THE APPLICATION OF FEMINISM LITERARY CRITICISM
IN “JANE EYRE” NOVEL BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

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ABSTRACT
This research is aimed at analyzing Jane Eyre Novel by feminist literary critics theory. Jane Eyre is a famous work written by Charlotte Bronte on the basis of her own experiences. In Victorian period, the image of Jane Eyre cast a sharp contrast to the man-dominated society. It awakened women’s awareness to be independent. There are three objectives presented in this paper. The first objective is to find out the aspect of literary criticism are exposed by Charlotte Bronte in her novel. The second is to find out the kind of feminism critical theory which contain in the novel. The third is to find out how is Bronte’s life reflected in her Novel “Jane Eyre”. The method of this paper to collect the data is a library research to answer the problems. The results of these analyses are firstly, Jane Eyre is a Liberal Feminist. Jane challenges the old tradition, the males’ domination, and subordination of women. In challenging the old tradition, Jane challenges the patriarchal system, where males dominate in society so that women become subordinate. Secondly, there are similarities between Charlotte Brontë’s life and Jane Eyre occur in the novel.

Keywords: Feminism, Literature, Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte, novel.
A. Introduction

Based on lot of studies on women, it seems that women have long suffered discrimination and violence in all areas of life. The various forms of discrimination and violence against women was worsened by the living conditions of women. This further impedes on women's progress. Various acts have long struggled to protect women's rights and freedoms, such as discrimination, denigration of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification of women, but until this moment the result has not been significant. Women still live under discrimination and inequities.

The development of feminism in science progress rapidly, many science studies after the movement of feminism discussed about women, no exception in the field of literary studies. Literary works are not born from emptiness, but the reflections of human life, which make literary works analyzable on the bases of feminism. In the literature there are a wide range of human issues, including the issue of women, these problems are varied.

This novel embodies the ideology of equality between a man and woman in marriage, as well as in society at large. As a feminist writer, Charlotte Bronte created this novel to support and spread the idea of an independent woman who works for herself, thinks for herself, and acts of her own accord. Women of the Victorian era were repressed, and had little if any social status. They had a very few rights and fewer options open to them for self-support. Yet these traits also contrast sharply with some of Bronte's female characters Jane Eyre can be labeled as a feminist role model due to her relationships with men that defied the generally accepted roles of the nineteenth-century woman. This research is to explore and appreciate the spirits of feminism reflected in this novel and also reveal the limitations in demonstrating the concept of feminism in literature. At this Thesis Proposal, the Authors wanted to examine about feminism and its application in “Jane Eyre” Novel by Charlotte Bronte.

B. Research Questions

In this Thesis proposal, I try to describe and classify the application of feminism literary criticism. So, the problem is formulated by the problem of the study is as follows:

1. What aspect of literary criticism are exposed by Charlotte Bronte in her novel?

2. What kind of feminism critical theory which is contained in novel Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte?

3. How is Bronte’s life reflected in her Jane Eyre?
C. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem form above, the objective of the research is to find the appropriate Feminism literary criticism in Jane Eyre Novel by Charlotte Bronte and describing it. Moreover the Writer also wants to apply the Novel by appreciating and studying a work art based on theory that is got from some other theories, therefore the Writer can construct a study that connects the literature and another science. And also;

1. Describing aspect of literary criticism are exposed by Charlotte Bronte in her novel.
2. Describing kind of feminism critical theory which contain in novel “Jane Eyre” by Charlotte Bronte.
3. Describing how is Bronte’s life reflected in her Novel “Jane Eyre”.

D. Previous Study of Related Literature

The development of feminism in science progress rapidly, many science studies after the movement of feminism discussed about women, no exception in the field of literary studies. Even now, not only the women write about the issues of women in literary works, but there are also male writer involved in the issues. These literary works become the media for women to explain their rights and to show feminist movement. This is because the literature is one of the effective ways to express the feminist movement. There is a lot of research about feminist literature has been published in the form of Journal, Article, and Thesis. As well as my thesis that discusses about the application of feminist literary theory in the novel Jane Eyre. Then, I will compare it with other research that also discusses the same issue.

1. “Reflection on Feminism in Jane Eyre” a Thesis by Haiyan Gao, School of Foreign Languages, He Ze City, China. (2013)

   This thesis deals with an analysis of what Jane has done as a feminist through four aspects, her pursuit of esteem, independence, equality, and true love. It is a way different from my research that states an aspect of literary criticism are exposed by Charlotte Bronte in her novel and how far Charlotte Bronte’s life influence her heroine in the novel.

