

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 1.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, in order to make easy in analyzing the problems of this research definitely it needs a literary criticism. Literary criticism is the discipline of interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating works of literature (Gillespie 4). In other word, literary criticism is a natural human response to literature. In literary criticism, there is a specific method or approach to analyze in literary work, it was called literary theory (6).

Through literary theory, we can analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of a literary work. Intrinsic element is the basic element that contained in a work such as imagery, theme, symbol, figure of speech, etc. While extrinsic element is the supporting element of literary work that come from outside of the work such as the biography of author also the social, environment, religion, education of the author. There is extrinsic method which it used to analyze the setting, environment and external causes of a work (Wellek and Warren 65). Throughout extrinsic study, it can interpret literature by a proper knowledge of the conditions under which it has been produced (65). The best known of extrinsic methods in literary study are historical and biographical criticism.

This research will be focus on the extrinsic element of Maya Angelou's selected poems, especially in relationship between Maya's life (biography) and her poems. In order to analyze it, this research will use biographical criticism by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1949). The reason in using this theory because through biography literary work (poetry) can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry and biography also as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process (67).

### 1.1.1 Biographical Criticism

Late in the seventeenth century, John Dryden defined biography as the history of particular men's lives (qtd in Abrams 22). While according to Abrams biography was full account of a particular person's life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament, and milieu, as well as the subject's activities and experiences (22). In short, biography presents the subject's life story (in this case, the subject here means the author of a work), various aspects of his or her life, including intimate details of experience and activities.

The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography, and also the theory of biography as a special literary genre (22). It was the century of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81) and of the best known of all biographies, James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (22). At least in England, biography has been one of the earliest and certainly one of the most persistent forms of literary study (Wellek and Warren 68).

Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry and it also as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process (67). That means through biography of an author, we can know how the poem was created and how the condition of the poet when he created his poem.

There are some benefits in analyzing a work with knowing the author's biography. Biography has exegetical value, it may explain a great many allusions or even words in an author's work (73). It means, through biography of the author can give explanation of the allegory words in a work. It also helps us in studying the most obvious of all strictly developmental problems in the history of literature, the growth,

maturing, and possible decline of an author's art and it accumulates the materials for other questions of literary history such as the reading of the poet, his personal associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in (73). Biography of author is the important thing to applying biographical criticism in analyzing a literary work.

Biographical criticism starts with the premise that stories, poems and plays are written by human beings and that important facts about the life of an author can shed light on literary texts (Charter 1799). It means this approach begins with the simple but central insight that literature is written by actual people which there is an understanding of an author's life from his work. This critical approach suggests us to maintain that the imaginative world of the text has characteristics that originate from causes or sources in the author's background (1799). Regarding with this statement, there are creative and imaginative things in a work that was created by an author which that work considered has relevance with author's personal life.

According to Wellek and Warren, the most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study (67). It means this theory is one of the oldest theories to analyze a literary work and it stressed on the creativity of the author in creates his or her work based on the creating history which the work has relationship with the author's life. It is appropriate with Guerin et al statement in their *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* that biographical criticism is an approach which consider that literature as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work (35).

In short, biographical criticism assumes that there is a relationship between the writer's life and work (Gillespie 23). This theory focuses on the particular incidents, people and historical occurrences in an author's life (23). It means biographical criticism was focused on links between a work's content and the writer's life such as the writer's intentions, experiences, motives, or beliefs to interpret his/her literary works.

In using biographical criticism, there are three points of view should be noticed carefully. The first is biography explains and illuminates the actual product of poetry, is directly relevant. It means the biography of the author explicates the creating process of the literary work. The second is advocating the intrinsic interest of biography, shifts the center of attention to human personality. It means the author is the main focus in analyzing a literary work. And then, the third is considering biography as material for a science or future science, the psychology of artistic creation. It means biography can be used as a science to analysis the poem through the condition of the poet when create his work (Wellek and Warren 67).

In conclusion, the main aim of biographical criticism is to do some digging into the facts of an author's life and times, then to relate that information back to the author's work (Gillespie 23). Hence, through this theory we will understand and comprehend a literary work by studying deeper about the life of the author. This research will try to understand in Maya Angelou's life and then know how her life was reflected in her *Woman Work, Equality, Still I Rise* and *Touched by An Angel*. Furthermore, in using this theory, we must know the biography or the personal life of Maya Angelou because the biography of Maya Angelou will be the important thing as the main source to find the correlation of Maya and her poems also her experience life was reflected through her poems.



linguistic techniques whether from logic, sociology or psychology of literature (qtd in Chandra 86).

In short, New criticism is not concerned with context of a literary work such as historical, biographical, intellectual and so on, it is not interested in the fallacies of intention or affect, but it is concerned solely at the text itself, with its language and organization, it does not seek a text's meaning, but how it speaks itself (Selden et al 19). That means New criticism ignores any cultural, historical or biographical context, but it focuses on the component of language in text itself which it was called as formal elements, include of the literary devices, figurative language and language structures (Gillespie 178). The main strategy of new criticism was close reading, the detailed analysis of the complex interrelations and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the verbal and figurative components within a work (Abrams 181).

