

WOMAN AS A RATIONAL BEING IN THOMAS HARDY'S *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD* (1874): A FEMINIST APPROACH



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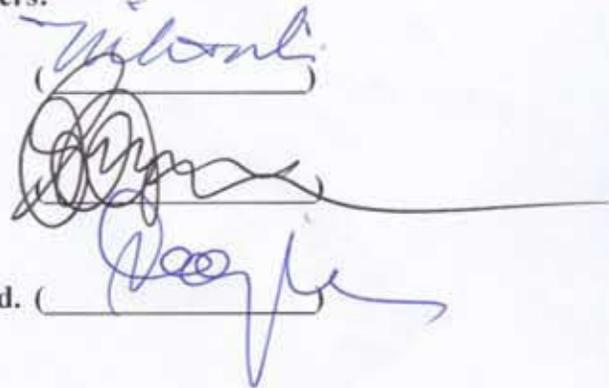
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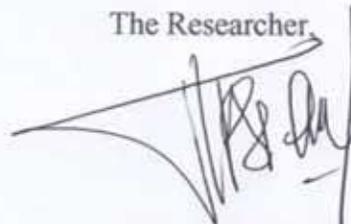
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Abstract

The study is about a woman as a rational being reflected in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874). The purpose of this study is to analyze the rationality of the major and minor women character based on the perspective of Feminist Theory about stereotypes of women. This study is descriptive qualitative study. The object of the study is *Far from the Madding Crowd* novel. There are two kinds of data source: Primary and Secondary data source. The Primary source is *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) novel by Thomas Hardy in English and Indonesian version. The secondary object is any references from books, journals, and articles related to the study. Technique of data collection is using Library Research and Note-taking method. Data are analyzed using descriptive qualitative method. The result of the research showed that the main character of woman in this novel, Bathsheba Everdene, fulfilled 4 criteria as a rational woman i.e. *logical, reasonable, sane, and intelligent*. Based on the analysis, Bathsheba is more rational than irrational, while the minor women characters are equal in both rational and irrational feature. Thomas Hardy wanted to criticize stereotypes of women in his era through the women character of his works including *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Keywords: Rational Woman, Stereotype, Feminist, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tentang perempuan sebagai makhluk rasional yang dicerminkan dalam novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) karya Thomas Hardy. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis rasionalitas dari tokoh utama dan pendamping berdasarkan pandangan Teori Feminis tentang stereotipe perempuan. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Objek kajian penelitian ini yaitu novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Terdapat dua jenis data dalam penelitian ini yaitu: data primer dan data sekunder. Data primer yaitu novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) oleh Thomas Hardy dalam dua bahasa, Inggris dan Indonesia. Objek sekunder berupa referensi dari buku, jurnal, dan artikel yang sesuai dengan penelitian ini. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan metode *Library Research* dan *Note-taking*. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh utama perempuan dalam novel ini yaitu Bathsheba Everdene memenuhi 4 kriteria sebagai perempuan rasional yaitu logis, masuk akal, waras, dan pintar. Berdasarkan analisis, sifat rasional Bathsheba lebih menonjol daripada sifat tidak rasionalnya, sementara itu tokoh pendukungnya memiliki sifat yang seimbang antara sifat rasional dan tidak rasional. Thomas Hardy hendak mengkritik stereotip perempuan pada zamannya melalui tokoh-tokoh perempuan dalam karyanya termasuk novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* ini.

Kata Kunci: Perempuan rasional, Stereotip, Feminis, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

1. INTRODUCTION

The study about *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) novel had been done in some approaches with different objects of study. The previous studies substantively have the similar focus to this study. In the field of Psychological approach there are researches about the struggle of male character to gain love from female character (Febryana, 2009) related with the female character response (Afiana, 2009) and article about the study of Thomas Hardy's background and character making (Schapiro, 2002). It among other studies focusing on the stereotypes of women in Victorian Era and character that is against the stereotypes (Shires, 1991), the kinds of stereotypes (Dewi, 2004), and the life of lead female character who lives in Patriarchal surroundings (Liliyanti and Diyantari, 2009) which are related with the theme of gender and power of women and using the Feminist approach.

This study focused on the analysis of woman as a rational being because there is no study about the rational and irrational character of female character in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) novel. The characteristics are related to the stereotypes of women and the background of the author in, Thomas Hardy, in writing about women.