2. “Jane’s Refusal Towards Gender Inequalities In The Victorian Era Revealed in Charlotte Bronte Jane Eyre (A Liberal Feminist Literary Criticism)” a Thesis by Yuyun Wardayatul ‘Uyun, Faculty of Humanities and Culture English Letters and Language Departement the Islamic State University Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang. (2010)
This Thesis just contains with how far Jane’s Refusal against Gender Inequalities in Victorian Era Revealed in Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre. Looking at the content of the study, it is very different from what I am discussing about this thesis. My thesis, talks what aspect of literary criticism in Jane Eyre and the influence of Bronte’s life in Jane Eyre.


This journal presents the Charlotte’s Jane Eyre and Anne’s The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. That deals the Victorian masculinity is deconstructed. Except with a different from the notion, this journal talks with the issue: how can a Victorian woman with a need for her own agency and freedom have a relationship with a Victorian man? This journal is look at the authors’ different constructions of masculinity within their novels. My thesis deals with literary feminist criticism and the effect of Bronte’s life in the Novel.

E. Methodology

The data of the study are paragraph and dialogue quoted from the Novel. They have been collected based on the purposed of study. I use the library research method that is to study and investigation of some aspect of library and information science where conclusions are based on the analysis of data collected. The goal of research is to create new knowledge which can take one of these three forms:

a. Exploratory research, which structures and identifies new problems
b. Constructive research, which develops solutions to a problem
c. Empirical research, which tests the feasibility of a solution using empirical evidence

The writer uses novel as the instrument of this study, documentary research as the technique to conduct this research and qualitative Thus far, the writer has done read the novel and collecting the data. The writer has used library and internet resource to assist completing this research.

F. Finding

The main problem found during the research. First is variety of feminism criticism that indirectly developed the main idea of Jane Eyre story. Women through the ages have written feminist theory and various forms of feminist critique. Feminist literary criticism has since intertwined with postmodernism and increasingly complex questions of gender and societal roles. Feminism literary criticism was born and developed in line with the development of the feminist movement. There are several types of feminism that have been discussed, which offer a distinction and tradition in
each of them. Such as, Liberal feminism, Social Feminism, and the last is Radical Feminism.

Second is character and characterization of Jane Eyre itself, Jane Eyre’s character was presented with lots of facets and she had the incalculability of life. Thus, there are several characters that we can found in Jane Eyre, as is Jane is a rebellious girl, intransigent, feminist, skeptical, lover, idealist, and merciful. According to the result of observation, some of characters in the novel are described through direct statement about characters personality and tells the characters look like. Because the point of view in this novel is Narrator point of view.

G. Discussion

1. An Analysis of Major Character in Jane Eyre

1. Jane Eyre

The development of Jane Eyre’s character is central to the novel. From the beginning, Jane possesses a sense of her self-worth and dignity, a commitment to justice and principle, a trust in God, and a passionate disposition. Her integrity is continually tested over the course of the novel, and Jane must learn to balance the frequently conflicting aspects of herself so as to find contentment. At many points in the book, Jane voices the author’s then-radical opinions on religion, social class, and gender.

2. Edward Rochester

Although Rochester is Jane’s social and economic superior, and although men were widely considered to be naturally superior to women in the Victorian period, Jane is Rochester’s intellectual equal. Moreover, after their marriage is interrupted by the disclosure that Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason, Jane is proven to be Rochester’s moral superior. Rochester regrets his former libertinism and lustfulness; nevertheless, he has proven himself to be weaker in many ways than Jane.

3. St. John Rivers

St. John Rivers is a foil to Edward Rochester. Whereas Rochester is passionate, St. John is austere and ambitious. Jane often describes Rochester’s eyes as flashing and flaming, whereas she constantly associates St. John with rock, ice, and snow.

4. Helen Burns

Helen Burns, Jane’s friend at Lowood School, serves as a foil to Mr. Brocklehurst as well as to Jane. While Mr. Brocklehurst embodies an evangelical form of religion that seeks to strip others of their excessive pride or of their ability to take pleasure in worldly things, Helen represents a mode of Christianity that stresses tolerance and acceptance.
2. Feminism Literary Criticism

Feminism literary criticism was born and developed in line with the development of the feminist movement. There are several types of feminism that have been discussed, which offer a distinction and tradition in each of them. Although the theory comes into same destination, thought and action to differentiate their ways are not equivalent. These types form a differentiation caused by the system of gender in a particular society and the involvement of individuals who support the system. The condition was occur because the theory is changeable according to individual and condition which becomes the background of it. Problems can differentiate these types when they try to answer a question, “why women are treated unfairly or discriminated?” Principally, there are three types of feminism that will be explained further. They are liberal feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism.

