



## JANE AUSTEN'S VIEW ON THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

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Received: (April 2020)

Accepted: (May 2020)

Published: (June 2020 )

### Abstract

This study dismantles Jane Austen's view in *Pride and Prejudice* novel triggered by the social systems in British society. The society influenced by the phenomena of the industrial revolution in England in the late eighteenth century revealed the social system. This study aims to find out how Jane Austen views the revolution of the industry in British society. By having the focus on the sociology of literature, this study applies Lucien Goldman's genetic structuralism. By the dialectical method, the study found that in Austen's view the landed gentry system and inheritance system was adopted to measure the social class among the societies. Jane Austen thought the inheritance system as the fallacious practice in the society as the economic condition motivated British parents to apply matchmaking for their children to get a better life. Jane Austen views that the industrial revolution plays an important role in forming social occupation at that time. The working-class condition leads them to work in the town, while the upper-class society tends to open some businesses by doing trade at the town. The rest group of middle class tends to work and dedicate themselves to the rich people. Finally, Jane Austen puts her view toward the society in *Pride and Prejudice*.

**Keywords:** author, class, genetic structuralism, the industrial revolution, view

### INTRODUCTION

Literary work is considered important because, in poetry, novels, and drama, we can find what is best from thought and said (Bertens, 2008). It sometimes compiles someone's life to put the principal accent upon his or her life, especially upon the story of his personality. Moreover, it can treat such stories as self-referential texts, they function to illuminate the processes of identity formation (Smith, 2001). It can be seen from Jane Austen's work which she views her life to the society in British societies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The era when the Industrial Revolution appeared as one of a great phenomenon to impact society. The industrial revolution in England happened very fast. The access and the use of technology were very easy rather than do manually, which cause a lot of rich people to make their factories and create a new social problem between society. Perkin Berlanstein (2017) describes the industrial revolution which portrays the phenomenon for a human to live their lives and know how to survive. In that period people were labor power and mostly worked in force by the capitalist. The change over the industrial revolution was marked by the presence of factories, especially textile and coal. As the setting of *Pride and Prejudice* novel, the era drives Austen to create her view about the industrial revolution from what she has seen in life and put it through her work.

*Pride and Prejudice* novel by Jane Austen is one of her best works published in 1813. The highlight of the story explained the situation between the middle and high-class condition of society. The novel describes British society's condition such as their social intercourse, the rules of society, and their economical situation. *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the media for Austen to share her mindset related to the situation over the nineteenth century. This novel can be seen as the reflection of Austen's life, how is her view toward the condition in England during her life. She shares the situations which become her experiences as the fictional representation. As *Pride and Prejudice* were produced in the time during the industrial revolution, several things could be found as the phenomenon of the industrial revolution in the novel. This study is stated sociological study which focuses on what happened in the society.

The sociology of literature was applied to focus on the relation between literary work and the social structure in which it is created (Bates, 2015) and some studies (Afrianto & Gulö, 2019; Suprayogi, 2019) can also have origin from some contexts in the societies. Considering the theory by Marx and Engels in Jadhav and Hall (2014), the sociology of literature approach is a scientific method of literary interpretation by considering

economic factors which forming society structure. The analysis in this study is supported by some studies (Arbain 2016; Kristic, 2015). Regarding the novel of *Pride and Prejudice* and genetic structuralism theory, one of the studies highlights the story in the novel as perspective on marriage. In addition, marriage is seen as the perfection of life when husband and wife can live happily ever after. This becomes the reason to find out perfect husband and wife and marriage moves to the central social concern of the society. The other study focuses on the intrinsic elements in *Pride and Prejudice* novel. It describes how the social and internal conflicts appear in the novel.

Those studies reveal that the issue of the industrial revolution in Jane Austen's in *Pride and Prejudice* provides a more specific model of the present study. The study aims to describe the situation within British society and what happened at that time, such as their perspectives and the structure of the society. On the other hand, some previous studies also give information about the author's view analysis and how to analyze a literary work using genetic structuralism theory.

## METHOD

This research employed a qualitative one that focuses on understanding or description. One of the qualities of this type of research is its ability to generate the general issue of a phenomenon or event (Aryangga & Nurmaily, 2017). It relies on their judgment, experience, history, social contexts, and constructions of reality to generate new or to enhance existing perceptions of events and conditions in the real world descriptive data (Cooper & White, 2012). The study also applied the descriptive qualitative method as a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals (Creswell, 2017). The study applied Lucien Goldman's genetic structuralism. It focuses on the relationship among the structure of the novel and the structure of the society based on the author's view on that (Faruk, 1994; Faruk, 2012). Genetic structuralism is an alternative theory to analyze literary works between historical and sociological phenomenon. In genetic structuralism, the dialectic method focuses on literary text and its cultural coherence (Kardiansyah, 2018) because "*dialectic mirrors the real world*" (Lanuza, 2016). This method is to draw the understanding of the literary work and its correlation with the phenomenon that happened in society, either their economic, political, social, religion, or technology. The dialectic method was applied to find out the correlation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* novel with the sociological and historical background that may explain the fact of humanity and world view.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Due to the presence of the industrial revolution in England over the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the industrial revolution has its role to trigger the social system within British society. There are two systems found in the *Pride and Prejudice* novel by the writers as described in the text below:

