



## **SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF JANE AUSTEN'S PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A THEMATIC STUDY**

**DR. KRANTI VATS**

Professor  
Govt. M. V. M. College, Bhopal.  
(MP) INDIA

**MONIKA RAGHUWANSHI**

Research Scholar  
Barkatullah University Bhopal  
(MP) INDIA

### **ABSTRACT**

*The prime objectives of the research paper is to analyze novel Pride and Prejudice based on its social elements based on the sociological approach, by identifying the relation between the novel and the social background of the early nineteenth century in English society based on sociological approach. This research paper belongs to a qualitative research. The sources of the data are both primary data source, which is Pride and Prejudice novel and secondary data sources, the other sources related to the analysis such as books of literary, journal articles, Ph. D. theses, etc., as well as the virtual references. Based on the social analysis of the novel, it can be advocated that in Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen conveys a social and moral message that some people use marriage to lift up their social economic status. Besides, she reflects the social realities of the English society including social, cultural and religious aspect at late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. MLA eighth edition has been used for documentation and citations.*

**Keywords:** social, cultural, religious, income, profession, marriage, aristocrat, social stratification, etc.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen is a romance novel. It has described clearly the condition of English social life in early 19th century such as social class and marriage. It was originally titled *First Impression* because the appearances of the characters of the characters



created the plot of the novel. However, the novel is also concerned with the effects of the character's first impression, which is their prejudice; Austen finally found the title *Pride and Prejudice* more appropriate. This research paper concerning about social stratification.

Social classification is a distinction or grouping of members of the community as a vertical (rise). The social stratification is the classification of people who belong to a particular social system into hierarchical layers according to the dimensions of power, privilege and prestige.

*Social stratification is the result of human relationships habits regularly and structured so that every person, every moment has to do with the situation that determines the vertically or horizontally in the community. (Susanto 98)*

A literary work exists because of society; the existence of literary work is influenced by the condition and phenomenon in society either in social, economy, politic, science and technology, culture, and religious aspect. According to Laurenson and Swingwood:

*There are three types of sociology of literature: literary work as the social documents, literary work as reflection of social situation of the writer, literary works as the manifestation from the historical moment. (Laurenson and Swingwood 13)*

### **Research Method:**

While analyzing the novel, the writer uses qualitative research. The data sources are library and literary data. Its purpose is to analyze using sociological approach. The object of the study is to analyze the social classification of English society reflected in *Pride and Prejudice* novel on a sociological approach. The writer uses two data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data source of the study is the novel *Pride and Prejudice* written by Jane Austen. The secondary data sources are many sources such as references, the author's biography, the website, journal articles, etc. from the internet about this novel and other resources that support the analysis. The analysis is begun from the structural analysis of the work and finally the sociological analysis of the literary of literary works. The steps analyzing the data as follows: first, analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Second, analyzing the data based on sociological analysis.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen shows that Darcy family belongs to the upper class. It can be seen from their estate, snobbish life style. They stay at the large estate and they have company. The income also identifies the social status of someone. The higher someone's



income the higher social status she or he gets in society. The income identifies Darcy's social status. Fitzwilliam Darcy's annual income is ten thousand pounds.

Another character belonging to the upper class is Bingley family. Mr. Bingley is Darcy's closest friend. He always holds the dancing party. He is categorized based on his wealth. His wealth got from inheritances property to the amount from his father. As a part of Bingley family, she thinks that wearing an elegant gown in every party at ball so important to determine her social status. She feels that it shows one's pride and position in society. Lady Catherine de Bourgh family also represents the upper class. She is Darcy's aunt. Like the other upper class family, they dwell at the elite estate, which is known Rosings park. It is a beautiful modern building house at England.

From the analysis above, Jane Austen wants to portray that the upper class usually stay in the luxurious and elite estate. It is also completed with a beautiful park in front of the house as a symbol of their social status.

The middle classes are represented by Bennet's family and William Collins. It is categorized based on their income and their profession. Bennet's family consists of Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet and their five unmarried daughters. They live in Longbourn, the small town in England. Bennet's income is two thousands a year.

William Collins is a Clergyman. During Austen's time, clergyman in the Church of England increasingly came from the middle class. The occupation was viewed as a learned and prestigious profession and providing a moderate income. Actually, the life style of the middle class is almost the same as the upper class. They like to go to important places where many people are gathering such as attending the dancing parties.

Jane Austen also draws the class distinction which is in fact very rigid at her time. The upper class also shows their identity to the society. They do not want to be similar with the other class. Their performances are elegant and luxurious. They like to have the distinction of rank preserved. There are distinctions among the landed classes that are determined by the amount of wealth possessed by the members. In this novel, for instance, Miss Bingley and her sister underestimate Bennet's family because they are not wealthy compared to them. This situation is shown when Miss Elizabeth visited her old sister in Netherfield.

