

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five parts of the introduction. Those are the background of the study, statement of the research problems, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, and also the scope and limitation of the study.

1.1. Background of The Study

What does come to your mind when you hear the word “racism”? or have you ever seen racist behavior around you, or have you ever experienced it by yourself? Racism is experienced by a person or group who considered come from a minority race and it is also included as a portrait of social injustice that continues to this day. Racism itself is a bad treatment by a person or group of race or majority against a person or group of minority in which the act violates humanity. This act also confirms the existence of a hierarchy as a result of significant differences between races. According to Fredrickson (2002) The term “racism” is often used in a loose and unreflective way to describe the hostile or negative feelings of one ethnic group or “people” toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes. But sometimes the antipathy of one group toward another is expressed and acted upon with a single-mindedness and brutality that go far beyond the group-centered prejudice and snobbery that seem to constitute an almost universal human failing (p.1)

According to Bradly (2006) Racism is a tool of oppression that has global

reach. It works by dehumanizing individuals and communities not only by denying their inherent equality and dignity but doing so on the basis of a constructed category of race designed for the very purpose of separating humans into a hierarchy meant to permanently elevate some and suppress many (p.8). Reviewing the sentence "*Racism is a tool of oppression that has a global reach*" makes us inevitably have to agree when we see how racist behavior does not only occur in one region but covers various places in various countries around the world. What make it seems even more sad is how racist behavior has happened since the past. Many of the oppressions carried out by racist perpetrators have resulted in turmoil of resistance from opponents of racist behavior that shocked the world. Some of these incidents include *Harlem Renaissance (1918-mid 1930)*, *Civil right movement by Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)*, and *The Black Art Movement (1965-1975)*.

The first is *Harlem Renaissance (1918-mid 1930)*. It was a time where the black writers, artists, musicians, photographers, and poets moved to a place called Harlem so they could freely express their talents. The next is *Civil Right Movement in The Hand of Martin Luther King Jr.* One of the movements was the Montgomery bus boycott. They are boycotting a treatment whereby blacks must surrender their seats to whites, while those in the minority must stand or sit in the back of buses. The last is *The Black Art Movement (1965-1975)*, it is a nationalist movement spearheaded by black people that focuses on music, literature, drama and visual arts consisting of black artists and intellectuals. It is a cultural part of the black power movement, where participants share many ideologies about black

self-determination, political beliefs, and African American culture.

Another movement caused by racism also occurred in UK, the movements carried out by black people and minority people in the UK. Those movements are *The Black People's Day of Action; March 2, 1981*, and *The British Black Art Movement*. The first is *The Black People's Day of Action; March 2, 1981*, where this movement was caused by the failure of the police to investigate the deaths of 13 children who died in a fire at a birthday party. The police are considered not serious in handling the case. A demonstration was carried out by about 20,000 people who lined the streets of London demanding the rights of the 13 victims who died in the fire who were black children, around 13 banners in red ink containing the names of the 13 victims were raised by several people. This demonstration movement is intended to make the government and the police aware of their silence on the case because the victim is from a black racial group, the fighters want the case to be opened and investigated again thoroughly.

The last is *The British Black Art Movement*, it is a radical political art movement founded in 1982, inspired by anti-racist discourse and feminist critique which sought to highlight issues of gender and race, and the politics of representation. The movement was founded around the time of the First National Black Art Convention organized by the Blk Art Group and held at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. A key moment in this movement was the *Other Stories* exhibition staged at the Hayward Gallery in 1989 and curated by Rasheed Araeen. Featuring Modern artists who are of African, Caribbean and Asian descent, the show reveals how these artists have been marginalized in the West

through discrimination, where artists are seen as only white artists with their western culture by marginalizing the ideas of black and ethnic culture. another minority. Some of the artists and curators involved in this movement include Rasheed Araeen, David A. Bailey, Eddie Chambers, Shakka Dedi, Denzil Forrester, Lubaina Himid, Claudette Johnson, Remi Kapo, Eugene Palmer, Keith Piper, Donald Rodney, Mark Sealy, Marlene Smith and Maud Sulter. Audio Black Film Collective, Sonia Boyce.

One of other victims of racism is a refugee. According to UNHCR Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution in their country of origin and have crossed international borders to seek security in another country. The particular issues and stresses faced by refugee families; One group very much at risk of the worst excesses of poverty and social disintegration are refugees. Their experiences both prior to and following arrival in the country of 'refuge', make them extremely vulnerable (Webb et al.,2002). The above statement shows that refugees are at greater risk of being the target of racist behavior carried out by the majority of people, this has happened to the refugees in several places, one of which is in the UK. This is reinforced by the statement from Crawley, and Crimes (2009) they report that more than half of the refugees in Wales have experienced racism or negative attitudes towards them. From the report above, we can conclude that people in one area in the UK have not fully accepted the presence of refugees in their area. They, as the hosts of the region, also show evidence of their unacceptability for the presence of refugees by committing acts of discrimination against the refugees.

