
**WEALTH AND POWER IN THE NOVEL *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*
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ABSTRACT

The problem of social class becomes a unique object which would be discovered in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The study aimed to determine the influence of social class on British society and represent the reflection of social class in British society in the novel. A method used in this research was qualitative descriptive. Data that were collected were in the form of narration and dialogue in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Furthermore, this study used the Marxist concept (1995:25) to analyse the data. The findings of this research were the discovery of the impact of social class on British society in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, namely *Pride and Prejudice* as the title in the novel and the invention of the forms of social class which can be found in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, such as status, wealth, and power.

Keywords: Marxist Theory, Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, social class

INTRODUCTION

Literature and society are two things that are interconnected and cannot be separated. Through literary works we can see how writers reflect society and social realities. The works of Jane Austen is the examples of literary works which are a reflection of people's lives in the early nineteenth. One of them is a novel entitled *Pride and Prejudice* which depicts people's lives in the early nineteenth century intelligently and realistically. Through this novel, Austen raises the topic in the early 19th century about the opportunistic and discriminatory reality of British marriages. To get social status, women at that time then competed to find husbands from higher social circles. Marriage is then considered to be an institution that can save women's social status, become one of the ways to obtain a stable life, and maintain family property.

The meaning of social class is the differentiation in a hierarchical manner of the society or population into classes according to economic matters, employment, education, and social status comparison between a

family member with other family members. Therefore, a position of the head of the family will increase as well as the status of other family members. The embodiment is the layers or classes of high, middle, or lower classes. Bernard Barber defines social class as the set of families. This means that the position of a family member in one class is related to the position of other family members. If a family head or family member occupies a high status, the status of other family members will also get a high status. Conversely, when the status of the head of the family is low, the status of family members will also low (Barber, 1961).

In the eighteenth century, European scientists used the term social class in a different sense, namely the position or social status. It means that the terms social status and social class are considered synonymous. The term social class began in the nineteenth century and used in the analysis of social inequality rooted such as the economic situations of a country public. The concept of Marx is the social class and the use of this term is distinguished from the social status term (Singgih, 2010). Social class is one of the issues in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. This can be seen from Jane Austen's view of the upper class or landowners by expressing them as lucky people. Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* reflects someone who is rich and has a good future. Wealth and income become a measure of social class. Mr. Darcy was considered a person from the upper social class. In contrast to the main female character, Elizabeth Bennet is described by Jane Austen as a woman from a middle-lower social class. This can be seen from the simple house of the Bennet family which is very different from Mr. Darcy.

Based on the background described above, the researcher formulated a research question, namely: what kind of social class issues in the *Pride and Prejudice* Novel? This question will be analyze by using Marxist theory. The researcher also use an objective approach which treats literary works as something that stands free from reference or extrinsic. On the other hand, it is described as a literary product which is an independent and autonomous object, and as a world in the complexity, integrity, coherence, and interpretation of its component elements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is a creative expression to express ideas or feelings from what they experience through these creative expressions which will always develop according to the times. Literature is reflection of attitudes towards the symptoms that arise from the surrounding environment which is then poured into the form of art. On the other hand, literature is also a form of entertainment which is a need to fulfill emotional satisfaction. In literary matters, words can be a medium of expression. Words that are recorded in one's living memory or through mechanical means such as writing can make a difference (Taylor, 2012). Literature and ideas have a connection that can be described by literary analysis or in different ways. In general, it is necessary in role in life and the study of literature. Through analysis, literature can be understood in depth until values, knowledge, beliefs, and symbols are represented in a story. There are various forms of literary works, one of which is the novel. The novel is a fictional prose narrative that depicts

characters and actions in real life in a long story and a fairly complicated plot. In social life, everyone has demands to live as an integrated individual that gives different characteristics. In the end, these differences can form a problem in social life, especially economic problems. Modern life is inseparable from economic problems that give rise to classification based on their ability in status or economic class. Social class is defined as the grouping of people based on their status in the society. It means that social class is represented by the stratification system that occurs in a particular society. Barbusse and Glaymann (2004) argued that stratification system that cuts a society into a hierarchy of social positions called social classes. This means that in the system of class stratification (middle class, lower class, and working class) everyone occupies a certain social position. Therefore, social class can be referred to as a substantial social cluster that has common socioeconomic characteristics (status, wealth, power) and a similar lifestyle. The Marxist theory of class probably fit the typical Marxist question of potential emancipatory transformation which is still sociologically beneficial if one declines the question (Glaymann, 2004).

