. For the white children, they start to grow anti-black feeling and self adoration. However, the black children who read and learn American history through those history books begin to think that they are born to be inferior and grow excessive adoration toward the white. Maya Angelou describes the effectiveness of the white's strategy in the first stanza of *Alone*,

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone

Racism ideology which is brought by the white socially and historically gives significant impact for the blacks. 'How to find my soul a home' provides the depiction of the black's feeling toward themselves and their society. Soul is the inner character of someone and consists of the true thoughts and the true feelings (Hornby, 2005, 1461). The black's soul rejects to live in their body as it is a shame to live as 'black'. The soul demands to live in the white's body but it is impossible 'water is not thirsty' and 'bread loaf is not stone'. 'A home' presented in the stanza above also represents America as their home. The black is disappointed with their country which mistreats the black. America as a home should be a place "where you are living and

that you feel you belong to”. However, this description does not work for the black. Racial discrimination brings the great disappointments toward the black’s expectations of Declaration Proclamation and The Great Migration. Better changes do not come and makes the black feel that they do not belong to the society.

Finally, this subchapter has presented the discursive events related to the explanation about the white as the power controller that spreads over in the three poems. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone* and *Still I Rise* present the white as the race with the highest position. To maintain their position, the white has to make sure there is no interruption coming from other races. The interest of power becomes the motive behind the white’s rejection toward equality preceded by the black. Violence, stereotypes, segregation, and limitation are only vehicle to keep their power circulates socially and historically. However, this research also views the depiction of the black as the object of the white’s subjectivity needs to be observed as Greenblatt states that the investigation of the representation of history involves the explication of dominant discourse and minor discourse. The weak black as the victim of racial discrimination is considered as the recovered matter for the plastered over cracks in the representation of history. Therefore, the minor discourse is presented in the next subchapter.

4.2.1 The Weak Black as The Victim of Racial Discrimination

New Historicist observes that literary texts written by marginalized community in United States such as African-American people, Jews, Hispanics, and Asian American are not included as canonical works (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000: 10-11). The reason comes from the tendency of ‘minor’ discourse to present story that disturbs the continuation of the Big Stories. The exposition of the weak black as the victim of racial discrimination in Maya Angelou selected poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise* becomes one of those interruptions,

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing

Grave is “a place in the ground where a dead person is buried” (Hornby,). However, the author uses ‘dreams’ as the object of being buried which means that the dreams are dead. At this point, dead is articulated as unreachable. Locking the bird inside the cage means killing his dreams to live freely. His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream implies resistance from the caged bird. However, the line also implies anxiety; it is his ‘shadow’ which shouts on a nightmare scream. The caged bird experiences a dilemma; knowing that it is unfair to live under racial prejudices while his powerless condition (his wings are clipped and his feet are tied) leads anxiety to directly show his protest. ‘So he opens his throat to sing’, singing finally becomes the only thing he can do.

The black who lives bearing racial discrimination is like standing on the grave of their dreams. Comparing to the white who expects for another ‘breeze’, ‘the trade wind’ and ‘the fat worms’, the black is sure that their dreams is impossible to be reached. That desperation and weakness presented by Maya Angelou in her poem indicates the inability of the black to survive in ideological contradiction. Greenblatt believes that everyone is surrounded by powers. It is only about which power is more dominant to take human’s mind to be entirely controlled. The stanza above shows that the black acknowledge that the dominant discourse has successfully injected a knowledge brought by racism ideology. For the poor black, consuming racism is like seeing them standing on the grave of their dreams, there is no hope for freedom and equality while for the rich black; they turn to be white-minded. Maya Angelou describes about this white-minded rich black in the second stanza of *Alone*,

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone
There are millionaires

With money they can't use
Their wives run round like banshees
Their children sing the blues
They've got expensive doctors
To cure their hearts of stone
But nobody
No, nobody
Can make it out here alone

There are millionaires with money they can't use', the author describes that there are some blacks who are considered as 'the millionaires' but with money they cannot use. 'can't used' becomes unclear expression before the following line comes out; 'their wives run around like banshees, their children sing blues'. The millionaires are considered cannot use their money because they spend their money for themselves. 'Banshees' and 'Blues' implies sadness felt by people around the rich blacks. Banshee is a woman spirit whose cries indicate death while blues is African-American tradition used as the expression for their sadness and melancholy. The black prefers using their money to afford expensive facility 'expensive doctors' for themselves than to cherish their family. The author considers these people as people with their hearts of stone; they are cruel and have no sympathy for other people (<http://idioms.freedExceptionary.com/have+a+heart+of+stone>).

