

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Ross C. Murfin states that all aspects of social life's portrait, with its various problems, are considered as literature (qtd. in Mahardhika 1). In literature, many significant human life values can be observed. A literary work can also function as a universal language for any societies for its peculiar characteristics: it can transcend both time and culture to speak directly to a reader in another country, or a different period of history (Collie and Slater 3). It is because "literature is the object where a person's creative work--either written or visual, fact or fiction--contains the values of *social*, moral, spiritual, language, culture and sense of works" (Murfin qtd. in Mahardhika 1).

Social term as mentioned above is the term used to describe the interaction among people in a society or a community. Z. Doda states that the society which is derived from Latin word "socius" directly means "association, togetherness, gregariousness, or simply group of life" (62). As social beings, humans are always oriented to relate to one another, in which the meaning of relationship itself is based on the concept of the relationship of a group of people that gathered in an equation or various kinds of different types of race or ethnicity (Doda 690). Unfortunately, instead of only togetherness, this association or interaction between people can also lead to a conflict.

“Conflict as an element of society has existed from the moment there were two or more humans to interact with each other” (Guclu 152). There are many discussions about the conflict definitions among scholars of conflict theory, for example, as: “breaches in normally expected behavior”; “a breakdown in standard mechanisms of decision-making”; “a threat to cooperation”; “opposition processes in any of several forms-competition, status, rivalry, bargaining, sabotage, verbal abuse, etc.”; or “antagonistic struggles” (qtd. in Schmidt and Kochan 359).

One of leading scholars of conflict theory is Ralf Dahrendorf; indeed, he is one of pioneers in the sociological tradition called as the “conflict” perspective. In the perspective, conflict and class are two key terms. The link between conflict and class has long been one of the most focused on themes in social research (Dahrendorf 170). Conflict is defined by Ralf Dahrendorf as “the inequality of power and authority which inevitably accompanies social organizations” (qtd. in Guclu 152). In addition, M. A. Straus states that Dahrendorf considers ‘conflict’ as a ‘conflict of interest’ or of ‘one's interests’ (qtd. in Guclu 152).

The next term is class. Sociologists have established some definitions of class; based on Seymour M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, class is a “strata of society composed of individuals who accept each other as status equals”, and according to Edward Shils, class is “aggregate[s] of persons, within a society, possessing approximately the same status” (qtd. in Chan and Goldthorpe 512). According to Jacek Tittenbrun, classes are “social groups rooted in the economy, and... are born in a certain historical period and are not supposed to persist eternally” (117-118). For Ralf Dahrendorf, class is a real phenomenon with

effective forces in social conflict. He argues that class(es) is “conflict groups arising out of the authority structure of imperatively coordinated associations” (Dahrendorf 207).

Ralf Dahrendorf states that “classes are social phenomena rather than economic and authority was the source of class stratification” (qtd. in Guclu 164). Ralf Dahrendorf points out that “class inequality and conflict always exist since authority is a universal phenomenon” (qtd. in Guclu 163). The groups with power pursue their interests, and those without power pursue theirs. There is always an inevitable conflict between these two classes and this conflict is the great creative force of human history. The dividing line is between power groups: “between a group called the superordinate class and a group called the subordinate class” (Guclu 160).

Dahrendorf adds that:

the differential distribution of authority in society is the determining factor in social conflicts. A further assumption is the tendency of dominating groups to maintain and defend their dominant status. The majorities, with authority (power), and minorities, without power, each become an interest group with programs, actions and ideologies. The interest of the dominant group is preservation of the status quo, while the interest of the minority group is to change the distribution of power (qtd. in Eitzen 81).

Thus, majority-minority relations must be viewed as a conflicting, changing relationship between two parties--one with the power and the other desiring a fair

share of that power and the rewards that come as a result of power holding (Eitzen 84).

