

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

There are various ways to convey ideas, particularly in written works. A literary piece transports us to the realm of dreams and away from reality. It needs to be compared to a piece of literature that requires our interpretation. In the concrete description of a feeling using language, literature is a person's expression of that feeling, including experience, idea, motivation, and conviction. In addition to short stories, novels are prose forms. Most people read novels and short stories. A novel expresses some aspects of human's love and existence. The novel is written in a long composition because it describes human activities and what happened in the surrounding area. According to Kennedy (1983: 103) novel is generally thought of as containing about forty-five thousand words or more. In comparison to short stories and novellas, a novel is a larger narrative.

According to Wellek (1949), novels have been recognized in England as literary works from the eighteenth century. resulting in works of fiction, poetry, drama, and prose. Prose is frequently used as a more precise term for all discouraging spoken or written material that is not patterned into the recurrent matrix that we call verse. Prose has a broader meaning because it includes some nonfiction writing along with everything else written as literary work.

Women are one of the themes in literature that has inspired many authors, from oppression to the intelligence of their minds or their ability to survive. Even a long time before the emergence of the feminist movement, women had become a popular theme in literary works. Unfortunately, in most old literary works, men are always presented as heroes with their strong and brave nature as the main characters of the story. In stark contrast to female characters, they are only depicted as weak creatures, objects of oppression, and as inferior/subordinates. (Tyson 2015,81). Women in the Victorian era were often depicted in roles that reflected the era's social expectations and constraints but also explored themes of independence, identity, and resistance to societal norms. The portrayal of women ranged from the traditional to the rebellious, reflecting the changing views on gender and social roles.

Agnes Grey (1847), according to Bronte, is one of the classic middle-nineteenth-century novels written in England, which responded to the social climate and was inspired by Bronte's experiences as a governess. Agnes Grey's novel was Anne's first debut novel in English. When Agnes Grey initially started working as a governess in Mr. Bloomfield's family, she did not live up to the family's expectations, and as a result, Agnes was fired from her position as a governess right away. The second time, Agnes moved in with a different family, Mr. Murray, who had a greater social rank than Mr. Bloomfield. Agnes had experienced loneliness, determination, and oppression. It was also mentioned that Agnes found it difficult to join this family because she believed she did not belong there.

Since the thesis will deal with the role of women during the Victorian Era, it is necessary to know the Victorian society during that period. The Victorian period in England corresponds to the reign of Queen Victoria, beginning in June 1837 and ending with her death in January 1901 (Swisher, 2000: 11). In that period, there were many great changes in the life of English society. Cultural, political, economic, industrial, and scientific changes have occurred during her reign.

In this undergraduate thesis, the writer will analyze a novel as its subject. The novel that is going to be discussed is one of the literary works of Anna Bronte, entitled *Agnes Grey*. The writer is interested in analyzing the role of Victorian women as reflected in that novel. The writer is sure that the characters of the story are the picture of Victorian women's society because of the way Anna presents the character of the writer in the novel, working as a governess. The governess is also Anna's real-life job. Anna presents the readers with a description of the surrounding experience as the governess in Victorian Family too. The author will also examine other female characters because they are a reflection of Victorian society.

1.2 Identification of The Problem

Agnes Grey's Novel portrays the life of British society in the Victorian era. This era was marked by the reign of Queen Victoria of England (1837-1901). The novel also portrays the life of several women in British Society. Therefore, the writer will analyze the Role of Women in Victorian Society as seen in the novel

entitled *Agnes Grey* written by Anna Bronte. In analyzing the novel, the writer focuses on four women characters, they are Agnes Grey, Mrs. Muray, Mrs. Bloomfield, and Rosalie Murray.

1.3 Review of Related Studies

The writer presents some previous studies that related to this research, which can be seen as follows:

The first previous study was conducted by Bahreldin (2019) from Jouf University entitled "*The Image of Victorian Women as Depicted in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte*". In his article, Bahreldin describes the society of the Victorian era throughout the novel. The main character in the novel, Jane Eyre, battles for her freedom while in all of field life the Victorian culture against women. He stated that the women in Victorian era were thought to have wasted higher education because they were considered mentally inferior or weak to men, and working was thought to make them sick. The similarity between his study and the writer's study is that both studies analyzed the life of Victorian women during the Victorian era. The difference is that he focuses on analyzing Charlotte Bronte's novel while the writer focuses on Anna Bronte's novel.