The abandonment of the millionaires' wives and children imply the internal clash within African-American community. The black who miraculously gains a better fortune becomes selfish as they only think about their own happiness. This situation shows that the rich blacks are influenced by the white's way of thinking. The existence of the white-minded black inevitably weakens the struggle of freedom and equality and worsens the black position in American society. The poor black who spreads over the country with greater number gets spotted as they have to endure opposition from the white and the rich black.

The appearance of dictions which implying 'anxiety', 'desperation' in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and the existence of the millionaires with their heart of

stone in *Alone* creates a discursive formation of the weak black as the victim of racial discrimination. The black as the object of the white's control receives the side effects of the white's domination; the black is insisted to receive the harsh reality that they are too inferior to have a bright future as the white's. The black is aware that it is a form of injustice done by the white to maintain this unstable position. However, the black experiences anxiety over the violence and oppression which gets stronger if they rebel. Moreover, the self-hatred and the excessive adoration toward the white results the rich blacks with white-minded ideology. This ideology adoption causes the clash inside the black's community. Instead of strengthening the black position, these millionaires create gap inside the black society which undoubtedly strengthens discrimination.

4.2.3 The Negotiation of Freedom

Negotiation intended in this subchapter is the process of power exchange between the black and the white. Through discursive fragments spread over the three poems, this research examines how power within racial discrimination discourse. New Historicism notices that human beings always try to find the solution for every barrier in their lives in order to escape from their position as victims (Tyson, 2006:285). This research captures the intention of the black to do the negotiation about freedom to the white and finally put the black no longer become the victim of dominant discourse. The negotiation of freedom is sequentially depicted in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings show that the black still accept non-violent ideas which is injected by Martin Luther King even two years after his assassination. This situation is depicted in the third and the sixth stanza;

The caged bird sings
With fearful trill
Of things unknown
But longed for still

And his tune is heard
On the distant hill
For the caged bird
Sings of freedom

'Sings' is an activity chosen by the caged bird as its reaction toward violence and restriction inside the cage. When the caged bird is allowed to sing, it means that this activity is regarded not as threat for the free bird. Through his singing, the caged bird expresses his protest about his not-free condition. Freedom becomes something that he never knows. However, 'his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom' shows unclear description of cause-effect relationship; freedom becomes the reason why it is heard until the distant hill. Therefore the second level interpretation is needed to be conducted.

Music has become African-American culture since the period of slavery. The first music they know is gospel songs in the churches. The Christian values contained in gospel songs become inspiration for Martin Luther to speech in front of the black. Since gospel has been embedded in their African-American culture, the idea of non-violent movement conducted by King becomes more acceptable. In his speech on August 28th 1963, King stated that it is better to use creative protest rather than physical violence in civil right struggle since Christianity teaches them not to hurt people only for fulfilling their happiness. Moreover, King also states;

"Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill in Mississippi. From every mountainside"
(<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/speech/dream>)

The use of 'hill' as the diction in Angelou's poem and King's speech illuminates the meaning behind 'his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom'. The bird that express his sadness locked inside a cage through singing resembles to the blacks who struggle for freedom and equality through non-violent movement rather than committing wrong deeds as the white does. At this state, the research gains a conclusion that the black tries to offer reconciliation as the solution

of racial conflicts between the white and the black. As devoted Christian, the black believes that creative protest (songs) which reminds the white about humanity and religious values is the best way to bring the white back into their realization that every human is born as equal.

However, *Alone* which is written in 1975 shows that the reconciliation offered by the black is not accepted by the white. As discussed in prior subchapters that *Alone* captures the success of the white injecting their white-minded among rich blacks and inevitably gets other blacks to be more spotted, this situation indicates the failure of the black's non-violent ideas in ideological contradiction. Nevertheless, as stated by Tyson that human always tries to find solution for their problem in any condition, the black also learns from the tensions and offers the second negotiation;

Now if you listen closely
I'll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The race of man is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
'Cause nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone

'Now if you listen closely, I'll tell you what I know', this line shows that the black offers an information. Since the white needs to listen closely, the information is important. 'Storm clouds are gathering, the wind is gonna blow', the black tells the white that there will be a disaster since the black sees the storm clouds are gathering. This stanza implies the white's carelessness toward their surroundings since the storm clouds are the visible natural signs for the storm but they do not notice. 'The race of man is suffering and I can hear the moan' gives unclear cause-effect relationship; the storm clouds are gathering and the wind is gonna blow because the race of man is suffering. At this state, this research reveals that storm clouds are the metaphors used by Angelou to represents the black's disappointments which get stronger and 'the wind is gonna blow' means the black nearly catch their endurance limit and ready to

obviously shows their anger. This research sees the black does not merely give information but a warning for the white. There is a shifting mood happened between the depiction of black in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and the black in *Alone*.

Maya Angelou persistently shows that the black is the object of the white's domination implying the efforts to recall the white's humanity in the first poem but this strategy is no longer used by Maya Angelou in *Alone*. It is started by her decision to put the black as the subject who 'knows' and 'can hear' while the white as the one who is lack of sensitivity about what happens around them. The incapability of the black to endure their sufferance and their decision to explicitly shows their anger if the white neglects the black's warning are the evidence of the degradation of non-violent ideology and the insistence of another ideology which finally changes the black's way of thinking. However, the last line 'but nobody, cause nobody can make it out here alone' shows that the black is not entirely lose their trust upon non-violent vision since the black still believes that freedom and equality in impossible to be reached if the white and the black do not work together to support these goals.

Racial conflicts are still presented by Maya Angelou in her third poem which is written in 1978, *Still I Rise*. Nevertheless, the reaction shown by the black in this poem of truly different with the black in prior poems;

You may write me down in history
With your bitter twisted lies
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise

This research has explained that this stanza provides information about the white's efforts to maintain their position by injecting their doctrines through historical account. The black allows the white to write the 'lies' description about the black and makes people put African-American in the very bad place but the black promise the consequences for the white's actions as stated in the last line that 'but still, like dust, I'll rise'. Rise means to reach the higher position or the higher level. Therefore, this stanza indicates that the white is failed dominating the black since the black has

greater power to counter the white's attacks. Maya Angelou even presents a clear transition from the 'old' black and the 'new' black in 1978, from the blacks who believe that they have no faith to face the future and slowly feel more desperate with their condition that gets more spotted into the black who has confidence to live surrounded by racism practices in society. The next stanza even shows that the black is braver and even has courage to insult the white;

Did you wanna see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like tear drops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard?
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin in my own backyard

The question asked in the stanza above are the evidences that the black gain confidence and bravery to 'laugh like they've got gold mines digging in their own backyard'. It implies that the blacks are very happy with their condition even though they actually do not have the gold mines' in their backyard. This is not an ordinary situation for the white since they are accustomed with the black who bowed their head and lowered their eyes. The stanza even shows that the white gets offended with the black's change. The mental improvement experienced by the black shows that they finally realize that to free themselves entirely from racial discrimination practices such as segregation, stereotypes, and prejudices which circulate in American society, they have to liberate themselves first from racism which control and pose themselves as inferior.

4.3 The Position of Maya Angelou's Selected Poems toward Racial Discrimination

From the description of racial discrimination, this research comes to find that Maya Angelou's selected poems implying the rejection of racial discrimination.

Describing the black position as minority implies Maya Angelou's intention to object the social construction as Greenblatt states that the work of art is the product of the negotiation between the author and his/her society. Therefore, It is impossible to create racial discrimination discourse without social energy in particular era which encourages an author to comment the construction of the white is powerful and the black is weak.

The explanation of the negotiation of freedom in previous chapter proves that the poems establish a new interpretation about black. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* the poem exposes that the black does not have intention to take revenge for the mistreatments they get from the white. Maya Angelou tries to turn over the perception that the black is bad and the white is the good one because in her poem, the white is the one who arbitrarily uses their power to discriminate the black. *Alone* shows that lonely and desperation feelings which lead some blacks turning to be ruthless are the impact of the white's domination which pushes the black even stronger than before. However, in the last stanza, Maya Angelou still believes that freedom and equality are impossible to be reached without the intention from both races to live together harmoniously; this means that the black still has faith toward non-violent movement. In *Still I Rise*, the work presents a belief that black is beautiful and brave. The black realizes that they are actually not inferior because they have successfully survived from the white's domination for years. Meanwhile, the white does not have ability to escape from their own ideology, they does not live comfortably because they suffer from their own perception that they are born to be superior. Hence, the representation of black is bad and white is good can be deconstructed by creating a new interpretation.