The statements above appropriates with new criticism according to T.S. Eliot, he stated that we should not confuse the writer's life story or psychology with the poem he or she created. Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry (qtd in Gillespie 176). Thomas Stearns Eliot or known as T.S. Eliot was an American poet and scholar, his collection of essays published in 1920 in a book for entitled *The Sacred Wood* is a landmark in the field of modern criticism (Chandra 86).

Based on the explanation above about the scope of new criticism which the formal elements of a work, the applying of new criticism in this research is deciding the theme. However, this research will analyze the character and setting first to decide the theme of Maya's poems.

### 1.1.2.1 Character

Character is the player in a narrative (Gillespie 190). It means the person represented in a dramatic or narrative work. Character was developed through description, action, thought, speeches and direct statement of the author (190). In this case, the character of the work can be the writer itself.

Many poems do contain well-delineated characters. However, because poems on average are shorter than stories or novels, the process of character development in poetry tends to be compressed ([www.writeanything.com](http://www.writeanything.com)). Sometimes, the character in a poem is not identifiable, unlike in novel, drama or short story which there should be a character.

There are four types of characters can be analyzed in a literary work (Dinnurriyah 115). The first is Physical character, it identifies the peripheral facts of the character include of age, sexual, category, size, race and color (115). It means the character in a literary work may be described as the age, sexual, category, size, race and color or it can be called the character's physical appearance.

The second is Social character, it covers all aspects that can be gleaned from the character's world or environmental such as by the economic status, occupation, creed and familial affiliation of the character (115). This character might be described based on the character's relation with its social life.

The third is Psychological character, it was showed by the inner mechanism of the character's mind as his habitual responses, attitudes, longing, purposes, likes and dislikes (116). It means this character described based on what he think about something.

And the last is Moral character, it discloses the decisions of the character, either socially acceptable or not, exposing their intentions, thus projecting what is upright or not (116). This character described based on his personality and his behavior in deciding something.

By knowing those types of the character, we can easy to analyze and find the character reflected in each poem *Woman Work*, *Equality*, *Still I Rise* and *Touched by An Angel*. The character on those poems might be described through physical, social, psychological or moral character. After find out the character, it will make easy to know the description of the life experience of the character in the poem and then we will know the setting of poem.

### **1.1.2.2 Setting**

The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place (Abrams 284). It is the background which a story takes place, include of geographic location, time or period and the milieu (Gillespie 190). In Short, setting is the time and place in which the events occurred.

The setting here is used to identify the background of place, time and events that represented in Maya's poems. After this research find the character and the setting, it will make easier to determine the theme because through the character and setting of the poem it will know the main point of the content in the poem.



### 1.1.2.3 Theme

Theme refers to main message, main thought and main insight in a literary work (Gillespie 188). The theme is usually an abstract idea that seems to us to summarize what we perceive as the author's purpose or effect in writing. It is the main idea of a literary work which allows the reader to easily understand what the purpose or intention of the author in the work. Through the theme it will make easy the writer to seek the relation between Maya's life experience and her poems.

## 1.2 Review of Related Study

Most of Maya's poems have analyzed by some students from university, such as Krisna and Solestiyo are the English Department students in Petra Christian University, they have analyzed three of Maya's poems in their *Black Power in Maya Angelou's Still I Rise, Phenomenal Woman and Weekend Glory*. Their research tried to find out what ways Black power is revealed in Maya Angelou's three poems. The analysis showed there are differences of ideas of Black power in each poem, those are the way to survive in the society, the way to express someone's thought, and the ability to accept one's identity as a Black woman.

The other research that analyzed about Maya's poem is a research from Dian Rahmawati from State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah. She has analyzed Maya's poems in her *The Image of Black Woman in Three Poems of Maya Angelou* (2011). She used Feminist criticism to analyze those poems and the result is she described the image of Black woman reflected on those poems which Black woman are independent, strong, brave, confident, outspoken, explicit, honest and mysterious.

This research has similarity with two researches above which analyzing about Maya's poems, but they also have difference. In Krisna and Sulistiyo's research, they analyzed about Black power reflected in Maya's poem and in Dian's research, she analyzed about the image of Black woman reflected in Maya's poem using Feminist criticism. While, in this research will analyze Maya Angelou's experience reflected of her poems using Biographical criticism.

There also a research analyzed a literary work through biographical criticism. It is the research by Primiaty Natalia Sabu Kopong, a student from Udayana University. She has analyzed a novel using biographical criticism in her *Biographical Approach to the Analysis of Virginia Woolf's Novel: To the Lighthouse*. She analyzed the relationship between the events happened surrounded her life with the content of the story in her novels. The result is she describes the position of woman in Virginia Woolf's life time that reflected in her novel. Priamity's research has similarity with this research which both of them use biographical criticism as main theory and the differences are it used a novel as the research object while this research will use the selected poems of Maya Angelou.