

**PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION TOWARD WOMEN IN
VICTORIAN AGE AS REFLECTED IN THOMAS HARDY'S
*TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES***

A Thesis

*Submitted in Partial Fulfillment to the Requirement
of Sarjana Sastra Degree*

By:

**RANI TINIA
03 185 059**



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT-FACULTY OF LETTERS
ANDALAS UNIVERSITY
PADANG
2009**

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisa novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* karya Thomas Hardy, dengan tujuan untuk membahas penindasan terhadap perempuan yang dilakukan oleh kaum laki-laki di Eropa, khususnya di Inggris pada zaman Victoria sebagai dampak dari kebudayaan patriakat pada masa itu. Pada penelitian ini penulis membahas bagaimana tokoh utama perempuan dalam novel ini, yang merupakan potret perempuan zaman Victoria, ditindas oleh kaum patriakat serta mengkaji konsekuensi yang harus ditanggungnya dari tekanan atau penindasan kaum patriakat tersebut. Penulis juga menggali ide-ide feminis yang tergambar dalam novel ini.

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif karena data yang digunakan merupakan gabungan dari buku-buku dan artikel yang berhubungan dengan masalah yang dikaji oleh penulis. Dalam memaparkan hasil analisis, penulis menggunakan metode deskriptif yang bertujuan untuk menggambarkan serta membahas bentuk-bentuk tekanan atau penindasan yang dihadapi oleh perempuan pada zaman Victoria dan dampak penindasan tersebut dalam kehidupan mereka. Dalam menganalisa novel ini, penulis menggunakan pendekatan feminis dengan menerapkan perspektif Elaine Showalter; *Women as Reader* dan perspektif Kate Millet tentang patriarki.

Dari penelitian ini, penulis dapat menyimpulkan kalau Tess, tokoh utama dalam novel ini mengalami tekanan atau penindasan yang dilakukan oleh kaum laki-laki. Tess dimanfaatkan, ditinggalkan dan bahkan dilecehkan secara fisik maupun mental oleh ayah, suami dan majikannya. Dari analisis tersebut, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa penindasan terhadap wanita yang dilakukan oleh kaum patriarkat yang terdapat dalam novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* merupakan refleksi dari kehidupan wanita pada zaman Victoria di Inggris.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Research

The issue on gender is still controversial today. This issue has risen since there is classification between men and women which assume men as the superior and women as the inferior one. As the result of this classification, women are deeply drowned under the shadow of men's superiority. It shows the unequal status of men and women. The women's inequality is caused by an ideological system of social relationship which known as patriarchy.

Patriarchy assumes men as the leaders who have power over women's life, both in civil and domestic life. Thus, it makes them easily to oppress women's life. As Millet in Selden's *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* says, "Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or threatens the female, as an inferior male, and this power is exerted, directly or indirectly, in civil and domestic life to constrain women" (214). It obviously illustrates that women are oppressed by patriarchal society. All aspects of women's life are dominated and controlled by men in order to get advantages from the women. No matters in politics, economy, social, women are considered subordinated, oppressed and constrained by men.

Literary works written by male authors often become a medium to show the women's subordination in a certain time and place, in which women become the victims of patriarchal culture. They describe about the marginalization and the exploitation of women's bodies especially women in the nineteenth century. These

women are described based on the male perspective. Hence, the feminist criticism is needed to reveal that literary works which written by male author contain women issues, such as the marginalization, the oppression, and the stereotype of women.

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, published in 1891, is one of the novels that contains the women issues. Mostly Hardy's novels are the mirror of the condition of Victorian age women. Living in Victorian age has inspired him to describe about the condition of Victorian women through his novels including *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. As Hardy states in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*:

It will just add that the story is sent out in all sincerity of purpose, as an attempt to give artistic form to a true sequence of things; and in respect of the book's opinion and sentiments, I would ask any to genteel reader, who cannot endure to have said what everybody nowadays thinks and feels, to remember a well-worn sentence of St. Jerome's: if an offence comes than that the truth, better is it that offence come than that the truth be concealed. (Eurekamultimedia's 4000 Classic works of Literature, 2003)

It shows that Hardy tries to challenge the patriarchal society in Victorian age through his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He wants his readers not to hide the real fact about the oppression toward women in patriarchal system. This novel is widely criticized because of its honest portrayal toward the Victorian patriarchal system.

