

# **GENDER EQUALITY REFLECTED IN CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S NOVEL *JANE EYRE* (1848) : A FEMINIST ANALYSIS**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For Getting Bachelor Degree of  
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Hence later, if it is proven that there are some untrue statements in this testimony, I will fully be responsible.

Surakarta, 9 July 2021

The Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selma', with a horizontal line underneath.

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# GENDER EQUALITY REFLECTED IN CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S NOVEL *JANE EYRE* (1848) : A FEMINIST ANALYSIS

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini untuk mengetahui masalah wanita, budaya patriarki dan perjuangan untuk kesetaraan gender seperti yang terekspos dalam novel Charlott Bronte. Teori feminisme masih menjadi topik favorit untuk dibahas, baik itu dalam novel, film, atau diskusi umum. Jika kita berbicara tentang emansipasi, sebenarnya antara wanita dan pria memiliki porsi yang sama. Namun dalam perspektif masyarakat saat ini, pria berhak untuk lebih mendominasi dalam kehidupan sosial ini. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membahas tentang teori Feminis dalam sebuah buku berjudul "Jane Eyre". Perkembangan karakter cukup intens meskipun tidak ada konflik yang berarti, tetapi layak untuk didengarkan. Ini mungkin penulis mencoba untuk menanamkan simpati pembaca untuk Eyre. Objek penelitian ini adalah Jane Eyre sebagai protagonis wanita dalam buku tersebut. Metode dalam menganalisis buku ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Penulis menggunakan teori feminisme oleh Allison. M Jagar untuk menganalisis buku ini. Dalam teori ini, Ali menyebutkan bahwa pada intinya kesetaraan gender antara perempuan dan laki-laki memiliki porsi yang sama. Meskipun dalam praktiknya pria selalu dianggap lebih unggul dari wanita. Dalam hal ini seperti kesenjangan dalam hal pendidikan, pekerjaan atau profesi. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti mencoba memberikan pandangan bahwa wanita juga dapat unggul dengan berbagai cara, wanita mandiri, dan wanita memiliki tingkat yang sama dengan pria.

**Kata kunci** : Feminisme, Jane Eyre, Kesetaraan Gender, Patriarki, Emansipasi

## Abstract

This study is to find out the problems of women , patriarchal culture and the fight for gender equality as exposed in Charlott Bronte's novel. Feminism theories are still a favorite topic to discuss, whether it be in novels, films, or general discussions. If we are talking about emancipation, actually between women and men has the same portion. But in today's community perspective, men are entitled to more dominate in this social life. The aim of this research is to discuss about Feminist theory in a book titled "Jane Eyre". The character development is quite intense although there is no meaningful conflict, but it deserves to be listened to. This is probably the author trying to embed the reader sympathies for Eyre. The object of the study was Jane Eyre as the female protagonist in the book. Method in analyzing this book is using qualitative descriptive method. The writer used theory of feminism by Allison. M Jagar to analyze this book. In this theory, Ali mentions that in essence the gender equality between women and men has the same portion. Although in practice men are always considered superior to women. In this case such as gaps in terms of education, occupation or profession. In this study, the researcher tried to give the view that women can also excel in various ways, women are self-reliant, and women have the same level as men.

**Keyword** : Feminism, Jane Eyre, Gender Equality, Patriarchal, Emancipation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Engels in Narwoko and Suyanto (2010) understand gender as a difference that puts the roles of men and women going through a very long process, through the process of socialization, strengthening, and social, cultural, and religious construction even through state power. Gender understanding contained in several training modules by the Minister of Women Empowerment according to Rahmadewi is able to provide indicators that gender is closely related to equality or equality.

Equality comes from the word “equal” which means level or balanced. Equality in this understanding means pointing to a balanced and equal condition, or equality. Equality also means no weight. Equality also means equality and equality. Gender equality means equality of conditions for men and women to have opportunities and rights as human beings, to be able to play and participate in political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, educational and defense and national security activities, as well as similarities in enjoying the results of such development. Gender equality also includes the elimination of discrimination and structural injustice, both against men and women.

The English Novelist, Charlotte Bronte, was the eldest from three Bronte sisters that their novels have become enduring classic of English literature. One of her claimed masterpiece is “Jane Eyre”. Bronte's sister lives in a poor family environment. Since they are still very young, they have been left by their mother who died because of carcinoma. Jane is a picture of a regular and simple woman. Charlotte was an independent woman, who was very brave to voice her own voice. Between the life pressures she lives in, she always maintains his respect with her diligence, wit and individualization that is hard enough. She never gave up a little in her life. Although she is a small figure, Jane Eyre has a great soul in her story. She pursued true and faithful love and was faithful to the man she loved. Her goodness, intellect, and independence attracted the attention of her kind opponents.

The focus of feminism theory is an attempt to bring the distinction into openness to demonstrate the subordinate position of women and to explain the world's economic and political systems that are considered discriminatory against women's positions. Therefore feminism is one of the approaches used in qualitative research is expected to be able to restore the root of social, cultural, political, economic and religious issues to be answered as a more feminist solution among the question of the propient hegemony of Patriarchs. Feminist theory is a tool used by women to fight for their rights related to conflicts such as racial classes, especially gender conflicts. In contemporary literary theory, feminists are women's

movements that occur almost all over the world. The movement is triggered by the realization that women's rights are equal to men. Women are entitled to do what men do. The characteristic of feminist studies is the diversity and differences of objects with their theories and methods. The areas of study are relevant in relation to the literature, including: Women's literary traditions, female writers, female readers, characteristics of women's language, female characters, and so on.

At this study, the research consisted of three parts. The first part is the background where the researcher displays an overview of what will be discussed in this proposal. The second is the literature review. In this section, the researcher discusses more about the main topic of Charlotte's book and the discuss about feminism. The last is about the research method. In this section will be discussed on how to analyse the novel, and what method is used. The researcher choosing this object is because she interested in digging deeper into ancient English literary works. She also want to know what are the theories of feminism and gender issues especially gender equality in Charlotte Bronte's work. The novel has many problems that can be discussed in it, but researchers choose one of them, it is a search for the meaning of life. The Quest for life's meaning is a matter chosen by researchers in the novel for telling Jane's life.

Previous study have been conducted by Dr. B. Janaki. In his research, he concluded that through Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë aimed to fight against oppression in patriarchy. Jane fights gender equality and is determined to assert her individualization is not solely subject to the traditional norms that anyone receives. Mr. Rochester and St. John want to know more about Jane at that both cases, whether she really insisted on independent wills.

A similar study by Cristina Budeanu, Școala Gimnazială Filipeni, Bacău analyzed this novel from the View of feminism. The final goal of the study was to give the fact that the character's life in the Victorian era was relevant to today's modern women as well. Although perhaps the issue of feminism used at that time is different from the present, but the researcher thinks there is not much to change in that theory if it is associated with the present.

Third research done by Widya Firmanilla Mentari uses liberal feminism theory according to Alisson M Jaggar. In his research, the researcher wanted to find out what ideas were opposed by the feminists in the book. In this study, researchers tried to convince that women could be independent, as well as men. And based on the story in the novel, the main character aka Jane Eyre proves that Jane reflects liberal feminism.

The relevant research created by Haiyan Gao in 2013, examines the historical, social, and cultural elements of the book. At his writing, Haiyan mentions that if Jane Eyre was able to enforce justice for women, she proved that women could be independent. Researchers also mentioned that being a woman should be tough and brave in the face of anything, as Jane Eyre did in the novel.

The fifth relevant research by T. Patoding focuses on researching women's positions in social life and the role of women in real life. Researchers used the feminist mystical theory by Betty Friedan. The conclusion of this study is the female emancipation clearly described by Jane in the novel. The main character is able to solve the problems that exist in social life during the Victorian era.

The aim of this research is to discuss about Feminist theory in this novel. This novel was written in the Victorian period in the 19th century in England. Feminism research should essentially pay attention to the cultural construction of two living creatures namely men and women. The study tried to test the differences and similarities, experience and interpretation of both in various contexts and types of social relations. The objectives of this research are to identify, describe, and reveal the characteristic of Feminism Criticism in the work.

## **2. METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. This method gives an explanation by giving a description of the phenomenon to be researched. Because of the purpose of this research to examine the issue of feminism in this novel, the descriptive explanation will be done in this study.

Method in analyzing this book is using qualitative descriptive method. The writer used theory of feminism by Allison. M. M. Jaggar to analyze this book. In this theory, Ali mentions that in essence the gender equality between women and men has the same portion. Although in practice men are always considered superior to women. In this case such as gaps in terms of education, occupation or profession.

The main data used in this study is Bronte's novel titled Jane Eyre. This research also needs a supporting data. Supporting data to fulfill this research came from previous research, articles from the Internet, and also films that adapted from the same novel. The main data used in this study is Bronte's novel titled Jane Eyre. This research also needs a supporting data. Supporting data to fulfill this research came from previous research, articles from the



Internet, and also films that adapted from the same novel. In collecting the data, researchers read the whole novel to find the issue to be discussed, that is feminism. Then assisted with supporting data such as previous research, article, and film to strengthen previous data. Next is collecting all the material and finding the answer to the issue or theory of feminism through Charlotte Bronte's novels.

Researchers read novels or data that already existed comprehensively. And then divide or classify the data to be researched with established topics or issues. All data is studied and understood in depth based on the appropriate approach. Then after being analyzed, the data is interpreted into the title of this research. In analyzing data, the researchers embraced on the theory of feminism by Allison. M Jagar.

### **3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Finding**

In this chapter, we will find out the problems of women , patriarchal culture and the fight for gender equality as exposed in Charlotte Bronte's novel. Feminism theories are still a favorite topic to discuss, whether it be in novels, films, or general discussions. If we are talking about emancipation, actually between women and men has the same portion. But in today's community perspective, men are entitled to more dominate in this social life.

The term gender is a public perception that refers to a person's identity, behavior of social roles of either women or men. General knowledge of gender differences between men and women is important to determine their position on any side of life. Gender is usually associated with masculine and feminine terms. Masculine is associated with male traits, such as dashing, strong, and leading. While feminine is associated with female traits, such as nurturing, meek, and flavoring. How one community determines the role or nature of a gender can be different from another and can also change over time.

In analyzing this chapter, the author divides several chapters to make it easier for the author to analyze the results of the study. The chapter is divided on the issues of fighting for education, against male dominance, injustice in work, against tradition in society, and the last is the portrayal of independent women in Jane.

##### **3.1.1 Gender Equality Issue in Struggle of Education**

This section will analyze Jane's thinking as well as Jane's life concerning education as a means of achieving gender equality which is thought to reflect Jane Eyre's

character in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. Justice and equality are basic ideas, objectives and the main mission of human civilization to achieve prosperity, building harmony of social and state life, and build quality families. Similar conditions for men and women to gain opportunities and rights as human beings in order to be able to play a role and participate in politics, economy, law, socio-cultural, defense education and national security, as well as similarities in enjoying the results of building. Looking at the strategic position and role of a mother in the educational process, it is appropriate that the role of women in the process of education in social life get a reasonable place to be able to protect human rights human beings. This can be seen from women on occasion development or independence. Education as gender equality means that women have an equal right to equal education or equal participation for both women and men. Equal human rights mean women and men can have and enjoy equal status. In the novel, Bronte portrays a Jane as an intelligent, independent, and capable young woman who has a strong ruthless vision of a world measured by education in search of gender equality.

*“Why did they send me so distant and so lonely,  
Up where the fields spread and dim rocks are heaped?  
Men are hard-hearted, and kind blessed messengers as it were  
Watch o’er the steps of a destitute vagrant child.” (Bronte 1848 : 29)*

Jane was sent to Lowood and continues to fight for her right to education while she is at Loowod school, how loowod school leaders hate Jane and tell all children and teachers that Jane's a liar child and deserve to be hated. But Jane wasn't down with Mr Brocklehurst's attitude and words but she did be an advanced woman by studying hard. Mr. Brocklehurst hated Jane so much, even he humiliated Jane in front of Lowood's students and teachers. Although Jane was under pressure from her school leaders, she did not become a weak, downcast and protracted woman in her grief. But with this incident rounded his determination to be a more diligent child. will work hard because she deserves a decent education, with showed her passion in learning.

### 3.1.2 Gender Equality in Against Male Dominance

Gender issues are defined as issues that concern injustices that negatively affect women and men, especially women. For example, subordination (women are always number two), the assumption that women are weak, unable to lead, difficult to make

decisions, and that results in women being number two after men. Dominance means mastery by the stronger against the weaker. As revealed by Florence & Paludi (1993) the difference in the roles of women and men is natural i.e. female anatomy that is different from men becomes the main factor of social roles, men become the main role because in society is considered stronger, full of potential, and more productive. Dominance means mastery by the stronger against the weaker. The analysis material in this study is a novel that represents feminism, so the author describes the development or role of the feminism movement in literature, especially those contained in the novel. In the western literary world there is a classification between men and women in the field of literature. This concerns the more dominant role of men and considers women to be objects.

*“You've got no business to require our books; you're a dependent, mama says; you've got no cash; your father cleared out you none; you have to be ask, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same suppers we do, wear clothes at our mama's cost. Presently, I'll instruct you to scrounge my bookshelves: for they ARE mine; all the house has a place to me, or will do in many a long time. Go and stand by the entryway, out of the way of the reflect and the windows.” (Bronte 1848 : 11-12)*

John Reed's ban on Jane from taking and reading books is one example of restraint on women to gain knowledge or gain an education. The way John Reed breaks down the book, which in fact belongs together with his sister, signifies the power of men in the family. John Reed's two sisters; Eliza and Georgiana could not prevent or forbid their brother's actions because they considered their brother more entitled to what was in the house. This is also supported by the expression John Reed on all the house belongs to me signifying that men is the sole holder of ownership in the family as he or she controls the family.

### 3.1.3 Potrayal of Jane Eyre as Feminism and Independent Woman

Feminism is one of the approaches used in qualitative research is expected to be able to restore the root of social, cultural, political, economic and religious issues to be answered as a more feminist solution among the question of the propient hegemony of Patriarchs. Feminist theory is a tool used by women to fight for their rights related to conflicts such as racial classes, especially gender conflicts. In contemporary literary theory, feminists are women's movements that occur almost all over the world. In the novel, Bronte portrays Jane as an innocent, obscure poor woman of her origins, but she was an independent woman. The novelist also created Jane as a victim of oppression in

every place she lived, but she also transformed Jane into a helpful person around her. Jane had to fight in her life to fight the old tradition that had been to make her a free and independent person in her lives and communities.

*O Miss Jane! don't say so!*

*'Good-bye to Gateshead!' cried I, as we passed through the hall and went out at the front door (Bronte 1848 : 60)*

When Jane decided to leave the house and go to school, she actually had to get out from the house, and she couldn't go back to that house anymore. When she realized when she had stepped out of her home in Gateshead, then a new chapter of her life began. She would fight alone in Lowood without her family, she would have to adapt to his surroundings, find friends and people she could trust. Because for a child her age, it's a thing that to bear on its own. But it was here that she showed her abilities, her ability, her manhood and her indecebility to her uncle's family that without them Jane would still be successful, with her own efforts and hard work, she would then emerge as an independent and free woman.

#### 3.1.4 Gender Equality In Terms of Work

Human rights are a must-have for both men and women. It must have the same portion between the two, nothing more or less. That human right serves to guarantee one's dignity. Women's rights are often the issue discussed one of which is the issue of women's education and being a career woman or a working woman. Talk about gender differences, it makes us remember the days before emancipation, where women were considered one-sided by men. What happened to women in those days was inversely proportional to that of their males. Men have the freedom to get an education to the highest level. They can also freely do activities outside the house. It can be said that at that time education and work outside the home were men's rights. Female Emancipation cannot be misinterpreted, or interpreted clearly. That woman is the same as a man. That definition is a big mistake. The social environment must also understand the true meaning of gender equality. Because basically Men and Women have their own roles in their lives. The role of women does not necessarily eliminate the role of men. However, women also have the right and obligation in carrying out responsibilities, be it in the form of careers or in family life, society, nation and country.

*“ladies feel fair as men feel; they require work out for their resources, and a field for their endeavors, as much as their brothers do; accurately as men would endure; and it is narrow-minded in their more favored fellow-creatures to say that they need to keep themselves to making puddings and sewing leggings. It is neglectful to sentence them, or chuckle at them, in case they look for to do more or learn more than custom has articulated essential for their sex”(Bronte 1848 : 167)*

Jane's thought like this made her mindful of what ladies ought to do within the center of society who at the time considered that ladies ought to fair be noiseless and make ladies not think barely almost hinking ahead as Jane felt whereas still in Lowood she felt that her life was fair turning in that portion alone she needed to be free to do something she liked. Jane thinks that women are capable of doing the same as men do. Women shouldn't just stand still and refrain from doing what they love. They can learn and practice anything more than what has been outlined according to their nature.

### **3.2 Discussion**

In this study, researchers found several points that presented the issue in this study, namely gender equality. In conducting this study, the authors also used feminism theory by Allison. M Jagar to analyze this book. In this theory, Ali mentions that in essence gender equality between women and men has an equal share. Although in practice men are always considered superior to women.

First, the authors found there was an issue of gender equality in terms of education. The issue of education has always been the main issue or very strong injustice in those days. Women have always been victims of the injustice of the problem. Men think women shouldn't get education. That's what happens in Jane's life story. Although Jane was under pressure from her school leaders, she did not become a weak, downcast and protracted woman in her grief. With a highly educated woman can vertical mobility to improve socioeconomic status. Not only that, women must also act as a self-identity, as well as the science of will grow and develop.

Second, researchers discuss gender equality in the issue of male dominance. In the novel, Jane encounters a problem of how to deal with difficulties at that time, at which

time society was still dominated by men. Gender equality was very inherent in life at the time because men still dominated various sectors of life. Jane tries hard to make women have the same gender equality as men of the time.

Third, the researcher discuss about Potrayal of Jane as Feminism and Independent Woman. Researchers found that there is a feminism character in Jane. Jane challenges the old traditions, the male domination, the patriarchy system, the male being the domination and the female being subordinate. Jane had to fight in her life to fight the old tradition that had been to make her a free and independent person in her lives and communities.

Fourth, gender equality issues in the employment sector. Since time immemorial, gender equality in the field of work has occurred. Jane is strongly opposed to anything deviant or women's equality in her work. Jane aspires to be an independent woman, able to stand alone without men, and also to fight for the emancipation of women in her environment. In the novel, Jane is portrayed as a hardworking woman, and women are equally entitled to the same position as men. Women also want to hone their talents or skills just like men do. Jane thinks that women are capable of doing the same as men do.

#### **4. CLOSING**

Based on the result of the study and discussion in chapter four, the author concludes that First, Jane Eyre as a woman can achieve her freedom as a human being who is fully entitled to her. Jane Eyre proves that she is capable of appearing as an intelligent, independent woman who can escape all kinds of oppression, racism against women, inequality against her people and the dominance of men that puts her in an unfavorable position. Evidence of Jane Eyre's freedom can be seen in the choices she sets out, such as taking the decision to leave the figures who put her in an unfavorable position. In this story, the author tells how Jane can endure a difficult condition at the time. But in the end, Jane can prove that women have the same equality as men. There will be a variety of problems that will be discussed in Jane Eyre's novels, such as How the writer, Charlotte Bronte can communicate with her readers, the loneliness that experienced by Jane, who makes her work hard to find a partner. In this research researchers focus mainly on the main character, the Jane The issue of gender equality in the study is divided into 4, namely about gender equality in education, employment, against male dominance, and also the portrayal of feminism figure in the character Jane Eyre. The feminism movement that propagates into the literary world also has to do with the role of feminism in the

author and the role of feminism can be reflected in a story character. A reflection of feminism in a story character can be seen when a story character experiences a movement to change and fights for her liberation from order and struggle to get equal rights that are just as men have, like Jane figures. The image of feminism in Jane is clearly illustrated through the stories in the novel. Jane was portrayed as an independent, courageous, strong woman, a fighter for her people, and also against various issues such as old traditions in society, or against male domination in those days. The pattern of relationships between men and women has achieved the nature of equality relationships. It means that women who have been present as objects that have always been oppressed or objects of subordination have been able to appear as subjects that are free of themselves, and also able to create an equal relationship with men, namely achieving an equal relationship, no dominating or subordination. The pattern of equality or ability of women to appear as equally positioned individuals with men is supported by hard work, sacrifice, potential, intellectual and personality. All of that honed women to develop their potential. Thus, Jane Eyre in her day was able to show her ability and courage as a pioneer of emancipation so that at finally women can appear as an important figure in society and his voice was also a consideration.

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