### Landed Gentry System

Landed gentry describes as a historical British social class that reflects the higher class of society. Landed gentry is the term used by the society to differ their status based on how much the property (estate, lands) that they have and their income per year. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ownership in England was concentrated in the hands of relatively small landed classes. By the capability of owning such land or estates, the people are considered as the landlord and triggered as rich. This term has been implemented by society to measure their wealth among the upper, middle, and lower class of society. Based on that term of British social class, these are the quotations regarding the landed gentry system found in the novel:

"Why my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he so takes possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week." (Austen, 2017: 6)

As a part of history, The Industrial Revolution also takes its part in forming the social system in British society. Landed gentry as the term of upper-class society also can be found in the novel. Jane Austen gives her view toward the system of society by using the diction of "large fortune" to indicate the higher class of society. From the quotation above, it describes a young man who becomes the landowner of Netherfield. Considering the term of landed gentry in England, the upper class is measured by the amount of wealth that they have, it can be from their parents or descent. During the era of The Industrial Revolution, the term of landed gentry can be measured by the wealth of how much estate, land and factories that they have so they could be considered as part of upper-class society. It also can be seen from the quotation below:

“What is his name?”

“Bingley.”

“Is he married or single?”

“Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!” (Austen, 2017: 7).

Jane Austen shares her view toward the upper class or the landowner by expressing someone with a large fortune. Those words represented Mr. Bingley as the one who is rich and has a good future. The wealth and the income of someone become the measurement of the social class. Jane Austen views that rich people would have a large fortune for the next years of life. It also can be seen from the quotations below:

They were very fine ladies; not deficient in good humor when they were pleased, nor in the power of making themselves agreeable when they chose it, but proud and conceited. They were rather handsome, had been educated in one of the first private seminaries in town, had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, were in the habit of spending more than they ought, and of associating with people on rank, and were therefore in every respect entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others (Austen, 2017: 22).

“Yes,” replied Mr. Wickham; “his estate there is a noble one. A clear ten thousand per annum. You could not have it with a person more capable of giving you certain information on that head than myself, for I have been connected with his family in a particular manner from my infancy” (Austen, 2017; 106).

Both of those quotations successfully represent the landed gentry system in England. Jane Austen shows it through some character. In the first quotation, Austen describes Mr. Bingley as the one who has a large fortune with an income of twenty thousand pounds per year. On the other hand, on the second quotation, she also shows the characterization of the landowner or the upper-class society through the character of Mr. Darcy who represented the nobleman, having the luxury estate with ten thousand pounds per annum for the income.

Thus, the landed gentry system is simply described in *Pride and Prejudice* novel. Jane Austen shows that the landed gentry system is used by the people at that time to differ their social status. The landed gentry system being implemented as the result of the development in the technology era where the people tend to migrate to the town and leave their houses at the village. The result there are lots of rich people take over their lands and mostly the people who have power are owning the lands in most villages. According to Greene (1953) in his paper entitled *Jane Austen and Peerage* stated that during Jane Austen’s life she was close to some people who are rich and called the House of Lord. So, because of the existence of those landowners, it gives attention to Austen to create the use of gentry system inside of *Pride and Prejudice* story.

## Inheritance System

Wealth is very powerful in every phase of life. Mostly the wealth of family will be given to their descent. The parents will give all of their heritages to their children. In British society, there is an inheritance system used. During the industrialization era, the inheritance system in England is getting worst. For those who only have a daughter with no son, the wealth of their parents is hugely possible to be taken by the brother of their parents or the male heirs from their family because they do believe that man is the great descent to take over the wealth of family. In *Pride and prejudice* novel, Jane Austen portrays the use of inheritance system in the Bennets family and Mr. Collins through these quotations:

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 I’ll supply the deficiency of his. His father had been an attorney in Meryton and had left her four thousand pounds (Austen, 2017: 39).

Mr. Bennet’s family represented as a family that has quite good at their economic condition. Despite, the quotation above indicates that in less of a son, Mr. Bennet should give the wealth to Mr. Collins as what British society has implemented this system. In the urgent economic condition during the industrial revolution era, people require extra money to live their life. In this position, Austen reflects her life as a daughter with no brother in her family, she tries to describe that the system used among the society is wrong. The inheritance system during that period is hardly accepted by society. The use of the inheritance system also can be found from the next quotation. Jane Austen represents it through Mr. Collin’s character in the quotation below:

Having now a good house and a very sufficient income, he intended to marry; and in seeking a reconciliation with the Longbourn family he had a wife in view, as he meant to choose one of the daughters if he found

them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends-for atonement-for inheriting their father estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitability, and excessively generous and disinterested in his part (Austen, 2017: 97).

