

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

A person's personality can be greatly influenced by the environment in which they grow up. According to Parke (2004), family is the major context for children's development, and interactions within the family system shape children's psychological development pathways. In psychology, an individual's development is often shaped by external factors beyond their control, such as parenting styles, the family's economic conditions, and the dynamics of sibling relationships. These elements shape children's emotional experiences, which ultimately affect their character, search for self-identity, and perspective on themselves and others. From a psychosocial perspective, the family serves as the primary context for a child to understand social relationships, social roles, and acceptance of others' behavior. Erikson (1963), in his psychosocial development theory, emphasized that the family is an important context for children to understand social roles and interpersonal relationships.

The family is not only a place where children receive physical care but also the earliest environment in which they develop a sense of emotional security, communication skills, and social values. Every interaction that occurs within the family contributes to the way children understand themselves and others. Through everyday experiences with parents and siblings, children gradually build their self-confidence,

emotional responses, and behavioral patterns. Therefore, the quality of family relationships has a significant influence on children's psychological development because it serves as the primary foundation for their understanding of love, acceptance, and recognition. Family dynamics are important because within the family there is a distribution of roles, attention, and different forms of caregiving. These patterns of interaction can create different psychological experiences for each child.

In addition to the relationship between parents and children, interactions among siblings also play an important role in personality development. Sibling relationships often involve cooperation, competition, emotional support, and conflict, all of which shape children's psychological experiences. Because each child occupies a different position within the family, sibling may experience different expectations, responsibilities, and parental treatment. As a result, children who grow up in the same household may develop different personalities, even though they share a similar family background. These differences become increasingly evident when parents unconsciously compare one child to another or distribute attention unevenly among their children. Therefore, a child's position within the family is not merely biological but also psychological, as it may affect how the child adapts to the family environment and develops a sense of self-identity.

This view is supported by Alfred Adler's concept of the family constellation, which explains how birth order, parenting styles, and sibling interactions may contribute to the development of different personality patterns (Adler, 1956, as cited in

Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Family constellation refers to the position and relationships of individuals within the family, including the way children experience their relationships with parents and siblings. These experiences can create different psychological situations for each child, even when they grow up in the same family. Therefore, a child's position within the family can influence how they respond to the family environment and develop their personality.

One important concept related to the family constellation is birth order. Adler's birth order theory explains that the position of a child within the family, such as the firstborn, middle child, or youngest child, can create different psychological experiences. Feist and Feist (2006) explain that birth order is a key concept in Adler's theory because it influences how individuals develop their lifestyle and respond to their family environment. Adler argued that children in different birth-order positions experience different family situations because parental attention, responsibilities, and relationships with siblings change as the family develops (Adler, 1956, as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Therefore, birth order is relevant to the study of personality because it provides a framework for understanding how individuals respond to and adapt to their family environments

The position of the middle child is particularly relevant to this study because a middle child occupies a position between older and younger siblings. This position may result in experiences that differ from those of the firstborn and youngest children. Kevin Leman (2009), in *The Birth Order Book*, discusses characteristics commonly

associated with middle children, including the tendency to experience competition with siblings, seek recognition, and establish an individual position within the family. These characteristics do not necessarily apply to every middle child, but they can provide a supporting perspective for examining how middle-child experiences are portrayed in literary characters. Therefore, Leman's discussion is used in this study as a supporting reference, while Adler's *Individual Psychology* serves as the primary theoretical foundation for understanding birth order and family constellation.

The relevance of birth order and family dynamics in shaping personality can also be seen in literary works such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The novel portrays the Bennet family, which consists of five daughters with different birth-order positions and personalities. Mary Bennet is the third of the five Bennet sisters, positioned between her older sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, and her younger sisters, Kitty and Lydia. Her position as the middle child provides a basis for examining how her family position and interactions with other family members are portrayed in the novel. Through her behavior, interactions, and responses to her family environment, Mary Bennet offers an opportunity to examine the experiences and characteristics associated with being a middle child.

Unlike Elizabeth Bennet, whose intelligence, independence, and relationship with Mr. Darcy have received considerable attention from readers and scholars, Mary Bennet occupies a relatively peripheral position in the novel. She rarely becomes the focus of family conversations and is often portrayed as socially awkward, overly

serious, and eager to display her intellectual abilities. Her appearances in the novel are also more limited than those of her sisters. However, her interactions with other members of the Bennet family reveal particular behaviors and experiences that can be examined in relation to her position as the middle child. These characteristics make Mary Bennet an interesting literary figure for analyzing the portrayal of a middle child in the novel.

