CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The word ‘literature’ is derived from Latin, ‘litters’ which means ‘letter’. It primarily refers to the written or printed words, but later, it has also referred to the oral tradition or recitals. Literature is regarded as a creative and art (Wellek, 1977:3). Like other arts, literature can give new ways of looking at the world. It is essentially an imaginative act of the writer’s imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experiences (Taylor, 1981:1).

Literary works are the product of literature. Literary works can be divided into three categories or genres: poetry, prose, and drama. Prose can be divided into short story, novel, novelette, sermon, biography, etc. A novel is normally a prose work of quite some length and complexity which attempts to reflect and express something of the equality or value of human experience or conduct (Taylor, 1981:46). Most novels are concerned with people and their problems in the society which they find. Every novel is an account of life which involves characters, plots, setting, themes, etc. Narrative works are never purely literature. They are closely related to various aspects of human life. They may be related to mythical stories, historical events, social occurrences, philosophical ideas, biographical elements, or religious doctrines.
Charlotte Bronte, the writer of the novel, *Jane Eyre*, is one of the greatest novelist in the nineteenth century. She wrote some famous novels, such as *The Professor, Sherley, Emma*; but her most well known novel is *Jane Eyre*.

*Jane Eyre* depicts the British middle class woman condition in the 19th century. As we know, there was a great change in social and economic organization, which resulted from the replacement of hand tools by the machine and powered tools in Great Britain between 1750-1830. It was known as Industrial Revolution. Although the Industrial Revolution brought obvious advantages to mankind, it also brought harm to many people who lived through it, especially women and children.

In Britain, three structure classes generally called as the urban social hierarchy were formed when Industrial Revolution was occurring. First is the Aristocracy. It is the upper stratum of the society. The second class is the middle class. The third class is the working class. They consisted of high-skilled, semi skilled and unskilled people. According to Perkin in *Origins of Modern Society* (1969:176), Middle classes constituted a new class society in the era of Industrial Revolution. Great Britain may have had predominantly open class type in the nineteenth century. Open class permit people to change status with relative ease all during that century, and continuing up to the present.

Middle class was formed by the people from the lower rank which had enough education and better profession, therefore they could rise their life into a better condition. As the industrial revolution grew larger, middle classes succeeded in industry, trade and commerce and also technology (Perkin, 1969:176).
In the early 19th century, middle class women were required to become obedient, secret and bend. Married women were absolutely subordinate to their husbands. The men considered their wives, their properties and unfortunately, so did the law.

Women had double values. They considered themselves best as householders and workers. Women in the 19th century started to enter the men’s dominated world of ‘working’, the world that was used to be prohibited for female. Working was the means to release them from the old and conventional thought that woman for centuries were subordinate to men and could do nothing outside their house.

Jane Eyre’s experiences which are full of somberness and unhappiness have touched the reader’s feeling. This makes this novel very interesting to read. It becomes well-known throughout the world. This also drives me to analyze the novel. My hypothesis is that this novel can represent the social condition in the 19th century England, especially the women condition: their social status, education, and occupation.

1.2 The Statement of the Problems

As it has been mentioned in the background of the study, Jane Eyre tells about the condition of the British women in the nineteenth century. Therefore, it raises some problems which are going to be solved in the thesis:

- How is the social status of women in England in the 19th century?
- How is the women education in England in the 19th century?
- How is the women profession in England in the 19th century?
I will analyze the novel, based on the problems which are going to be solved.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, I have some objectives in writing this thesis. They are as follows:

- To describe the social status of women in England in the 19th century as reflected in the novel.
- To describe the education of women in England in the 19th century, which is reflected in the novel.
- To describe the profession of women in England in the 19th century as reflected in the novel.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The study of the novel, Jane Eyre, is very useful for the readers who want to know more about the women social condition in England in the nineteenth century. Besides that, it is also hoped that the reader will enjoy reading the novel and the other works written by Charlotte Bronte. Although it seems that the analysis is related to the historical perspective, most of the quotations are derived from the novel itself. It means that I only focus my attention on the novel instead of the history.
1.5 The Method of the Study

In order to analyze the novel, *Jane Eyre*, I attempt to find the source of data. The primary source of the data comes from the novel itself since almost all the quotations are quoted from the novel. Besides that, I also get some references from the other books which deal with the subject matter of the analysis. These secondary sources are used as the support of the study.

In selecting the data, I used some procedures. First of all, I read the novel several times so that I can understand the whole story. Then I read some books which deal with the subject matter of the analysis. I do this because I have to know more about the history of England in the nineteenth century so that I can write my thesis easily. Then I jot down some interesting information about the novel.

In order to begin writing the thesis, I compile all the data, both from the novel and from the secondary sources. Fortunately, there are some valuable books about *Jane Eyre* since it is very famous novel and critized by many critics around the world. It is, of course, easier for me to analyze the novel.

After gathering all the data, I begin constructing the idea of what I am going to analyze. First, I have to get the title of my thesis, and then I begin to think about the problems of the analysis, the significance, the objectives, and the most important one is the reason why I analyze the novel.
1.6 Review of the Related Literature

In analyzing the novel, I need some references which will support my study. There are some books which give valuable contribution to the study. They are as follows:

- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1982)
  
  In this novel, the writer finds the situation of British Women in nineteenth century.

  
  This book provides some valuable explanations about the method of analyzing a literary work. It is used by most of the students of literature when they are going to analyze literary works.

  
  This book helps me some basic information about literary genres, like novel, short story, or novelette.

  
  This book helps me understand the social condition in England in the nineteenth century. By reading this book, we know what happened in the British Empire, especially in England during the Industrial Revolution.

  
  This book also helps me understand the cultural background in England in the nineteenth century when Charlotte Bronte wrote the novel.

This book elaborates the lives of Charlotte Bronte and her sister, Emily Bronte. It also tells us the background of the writing of their novels so that they make me easy to analyze the novel.