

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Of the three literary genres, I decide to analyze novel. Through analyzing the novel, I can get a lot of information and I can certainly know about issues or events in various periods. Novel is described as “a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying character and presenting an organized series of events and setting. Every novel is an account of life; every novel involves conflicts, characters, actions, setting, plot and themes” (Shaw 257). I will analyze a novel written in Victorian period that describes middle and upper-class societies. There are many great novelists in Victorian period, such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brönte, and William Makepeace Thackeray. The last novelist is one of the most prominent novelists, satirists, and realists in the era, which is why I choose to analyze Thackeray’s greatest work, Vanity Fair.

William Makepeace Thackeray was an English novelist. Thackeray remarks that “The art of novel is to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality”(“Literary Information of Vanity Fair”). In other words, I believe he wants to make the event or the situation in his novel as real as possible. He was also best-known for his satirical and moralistic studies of upper-class and middle-

class in England (Thackeray i). Some reviewers and novelists appreciated the good of the novel. For example, Harry Thurston Peck, a reviewer said that “Vanity Fair is one of the greatest books in English literature, but it belongs to purely English literature...” (“Critical Essays on Vanity Fair”). Moreover, a reviewer from The London Review acknowledged that “Vanity Fair is a remarkable book, brilliant, entertaining...” (“Critical Essays on Vanity Fair”).

I choose to analyze Thackeray’s Vanity Fair in my thesis. From Thackeray’s day to the present, Vanity Fair has been regarded as Thackeray’s masterpiece. Many criticisms, reviews, and essays have appeared since the novel first appeared in 1847. Through this novel, Thackeray wants to show the portrait of English society during the Victorian period, a period of significant and economic change in United Kingdom. The two female major characters, Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley, represent young ladies in Victorian era. They have different desires and ways of living, which lead to many conflicts in the story. That is why I would like to analyze the conflicts in the novel. By analyzing the conflicts in the novel, I might find out about the social life in England in Victorian period. Once, one of the greatest novelists in Victorian era, Charlotte Brontë remarked:

“You mention Thackeray, and the last number of “Vanity Fair.” The more I read of Thackeray’s works— the more certain I am that he stands alone; alone in his sagacity, alone in his truth, alone in his feeling (his feeling, though he makes no noise about it, is about the most genuine that ever lived in printed page) alone in his power, alone in his simplicity, alone in

his self-control. Thackeray is a Titan” (“Contemporary Response to Vanity Fair”).

There are three types of conflicts, but I will focus my analysis on social conflicts because they are the most prominent aspects in the novel. The definition of conflict, according to Harry Shaw in his Dictionary of Literary Terms, is:

“The opposition of persons or forces upon which the actions depends in drama and fiction. There are three kinds of conflicts: inner/psychological conflict, physical conflict, and social conflict. Physical conflict is a struggle between man and the physical world. Inner conflict or psychological conflict is a struggle between desires within a person. The last type is social conflict. Shaw also divides the social conflict into two types: the first one is a struggle between man and man; and the second one is a protagonist against society” (Shaw 91-92).

Statements of the Problems are:

Based on the reasons above, I formulate the statement of the problem as follows:

1. What social conflicts are faced by the major characters in Thackeray’s Vanity Fair ?
2. What are the causes of the conflicts?
3. How are the conflicts resolved?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, this study is conducted:

1. To show what social conflicts are faced by the major characters in Thackeray's Vanity Fair.
2. To analyse the causes of the conflicts.
3. To present how the conflicts are resolved.

Method of Research

I apply the library research, in which I read the primary text, William Makepeace Thackeray's Vanity Fair. In addition, I get some data from the Internet. I use intrinsic approach in analysing the novel. The intrinsic approach is used to analyse the major characters in facing social conflicts. Then, I draw a conclusion of my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

In my thesis, there are three chapters, preceded by Abstract, Table of Content, and Acknowledgements. Chapter One is 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. Chapter Two is the Analysis of the Major Characters' Social Conflicts in William Makepeace Thackeray's Vanity Fair. Chapter Three is the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the Synopsis of Vanity Fair and the Biography of the William Makepeace Thackeray.