

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In doing this study, the writer tends to utilize some theories. Since the analysis extremely focuses on the characters from the novel selected, so the theory of character and characterization which cannot be separated one another is used. Also, this study tries to reveal mostly upon the woman character and her struggle so that Feminism theory is chosen. Instead of using other branch theories of Feminism, this study employs Marxist-Feminism theory in order to accomplish it more deeply in its analysis. Those theories are explained as follows:

2.1.1 Character

In some studies, character is often selected as the object for analysis and this study is also interested in it. Characters, which take most part in a story, are then considered as the most important intrinsic element of fiction. Through the presence of characters, one story is built. A story exposes around its characters' life so that reviewing them becomes very interesting. Burhan Nurgiyantoro claimed that talking about characters of one story, in many ways is more interesting than discussing on other elements (164). Moreover, Bennet and Royle also agreed that characters are considered as the life of literature. Characters become the objects of the readers' curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike,

admiration and condemnation. Indeed, our intense relationship with literary characters makes them to be more than becoming simply objects because in which through the power of identification, through sympathy and antipathy, they can become part of how we conceive ourselves, a part of who we are (60).

Talking about character means that we refer to a person in a fictional story. Characters are the people who appear and experience life stories in fictional works. It can be simply said that characters are people who are included in the story. Character is a brief descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies some definite quality (Holman 74). Just like us in the real world, characters act, speak, think, also face some problems, and so on. Besides, they can be characterized as good, bad, kind, generous and any other types of human quality. In accordance with Holman, Baldick stated that character is a personage in a narrative or dramatic work and it is also a kind of prose sketch briefly describing some recognizable type of person (37).

Additionally, according to Abrams, characters are people who are represented in narrative or dramatic works, and then they are interpreted by the readers to have certain moral qualities as they express through what they say and what they do (qtd. in Nurgiyantoro 165). Furthermore, interpretation on characters can be also based on what he or she is thinking, his or her motives of doing something, as what Card said that:

We never fully understand other people's motives in real life. In fiction, however, we (as author) can help our readers understand our characters' motives with clarity, sometimes even certainty. This

is one of the reasons why people read fiction—to come to some understanding of why other people act the way they do (6).

From that statement, we know that an interpretation on characters is left by the author to readers to decide. Interpreting character's moral qualities can be performed through analyzing the characters' speaking, doing, and thinking. By exploring the characters, readers can get some moral lessons implemented in real life since character exactly possesses a strategic position to deliver messages, values, and all things that the author wants to give to the readers (Nurgiyantoro 167).

In fiction, characters are divided into some types. Based on its significance role in developing a story, characters are separated into major and minor characters. Major or main character refers to character which appears in almost all or totally in the whole story. He or she is character which is mostly told and always relates to other characters. On the other hand, minor character is character which appears only in some parts of the whole story and he or she is told less than major character. Minor characters may exist just when they are having correlation with the major characters (Nurgiyantoro 176-177).

Altenbernd and Lewis, in *A Handbook for the Study of Fiction*, presented another division on character. It hangs on its functions that characters are two, protagonist and antagonist character. Protagonist can be plainly said as a hero, a character which represents ideal norms and perfect values based on us. Therefore, readers often identify protagonists as part of who they are, give sympathy and antipathy, and also emotionally connect their own selves with the character.

Antagonist, in opposite with protagonist, is a character which causes conflicts (59).

Character becomes a prominent thing in this study since it focuses on the female main character named Agnes Grey. By analyzing her character, the deeper knowledge of Agnes Grey character is achieved. The knowledge of what character of Agnes Grey is like, she is a woman of what status and so on.

2.1.2 Characterization

However, every single character has their own personal characteristic that differs from one and another. To point out this thing, it needs a literary device to use. The author has some styles to reveal the characters of imaginary persons. The creation of these imaginary persons so that they exist for the reader as real within the limits of the fiction is called characterization (Holman 75). For instance, characterization is meant by ways which an author or writer presents and reveals the characters' personalities within creating the story. The writer or narrator tells the reader what the character is like. The ability to characterize people of one's imagination successfully is a primary attribute of a good novelist, dramatist, or short-story writer.