In the 19th century, the theory of social class fully emerged and coincided with the development of modern social sciences, especially in sociology. The issue of inequality and social stratification began to be analyzed by several political philosophers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Hobbes. English and French writers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, put forward the opinion that non-political factors in society, such as the family and economic system influence the society's political life form. Furthermore, Henri de Saint-Simon as the French social theorist later carried this opinion and argued that it was the character of the economic production system which underlies the form of state government. The urban working class or proletariat theory introduced by Saint-Simon's successors was considered as the main political force in the modern society and precisely influenced the spreading of Karl Marx's class theory.

The idea of the class theory of Marxism is the history of contemporary society which is the history of class struggle. So that means, class theory presupposes that social class is the main actor in society. The example is the oppression of one class by another class results in human alienation. The theory expressed by Karl Marx is not an explicit theory, but rather the background of Marx's explanation of socialism, capitalism, and the laws of historical expansion. In Marx's theory, society is distinguished by modes of production such as the division of labor and technology. Based on each of these modes of production, a different class system is born where one class controls the production system (class of owners of capital) and the other class is the provider of services to the dominant class (working class) and direct producers. Eventually, it is the economic factor that governs social relations in a capitalist society.

METHOD

This type of the research is qualitative using descriptive method. A qualitative research is a research that refers to comprehend the phenomenon

of what is experienced by the research subject, holistically by descriptive in a special context the form of words and language (Moleong, 2005). The research method used in this study is a descriptive method using content analysis techniques. According to Guba and Lincoln this study with content analysis was carried out to draw conclusions through efforts to identify specific characteristics in a text objectively and systematically. This descriptive method is used to observe and describe social class in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by. In accordance with the type of research, the data to be discussed is qualitative data. Qualitative data can be collected through interviews, observations, documents (Moleong, 2005). The data that will be used is the content contained in the novel such as; characterization, plot, setting, theme and message, point of view, and language style that leads to social class expressed in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sociology is the science of things in the social sphere, such as status, economics, family relationships, occupation, and others. Literary works are created from society and also its environment. Furthermore, the relationship between society and literature are depicted in the study of literary works as social documents as well as hypothetical descriptions of social reality. Therefore, sociology can be related to various social aspects, such as social behavior, nationality, religion, and so on. The sociological dimension is related to the description of roles in environmental conditions. On the other hand, sociological factors such as work, education, and social status can be examined through the character's social life effectively (Wellek & Warren, 1956). Social stratification is the grouping or differentiation of community members vertically. According to Max Weber, Social stratification is defined as the classification of society into hierarchical levels according to the dimensions of status, social class, and power included in a particular social system (Bendix, 1998). Social stratification based on Max Weber's theory which is reflected in Jane *Pride and Prejudice* most prominently is through the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth. Darcy who has everything (class, status and power) is related to Elizabeth who is in a lower social class than him. Through these two figures, Elizabeth reflects the middle strata of English society in the early nineteenth century, while Darcy reflects the upper class. As a result of this relationship, conflicts arose because of their different social class, although, in the end they managed to solved these social class problems through love, sincerity, and commitment.

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is one of the realistic writings that describe positions based on their social status. This novel not only tells about the classic love story in medieval England between a middle-lower class girl named Elizabeth Bennet and a wealthy nobleman named Mr. Darcy. More specifically, Jane Austen described the condition of women at that time judged based on the social status they had and their behavior. Social class is one of the issues in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* (Pont, 1986). Jane Austen often alludes to the life of the British society in the 18th century which emphasized social status in their lives. Dance parties with a luxurious lifestyle are the hallmark of the upper-middle class. This is done to get friends who

may later become life partners in the future, especially by women because the position of their husbands will determine their level of welfare.

“YOU are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,” said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

“Oh! She is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you.”

“Which do you mean?” and turning round he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said: ‘She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt ME; I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.’ (Austen, 2001; p.13)

Some etiquette cannot be separated from the lives of women in the Georgian-Victorian era where they have to meet certain standards to get a rich husband. For example, such as not being allowed to express opinions because it was considered unusual at that time, this intelligence might intimidate men so they do not marry women with high intelligence. British women who were not used to expressing their opinions in those days became completely dependent on their husbands. Most of them marry not because of love, but a mere social status. Mr. Darcy, who has a high social class, was initially reluctant to get acquainted with the Bennet family, who had a low social class. Likewise with the main character, Elizabeth Bennet. The existence of social class issues is indeed inseparable from the conditions and views of the community at that time. Especially for a woman who will marry a man. When a woman marries, her social class will depend on her husband. It may be upper, middle, or lower class.

The higher class of society is described by the landlords as the historical English social class. This term is used by communities to differentiate their status based on how much property (land, gardens, etc.) they own and their annual income. In the 18th and 19th centuries, ownership in England was concentrated in the hands of a relatively small class of landowners. The owner of the land or plantation was then considered a landlord and a rich person. This term has been applied by people to measure their wealth among the upper, middle, or lower classes of society (Heaverly & EWK, 2020).