Greenblatt notes that the desire to counter social hegemony upraises in 1960s-1970s. Maya Angelou as part of black activist and black writer uses poems to offer the alternate history or counter history to the readers. Hence, the existence of Maya Angelou is seen as the agent who operates a discourse of anti-racism within her poems as the mode of existence, circulation, functioning of certain discourses within

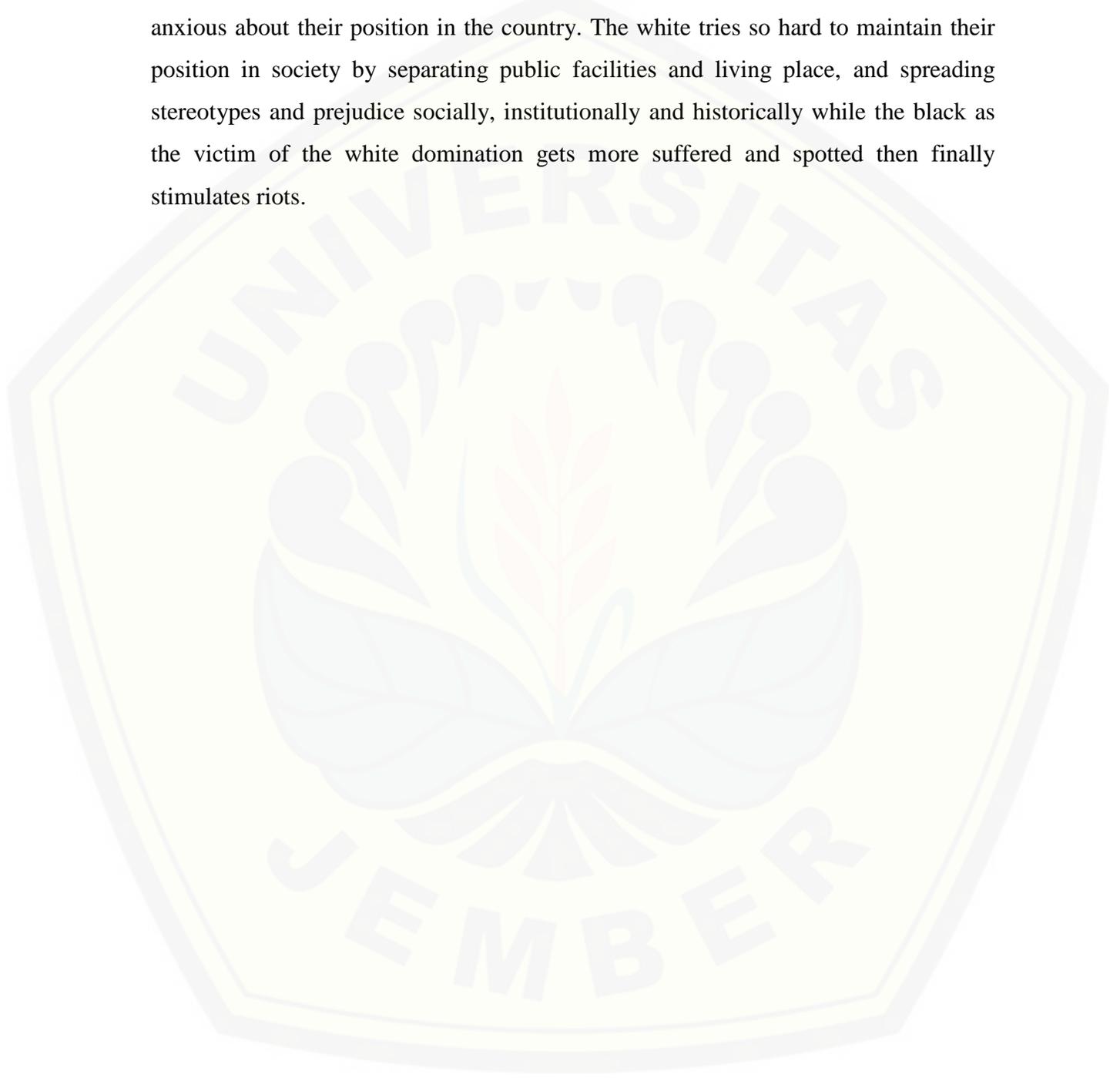
a society in particular period (Foucault, 1970). Scientific accounts show the reader the general news such as the significant increasing number of black population as the impact of the great migration encourages the white to leave the city, Watergate scandal in the middle of 1970s evaporates Americans' trust toward American government, and civil right movement causes tremendous riots along the period. Scientific accounts are lack of attention toward personal information which provides knowledge about how people feel and think about those issues. Thus, that information is only provided in literature,

“we wanted also use the anecdote to show in compressed form the ways in which element of life experience enter into literature, the ways in which everyday institutions and bodies recorded” (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000:30)

Sadness, disappointment, happiness, etc are the element of life experience which is missed by scientific accounts. Maya Angelou as part of American society witness the practices of racial discrimination discourse and express her opinion, objection, emotion and perception through her works. Since every poets have their own styles and concerns in creating a work, Maya Angelou also has her own style and concern. She tends to write poems rhythmically. Her poems are structurally similar to song lyrics; there is always the repetition stanza as the stressing of her poems. The repeated stanza is like the chorus of a song.

