ANDREA SACH'S STRUGGLES AGAINST EXPLOITATION AND ALIENATION IN
LAUREN WEISBERGER'S
THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

ATHESIS
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Sarjana Degree Majoring Literature in English Department
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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, April 2011

Nora R. Surahman

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

"*Man jadda wa jada*"
(Those who do it seriously will be successful)

"*Inna ma'al 'usri yusra*" QS. Al-Insyirah: 6
(There will always be sunshine after the dark cloud)

This paper is dedicated to
My beloved family,
my faithful friends,
and everyone who supports me
"Thank you for uncountable help you do for me"

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Finally, the writer hopes that compiling this thesis is one of contributions the writer did to reader. Hopefully, it can be so helpful for those who wish to learn about literature.

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Nora R. Surahman

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ABSTRACT

Considered as a portrait of life, literature often conveys social phenomena, such as those in Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*, a novel that portrays subordinate's exploitation and alienation. Therefore, the novel is interesting to analyze. The objectives of this study are to analyze the intrinsic aspects of the novel, to describe that exploitation happens in the society of the novel, to analyze that the exploitation done by Miranda Priestly to Andrea Sach, her staff, causes alienation, and to show that subordinate represented by Andrea Sach can struggle against the exploitation and alienation. The method used in the study is library research. To analyze the social aspects of the novel, sociological approach is employed. The study reveals that exploitation happens in the society of the novel. It is represented by the relationship between Andrea Sach and Miranda Priestly, her superior. There is an unbalanced power which leads Andrea Sach under pressure. The exploitation makes Andrea Sach alienated. Almost all of her time is to satisfy what her job requires. Because of her demanding job, she gets distanced from her boyfriend, her close friend, and even from her family. Later, she realizes that she is exploited and alienated. She struggles to come out from the situations. Her decision to come back home gets her fired. She has reckoned that her decision will draw her into a direct confrontation with Miranda. However, it makes her free. She is no longer under pressure and has more time to fix her alienation up. It can be concluded that even though exploitation and alienation cannot be rejected, people can fight against it.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

Literature and society are closely related. Conflicts told in literary works are a representation

of what happen in society. Writers express what they see and do, and they often convey social conditions in literary works. Quoting Thomas Warton, Wellek and Warren argue that literature has the "peculiar merit of faithfully recording the features of the times, and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation of manners" (1977:103). As many writers are inspired by social conditions, literature can be said as a portrait of life.

One of social phenomena flourished in the twentieth century is fashion industry in which clothing is mass-produced in standard sizes and sold at fixed prices. The fashion industry comprises the production of fashion goods, the sales, and the advertising and promotion. All of which are operated not only to satisfy consumers' demand but also most importantly to gain profit. The growth of fashion industry leads to the development of fashion journalism that includes all aspects of published fashion media. The production of fashion media incorporates not only fashion writers, fashion critics or fashion reporters but also other positions supporting their work. As in many other industries, the ones who own the capital will try to make profit as much as possible which in turn leads to exploitation and alienation on the part of the workers.

As a portrait of life, literary works can also picture the existence of exploitation and alienation in society, especially in the fashion journalism. An example of such literary works is *The Devil Wears Prada,* a novel written by Weisberger. The society picked is an elite class society in *Runway* fashion magazine, one of the most influential magazines in America. The society portrays how money takes control. That the ruling class can determine others' lives is described clearly throughout the novel. Staff are mostly subject to their boss and they are exploited to meet their boss' demands. Exploitation which staff's experience may lead them to alienations. Such a relationship between staff's and their boss is conveyed by the relationship between Andrea Sach and Miranda Priestly. As many people believe that working in *Runway* is a path to gain dreamed job, Andrea Sach, a Personal Assistant who dreams to work at *The New Yorker*, endures the pressure she gets from Miranda Priestly, a high-profile Editor for *Runway*. Miranda Priestly intimidates Andrea Sach psychologically. Andrea Sach is somehow not allowed to do her job peacefully. Andrea Sach is always haunted by Miranda's demanding call. She is also forced to wear high fashioned stuff, like high heeled shoes and leather pants which she feels uncomfortable with. The working hours and the job description are also unclear. She has to handle everything, not only what Miranda Priestly's needs but also what Miranda's children's and husband's want.