“He is the best landlord, and the best master,” said she, “that ever lived; not like the wild young men nowadays, who think of nothing but themselves. There is not one of his tenants or servants but will give him a good name. Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw anything of it. To my fancy, it is only because he does not rattle away like other young men.”

“In what an amiable light does this place him!” thought Elizabeth.

This fine account of him,' whispered her aunt as they walked, 'is not quite consistent with his behaviour to our poor friend.'
(Austen, 2001; p.306)

This upper class is then described by Jane Austen through one of her characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, namely Mr. Darcy. This can be seen from the wealth, houses, properties, and others which strongly reflect the nobility with high social status. It was also the social class that made Mr. Darcy so arrogant when he first met Elizabeth Bennett who had a different social class from him and so did the following meetings. Different social classes affect the storyline and development of the characters.

"Mr. Bennet's property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters, was entailed, in default of heirs male, on a distant relation; and their mother's fortune, though ample for her situation in life, could but ill supply the deficiency of his. Her father had been an attorney in Meryton, and had left her four thousand pounds." (Austen, 2001; p.34)

Husain, S. W. argued that Mr. Darcy's attitude towards women is one example of describing the condition of women based on their social class. The novel entitled *Pride and Prejudice* written by Jane Austen, was first published in 1813. In the life story of Jane Austen, it turns out that she is the daughter of a pastor who lives in the countryside. The rural environment she lives in makes social class a measure of social interaction. This is what makes criticizes acceptance and rejection in socializing based on social status. This association and grouping of social status positions are mostly aimed at women. Jane Austen then write down the situation and criticism of what was happening in her environment in one of her novels entitled *Pride and Prejudice* (Husain, 2020).

"Such were the kind of lamentations resounding perpetually through Longbourn House. Elizabeth tried to be diverted by them; but all sense of pleasure was lost in shame. She felt anew the justice of Mr. Darcy's objections; and never had she been so much disposed to pardon his interference in the views of his friend." (Austen, 2001; 286)

The social class in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* was then reflected in the characters. One of them is the main character, namely Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. Mr. Darcy as an upper social class with Elizabeth Bennet with a middle-lower social class influence each other. Jane Austen is indeed skilled in pouring the idea of social class in the 18th century into the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. That is why the social class in this novel can build an interesting storyline.

Pride

Pride is an emotion or feeling in the form of satisfaction or deep pleasure through the achievement of something. These achievements can be related to those closest to them from their possessions and qualities that can be widely admired. An example of this pride can be seen from the words, attitudes, and actions taken by Mr.Darcy.

“She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.” (Austen, 2001; p.13)

Based on Mr.Darcy's words, it can be seen that he is someone who is intelligent and has his own judgment of the people he meets. He has a judgment that tends to be harsh and hasty without any doubts about his judgment. This is because of his awareness of his wealth and high social status that makes him proud. This incident occurred when Mr. Darcy refused to dance with Elizabeth Bennet who had a lower social class. Mr. Darcy's behavior is a reflection of the family's influence on him because the family has an important role in shaping the behavior of other family members. Mr. Darcy in his daily behavior is very arrogant, even his pride and wealth cannot cover his shortcomings (Rugian, 2014).

Prejudice

Prejudice is an effective form of negative attitudes and feelings towards a person or member of a particular group based solely on the value of that group. It tends to be triggered by preconceived feelings and likely to be unfavorable to a person simply because of their social class differences. Elizabeth Bennet is a lady who represents Prejudice from the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. This is based on the way she easily judges someone though she does not know the real reality. In accordance with data from the novel, Elizabeth Bennet's psychological aspects are intelligent, observant, and independent (Made et al., 2021). Elizabeth has a behavior that is easily provoked by other people's words and is also easy to judge others. Elizabeth was once instigated by Mr.Wickham's words about all of Mr.Darcy's bad behavior. Without finding out the truth, Elizabeth immediately believed Mr.Wickham's words. Every time she met Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth always cursed and behaved rudely. In response to this, Mr.Darcy sent Elizabeth a letter. The letter contained Mr.Darcy's explanation that Elizabeth had misunderstood because all Mr.Wickham's words about Mr.Darcy were lies. Mr.Wickham twists the facts so that everyone hates Mr.Darcy (Agustya, 2019). An example of this pride can be seen from the words, attitudes, and actions taken by Elizabeth Bennet.

“And I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry.”(Austen, 2001; 241)

Elizabeth's words above illustrate that she really dislikes Mr. Darcy with his impolite attitude and actions. In addition, she also hates his

pride based on his social class. Prejudice is also inclined towards beliefs that have no clear basis and may not include reasonable attitudes and actions. It is usually resistant to rational influences. At first Elizabeth had a very strong prejudice against Mr. Darcy. However, she gradually begins to lose her judgment until she cannot judge who really loves her.