Moreover, *Pride and Prejudice* offers a rich depiction of family relationships during the Regency Era. Rather than focusing solely on romance, the novel portrays parenting styles, sibling interactions, social expectations, and domestic life within the Bennet family. These elements provide an appropriate literary context for examining how family dynamics contribute to the development and portrayal of individual characters, particularly Mary Bennet as the middle daughter.

The social context of the Regency Era is also relevant to understanding the Bennet family. Parenting patterns and family relationships during this period were influenced by social values, gender hierarchy, and expectations concerning women's roles and marriage. Daughters were often positioned in relation to domestic responsibilities and marriage prospects, which could influence the way parents viewed and treated their children. This context provides an additional consideration when examining the family environment in which Mary Bennet develops as a character.

Based on this description, research on the portrayal of Mary Bennet as a middle child through Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology is important to conduct. This study focuses on how Mary's position within the Bennet family is portrayed through her behavior, interactions, and psychological experiences. By applying Adler's concepts of family constellation and birth order, supported by Leman's discussion of middle children, this study seeks to examine the relationship between Mary's family position and the characteristics portrayed through her character. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the study of literary psychology, particularly in understanding the relationship between family dynamics, birth order, and character development in literary works.

1.2. Problems of the Study

Based on the explanation above, the research questions sought to be answered in this study are:

1. What middle-child characteristics are portrayed through Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. What are the causes of middle child characteristics displayed by Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

Based on the problem of the study, the purposes of this study are:

1. To identify the middle-child characteristics portrayed through Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.
2. To identify the causes of middle child characteristics displayed by Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

1.4.Hypothesis

Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) displays characteristics associated with the middle-child position. These characteristics are portrayed through her limited parental attention, relatively minor role within the family, competition with her siblings, and efforts to gain recognition.

1.5.Previous Studies

In several previous studies, *Pride and Prejudice* was chosen as object of research. The first, study conducted by Khoirun Nisa is titled The Relationship among Class, Marriage, and Wealth as reflected in Jane Austen's Novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (2023). This study uses a socio-cultural approach. It explains that marriage was used as a stepping stone for women in the era of this novel as a means to improve their social class by marrying men of higher or equal social class.

The second study is Aprilia's journal article entitled Elizabeth Bennet's Personality in The Novel *Pride and Prejudice* (2021). This study uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Florence Littauer's personality types as a support to address the research questions. This research analyses that there are id, ego, and superego drive

within Elizabeth. The id drive within Elizabeth is fulfilled by the ego's response based on the superego's considerations. Additionally, Elizabeth Bennet's personality is categorized as a choleric personality type, as it is known that Elizabeth's attitudes and traits align with the characteristics of the choleric personality type.

Third, Moberg with the research title *The Shameless Little Sister: A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Conduct of Lydia's Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice** (2021). This study uses psychoanalysis theory Sigmund Freud's to explain Lydia Bennet's impulsive behavior as the youngest child, whose actions are strongly influenced by the id. The analysis concludes that there is a clear relationship between Lydia's uncontrollable behavior and her dysfunctional relationship with her parents. Due to a lack of parental guidance, Lydia was left unchecked and heavily influenced by her id.

Fourth, from Silvana's research titled *The Influence of Social Class on Women's Attitudes toward Men in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813): a sociological approach* (2021). By using the theory of Sociological Approach, the research findings show that there are indicators of social class differences that cause the influence of social class on women's attitudes toward men in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Based on the analysis of sociological theory, this novel reflects real life in early nineteenth-century English society.

Fifth, the study by Lifa and Sihame's entitled *The Psychological Change in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* (2019). This study uses psychological and feminist approaches to analyze the psychological changes of Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy. The findings reveal that Jane Austen successfully portrayed the image of women in the nineteenth century. In addition, the themes of love, marriage, pride, prejudice, and sisterhood are key factors that lead to the psychological change of the novel's protagonist. The researchers also show that the event in the novel are a true reflection of Jane Austen's real life.

