

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I will analyse a novel for my thesis because most novels usually reflect personal experience, attitudes and ideas or viewpoints of the writers on certain issue. This matter is interesting to analyse since there are so many novelists who write their novels not only based on the demand of the market but also based on a certain ideology that they have at a particular time. David Dvorkin in his article, Why Do We Write?, said that “Making the idea into the externally real thing, the novel, is only the first step in the artistic process of creation for a writer.” They then, intentionally or unintentionally, insert their ideology in their novels.

One of the famous English novelists who inserted their ideology in their writings, is Jane Austen (1775-1817). Her novels were all written around Regency Era (1811-1820) and her novels (Northanger Abbey (1798), Sense and Sensibility (1811), Pride and Prejudice (1813), Mansfield Park (1814), Emma (1816), and Persuasion (1818)) are loved and still read by readers even until today. Austen’s novels also have been adapted into a great number of films and television series. Furthermore, her novels are highly prized for their light irony, humor and depiction of contemporary English country life. Sir Walter Scott and Richard

Whately praised Austen's works. Scott said “from nature as she really exists in the common walks of life and presenting to the reader . . . a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place . . .” whereas Whately said “drew favorable comparisons between Austen and such acknowledged greats as Homer and Shakespeare, praising the dramatic qualities of her narrative” (Wikipedia).

For my analysis I chose Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. It is one of Austen's best-selling novels. It tells about a restrained women's life in a realistic way. Consequently, it indirectly criticizes the society of the late eighteenth century. The subject of this novel is about love and marriage. However, the storyline is not really romantic but quite realistic and objective. Future husbands' income is clarified at the beginning of the novel. It means economic power is considered to be men's value. Daughters should marry men in possession to live a decent life before their father's death, otherwise they would live miserably. Because of the patriarchal system, they could not get any fortune from their father. This kind of storyline shows that the society at that time is influenced by economic power. So it embosses that women's life depends on marriage to men in possession. By telling about marriage, this book shows the reality that women suffered from an absurd system during that period.

To convey her idea about womanhood awareness Austen creates a character named Elizabeth. Thus, I will analyse the portrayal of Elizabeth, the female major character in Pride and Prejudice by using Enlightenment feminism. In spite of its difference from modern feminism, Enlightenment feminism as an early feminist movement has an important meaning. “In secular use, the concept refers mainly to the European intellectual movement known as the Age of

Enlightenment, also called the Age of Reason referring to philosophical developments related to scientific rationality in the 17th and 18th centuries” (Wikipedia). In Enlightenment period, the age of reason, feminism emphasizes woman’s reason. And it can clearly be seen through Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice. Enlightenment feminists for the first time try to ask women “to reject an inferior role of passive obedience” and “to claim, by demonstrating their moral equality, that they must be allowed and expected, like men, to form opinions on the basis of rational reflection and to make independent moral judgment” (Kirkham 6). Judging from the fact that Austen was born in 1775 and her novel Pride and Prejudice was published in 1813, she might have been interested in the Enlightenment feminist issue. Hence, this thesis is conducted to prove that Austen, to some extent, inserts her Enlightenment feminist perspectives into her novel and how those perspectives shape the female protagonist in her novel. I will elaborate more on the Enlightenment feminism in the next chapter.

Statement of the Problem

1. How is the female protagonist in Pride and Prejudice portrayed?
2. In the perspective of Enlightenment feminism, what does the portrayal signify?
3. Why does the author create such a character?

Purpose of the Study

1. To figure out how the female protagonist in Pride and Prejudice is portrayed.

2. To find out what the portrayal signifies in the perspective of Enlightenment feminism.
3. To find out why the author creates such a character.

Method of Research

First of all, I read Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice several times thoroughly for maximum understanding on the content of the novel. Afterwards, all the data related to the portrayal of the female protagonist from the novel are collected. Then I gather some information from the Internet which supports my research. Finally, the collected-data are analysed by means of Enlightenment feminist literary criticism.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis starts with the Abstract, which contains a brief analysis of the thesis in Indonesian. In Chapter One, I present the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I present the Enlightenment Feminist Discourse as the theoretical background. Chapter Three contains the analysis of the portrayal of the female protagonist. Afterwards, I conclude my analysis in Chapter Four. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the biography of Jane Austen and synopsis of Pride and Prejudice.