CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

In early 1860s, especially in England, there were many fictional novels were vigorously published and controversially debated. This was the decade when some serious fictions storied about the historical issues and concerned on the social classes. One of the famous fiction novels that were controversially debated was Lady Audley's Secret by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The novel was written in a decade when the nobility of feminine issues were tightly held. Some improper or irregular acts of female in that era would be considered as the form of insanity. In that Victorian era, there were much inequality in women's roles, status, values, and culture. Those conditions later on bring up some issues about women's struggle through the inequality that is built and formed by the patriarchal domination, which still have its effects in women culture and social life today.

On the other side, the novel itself told about story of a woman that showed much assertive behavior and attitude, which brought many critics and debates throughout it. Some criticism considered it as a form of crime, whether others considered it as a form of female constraint from the limitation. There were much patriarchal constraints which were suffered by the women in the Victorian era, such as; limited right to determine their marriage and culture, limited freedom to choose their own living, social roles and values. And those constraints become the

background of women's struggle and movements from time to time. "There are three important stages of women's writing. First, the imitation of the mainstream literary tradition; second, the protest against the standards of this dominant tradition concerning social values and rights; and third, self-discovery which aims at a search for identity." (*Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own*).

1.2. Problem Formulation

In the Victorian Era, the dominant traditions that concerned on the feminine values and rights were also determined by the society. That condition indirectly created some standards and limitations in women society, and later on brought up some aims from the women society to gain their own new identity and freedom. Those interesting points bring up the curiosity for the writer to find out kind of struggles which the main character, Lady Audley made in order to survive from her life difficulties and constraints in the male-dominated society and culture. And the other important issue to be revealed in this thesis analysis is how Lady Audley's complex behaviors and struggles had appealed as an example women movements and empowerments in revealing and ensuring female survival, freedom, prosperity, and power among the patriarchal limitation from time to time.

1.3. Scope and Limitation

This study will scope on Literature analysis, especially the work of fiction novel titled Lady Audley's Secret, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Mary Elizabeth Braddon who brought up by her mother and left by her father since the age of 5 grown to write in order to support herself and her mother life. She achieved her first popularity from her controversial novel, Lady Audley's Secret. And the analysis of this thesis will be limited on the main character of the story, Lady Audley, a wife of a noble and rich widower, who has some behavioral complexities.

1.4. Goals and Function

The goals of this research are to reveal the kind of struggles and empowerments that the main character, Lady Audley, shows in order to survive and ensure her freedom and independency among the male domination. This study is also proposed to reveal how Lady Audley's struggles and empowerments applied in order to represent women movements in each feminism phases, especially the first phase of feminism. Hopefully, this study will also acknowledge the reader about Mary Elizabeth Braddon's works, Lady Audley's Secret about the women's struggles, empowerments, and movements from the male constraints in the Victorian Era, and its contribution to the larger chain of feminist literature and feminist movement.

1.5. Research Methodology

Firstly, to compose this research, the writer has to define a topic and then find the proper theories to support the topic and the analysis. The theories, evidences, and references that are used in this analysis are gathered from the library research, based on the qualitative methods. And, in order to solve the problem of this research, the writer has to connect the topic and the analysis with the theories and data that are found in authorized books, journals, and articles. By those steps, finally this research could achieve the expected goals, solve its problem formulations.