

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In 1990 literary works adds the production with the born of chick literature as the new genre in literary world. The meaning of “chick” itself refers to women. As the grand theme in the production, chick literature obtains the problematic life of women at the age of early 20 to 40 who live in cosmopolitan area or urban. The characters mostly picture the real condition of metropolitan women since the early 1990. Chick literature is one of the literature genres which have huge number of readers. The readers feel the affection for the grand theme and the romantic side that is presented by the authors. The authors which are mostly women give the impression that women’s world nowadays has become something which is interested to be explored. In other words, nowadays women have other pleasant roles than doing domestic duties, such as become politicians, movie directors and others (www.hanyawanita.com).

The problematic lives of modern metropolitan women represented in chick literature are about career, relationship, friendship, love, family, marriage and other issues (www.chicklitbooks.com). One of the interesting issues which also represented in chick literature is about modern western metropolitan societies’ judgment toward appearance. The societies give more attention to the existences of having attractive appearance, especially for women. Since modern western metropolitan societies

believe that women must always have attractive appearance and it can be produced by having outstanding way of dressing, appropriate make up and even plastic surgery. Moreover, the societies believe that the way a person is dressed or styled is equal to the person's identity. Identity is something that can be natural or something constructed and produced by other people after viewing someone else (Culler, 2002: 104). These make metropolitan women consider that attractive appearance as something important in their life. The societies also believe that having attractive appearance is the main way for women to attract men's attention.

The phenomena of modern western metropolitan women who pay lots of attention toward appearance also appears in one of Helen Fielding's novel entitled Bridget Jones's Diary. Helen Fielding is one of the British contemporary female writers who graduated from Oxford University. In 1979 she was given the opportunity to work as a producer in British Broadcasting Corporation, but ten years later, Fielding worked as a freelance writer for several newspapers to continue her writing hobby. In 1994 her first novel entitled Cause Celeb was so well received in the heart of chicklit's readers. Helen Fielding gives her description about the problematic life of single western metropolitan women in Bridget Jones's Diary. When Bridget Jones's Diary was first published in 1996, readers honored Fielding's truthfulness in Bridget Jones' character. Through Bridget Jones's Diary, Fielding coined new words that became part of English vernacular like singleton which refer to a person who has no boyfriend, girlfriend or fiancé and smug married which refer to a married couple who like to ask single person whether he or she will get married

or not (www.helenfielding.com). The novel received highly acclaimed British Book Award and was adapted into a successful film in 2001, starring Rene Zellweger, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth (www.movie@yahoo.com). In 2000, Fielding started the sequel of Bridget Jones's Diary in Bridget Jones: Edge of Reason.

In Bridget Jones's Diary, Helen Fielding narrates that being single women in western metropolitan area are not easy because the society believes that women in Bridget's age must be already married or have a boyfriend. The novel portrays how Bridget Jones as the main character tries hard to attract men's attention through her appearance. Bridget Jones is 30 year old single woman who likes to blame herself for being overweight and for her singleton. She feels desperate when her friends, families and relatives ask about her love life because she can not easily attract men's attention.

Bridget Jones is in love with a handsome man named Daniel Clever, but he often underestimates her because of her appearance. One day when Daniel becomes Bridget's boyfriend, she finds him having an affair with a beautiful slim woman. She considers that her look makes her inferior because she is overweight, has wrinkles and has no ability to put on appropriate make-up and clothes. Bridget believes that if she can eliminate her inferior, she will find no problem to attract a man. She applies the criteria of women's attractive appearances which have already existed in the Western metropolitan societies. Being slim is the main principle to be confident; having no wrinkles and cellulite are the best things to attract a man. Bridget does not realize that mass media already influence her point of view toward women's look. Her favorite actresses who are her beauty figures are also the mass media's partner to

represent the appearance of attractive women. Magazine, news paper, film and other mass media have influenced Bridget Jones's life and mind.

In fact, Bridget Jones does not need to be slim to attract man's attention. Mark Darcy, her latest boyfriend, loves her nature. He does not care about the calories that she consumes. Bridget does not have to fulfill the criteria's of beautiful women that exist in the societies to get men's love. Her problem is merely having no self confidence. If she has confidence, she will look gorgeous. Bridget Jones finds the meaning of a real love from Mark Darcy.

The writer of this study views that the idea which is presented by Fielding in Bridget Jones's Diary is not something new in nowadays metropolitan society. Bridget Jones' problems to find a spouse are probably possessed by most single women living in metropolitan area. Those women are concerned on their appearance to magnetize men's attention. The writer of this study believes that the problems come out when mass media in metropolitan area constructed the definition of good-looking women by having a slim body, looking younger, having no wrinkles and cellulite. Mass media manipulate metropolitan societies' point of view by continuing to present those attractive women as their objects. This becomes the quandary for women when they realize that they are not part of those women who have attractive appearance. Since that time, they have more admiration toward attractive women. In other word, metropolitan women have a high regard for mass media's beauty mites, that women must pay more attention to their beauties (Wolf, 2004: 130).

Mass media become a life's guidance for metropolitan women. Since mass media always discuss about daily life problems. Bridget Jones as a metropolitan woman also takes mass media as her daily guide life. Mass media mostly discusses and continue construct the images of attractive women. These conditions frighten women because they can not simply follow the image and therefore, create the panic of becoming unattractive. Moreover, mass media show the societies that if women can fulfill the image, they will easily acquire confidence and reach their dreams.

Bridget Jones tries hard to reduce her inferior with duplicates the images of attractive women from mass media. Bridget's ambition to copy those images is to attract men's attention but do not supported by her friends. Bridget's friends viewed that she has no problems with her appearance if she can develop her confidence. These different opinions make the writer of this study analyze further as the clash of judgment toward appearance between Bridget and her friends which shows that there must be fundamental causes so that she has different point of view compared to her friends.

The writer of this study considers that Bridget Jones' inadequacy mostly pictures the real condition of single women in western metropolitan area. The writer of this study tries to answer and analyze the meaning of attractive women in modern metropolitan societies as women always wish to complete the standard of attractive appearance from mass media. The analysis discusses on how mass media constructs Bridget Jones' inferior and how it influences her daily actions. The study relates Bridget Jones' point of view toward women's look with the theory of hyperreality

from Jean Pierre Baudrillard. As part of Western metropolitan societies, Bridget's life can not be separated easily with the influence of mass media, moreover as she is one of the television reporters. Mass media have influenced society's thought toward appearance by continuing to give images of beautiful women.

Bridget Jones' character is a unique character which is worthy to be examined. Her point of view toward appearance in her life is particularly interesting. Living in a metropolitan city, eventually, draws Bridget Jones' hilarious personality. Her comical behavior leads herself into a complete humorous world. From these reasons, the writer of this study enforces sufficiently to pick Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones's Diary to be analyzed.

B. Statement of the Problems

1. How does Bridget Jones' inferiority influence her daily actions in Bridget Jones's Diary?
2. How does the hyperreality in mass media shaping Bridget Jones' self-confidence?

C. Objective of the Study

1. To know the impact of Bridget Jones' inferiority toward her daily actions in Bridget Jones's Diary.

2. To know how the hyperreality in mass media shaping Bridget Jones' self-confidence.

D. Significance of the Study

The study has two significances. The first is to know deeper about the idea behind the standard of women attractive appearance which appear in western metropolitan societies. Through Bridget Jones's Diary, the writer of this study wishes the readers to recognize the manipulation of mass media in shaping people's point of view towards women appearance and making women inferior.

The second is to give contribution toward the study of literary works in the English Department of Airlangga University. It also attempts to give another study of hyperreality theory point of view.

E. Scope and Limitation

The writer of this study finds many issues and problems that can be analyzed in Bridget Jones's Diary. In order to concentrate the analysis, the writer of this study only focuses on the way mass media shaping Bridget' point of view toward women's appearance and seen from hyperreality theory. Like most women who have no satisfaction with their own appearance, Bridget tries hard to eliminate her shortage such as obesity, wrinkles and cellulite. Unfortunately, her purpose to complete the standard of attractive women is to increase her confidence and attracts men's

attention. This makes her inferior when realizes that she can not duplicate the images of beautiful women in mass media. Principally, this becomes the problem when Bridget finds Mark Darcy's love as he feels affection for her nature.

F. Theoretical Background

In analyzing the influence of mass media to Bridget Jones' inferiority, the writer of this study chooses the theory from a French postmodernist named Jean Baudrillard. The theory is called hyperreality. The hyperreality theory is a concept which is believed that unreal situations or images can be seen and considered as a reality. Bridget's view toward appearance is something unreal, even hyperreality because it is only a fake appearance or image which continues to be presented by mass media. She does not realize that she already in hyperreality world because she accepts those fake images as real.

The hyperreality images or situations consist of three elements. The first is simulation as a process of creating model of artificial reality, then simulacrum as the models do not refer to any type of reality and hyperreality as the final element.

G. Method of the Study

The writer of this study chooses library research to make the detailed analysis for this work. The novel entitled Bridget Jones's Diary becomes the main source to be analyzed. The plot and dialogs from the novel are used as the important foundation

to be analyzed. All these basic sources are also combined with the data collection from various books and encyclopedia which are related to the study. The writer of this study also uses the electronic sources to obtain the latest information. To make the analysis deeper, the writer also combines it with the descriptive analysis as a methodology of the study.

H. Definition of Key Term

1. *Appearance* = the way of somebody looks to other people or an act of somebody's appearing.
2. *Hyperreality* = a situation where the unreal images are seen as reality.
3. *Inferiority* = of little or less importance, value or merit, a situated lower down.