

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter divides into five parts of the introduction, that are background of study, statements of research problems, objectives of the study, significances of the study and scope and limitation.

### 1.1 Background of Study

A governess becomes one of the deserving people in education. She is needed by the upper middle class family to give the knowledge to their children, especially family in around the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Middle class families were arisen at that time. In the mid of nineteenth century school was not like in the twenty first century, especially for woman. In that century woman could not enter the formal school like the men and even the university was not opened for women. So, at that time the governess was needed.

According to Oxford Dictionary, Governess /ˈɡʌvənəs/ is a woman employed to teach young children in their home, and usually living as a member of the household (1995:515). In the twenty first century a governess similar to a homeschooling teacher who teaches privately at home and especially a woman. A governess lives in her pupils' home and nurses the pupils all the time, but she does not do the housework. Anne Bronte tries to describe about the life and the condition of a governess in her first novel entitled *Agnes Grey*. This novel tells about the life of a governess in the mid nineteenth century which is adapted from the real life of Anne Bronte.

Anne Bronte wrote *Agnes Grey* in 1846 and it published in 1847 together with her sisters' novel, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Anne Bronte was the youngest sister of the famous women writers, Charlotte and Emily Bronte. Although her name was not too famous as her two sisters, but her works were as good as them. Anne Bronte was born at Thornton, near Bradford in Yorkshire on 19 January 1820, she was the sixth children of a clergyman named Patrick Bronte and Maria Branwell. Anne did not attend school until she was fifteen, she taught at home by her father, aunt, and her sister Charlotte. Since she was a child, Anne had written many of literary works with her sister Emily. In April 1839, Anne became a governess of Inghams family in Blake Hall, Mirfield. In the next year on May 1840 she moved to the Robinson family of Thorp Green, Little Ouseburn. By her experiences as a governess, she wanted to share how difficult became a governess by writing a novel. Unfortunately, Anne had a short life; she died on 28 May 1849 at twenty nine years old because of tuberculosis.

*Agnes Grey* has published by many publishers, and the new one is published by the Wordsworth Classics in 1998. It had published many kinds of classic novels and canon from women writers, such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and many others. Although *Agnes Grey* is not categorized as canon and the name of Anne Bronte will never famous as her sisters, but her work is estimable. Anne will always be the other one amongst the Bronte sisters who narrates her true experiences through the novel, with the

purpose to make the readers know about the condition of being a governess in the mid nineteenth century.

The interesting part in *Agnes Grey* is the story which is based on the true experience of Anne Bronte as a governess. She delineates the governess as real as in the true life. Her creativity by creating her novel should be appreciated, because every writer has their own uniqueness and characteristic to create a literary work. She wants to explain the struggle of a woman who became a governess at that time. When discussing about the struggle of woman, feminism theory is appropriate to the discussion. Feminism not only discusses about the women's struggle to the gender equality, but also the creativity of women in this case is writing. Writing here means as write a literary work which the purpose also to sound the gender equality. Feminist Criticism is the theory which concern in the woman as writer and woman in literature. Sandra Eagleton quotes the note of the introduction of Adrienne Rich in the *Working It Out* about feminist criticism, "a study of creative achieving women, women's commonality is not based solely on the fact of having been oppressed as a group" (Eagleton, 1988:2).

Another feminist Elaine Showalter created the term "*Gynocritics*," it means a study of '*gynotexts*' (literary works written by women). According to her the subjects of gynocritics are 'the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by woman; ...' (Barry, 1995:123). The subjects above are the parts of creativity which needed to make a literary work. It also includes the creativity of women to delineate the characters in a novel. "Feminist critics showed how often literary representations of woman repeated familiar cultural stereotypes" (Bertens,

2001:97). The stereotypes of women are mostly negative, such as women are weak, helpless, dependent, etc. So, the feminist critics try to reveal how the characters expressed in a novel written by a woman, it used to break the negative stereotypes of women. Elaine also divides three phases of the history of women's writing (female phases) in her essays "Towards A Feminist Poetics", which are *feminine phase*, *feminist phase* and *female phase* that will discuss deeper in the next chapter.

In the previous study, there is a study using gynocriticism theory to analyze the female phases which presents in the novel. The thesis is from Ussilah, University of Trunojoyo Madura, entitled "Comparing the Female Phases within Male Disguised in William Shakespeare's Plays *as You like It* and *Twelfth Night*" (2014). This thesis uses the theory of gynocriticism only to analyze the female phases which presents in the novel, but the writer does not analyze the literary work based on the creativity of the author like the delineation of characters and themes. Because of that, this study will analyze a literary work from Anne Bronte entitled *Agnes Grey* based on the creativity of the author as one of the subjects of gynocriticism. Meanwhile, the discussions of this study include the creativity of Anne Bronte delineating the women characters, describing the governess experiences through the theme and determining the phases which present in the novel *Agnes Grey*.

## **1.2 Statements of Research Problems**

Based on the background of study which explained above, there are three questions formulated as the statements of research problems:

1. How does the delineation of the women characters break the negative stereotypes of women in the novel *Agnes Grey*?
2. How the governess experiences described through the theme in the novel *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte?
3. What are the phases which are presented in Anne Bronte's novel *Agnes Grey*?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explain how the women characters break the negative stereotypes in the novel *Agnes Grey*.
2. To explain the governess' experiences described through the theme in the novel *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte.
3. To describe the phases of history of women's writing which are presented in the novel *Agnes Grey*.

### **1.4 Significances of the Study**

Hopefully this study gives the theoretical and practical significances. For the theoretical significance, this study will give the reader knowledge and more information about the life of a governess in the mid-nineteenth century which convey by the creativity of the woman author through the novel *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte. This study also can improve the knowledge of analysis using gynocriticism theory and it can become the reference and as the measuring road for the reader who wants to take the similar discussion, either the novel or the theory.

For practical significant, hopefully this study will make the readers aware with the existence of the literary works written by women. So, the readers will more appreciate the creativity of women in writing literary works.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

This study will discuss about the creativity of a woman author and the phases of the history of women's writing presented in the novel *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte. As the scope of the study, this study will use feminist criticism: gynocriticism theory. The theory used to analyze the creativity of woman in writing literary work and determine the history of women's writing (female phases) in the novel.

The limitation of the data is the delineation of women characters and themes which convey by Anne Bronte through her novel *Agnes Grey* and the history of women's writing (female phases) which presents in the novel. The data taken from the utterances in the novel, the introduction and the biography which written in the beginning of the novel by Kathryn White as the escort to the story of the novel.