

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the study

There are many ways of spending leisure times. People might go out and entertain themselves or decide to stay at home then do something like reading. From reading, people may get some improvements of their knowledge, insight and sensibility in all kinds of living things condition.

Literature should inevitably be recognized as one of the significant subjects exclusively offered in the curriculum of the English Department of Widya Mandala University. It is the reflection of how language is aesthetically arranged into a harmonious piece of arts. Thus, literature invites people into the wonders of human nature.

Some students think that studying literary works is not important because it does not support their education but it needs hard effort to understand them. Richard Courtney (1966:VII) argues the wrong idea by saying that from ancient times until today, there are close relations between drama and education. By learning literary works, the students do not only improve their vocabulary and grammar but also broaden their Knowledge.

Literary work is produced as the result of a thinking process about human experience expressed through creative writings. From analyzing literary work, the students will know the human values, conflicts, the culture, the moral life, the social life, on the background of a certain society. Little (1966:2) says, "As the

principal elements of people's culture, literature contains the record of people's lives, their thoughts, their problems and conflict, in short their way of life."

The main function of literature according to Scholes, Silverman and Klaus (1978:XXV) is for understanding and communication. Literature helps the readers to find meaning in the world and express it and share it with others. The other functions of literature are that literature uses language to communicate to the readers in two ways, namely, first, in the way these words are used either to create imaginary people and events, or second, in the way to give immediate expression to ideas and feelings about experience. Entertainment is also one of the functions of literature. According to Barnet (1963:1), literature has its element of entertaining display or to afford pleasure. Since literature gives profits to the readers, it fascinates to the writer to forward literary study to as the subject matter of her thesis.

There are many forms of literary works. Little (1966:67) states that literary forms are established types or a kind of composition such as poetry, play and novel. The poem uses the language to express feelings addressed by a speaker talking or thinking to himself or herself rather than to the reader with meditation as its essential quality. The play or drama uses language to create action through the dialogues of imaginary persons talking to one another rather than to the reader with interaction as its essential quality (Scholes, Silverman and Klaus, 1978:xviii). Novel presents one or a few characters in considerable depth and it also traces the development of characters as a result of the experiences of which the plot tells and

explores in some depth the personal relationship of the characters (Little, 1966:97).

The writer of this thesis is interested in choosing novel as the subject of the study. The underlying reasons are due to the fact that first, novel contains imaginary characters and situations. People are taken to the imaginary world. In the imaginary world, the reader can visualize what is described and also see what is pointed out. Second, reading a novel can develop her mature sensibility and it helps her to understand more about what life is all about. Third, reading a novel includes emotions and it reveals human interest, concern, excitement, tension, fear, hope, regrets, laughter and joy. Fourth, reading a novel gives her the knowledge and description about the world with its good and bad things. The final reason is by reading novel she gains new vocabularies and certain terms that are used in English and improve her reading ability.

In relation with the above viewpoints, the novel that is going to be analyzed in this study is Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. This novel is chosen because the story is very interesting and it has not been investigated by any other student of the English department of Widya Mandala University. Thomas Hardy is chosen because he is a famous writer who uses women as his main characters. Hardy not only acknowledges or gives recognition to the female emotions and sensations, but also treats them with the same devotion to physical detail as he gives to the male. Hardy is very interested in women's lives as he is sympathetic to any moves to improve the status of women. He

believes that women are capable of much. From then on, most people assume Hardy pays a lot attention and sympathy to women's rights.

Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) is significant in the career of Thomas Hardy. Also the character Bathsheba Everdene anticipated later heroines who appear in Hardy's greatest novels e.g. Eustacia Vye in *The return of the Native* (1878), Tess in *Tess of the D'urbervilles* (1891), Arabella Donn and Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*. Bathsheba is as complete a feminine characterization. Seeing that Hardy pays a lot of attention and sympathy to women's lives, the thesis writer is very interested to know more about his novels especially *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Far from the Madding Crowd is free to express and define "masculine roles", for example Bathsheba who has to learn to run a farm after she inherits the farm and her confidence to choose a husband based on her own decisions. Hardy's feminine character shows that women do not always depend their life on men. Women can be very independent. Women and men should work hand in hand because women and men need each other.

The character of Bathsheba Everdene is chosen since she is a beautiful woman at the center of the novel, who must choose three very different suitors. At the beginning of the novel, she is penniless, but she quickly inherits and learns to run a farm in Weatherbury where most of the novel takes place. She is not only independent in spirit, but she is also independent financially. Bathsheba Everdene is woman of power, passion, thoughts and feeling, of hopes and aspirations far above the average. In relation to the explanations above, the writer intends to

analyze and describe Bathsheba Everdene as manifested in the title *Far from the Madding Crowd* of the opposing stereotypical role of Victorian women in the nineteenth century.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is to analyze and describe the characteristics of Bathsheba Everdene, the main character in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Specifically the problem is formulated as follows:

How does Bathsheba Everdene's character reveal the idea of the opposing stereotypical role of Victorian women in the nineteenth century?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, this study aims to explain how Bathsheba Everdene's character reveal the idea of the opposing stereotypical role of Victorian women in the nineteenth century.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Actually every human being in this world has the same rights, but people tend to treat women unfairly and underestimate women's potentials. Some people consider women as a weak creature that will never be able to do men's work and it will make women always dependent on men. Therefore by analyzing the novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* the writer of this thesis hopes the fellow students of Widya Mandala Catholic University, especially female students to be more

independent and brave in facing the challenge of life. Hopefully, this study also can make the students be interested in reading *Far from the Madding Crowd* and to broaden their knowledge about women.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Realizing how broad and complex this study could be the writer considers it is necessary to limit the scope of the study. The writer of this thesis limits the discussion to the main character “Bathsheba Everdene” because her character is the most dominant of the opposing stereotypical role of Victorian women in the nineteenth century in Thomas Hardy’s novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*

1.6 Theoretical Frameworks

In analyzing *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the writer uses some theories concerning the definition and the criteria of novel, the elements of novel such as theme, character and characterization, plot, and setting; and also the theories concerning the Victorian novel and Victorian women in the nineteenth century.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding this thesis writing, the writer would like to define key term that is related to this study:

1. Victorian era is the eras correspond with the reign of Queen Victoria in England from 1839-1901. The period is beloved for its attention to high morals, modesty and proper manner as inspired by the Queen and her

husband, Prince Albert. The Victorian era was also an optimistic time in which scientific and industrial invention thrived. The importance placed on civic conscience and social responsibility engendered notable developments toward gender and social equality, such as the legal abolishment of slavery in America. In addition, humanitarian and religious organization such as the Salvation Army reflected the Victorian concern for the poor and needy (www.erasofelegance.com/victorian.html).

2. *Far from the Madding Crowd* suggest the avoidance of the life of the city, modernized government, crowds and industry (Thomas Hardy, 1967:6).
3. Controversial role is a person's task, which is likely to cause prolonged argument especially over social, moral or political matters (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1987:187).

1.8 Research Method

The writer uses qualitative content analysis. In this study the writer selects some quotations and illustrations in order to reveal the idea of the opposing stereotypical role of Victorian women in the nineteenth century in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding crowd*.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, theoretical framework,

definition of key terms, research method and organization of the thesis. In chapter II, the writer reviews some related literature, which can support and help the writer to do the analysis. In chapter III, the writer deals with the methodology of the study. In chapter IV, the writer presents her interpretation of the analysis. Finally, the writer concludes her analysis and gives suggestions in chapter V.