Last, Suaidi in his journal titled *Feminism Reflected in Pride and Prejudice. Novel by Jane Austen 1813* (2016). This study shows that Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* reflects feminist issue. Particularly regarding family solidarity and the role of women in facing the marriage culture of the early nineteenth century. Using the feminist approach, Elizabeth Bennet illustrates the strength of women who are able to challenge the traditional views of their parents and society at that time. The findings of this study provide insight into the fact that women's roles during that period were not weak, but rather possessed the ability and right to determine their own destinies.

In contrast to previous studies that mainly discuss the romantic dimension and the main characters of *Pride and Prejudice*, this study focuses on Mary Bennet as a middle child, analyzed through Adler's birth order theory. This approach offers a new perspective on character portrayal in the novel and contributes to the limited research on secondary characters from a psychological viewpoint.

1.6.Theoretical Framework

1.6.1. Psychological Approach

The psychological approach is one of the approaches used in literary studies to examine the psychological aspects of characters, particularly those related to thoughts, feelings, personality, motivation, and behavior. This approach views characters in literary works not only as part of the plot but also as individuals with psychological states that can be analyzed. One of the key foundations of the psychological approach is psychoanalysis, developed by Sigmund Freud. Freud's psychoanalytic theory emphasizes that psychological processes including those outside of consciousness can influence a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. In literary studies, this perspective allows researchers to examine the psychological states of characters through their experiences and behaviors as depicted in literary works (Ratna, 2004).

In this study, psychoanalysis is used as a general framework for understanding the psychological state of characters in literary works. Through a psychological perspective, a character's behavior and actions can be understood not only from what is visible in the story, but also from the experiences and environment that shaped them. In line with the development of psychodynamic thought, Alfred Adler later developed Individual Psychology, which places greater emphasis on social relationships and an individual's experiences within their family environment. Adler believed that a person cannot be understood in isolation from the environment in which they grew up, as relationships with parents and siblings can influence how a person views themselves

and responds to their surroundings. This perspective is relevant to this study because Mary Bennet is the third of five children in the Bennet family. Therefore, Mary's position among her siblings is an important aspect to consider in understanding her portrayal as the middle child in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

Therefore, the psychological approach in this study serves as a general framework for understanding the psychological portrayal of Mary Bennet, while the specific analysis is conducted through Birth Order Theory. Adler's perspective provides a theoretical foundation for examining how a person's position in the family can influence personality development. The discussion then focuses on the concept of birth order, specifically the position of the middle child, which will be further examined through Kevin Leman's discussion of middle-child characteristics.

1.6.2. Birth Order Theory

Birth order refers to the position an individual holds within a family based on the order in which they were born, such as firstborn, middle child, youngest child, or only child (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). It provides a general framework for examining how an individual's position among siblings may be related to their experiences and psychological development. Birth order does not automatically determine a person's personality; rather, different family positions may create different experiences and expectations for children (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Factors such as parental attention, sibling relationships, family responsibilities, and competition among siblings can also influence how children experience their position within the family (Boeree, n.d.). Thus,

birth order can be understood as a general concept for examining the relationship between family position and psychological development.

1.6.3. Adler's Birth Order Theory

The concept of birth order was further developed by Alfred Adler as part of his Individual Psychology in the early twentieth century. Adler viewed the family as an important social environment in which children develop their ways of thinking, behaving, and responding to others. He argued that children in the same family may develop differently because they occupy different positions and experience different relationships and treatment within the family (Adler, 1927). Murdock (2013) explained that Adler related birth order to the development of an individual's style of life, referring to the way individuals approach their goals and deal with life experiences.

Adler associated different birth positions with certain psychological tendencies. The first child generally tends to have a strong sense of responsibility and may experience a high level of anxiety. The middle child may feel ignored by parents or siblings and develop a strong sense of competition and motivation to surpass their siblings. Meanwhile, the youngest child tends to be more pampered, may desire to outdo their older siblings, and can learn quickly by observing their older siblings as role models (Adler, 1927). However, these tendencies are not fixed characteristics that apply equally to every individual. Adler emphasized that children's development is also

influenced by their particular family circumstances and the way they experience their position within the family (Adler, 1964).

