

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Next to Shakespeare's Stratford-on Avon, the most visited literary shrine in England is the old parsonage at Haworth, on the edge of Yorkshire Moors, once the home of three remarkable women novelists- Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë. This is not only the result of the books that the Brontës wrote, but also the strange circumstances of their lives which are brought up as the theme of their writings. Their popularity arise from the easily grasped pathos of their lives, the wide appeal of their novels as simple love stories, and the allurments of both equating and contrasting events in their lives with events in their books, (Phelps, 1979 : 44).

This thesis deals with one of the Brontë sisters, Anne Brontë. Though the least gifted among the three, Anne is absorbing on at least three, though not equal, counts : as the first novel writer of the family, using material later used by Emily and Charlotte; as a norm which to judge the powers of her sisters in using such material; and as a novelist in her own right with a mode and flavour of her own worthy attention, original, and good, (Craick, 1968 : 202).

Anne Brontë's Agnes Grey of which Anne wrote as a personal emotional release has its purpose as a fantasy reliving of an

unsatisfying life that Anne experiences when she was a governess. It is an expression of her feelings and thoughts towards the governess question regarding the unequal reward and unequal distributions of rights and duties of a governess.

Agnes Grey, a young and inexperienced girl, enters the world as a governess. Unfortunately, she gradually loses her bright illusions of acceptance, freedom and friendship by the time she gets her charges on her employers. As a deeply moving account, this novel seriously discusses the contempt and inhumanity shown towards the poor though educated woman of the Victorian age, whose only resource was to become a governess.

Part of the strength of Agnes Grey lies in its close personal involvement of the author. It is true that some of the attitudes displayed by the protagonist of this book was shown by the author. Anne herself was a governess, and like most governesses she was not very happy with her employers. To take the matter specifically is showing Anne's dislike of the subservient role of governess, despise the intellectual inferiority of their employers. But, the novel is not mere an autobiographical works since Agnes' experiences with her employers may be based on fact, although possibly Anne was less successful than Agnes in coping with her recalcitrant charges. However, it does not close the possibility to equate Agnes and the author. Similarly the attitude of Agnes towards her employers and

towards the governess question may be a reflection of Anne's own attitude, (Winnifrith, 1970 : 68).

Agnes Grey is in its essence an emotional and spiritual pilgrimage which seeks to discover the right balance between demands of society and the individual dealing with the position of a governess. Each stage of the story is attended by revelations of discovery and adjustment either of herself or her employers. In a peaceful life at the parsonage, she assumes that the role of a governess is adequately important since it accounts on the formal and moral education she will provide her pupils. But she gradually destroys her sanguine expectations by the time she gets her charges on Bloomfields and Murrays. What is expected by Agnes is a very contrast to the harsh realities she soon finds on her posts. Instead of being respected as a well-educated woman, Agnes receives contempt and inhumanity as her employers regard on her spiritual provisions but on the material one. In other words, Agnes is treated improperly because of her poverty.

The experiences of Agnes Grey in her position as a governess become a good example to achieve Anne's intention. The contempt and inhumanity she received from her employers may represents Anne's intention of exposing the injustice treatments which emerge from the social class distinction.

Based on the consideration that Anne Brontë has produced a literary work as her means to examine the role of a governess by using

Agnes's experiences, the writer of this thesis is eager to seek for the literary elements that have been used to reveal her purpose. Furthermore, the writer is interested also to find out what the author tries to convey regarding the subservient role of a governess as the impact of social class distinction.

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the writer arises her questions as follows :

1. How does the author portray the role of a governess through character and setting ?
2. What does the author try to express regarding her revelation of the role of a governess ?

C. Objective of the study.

This study is designed to reveal and analyze the way Anne Bronte portrays the role of a governess that becomes the focus of her novel through character and setting.

Then, the writer will step further to seek for the author's expression of thoughts and feelings regarding the role of a governess.

D. Significance of the Study

By analysing Agnes Grey through its intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, the writer expects that the readers can have a deep impression towards the suffering of people caught in class structured like what happens to Agnes Grey. Being poor though educated, she even has a single respect from her employers for they only counts for her poverty.

Further, the writer hopes that the reader can realize that the social stratification which includes class stratification will only bring disadvantages and miseries in society as seen in most novels having the same theme as Anne Brontë's Agnes Grey.

E. Scope and Limitation

To keep the study in the expected field, the writer limit her analysis on the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects since the objective of her study can be fulfilled by analysing both the aspects within and outside the work.

The character and setting are considered as the most appropriate elements to be analyzed since it will represent how the character develops her trait under the circumstances of certain social context which is caught in the setting.

Stepping further to the extrinsic study is to look at the author's personal involvement on her work. Anne Brontë wishes to share her

thoughts and feelings regarding the role of a governess, with her intention to present a case of the contempt and inhumanity as the result of the determination of social class, Anne Brontë represents the subservient role of a governess. Thus the expressive theory and sociological approach are applied in this analysis.

E. Theoretical Background

In composing her analysis, the writer starts from the intrinsic elements that is the character of Agnes Grey and the setting. It is aimed to elaborate the author's purpose to reveal her intention of the role of a governess using Agnes's experiences.

Then, the writer steps further by making an extrinsic study to fulfill her objective of the study. Since the writer aims to reveal the role of a governess by involving Anne's personal view related to the social reality, the use of the expressive theory and the sociological approach is applied in her analysis.

F. Method of the Study

To make a proper analysis of the work, the writer needs to collect and find materials and data. Therefore, the writer needs to use a library to help her in the process of finding informations from various books, articles, encyclopaedias, and other related materials. The writer

also makes the same research in her attempt to reveal the theory and approach applied in her analysis.

The descriptive analysis is used to depict the problem through dialogues, events, and actions. This application is based on the work itself and other related studies about this work.

G. Definition of Key Terms

subservient

being humiliated

governess

a well-educated woman employed by a family to teach young children in their home

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK