



## WOMEN AND MARRIAGE: AN ANALYSIS COMPARATIV LITERATURE ON THE NOVEL INDONESIA, ENGLAND, AND AMERICA

**Syahril**

Tarbiyah Faculty, Serambi Mekkah University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

e-mail : syahril@serambimekkah.ac.id

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### Abstrak

*A novel can represent reality. Thus, a character in a novel with his or her complexity, might be a portrait or a representation of a real person. This article discusses representations or images of women in three novels from three different social background. They are Kalau Tak Untung (Selasih, Indonesia), Far From The Madding Crowd (Thomas Hardy, England), and The Great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald, United States). All of these three novels represent women in both positive and negative images. The positive images are: independent, hard working, rebellious, and futuristic (in thinking). Meanwhile, the negative images are reckless, naïve, materialistic, seductive, unfaithful, egoist and passive. The three novels show some facts. The first is that women will work hard when they are in an unpleasant situation, particularly when they need money. In this situation they will not mind doing man's job. The second similarity is that woman with good education seems to have better behavior than those who lack education. The third fact is that there are some women who value their happiness by the wealth they can get.*

**Keywords:** *Comparative Literature, Images Of Women, 'Petriarchal Binary Thought'*

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### A. Introduction

This paper is a study of comparative literature. As presented Remark, comparative literature is a comparative study of the two works of literature or more coming from a different country, or it could also be regarded as comparative study between a literary work with other disciplines, such as art (painting, sculpture, architecture, music ),

philosophy, history, social sciences, religion and others.<sup>1</sup> In other words, a study of comparative literature to analyze two or more literary works of different countries by comparing a literary elements that build.

Elements literary comparison here is the heroine and the theme of love and marriage. Issues of love and marriage is one of the themes contained in the third novel. Therefore, the writing is taking a thematic approach, which aims to compare a literary work with one another based on the subject or the elements of the dominant narrative.<sup>2</sup> Sohaimi also said that this approach is very wide-ranging. By using a thematic approach, the creativity of the individual author can be disclosed, and can also traverse a variety of differences in language and politics. Therefore, a thematic approach is very appropriate for this study because it will discuss the same theme in the novels that transcends political differences in language and third country from which it originates novel.

Further, the writing of this comparison will look at how a woman is shown in three novels by wearing a feminist approach, especially with the application of a 'woman as a reader' presented by Elaine Showalter.<sup>3</sup> The approach focuses on women as consumers or readers of literary essay writer man. Subjects include the analysis of imagery and stereotypes of women in literature, ignorance and misunderstanding of women in literary criticism and literary history division formed by men. This

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<sup>1</sup> Stallnecht, Newton P. Dan Frenz, Horst. *Contemporary Literature: Method & Perspective*. (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), hlm. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Aziz, Sohaimi bin Abdul. *Kesasteraan Bandingan. Perkembangan. Pendekatan. Praktis*. (Kualalumpur: Utusan Publications, 2001), hlm. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Newton K.M. Elaine Showalter: 'Towards a Feminist Poetics'. In: Newton K.M. (eds) (Twentieth-Century Literary Theory. Palgrave, London, 1997).

approach also pay attention to exploitation and manipulation of female readers. Read as a guarantee women an understanding of imagery and stereotypes of women, and how female characters shown in the literature.

Mimetic theory presented by M. H. Abrams <sup>4</sup> said that in a literary work are a reflection of what is in reality. Thus it can be said that the characters created by author in his work can be regarded as a representation of the real world. When women appear in a novel, it could be he is an excerpt from a reality.

On the basis of earlier mimetic paradigm, this study intends to reveal how fiction writers represent images of women in his work. The object of this article is three novel with a background of different countries and cultures, namely *Far From The Madding Crowd* (Thomas Hardy, Inggris),<sup>5</sup> *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald, Amerika Serikat),<sup>6</sup> and *Kalau Tak Untung* (Selasih, Indonesia).<sup>7</sup> *Far From the Madding Crowd* tells about the life of a beautiful young woman heir to a vast plantation. These women had a conflict in him about who should be chosen as the husband. *The Great Gatsby* is a novel about a rich man who wanted to recapture the hearts of the ex-girlfriend who has become a man's wife. This woman then undergoes an inner conflict of having to choose between a husband or ex-boyfriend wealthy. While *Kalau Tak Untung* tells the story of a young woman who must give his sweetheart married to another man because he just came from a simple family while his girlfriend chose another woman more beautiful, more educated and richer.

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<sup>4</sup> Abrams, M.H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), hlm. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Hardy, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*. (Britain: Penguin Classic, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby (eBook)*. (Australia: University of Adelaide, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Selasih. *Kalau Tak Untung*. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2001).

The third novel is selected as an object, because they have some similarities. First, all three have a common theme, which is about the life of a young woman with a conflict it faces with respect to matters of love and marriage. As for the reasons why the issue of romance and marriage that is selected is that in marriage (of course involves the problem of loving and lovable) a woman appeared in the complex. In marriage it appears as an individual, as the wife of a husband, and as the mother of his children. This is the role of women in the complexity of many conflicts, either by himself or with others around him. Second, all three are written and published in the span of time which is not too far apart, that is, around the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century. The third reason, these novels are popular and in great demand at the time of their respective.

It should be emphasized that this paper is not to uncover the problems typical women of Indonesian, England or Americans but rather to see how the women of the neighborhood (country and culture) different displayed or represented in literature with a greater emphasis on the study of feminism in the novel.

To see the representation of women then used a patriarchal hierarchy (patriarchal binary thought), a thought about gender differences in general thrive in a society where only. Helene Cixous<sup>8</sup> explains in his book *La Jeune Née* about it:

Activity/Passivity

Sun/Moon

Culture/Nature

Day/Night

Father/Mother

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<sup>8</sup> Cixous, Hélène & Clément, Catherine. *La jeune née*. (Union générale d'éditions, Paris, 1939-, joint author, 1975).

Head/Emotions

Intelligible/Sensitive

Logos/Pathos

Binary opposition above can be explained as follows: the right side is identical to the male gender, which is active, sun, culture, day, dad, mind, intelligence and logos. While passive, moon, nature, night, mother, emotional, sensitive, and pathos are women. This opposition that has been built in a patriarchal society. Where the active and decisive are male, while the passive and waiting are women. Comparison of three novel is intended to see how women of Indonesia, England and the United States in the context of the patriarchal binary opposition in the face of love affairs and marriage earlier; whether women of Indonesia, England, and America, is completely passive, emotional and sensitive as it was concluded Cixous, or a representation that does not apply to them?

## **B. Women's Imaging In The Novel *Kalau Tak Untung, Far From The Madding Crowd, And The Great Gatsby***

As noted above, the third novel in particular analyzed feminism approach to the theory of the image of women to see how the women featured in the novels, especially in the face of problems with love and household or marriage. All the female characters are grouped into the nature and attitude of positive and negative attitudes based on the hierarchy of patriarchy submitted by Cixous.

### **1. Women in *Kalau Tak Untung***

*Kalau Tak Untung* novel written by Selasih and first published by Balai Pustaka in 1933. Because it is written by an author from West Sumatra, the novel is of course natural cultural backgrounds Minangkabau. From a novel that was only 156 pages of this sheet, can be concluded positive and negative image as described here.

*a. Positive Image: Forward-Thinking, Hard-Working, Intelligent; Clever Restraint And Keep The Attitude*

Good attitude first caught the female character in this novel is that women have a mind developed Minang. This is shown very clearly by a female character named Mrs. Rasmani. On the first page of the novel, we are treated to views of the mother in the morning was busy cleaning the house while continuing to shout to wake his daughter, Rasmani, in order to take a bath to go to school, "Rasmani, Mani! Nak wake, wake up, it was already high, you will go to school, "(9). The above sentence is actually normal. But behind it reflected in the forward-thinking nature which is owned by the mother Rasmani. For him, a very good education for girls when they married later. To be able to provide a good education for their children, mothers Rasmani participated worked hard to help her husband earn money. He came down to the rice paddies and fields. And as a result of the education that has been cultivated by his parents this, Rasmani later become a young woman good at keeping the attitude and words.

*b. Negative Image: Wife Selfish And Passive Woman*

The only woman with a selfish attitude in this novel is Muslina, Masrul wife. Muslina born as children of the rich and the only daughter also for parents. As a result, she used to be spoiled by her parents. What will her usual come true. So when she was married, these properties remain embedded in her self. Not the slightest desire to succumb or according to her husband. Actually Masrul not an angry husband or restrictive. He was a pretty patient. However, the fixed Muslina being selfish and always impose the will against Masrul. Selfishness Muslina making it the wife who was rude and not very good at keeping the attitude. In addition, comforting his parents remain towards. So, all the luxury that was ever given to his parents during the girl, she asked on

Masrul. It can be seen from the house of his, such as glassware, the baggage of his parents' house (101). Muslina roughness can be said as a woman who failed in her marriage.

Contrast with Muslina looks very aggressive in conveying feelings and thoughts, another image that women are very passive in Minang. It is common knowledge that children Minang people, both girls and boys, should be according to the will of his parents and uncle (mamak). This is even more applicable in girls. Some of the women in this novel created by the submissive and passive attitude. This markedly in terms of determining a mate. Girls are not allowed to make a sound to be able to choose their own future husband. all in the hands of a mother and her mamak-mamak.

In addition to choosing a mate picture of the above, there is also a picture of another passive female. Still in the household, Minang woman depicted accept polygamy. Not a few men who have more than one wife without divorcing his first wife. There is no mention in the novel what they think of it. Nor was there any women who seek divorce because they do not like polygamy. Everything just becomes the object and passive, obey what he wants.

## **2. Women in *Far From the Maddening Crowd***

There are two groups of women featured in the novel nature of this. The first group is comprised of positive qualities as well as the self-contained nature superior to men and sympathetic towards women.

### ***a. Positive Image: Independent, Superior To Men And Sympathetic Towards Women.***

From the beginning of the story, Bathseba Everdene, the main character in this novel, is described as an independent figure; the only woman who can do any work without the help of men. She was milking a

cow, shopping, home and garden purposes, check out the garden at midnight, even caught a plantation worker who was about to steal.

Meanwhile, about love and marriage, Bathseba initially described as someone who does not want to be a lover or wife of a man. She said that to be a lover or wife of a man is to be a man's property:

...nobody has got me yet as a sweetheart, instead of my having a dozen, as my aunt said; I *hate* to be thought men's property in that way, though possibly I shall had someday... (32)

'I have tried hard all the time I've been thinking; for a marriage would be very nice in one sense. People would talk about me, and think I had won my battle, and I should feel triumphant, and all that. But a husband... (33)

In this case, Bathseba still never fall in love with any man. She still has a high confidence that he does not need a man as a companion, therefore, it became an independent woman.

Due to the elegant and charismatic demeanor, coupled with her good looks, then it can not Bathseba the target of the men around him. But she never easily accept the statement of a man's love. More often she refused to resume men like it because, as mentioned in point a, she did not want to be 'property' of men and lost her freedom. Bathseba always talk with logic without involving feelings, as described following quote: "Being a woman with some good sense in reasoning on subjects wherein her heart is not involved." (110).

This sympathetic attitude is also apparent when Bathseba face domestic problems. Her husband, Sergeant Troy, loves another woman, Fanny Robin, since long. Troy had even promised to marry her and Fanny came looking for Troy in a state of being pregnant. When finally Fanny



died of physical and mental suffering after a long journey looking for Troy, Bathseba do not feel happy or win it. He even sympathized with the suffering Fanny as other women (298).

***b. The negative image: inferior, careless and naïve***

Sense of inferiority and despair arose in Bathseba - which originally was a strong and independent woman - and Fanny Robin when they were both stuck in the feeling of falling in love. When they fall in love, it is no longer independent and superior attitude in them. Attachment to the institution of marriage, to her love for Troy, make Bathseba become weak and brittle, afraid of losing something she loves. She was even afraid to accept the fact that Troy still love Fanny who is now deceased (272).

Additionally, Bathseba was described as a woman who is careless. It can be concluded at the end of the story that the sorrow and suffering endured Bathseba caused by carelessness in taking action. Carelessness greatest accomplishments is married to Troy decision just because she was afraid of losing Troy (231). So the nature of careless and less discretion is not caused by entrapment feelings of love for a man. Still in love, Bathseba and Fanny Robin had the same naïve nature. These properties can be seen from the way they look at someone (male) only from her physical appearance as well as how easy they are inedible seduction of men.

**3. Women in *The Great Gatsby***

Fitzgerald featuring many negative images in this novel:

***a. The Positive image: rebels***

In this novel, Fitzgerald featuring a woman's nature is considered positive in view of feminism, that rebellious nature. This rebellious nature is shown as a resistance against the confines of her husband or marriage. The women are described as wives to do whatever they like without being

dictated by their husbands. They went to parties and wherever they like *separti* as that done by men.

***b. The negative image: materialistic, teasers, not opinionated and unfaithful***

Two female character in this novel, that Daisy Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson, described as materialistic woman. Daisy had been a pretty girl from the upper classes in Louisville. She is very famous among the men stationed near her home in 1917. One of the soldiers is Jay Gatsby who then managed to win her love. When Gatsby leaving her to the battlefield, she then establish relationships with other soldiers. In addition, but later she married Tom Buchanan because Tom is a rich young child. When Gatsby then return from the war and became very rich, richer than Tom, then she was tempted to go back to Gatsby. But eventually she stays with Tom.

