

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter conducts the introduction of the study that includes the background of the study, problem formulation, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

A. Background of the Study

In the 18th century, one's honor was determined or seen by the wealth, social status and position that usually were got from hereditary inheritance. The wealthy would be considered more honorable because they had more money and property. Money became a fundamental sign of a person in social life. Poonam Nagar states that "..., money was then, as it is now, of fundamental significance. It was very important that a family must have a good reputation & financial stability, for a satisfactory living in the society" (121). The quotation shows that money would also enhance the reputation and life satisfaction in that era.

Social status would affect one's honor. It means that someone with a higher social status would be more respected by the society of that era. Suaidi et al. argue that "Jane Austen is one of the very famous writer of the century, she lived a simple and living in communities conditions that are very distinguish social status between men and women, causing intimidation women by men with the condition that her experienced..." (86). It was very clear that the difference of social status between men and women reflected at that time. The men's position

was higher than women in society. Women have lower social aspect and position than men. The women's social status was lower than men's.

Furthermore, inheritance became the important thing for people because it was determined by wealth and social status. England was known as a commonwealth country which tightly keeps its traditions like inheritance. As Ulla Tarkainen said that;

Inheritance consist of transferring property after the death of the prior owner to his/her descendents, ... The concept of an inheritance system comprises both laws and customs, based on which an inheritance is practically carried out. Hereby it is necessary to bear in mind that laws, customs, and the actual practice of inheritance need not overlap. (127)

It means that, inheritance would be given to the next generation after the owner dies. Inheritance was a law of wealth in a family, because of one's death there would be a transfer of the wealth left behind. The division of inheritance was followed the law and custom in that time.

The case of inheritance became a very important issue in every family. Although it was important, the division of inheritance often leads to various problems. It triggers conflict if the division of inheritance was not fair. That was due to differences of opinion regarding equality and justice in the division of inheritance in England. According to Eileen Spring;

By the common law rules of inheritance women in English landed society fell into two classes. Some were altogether excluded from inheriting ...and attention has been focussed largely on eldest sons and their relations with younger children, with younger sons or with daughters not heiresses.... (273)

It shows that, men were considered to get more inheritance than women. Men were the focus for the division of inheritance. The eldest son became the inheritor of their father's inheritance.

Inheritance is divided into two kinds. Those are primogeniture and multigeniture. Alston and Schapiro states that;

Inheritance transfers are divided into two principal types primogeniture (passing all wealth to the eldest son) and multigeniture (dividing the wealth among all the sons or possibly all the children). Partibility (where the land is divided among the children) usually accompanies multigeniture, whereas impartibility (keeping the land as a single piece) accompanies primogeniture.

The common law regarding the intergenerational transfer of wealth in most of feudal England was primogeniture. (277)

From the quotation above, it explained that the primogeniture system is the system which inherits all the wealth from the person who has died to the eldest son only. While the multigeniture system is the system which shares all the wealth to all sons and children.

According to Ulle Tarkiainen, "..., the law preferred a son as a property heir" (126). The 18th century law prefers to give property to the son. In England the division of inheritance uses primogeniture system. Primogeniture is defined in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as:

The right of succession or inheritance belonging to the first born, the principle, custom or law by which the property or title descends to the eldest son (or eldest child); spec. The feudal rule of inheritance by which the whole of the real estate of an intestate passes to the eldest son. (qtd. in Jamoussi 9)

From the quotation above, it can be concluded that someone or especially a father was forced by the law in England to inherit the wealth and property to the eldest son. The primogeniture system was very adverse for the women side and it places the men as the profitable position.

As Eileen Spring states that "The prime rule is well known: Land descended to the eldest son to the exclusion of his siblings" (274). This rule would only give the wealth and land to the eldest son and ignore his sisters or brothers. Allarie Gifford states that "Women had no right to inheritance or land ownership..." (2). Women in their time did not have rights to inheritance and land ownership. Injustice in the division of inheritance was caused by the primogeniture system. According to Suaidi et al., "The position of women in distribution of the inheritance is weak; they do not have a right to get the inheritance. The distribution of inheritance based on Primogeniture causes

discrimination between men and women” (91-92). The quotation shows that women were unprofitable people in the primogeniture system. The division of inheritance using primogeniture system also causes discrimination between men and women. As Tarpley said that “Primogeniture, a feudal practice, became popular after 1066 as a way to preserve the estate intact over generations” (90). The primogeniture system was applied in England after 1066 to maintain the wealth and property to remain intact for the next generation and not fall to the others.

Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* was first published in 1811. This novel tells about the two sisters, Elinor Dashwood and Marianne Dashwood as a main female characters. They were the daughters of Mr. Henry Dashwood and Mrs. Henry Dashwood. They have a younger sister, Margaret. After their father’s death, they were forced to leave their home at Norland Park for a small cottage far side of England. They moved to Barton Cottage owned by Sir John Middleton. Mr. Henry Dashwood’s fortune and estate of Norland Park bequeathed to his son from his former marriage, Mr. John Dashwood. Besides, he has three daughters from his second marriage to Mrs. Dashwood.

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the background of the study there is one question as problem to answer in the analyzes, the question is;

1. What are the primogeniture system depicted in Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*?

C. Limitation of the Study

There are some aspects that might be analyzed in the literary work, but in this study just focuses on analyzing the primogeniture system. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* as the object of the analysis. This study only focuses on primogeniture system depicted in the novel.

D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem formulation above, this study focuses on the following objective:

1. To identify the primogeniture system depicted in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful in the following ways:

1. This study is expected to give some additional information and knowledge about primogeniture system especially in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.
2. This study hopefully can give contribution as the references and help the other researcher, especially the student of English Literature in Faculty of Languages and Communication Science Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang.

F. Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter describes the introduction that divided into six subchapters; background of the study, problem

formulation, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter is reviews of related literature that consist of synopsis of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and related literature will use in analyzing the novel. The third chapter contains the research method that consist of types of research and data organizing. Data organizing is divided into three parts; data collecting method, types of the data and analyzing the data. Data collecting method is divided into four parts; reading the novel, identifying the data, classifying the data and reducing the data. The fourth chapters contain finding and discussion. The fifth chapters provides conclusion and suggestions.