For this study, Adler's Birth Order Theory serves as the primary theoretical foundation for understanding Mary Bennet's position as a middle child within the Bennet family. Leman's discussion of middle-child characteristics is used as a supporting reference to identify the characteristics portrayed through Mary Bennet. Therefore, Adler's theory provides the main theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between Mary's birth order and her family experiences, while Leman's discussion helps identify the specific characteristics examined in the analysis.

1.6.4. Kevin Leman's Middle Child Theory

In this study, Kevin Leman's discussion of middle-child characteristics is used as a supporting reference to identify the characteristics portrayed through Mary Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In *The Birth Order Book*, Leman (2009) discusses the experiences and characteristics commonly associated with individuals who occupy the middle position within their families. According to Leman, the position of a middle child is different from that of the firstborn or youngest child because the middle child grows up between older and younger siblings. This position may influence how the child experiences parental attention, family roles, sibling relationships, and their efforts to gain recognition within the family.

The selection of Leman's theory is based on several considerations. First, Leman provides a more specific discussion of the middle child position, whereas Adler's Birth Order Theory discusses birth order more broadly by describing the general tendencies associated with the firstborn, middle child, and youngest child. Since this study specifically focuses on Mary Bennet as a middle child, Leman's theory provides a more focused framework for the analysis. Second, the characteristics discussed by Leman can be related to Mary's behavior, experiences, and interactions with her family members as portrayed in the novel. This allows the characteristics to be examined through textual evidence from the novel. Third, Leman's discussion addresses experiences that are relevant to Mary's portrayal, including parental attention, family roles, sibling competition, and the desire to establish a position and gain recognition within the family. Therefore, Leman's theory is considered appropriate for examining how Mary Bennet is portrayed as a middle child in *Pride and Prejudice*.

According to Kevin Leman (2009) in *The Birth Order Book*, several characteristics of middle children can be identified as follows:

- First, because they are between their other siblings, the middle child feels sandwiched between them and tends to receive less attention and affection from their parents.
- Second, middle children feel they are given a minor role in the family.

- Third, they are highly competitive in the face of high expectations from parents and feelings of rivalry and a desire to excel, as the middle child feels competes with older siblings for parental attention, where feelings of envy and vulnerability to defeat or even rebellion arise.
- Lastly, middle children occupy a unique psychological position, as a middle child, they may have difficulty adapting and feel they have to fight alone to be recognized.

These characteristics provide the categories used in this study to examine the portrayal of Mary Bennet as a middle child.

1.7. Research Methods

This type of research is qualitative. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research data are commonly collected through interviews, observations, document analysis, focus group discussions, longitudinal studies, and cross-sectional studies. These methods enable researchers to obtain detailed and descriptive information from natural settings, while the researcher serves as the primary instrument throughout the data collection process. Meanwhile, Patton (2015) states that qualitative research is a research method that conducts in-depth investigations by conducting interviews, observations, and document analysis to capture the experiences, perceptions, and meanings of individuals or groups. According to Neuman (2014), it is defined as a guide for researchers in conducting research, which includes rules for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to answer all questions in the research. Therefore, there

are two basic methods used to conduct research, namely data collection and data analysis methods.

1.7.1. Data Collection Method

Data collection method is a process of searching for and gathering information used to answer all questions in a research problem. These data collection is an important stage. There are two types of data required in data collection methods. The first is called primary data. The primary data used in this study is the novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen. The second type of data is secondary data, such as supporting materials, such as academic books and journals

This study uses close reading as the primary method of collecting data from the novel. The researcher reads the novel carefully and repeatedly to identify relevant passages. The collected data include dialogue, narration, descriptions of characters, interactions among family members, and events related to Mary Bennet's portrayal as a middle child. Secondary sources are used to support the interpretation of the primary data.

1.7.2. Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis is a process in data processing that ultimately answers all the questions raised in this study. The first step in the study is to conduct a close reading. According to Brummet (2018), Close reading means focusing attention on the literary elements of a line or passage of text, disregarding the author's identity or the text's

history. The aim is to analyze the text based on its own merits as a complete, singular object. This involves repeated reading of brief sections, paying attention to the actual words of the text, and discussing how these words use figurative language, diction, syntax, point of view, tone, imagery, or prosody.

This analysis will continue by examining the characteristics of the middle child and the factors that contribute the portrayal of middle child experienced by the middle child character in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Mary Bennet. This study will use fictional elements from the novel such as plot, theme, point of view, symbols, and settings