

**WOMAN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION  
AS SEEN IN ANNE BRONTE'S *THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL***

**A THESIS**

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## ABSTRAK

Di dalam skripsi ini, penulis membahas tentang jenis-jenis penindasan terhadap tokoh wanita di dalam kehidupan pernikahan dan usaha-usaha yang dilakukan untuk mengatasi penindasan tersebut seperti yang tergambar di dalam novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Penulis juga melihat apakah penindasan yang dialami tokoh wanita merupakan cerminan kehidupan wanita pada masa Victorian.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif (qualitative research) dengan mendeskripsikan bentuk-bentuk penindasan yang dialami oleh wanita pada masa Victorian beserta perjuangan untuk mengatasi penindasan tersebut. Penulis menerapkan metode analisis kepustakaan. Penulis menggunakan teori kritik sastra feminis, khususnya kritik perspektif feminis (perspective feminist criticism) yang dikemukakan oleh Cheri Register dan teori mimetik.

Hasil akhir yang penulis peroleh dari hasil penelitian tersebut yaitu adanya penindasan terhadap tokoh wanita pada masa Victoria melalui karakter Helen di novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, seperti pembatasan aktivitas oleh suami Helen, penganiayaan yang dilakukan oleh suami Helen, dan hak yang tidak adil terhadap Helen oleh suami Helen. Tetapi penulis menemukan usaha-usaha yang dilakukan oleh tokoh wanita yang dianggap dapat melepaskan diri dari penindasan patriarki, yang merefleksikan tiga bentuk kriteria dalam kritik perspektif feminis, diantaranya, mengekspresikan rasa ketidaksetujuan (penolakan) terhadap penindasan yang diterima, membangun rasa persaudaraan sesama wanita, dan menjauhkan diri dari si penindas. Penulis menyimpulkan bahwa Anne Bronte mulai menyuarkan isu-isu feminis melalui penggambaran tindakan tokoh wanita pada novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* yang berhasil membebaskan diri dari kungkungan budaya patriarki, dan memperoleh kebahagiaan karenanya.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. The Background of the Study

The issue of gender has been controversially discussed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It causes many debates about women's position and role in society. It was the era when women were regarded as the second gender. Women and men like to accept the fact that men have the right and women do not. Male behaviour has been considered as the norm and women have been viewed as inferior. Women have been thinking about women's behaviour about men. Men ultimately determine women's status in society.

This condition generates some critics from women who are called feminists. They asked about the equal rights for themselves in some aspects, such as in social cultural, economic, education, marriage and etc. As Clare Burton writes in her book *Subordination, Feminism and Social Change Theory*, "The feminist movement is visible manifestation of the fact that women are not simply passive recipient of dominant ideology, which imposes on them a definition of their places. (1985: 133).

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* who was published on June in 1848 by Anne Bronte is interesting to be analyzed. Anne Bronte is Charlotte and Emily's youngest sister. She was born on January 17<sup>th</sup> and died on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1849. During her life, Anne only produced two novels; the first is *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). There are some reasons for the writer to analyze

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. First, *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is one of visible manifestation against patriarchal oppression which imposed to women by men. Her novel represents and shows that woman must reject, to be abused, compromised and subordinated by men. It's seen in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* Helen as the main character who are mistreated, abused, and subordinated by men, done some struggles that can makes her against the oppression which is unusual in her society in Victorian Age. Though she is repressed, she dares to express her rejection through the oppression from her husband. Anne shows that women must speak up against the oppression not just receive the oppression. Then, women must achieve their rights no matter against society.

The setting of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in 1848 which is in Victorian Age is the other reason for the writer to analyze *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. It's the Age where women were subordinated, compromised and repressed by men. Women became the victim of patriarchal society that determined and control their activities. In marriage, women were oppressed to be patience, resignation, and follow to their husband's command. Beside, they got imbalance rights with the rules made by men that are good for men not between men and women.

It's seen in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Helen as the main character is not treated well by her husband. She is abused, repressed and subordinated by men. During her marriage, she is repressed to be the role of women in Victorian Age, in where she has to be patient, resign and must follow her husband command. In law, she doesn't get the same rights as men. Beside, economically, she has to

follow her husband's command not to continue her job as a painter. Her husband's cheating is the other oppression which is psychologically represses her.

Based on the reason above, the writer applies feminist literary criticism proposed by Cheri Register uses perspective feminist criticism. In perspective feminist criticism the writer focus to see the struggle done by Helen as the main character against the oppression she faced in her marriage based on female view, whether *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is bad or good in feminist view point.

The writer finally comes up her analysis entitled **"Woman's Struggle Against Patriarchal Oppression As Seen in Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*".**

## **1.2. The Identification of the Problem**

In this research, the writer analyzes Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Helen is the main character faces patriarchal oppression which imposed to her by male power. The writer assumes that the stereotype of woman in marriage as the passive one, resignation and silent suffering are the reasons used by men to oppress women in marriage. This condition is seen in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Helen becomes the victim of patriarchal system in Victorian Age. She is mistreated by her husband; she is not respected and repressed by her husband. Her husband insists Helen to be the role of model of Victorian's wife. Besides he uses his power to do whatever he wants and he forces Helen to obey his command.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

By analyzing *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* the writer sees how Helen doesn't treat well by Arthur. Arthur takes control over Helen's activity and attitude toward him. He just considers Helen as slave or servant in their marriage. Arthur shows his superiority when Helen demands for divorce and takes their son with her. The writer finds this condition is the reflection of the condition of women in Victorian Age. It's the time when women were under men's control. Men controlled and determined women's activity, attitude toward him. Women were considered as slave or servant as one of his property. Women had no rights to divorce as the House of Lord didn't allow women to divorce. This description gives the writer knowledge how women in Victorian Age lived in under oppression from women.

Yet, the writer sees struggle done by the main character Helen against the oppression in her marriage. There are three struggle against the oppression; expressing the voice, promote the sisterhood, and getting away from the oppressor. Related to the struggle done by women in Victorian Age, the writer find that the struggle done by women in Victorian Age reflects the struggle done by Helen in Victorian Age as seen in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* shows that women should not subject themselves, to be abused, compromised, or subordinated by men. Women should achieve their rights to get free from the oppression which imposed by men to them. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* shows that women can against oppression

toward them. The writer finds that Helen starts to voice about feminist issues through Helen's character and her actions against the oppression from her husband. The writer concludes that *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is good based on feminist view point.

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