

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Social class is a phenomenon that occurs in society. Social class causes differences in groups within a society, this is due to the level of social class which makes the rich people as the upper class and the poor people as the lower class. Nowadays, many people wrongly use their social class status to have an arbitrary attitude to other class groups who are not at the same level. From the phenomenon above it can be concluded that the social class of a person can influence their attitude towards others in a society.

The phenomenon of the influence of social class on someone's attitude does not only occur in the real world but also in the *Pride and Prejudice* novel written by Jane Austen. The writer is concerned in the *Pride and Prejudice* that shows the differences in social classes of British society in the early nineteenth century. The writer wants to deliver the differences in life and the attitude between the Middle class and Upper class of British society in the early nineteenth century.

Jane Austen is one of the famous novelists who came from England. Born in Steventon, Hampshire, England in 1775, Jane Austen has produced six works in the form of novels that are so extraordinary. Jane focused on her passion for exploring a woman's dependency in a marriage that they do only to pursue and get a high social class position to ensure their survival remains well-off from an economic standpoint and is not looked down on because of the social class they get from a man. Jane Austen often includes a critique and commentary on British nobility in the early nineteenth century in each of her works.

Pride and Prejudice is one of the best works of Jane Austen that lifts a love story in British society in the early nineteenth century. In her works, Jane Austen provides exploration relating to the way of life of British society amid differences in social classes. In her novel, Austen

shows the level of social class between the upper class and the middle class. The romance of love story between the main characters in the novel who came from different social classes made the *Pride and Prejudice* novel neat and popular.

Elizabeth Bennet as the main character who has a bold and assertive nature came from a middle class family who is lived in a small village called Longbourn. Elizabeth is the second of five children. Mr. Bennet her father could not bequeath his wealth to his daughter due to regulations requiring the inheritance of family property is given to sons. Realizing that her five daughters would not inherit property from her father, Mrs. Bennet urged her husband to match his five daughters with a rich man who had a higher social class than his family so that the marriage would benefit his five daughters.

Mr. Bingley is a newcomer who occupies a luxury building in the Netherfield Park area. Mr. Bingley made Mrs. Bennet increasingly urged her husband to introduce his daughter to Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bennet deftly invited Mr. Bingley to attend the dinner party, but the invitation could not be attended by Mr. Bingley because he had to go back to London soon. After finishing his business in London, Bingley returned to Netherfield Park with her siblings and best friend, Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bingley and his entourage went to a party held in the city of Meryton. It was there that finally Mr. Bennet to introduce his daughters to Mr. Bingley happened. Unexpectedly it turns out that Mr. Bingley was interested in Mr. Bennet's daughter named Jane Bennet. Mr. Darcy who is a friend of Mr. Bingley turned out to feel a sense of Elizabeth Bennet. Mr. Darcy's attitude Cold and slightly arrogant made Elizabeth uninterested in Mr. Darcy.

The love story of two couples who have different social classes certainly does not run easily. Mr. Bingley and his entourage were forced to leave Netherfield and return to London, there was no clear reason for the decision they had made, but that made relationship Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet ended because of Mr. Bingley's youngest sister named Caroline

sent a letter to Jane stating that Mr. Bingley likes Mrs. Georgina Darcy sister of Mr. Darcy and that is unknown to Mr. Bingley. The same is true of the love story of Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet, Mr. Darcy was forced to end his relationship with Elizabeth Bennet because Mr. Darcy has been forced to marry the daughter of Lady Catherine named Miss Catherine de Bourgh. Even so, the love story of the two couples ended happily. Mr. Bingley finally proposed to Jane Bennet accompanied by her best friend, Mr. Darcy. After Mr. Bingley proposed to Jane Bennet shortly afterward Mr. Darcy also ventured to apply for Elizabeth Bennet and Elizabeth Bennet accepted the proposal Mr. Darcy is happy. End of the story, Mr. Bingley was married to Jane as well as Mr. Darcy is married to Elizabeth and they live happily together in the residence of Mr. Darcy at Pemberly House.

Pride and Prejudice have become a very famous novel start from the first publication to the present. So, that is why *Pride and Prejudice* have been read by many people in this world. For that reasons certainly, many people who provide comments or responses about *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Here are some responses from readers of *Pride and Prejudice* novels. The first comment came from a reader named Casey Hoey. Casey revealed he agreed with Jane Austen about the concept of marriage based on love and not based on the high social class they have. The difference in social class between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy is not a barrier to their love.

Another positive comment came from a reader named Catherine Evans who claimed that he had fallen in love with Jane Austen's novel. That's because Jane Austen can show the different roles of a woman in society. Another thing is *Pride and Prejudice* shows how women uphold their reputation. Another comment came from a reader named Jessica Finan. She revealed that one of the things that attracted her to the *Pride and Prejudice* novels was the story which contained elements of social class. That proves that social class is very important in society.

In addition to responses that discuss the concept of marriage, differences in social class and the role of a woman. Another response discusses the family role described by Jane Austen through Mr. Bennet family. A reader named Rachel Todd gave a positive response related to the role of families who are more likely to be loyal to other family members than unfaithfulness. This can be seen from the attitude of Elizabeth Bennet, who was so loyal to her sister that she chose to follow her sister to Netherfield when she found out that her sister was sick.

Pride and Prejudice have many attractions and is very appropriate to be chosen as a research object focused on literary study. Jane Austen as a writer has included various elements of the social aspects of British society in the early nineteenth century into the novel.

The readers of *Pride and Prejudice* novels can understand how the situation of British society at that time. This can make the reader interested in researching the novel. They can raise various issues contained in the *Pride and Prejudice* novels such as issues concerning the concept of marriage, the role of women, gender equality, social stratification, etc.

Another thing that makes the *Pride and Prejudice* interesting is because it tells the romance of some young couples in the novel. A complicated but happy ending ultimately makes the *Pride and Prejudice* novel become a novel that has a happy ending story.

From the discussion above, the researcher interest in analyzing *Pride and Prejudice* novel because the story contains differences of social class which is make the researcher interest to connect that issue to the women's attitude towards men. The researcher wants to reveal the influence of social class on women's attitudes towards men in *Pride and Prejudice*. Therefore, the researcher researched with the title ***“THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CLASS ON WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MEN IN JANE AUSTEN'S PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (1813): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH”***.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the explanation above, the researcher expresses the problem statement which is described in the research questions as follows:

1. What are the indicators of social class in *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. How the attitude of women towards men is described in *Pride and Prejudice*?
3. Why did Jane Austen address women's attitudes of different social classes in *Pride and Prejudice*?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the indicators of social class in *Pride and Prejudice*.
2. To describe how the attitude of women in the different social class towards men in *Pride and Prejudice*.
3. To reveal whether Jane Austen agrees or not with the situation of British women in the early nineteenth century.

D. Significances of the Study

This research will give some benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

The study contributes to the body of knowledge, especially literary study on *Pride and Prejudice* and to complete the previous study that was analyzed *Pride and Prejudice*.

2. Practical Significance

The study enriches the present researcher's understanding of sociology and literature theory, especially on the field literary and society. The researcher hopes that this research gives deeper understanding to the next researcher in the field of literary as references and previous study on his/her research.