Woman as an adult human being certainly has a rational characteristic but it may be less than their irrational characters in appearance. In some cases, women show their rationality more than the society had expected. Moreover, women oppressed in many ways because of the tradition that give priority to men or may be because selfish and masculine role of men. The imbalance of gender relation also taking part in subordinating women, make women, makes women as inferior being.

After the Feminist movements, women raised the equality and rights to exist both culturally and structurally. Women once are bound with domestic role and patriarchal system. The Feminist movement began with the perception of the imbalance between men and women in society. These thought result an effort to investigate the injustice and find a way to catch up women's right along to men in all aspects appropriate as a human being (Fitalaya in Anshori, et all, 1997: 19).

One of the authors concern in these phenomena is Thomas Hardy, an English author in Victorian era who put his thought about the social constraints on the living of Victorian England Age. His concern of women written on one of his work entitled *Far from the Madding Crowd*. It has the major conflict that pointed to the heroine, Bathsheba Everdene, the woman who inherit her Uncle's wide farmer then become the owner and take her hand as a leader and bailiff for the farm and the workers. She is an educated woman, tame, independent and loved by three men in the same time. Thomas Hardy wanted to reflect the stereotype of women in his era through the character of Bathsheba Everdene and the supporting women characters.

The aim of this study is to analyze the women characters of the novel in the perspective of Feminist Theory about the stereotypes of women. The phenomenon of Feminism in this novel are related to each other and pointed to the same direction. Therefore, this study is discussed about rational character of woman as a human being. This study has broken down into some questions: 1. what are the characteristics of woman as being rational? 2. How is being rational depicted in the novel? 3. Why did Thomas Hardy write about woman in his novel?

Based on the question above, the objective of the study is to explain the characteristics of rational women, the depiction of rational women in the novel, and Thomas Hardy's concern of woman. By doing so, theoretically and practically this study can give advantages to the researcher, readers, and the next researcher in expand the study about the same object in other way.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research method of the study can be explained as follows. The type of the study is descriptive qualitative study. This research takes *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) novel by Thomas Hardy as the object of the study. This research is using feminist approach and descriptive qualitative research to analyze the novel. Type of the data consists of two types: Primary data source and Secondary data source. The primary data source is the texts in form of narrations and dialogues in *Far from the Madding Crowd* novel (1874) in both English and Indonesian version. The secondary data source is collected from the books, journals, and articles which related to the Primary source to support the study. The researcher uses two techniques of data collection: Note Taking and Library Research. The researcher analyzes the data into three categories; analyzing and matching the core characteristics of rational women to the women character of the novel, analyzing the depiction of a rational woman in the novel through the structural elements of the novel and analyzing Thomas Hardy's concern on the stereotypes of women using descriptive qualitative analysis.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF A RATIONAL WOMAN

3.1.1. Logical

Logical is a characteristic of a clear reasoning. The explanation of the *logical* character in the novel is through the dialogue. Hardy's style of writing depicted Bathsheba Everdene characterization. She is a Mistress of Weatherbury Upper Farm, she tries to hold her financial all by herself, and for example Bathsheba hired her workers based on their ability in work.

She hires her workers based on what is written in source book from her uncle Farmer James Everdene who previously owner of the farm, but she wanted to know if what was written truly match with her workers or not because the salary system may be change after her uncle left. The reason why she asked before giving is that she put her rational thinking in front of her workers so they know that their mistress is good at managing the finance and there is a clear explanation for everybody why they get their salary differently so there will be out of misunderstanding between the mistress and workers, or between workers instead.

3.1.2. Reasonable

Reasonable related to the previous character: logical. Someone who is reasonable must be logical in thinking. It is because reasonable things are the result of logical thinking. As long as the writer found in the novel, the major character, Bathsheba Everdene has the reasonable characteristic. It is based on her logical process and she had a fair and sensible judgment. She fired the Bailiff Pennyways, because she caught him stole the barley crop.

She announces in the next day that she had fired the bailiff, so that the workers know what is really happen and the reason why she decided to make herself as the manager alone. Also, Bathsheba refuses Gabriel Oak marriage proposal through the reasonable thinking because she did not ready to marry just in her young age and poor life.

The clear reason along with her explanation why she do not marry yet and suggest Gabriel Oak to marry other women because he is a beginner-farmer and need money to expand his farm while Bathsheba just a woman who live with her aunt and have no money to support Gabriel in the future.

One of the rational woman characteristic is *refer to the future*; and Bathsheba is a kind of woman like that based on her statement.

3.1.3. Sane

Sane related to a clear mind of a human. The condition when human inner health is well, not mad or mentally ill. Woman such Bathsheba must be sane because she has to managing her farm along with her workers. It is reflected in her speech.

Someone who give their speech in front of people must be sane because speech is effective in influence people, speech is an effective media

to communicate with others; communication is the way to connect with the outside world of a human.

Bathsheba also has her sanity to keep the situation and give speech to calm down the situation of her workers after the bailiff fired along with the environment confusion about missing Fanny Robin, one of Bathsheba's housemaids.

3.1.4. Intelligent

Intelligent automatically means someone who has their intelligence and possibly in higher level. The writer tries to match this kind of intelligence with the novel but found something more important than intelligence in higher level that is intelligent as the ability of action as the response of varying situations, requirements, and past experience.

The women character of this novel show that they had their ability to fit themselves in various situations, but the first evidence shows that Thomas Hardy clearly pictured Bathsheba as educated woman, which means Bathsheba is intelligent in higher level/ academic level.

According to intelligent as the ability of action as the response of varying situations, requirements, and past experience, there is some cases between the characters; for example, Bathsheba and Fanny involved in situation when Francis Troy decide to love Fanny into eternity instead his wife Bathsheba. The past experience of her husband who lying in the coffin, Fanny Robin. Fanny is someone who had to accept by Bathsheba no matter what. Bathsheba is still warm-hearted to the body of Fanny Robin by taking care and bring her body to the house because she feels that it is her responsibility as the mistress of Fanny and such a manner to burying her in Christian manner, '*...it should be kind and Christian*' (**Chapter 43: 251**).

Based on the explanation above. The writer finds that there is a correlation between the four characteristics of the rational woman. A woman become reasonable as the result of logical sequence of thought, the logical thinking as the result of woman sanity, sane guides woman to act as a reasonable human while the combination with the logic bring it out into an intelligent woman.

3.2. Depiction of Woman as a Rational Being

In *Far from the Madding Crowd* novel there are major and minor women character. The major character, a heroine of the story is Bathsheba Everdene. The minor character is the characters who represents the rationality as a woman approximately with the major character does, they are Bathsheba housemaid; Liddy Smallburry and the ex-housemaid who also Troy's lover; Fanny Robin. Other minor character writes as a comparison to the main character as rational women, they are Temperance and Soberness Miller, Susan Tall, Mrs. Coggan, and Maryann Mooney.

The depiction of a rational woman of *Far from the Madding Crowd* is through the character/ characterization, style, and plot; while the point of view of the story is using third-point of view as the classic work in general.

The analysis of the depiction of woman as a rational being in the novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, as follows:

3.2.1. Through the Character/Characterization

3.2.1.1. Bathsheba Everdene

The rational character of Bathsheba Everdene including all the aspects; she is *logical, reasonable, sane, and intelligent* woman.

First, Bathsheba as a *logical* woman reflected in her ability to managing the financial of the farm and how she hires her workers in open-method. Latter, in her attitude as a woman, Bathsheba shows that she is a practical woman. It was through her method in helping her murdered-husband.

It means that *she conducting her method* in helping human even she has not practice it before. It is something logic to a human to act (practice) after learning a theory (philosophy).

Second, Bathsheba character as a reasonable woman is depicted in her act in refusing men. She is a woman who does not want to marry yet because of her youth and her thought as independent woman who just own and begin her career.

She had a clear explanation to Gabriel Oak that she *does not want to marry yet*. Beside, she is thinking about his and her future if they are marrying. They are in the same moment that they just begin their business. Latter, she refuses Boldwood because her dead-husband is not confirmed yet. Bathsheba resists herself in reasonable speech.

It is because she has not confirmed that her husband, Francis Troy, is really death. There is a rule about being a widow—in law. She makes it as a resist to Boldwood because Boldwood too much obsessed about marrying her and too confidence that he get a change after long time.

Third, Bathsheba's sanity depicted more in the way of her speech. She must be sane because she decide to manage her farm alone beside she is an owner who automatically take full responsibility about all-things of Weatherburry Upper-Farm. Latter, as she faces her marriage problem and her husband's betrayal, she keeps her sanity by think positively and tries to talk to someone who is more experienced about life than her.

Fourth, Bathsheba already confirmed her character of intelligence in many ways. Hardy depicted Bathsheba as a *good gen* of woman. It can be stated that the intelligence stage of children/ human genetically dominated by a mother. The first education of a human is from a mother, who is a woman.

3.2.1.2.Lidya/Liddy Smallbury

First, Liddy's character of logical thinking showed when she had argued with Bathsheba and she get her conclusion of manner by herself, she tells Bathsheba about her thought in an objective way. The premise of Lidya's thinking is the result of her logical process.

