

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The rationality of women had been disputed because the traditional thought of society that women had seen as an emotional being because of their characteristics such inferior, weak, passive, dependent, etc. while men seen as more rational than women. Moreover, the word 'feminine' and 'masculine' is being a mark in societies. The differences of the both words also make the differences in how people see men and women.

Woman as an adult human being certainly had a rational characteristic but it may be less than their irrational characters in appearance. In some case, women show their rationality more than the society has expect to, for example, women who become leader or career-women show their ability in thinking and making decision in a time. It needs logical, reasonable, sane, and intelligent thoughts in the act.

According to Mandell (1995: viii), there are lot of studies about men and women but also the studies include the misconceptions about the both. Some serious misconceptions about women's bodies, mental capacities, activities, and achievements are widely believed.

Thus, woman is interesting object to study, the rational and irrationality of woman is the interesting issue to raise, begin with the evidence in the daily lives that women nowadays have an important role in society, for example, women workers in public places seem more than men workers. Then women, who are turn into politics, take a part in government, being businesswomen, etc; show themselves up more than just being housewives.

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 and because

of these thoughts there is 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, 1997: 19).

Feminist movement began and widespread in western world in the 1890s. The movements first called First wave feminism and the second is Second wave feminism. At that time, the movement is emerged to identify individuals who supported an increased public role for women and also women's right to define themselves as autonomous being (Elliot in Mandell, 1995: 6).

According to the phenomena, Gerrard and Javed in their book *The Psychology of Woman* stated that, "Biologically, socially, culturally, and politically, women are viewed as 'less than', 'different than', and 'inferior to' men. Connected with the theory and treatment of women as deficient lies the actual material and psychological oppression of women" (on Mandell, 1995: xiv).

Women oppressed in many ways may be because of the tradition that gave priority to men or may be because selfish and masculine role of men. The imbalance of gender relation also takes a part of subordinating women, making women as inferior being.

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. Sanders (1996: 465-466) stated that "Hardy criticizes those beliefs, especially those that relating to marriage, education, and religion, that limited life of the people and caused unhappiness even suffering". Hardy makes his reader reconsider the conventions set up by society for the relationship between men and women. Thomas Hardy, in his novel, shows his complex view about woman, as variously virgin and coquette, as endure and *ingénue*, as actor and victim, culminates" (Sanders 1996: 465-466).

Thomas Hardy's thoughts had written in some literary works and the famous work such *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*,

Jude the Obscure, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. His novel represents his background of him, Wessex rural area, in South-west England. In *Jude the Obscure* (1895) Hardy lifts up the particular issues about class, education, religion, and marriage. Then in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1911) Hardy wrote about sexual morals challenged of late Victorian England (Carter & Mcrae, 1997: 310). He wrote the women character hardly lively as the era lives. In feminist thought, women put as an object, the object of sexuality as Hardy had written in. Later, the writer wanted to lift the issue by one of Thomas Hardy's work, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874).

Far from the Madding Crowd is novel written by Thomas Hardy and first appears as anonymous monthly series published by *Cornhill Magazine* in 1874. The novel tells about woman called Bathsheba Everdene who live in North England and inherit her uncle's big farm. She previously met Gabriel Oak, a farmer, while she lives with her aunt. After she moved into Norcombe, she began her leadership in her big farmer. She had a characteristic of autonomous woman. There are conflicts while she meets a neighbor, a man called Boldwood who is a middle-aged man owner of a big farm beside Bathsheba's farmer. She knows that Boldwood fall to her immediately by her random act. Beside she meets a young soldier called Sergeant Troy who has make her marrying him above the difficulties felt by Bathsheba.

Bathsheba is being a leader and heading her business along with her autonomous character and her ability in trade. Bathsheba lives with her rational thought and influenced her environment by her typical of thoughts; she also thinks that love is nothing to her at that time. She can refuse Gabriel Oak when he propose her before, and begin again as a friend. She also refuse Boldwood by saying that she should thinking but she finally become weak as she has falling into Troy and become irrational since meet him.

After marrying Troy, Bathsheba confronts some difficulties in her life and can not longer manage her farm and being a household well as Troy takes her position because he is the master; she thinks that she took in difficult time by herself. Then the life only rough that the climes are Troy being played her

and there is irrational action did by Boldwood. After all the difficult time, just Gabriel which she had always trusted takes a turn and become her husband.