What makes the novel interesting to analyze is that the novel conveys exploitation and alienation practice in society. Through the character Andrea Sach, the novel describes clearly a staff's feelings toward the pressure she gets from her boss. The unbearable pressure she gets from Miranda Priestly finally makes her fight against it. She tries to go out of the oppressive circumstances. She struggles against alienation and exploitation. To learn further about that, this study is given a title: "Andrea Sach's Struggle against Exploitation and Alienation in Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*"

2. Research Problems

Because there are many aspects which can be analyzed from a novel, the problem of the thesis has to be formulated. The thesis will serve analysis on two major aspects of the novel. It focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

Firstly, among many intrinsic aspects, the intrinsic aspects analyzed in the thesis are

conflicts, settings, and characters. How do conflicts influence characters that finally make the main issue vivid? What is the social context of the novel? The answers to these questions will lead to deeper understanding of the story. Any quotations and narrations that are correlated will be picked to support the analysis.

Secondly, since the relationship between Andrea Sach as one of the staff's and Miranda Priestly as the superor is the main topic described in the novel, the analysis will focus on social relation between them. How does the boss exploit the staff? How does exploitation lead to alienation? And how can staffs free themselves from the exploitation and alienation? The answers of these questions will clarify the issue discussed in the thesis.

3. Objective of the Study

As explained above, the novel shows indications that exploitation and alienation happen in the society of the novel. To explore more about them, the thesis has three purposes as follows
- to analyze the intrinsic aspects of the novel that show how exploitation and alienation happen in the society of the novel.
- to analyze that the exploitation done by Miranda Priestly to Andrea Sach, her staff, causes alienation.
- to show that staff represented by Andrea Sach can struggle against the exploitation and the alienation.

4. Method of the Study

The research method used in making the thesis is library research. George says that library research "involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question" (2008:6). By using the method, the writer is able to collect data from various resources such as books or articles related to and support the analysis.

Besides, sociological approach is helpful to this research. According to Kennedy and Gioia, "sociological criticism examines literary works in the social, political, and economic context" (2002:2194). By using the approach, the writer is able to examine the social context of *The Devil Wears Prada*. Therefore, there will be two aspects analyzed in this study; they are intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspect. The intrinsic aspects that will be analyzed are conflict, characterization, and setting. The analysis of intrinsic aspects leads to the analysis of extrinsic aspect: the social context of the novel.

5. Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters, they are as follows.
Chapter 1: Introduction
> This chapter contains background of the study, research problem, objective of the study, method of the study, and organization of the writing.
Chapter 2: Author and Her Work
> This second chapter of the thesis contains the biography of Lauren Weisberger and the synopsis of her works *The Devil Wears Prada*.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The writer reviews the study from intrinsic analysis and extrinsic analysis. The intrinsic aspects are the conflict, characterizations, and setting of the novel. The extrinsic aspect analyzed is Exploitation, Alienation, and struggle.

Chapter 4: Analysis

The discussion chapter contains the main analysis of the thesis. The writer explains the result of her analysis on both intrinsic and extrinsic aspect. The writer uses the theory written on chapter III to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this last chapter, the writer summarizes the discussion and concludes the analysis of the study.

CHAPTER 2
AUTHOR AND HER WORK

1. Lauren Weisberger and Her Work

The following description about Lauren Weisberger is taken from http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Weisberger__Lauren.html. It was downloaded on March 18th, 2010.

Lauren Weisberger was born on March 28, 1977, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. At the age of 11, Lauren Weisberger's parents divorced, at which time her mother, Weisberger,

and her sister moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania. Lauren Weisberger attended Parkland High School in Allentown. There she participated in many extracurricular activities including varsity tennis. She graduated in 1995 planning to attend Cornell University. There she studied English and near-Eastern studies. She participated in Alpha Epsilon Phi, a sorority, and became a tour guide. After graduating in 1999 with a B.A. in English, she decided to save money and travel around the world. Weisberger traveled, only carrying a small backpack, through Europe, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Thailand, India, Nepal, and Hong Kong. After traveling, it was time for her to change her focus from college life to her career.

Lauren Weisberger moved to Manhattan and began working. Weisberger's first job was an assistant to the Editor-in-Chief at Vogue. After Vogue, she wrote reviews for Departures magazine, a high-end travel and lifestyle magazine. While working there, she began writing the much talked about The Devil Wears Prada. The novel was published in April of 2003 and spent six months on the New York Times Bestseller List. Weisberger's novel is about a small-town girl who is hired to work as an assistant to a high-profile editor for Runway magazine. The main character, surrounded by fashion obsessed, model thin women, manages to turn everyone into scared children. The novel got rave reviews from the Detroit Free Press: "A wickedly amusing roman à clef set in the highest circles of fashion." as well as many others. The Devil Wears Prada was sold in thirty-one countries and made into a motion picture. The New York Times raved about the movies stating: "The Devil Wears Prada is the first film to take a 21st-century view of fashion, moving beyond the myth of its practitioners as visionaries, revealing them instead as the exacting functionaries they are: those who live and dress and think according to the seasonal edicts of global conglomerates." After the success of her first novel she began on a second.

Weisberger's second novel, Everyone Worth Knowing, was published in October of 2005. The second novel did not do as well as the first, but it also was on the New York Times Best Seller list. This novel is about a young woman who feels claustrophobic in her cubical desk job. She quits her job and lands a new one with a hot Public Relations firm. She finds herself caught up in a world of fashioned, celebrity, and party obsessed people. She dates an infamous play-boy and begins showing up in gossip columns. She realizes that her personal and professional lives are one. LIFE magazine called the novel "Deliciously Entertaining." The Cleveland Plain Dealer states "...a lot of fun, more assuredly written than The Devil Wears Prada and more confident in its jabs—it's hard to deny its witty, voyeuristic charms."

2. Synopsis of *The Devil Wears Prada*

Andrea Sach, 23 years old, applies for a job as personal assistant in *Runway* magazine. Her educational background is the English Department of Brown majoring in creative writing. Because she was a creative writing student, she began dreaming of being a writer. Her dream job is being a worker of *The New Yorker*. Therefore, she thinks that it will be a great step to get closer to her dream job when she takes the job of being an assistant of the greatest editor and the most influential person in fashion industry, Miranda Priestly.

Andre Sach grew up in Avon, Connecticut, a small town of the USA which influenced her point of view about fashion. During her school time in Connecticut, she did many activities that girls at her age did but fashion. High fashion was one big exception. She was never really concerned to the clothes she was wearing. She used to wear sweatpants to

school and any other clothes that made her comfortable.

Andrea Sach's family consists of father, mother and her sister. Her relationship with her family is so close. Her parents are so caring. She often plays scrabble with her father while having a talk. She is also so close to Alex, her boyfriend and Lily, her close friend. Travelling, spending the night, and having dinner are what they used to do. This does not last until she works at *Runway* magazine.

Working at *Runway* magazine as junior assistant of Miranda Priestly takes all Andrea's attention. Her job description is actually anticipating and accommodating Priestly's needs but it begins going astray because she has to accommodate and to arrange Miranda's twin-daughter's and her husband's needs as well. She is always panic and stressed out every time she gets a demanding call from Miranda Priestly. It is because of Miranda's impatience and intolerance. She once wants to quit the job because of it.

Moreover, her working-hour is so long. Her official working-hour is fourteen hours, from 7 AM to 10 PM. However, she even is usually allowed to go home around midnight. She has to come earlier than everybody else does. Enjoying weekends is almost impossible because Miranda still keeps haunting her with the demanding calls. Andrea has no other choice; she has to 'work'. She does not feel happy with this.

There are some unwritten rules that Andrea has to obey. Firstly, she has to wear high fashioned clothes since she represents *Runway*. Andrea Sach is not really interested in fashion. She does not feel comfortable with all the stuff. Every time she wears high heels, she has to suffer pain in her knees for weeks. Secondly, the rule is about food. All the staff are also "not allowed" to eat meals freely. Every time one of them takes fatty food, people around her/him will look at him/her strangely. They have to watch out their weight, and so does Andrea Sach. Those are also example of work demands she has to satisfy.

The unwritten rules push Andrea Sach to wear clothes which she is not comfortable with. The long working hours make her have conflicts with people close to her. Because of her job, she has a fight with Alex, her boyfriend, and it makes them have a break. Lily, Andrea Sach's close friend, gets mad to her because of the same case. Her job also leads her to her absence to her sister baby birth even though it will let her family down.

However, that she gets conflicts because of her job does not make her quit. She still thinks that her job will get her closer to her dream job. The thought is what make her decide to fly to Paris to accompany Miranda Priestly. The decision leads her into dilemma. The dilemma grows because she has to choose whether to come back home because of Lily's getting accident or to stay in Paris to accompany Miranda Priestly. Andrea Sach finds it is difficult. However, Andrea's endurance to work in *Runway* to gain her dream job finally comes to an end. She decides to fly back home. She gets fired after then.

Her getting fired by Miranda Priestly and being off of *Runway* enable her to fix her relationship up. Her relationship with her family and Lily is like it used to be. Relationship with Alex is getting close as well even though they are not dating any longer. She also wears the clothes she likes after then.

CHAPTER 3
THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Intrinsic Aspects

Intrinsic aspects are aspects which build and structure a literary work. Accordingly, to analyze intrinsic aspects of a novel is to analyze aspects of the novel itself. It is like what Wellek and Warren define intrinsic analysis as "the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves" (1977:139). Therefore, the analysis enables the writer to examine the structure of a novel. Novel is structured by many aspects. The aspects are such as theme, characters, plot, settings, point of view, etc. In relation to it, Wellek and Warren explain that novel structure "includes plot, characters, setting, world-view, tone" (1977:214). However, in this thesis, the aspects which will be discussed are limited. They are character and characterization, setting, and conflict.

1. Character and Characterization

Character is a term to call a person that plays role in a story. Thrall and Hibbard define character as "a brief descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies quality" (1960:79). It is characters that run the story so this is why characters are intentionally created. Because characters in a novel are created, they are imagined and unreal. Hall explains that character is "an imagined person in a story whom we know from the words we read on page" (1981:47). Therefore, there are no characters who are exactly the same as real people are. Any qualities of human being which characters have are completely given by the author. These qualities are to make the characters real.

To make characters real, author uses characterization. Characterization is the way the author describes and presents the characters he/she creates in a story. Thrall and Hibbard argue that "the creation of images of these imaginary persons so credible that they exist for the reader as real within limits of the fiction is called characterization" (1960:79). It makes the characters real as like real human being. Characters can be presented either directly or indirectly. Quoting Ewen, Kenan explains that "there are two types of textual indicators of character: direct definition and indirect presentation" (1989:59). The direct definition is given through direct exposition, explanation, or narration. The author explicitly states what a character is like. The author may also have someone else in the story to tell the characters' qualities. The explicitness may be presented by giving any adjective as a character's detail, for example he is a good guy. It also can be "abstract noun ('his goodness knew no bounds'), or possibly some other kind of noun ('she was a real bitch') or part of speech ('he loves only himself')" (Kenan, 1989:60). The second type is indirect characterization. The characters' qualities are hidden in dialogue, gesture, or action. It is not apparently stated. The author "does not mention the trait but displays and exemplifies it in various ways, leaving to the reader the task of inferring the quality they imply" (Kenan, 1989:60). Those ways are by inferring from action, speech, external appearance, and environment. What character said and how it acts also can be source to characterize it. It is also to help readers to determine it into which kinds of character.

