

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

In order to be able to analyze Thomas Hardy's Far From the Madding Crowd, the thesis writer includes the background of the Victorian women to support her analysis since the setting of the novel takes place in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the thesis writer will apply the feminist theories in the analysis because she will analyze some elements of feminism in the novel Far From the Madding Crowd. Finally, the characterization theory is used by the writer in order to analyze the character of the main female, Bathsheba Everdene, through her speeches, actions, and comments of other characters on her. By applying those sources of related literature, the thesis writer expects to be able to find out some elements of feminism as reflected through Bathsheba's characters in the novel.

## 2.1 The Ideal Victorian Women

Since the novel takes place in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to include the background of the ideal Victorian women in order to help the thesis writer do the analysis. In the Victorian era, women of the middle-class, had a very restricted life. Martha Vicinus in The Religious Ideas of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Her Gospel of Womanhood (1982) states that the Victorian women's world is like a prison "whose dimension is defined by the four walls of their homes" (Kimball, 78). Women became the consumers who stayed at home, performing their 'natural functions' of wiving and mothering. They were idealized vision of home and family. Most people assumed these functions were the only natural duties besides giving birth.

One of the most widespread beliefs concerning woman's role and position was expressed in the description of the ideal woman vocations: as a wife and a mother. Women in the Victorian period, at first, should seek a husband in order to get married and have children. Their marriage was strictly controlled by their parents and they could not choose their own husband freely. They were generally considered to be illiterate and the only purpose for educating them was to make them enter the marriage life. Girls at that time were not allowed to get higher education because they are considered to be inferior, gentle, emotional, and not very bright (Gorsky,

86). In other words, women in the nineteenth century were considered by men as the weaker sex physically, mentally, and intellectually. The ideal of womanhood at that time demanded that a woman have an important role and position as a housewife and a mother of her children. They should make the house a peaceful place to retreat for their husbands after working outside and facing their problems outside the house (Burstyn, 32).

In addition, Deborah Gorham in Victorian Girl and Feminine Ideal states that, the middle-class women were raised to get status by their relationship with men, and women were never taught to get their status by working outside, because earning money for a girl or woman meant the loss of caste. Women would be less respectable. On the other hand, men could achieve success in obtaining economic power and social status by working hard (8). As a result, the world of profession was owned by men, and the world of private life, like family or domesticity, became women's world. Women almost have no opportunity to have a high education and to develop their own careers other than being wives and mothers.

Furthermore, Coventry Patmore states about the idealized role of women in his poem entitled The Angel in the House that an ideal woman has to be dependent on men and submissive to them. The most common view about marriage in the nineteenth century is that marriage is "an institution based on male authority and property" (Gorsky, 175). In other words, women's lives were men's property: before marriage a woman's life

was determined by her father; after marriage she was her husband's. Men will provide the house and support the family needs, while women will take care for the house and the children. When a woman got married, all her personal possession became her husband's. Any money that she might earn as a married woman, whether living with her husband or not, legally belonged to him (Burstyn, 105-106). It means that women have no right to have their own property at that time.

According to Deborah Gorham, a Victorian wife has to please her husband as well as to sacrifice herself for him and able to sacrifice herself to do the best for her children (10-11). Thus, it is believed that woman's sphere is at home, because it is the place where her duties are to be performed, and she doesn't have a right to know far about the world outside the home. Since the novel takes place in the nineteenth century, the thesis writer includes the discussion of Ideal Victorian Women in order to help a better understanding to differ the main female character, Bathsheba Everdene with the ideal Victorian women.

## 2.2 Feminist Theories

To understand more about feminism, it is better to look further into the history, especially in the lives of women. The Victorian era becomes the starting point of the feminist movement, especially during the Mid-Victorian period that provided women with the possibility of taking a part in education and profession, also the opportunity became available to middle-class women in the 1860s (Gorham, 153).

Feminism is a word that people usually associate with the effort to change women's lives. The term "feminism" concerns with a movement for the recognition of the claims of women for rights (educational, career, political, and etc) equal to those possessed by men (As Hornby, 315). The purpose of the movement is undeniably worthwhile. It aims to end the oppression of women and seek for their equality with men in every aspect of human existence.

Feminism has brought a new era in woman's life. All of the changes that happened in the Victorian period have influenced women's lives. Women began to demand the equality of rights between themselves and men. They no longer accepted the idea of just becoming good housewives and mothers. But they also requested for their rights to get more than they did before. They were finally aware that they had to show their existence and to be admitted by the society. They were eager to struggle in order to

prove that they had the ability and skill in other fields as well. They also attempted to obtain the same rights as men in several aspects, like in education, job or career, and marriage. As Gorsky says “women of the middle-classes in the nineteenth century demanded to have a high education, a job, and the right to determine their own marriage life just the same as men in the society” (Gorsky, 12-14). In addition, Harold Smith defines that feminism is both an ideology and a new movement seeking to improve the status of women (1).

It is believed that before the nineteenth century, women only became wives and mothers because they did not have any choice for “there is no other career open to them” (Foster, 9). The pressure of economic and social condition made them depend on men’s willingness and power. Due to the importance of the roles of wifedom and motherhood, marriage then was seen as the best means of woman’s fulfillment. Harriet Taylor Mill challenged the beliefs that wifedom and motherhood should be the only female function.

An equal right between men and women has been frequently developed from time to time by most feminists who sympathize with women’s life. They also fight for equal rights in education. They would like to prove that women also have the ability as men do and want their existence to be acknowledged in the society. They do not want women to be mothers for their children and housewives for their husbands only, but

women should begin to increase their role to be more active in the society in order to improve their life and status. They need to have a high education and reject to be only mothers and housewives. Women know that they also have the same rights as men do. By having a good and a high education, women can improve their interest and talents (Gorsky, 112). Therefore, women really possess a great desire to obtain a high education in order to improve their knowledge and to prove their ability so that women's existence will be admitted in the society.