Most of Hardy's novels concern about women who become the victim of men's oppression. Therefore, it is not surprise that Hardy develops the theme of fallen women in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In this novel, he portrays a woman, who should face her downfall because of the oppression of patriarchal society in Victorian age,

when the story is set. Hardy also portrays a weak and oppressed of Victorian typical woman named Tess Durbeyfield. Her father's obsession in reaching the high class leads Tess in getting her bad future. Her engagement with Alec d'Urbervilles becomes the nightmare for her whereas she becomes the sexual object of Alec. The consequences have to be paid by Tess later on; she is left by her husband, Angel Clare in the wedding night and deserted into ruin of his absence for months. The economical oppression causes Tess falls into her seducer's lap for the second time. When Angel decides to come back, she has already been in Alec's lap and it makes her furiously murdered Alec. The murdering is her first attempt to confront against patriarchal oppression toward her. However, this action will only lead her into a greater oppression, which is her death penalty. The fact of her arrestment by a group of male police is another kind of oppression by the patriarchal institution in Victorian society.

Hence, the writer chooses *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in her research. The writer is interested to analyze Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* from feminist point of view for two reasons. First, among the Victorian novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is one of Hardy's novels, which clearly exposes women's oppression in Victorian patriarchal society. This novel emphasizes the condition of Victorian women more explicitly. For this reason, the writer analyzes this novel by using feminist criticism. Second, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is one of Hardy's novels that also aroused a substantial amount of controversy since it portrays the woman as the victim of patriarchal society. As stated by Hardy in his novel;

The foregoing remarks were written during the early career of this story, when

a spirited public and private criticism of its points was still fresh to the feelings. The pages are allowed to stand for what they are worth as something once said: but probably they would not have been written now. Even in the short time which has elapsed since the book was first published some of critics who provoked the reply have "gone down into silence" as if to remind one of the infinite unimportance of both their say and mine. (Eurekamultimedia's 4000 Classic works of Literature, 2003)

It is important to analyze this novel, because through this novel, Hardy tries to challenge the reserved patriarchal system by portraying the main female character as fallen women, who suffers in the society as the impact of men's oppression.

For all the reason above, the writer entitles her research **Patriarchal Oppression toward Woman in Victorian Age as Reflected in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.**

1.2. The Statement of the Problem

The main problem which is investigated in this research is about the patriarchal oppression toward women in Victorian age. The writer assumes Hardy exposes Victorian typical woman through his female character in *Tess of The d'Urbervilles*. Tess, the main female character, is the victim of Patriarchal system in Victorian age. She faces some sorts of patriarchal oppression which is done by the male characters in the novel as the impact of her social inferiority. She is exploited, mistreated and repressed by her father, her employer, and her husband. These oppressions cause the downfall of her life. Therefore, the writer investigates the main

female character to find out the men's oppression toward women in Victorian age and its consequences that are borne by women. In this research, the writer also tries to dig out the feminist thought that reflected in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of The d'Urbervilles*.

1.3. The Objective of the Research

This study is purposed to analyze how women is oppressed by Patriarchal system in Victorian age. It is shown by exposing the conditions and the sufferings of the main female character in the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, who lives under the great influence of patriarchal system in which the authority is in the hand of men. It is also purposed to study about the consequences of patriarchal oppression experienced by the female main character, and at last, to dig out all the feminist ideas that found in this novel.

1.4. The Limitation of the Problem

In order to specify this research, the research is limited on a major female character in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. This research reveals the women's issues, mainly about the oppression toward women in Victorian patriarchal system.

The research questions below which will be the guidance in conducting this research;

- 1) How was the condition of women in Victorian age?
- 2) What kind of patriarchal oppressions that were faced by women in Victorian age?
- 3) What are the patriarchal oppressions which are faced by Tess and its

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After analyzing Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the writer gets a full description of the patriarchal oppression toward women in Victorian age. In this novel, Hardy portrays Tess, an oppressed Victorian woman who lives in male-dominated culture. He pictures Tess as the victim of the brutal standard of men where she has been oppressed, constrained and mistreated by men both in domestic and civil life. It dues to the imbalance gender in Victorian age that claim the power is in the hand's of men. Everything has been ruled based on men's will included control for all aspect of Tess' life. In this case, Hardy shows women's life is deeply under the great influences of patriarchal system that let men's absolute superiority over women.

Through the analysis, the writer finds out that there are three patriarchal oppressions toward women in Victorian age that reflected by Hardy in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The first one is the exploitation of father. Tess is really pressed by her parent especially her father to raise wealth and high social status by marrying a noble man. Through the father exploitation, it presents that women are the property of their father. Therefore, father had power to press them to do what he wants.

The second oppression is the sexual oppression that done by Tess' employer. The writer finds that employer is a man that also has authority over women who work for him. He is able to do what he wants over them since they are regarded as the property of their employee. Tess is a portrait of working class girl in Victorian age that is taken advantages sexually by her employer when she works far away from her