H. The Feminism issues in Jane Eyre Novel

There are several points of view that can describe how the issue of feminism can be summed up in this novel, some of the important points among others:

1. Four Men that had Oppressed Jane’s Life

Four men in Jane’s life had laid oppression on her in different degrees. Jane survives the oppression and led herself constantly to her own desirable life.

   1. The oppression from John Reed

      The first male character to oppress Jane was her cousin John Reed, who in part made little Jane live in shadow and fears when she was only a young girl. The boy hit Jane whenever he felt like only because Jane was an orphan. Poor little Jane could do nothing but bear the hurts both physically and spiritually.

   2. The oppression from Mr. Brocklehurst

      Mr. Brocklehurst represents those who had firm belief in women-inferiority theory. He demanded the girls in Lowood to wear ugly or even broken clothes, eat far-from-enough harsh food and led a hard life. In his opinion, girls should lead a simple life in order to cultivate the virtue of subordination and dependence.

   3. The oppression from Edward Rochester

      Even Edward Rochester, Jane’s lover, wanted to lay some oppression or control upon Jane. Before their marriage, he wanted to use the necklace to circle up the thoughts and feelings of Jane. He wanted the ring to restrict Jane’s actions. Further, he wanted the beautiful wedding dress to change Jane’s appearance a little bit.

   4. The oppression from St. John
St. John hold absolute faith in the social convention that a woman’s value was realized only when she devoted her life to a man. He took it for granted that it was the privilege and honor of Jane to go to India with him and help his work as his wife.

2. **The Image of Women in Jane Eyre**

   The heroine of the novel *Jane Eyre* has undoubtedly succeeded in building up the image of a woman who has the courage to fight against the unfair reality and pursue the equality in life. She calls for women to struggle for and be the mastery of their own lives. During the whole story, Jane serves as a positive character. By the development of Jane’s thoughts and feelings, the author conveys the spirits of feminism.

   Miss Blanch Ingram serves as a contract character against Jane. She represents the typical girls from noble families in that time. All she wanted was to find a rich man to depend on and get married with him. In her opinion, a woman’s duty was to make her appearance attractive and beautiful in order to win the heart of a rich man. Marriage should base on social ranks and money only and husbands and children are the whole world for a woman. Her rude behaviors and contempt upon “ordinary” people have fully illustrated her lack of cultivation and education. The image of Miss Blanch Ingram also symbolized the women victims of the social conventions. They lost their soul or even lost control of their bodies and they didn’t have the slightest idea of the value of a woman’s life. they lived and were quite willing to live as the belongs of men.

   The mad women living on the 3rd floor arouses readers’ suspicion and speed up the development of the plot. In addition, she helped to turn on a new page of Jane’s life (Rosemarie Putnam Tong, 1998). Because of the terrible set by the mad woman, the Thornfield was reduced to ashes and Mr. Rochester became blind and lost one arm. Everything in the past had become history and a new chapter in Jane’s life had opened. In Ferndean Manor, a quiet and peaceful place, Jane and her beloved Mr. Rochester began to lead a new life in which Jane was no longer inferior to him and Jane’s stature has changed because she was rich thanks to the heritage from her dead uncle.

3. **The Relationship Between Jane and Mr. Rochester.**

   Jane was a relatively stronger character. At the first time they met, Jane helped the injured Mr. Rochester and at the end of the novel, Jane helped Mr. Rochester to deal with his daily life because of his blindness and disability. Furthermore, Jane was rich while Mr. Rochester turned poor, old and ugly. The author seems to arrange their marriage in this kind of condition on purpose. In Jane’s preparation for her marriage when she was still a governess in Thornfield, she refused all the jewelry or beautiful dresses Mr. Rochester had prepared for her. She didn’t want to be changed into another woman.
I. Comparison Between Charlotte Bronte and Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë was born April 21, 1816. One of five daughters born to Reverend Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell Brontë, Charlotte lived a sheltered life, spending most of her years confined to Haworth Parsonage. With Charlotte's limited knowledge of the world, it should come as no surprise that the plot of her first published novel, Jane Eyre, contains many parallels to her own life some very likely intentional, while others may be subconscious or even merely coincidental. Regardless of her intentions while writing Jane Eyre, it is clear that Charlotte Brontë drew heavily on her own identity and experiences in creating the character of Jane.

Jane Eyre's childhood seems in some respects to have been modeled after Brontë's. Some parts of Jane Eyre's childhood were taken directly from Charlotte Brontë's memories; no matter how extreme seem the conditions of Lowood, the school is, in fact, intentionally modeled after Charlotte's own experiences at Cowan Bridge. In her biography The Life of Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, a friend and fellow writer of Brontë, said of the relationship between the two schools:

"Miss Brontë more than once said to me, that she should not have written what she did of Lowood in Jane Eyre, if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan Bridge, although there was not a word in her account of the institution but what was true at the time when she knew it" (Gaskell, 2004).

As Lowood was obviously meant to be Cowan Bridge, despite Brontë's reluctance to have others aware of it, the similarities between the two schools merit additional analysis. Gaskell describes the Cowan Bridge school as a charity school for daughters of poor clergyman, that they might be educated as befitting their station. The school was established by. That Charlotte Brontë drew on her own limited life experiences in the creation of Jane Eyre is demonstrated by the many parallels between Charlotte's life and her heroine's. Jane evinces many of the characteristics of her creator, to the point that Jane Eyre is a portrait of Charlotte herself. It is clear that Charlotte Brontë put not only her heart and soul into her writing, but her very life.

J. Conclusions

Feminist criticism comes in many forms, and feminist critics have a variety of goals. Some have been interested in rediscovering the works of women writers overlooked by a masculine-dominated culture. In short, the definition arrives in an opinion, that feminism is a theory applied into all aspects of life in which women issues appear as the major issues. This is the woman consciousness of equality among men-women relationship as human being that have rights to be treated equally. Opinions, arguments and perception about feminism are translated only as a justification and
legalize women towards their position in society. The perception attempts to equalize man and woman.

*Jane Eyre* essentially a Liberal feminist. She was an orphan with no family, no money, and no good looks (probably the first and last heroine repeatedly described by her author as unattractive). Liberal feminism's primary goal is gender equality in the public sphere, equal access to education, equal pay, ending job sex segregation, better working conditions, won primarily through legal changes. Private sphere issues are of concern mainly as they influence or impede equality in the public sphere. Gaining access to and being paid and promoted equally in traditionally male-dominated occupations is an important goal. The first strength of the novel lies in the fact that it chronicles in a highly rapturous eloquence the life and living conditions, hopes and aspiration, sorrows and sufferings of the people belonging to different rungs of the social strata. And its second strength lies in the fact that it presents itself more than a social reportage apart from presenting a strong critique on the unjust, discrepant, and anomalous social, political, economic structures, values, and practices of the age, it also envisions how the human society needs to be.

Most importantly, this novel gives voice to the marginalized class and gender, grinded into the exploitative feudalistic structure of the society. It was such cases which resulted in a few Victorian women becoming professional writers. To the fact that Victorian middle (and in some cases working) class women were more engaged in the intellectual endeavors compared to their upper-class contemporaries. Critics of liberal feminism point to a lack of critique of basic gender relationships, a focus on state action which links women's interests to those of the powerful, a lack of class or race analysis, and a lack of analysis of ways in which women are different from men. Critics often accuse liberal feminism of judging women and their success by male standards.

In *Jane Eyre* one is able to recognize the passion that Jane felt as a reflection of Bronte. To Gaskell, Bronte’s bold and passionate behavior was to be hidden or explained away as an effect of the grief she suffered. It was to be recognized as part of Bronte's character and part of her writing. Jane reveals her passion on many occasions in the novel, Jane's passion is a part of her just as was a part of Bronte.

Although the strongest parallels between Charlotte Brontë's life and Jane Eyre occur in childhood, the similarities continue throughout the rest of the novel as well. Charlotte created Jane after her own image of herself, reputedly telling her sisters, "I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours" (Gaskell, 2004). Jane takes on not only Charlotte's thoughts and memories, but her appearance as well.

That Charlotte Brontë drew on her own limited life experiences in the creation of Jane Eyre is demonstrated by the many parallels between Charlotte's life and her heroine's. Jane evinces many of the characteristics of her creator, to the point that Jane Eyre is a portrait of Charlotte herself. It is clear that Charlotte B
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K. Suggestion

Reading literatures or literary works is more enjoyable than any other sources. It can give us pleasures, moral lesson of other’s experiences in life and love, broaden our mind and make us have a better judgment of problems. Especially in Jane eyre that exposed an equality between men – women in their rights. Because, women’s rights are part of human rights, enforcement of the women rights is part of the enforcement of human rights.

Then, the protection, respect for and fulfillment of the women rights is the responsibility of all people, even citizens individually have responsibility to protect and fulfill the women rights. Thus, women are no longer considered inferior to man, but appreciated and valued as Jane does.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