Commonly in characterizing the characters, there are two ways that an author usually used. Those are direct and indirect characterization. Using direct manner means that the author describes directly about the character. The author attributes the qualities of characters in direct description. Otherwise, in indirect manner of characterization the author does not merely tell the characters but

showing them to the readers through how the character looks, what the character does, what the character says, what the character thinks, and how the character affects other characters (Baldick 37). From these five things, the reader can understand and get a clear description of the character's personality.

Furthermore another distinction of characterization drawn by Abrams and Harpham in *A Glossary of Literature* that there is a broad distinction which is frequently made between alternative methods for characterizing the persons in a narrative; showing and telling. It does not differ so far from direct and indirect way that in showing which is also called the dramatic method, the author simply presents the characters talking and acting, and leaves it entirely up to the reader to infer the motives and dispositions that lie behind what they say and do. The author may show not only external speech and actions, but also a character's inner thoughts, feelings, and responsiveness to events; for a highly developed mode of such inner showing. In telling, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of the characters (43-44). Telling method is a method of characterization in which the author declares directly what and how the character is like; beautiful, smart, greedy, ambitious, and so forth.

So characters and characterization cannot be separated each other. Also, characters become an important point to analyze in this study. The writer tries to reveal Agnes Grey's struggle in helping to maintain her family's financial by being a governess who lives uneasy and gets oppressed by her upper-class employers through the speaking, the doing and the thought of characters involved.

2.1.3 Feminism

In analyzing a literary work, it is necessary to utilize a tool. The tool needed in analyzing a literary work is a theory. Woman often becomes an interesting object in literary analysis and this study comes as an example which is interested in such matter; the struggle done by woman major character of *Agnes Grey*. Some theories related to woman exist. However there is a literary theory which focuses on woman most. It is popularly called Feminism. Feminism can be roughly defined as a movement that seeks to enhance the quality of women's lives by defying the norms of society based on male dominance and subsequent female which implies the emancipation of women from the shackles, restrictions, norms and customs of society. It demands that women should be treated as autonomous subjects, and not as passive objects. It seeks to achieve equality between men and women in moral, social, economic and political fields. The objective of that movement is the creation of a new identity for women and making them aware of their rights (Shihada 121). Women, their right, awareness, and struggle for getting equality turn out to be the point of this theory.

In agreement with Shihada, Eagleton argued that Feminism is a dimension which informs and interrogates every facet of personal, social and political life. The message of the women's movement is not just that women should have equality of power and status with men but it is a questioning of all such power and status. It is not that the world will be better off with more female participation in it; it is that without the 'feminization' of human history, the world is unlikely to survive (130). So Feminism puts women equally as men. Their status is not

inferior under men's power. Women can take parts in public sphere freely as they want and men cannot restrict them with their power because women have right to do that.

For women's movement of the nineteenth centuries the subject of feminism was women's experience under patriarchy, the long tradition of male rule in society which silenced women's voices, distorted their lives, and treated their concerns as peripheral. To be a woman under such conditions was in some respects not to exist at all (Rivkin and Ryan 765). For this matter, Feminism can be grounded in the perception that to seek such a unitary viewpoint is to adopt the patriarchal preference for singularity, coherence and unity. Such a viewpoint would deny the class, race, cultural and ethnic distinctions that divide women. It would also confine women to one of a range of possible gender identities or ways to be women and to experience their femininity. However, too great an emphasis upon difference and diversity can shatter the grounding of feminist activism against forms of oppression that affect women as a class. Thus, the challenge is to reconcile the awareness of difference with the need for rigorous grounding of feminism in women's common experience (Eagleton and Milne 22).