When we discuss about racism, it will be incomplete to skip the discussion about human rights. Clapham (2007, p.7) mentioned that the concept of a 'human rights culture' also means different things to different people. To some, it means ensuring that everyone is treated with respect for their inherent dignity and human worth. To others, it means that judges, the police, and immigration officials are required to protect the interests of terrorists, criminals, and other undesirable elements at the expense of the security of the population. According to the statement above we can conclude that every person on this earth have equal rights to get protection from any crimes committed by anyone, have the right to have the same opportunity in the education sector, residence, also get the same treatment as fellow humans without any discrimination. Therefore, if anyone practices racist behavior toward minority people or who are different from us, then they have violated human rights.

Regarding to the brief explanation about racism and human rights above, we can conclude that racism still occur around us to this day. These two problems are also reflected in social life which is wrapped in a literary work in the form of poetry, novels and others. Nevertheless, the issues of racism and human rights not only reflected in literary works such as novel that are commonly read by adults, but these issues are also beginning to be reflected in the children's books. One of the books that reflect racism and human right is the children's book; *The Boy at The Back of The Class* by Onjali Q. Raúf.

Like most children's books, this book also reveals about social phenomena that occur in everyday life. The social phenomenon that stands out in this book is

about the racism and the fight of human rights of a refugee kid in society. The name of the refugee kid in this novel is Ahmet and he comes from Syria, where he has to be apart from his family in their way to flee to France. They need to save themselves from the death threat because of civil war in their country.

The racism can be seen from the several forms of racism directed at him, as well as about his rights as a human being fought for by his four friends and some residents. The things that make this issue of this book interesting to be analyzed are the racism experienced by a small child who is also part of the refugees and the movement was carried out by 4 young children who wanted to defend the rights of their new friend, a boy who was a part of refugee children who experience racism by his peers and some of the surrounding adults. From the statement above, we can know that racist behavior is not only carried out by adults but also by young children.

The author behind this best-selling children's book is Onjali Q. Raúf. She was the founder of Making Herstory, an organization that encourages women, girls and children to work together to create a fairer and more equal world for women and girls everywhere. In her spare time, she delivers emergency aid packages to refugee families living in Calais and Dunkirk. She wrote her first book in 2018 and published it in 2019 entitled *The Boy at The Back of The Class*. Her first book becomes a best seller book. She also has committed a portion of the money that she receives from the sales of each copy of this book to some wonderfully brave people who spend their every single day to help save and rebuild the lives of refugees all over the world and charities.

Onjali has her own story behind the writing of the book. The idea of the book came to her when she imagined what if baby Raehan went to school one day. She dedicated this book to him and Alan Kurdi, a young boy who had died at the age of three trying to cross the *Aegean Sea* (a body of water between Turkey and Greece) with his family, and also to Raehan, “the baby of Calais”; a baby only a few weeks old whose mother had survived destruction of her village and a journey of thousands of miles while pregnant. Following the official statement, baby Raehan and his family disappeared.

According to her, this book also proves that different books where the main character is a refugee kid from Syria and from different author who is not part of white has their own market and can win critical acclaim. Usually, children's books are written by white people and so does the main characters. The racism reflected in this book is because she had experienced it when she was a child. She is a descendant of Bangladeshi living in London. She experienced racism when she was a child around the age of 6 or 7, while a local boy shouted to her "Go home, Paki" she didn't know what it meant but his friend said Paki meant Pakistani. The next day when the boy shouts after her, she replied that she is not Pakistani but Bangladeshi. Then, he said sorry because he got the wrong kid. This experience underlies the issue of racism in this book.

Likewise, in the narrative of the boy at the back of the class written by Onjali Q. Raúf, this study portrayed on how racism and the fight for human rights by four children as the refugees kid friends who experience racism. This study focuses on the issues represented through narration and conversations that contain

related issues. The theory will be used to analyze those issues is the theory of racism by Fredrickson. An important point that the readers get when reading this book is how to teach children from an early age that racist behavior commits crimes from an early age. Another important point is that racist behavior is not a good thing to do. Important value that is not all parents are currently able to share with their children.

1.2. Statement of Research Question

In line with the background of the study that has been displayed, there is one research question as follow;

1. How is the racism toward refugee kid depicted in the novel?
2. How is the fight for human right of the refugee kid depicted in the novel?

1.3. Objectives of The Study

Continuous with the previous statement of the research question, the objective of the study aims to;

1. Examining the refugees' alienation depicted in the novel.
2. Examining the fight for human right of refugee kid in the novel

1.4. Scope and Limitation

The major focus of this study is on the novel by Onjali Q. Raúf entitled *the boy at the back of the class*, and using racism theory to do the analysis of the refugees' alienation inside the novel. Furthermore, this analysis is limited only on

the narrative and the conversation of the characters.

1.5. Significances of The Study

Theoretically, this study uses theory of racism that expected can give understanding to the reader about racist behavior that still happened in this world to this day especially toward the refugee kid, and the struggle against it as a lesson. Afterwards, how the fight against racism can be carried out not only by adults, but how an understanding of bad racist behavior should be instilled in the mind of children from an early age. Practically, this study is expected to give an inspiration or as the reference to the other readers, writer, or researcher for doing their writing of similar research with the particular object. In the future, it can help the researcher, the reader or the writer to learn more about racism theory that was applied in analyzing the novel.