The conclusion of Liddy's thought after she had argued with Bathsheba about their tenet as women who fall into problem, also her theory that women should be such Bathsheba nowadays, because women need to be strong when put in life.

Second, Liddy has a reasonable reason to resist against Bathsheba who gets wrong of anger on her.

Third, the word *earnestness* and *mannerlines* means that woman like Liddy is intelligent; *intelligent to fit with the situation and on her duty*, because *manner is the result of good education*, education is not just at school but also given by her family (there is a case that parents educated their child to be mannered). The first education is beginning at

home and family play an important role. The environment is also holds high-carrying manner/ attitude.

3.2.1.3.Fanny Robin

First, Fanny's character of rational woman depicted through her act. She has her intelligent when she had her long journey to Casterbridge.

This case shows the intelligent side of Fanny Robin's character that she made a material aid or tools to make her journey easier. She uses materials around her to make a crutch; it was her alone without any help. She fight alone in her long walk to Casterbridge which in long miles, the word *conceivable aid, method, stratagem, and mechanism* has it correlation with *the way of thinking* and categorized as *rational* thought.

Moreover, Fanny is an educated woman. It proves through the dialog of Liddy. She said to Bathsheba that Fanny had been attended to school by Mr. Boldwood.

Second, other rational characters shows by Fanny Robin is her sanity, she is sane woman who can still thinking rational despite of her poor condition. She mobilized herself and determined to reach her destination even for a hundred miles with poor physical condition—she exhausted because she is also pregnant too, she did not giving up.

3.2.1.4.Opposite Characters

- Temperance and Soberness Miller

They show their lack education by their accent/ speak: '*Yes'm. Here we be, 'a b'lieve,*' It means that they has lack of manner and intelligent on speaking in a good way than Bathsheba, Liddy, or Fanny. Beside, Temperance and Soberness is worker of the soft job in Bathsheba's farm. It was not about a woman who differentiates in job with man, but during that time, woman workers considered in a job by their level of education. It is to decide what a match job that should be given, and depend on their less ability.

- Susan Tall/ Mrs. Laban Tall

Mrs. Laban Tall who is can not silent when Bathsheba trying to talk with her husband, Laban Tall. She just answering every part that Laban should tell the answer to Bathsheba. Laban Tall should talk by

himself but cracked by his wife. This kind case of manner is a result of her lack education. There is written: 'said again the shrill tongue of Laban lawful wife'. *Shrill tongue* means loud sound of a woman in speak. Somehow, that was showing her manner.

3.2.2. Through the Style

3.2.2.1.Diction

Diction is known as word choosing; generally the chosen word to show the author's idea. For example is when Bathsheba gives her first speech as a leader of *Weatherburry Upper Farm*. The diction of Bathsheba's speech revealed by Hardy to depict to the reader that Bathsheba is a woman leader who is independent, strict, and burn with will in managing the farm by herself.

3.2.2.2.Imagery

There is some imagery used by Thomas Hardy in the novel such when he depicted Bathsheba's intelligent and spirit. There is *simile* imagery which comparing Bathsheba to the figure of *Elizabeth* and *Mary Stuart*, who are the influential women's figure of England.

Other than that, Thomas Hardy pictured *Diana* in Bathsheba's mind in a narration, the figure of *goddess* which Bathsheba wishes to be.

Diana is Roman version of *Artemis* in Greek Mythology. She is known as *Goddess of the virgin and hunting*. She also uses as most of the Feminist icon because her strength. Moreover, Thomas Hardy compared Bathsheba to *Diana* as the strong woman and has her will to be independent and untouchable by men, in other words, she regretted her marriage.

There is also hyperbole imagery in picturing Bathsheba's strong heart as a woman or wife. In the chapter which Bathsheba hurt by the fact that her husband, Troy, had a lover, Fanny Robin, who is dead; and she pass her grave after the church with white gravestone made by Troy.

3.2.3. Through the Plot/ Creating Event

3.2.3.1. Bathsheba about Bailiff Pennyways as a Thief and Missing Fanny

Conflict that face by Bathsheba when her housemaid, Fanny Robin, missing and her bailiff, Pennyways, stealing the harvest of the farm when Bathsheba just begin to leads the farm. Bathsheba's method to face the problem as her leads the farm reflected her rationality, resolve the problem with considering the good and the bad shows the reasonable thought and her intelligent in facing the situation. Then she makes a resolution about the whole situation. The wise words were pouring in her speech to her workers.

