CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Theory of Literature

Literature is one of literary works in which generally refer to the work that tells something in fiction and imaginary. In the book *Theory of Literature* by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1985), Wellek quoted (Wellek, 1985: 4) Literature as one of the imaginary works, literature performs various problem of human and humanity, and the life. They propose their literary work based on the experience and observation on the life of society; in other words, literature portrays the life. It can be accepted in which it is commonly known that authors who write the literary work are also part of society and literature as a social institution, a social creation that represents life. They also mention two approaches in analyzing literary works; they are intrinsic approach and extrinsic approach. The intrinsic approach is also called the textual analysis, because this approach analyzes the literary work based on the text and the structural points of the literary work like characters, plot, setting, theme, style, and point of view. On the other hand, the extrinsic approach analyzes the literary work and its relation with external factors like biography of the writer, the environment, society, history, psychology, and so on (Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, 1967:73, 81,110).

Peck and Coyle devide literature into three genres or types; they are poetry, drama, and novel. Peck and Coyle (1984: 102) mentions, novels do not, however, present a documentary picture of life. Alongside the fact that novels look at people in society, the other major characteristics of the genre is that novels tell a story. In fact, novels tend to tell the same few stories time and time again. Novelists frequently
focus on the tensions between individuals and the society in which they live, presenting characters who are at odds with that society.

Novels can be fiction (unreal) or nonfiction (real-story) about people and the surroundings. Novels usually tell about experiences and feelings of people which help readers to read about new things that may happen to us in real life as well as different cultures. Novelists help us to picture the worst condition of life and the possibility to overcome them.

In parts of the book, Peck and Coyle describes that novelists usually get their ideas for works are based on the society on their surroundings. As the authors, Melton A. McLaurin and Nawal el Saadawi show their awareness towards the society through their work. In this case, el Saadawi shows her concern towards women in her society who receive various different exploitations which oppress them in particular ways. Similarly goes with Melton A. McLaurin, in one of his works he wrote a novel of true story which tells about slavery during the early era. He gained his concern towards the issue which motivates him to tell the story of years before to the world showing his concern. Therefore, society is a big impact on authors to get the idea of what they are going to compose as it is the closest phenomena happen within their surroundings.

2.2. Brief Description of Comparative Literature

Razali Kasim (1996: 26) mentions that comparative literature is an analysis that includes a comparison of literary works form different national literature, the relationship between literary works and science, religion (beliefs), and arts as well as about theories, history, and critics.
The purpose of Comparative Literature is to identify the literary works based on the literary elements either in intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. It does not only concentrate on the literary elements, but as well as other aspects like history, religion, knowledge, society, etc. As David Damrosch (2009: 46) mentions that, reading world literature gives us the opportunity to expand our literary and cultural horizons far beyond the boundaries of our own culture.

In this study, the writer looks at intrinsic elements of the novel to look at how the novels are similar and different to each other. This involves looking at the characters, plot, setting, theme, style, and point of view. Moreover, the study also involves looking at other aspects like history, society as well as religion to support the idea how those aspects affect the whole idea of the novels.

Comparative Literature can be seen through several fields, they are: Themes and Motifs, Genre and Form, Movement and Generation, and Interdisciplinary Aspects. In this analysis, the writer compares two literary works using thematic analysis focusing on theme and motif as the object of the study. Theme basically includes the meaning of motif. In further explanation, theme is the spiritual phenomenon of human which has repeated and will always repeat its self (Goethe in Weisstein, 1973: 138) whilst motive has the similarity with the other meaning of motive that is the main of the story which is universal, traditional, and appears repeatedly in the two literary works.

Razali Kasim (1996: 16, 17) mentions that American movement shows a wider scope study on comparative literature. Comparative study is not only about ‘comparing’ literary works or the authors, but also talks about various other fields. Broadly, comparative literature includes:

1. A study of comparing literary works as well as the authors.
2. A study about the relationship between literary works and other sciences (such as, philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc.), with religion and beliefs as well as arts (such as paintings, music, architecture, and sculpture).

3. A study of theory, history, and literary criticism (more precisely ‘literary criticism theory’) which covers more than one national literature.