From the quotation above, in the will of marrying, Mr. Collins plans to use the inheritance system to get one of Mr. Bennet's daughter. The urgency of his economic condition drives him to get his intention of the possession of Mr. Bennet's wealth. Looking at his daughters, Mr. Collins has a will to take one of his daughters as the substitute for their wealth. So, if he could marry one of them, then Mr. Bennet's wealth is saved and will not be taken by Mr. Collins. So, if there is no one of the daughters who wants to marry him, then he will take all of the wealth of Mr. Bennet as his.

### **Industrial Revolution and the Urgency of Marriage**

During the industrial revolution era, most of the society realized the need for marriage especially for those from the middle to lower class society. As Austen witnessed in her era, there are a lot of people who come not only from the nobleman but also from the middle-class society. "Austen may have had a sharply critical mind" (Pittock, 2003) for what happened in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as she smoothly criticizes the difference of condition between two classes in her novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The need for married status is to lift the economic status in a chaotic period. Due to that issue, the people that time like to do matchmaking over their family or their relations. Matchmaking is the way to unite a man and a girl to be together and ended in a married status. This term is the common term that usually parents use to looking for a partner for their children. During the Industrial Revolution, the economic condition of society for low and middle classes society is in a warning status. They perceived to have additional money to live their life. In Austen's view, marriage and money cannot be separated. Austen (1987: 33) stated in her letter "Marriage is a great improver. As to money, that will come, you may be sure because they cannot do without it". Bennet's family as one family that does not have a son, they have to give all of their wealth to Mr. Bennet's brother if they could not make one of their daughters get married. So, that is the reason why Mrs. Bennet enthusiast introduces their daughters to the owner of Netherfield and hoping that he will get interested in one of them. Here are the quotations about matchmaking found in the novel:

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you, and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy" (Austen, 2017: 7).

The quotation above indicates the matchmaking that Mrs. Bennet does. She tries to introduce her daughter to Mr. Bingley and wishing he will choose one of them. She realizes her family condition is urgent and it results in the action of her to seek someone who has a good fortune to marry her daughters and Mr. Bingley is the best choice for her. The urgency of married to pursue their prosperity is represents by the action of matchmaking that the parents do in the story. Besides Mr. Bennet, other parents do the same thing as seen in the quotation below:

"I honor your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture somebody else will; and after all Mrs. Long and her daughters must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself" (Austen, 2017: 10).

The quotation above shows that Mrs. Bennet is not the only one who tried to get her daughters to get into Mr. Bingley's attention. From that quotation, it stated that Mrs. Longbourn also tries to get her daughter into Mr. Bingley by introducing them at some moment. They compete to steal Mr. Bingley's attention to their daughters. This thing happens because they are in the will of increasing their economic status. By marrying Mr. Bingley, their status will be automatically lifted into upper-class society.

The novel sometimes portrays the suffering of the main character through the whole story in the novel (Amelia & Dintasi, 2019). In Austen's life, the matchmaking process during the industrial revolution is a common thing for British society. They like to look for a partner for their child to lift their economic status. Hume (2013) in his writing entitled *Money in Jane Austen* stated that the genteel woman must either have money or marry money. It is related to the possession of Mrs. Bennet that always tries her best to marry their daughters off. The chaos during that period results from the parents works hard to get their children a better life. Jane Austen lived within the society who had the perspective that British parents should marry their daughters to the rich men to lift their economic condition. This is what Austen saw during her lifetime in the late eighteenth century. Braun (2016) stated, "Like her heroines, [Austen] was a woman who chose freedom, knew the value of money, dwelled profusely on the subjects in her novels, and refused to marry without love". Her family's poor economic condition causes

their parents to ask her sister, Cassandra, to marry. She is planned to marry her father's relatives, a rich man. This can help the family pursue prosperity by having a rich son in law. The condition drives Jane Austen to share her view toward the matchmaking issue in British society and creates her perspective about marriage. It does not only become a matter of economic status, but it is also about love between married couples.

## CONCLUSION

This study focuses on Jane Austen's view on *Pride and Prejudice* with genetic structuralism theory by Lucien Goldman. The novel finally delineates Austen's view in the Industrial Revolution in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jane Austen thought the inheritance system as the wrong implementation the society. Austen through Elizabeth Bennet who objects Mr. Collins's proposal is her refusal for the system in her era. Second, Jane Austen views that the industrial revolution caused the urgency of early married as she strongly opposed it. The terrific economic condition of society motivated British parents to find a partner for their children to get a better life. Third, Jane Austen views that the industrial revolution plays an important role in forming the social occupation at that time. The terrible of working-class condition leads them to work in the town. The upper-class society tends to open some businesses by doing trade at the town, meanwhile, the middle class of society tends to work and dedicate themselves to the rich people. The study finally results that Jane Austen views her life on the industrial revolution toward the society in *Pride and Prejudice*.

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