Hence Feminism enhances women's awareness to release from patriarchy which always regards men as the control holder. Women's experiences are too limited since making a decision is based on men. Feminism also strengthens that women are not class of oppressed group but women are able to do things they want to do.

2.1.4 Marxist-Feminism

Studying about women in literary work seems suitable enough to use Feminism approach in its way of analysis since this theory definitely notices most on womanhood. However, Feminism has developed greater time to time in line with the problems around women which also vary so that then this theory bore some branch theories of literature. One of them is called Marxist-Feminism. It is a branch of Feminism which its basic concept is based on Marxist theory. In feminist criticism the concept of gender is the crucial critical instrument, while in Marxist criticism social class and class relations function as central instruments of analysis. Therefore, Marxist-Feminism is a sub-type of feminist theory which focuses on the social institutions of private property and capitalism to explain and criticize gender inequality and oppression (Bertens 80).

Furthermore Marxist feminism is organized around the basic conflicts between capitalism versus patriarchy and class versus gender oppression. Marxist feminism combines the study of class with the analysis of gender. Capitalism is viewed as both sexually and economically exploitative; capitalist patriarchy is seen as the source of women's oppression: their alienation from labor (through the necessary creation of a pool of available labor), the patriarchal ownership of the means of production, the construction of women as a class of passive consumers, and the exploitation of women's work (Madsen 65). Marxist feminism disapproves patriarchal system in social role which women are recognized as class that can produce nothing because the ownership of production is on men's power so women are alienated from working life, women are reserves labor force for

capitalism, women's generally lower wages provide extra surplus to a capitalist employer, and so forth. Women's oppression is as a result of this capitalist patriarchal system.

Capitalism and patriarchy are assumed as women's oppression sources. Patriarchy system limits women from the workplace. Women cannot freely participate in any kinds of job. This limitation makes them to have no another choice so that their abilities are mostly lack of respect. Rosemarie Putnam Tong, in her book *Feminist Thought* reinforced that either class or sex as the primary source of women's oppression strove to present capitalism and patriarchy as two equal partners colluding in a variety of ways to oppress women (Tong 115). Patriarchy makes women have no freedom to work. This situation creates a limitation works for women which causes them to be regarded less important and exploits women's work under capitalism.

The phenomenon of this patriarchy also took place in Victorian era. In England at that time, there was a custom stated that it was not acceptable for a woman to work or to have other kinds of activities outside the house. An ideal lady was devoted exclusively to her family sphere, and was supported by her husband or when a woman was not married yet, so her father was a man who was expected to support her financially. Moreover, the women were forbidden from a paid employment (Peterson 6). Being aware of this and one who faced it herself, Anne Bronte made a representation through her first novel *Agnes Grey*.

Through the character of Agnes Grey she portrayed how a woman who has to convince her father who firstly forbids her to work that she can produce money in order to help the finance of her family which is going worse at the time. Unfortunately because of the custom, she has no enormous choice to work and being a governess, based on some considerations, finally is left as one and only most possible job for her.

Talking about it broader, we come to the phase that it is started when Agnes has to find people who need her service and may employ her. People who can hire a governess always belong to upper class, the bourgeoisie, they who are rich and having high status. Then the new conflicts arise. Coming from lower class, a governess is disrespected and within her being of governess, Agnes Grey is often oppressed by her employers.

When we are discussing on class in social life, we ought to remember one thinker who proposes a theory which correlates with this matter a lot, Karl Marx. Marx suggests Marxist theory that also becomes the basic concept of Marxist feminism. According to Karl Marx, there are within capitalism enough internal contradictions to generate a class division dramatic enough to overwhelm the system that produced it. Specifically when many poor and propertyless workers exist. These workers live very modestly, receiving subsistence wages for their exhausting labor while their employers live in luxury. When these two groups of people, the haves and the have-nots, both become conscious of themselves as classes, class struggle ensues and ultimately topples the system that produced these classes (qtd. in Tong 99-100). There is a very strong relation between

classes and the system of capitalism. This system can be overcome when the class struggle exists.