3.2.3.2. Refusing Gabriel Oak Marriage Proposal

As a feminist being, Bathsheba really defends herself from a marriage. She gave Gabriel Oak clear explanation and the reason why she did not want to marry him.

The explanation of Bathsheba makes sense to Gabriel Oak to pull out his marriage proposal and respect Bathsheba as a *Lady* by her decision and clear speech.

3.2.3.3. Resist Farmer Boldwood Madness

William Boldwood, well-known as Farmer Boldwood is Bathsheba's neighbor. He is the owner of Weatherbury Lower-Farm. He is really falling into Bathsheba and looks so obsessed to Bathsheba but Bathsheba can not resist it at the time she would not want to confront Boldwood madness.

Bathsheba shows her independent and strong argument against Boldwood because she can not handle that Boldwood blame her for the case that he feel Bathsheba is a playing woman because she refuses her at the time when Sergeant Troy come and steals her heart.

3.2.3.4. Confronting Marriage Problem

Bathsheba had her marriage life with Francis Troy, a young soldier, a Sergeant; but as long as their marriage, Bathsheba found that Troy still has his lover.

Troy finally tell the truth that he has a lover before Bathsheba but none to talk to her who is it.

3.2.3.5.Suggesting Liddy to Think Over Again about Marriage

After betrayed and leave behind by her husband, Bathsheba had a talk with Liddy. Bathsheba is taking out on her thought about how to confronting the bad time and her marriage has been stake. How is she should be and give advise to Liddy about this if one day Liddy is marry and if she encounter the same problem.

It proves Bathsheba's strong heart and strong mind. She has her rationality in thinking and measuring, after her confronting her marriage chaos. Even, Bathsheba thinking about other woman, that she called friend, and give her suggestion because she had experienced the bitterness by herself.

3.2.3.6.Encountering Murdered-Husband

Thomas Hardy tries to explain Bathsheba's sanity through the climax of end lines of the novel. He depicts Bathsheba in chapter *After the Shock*, to prove that Bathsheba still can hold her sanity after saw his husband death and lying in her lap. She is stable; in hold her emotion, as the result of her sane character.

Hardy depicts Bathsheba as a woman who had a combination of sanity and power. Hardy tries to explain, even in ruined situation, Bathsheba stay still and after the difficulties that made by his husband, she is still in her common sense to help him, to love him just as she hold his bad-bloody wound and death body after shot.

3.3.Thomas Hardy's Concern in the Stereotype of Women

Thomas Hardy's particular work such *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Jude the Obscure*, and *Tess D'Urbervilles* show his complex view about woman. He esteemed woman as variously virgin and coquette, as endure and *ingénue*, and as actor and victim.

According to Sanders (1996: 465), "The 1860's had witnessed the emergence of the so-called 'New Woman'. It means that women are educated and individualistic. Women are still unfulfilled; it is by the fact of their continued subservience to men".

Thomas Hardy reflected a woman who is against the stereotype in Victorian era, even it is bound with the Patriarchal System but Bathsheba is not dependent and

submissive to a man. She chooses her husband by her own despite the public opinion. She is a wife along with her work as the original owner of the farm. In other way, she must be resist herself from Boldwood, who is very mad in love with her, and how her husband, Troy, treat her unfairly.

Hardy's vision has been called tragic, and the fate of many of his characters is indeed bleak and so with *Far from the Madding Crowd* that demanding a woman as a hero for herself. He reveals the cosmic indifference or malevolent ironies which life has in store for everyone, particularly for those unable to curb the demands of their own natures. He brings out issues which are highly relevant to his own day. In more far-reaching ways, the novel form also documented the social changes of the time. The move from the high moral didacticism of mid-century to the exploration of moral issues and responsibilities can be seen particularly in his novels.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that there are three explanations as follows: First, woman can be categorized as a rational being if a woman has at least four characteristics that is *logical, reasonable, sane, and intelligent*. Woman can be rational depend on the situation arises or naturally by the demand of the situation and the condition. Second, the depiction of woman as a rational being in the novel reflected by the character of Bathsheba Everdene, Liddy Smallbury, and Fanny Robin, the depiction of rationality is through the character and characterization, style, and plot. Third, Thomas Hardy shows the complex view about woman in the era. He tries to criticize the stereotype of women in his era who seen as weak, inferior, oppressed, and uneducated. He denies those stereotypes by his woman character, Bathsheba Everdene. He appoints the actual issues in his work and proves his deep understanding of women through this novel.

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