

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

Having read the Moll Flanders, I come up with the conclusion that Defoe's portrayal of prison and prisoners' life in 18<sup>th</sup> century England is realistic. Newgate is portrayed as a place full of horror; it was unhealthy and dirty; it was a place where babies who were born there did not have enough nutrition; it was also full of noises of the inmates that were tortured. In the novel, the place makes Moll think that she has entered a different world when she hears that hellish noise from the inmates in Newgate, The noise makes people numb and loose their awareness of their surroundings, which are corrupted, full with evil, and has sad atmosphere.

The reports that I have read about the prison also tell that the name Newgate itself can make people scared. They have helped me conclude that Defoe's portrayal of prison and prisoners' life in 18<sup>th</sup> century England is based on real facts about Newgate in 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the description is realistic, I think Defoe's association of Newgate with hell is rather hyperbolic. Using Defoe's own words, I find that he refers to Newgate as "an emblem of hell itself, and kind of and entrance into it" (Defoe, 236). Hell, as explained in the previous chapter, is an afterlife of suffering where Satan and the wicked men are punished eternally. Literally, hell is a place

to punish the wicked men and Satan. A prison also has the same function as hell; it is a place to punish criminals and wicked people. Thus, hell and a prison have the same function. However, there are differences between hell and a prison. Hell is a place created by God to punish Satan and wicked men. It is a place that no human being has seen. It is a place that has eternal punishment in it and Satan is afraid of the horror of the place. There is no place on earth that can be compared to its horror. A prison also has horror and punishment in it but it is not as scary as hell and the punishment in prison does not last eternally.

I believe that Defoe had some intention when describing Newgate in such a way. Firstly from his biography, I can see that his description is caused by his time in Newgate as an inmate. I believe that his time in Newgate had left a moment that he could not forget in his life. He suffered so much in his imprisonment and even wrote a hymn to express his anger. It can be seen that the same sentiment is reflected in his novel.

Through his description, Defoe also can make people or the society more aware about the horror that had so badly happened in Newgate. His intention was to criticize the people and the government so that they would have more concern about the condition of Newgate. Newgate at that time had so horrible condition and even the most evil criminals did not deserve to live there. Moreover, Defoe himself was an inmate in Newgate; therefore, he could understand the feelings of the other inmates. He wanted to show the feelings, which consisted mostly of anger to make people more aware about Newgate.

Reading Defoe's novel has bred an interest in me to know more about prison and prisoner's life, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, I decided to visit a

jail, LP Cianjur, in West Java to see the real condition of the prisoners in the present time. Fortunately, what I found there was nothing like the terrible things I read in Defoe's novel. In LP Cianjur, the inmates were having good life. They had decent clothing, lodging and regular meal three times a day. They lived in good condition and had their own free time to do activity such as sports. They were also taught a few skills such as sewing, fixing machines, and doing few handcrafts that could be useful for them when they were released from the prison. I could see that contrary to Newgate in which prisoners had no way out but through "infamous death," the inmates in LP Cianjur were prepared to leave the prison and return to the society. The section that held the inmates with drug problems was a little bit crowded compared to the other sections of the prison. Maybe it was caused by the numbers of inmates in this section, which was twice the inmate in other sections.

So after the visitation, I came to a conclusion that some of Defoe's portrayal of prison and prisoners' life in his novel is no longer relevant with the condition of the prison nowadays. However, not all prisons nowadays have the same condition as LP Cianjur. At least an article has described that some prisons still treated its inmates badly. The prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, still treated its inmates, most of them were political inmates and terrorist, badly. Often the inmates died because of the bad treatment that they had in prison ("Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp" Wikipedia). From some newspapers, people got to know that in some of the prisons in Indonesia corruption still existed. Inmates could have their time outside the prison during the weekend if they could afford to pay some money to the guards. Furthermore the rate of drug trafficking inside the prison was very high. Inmates could buy illegal drugs from the prison officers.

On the other hand, I believe that humanism and a bigger concern about human rights have helped improve the condition of the prisons in most parts of the world today.