As stated on former explanation, capitalism is also seen as the source of women's oppression in Marxist feminism. In capitalism oppression derives in many ways. Iris Marion Young divides it into five categories: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (40). Bertens added that:

Capitalism, Marxism tells us, thrives on exploiting its laborers. Simply put, capitalists grow rich and shareholders do well because the laborers that work for them and actually produce goods (including services) get less – and often a good deal less – for their efforts than their labor is actually worth (83).

Instead of using Marxist feminism concept of other theorists, the writer prefers to utilize Marxist feminism theory proposed by Michele Barret. She argues on her book *“Women's Oppression Today: problems in Marxist feminist analysis”* that the patriarchy as the particular form of household and its accompanying ideology of women's dependence are not the only possible form for an efficient reproduction of labour-power in capitalist relations of production but it is also the product of historical struggles between men and women, both within the working class and the bourgeoisie (Barret 249). So Marxist Feminists do not only aware of women's survival upon their consideration of inferiority under the men but also notice the relation between proletariat as the laborers and the bourgeoisie as the capitalist. Marxist feminist approach also involves an emphasis on the relations between capitalism and the oppression of women.

Additionally, at the same time, it must be emphasized that the conditions affecting improvements in women's position vary with changes in capitalism. It is more plausible to look for a lifting of the burden of domestic labour from women of high status than examining any changes on lower status women's life in capitalist expansion. It is perhaps less clear what changes we could expect in the case of working-class women. The double shift of domestic labour and poorly paid wage labour which is affected by variations in the strength of the capitalist economy is likely to lower women's standard of living generally and force many women into particularly exploited jobs in order to maintain some contribution to the household budget (Barret 255-256). Marxist feminist sees the struggle of women who have to produce something faces the fact that women are considered lower than men so that they are restricted from various jobs. Further, such thing makes women take jobs although it lacks of respect and brings them under capitalism because of having no other choice.

By giving the literary review above, this study intends to apply the theory in examining character of Agnes Grey especially her struggle. The writer uses this theory to analyze how class division between Agnes Grey and her employers constructs a capitalist system and how her family's thinking especially her father about her inequalities become a system of oppression for her, and how she struggles along with it in the novel written by Anne Bronte entitled *Agnes Grey*.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

This analysis is based on the previous analysis which has been done earlier. A study about the character of Agnes Grey in Anne Bronte's novel *Agnes Grey* has been written in 2011 by Qoriatul Mahfudhoh Qoffal from The State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang under the title *The Uniqueness of Agnes Grey as Described in Agnes Grey by Anne Bronte*. That previous research focuses on two significant problems. She tries to find out the kinds of woman uniqueness and also the kinds of process development owned by Agnes Grey in *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte. In her analysis, she uses theory of woman psychology, especially the theory which studies about woman unique character.

Another study comes from Irene Maria Cahyaningtias Rinukti (2001), the student of Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta who wrote down her thesis on the title *Moral Values of Respecting Others as Reflected by Agnes' Character Development in Anne Bronte's Agnes Grey*. This thesis has two objectives. First is to find out Agnes' character development, which is revealed through her characteristics and character development seen from plot development. Second is to find out how Agnes' character development reflects moral values of respecting others. In this thesis, the writer uses moral-philosophical approach since the thesis deals with how Agnes reflects moral values of respecting others. Here, Agnes, as governess, teaches some moral values of respecting others to her pupils. To analyze Agnes' character development, the writer uses theories of character and characterization, plot, and morality.

Similar to that previous research, this analysis also chooses the character of Agnes Grey in Anne Bronte's *Agnes Grey* as the main object to analyze. The difference between this research and the two previous is that this research does not concern with the woman psychological aspects of Agnes Grey and also moral-philosophical in which Agnes respects others, but it pays attention to the woman struggle depicted by the character of Agnes Grey and the writer intends to use Marxist-Feminism theory in this analysis.