

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### I.1 Background of the Study

Romanticized beliefs typically stem from the romantic ideals within our culture and include assumptions about what love is, what relationships should be like, and expectations about how we should feel (Castellini, A., 2011). The key word in 'romanticize' is romance. Where the word can be linked back to the Romanticism era in the 1800s. Romanticism (also the Romantic era or the Romantic period) was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850 ("*Romanticism*", 2007, Ch.7).

In literature, Romanticism found recurrent themes in the evocation or criticism of the past, the cult of "sensibility" with its emphasis on women and children, the heroic isolation of the artist or narrator, and respect for a new, wilder, untrammelled and "pure" nature ("*Romanticism*", 2007, Ch.7). This particular era emphasised human inner emotion. It was a glorification of all the past and nature, imagination, as well as beauty. Murray N. Rothbard (2007) asserts that romantic fiction has been denounced as "escapism." But, far from being the Philistinism it is usually portrayed, we have seen that such "escape" —the experiencing of a world where one's values have come true— is precisely the noblest function of fiction (Rothbard, 2007, p.27).

For the trouble with most romantic fiction has been that the authors have not believed their values to be applicable in the real world. They have therefore fled into such remote worlds as historical costume dramas or science fiction. *This* was their *illegitimate* form of “escapism” (Rothbard, 2007, p.27). We tend to start romanticizing when it comes to topics or things that are essentially viewed as something less or something that is not usually viewed in a positive light (Daniswari, A., 2019). This behaviour is most commonly found and seen in popular works such as books and magazines.

Although romanticization and romanticism are often linked together in the same bracket of description and understanding, the two words are not parallel. The romanticization or romanticize means to interpret or view something in a romantic unrealistic or idealized manner, whilst the romantic or romanticism is a romantic quality, spirit or action that could be seen through something as vessels to portray the romantic quality (Davis, 2019). We romanticize a story about a damsel in distress trapped in a locked tower with a dragon guarding the castle and a brave knight or prince come to rescue the damsel in distress in the most romantic and impossible way.

The romanticization had been analysed by few researchers, which among several instances, there are two studies that explained and analyzed the romanticization. The first study in regards to romanticization is from the journal article by Brianna R. Zgodinski entitled *I Hate IT, But I Can't Stop: The Romanticization of Intimate Partner Abuse In Young Adult Retellings of Wuthering*

*Heights* (2017). The study focuses on Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, who are famously known to have a complicated and toxic relationship. The author argues that the adaptations made by pop culture who reversed the ideological choice of Cathy, in which she ended up having infidelity with Heathcliff because the new retellings of *Wuthering Heights* made Heathcliff a “choosable” guy by romanticise his violent tendencies through the perspectives of their female protagonist.

The second study about romanticization is from the journal article *Till (un)death do us part: exploring the romanticization of adolescent dating violence in The Twilight saga and the romantic relationship beliefs held by female fans of the series* by Aviva H. Jacobstein (2016). This study was to examine the romantic relationship beliefs held by female fans of *The Twilight Saga* and to explore influences of media that romanticizes adolescent dating violence. The study found that few couples who identified with the Bella-Edward romantic pairing - who considered to be the most abusive relationship - reported having less healthy views about romantic relationships and instead portraying greater degrees of unrealistic relationship expectations.

The romanticization that used from the two studies were about the abusive and violence notions of relationships and between partners. The two researchers focused on examining how the negative notions could be seen as something acceptable and in positive light. In the study by Brianna R. Zgodinski (2017), it is clear how the use of romanticization on the violent and harsh personalities that were assigned on Heathcliff could only result in a way more negative light. Brianna

shows how much the idea of glorifying such sickening and destructive tendencies could create more damages than the original plot. This result helps the writer to show how much romanticization could lead into a more serious problem.

Thus, on the other study by Aviva H. Jacobstein (2016), gives examples on how romanticization of abusive and toxic relationships between couples could affect their expectations and standpoint towards a healthy relationship. It suggests how having romanticization could give false and unrealistic hope and expectations for adolescents. Therefore, the results of this study help the writer to show both the good and bad influences that Julia Quinn intended and inclined to show in her *The Duke and I* regarding the romantic relationship portrayed within.

