

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problems

Slavery has left deep wounds to the former slaves and also Africans in general. Slavery in regard to Africans has occurred for hundreds of years. We can see that slavery caused trauma to the victim. After slavery was abolished the former slaves have to struggle with their new environment as free men. The main character in the novel *Washington Black* by Esi Edugyan named Washington as a former slave also has to struggle in the new society that dominated by white people.

Literature has a major impact on the development of society, it gives us a detailed preview of human experiences and allowing us to connect on basic levels of desire and emotion. In literature, all human phenomena are reflected by literary works and related to the world through simple artistic mediums. It is no doubt that trauma exists as part of human challenges since the start of human history. Literature binding history and culture of a place and people efficiently. Trauma has as well been one way or another, prevalent in all forms of literature. It surfaces as the shady part of all narratives that tell of a history, memoir, agonies and sorrows of the writer or about the subjects (characters) created.

The story of this novel that I analyzed is about George Washington Black, who at the beginning of the story, is an 11-year-old, slave on a sugar plantation in Barbados. When the new owner's brother arrives and needs help for his science project, Wash, as people call him, gets the chance to get away from the vicious and sadistic cruelty the slaves on the plantation have to endure. Christopher Wilde, or "Titch", as the young scientist is called, borrows Wash from his brother so that he might help him work on an airship he designed - by that, Wash first gets the chance to learn about science and nature, which, along with drawing, will turn out to be his passion. When Wash, without his own doing, gets into trouble that might cost him his life, from there on, Wash roams the world, first seeking safety as he is a runaway slave, later, when slavery is abolished, still fearing bounty hunters and looking for

Titch. Wash tries to build a life, pursuing his interests in science and art. Wash also face the hardship has to endure, because even when slavery was abolished, racism is persisted. Wash struggles with his identity, constantly forced to look into the gap between his own potential and what society sees in him.

According to the background of the problem above, this novel intends to describe effects of slavery which causes cultural trauma that also afflicts black people and how cultural trauma is formed. I introduce the theory of cultural trauma from Jeffrey Alexander and Ron Eyerman to analyze this novel. I will focus this analysis on the main character, Washington Black, and other black characters in this novel. This issues interested me to analyze this novel through social-psychology approach. In researching this issue, I will present evidence about the issues to be discussed. This study is expected to be useful and I want to analyze it through intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. Through intrinsic approaches I use stream of consciousness, plot & setting. Through extrinsic approaches I use social-psychology concept of cultural trauma.

1.2. Literature Review

The first is an article on *New York Times* that written by Colm Toibin with the title “In Esi Edugyan’s Novel ‘Washington Black’, a Slave Escape by Hot-Air Balloon”(https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/17/books/review/esi-edugyan-washington-black.html accessed on 12 May 2019). In this review, the writer wrote what Edugyan has done in “Washington Black” is to complicate the historical narrative by focusing on one unique and self-led figure. Washington Black’s presence in these pages is fierce and unsettling. His urge to live all he can is matched by his eloquence, his restless mind striving beyond its own confines in tones that are sometimes overstretched, if brilliant, and then filled with calm subtlety and nuance.

The second review is an article on *Newyorker* that written by Laura Miller entitled “Washington Black Reveals the Bonds of Both Cruelty and Compassion”(https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/09/24/washington-black-reveals-the-bonds-of-both-cruelty-and-compassion accessed on 12 May 2019). In this review, the writer wrote that the novel “Washington Black” is historical fiction, yet

they rarely give the sense that history is their main concern. The brutality and injustices of the past supply Edugyan, the Canadian child of Ghanaian immigrants, with the situations that she uses to crack open the human psyche and expose the tender, tangled material within.

The similarity between this research and those two reviews is using the same novel *Washington Black* by Esi Edugyan. Afterward for this research, I will analyze the cultural trauma toward black people.

1.3. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background of the problems above, I identified the problem of this research is : The effect of slavery to former slave and the social process of cultural trauma in the context of slavery toward black people. Therefore, I assume that the theme of this novel is: The Reflection of Cultural Trauma in the Context of Slavery Toward Black People in Esi Edugyan's Novel *Washington Black*

1.4. Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identification of the problems above, I limit the problem of the research theory and concepts I used as follow :

1. Through an intrinsic approach: stream of consciousness, plot and setting
2. Through extrinsic approaches which are social-psychology of literature and the concept of cultural trauma

1.5. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the limitation of the problems above, I formulate the problem: Is my assumption of this novel, The Reflection of Cultural Trauma in the Context of Slavery Toward Black People in Esi Edugyan's Novel *Washington Black*, correct? In order to answer this question, I formulate the problem as follows:

1. Can the characters be analyzed through stream of consciousness ?
2. What are the plot and setting of this novel ?
3. What are the concept of cultural trauma through stream of consciousness, plot and setting ?
4. What does the theme of this novel reinforce through the result of analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches ?

1.6. Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objective of this research is to prove the assumption The Reflection of Cultural Trauma in the Context of Slavery Toward Black People in Esi Edugyan's Novel *Washington Black*. In order to achieve that objective, the steps which are supposed to be done in this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the characters through stream of consciousness of this novel.
2. To analyze the plot and setting of this novel.
3. To analyze the reflection of cultural trauma through stream of consciousness, plot and setting of this novel.
4. To develop the theme through the result of intrinsic and extrinsic approaches of this novel.

1.7. Method of the Research

In this research, I use a variety of qualitative research methods with, the type of library research, the nature of research in the form of analysis using the method of data collection in the form of Esi Edugyan's novel *Washington Black* as a primary source and supported by several references related to the theory and concept suitable as a second source. I use two approaches. First, the intrinsic approach, there are stream of consciousness, plot and setting. Second, extrinsic approach, there is the socio-psychological concept of cultural trauma.

1.8. Benefit of the Research

This study is expected to be useful to those who are interested and want to explore more about Esi Edugyan's novel *Washington Black*. This study may be useful since it is done through new perspective along with applying the concept of obsession theory that included in the field of psychoanalytic literature that shown as something new and understandable for people who read this.

1.9 Systematic Organization of the Research

In accordance to the title of the research above, the order of the presentation is written as follows:

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

It consists of: background of the problems, literature review, identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, method of the research, systematic organization of the research.

CHAPTER 2 :FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES

It consists of theoretical frameworks, there are several approaches, intrinsic approach, and extrinsic approach

CHAPTER 3 :THE ANALYSIS OF “WASHINGTON BLACK” NOVEL BY ESI EDUGYAN THROUGH INTRINSIC APPROACH

It consists of: stream of consciousness of the characters, plot and setting of the novel. The concepts above must appear in the number of sub-chapters.

CHAPTER 4 :THE ANALYSIS OF “WASHINGTON BLACK” NOVEL BY ESI EDUGYAN THROUGH EXTRINSIC APPROACH : CULTURAL TRAUMA

It consists of: a brief explanation of this chapter's content, analysis of the effect of slavery to the main character and social process of cultural trauma in the context of slavery, other characters, plot and setting. The concepts above must appear in the number of sub-chapters.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

It consists of: an evaluation from the previous chapters and the implication of the evaluated result.

ENCLOSURES : ATTACHMENTS

The chapters above are followed by references, scheme of the research, research poster, curriculum vitae, and other required attachments.