Moreover, the racial discrimination discourse found in Maya Angelou's selected poems shows her position as the agent of anti-racism. When Hartono finds out that Langston Hughes' poem, *Theme for English B*, reveals the real conflicts and problems experienced by the black in educational institutions, this research discovers that Maya Angelou concerns more on revealing the mental conflicts or mental experiences of the black through her three selected poems. Those elements of life lead this research to get the conclusion that 1970s is a period when Americans experience the social anxiety. According to *Oxford Learner Dictionary 8th Edition*, “anxiety means the state of feeling nervous and worries that something bad is going

to happen” (2010). When this anxiety is socially felt, it is called as social anxiety. The uprising of riots during this period is happened because white and the black are anxious about their position in the country. The white tries so hard to maintain their position in society by separating public facilities and living place, and spreading stereotypes and prejudice socially, institutionally and historically while the black as the victim of the white domination gets more suffered and spotted then finally stimulates riots.



CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

This research has examined there are some incident which stimulate tremendous black riots occur in America in 1970s; the death of Martin Luther King, the Great Migration, and Watergate scandal which involve President Richard Nixon in 1973. Moreover, this research also finds out that Maya Angelou is a black former activist as she ever joins in SCLC, an organization leaded by Martin Luther King. These facts become significant reasons why the problem raised in the three of Maya Angelou selected poems is about a relationship between the black and the white. New historicism called those facts as social energies.

Afterwards, this research also finds out three core events related to racial discrimination which is brought by Maya Angelou in her three poems; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Alone*, and *Still I Rise*. The first event is the white as the power controller. The poems build a discourse which describes the white as a group of people who believe they are born to place the highest position in American society. This racism ideology becomes a power for the white to maintain the social hierarchy. The continuation of black stereotypes, segregation and limitation are just the vehicles for the white to protect their throne. The second event depicted in the poems is the weak black as the victim of racial discrimination. Maya Angelou describes the black's life is aimless and hopeless, no hope for his/her dream. Moreover, the poems also show that racism grows the white-minded blacks who do not care of their surrounding; busy with their own business spending their money for expensive facilities. Afterwards, the third event is the negotiation of freedom. The poems show an action and reaction process as the result of the white and the black interaction. The black realizes that it takes a long journey for the black reaching the freedom and equality in American social life. However, they gain an understanding that to reach

those big dreams, they have to liberate themselves from mental problem as the impact of racism ideology which controls and limits their movement for a long time.

The racial discrimination depiction in the poems finally poses Maya Angelou as a poet who reveals the mental experiences or other elements of life which are usually missed by scientific accounts. She follows the spirit which bursts in 1970s; the desire to counter social hegemony. The white ambition behind the black sufferance destroys the social hegemony which put the white as the good one. The analysis concludes that Maya Angelou operates the anti-racism discourse within the poem. The negotiation between racism and anti-racism in the three selected poems finally leads this research to conclude that Maya Angelou perceives 1970s as period when the white and the black experience social anxiety toward their position in the country.

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APPENDICES

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1970)

A free bird leaps
On the back of the wind
And floats downstream
Till the current ends
And dips his wing
In the orange sun rays
And dares to claim the sky

But a bird that stalks
Down his narrow cage
Can seldom see through
His bars of rage
His wings are clipped and
His feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
With a fearful trill
Of things unknown
But longed for still
And his tune is heard
On the distant hill

For the caged bird
Sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
And the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
And the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
And he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
With a fearful trill
Of things unknown
But longed for still
And his tune is heard
On the distant hill
For the caged bird
Sings of freedom

Alone (1975)

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone

I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone
There are some millionaires
With money they can't use
Their wives run round like banshees
Their children sing the blues
They've got expensive doctors
To cure their hearts of stone
But nobody
No, nobody
Can make it out here alone

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone
Now if you listen closely
I'll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The race of man is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
'Cause nobody,

But nobody
Can make it out here alone

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone

Still I Rise (1978)

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room

Just like moons and like suns
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard?
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise?
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise