

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

When literature is taught to students studying a certain language, its objectives are not merely to enlarge their vocabulary building and their grammar. There are many other advantages they may gain from studying literature. First of all, literature, according to Robert Frost, is a "performance in words", and has the element of entertaining or affording pleasure. In other words, it brings enjoyment in their lives. It means that it creates relaxation and brings distraction from the monotonous days (Mayhead, 1965:9). Literature also adds their knowledge and outlook on life and world as Little (1963:3) says "... literature broadens and stimulates our minds, makes us people of wider human sympathy ...". For example, after reading Romeo and Juliet they understand that to love does not always mean to possess. Eventhough Romeo loves Juliet very much, he cannot marry her because her parents do not give their consent. To communicate significant experience is another advantage of reading literature where they are allowed to participate in it imaginatively. By doing so, their experience broadens since literature makes them acquainted

with the experience, and their experience deepens since literature makes them understand the everyday experience (Perrine, 1969:6). Of those advantages that literature gives, the writer, then, encourages herself to choose literature as the subject matter of her thesis.

There are works of literary art, such as poem, play, short story, and novel. Each person has his own purpose in reading a work of literary art. For example, a person may read a novel because he just wants to kill his time. Another one, however, is interested in reading it because there are certain things, such as messages of life, that the author reveals in the novel and those things make him interested and excited to read it. However, many people have the tendency to condemn reading a novel as a waste of time. They think that novel concerns with invented characters and invented saying and doings, so it is just like children's story books. In fact, the writer does not think so. In the London of Charles Dickens, for example, Dickens does not write strictly a historical account of some aspect of London life, yet he fills his book with fictitious characters. He does so because he has more to say about life in general as he saw it. Besides novel, other works of literary art, of course, have something about life to be revealed. Therefore, it is not wise for the writer to judge whether novel is better than other works. The writer intends to analyze a novel because she thinks that it is easier for her to understand the novel since everything in the novel is almost narrated in detail, such as the appearances, the

attitudes, the feelings or emotions, and the thoughts of the characters, and the social and cultural background at a time.

In this thesis, the writer has conducted the study on the novel written by one of the greatest novelists who lived in the Romantic period in the eighteenth century. The novelist is Jane Austen. The writer chooses Jane Austen with the consideration that Jane Austen is regarded as the first woman writer making a great name for herself in English literature as stated by Kooistra and Schutt (1948:250). Lewes as quoted by Gray (1966:324) also states that Jane Austen is "an artist of the highest rank". Further, he adds that her works have been extensively read, and her merits have been keenly enjoyed. Besides, Edinburgh as quoted by Gray (1966:322) mentions that Jane Austen takes simple plots occurring in every day life and commonplace people as her characters, but she is able to make the readers acquainted with the characters and feel as if they lived among them. Then, as quoted by Q.D. Leavis (1966:293), Professor Caroline Spurgeon praises Jane Austen's novels as the nature of a miracle. In this thesis, the writer takes one of Jane Austen's novels to be analyzed. She chooses Pride and Prejudice for many experts say that this novel is her best work. Lewes (Gray, 1966: 330-331), informs that Pride and Prejudice is the best of Jane Austen's novels since it is the most outstanding story and the greatest variety of characters. He, then, adds that from the first to the

last chapter of Pride and Prejudice, there is a succession of scenes of high comedy.

In Pride and Prejudice, the story tells about one character being proud and the other suffers from that pride. Pride is a human nature. Every man has his own kind of pride. Having pride is important of our lives because by being proud of what we have achieved, we will be satisfied, yet it should not be too much. The cause of being proud can be various as what Hume (1965:279) says,

A man may be proud of his beauty, strength, agility, good mien, address in dancing, riding, fencing and his dexterity in any manual business or manufacture. But this is not all. The passion looking farther, comprehend whatever objects are in the least ally'd or related to us. Our country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths; any of these may become a cause either of pride . . . .

As seen in Pride and Prejudice, Fitzwilliam Darcy's pride is not a common one. His pride is caused by his position as a rich aristocrat who earns ten thousand pounds a year and who is the owner of a very large estate, by his parents' training and by his obligation to preserve his family's dignity. His proud manner is shown when his friend, Mr. Bingley, who takes a large house, Netherfield, holds a ball. Darcy attends the ball, and during the ball he does not dance with anyone except with Mr. Bingley's sisters whom he has already known. His manner is misinterpreted by a beautiful girl named Elizabeth Bennet. She considers his manner disagreeable and reserved, and she begins to dislike him. Besides his

manner, his superior way of talking also makes her dislike him. It is seen when she overhears the conversation between Mr. Bingley and Darcy. Mr. Bingley offers her to dance with Elizabeth, yet he refuses Mr. Bingley's offer and insults Elizabeth as a young lady who is slighted by other men since she does not have a partner for the dance. Her feeling of dislike toward him is strengthened by the story of Wickham, a young and charming officer. Wickham tells her the artificial story about Darcy. According to him, Darcy is the most selfish and unfeeling man and the one who ruins his life. Besides that story, Elizabeth dislikes him very much when she knows that Darcy takes a part in separating the happiness of her sister, Jane. Actually Darcy is a generous-hearted man who always helps the poor. Yet his good character is unknown by Elizabeth. She mistreats his character. She does not realize that she is too proud of her right feelings in judging Darcy's character, thus she always dislikes him. It is seen when Darcy proposes to marry her, but she flantly refuses him. Later on, however, Elizabeth recognizes his character of being proud and is able to accept it. At the end of the story, they both get married.

In studying a work of literary art, it is important to determine its theme as argued by Perrine (1970:106), "The ability to state theme is a test of our understanding of a story". Therefore, when one has found the theme of a work of literary art, he would be able to understand the detailed problems, conveyed messages, and the conclusion of it. Knowing the

importance to state the theme, the writer, then, chooses to analyze the theme on Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. To discover the theme, there are several aspects to be concerned. Little (1963:13) mentions that the title can be a means to find out the theme. While Kenney (1966:94) and Ryan (1963:51) add that character plays an important role in expressing the central idea or the theme of the novel. Of these reasons, besides analysing the theme, the writer also discusses the relationship between title and theme, and the characters representing the theme.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

Based on the above reasons, this thesis tried to answer the following questions,

1. What is the theme of this novel ?
2. Is the title related to the theme ?
3. Which characters represent the theme ?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

In line with the problems above, this thesis intended to find out, firstly, what the theme of this novel is, secondly, whether the title is

related to the theme or not, and thirdly, which characters represent the theme.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The results of this thesis is expected to be able to give a little contribution concerning the teaching of literature, especially on the teaching of novel. The study on the theme in Pride and Prejudice is as well expected to give insight for understanding novel. With this thesis, the writer hopes that the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University are able to understand this novel better.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This thesis concentrates on the discussion of theme in Pride and Prejudice. It is not easy to find out theme of a literary work. The writer analyzes the theme in this novel through its characters, plot, and setting for it is developed through them. In relation with the characters, not all characters in this novel are discussed. The writer limits her study on discussing some characters, like Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy, Jane Bennet, Mr. Charles Bingley, Mrs. Bennet, Mr. William Collins, Mr.



George Wickham, and Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who are important in developing the theme.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation, some key terms used in this thesis are defined as follows,

### **a. Theme**

According to Perrine (1970:102), theme is the controlling idea or the central insight or the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by the story. In other words, theme is the basic idea of life in general that is expressed in a literary work. Whatever asserted in it is about a comment on life, a description of how people act and the effect of their actions upon themselves and others (Pooley et al, 1967:536).

### **b. Character**

What is meant by character in this thesis is the one explained by Roberts (1969:11-12) as follows :

the author's creation, through the medium of words, of a personality who takes on actions, thoughts, expressions, and attitudes unique and appropriate to that personality and consistent with it. Character might be thought of as a reasonable facsimile of a human being, with all the qualities and vagaries of a human being.

### **c. Pride**

Pride is an indirect passion that has agreeable object, related to ourselves, by an association of the perception of mind either idea or impression. Pride is caused by the qualities of mind that operate and the subject on which the qualities are placed. Imagination, judgment, memory or disposition, wit, good-sense, learning, courage, justice and integrity are the qualities of mind, while the subject consists of one's beauty, strength, agility, good mien, address in dancing, riding, fencing, dexterity in any manual business or manufacture, country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths and so on (Hume, 1965).

### **d. Prejudice**

Simon and Schuster in *The Great Quotations*, 1966:187 say that prejudice is an attitude to be kept in hand, not attitude to be avoided. It means it is nature for human being to possess prejudice. Prejudice is not a devil attitude. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1983), it is "an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics". It is also "an adverse opinion or learning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge". In this thesis, what is meant by prejudice is the combination of the first and second definition above. In other words, prejudice is defined as an adverse opinion or learning or attitude towards

an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics which is formed without grounds or before enough knowledge.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction while the second one concerns with review of related theories and studies. Then, chapter three deals with the methodology of the study. The next chapter, chapter four, analyzes the theme in Pride and Prejudice. At last, the fifth chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions.