

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The world has greatly altered in terms of work. From time to time, the increasing pace of work and the stress for both men and women has escalated to maintain survival and fulfill individual and/or group needs (e.g. family). Both sexes are taking whatever opportunity they can take, with nowadays culture people tend to work based on competence and have the freedom to be whatever they choose to be, whether it is a struggle in the workplace (public) or day-to-day housekeeping chores (domestic). In today's generation, people are more capable of embracing both their male and female qualities because of liberation from outdated social expectations or old norms (Gray, 2016, p. 7). Therefore, the professions based on gender role has pretty much shifted, men and women nowadays have the opportunity to do any kind of professional work that was restricted by the government, society, or mere judgment in the past.

Since early feminist efforts began in the late 18th and early 19th century fighting for women's rights to receive equal work opportunities and reducing the pay gap, many job fields have developed, diverse, and required men and/or women in the same chair to run the wheels. The terms female worker and male worker have become blurred over time concerning jobs that used to be restricted only to the category of men or women (Gray, 2016, p. 80). Even so, the limited availability of jobs requires both men and women to compete to get a position, earn income, and make ends meet. Every individual must be maintaining their position and secure a

job, regardless of gender and sex, to continue to survive and in the worst case: not starve to death.

This study is centered on female workers as the breadwinner. The “female worker” category does not refer to gender but leads to a specific intellectuality (Duhin, 2001). The word “worker” itself is a unique referent to both males and females in the context of the work field, which has the main objective of fulfilling one’s needs (clothing, food, shelter, etc.) which can be gained from the result of their activities. For example, women are superior in terms of caring for children men in the matter of intellectual, nature, and senses related to the basic needs of children, therefore the work of babysitters is mostly dominated by women. Women who work as babysitters with payment can be called "female workers". The writer concluded that female workers are a term for women who work to earn money and provide for themselves and their families, whether in the public or domestic spheres. Most of the work handled by female workers is domestic work, but the term female worker has been opened for various jobs outside the domestic and only refers to another term for working women.

Most of the struggles faced by female workers in the field of work, especially in the male dominant work fields demanded male characteristics rather than female characteristics for striving (e.g. police, military, government, law, finance, aircraft piloting, technology, etc). Thus, women are required to adopting and incorporate male characteristics to be more ‘like a man’ to do these types of jobs and this matter is contrary to the natural being of females. On one hand, she must be steady, tough, and competent in carrying out her responsibilities to maintain her work performance and earn an income, while she has feminine nature

of waving mood, vulnerable, and virtuous in terms of moral values and compassion. In the long term, it is possible for such individuals, especially women, to have two characteristics that can be quite contradictory when required to strive in work. This situation is very common but if someone is forced to keep up with these unbalanced characteristics for years, it can lead to confusion about the proper response to certain situations and self-identity. As a result, many women, especially career women or female workers today have digressed too far to their masculine side and then complain about being stressed, exhausted, depressed, or simply unable to relax and enjoy their lives (Gray, 2016, p. 6).

Humm (1995) describes the situation of 'having both masculinity and femininity' in her book *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory (2nd ed)* as "a psychological and psychic mixture of traditional masculine and feminine virtues" with the term **Androgyny**. Humm stated that Virginia Woolf defined androgyny in *A Room of One's Own* as "a spectrum on which human beings could choose their places regardless of history or tradition" (Humm, 1995, pp. 10-11; Soares, 2015). Having both feminine and masculine traits balanced at the same time gives the mind freedom to not think only under male and/or female norms, but to see beyond mere gender perspectives. Reaching an androgynous mind frame is the same thing as returning to a psychological harmony and ideal state of mind (Soares, 2015). While on the other side, in the *Encyclopedia of Queer Studies in Education (Vol. 4)*, Androgyny is a gender expression that is uncertain or imprecise in terms of masculine or feminine (Kedley, 2022, p. 31). Kedley stated that androgyny happened in either an intentional or unintentional decision, and it is achieved by mixing masculine and feminine traits. This means that an androgynous person can

have overlapping traits or exist in between or outside of the masculine or feminine category (Kedley, 2022). The earliest research on androgyny was introduced and developed by Sandra Bem (1974), the early leading proponent of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory or BSRI, which the term happens to be one of the gender role orientations. Bem's article discusses the development of the new concept of sex-role inventory which treats masculine (instrumental) and feminine (expressive) traits as two independent dimensions so that it can be characterized as a function for the identification of one's masculine and feminine personality characteristics (Bem, 1974).

The research conducted by Joyce Y. Lee and Shawna J. Lee (2016) about caring masculinity states that Stay-at-Home Fathers (SHAF) convey that they are incorporating aspects of masculine and feminine qualities (or characteristics) to develop a new masculine identity that aims to best support their caregiving role and experiences in that particular task. This also has the potential to change both attitude, identity, emotional connection, and respect for the caregiving roles which are mostly done by women. The result shows that regardless of the choice of work chosen by women and men, they must incorporate both masculine and feminine characteristics to complete their work to the fullest and live a life with contentment and prosperity.

According to Gray (2016) in his book *Beyond Mars and Venus*, males and females have twelve (simplified) characteristics (or qualities). The Male side tends to be more: independent, detached, problem solver, tough, competitive, analytical, powerful, assertive, competent, confident, accountable, and goal-oriented. The Female side tends to be more: Interdependent, emotional, nurturer, vulnerable,

cooperative, intuitive, loving, receptive, virtuous trusting, responsive, and relationship-oriented (Gray, 2016, pp. 50-51). Gray stated that every man and woman has their unique balance of male and female characteristics. Men cannot always be tough and women are not always vulnerable. These distinct male and female qualities mentioned by Gray are grounded in biological male and female differences, which explains that the concept of gender is not merely a social construct (Gray, 2016, p. 52). The reason is the biological differences between men and women, both require particular hormones and behavior that stimulates these hormones. These characteristics are the right response to a particular thing or someone based on certain situations and times, including at work situation.

The problem relies on individuals, especially women in the fieldwork when they are unable to balance these two characteristics to preserve the comfort of their selfhood. This is what motivates writer study in the field of gender and literature. The writer is interested in studying the androgynous characteristics contained within the literature as a part to explore a balance between feminine and masculine qualities reflected in the story, especially about the female protagonist, and are related to the workforce situation.

Related to the study of androgyny characteristics in female workers, the writer choose Jane Eyre's novel as the corpus of the study in which the protagonist, Jane Eyre, reflects androgyny characteristics. This novel by Charlotte Bronte is the canon of the Victorian Era, published in 1847. The rationale for choosing Jane Eyre's novel as a corpus of study is because this novel has a reputation as revolutionary and "*the passionate voice of its first-person heroine took the Victorian world by storm*" (Michie, 2006). This novel has known for being closely

linked to feminism as a representative voice of the women in England during that time, mostly middle to low-class working women.

Jane is the protagonist that has conditions as a female worker in the Victorian Era. Born into an orphan background and facing difficult economic conditions, the challenges this protagonist faces throughout the novel are closely related to the characteristics of masculinity and femininity that develop side by side with one another from her early life at Gateshead Hall with her maternal The Reeds, her adolescent in Lowood charity school, working at Thornfield as a governess of Adele, until the marriage with Edward Rochester and her final life in Ferndean. According to Rymer, Jane possesses a class androgyny, which is performing work like a “middle-class mother” but in the term of the role is ‘both a working-class woman and man in the wages she received’ (Poovey, 1989; Rymer, 2020, p. 117). This indicates the possibility of androgynous characteristics this female protagonist possesses as she works on that role and does the tasks to fulfill her needs. Jane Eyre as a representative of androgyny in her condition as a female worker will be the main discussion of this study.

The previous research that is closest to and adequately covers the three variables of this study is found in Rymer's article (2020) and Soares's dissertation (2015). In her article entitled *Becoming Jane Eyre: Getting Rid of the Androgynous Shadow*, Rymer discusses the comparison of androgyny's identity from Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason. She argues that Bertha Mason represents Jane Eyre's fear of patriarchal oppression as Jane struggles to become independent. Even though both characters have androgyny in common, the difference lies in the androgynous identity of both characters, Jane Eyre represents class androgyny, and Bertha Mason

represents racial androgyny (Rymer, 2020, p. 117). Whilst's discussion of Soares's dissertation *Charlotte Brontë and Virginia Woolf: Feminism and Androgyny* focus on the androgynous mind and its benefits of the writer Virginia Woolf in her novel *A Room of One's Own* (Soares, 2015, p. 43), henceforth what relates to Bronte and Jane Eyre's novel is the figure of the double (or other self) which means a contradiction in unity and unity in difference associated with complementary expression of division within the personality (Herdman, 1991, pp. 1-2; Soares, 2015, p. 23). The two studies above have a gap regarding the explanation of the characteristics of female workers from an androgyny perspective and do not explore the androgyny in Jane Eyre character. Despite being a canon novel, feminine and masculine characteristics centered on the protagonist Jane Eyre as a female worker from an androgyny perspective has not been explored in the study of gender literature, which has become the novelty of this study.