One of the early pioneers of the feminist movement is Mary Wollstonecraft. She recognizes the need of women to get a high education and to obtain job in order to be independent and to be able to run their own lives. In A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, she began her demand for women's education, financial independence and the right to vote. Most women were not educated in order to prepare them for taking a job or a career because it was assumed that their future lay in family lives (Gorham, 24). So, the purpose for women's education was different from men's education who were educated to be able to support the family's need when they got married.

The difference in intellectual characteristics between men and women was also another factor that limited woman's opportunities for a higher education. Women were considered to be physically and mentally unfit for serious intellectual effort in education. Wollstonecraft argued that

assumption by claiming that women had the potential to be fully reasoning and rational creatures and had the same ability with men in analytical thinking. The ideals of reason, she argued, should be applied to both men and women (Miles, 44).

Besides equality in education, women also have a great desire to get an equality in getting a job or career. In the nineteenth century, women had no chance to get work outside of their homes or to obtain a professional job or career other than to be wives and mothers (Gorsky, 2). As a result, marriage life became the only profession that women could have. When women worked outside home, they would be regarded as servants and be paid lower than men, even they had to do the same job as men did. On the other hand, men could achieve success through hard work and initiative (Gorham, 8).

It was not until 1882 when a reform on Marriage and Divorce Act was passed that the condition of women became better than before. Married women could own property and have the right to live away from their husbands. They could obtain a divorce in some circumstances and they could at least try to get custody of their children (Williams, 49). Thus, women could be independent persons and did not depend on men's will or control anymore.

Women in the nineteenth century frequently faced the injustice which happened in the society, not only in the field of job and education,



but also their dependence on marriage laws. Their lack of opportunity in job and education finally placed women on a weaker sex than men were. There is a fact that “the rules of marriage that differ from men and women do not limit this idealization of a woman, but it strongly influences the development of feminist attitude toward womanhood and marriage” (Gorsky, 19). For instance, women could not act independently in the court proceedings. In other words, women were regarded as men’s property without having any individual rights.

Women also “have no right to own their property, little control over their children’s lives, and no practical solution for even the most disastrous marriage” (Gorsky, 53). They were not permitted to control their property, even when it was theirs by inheritance. A husband had the right upon his wife’s property (Freeman, 113). But, the condition gradually changes after there is a feminist movement. The feminists also attempt to redefine the women’s sense of themselves to seek the true equality with men in order to get recognition as an independent people and to value their existence as women. The right to work, a new educational opportunities and job also came from the reformers of the nineteenth century (Gorsky, 80-81). In addition, Gorsky also states in her book, Femininity to Feminism:

Feminism does not only suggest a practical determination to alter unjust laws whether about divorce, property, or voting rights, but

also implies a philosophical questioning of traditional values and ideas, from women's intellectual and emotional capacities to male-female relationships to the ways women and men think, act, and feel (1).

The above quotation shows that men and women have the same ability in proving their intellectuality and have equal rights in getting and control the property, vote, and other aspects of human life.

That definition is in line with what Lerner states that the nineteenth century feminism was concerned with education, ownership of property, career opportunities, and also the vote (Lerner, 163). The aim of feminism is to reconstruct their personal emotional life, their sexual, social and interpersonal relationship (Lerner, 165). Its aim is more than to change the way women see themselves and the way men see them, and also to end up the oppression to women.

By applying the feminist theories, the thesis writer will understand more about feminism in the nineteenth century. This theories will be used to analyze some elements of feminism in the main female character, whether those elements of feminism related to education, job or career, and marriage are reflected through her character or not.

## 2.1 Characterization.

Characterization is basically a brief descriptive sketch of a person who represents some definite qualities used by the author to create his imaginary figures and their personalities. The function of characterization is to encourage the reader's empathy or sympathy, so that he or she will experience the reality of the fictional world for himself or herself (Dietrich and Sundell, 75). By using characterization, the author will make the readers realize and know how to understand what kinds of people that she or he presents in her or his works. Therefore, the success of an author actually lies on his or her ability to develop his or her imaginary figures into interesting characters who bring out the reader's response and whom they accept as real human being who have weaknesses and strengths.

There are two methods of how the author presents his characters in a novel or a fiction. Firstly, direct presentation in which the author will tell directly the character's qualities or exposes what a character is like. In other words, the author shows and gives direct comment on the character. Thus, the readers can see and learn primarily from what the author explicitly tells. For example, in this novel Far From the Madding Crowd, the author describes that the main female character has a bright eyes: 'Matthew Moon, ' murmured Bathsheba, turning her bright eyes to the book.' (Hardy, 81). Secondly, indirect presentation in which the author shows the

characters through actions and the readers infer what he is like from his thoughts, speeches, actions, and comments of other characters on him (Perrine, 84). For example, in this novel, Bathsheba Everdene's character is being talked by the neighborhood as follows: " she's a fine handsome body as far's looks be concerned" (Hardy, 49).

Furthermore, the thesis writer will use both of two methods in order to support the analysis of the main female character. It is also used to refer to the characteristics or the personal qualities of an individual. From the description of the main female character, Bathsheba Everdene, in Hardy's novel entitled Far From the Madding Crowd through her physical actions, speeches, thoughts, statements, and opinion of other characters on her, the writer will know whether her personality reveal some elements of feminism or not.

Thus, the theory of characterization will be used by the thesis writer in order to analyze the character of Bathsheba Everdene as the main female character in the novel, whether her character reveals some elements of feminism related to education, job or career, and marriage or not.