There are two kinds of characters based on the experience of changes and developments. There are round and flat characters. Quoting E. M. Forster, Perrine describes that "the characters in a story are relatively flat and round" (1993:68). Firstly, round character is a character that can be valued from many sides. The characteristics are developed. So, it is rather complex and unpredictable. For the changes it faces, the round character is dynamic. There will be differences between what the character is like in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of story. Secondly, flat character is a character that can be valued just from one side. It is static and not developed. There are no changes it faces. Its constant features go during whole story. It will be found the same between it

which is presented in the beginning and it which is in the end of the story. The classification is common in every story.

Another classification of character is according to its dominantly concerned in a story. It is classified into protagonist and antagonist. These two are the main characters of a story. Protagonist is the center character. Meyer argues that protagonist is "the central character who engages our interest and empathy" (1990:44). The readers' attention will be drawn on it because it is the one who dominantly appears which the main conflict is around it. Its changes and conflict are that the story concerns about. Therefore, it will be described mostly in the story. Another main character is antagonist. Meyer explains that antagonist is "the force that opposes the protagonist" (1990:44). It opposes the protagonist because it has different idea from protagonist has. It is like what Roberts and Jacobs state in *Literature: an Introduction to Reading and Writing*, "the protagonist is central to the action, moves against an antagonist ('the opposing actor')" (1998:153). In other word, antagonist is created to move against protagonist. And this opposition is what makes conflict grows.

2. Conflict

Another intrinsic aspect is plot. Plot has many specific elements. Here, plot is not fully described but it is specified in the main element of plot. The element is conflict. Conflict is problem told in a story. Perrine defines conflict is "a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills" (1988:42). There must be conflict in every story for it is part to build the story, while according to Roberts and Jacobs, conflict is "the controlling impulse in a connected pattern of causes and effects" (1998:105). Because of the conflict, character will take any decision, action, and response in other to overcome it. It is conflict which bonds the main characters to other ones. However, kind of conflict is varied.

There are two kinds of conflict. They are external and internal conflict. Firstly, external conflict is conflict which makes the protagonist move against another character, nature, or society. It is like what Meyer argues that external conflict "may place the protagonist in opposition to another individual, nature, or society" (1990:45). In short, protagonist faces external conflict when it opposes part which is outside of it, instead of part within it.

Secondly, internal conflict is that there is problem which grows within protagonist that makes it into doubt, fidgetiness, and difficulty. It is spiritual forces which finally makes protagonist do any struggle to overcome it. The force may be led by moral or psychological problems. Similarly, Meyer says that internal conflict is "in such a case some moral or psychological issue must be resolved within the protagonist" (1990:45). These conflicts will be so plausible if these are supported by any clear information of setting.

3. Setting

Setting is one of aspects which build the story. Setting indicates where and when story runs. According to Meyer, setting is "the context in which action of a story occurs" (1990:107). Setting includes "natural, manufactured, political, cultural, and temporal environment" (Roberts and Jacobs, 1998:253). It can be place, time, or situation in which an event of a story happens. Therefore, setting is varied. There are many kinds of setting such as time, place, and social environment. This thesis is also limited into those three kinds of setting:

Firstly, setting of place is physical environment like house, room, street, etc, in

which an event of a story takes place. As Thrall and Hibbard explain that setting place is "the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room" (1960:453). It is merely about location, place, or spot.

Secondly, time is another kind of setting which is examined. It is, of course, time in the context of story. According to Thrall and Hibbard, setting of time is "the time or period in which the action takes place, e.g. epoch in history, season of the year, etc" (1960:453). Therefore, setting of time is not just an exact hour, date, or year but also any explanation which refers to time such as weather, an era, etc.

Thirdly, social environment also takes an important role in a story. It is about social condition in which a character of a story grows. It may be about life style which a society of a story adapts. An ideology which rules in society is also another example of social environment. These social conditions enable readers to understand what is going on in the story.