The second research was previously conducted by Cicilya Dwi Saputra (2017) from Sanata Dharma University with the title *Gender Oppression in Agnes Grey by Anne Bronte*. This research found the depiction of the character Agnes Grey and the oppression experienced by the main character. The character in the novel is depicted

as a middle-class woman who works as a governess to help with her family's financial needs. She experienced oppression, such as not getting proper vacation time and being paid a low salary. The similarity between her research and the author's research is that both studies examine the object of the novel title and the same author, but she analyzes the oppression of women in the Victorian era while the author analyzes the role of Victorian women.

The third previous study was conducted by Nandy Intan Kurnia (2011) from Yogyakarta State University entitled *A Portrayal of Victorian Men and Women as Seen in O'neill's "The Grandmatch"*. Nandy emphasized that in the past time, Literature had been dominated by men. but in the Victorian Age, women writers began to emerge with their concern. Some of them are represented as the New Woman. She stated New Women along with their smart thinking and acting, were able to take hold of the men's minds. The men cannot avoid the attraction of those "New Women", even if they are forced to be obedient. The similarity between this study and the writer's study is both studies analyze Victorian Society. The difference is that her object focuses on men and women while the writer focuses on women only.

The next previous study was conducted by Nisrinal Ummul F (2018)) from Gajah Mada University entitled *Women's Roles as Housewives and Working Women in Post-World War II Canada as Seen in Alice Munro's The Love of a Good Woman*. Nisrina emphasized Patriarchy influences the role of women by establishing women's submissive position under the authority of men, unequal responsibilities for

household matters between male and female family members, and occupational segregation based on gender in the public work environment. She stated women are faced with conflict in choosing the role between housewife or working woman. The similarity between this study and the writer's study is both studies analyze the role of women with the same theory. The difference is that her object focuses on post post-World War II era while the writer focuses on the Victorian era.

Jeff Reinhard (2009) from Sanata Dharma University conducted the research entitled *Characterization of Mina Murray and Lucy Westenra as the Representation of Victorian Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula*. In his thesis, he investigated the characterization of several characters in his novel's object research. He found the characteristics of these characters are very important to reveal the idea of women in the Victorian Age. He stated women also have to be more sensitive to people around them because Victorian women had greater feelings about humanity compared to men. He concluded that the characters in the novel truly represent some of the women in the Victorian Age. The similarity between his study and the writer's study is that both studies analyze the women during Victorian age. The difference is that he focuses only on characterization while the writer focuses on the Image of women during the Victorian age.

N Widi Nurliyah (2009) from UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung conducted the research entitled *The Representation of Victorian Era in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through The Looking-Glass*. In her thesis, he investigated the characterization of several characters in her novel's object research.

He found that there are 7 sections of Victorian society represented in both novels. Starting from the social Structure of Victorian Society, Victorian Family, Victorian Women, Religion, Morality, and Economic Issues, to Victorian Values. She stated that *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* can be seen as portraits of reality that were adapted into fictional novels that depict the social life of the Victorian Era. She concluded that the novels *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* describe the social situation at the time the novels were produced. The similarity between her study and the writer's study is that both studies analyze the novel with the background of the Victorian age. The difference is that she focuses only on the representation of the Victorian era while the writer focuses on the role of women during the Victorian era.

The last previous study was conducted by Mustika Mufaristi (2017) from UIN Sunan Ampel University entitled *A Study of First Wave Feminism: Revelation of Helen Huntington Against her Abusive Husband from the Novel "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. by Anne Bronte"*. In her thesis, she examined the troubled married life of Victorian families. Then the wife rebelled and reflected a form of resistance against Patriarchy. He stated problems such as men considering women as inferior so meant that the husband became evil in the family. The similarity between her study and the writer's study is that both studies used novel objects with the same female author in the Victorian era, the author was Anna Bronte. The difference is her research focuses on a wife's struggle to be free from oppression while the writer focuses on the role of women during the Victorian age.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, this research will focus on:

1. What are the images of Victorian women as reflected in the novel *Agnes Grey* written by Anne Brontë?
2. How is the position of women in Victorian families reflected in the novel *Agnes Grey* written by Anne Brontë?

1.5 Scope of The Research

In analyzing Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* novel, this research will focus on how *Agnes Grey's* novel portrayed women in the Victorian era. Therefore, this research will be divided into two main topics. First, about the image of Victorian women. Secondly, about the position of women in Victorian families.

1.6 Objectives of The Research

The objective of this research is to reveal how the image of Victorian women is reflected in Anna Brontë's novel *Agnes Grey*, focusing on both the societal portrayal of women and their specific position within Victorian families. The study aims to explore how Brontë illustrates the broader cultural expectations placed upon women during the Victorian era, as well as how these expectations shape their roles and status within the domestic sphere, particularly in relation to family dynamics as depicted in the novel