

THE FEMININITY OF JANE AUSTEN
THROUGH THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF
SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

A Thesis



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BY:

L. UWYSE HASIANNI SIANIPAR

05 185 039



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT - FACULTY OF LETTERS
ANDALAS UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini membahas tentang ide Jane Austen mengenai femininitas yang harus dimiliki wanita melalui karakter utama yaitu Elinor dan Marianne. Skripsi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bahwa terdapat perbedaan antara pandangan Austen mengenai femininitas dengan femininitas yang berlaku pada wanita di tengah-tengah masyarakat pada abad ke-19. Selain itu penulis juga mengkaji bahwa perilaku para wanita yang digambarkan Austen dalam novel *Sense and Sensibility* ini adalah bentuk penilaiannya terhadap perilaku yang kurang sesuai dengan femininitasnya.

Dalam menganalisis novel ini penulis menerapkan teori "gynocriticism" oleh Elaine Showalter dan pendekatan ekspresif oleh Abrams. Melalui teori "gynocriticism" Showalter, penulis memperlihatkan femininitas menurut ideologi Jane Austen yang berbeda dengan masyarakatnya.

Dari hasil analisis penulis menyimpulkan bahwa melalui novel ini Jane Austen menyampaikan idenya mengenai femininitas yang berbeda dengan wanita di tengah-tengah masyarakat pada abad ke-19. Femininitas itu kesemuanya menyangkut hal-hal seperti tradisi pencarian suami, penilaian yang terlalu dini, sikap meremehkan wanita lain dan hubungan antara kakak beradik perempuan.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Novel is one of literary works that interesting to analyze, since the author usually conveys the ideas through the novel much clearer. An author may explicate the phenomena within society through the novel especially that related to the existence of women. Every author does not forget to put at least one female character in a novel, especially if the author is a woman, whether the female character takes important roles or not.

Many female authors formulate the representation of woman in a given society as an important theme in their novel. They do not only emphasize the roles of a woman within the story but also reveals the society where a given character being born into and grew up. As Bressler states:

By so doing, literature concretizes an array of human values, emotions, actions, and ideas in story form. And it is this concretization that allows us to experience vicariously the stories of a host of characters. Though these characters we observe people in action, making decisions, struggling to maintain their humanity in often inhumane circumstances, and embodying for us a variety of values and human characteristics that we may embrace, discard, enjoy, or detest (11).

Reading a novel gives the readers not only a story to entertain but also author ideas about a given society and the characters involved. As for women writers, novel is a way to express their attitudes toward the society they lived

in that always related to the life of women and of how women treated and act out.

Jane Austen is regarded as one of the most famous women authors which created some great novels. Often in her every novel, Austen conveys her ideas about the society around her and the representation of women in her lifetime within the female characters.

She conducts the society ideas of being a female in the nineteenth century in England and the way women move on their life. She wrote amazing stories, which laid open women's lifestyle at the time, as her viewpoint of British society that is the way they treated and beheld women, also society principle of what is proper or not a woman has to be.

Sense and Sensibility for instance is known as her first novel which was written fourteen years before it was published in 1811. The story was first titled "Elinor and Marianne" taken from the name of the two main characters presented in the story. Elinor and Marianne are both two sisters whose father has just passed away. They live with their mother and a little sister and are afraid being homeless and abandoned by their stepbrother. Elinor and Marianne are presented as sense and sensibility since they have different attitudes and ways of facing their life. Austen describes Elinor as a calm woman and has a strong understanding of her family; Marianne in other side as a lively woman and eager in everything.

In the story, Austen also reveals the society ideas of being a female through the society attention toward Elinor and Marianne which influence

their femininity. For instance, the condition where women are dependant to men that their status will be in a deep sympathy if they have no husband.

The writer chooses Sense and Sensibility among other novels written by Jane Austen since both the characters Elinor and Marianne stand out within the novel. The writer also finds out that the way Austen figures out the story is really connected to the attitudes, emotions, and ways of thinking of both Elinor and Marianne. Besides, there are many society ideas of femininity in Britain on nineteenth century which is revealed within the story.

The writer thinks it is important to conduct this research to analyze the ideas of femininity by using gynocriticism proposed by Elaine Showalter. The writer will focus on analyzing the main characters Elinor and Marianne. The writer uses this theory since this research is aimed to find Austen's ideas of femininity that conveyed through the characters. By using this theory, the writer also means to find out that the femininity of Elinor and Marianne are bit different from the society ideas of femininity.

In order to support the research, the writer will include some information related to Austen's experience of life dealing with the society around her. It is to establish that Austen's ideas of femininity reveals within the novel are much different from the society.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Sense and Sensibility is an interesting novel to read and to analyze. In this novel, Jane Austen really wants to show the readers the ideas of femininity through the main characters Elinor and Marianne, since they

present the sense and sensibility through their attitudes, emotions and ways of thinking in facing their life. Elinor is presented as having sense that she concerns on the way of keeping her family well-being than thinks and acts playfully. Marianne is presented as having a sensibility that she thinks and acts in a deep feeling.

The writer finds out that the femininity of the two sisters are as the way Austen's conveyed her ideas of what kinds of personality a woman has to act out. There are as well some differences between the femininity of main characters with the society ideas of femininity.

1.3 Scope of the Research

The writer will focus the research on analyzing Austen's ideas of femininity through the main characters Elinor and Marianne from their attitudes, emotions and ways of thinking in moving on their life. Therefore, the writer will also analyze the society ideas of femininity reveals within the novel. In conducting the research the writer will answer the questions below:

1. What are the society ideas of femininity that the writer found within the novel?
2. What are Austen's ideas of femininity that the writer found through the main characters?

It is in order to figure out that there are differences between Austen's ideas and society ideas of femininity.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After analyzing Sense and Sensibility by using expressive approach and gynocriticism, the writer finds out that the femininity of the main characters are Austen's ideas of femininity. Austen conveys those ideas through Elinor and Marianne to show the readers that she has different ideas with the femininity which appeared in the society around her in the nineteenth century.

Through the research, the writer discovers four uppermost femininity which are most spotted by Austen within the novel. The femininity of women in the given society are all related on finding husband, on giving immediate judgment over romantic affairs, on underestimating other woman based on social classes, and on sisterhood.

Apparently, the writer finds out that for Austen the femininity which appeared within society such as finding husband, giving immediate judgment, and underestimating other woman are kinds of femininity a woman must not have. She considers finding husband as useless, giving immediate judgment as careless and just a waste of time, while underestimating other woman as unfair. Therefore, another thing which is also important to consider for Austen is maintaining on sisterhood. She considers that every sister must respect to each other feeling and privacy.

The result of this research shows that within her novel Austen really conveys her feeling and thoughts about her society. It is also proved that between Austen ideas and society ideas of femininity are different.

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