This work on publication received plentiful and mostly positive critical notice. The novel received an honor as novel which listed as 48th number on the survey of BBC, The Big Reading 2003. This work had listed as 10th greatest love stories of all time in *The Guardian* (2007).

The novel had been adapted on several works such dance, opera, and plays. It adapted as a serial in BBC Radio directed by Graham White, the story being the fourths classic serial in 3 parts series. Then it was filming in several years. The first one in 1915 was directed by Laurence Trimble. In 1967 the film directed by John Schlesinger and nominated in Oscar. The latest is in 2015 directed by Thomas Vinterberg with the same title.

The researcher interested in analyzing the novel because writer interested with how Thomas Hardy wrote the women character lively as women in reality. Hardy influenced by author such Charles Dickens, but Hardy takes his way into realism and romanticism in writing. According to Andrew Sanders, “Women that Hardy had made in *Far from the Madding Crowd* also depicted as women who turning by fate. Hardy develop his novels from relatively relaxed, straightforward expositions of ‘tragedy, comedy, farce’ to what some might see as the over-complex stratification of his later work” (Sanders 1996: 464).

His work is fit with the issue that writer tries to analyze, and the rich conflict in the novel represent the real life at that Age. Women actually life with stereotypes and in Thomas Hardy put his writing based on the classic stereotype of women in his surroundings i.e. England in Victorian Age. According to Dewi (2004: iv), “the Victorian age women are more likely trained to be passive, dependent, and submissive”.

After seen about stereotype of Victorian women, the researcher wanted to fit the phenomena with the character of Bathsheba Everdene who is one step ahead than Victorian women at that age. She represents the courage and autonomous women which is not always being passive, dependent, and

submissive. Her rational thought depicted in her act. Bathsheba is an independent woman who lead the farm and the worker, she earn the worker in sense by consider of their role in the farm. She had refused marriage proposal because she did not wanted to married earlier then she chooses her own husband by herself. She also trade with other farmer even she is just woman alone. It makes an impression to writer's mind that women can do a lot even bounded by patriarchal system that makes women more feel the restrictiveness in life role (Dewi, 2004: iv).

Based on the illustration above, the researcher wanted to analyze the rationality of woman character in this novel by using a Feminist Theory entitled **Woman as a Rational Being in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* Novel (1874): A Feminist Approach.**

B. Problem Statement

Based on the title and the background of the study, the main problem in this research is "How woman reflected as a rational being in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*?"

Based on the problem statement, the researcher formulates the research question as follows:

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?

C. Objectives of the Study

The aims of this research as follows:

1. To describe the characteristics of woman as a rational being.
2. To describe a woman as a rational being depicted in the novel.
3. To analyze why Thomas Hardy depicted woman in such way.

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focusing on analyzing major character of the Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* novel (1874) who is a woman and the supporting character who are also women from the perspective of feminist literary theory. The problem statement is going to be discussed distinctively.

E. Benefits of the Study

The result of this research hopefully can be useful for the researcher, for the English Department students, for the lecturer and for Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. As follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research expected to give contribution, information, motivation, and enlarge knowledge on English Literature research particularly the literary study of Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

2. Practical Benefits

- a. For the researcher, this research becomes a way to pass the minithesis exam and graduate as a Bachelor Degree of English. And it may be useful as an experience in study about English Literature also improve ability in writing that will be useful in the field after graduated.
- b. For the English Departments students, this research expected to be a reference for students who are conducting their research in literature.
- c. For the lecturer, this research becomes a final assignment for student and final judgment for student after study with the chosen lecturer for enough periods.
- d. For the University, this study might improve the quality and quantity of the university.

F. Paper Organization

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is Introduction that includes the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of

the study, limitation of the study, benefits of the study; which separated as Theoretical and Practical benefits, and the research paper organization. Chapter two is literature review consist of underlying theory, previous study, and the novelty of the study. Chapter three is research method consist of type of the study, object of the study; which separated as material and formal object, type of the data and the data source, technique of the data collection, and technique of the data analysis. Chapter four is dealing with the analysis and discussion of woman as a rational being in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Chapter five is the conclusion and suggestion of the research.