Power

Power is the ability to influence a person, group, or other parties to behave and think in accordance with the will of the influencing party. In addition, it can also be in the form of an assessment that someone wants to strengthen and confirm his power. In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, there are differences in social class that are clearly visible in terms of economics between men who have an upper social class and women who have a lower-middle social class. It is related to money and power that determines their attitudes and actions in society. According to Loindong, Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* reflects the society life during the early nineteenth century. This reflection starts from the most common habits that people do in things such as dance parties as a medium of socialization and correspondence as a medium of communication. In addition, the social aspects of British society at the beginning of the nineteenth century which are also reflected in *Pride and Prejudice* are not only the habits carried out by the middle-upper class society (Loindong, 2013). The example of the power contained in this novel can be analyzed through the character Mr. Darcy.

"I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men." (Austen, 2001; p.13)

Elizabeth is someone who is very cheerful and often laugh at the unpleasant things that happen to her. For example, when she was at a party and talking with Mr. Darcy, then he refused to dance with her because she was not considered beautiful enough (Asmarani, 2013). Mr. Darcy's words above indicate that he does not want to dance with Elizabeth at the party. This is because of the strength and power he has by giving rejection to Elizabeth Bennet who is a woman from the middle class. Mr. Darcy always thought that a man should pay attention to the decency, dignity, strength and social class of the people around him. Especially against women who at the time of the nineteenth century did not have equality with men. Although there are still few rights that women have in their contribution to suffrage and some rights related to marriage. It was the result of the change movement that began in the nineteenth century.

Wealth

Wealth is everything related to the value of a person, family, or group. This value includes tangible objects such as jewelry, houses, vehicles, and other personal property. In addition, financial assets in the form of stocks and bonds that can be traded for cash are also included in the value of a person's or family's wealth. The amount of wealth can be calculated by net assets minus any debts that must be paid. In the nineteenth century, this wealth was also

highly valued by society. In addition, the social class that occurs in society never goes unnoticed. Therefore, rich people who are in the upper social class are always a concern in society because they can attract anyone into their social class. There are three main classes described in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, namely the upper, middle and lower classes. The upper class was further divided into three parts, namely the aristocracy, the nobility, and the squirearchy or class of independent men who did not have to work. The upper social class becomes most of the characters in this novel. An example of a character who has wealth is Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley.

“Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion.” (Austen, 2001; p.11)

Mr. Bingley was considered someone worthy of being called a gentleman. When he first came to Netherfield, Mr. Bingley immediately attracted one of the daughters of the Bennet family. This is because of the wealth he has. Mr. Darcy is also considered as the ideal husband candidate because of the amount of money he has. Money can make a person rich and also the medium in which their character will shape life.

Status

Status is a person's position in society. In this novel *Pride and Prejudice*, family and marriage are the benchmarks for the status of women in the nineteenth century. This is what makes most women at that time really want an ideal man to be her husband. An example of a status that influences this novel is the character of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley.

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” (Austen, 2001; p.2)

Single men who come from rich families will indeed be the dream of women because of their social status in society. The status of women becomes dependent on men in their social environment compared to their individual conditions. Hence, they must marry the most appropriate man and are expected to have a high social class to the point that the woman's family sometimes forces them to marry according to these criteria. While they have the opportunity to choose the man they want to marry, this probability is likely to be small, unless the man is also rich and wants to marry her.

CONCLUSIONS

Social class is one of the issues in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. The life of British society in the 18th century described by Jane Austen often alludes to the importance of social status in their lives. Mr. Darcy, who has a high social class, was initially reluctant to get acquainted with the Bennet

family, who had a middle-lower social class. Likewise, with the main character, Elizabeth Bennet. The existence of social class issues is indeed inseparable from the conditions and views of the community at that time. Especially for a woman who will marry a man. When a woman marries, her social class will depend on her husband. It may be upper, middle, or lower class. The conclusion obtained after analyzing the social class issue in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* is the impact of social class in British society at that time in the form of *Pride and Prejudice* as the title in the novel. Pride is an emotion or feeling in the form of deep satisfaction or pleasure towards the achievement of something done by the power possessed based on one's own opinion. While prejudice is an emotion or feeling felt by someone towards another person based on their social class. In addition, there is a reflection of social class that occurs such as status, wealth, and power. Status is the position that everyone has in society. In this *Pride and Prejudice* novel, family and marriage affect women's status in society. Wealth is the total value of what a person, family, or group owns. This is usually associated with money as a benchmark. Then, power is the ability that a person has to influence others to behave, believe, and judge what they want.

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