A perspective that initiates significant changes in the common work field and gender stereotypical roles is liberal feminism. The writer uses Betty Friedan's liberal feminism, which explained that women are equal in expressing their rights towards the opposite gender. This theory's contribution to the study is to explore some of the early feminist perspectives underlying the development of the androgyny concept in gender studies and literature. Friedan has a vision that androgyny is in all human beings' best interests, which then she is committed to. Friedan urged men to develop their feminine characteristics such as passive, nurturing, or contemplative, and women to develop their masculine characteristics such as bold, assertive, commanding, or adventurous to be more androgynous (Tong & Botts, 2017, p. 29).

The methodology used by the writer is qualitative analysis. In this study, the writer identifies and describes the androgyny characteristics of Jane Eyre through the narrative plot and dialogue of the character and her identity as a female worker. First, the writer identifies the stereotypes regarding female workers' complexity in Jane Eyre novel by studying the background, intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel and its author. The writer uses previous research from Anjaneyulu & Bohra (2020) about portraying the role of gender in 19th-century literature to help construct the method for analyzing stereotypical work on females. Then writer will identify the evidence of the androgyny characteristic of Jane Eyre per chapter and contextualize it. The resulting description is associated with Betty Friedan's liberal feminism theory specifically related to Bem's androgyny characteristics. Then, the result of discussions is analyzed and linked with chosen narratives or dialogues that have been collected by the writer from the novel Jane Eyre. In the last step, the writer concludes the androgynous characteristics contained in the character of Jane Eyre as a female worker. The writer also include other sources related to masculinity and femininity as an expansion and deepening of material concerning the understanding of androgyny in the realm of the workforce, especially for women.

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In the realm of gender studies in literature, many studies have raised issues of feminism in writing works, especially canon literary works. The problem of this study relies on the focused discussion of how androgyny characteristics possessed by one character in literature, which represent femininity and masculinity clearly expressed in a single individual regarding one's situation as a worker, especially for female worker situations reflected in literature.

1.2. Research Questions

The questions deal with the research problem regarding the identification of female worker's androgyny characteristics within Jane Eyre novel which is divided into two aspects,

1. What is the stereotype of the female worker in the novel?
2. How androgyny characteristic of Jane Eyre as a female worker reflected in the novel?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study is an attempt to understand the underlying reasons and to provide information on the personal androgyny characteristic of protagonist Jane Eyre as a female worker, which gives the writer a comprehensible interpretation of femininity and masculinity qualities in the literature context in regards to the workforce situation which is quite rare studies to date. By using Friedan's Liberal Feminism theory, the writer can describe the androgyny trait as part of the deep layer of personal characteristics which becomes the rationale to take an action or to make a decision.

*Mencerdaskan dan
Memartabatkan Bangsa*

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be a contributor to adding insights into the understanding of female workers' androgyny characteristics in literature. Using qualitative methodology, the writer will explain the application of content analysis using the combination of Friedan's liberal feminism theory to dissect the causal of

androgyny situation from an individual's feminine and masculine qualities in studying Jane Eyre's character as a female worker, and then conclude the identification of what androgyny characteristic possessed by Jane Eyre. The result of this study can potentially increase the reader's awareness of androgyny characteristics found in working women (female workers) which underlie an individual's decision-making and rationale. It can also influence readers' viewpoints on femininity and masculinity perception as a reference for future gender studies in the literature.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study only focuses on the process of identifying, analyzing, and describing the androgyny characteristic of Jane Eyre as a female worker reflected within the novel context. The writer will maintain the consistency of the linkages of predetermined keywords to the results of the analysis in this study. Anything other than keywords related only serves as additional information and the input of the analysis process, not to be explored further. Using Friedan's liberal feminism theory, the writer chose the novel Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte with the protagonist Jane Eyre as the research corpus because the character meets the criteria set by the writer as an ideal corpus that has relevance to the three variables in the research title of this study, namely androgyny, literature study, and female character as a worker.