2. Extrinsic Aspects

Intrinsic analysis of a novel cannot be isolated from its extrinsic aspects. It is because there are extrinsic aspects implied within it. Therefore, it is necessary to provide extrinsic aspects analysis in a novel analysis. Extrinsic aspects of a novel are aspects which influence a novel. The aspects are not part to build the novel. It is outside factors in which the novel is created. The aspects are mainly correlated to the real social condition in which the author lives. Wellek and Warren explain extrinsic analysis is "merely attempt to interpret literature in the light of its social context and its antecedents" (1977:73). It may also psychological condition which is presented through character. However, to analyze extrinsic aspects of a literary work, it can use non-literature theories. In this thesis, for example, exploitation and alienation is used to examine and identify social phenomena of a literary work. Exploitation and alienation are terms that mostly discussed in capitalism but in this thesis the term will be used to analyze the relationship between a superior and his/her subordinate in work relations.

1. Exploitation

Exploitation is making use in an unfair portion and deriving benefit done by an unfair way. Woodfin and Zarate explain that exploitation is "the ability and willingness of some people to take advantage of others" (2008: 37). Exploitation is described as the way the superior uses the subordinates to take more advantage and profit. Therefore, to make more profit, the superior exploits the subordinates through certain ways.

The common way exploitation is presented is through extended working hours. In order to make more profit, the working-hour has to be longer so that the use of workers' man power is getting more. In addition, the more working hours is extended, the more workers are exploited. As Kautsky argues

The longer the time is extended,…, the larger is the per cent of exploitation to which these workmen are subjected <http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1892/erfurt/ch02.htm>.

The exploitation worsens the condition of the workers and make them more miserable because of unjust wages workers get.

Another way workers are exploited is that they are paid with unjust wages. As explained in previous paragraph, workers have to work longer in order to make more profit

but the wages they get are not adequate with the man power they spend. The superior does not give the extra wage for the extra work so that the production expense can stay low. The lower the expense of the production is, the more the profit is reached. Therefore, profit is getting higher. Such conditions are profitable for the superior but often lead to the workers' feeling alienated.

2. Alienation

Alienation is a concept describing about workers' isolations. Dupré argues that alienation as "a feeling of isolation from the culture of one's society" (1983:15). Exploited workers often feel that they are bordered and no longer free. This is because of their job's demands. The job requires them to focus on it. Their time and attention are taken by it that they do not have those for other things. Booker defines alienation as "the process by which individuals become distanced and estranged from the product of their labor, from the world around them, from other people, and eventually from themselves" (Brooker, 1996: 473). Therefore, there are many kinds of alienations. However, there will be two kinds of alienation analyzed in this thesis, alienation from the workers' nature and alienation from the society.

Firstly, workers are estranged from their nature. The statement is shown from Woodfin's and Zarate's words "we (workers) are alienated from our species nature" (2008:35). As described above, the long working hour borders them. It entails labors' unsatisfied needs. The needs of becoming a normal human being cannot be satisfied. For example, as many other human beings, workers need to have enough time to take a rest. They cannot get it because of the job. Another example is the necessity of having a holiday. It is also not fulfilled. The works do not allow them to enjoy holiday. The need of having a well social interaction is also man's basic need which cannot be satisfied.

Secondly, alienation from society happens. Workers become "estranged from society as a whole because they participate only in a small portion of it" (Brooker: 1996:73). They can no longer involve in society. Their job takes the whole time that they have no much time in home in which they can socialize with people around. They are not able to participate much in any event the society held. They, even, do not have enough time for their family.

Those two kinds of alienation are the consequences of working in industrial company. Accordingly, quoting Marx, Sim & Loon explain that "individuals were alienated from each other by the dehumanizing processes of industrial labor" (2004: 167). Workers do not realize the alienations firstly. They think it is just as what their job takes. Yet, actually it is formed by the upper class to satisfy their interest. When they finally realize it, they will struggle against it.