Materialism is then escorted the women to the nature of the opinion and unfaithful. To make them loyal, then what is needed is money and luxury goods. To make their stay on the decision, need to make their property no less than the others.

**4. Comparison of female characters in three novels**

***a. Women, materials and love***

The third novel to show that the material and her love affairs can be aggressive but can also be passive. Bathseba bit aggressive in terms of the progress of the operation. she did anything for her prosperity and her garden workers. Similarly, in matters of love. Her confidence is high enough makes it able to face a man with her head held high. She dared to mock Boldwood by sending a valentine card to Boldwood was then approached and crazy about him.

Meanwhile, aggressive attitude was also shown by women in *The Great Gatsby*. Daisy leave Jay Gatsby is being got the task to the battlefield and is married to Tom Buchanan and then think to leave Tom. That is, the private pleasure is concerned, Daisy is extremely brave to take the initiative. Even the household for her is not a Holy institution.

The fact that much different from the novel *Kalau Tak Untung*, Rasmani contained in it tend to be passive. Her education makes it continued to consider carefully what she should do. Masrul of her love did not blind, do not necessarily make it behave and make decisions on her own pleasure. Treasure did not make glare. Due to poor families born and educated in all its simplicity, the Rasmani never glare toward wealth. Abandoned by Masrul, who came from a rich family, whom she loved, does not make Rasmani lose adult attitude. She does not necessarily indulging in her heart that wanted to get back the man she loves. In this case, Rasmani tend to be passive. She never showed or said her feelings on Masrul. Regarding the treasure she never showed any great ambitions to become a rich man. Being a teacher is the only one wish.

However, Muslina shows a different attitude. Although accept an arranged marriage by her parents, Muslina turns bold enough to express her feelings. She did not hesitate to show a sense of disappointment and anger (albeit with a somewhat exaggerated manner) to Masrul, her husband. She vilify and slander Masrul to Masrul away from home. What do Muslina of course can not be separated from the material affairs. Muslina borns to a wealthy family and he was the only child of her parents. She habitually pampered by treasure. Then when the Muslina had to undergo a simple household because her husband was just a clerk, then Muslina shows an aggressive attitude. She demanded Masrul to be able to provide what it wants. When Masrul not able to fulfill all the wishes of Muslina of wealth, then she turned into the bad and rebellious wife.

***b. Women and Education***

The third novel also shows similarities in terms of education and personal attitude of a woman: a woman who got a good enough education to be able to keep his attitude toward others. Positive images of women who are good at keeping the attitude and said he was shown by Rasmani. Rasmani minded woman said as long, do not indulge heart and feelings, and did not want revenge against those who had insulted him and her family. Her attitude in the future is what makes Rasmani respected by Aminah, her friend. And this attitude also told Masrul that prohibits him to divorce his wife because she knew it was not good divorce, even if she wanted it. In all the decisions and attitudes that, Rasmani always say what they say, I am a knowledgeable woman, don't want my name bad in the eyes of the people etc.

Unlike the novel *Kalau Tak Untung*, two other novels did not mention anything about the education of women. Bathseba not be regarded as an educated woman, as well as Daisy. It turned out that they are different from the Rasmani. Bathseba not very good at keeping the attitude; She play very Boldwood feeling loved him. She is also incapable of restraint not to fall in love with Troy who have yet to be seduced just because he knew and honored by the man. Meanwhile, Daisy is not at all shows a smart. She could only celebrate and talk about unimportant things. In addition, she is not smart enough to act on feelings rather than logic.

***c. Women and hard work***

English and Minang novel shows one equation of hard working woman, Bathseba and Rasmani. Both are women persistent work. The similarities between the two are the reasons behind their work, financial difficulties. This means that both the novel shows the same phenomenon; When it is in a difficult condition, often women can do what women do not in General.

### **C. Conclusion**

From the comparison of the three novels above, it can be concluded that the hierarchy of patriarchy shown by Cixous in her book is not an absolute opposition. That is, a woman not only be passive, moon, nature, night, mother, emotional, sensitive, and pathos. Some women can be active, initiators, and can also act in a logical and smart, not just follow the feeling. Whatever picture the woman in this third novel, it is understood that such women may exist in reality. Because, as Abrams, a literary work is a reflection of reality.

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