The scope study of American movement classified above shows the extensive study field because it is not only about literary texts. Needless to say, various studies are not included in one national literary, ‘taken over’ by comparative literature. For instance, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren’s book Theory of Literature, does not belong to the US national literature, even both authors are American; similarly, Northrop Frye’s Anatomy of Criticism, Tzvetan Todorov’s The Fantastic, or Robert Schole’s Structuralism are not part of any one national literature.

Based on the view above, a study that compares Indonesia’s and Malaysia’s literary works, for example, are not included in the comparative literature scope study. Indonesia and Malaysia, likewise England with America and Australia, have similar cultural background; in this case, if there are similarities found in their literary works, this is a reasonable case. In this thesis, the writer uses two different novels from different nations which are from Egypt and America which has different cultural background as Woman at Point Zero is from the middle-east whilst Celia, A Slave is from America. However, they are similar to each other in case of a motif which is women oppression.

Then Kasim (1996: 18, 19) mentions in the book that an author can probably create a literary work with location outside the cultural scope of where the author
lives. Even the characters in that literary work are probably the people who have a
different cultural background from the author. Classic examples can be seen in
several William Shakespeare’s works. *Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, The
Merchant of Venice, Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Venice* are all
have the same setting of place and all characters outside England, which is Italy.
However, all works are still considered as English national literature.

Regarding the theory above, the writer uses an English translated version of
the novel *Woman At Point Zero*. Though the novel is written in English it still
belongs to Egyptian literary works as it was originally written in Arabic (Egyptian
language) and by an Egyptian writer who tells stories about women in her society.

2.3. Brief Description of Oppression

Oppression is a type of injustice. Oppression is the inequitable use of
authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal. It can
also be defined as an act or instance of oppressing, the state of being oppressed, and
the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse
conditions or people, and anxiety.

Charlton (1998: 8) states, oppression occurs when individuals are
systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social degradation
because they belong to a social group…results from structures of domination and
subordination and, correspondingly, ideologies of superiority and inferiority. The
novels of both countries show how the women characters face the power of those
with domination against the women as subordinate. In this study, the struggles of
Firdaus and Celia against superiority of individuals, institutions and social are visibly
portrayed.
2.3.1. Women Oppression

The oppression of women stems largely from men’s desire for power and control. The same need which, throughout history, has driven men to try to conquer and subjugate other groups or nations, and to oppress other classes or groups in their own society, drives them to dominate and oppress women. Since men feel the need to gain as much power and control as they can, they steal away power and control from women. They deny women the right to make decisions so that they can make them for them, leave women unable to direct their own lives so that they can direct their lives for them.

In Europe and America (and some other countries) the status of women has risen significantly over the last few decades, but in many parts of the world male domination and oppression continues. In many Middle Eastern countries, for example, women effectively live as prisoners, unable to leave the house except under the guardianship of a male guardian. (There are many Saudi Arabian women who have only left their houses a handful of times in their whole lives.) And when — or if — they do go outside, they are obliged to cover themselves from head to toe in black, leaving them in danger of vitamin deficiency and dehydration. They have no role at all in determining their own lives; they are seen as nothing more than a commodity, property of the males of the family, and as owners, the men have the right to make decisions for them.

2.3.2. Levels and Types of Oppression

The system of oppression maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships and operates, intentionally and unintentionally, on individual, institutional and collective levels. Through these, oppression can be
measured by respective levels and types. Moreover, oppression can also be intentionally as well as unintentionally.

a. *Individual Oppression:* Individual oppression attitudes and actions that reflect prejudice against a social group (intentional and unintentional). Specifically, this level of oppression is shown within attitudes, beliefs, socialization, interpersonal interactions, and individual behaviors.

b. *Institutional Oppression:* Institutional Oppression occurs when Policies, laws, rules, norms and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that disadvantage some social groups and advantage other social groups. These institutions include religion, government, education, law, the media, and the health care system (intentional and unintentional).

c. *Collective Oppression:* Collective oppression is sustained through conditioning us to remain separated for reasons we lack the knowledge to recognize as trivial.

In this study, *Celia, A Slave* and *Woman At Point Zero* are novels which show oppression on women. Respective novels show how women struggle against their society seeking for their own virtue. Therefore, in studying their struggles involves looking at the levels and types of oppression that they experienced.