Current pop culture is a hot mess of a romanticized reality. As a generation, we have slowly grown into a coping mechanism towards several things that we see as unpleasant and we overcome this by romanticizing certain conditions and ideas that are essentially bad (Daniswari, A., 2019). Out of many things that are romanticized, women's stance or the issues of women have been in rough water specifically through the media of literature. Many of the writers apparently found the idea of placing female characters into numerous attitudes and notions quite appealing and captured many interests. One of the instances is how women are portrayed in literature, notoriously in the nineteenth century. The idea of 'woman' in the nineteenth-century writings was a site of much contention and performed a type of 'ideological work', where different representations of what woman was (or

should be) were deployed in a social debate with broad ideological ramifications (Poovey, 1988, as cited in McDonagh, P., 2000).

It was assumed that all men approaching marriage had a rudimentary understanding of what was going to happen. But women of quality would not have been so exposed to rude talk, rumors, and basic knowledge of their own body. She might not even know the names and function of her own reproductive organs (O'Neill, 2015). This view of the nineteenth century attitudes toward sexuality is captured in more than stories. Dagler (1974) explains that modern writers have echoed these contemporary descriptions on the sexual life of women in the nineteenth century. Quoting from his journal article from Walter Houghton that says *“For the sexual act was associated by many wives only with a duty, and by most husbands with a necessary if pleasurable yielding to one’s baser nature; by few, therefore, with any innocent and joyful experience.”* (Degler, C. N., 1974). The nineteenth-century feminist mainstream accepted women's sexual powerlessness with men as inevitable, even as it sought to protect women from its worst consequences (Dubois, E., & Gordon, L., 1983).

In the beginning of the century, women had very few rights of their own. At this time, women were the continual victims of social and economic discrimination; Upper- and middle-class women’s choices were limited to marriage and motherhood, or spinsterhood (Cruea, Susan M., 2005). Prior to 1830, married women essentially had no rights at all, as all legal authority rested with their husbands – this meant that married woman could not own property, she could not

enter into contracts, she had no rights to her own earnings, she had no parental rights over her legitimate children, and she could not obtain a divorce (Doepke, M., & Tertilt, M., 2009). The residual of this can still be seen today with married women taking their husband's surname and was never the other way around.

In many ways, the early nineteenth century (or Regency era) was a time of changing values in education, particularly women, where young ladies had more limitations on their educational opportunities than their male counterparts. Though they could be sent to attend an education provided by a boarding school, like every young man in the country, there were no universities available for women (Kloester, J., 2005). One of the 'insuperable obstacles' was that higher education remained firmly closed to women, and this was to remain the case until the late nineteenth century (Raftery, 2002). Intellectual pursuits were strongly discouraged; instead, a true woman was expected "to fulfil herself in the 'instinctive' arts of child rearing, domestic pursuits, and spiritual comfort (Cogan 68, as cited in Cruea, Susan M., 2005). Since a woman's "heart" was valued over her "mind", the mind being associated with the masculine (Cruea, Susan M., 2005). What was conceived as women's greatest virtue, their passionate and self-sacrificing commitment to their children, their capacity for love itself, was a leading factor in their victimization (Dubois, E., & Gordon, L., 1983).

As 'the gentle sex', women were meant to be both ignorant and devoid of the various vices of the more 'natural' man and were generally not expected to have opinions or ideas of a political nature (Kloester, J., 2005, p.63). While all women

are disadvantaged by gender, it is also true that some women experience more disadvantages than others. Innocence was also held to be a virtue in the female—both in knowledge and experience—and the fact that many women were extremely knowledgeable and aware of life’s realities was often disguised or kept below the surface veneer of respectable and acceptable behaviour (p.63). Societies' definitions of masculinity and femininity are inextricably linked to each gender’s power in society. In other words, everyday social interaction reflects and helps reinforce gender stratification and gender roles as well.

Following this, the portrayal of the lead female character in the novel *The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn, somewhat fits the characteristics of what female character being portrayed in the historical romance novel, by having the “damsel in distress” paradigm with the lack of intuitive and assertive characteristics. To become the perfect woman is to have and follow certain standards. Beauty, taste, modesty, manners, a strong sense of duty and a desire to make a good marriage were esteemed as the most desirable female attributes and girls were trained from birth to abide by the restrictions placed upon them and to conform to their parents’—and later their husband’s—expectations (Kloester, J., 2005, p.64). The general expectation was that woman should be docile and amenable and that the “good” girl is passive, weak, and submissive and can do nothing (and does do nothing) to improve her own condition, and the fact that the powerful woman is portrayed as wicked and probably have an unpleasant or plain look.

Julia Quinn's *The Duke and I* was published in 2000 by HarperCollins Publishers. It is the first book from the eight Regency-packed books that narrate the romantic adventures of the Bridgerton siblings in the high society of early nineteenth-century London. The book however, only recently received an enormous whole of attention after being adapted into a Netflix series in the beginning of this year. The story narrates mainly about Daphne Bridgerton, the third child and first daughter of the Bridgerton siblings. That is when they were out in the marriage market trying to find husbands. But they would eventually lose all control the moment they got into wedlock, as the husband would ultimately be the superior and hold the highest control. Wives, on the other hand, follow whatever the path their husbands decide to go, as their primary function would be to "adorn and beautify" rather than "support" the family.

The female protagonist, Daphne Bridgerton, became the main subject of the observation. Her role as the first daughter forces her to seek opportunities in marriage and have a family in order to keep the social structure, both in private and public. Her character was being described as a perfect candidate for a young and beautiful match for any man looking for a wife. With only beauty and proper etiquette as her weapons, Daphne somewhat found her way into a total blackout. Walking into an oblivion as someone's wife without any preparation for what would welcome her in the front door. Having zero knowledge regarding the marital activities, Daphne found herself being manipulated and tricked by her husband, Simon Bassett, who refused to have children and was thrilled at the idea of Daphne's lack of sexual information. Later on, she confronted her husband about his



manipulative way of taking advantage of her marital acts knowledge which she also condemns and realized her stupidity and ignorant self for not being taught or told regarding the subject matter.

Representations of female ‘ignorant’ characters by nineteenth-century writers tended to employ a ‘doubling’ strategy to render the characters meaningful, with the ‘ignorant’ character linked to another more prominent character (often the heroine), and while these writers often associated this ‘ignorant’ character with an aspect of female sexuality, the meaning was very different from that of writers working within the dominant discourse (McDonagh, P., 2000). In women, ‘ignorance’ was usually associated with a reduction to a threatening sexuality which was either controlled or absent in ‘normal’ women (McDonagh, P., 2000).

Literature communicates ideas about what is gender appropriate behaviour for men and women. Male characters typically outnumber female characters, female characters are significantly younger than male characters, and female characters are less likely to be portrayed as working women, according to several studies conducted in the early 1900s (Burns, 1996, as cited in Salem Press, Gender Roles & Equality, 2011). Thus “the vast majority [of female characters] conformed to male fantasies of scantily clad half-wits who need to be rescued” (Burns, 1996, p.15 as cited Salem Press, Gender Roles & Equality, 2011).

Ralf Schneider (2001:608) explains that to understand literary characters requires forming some kind of mental representation of them, attributing dispositions and motivations to them, understanding and explaining their actions,

forming expectations about what they will do next and why, and reacting emotionally to them. All this happens through a complex interaction of what the text says about the characters and of what the reader knows about the world in general, specifically about people and, yet more specifically, about “people” in literature. Personality traits play a significant role in our perception of, and satisfaction with, our interpersonal relationships (Castellini, A., 2011).

To examine the portrayal of women in the novel, the theory of liberal feminism by Mary Wollstonecraft deemed fit to be used. Her thought and theory of the equal education between women and men in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, when the economic and social position of European women was in decline (Tong, 2009). Middle-class ladies were, in Wollstonecraft’s estimation, “kept” women who sacrificed health, liberty, and virtue for whatever prestige, pleasure, and power their husbands could provide (Tong, 2009). She reasoned that if they were confined to the same cages that trap women, men would develop the same flawed characters (Tong, 2009).

Alongside the liberal feminism theory by Wollstonecraft, the theory of characters and characterization by Christopher Reaske is used as well to analyse the characteristics of Daphne Bridgerton as the main female character. This theory is used to examine the characters as well as the characterizations in the drama, therefore the author used his book of *How to Analyze Drama* (1966) as the main reference. It focuses on the combinations of speeches and actions throughout a play,

the small asides and jokes, the short angry speeches, the lengthy diatribes, all add up to produce in our minds an understanding of the characters (Reaske, 1966, p.40).

According to Reaske (1966) in *How to Analyze Drama*, there are different devices of characterization, those are: the appearance of the character, the asides and soliloquies, the dialogue between characters, the hidden narration, the language, and the character in action (p.46-48). These devices will be used to analyze the characteristics of Daphne Bridgerton throughout the novel.

There are two previous studies regarding the issue of this study. The first is in Lorraine Code's journal article titled *The Power of Ignorance* (2004) where she questioned how judgements of culpability can be sustained when ignorance is culturally induced. Which she answered by giving instance from one of the characters, Gwendolen Harlech from *Daniel Deronda* by using Charles Mill's *Racial Contract* – the global social theory and Le Dœuff's *The Sex of Knowing* as the references. Through the representation, Lorraine asserts how privilege and ignorance somehow interrelated culturally and therefore one's history and social status might have infiltrated and shaped one's mind.

The second previous study from that focused on the issues of liberal feminism as well as the theories of character and characterization Dewi Artika Puspitasari entitled *Liberal Feminism Values Seen Through the Main Female Character in Kinberg's Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (2016). The research discussed the liberal feminism values in Jane's Characteristics such as the equal opportunity in economy and politics, equal liberty and education through the lense of Rosemarie Tong and her

book in *Feminist Thought* that focuses on Liberal Feminism. This research also focused on the theory of character and characterization by Christopher Russel Reaske (1966).

As the research will be conducted through novel as the data source, hence to explore how women in the nineteenth-century, especially in the novel *The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn are being portrayed and romanticized for their ignorance and innocence of the marital act, the Feminism and Characterization theories will be used as the aid throughout the research. The feminism theory which will be used is the Liberal Feminism by Mary Wollstonescraft as well as the Theory of Characterization by Christopher Russel Reaske. Therefore, it would be appropriate to combine the two theories to help analyse the characteristics of Daphne Bridgerton as the main heroine on finding the results in regards to the notion of both ignorance and innocence toward sexual intercourse of marital activity being glorified or romanticized in *The Duke and I*.

## **I.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study and the reason for choosing the topic, the study tries to answer this following question:

1. How are women's ignorance and innocence of marital activity portrayed in *The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn?

### **I.3 Purpose/Aim of Study**

*The Duke and I* by Julia Quinn is used to help to examine the portrayal of women's ignorance and innocence of their sexual-knowledge, especially in regards to the marital act. Hence this paper will put the attention on the romanticizing of such characteristics and the link between innocence and ignorance, particularly the early nineteenth-century Regency women.

### **I.4 Scope of Study**

The research will put up a parameter centring on analysing the romanticization on women's ignorance and innocence of marital act in the novel *The Duke and I* written by Julia Quinn by using the theory of character and characterization by Christopher Russel Reaske alongside with feminism theories of Liberal Feminism by Mary Wollstonecraft about women's education and equal sexuality.

### **I.5 Significance of the Study**

The writer hopes that this study will be useful for references related to the infamous notions of women's ignorance and innocence that are romanticized and pictured, particularly in the scope of the nineteenth-century society, through the theories of character and characterization as well as the liberal feminism specifically in regards to women's education.

The result of this study aimed to give a thorough explanation regarding the notions of women's ignorance and innocence in regard to marital activity and how

those are portrayed in the novel *The Duke and I*. Lastly, this study is also expected to be useful for readers who are interested in discussing women's issues within literary works