One of great English novels which can describe class conflict in society is *Wuthering Heights* (1847). This one and only novel of Emily Bronte (1818-1848) describes well the chaos of a society when people from different class stratification are having conflicts each other. By learning the content of the novel, it is known that the story started in the year of 1770; it was the initial years of Industrial Revolution Age. The setting of this age was 1750-1850.” Yao and Lin state that,

before the (first) industrial revolution, almost all products were handcrafted. However, since the industrial revolutions, very few products are made by hand, with focus on mass production technologies applied to make products more efficiently. The new industrial revolution, in a sense, represents a social revolution shifting from the previous ones with emphasis on technical aspects to collaborative manufacturing with emphasis on the use of social computing and wisdom in manufacturing.

It means, Industrial Revolution in short is all radical changes because of the implementation of new technology invention in industrial and transportation fields. Industrial Revolution contained positive and negative aspects. In the initial years of the revolution, the negative aspects took the greater part. One of them was the wider gap between the rich and the poor; the masters and the laborers.

Rene Welleck and Warren Austin state that novel is a representation of real human life and behavior of time when the novel was written (283). Emily Bronte lived in Victorian Period; it was in the era of Industrial Revolution. The Victorian Period was a time of great economic, social, and political changes. The British Empire reached its height and extended throughout one quarter of the world. Industrial Revolution was a time of great prosperity for some, but abject poverty for factory and farm workers. Many Victorian writers dealt with the contrast between the prosperity of the superordinate class and the wretched condition of the subordinate class. Indeed, those class distinctions appear as an important subtext of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*.

As a Victorian writer, affected by the life in Industrial Revolution age, Emily Bronte describes well the class stratification gap and conflicts among the characters in the novel. This fact matches with a well-known sociologist' opinion, that is George Lucas, who states that "the society is the reality behind the appearances of literature" (qtd. in Sills 418). The tight correlation between class stratification and conflicts happened in this Industrial-Revolution-Age-novel is analyzed using Ralf Dahrendorf's class conflict theory and formulated in this study entitled: **Conflict between Classes as Depicted in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* Novel Based on Ralf Dahrendorf's Conflict Theory.**

B. Problem Formulations

Based on the background above, this study has two problem formulations as follows:

1. How are the subordinate and the superordinate class reflected in the novel?

2. How are conflicts between the superordinate and the subordinate class depicted in the novel?

C. Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on analysis of class stratification, those are the superordinate and the subordinate class, and conflicts between those two classes happened in *Wuthering Heights* novel. The analysis uses Ralf Dahrendorf's class conflict theory.

D. Objectives of the Study

There are two objectives of the study as follows:

1. To describe the subordinate and the superordinate class reflected in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* novel.
2. To explain conflicts between the superordinate and the subordinate class depicted in *Wuthering Heights* novel.

E. Significance of the Study

This study highlights on the perspectives and interpretations of the story related to class stratification. Thus, this study hopefully can be a useful paper and source to the readers in general, to the teaching of literature, and to the students of literature.

To the readers in general, this research could function as information of the novel *Wuthering Heights* and class stratification; it also could be used to

understand how literary work may integrate with Ralf Dahrendorf's class conflict theory.

To the teaching of literature, this study explores a novel as one of the materials taught in the college. Thus, the students will have a further way on how to analyze a novel and related it to some theories.

To the students of literature, this study could be a useful reference to further study using class stratification. It is also expected that this study could functions as an alternative document to learn on how each class in certain class stratification struggle to fulfil its own interests.

F. Organization of the Study

This final project consists of five parts. Chapter one is introduction. It contains background of choosing the study, problem formulations, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature which presents the synopsis of *Wuthering Heights* novel as the subject of the study and Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory. The third chapter is research methodology. It deals with object of the study, types of research, data collecting method, types of the data, and analyzing data. The fourth chapter is findings and discussions. It describes the superordinate and the subordinate class reflected in *Wuthering Heights* novel and the conflicts between classes. The fifth chapter provides conclusions and suggestions of the study.