In the nineteenth century there were two different groups in England that are largely Christian middle classes and largely un-Christian working classes. The factory worker did not go to the church because they were outside of any religious body. "They thought religion just part of



fading way of life and they were scribed by religion doubt described by religion doubt.”  
(Gwinn 79)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen represents William Collins as the religious person.

*He is a clergyman and he has patroness, Lady Catherine. She always pays attention to his wishes, and consideration for his comfort, appeared very remarkable. William Collins had already had the honor of preaching her.*  
(Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 57)

A clergyman in the Church of England is given a living, meaning a house, in a Church district or parish. He usually stays at personage, which is usually modest but comfortable. The minister is called a parson. In this novel, Jane Austen draws Mr. Collins as become a financial sponsor, or patron of the local church.

The majority religion in England is Christianity. Every Sunday they go to the Church for praying. As a good Christian, Lady Catherine de Bourgh also goes to the Church every Sunday. So, based on the condition above the story of the novel can be mirror of the real condition society in the early nineteenth century that concerned with social status and social stratification in their society. Here, the writer tries to find whether there is a social stratification reflected in this novel or not.

By focusing on social aspects, Jane Austen tries to illustrate the social condition of the society at that time, and concludes that social class is not permanent. It can change depending on the effort of human. It can be called as a social mobility. By marriage, someone can change their social status be higher than before. This is experienced by Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Bennet. At the story, they are told that they belong to middle class, but after they get married with rich men, Darcy and Bingley, their social status automatically follow their husband's social status.

In the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that Jane Austen describes marriage based on social status or social stratification, clearly in the novel. It is not different from the reality in the early nineteenth century where in that period were many people had marriage based on material oriented and social status. After analyzing the novel using sociological approach, finally the researcher finds that there is correlation between underlying theory, the historical background of the England in the early nineteenth century, and also the structural elements of the novel. It can also be said that Jane Austen is able to reflect the condition of England society in that period in the story of the novel.



In the nineteenth century many people especially the upper class enjoyed aristocrat's excessive diet, and married woman from this class enjoyed increasing leisure. The amount of reading and writing grew voluminously.

*It was common to judge everything materially; money and wealth become the standard of pride and dignity (Back 78)*

Many activities occurred during leisure times. One of them was dancing party at the ball. It became activity for most of people in their spare time. In this novel, Mrs. Bennet represents this character because she always encourages their five daughters to attend the ball follow the dancing party. They come to the dancing party almost every day when they are in spare time. It is due to has become their life style.

Another major sort of marriage which occurs in this novel is the one concerning marrying outside social class which happens in the novel. This is when someone from a rather high class marries village girls which would be considered a social disaster. This is demonstrated by Mr. Darcy's first marriage proposal towards Elizabeth. He is taking on asking of someone of a much lower class.

In that time, everything is valued by material. The concept of materialism can be seen from the way Mrs. Bennet has a strong opinion on this subject due to her situation in life which is she should be concerned with herself and her daughters because if Mr. Bennet dies they will be left with nothing, because all their property will go to Mr. Collins. Mrs. Bennet wants her daughters married because if they do not then they will have no place to live, her great anxiety to get her daughters married is shown when she says

*A single man of a large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls! (Austen, Pride and Prejudice 2)*

In the nineteenth century, most women of England did marry. After the marriage, the wives tended to stay at home to manage the households and took care the family. In this novel, "Charlotte Lucas after becoming Williams Collins's wife, she also tended to stay at home and managed the household." (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 186) In the traditional British class system, wealth is passed on via the inheritance of family property. Inherited wealth conferred for more status than money earned by work. Family estates were usually inherited by the oldest son and sometimes daughters were given smaller incomes. In this novel, Mr. Bennet cannot inherit their wealth to their daughters but he inherits to his male cousin, Mr. William Collins.



### CONCLUSION:

Thus, based on the sociological analysis, it can be concluded that in *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen reflects the social realities of the English society including social, economic, political, science and technology, cultural and religious aspect at late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. The dominant aspect including in the novel is the social aspect, especially social stratification and social relation. In this novel Jane Austen also criticize the society that tends to consider social class as this only issue.

### REFERENCES:

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2005.
- Back, Robert N. 1967. *Perspective in Social Philosophy*. New York: Holy, Renechart & Winston, Inc.1967.
- Gwinn, Robert P. 1768. *The New Encyclopedia Britanica* Volume 2a. Chicago.1768.
- Gwinn, Robert P. *The New Encyclopedia Britanica* Volume 2a. Chicago,1768.
- Laurenson, Diana and Alan Swingewood. *The Sociology of Literature*. London: Paladia.1972.
- Susanto, Astrid S. *Pengantar Sosiologi dan Perubahan Sosial*. Bandung: Bina Cipta, 1983