



**THE CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF ELFRIDE SWANCOURT IN HARDY'S A
PAIR OF BLUE EYES NOVEL**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the character of Elfride Swancourt especially to reveal the flaws within her character and their influence that has led her to a miserable life. This research is categorized as a qualitative research since the data are in form of words, quotations and statements. The data are collected from the primary source that the novel itself, A Pair of Blue Eyes and the secondary sources are some books and references that support the analysis. In analyzing the data, the objective approach has been used. The result shows that the main character, Elfride Swancourt has a weak personality because she is incapable of improving or even changing the flaws and has not tried to reach her happiness. The main character A Pair of Blue Eyes, Elfride Swancourt has some flaws within her character. She is inexperienced, childish, doubtful and fickle, disloyal, fainthearted and docile. She obeys her father's will to marry a man who has the same social stratum with them, the high class in accordance with her father's recommendation. Those flaws have led her life into a tragic life. The Effect of The Flaws to Elfride's life, she suffers physically and spiritually. She gets harsh treatment from her family and dies five months later after marrying Lord Spenser Hugo Luxellian, a man from high class, same social stratum with her.

Keywords: *Elfride Swancourt, In Hardy's A Pair Of Blue Eyes Novel*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penulisan ini adalah untuk menganalisa karakter dari Elfride Swancourt yaitu untuk menjelaskan tentang kekurangan yang ada dalam karakternya dan dampak yang membawa pada penderitaan hidup. Penelitian ini dikategorikan sebagai penelitian kualitatif dimana data dikumpulkan dari kata, kutipan dan pernyataan. Data dikumpulkan dari data utama yaitu novel itu sendiri, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* dan data pendukung yaitu buku-buku dan referensi-referensi yang mendukung penelitian. Pendekatan objektif yang digunakan dalam menganalisa data. Data menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama, Elfride Swancourt memiliki karakter yang lemah karena dia tidak mampu merubah jadi lebih baik atau bahkan merubah kelemahan yang ada dan tidak berusaha meraih kebahagiaan. Elfride adalah seorang wanita yang tidak memiliki banyak pengalaman, kekanak-kanakan, ragu-ragu dan plin-plan, tidak setia, pengecut dan terlalu penurut. Elfride menuruti kemauan ayahnya untuk menikahi seorang lelaki dengan strata sosial yang sama dengan mereka, kelas sosial tinggi sesuai dengan rekomendasi ayahnya. Semua

kelemahan itulah yang membawa dia kedalam hidup yang tragis. Akibat dari kekurangan Elfride kedalam hidupnya membuat dia menderita secara fisik dan spiritual. Dia menerima perlakuan yang buruk/keras dari keluarganya dan meninggal lima bulan selanjutnya setelah menikahi seorang lelaki berkelas tinggi, sosial strata yang sama dengannya yang bernama Lord Spenser Hugo Luxellian

Kata kunci: Elfride Swancourt, Dalam Novel Sepasang Mata Biru Hardy

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is interesting to be studied because it gives information and some lessons of life, beside it gives pleasure. Literature is a product of creative activity it is an art (Welleck and Warren, 1956). According to Jones (1986) literature, in its broaden sense includes all written materials. Literary works include prose, poetry, drama, and novel.

Novel as one of the literary work deals with human life, which may consist of Author's experience and other people's experiences. Character is an interesting and important element of novel. It has its own characterization, which brings the idea to have incidents through its characterization whether it is protagonist or antagonist. Each man has his own characteristic and identity which differs from others.

Thomas Hardy is one of the English great authors who produced a lot of great works. At the beginning, he is an architect and a poet. His novels usually tell about the daily

life of ordinary people in the village named Wessex and tragic life which consists of sorrow even death. The works of Thomas Hardy among others: *master of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*.

A Pair of Blue Eyes reveals the incidents that happen in human's life, it is in form of novel that tells about the life's experience of Thomas Hardy who lived in Victorian period. This explanation supports the statement of Hudson about what Literature is in *An Introduction to the study of Literature* that : Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have thought and felt about aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (1965: 10). It cannot be denied that literary work is concerned directly with human's life. Mostly, it is written based on human's feeling, thought and experience of life. Thomas Hardy supports what Hudson say that Literature is a vital record of human's life

because this novel is the life experience of Thomas Hardy with his first wife, Emma Gifford and his best friend Horace Moule.

A Pair of Blue Eyes (which was originally titled *A Winning Tongue Had He*) was probably outlined the summer of 1873, written in the following summer and published in three volumes by Tinsley brothers in May 1873. It was serialized in Tinsley's magazine from September 1872 through July 1873.

A Pair of Blue Eyes describes the triangle love between a young woman and her two suitors. One is the socially inferior but upwardly striving young man who adores her and connects her with country past, while the other is respectable, established, older man who represent London society, the heroine is caught between multiple expectations (those of the men, her parents and the society) and the desires of her own heart, which she does not always seem to know. It is categorized as a romance novel that tells about a tragic blue-eyed heroine, Elfride Swancourt as a main character. She has some flaws, which has led her to the unhappy life. Flaw is defect or weakness of the character. There is always a flaw in the character of tragic hero. However, nobody is perfect and neither is Elfride.

The purposes of this study are to identify and analyze the flaws that has led the main character, Elfride Swancourt into miserable life and to elaborate the influence of those flaws to her own life. The significance of the research is that the result of this study can motivate the readers to understand, appreciate even to analyze literary works. It is also expected that the readers can apply the message especially some good values in their daily life. In this case, by learning the character of Elfride Swancourt, people can learn how to face the reality of life. Although as a human being, we go far from perfect, at least we can know how to correct ourselves to become better and try to reach our happiness.

II. THEORITICAL REVIEW

Character is people who are appeared in a narrative prose or novel and it is interpreted by the readers as a person who has moral quality and certain tendency such as being expressed in what they say and what they do (Abrams, 1982). Character is the person who can contribute to a story in several ways (Dickinson, 1996). In his book, *Aspect of The Novel*, Foster differentiates flat character from round character. A flat character has a steady characteristic, which means that the characteristic does not change from the beginning of story

until the end of story. Meanwhile, a round character is changing, means that there is a difference of the characteristic at the end of story (Foster, 1954).

Characterization is describing the physical and mental behaviors of the characters (Djasi, 2000). In majority of cases, the author would introduce new characters before they appeared in the story. Nowadays characterization is done indirectly through dialogues or conversations. In other word, the characters' characterization is known through the dialogues among them through words or statements or even the body language (physical and mental behaviors). There are two kinds of characterization; there is direct characterization and indirect characterization. Direct characterization tells the audience what the personality of the character is whereas indirect characterization shows things that reveal the personality of character.

The writer reveals the character of the main role of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Elfride Swancourt through dialogues or conversation in the novel itself. There are many characters in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* that Support the idea to have an incident in the story. They are: Elfride Swancourt itself as a main character, Stephen Smith, Henry Knight, Christopher Swancourt,

Charlotte Troyton, Gertrude Jethway and Lord Spenser Hugo Luxellian. Those characters also reveals the character of Elfride Swancourt through their dialog or conversation.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The research is classified as a qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Bikklen, Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in the form of words or picture rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotations from data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation (1982: 30). Therefore in conducting the research, the library research is done since in the term of the place where the research is conducted in the library and the source of data are from books. The data are in the form of words, quotations, definitions or statement.

The writer classifies the source into two categories; the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the novel itself, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and secondary source are some books and references related to analysis. In analyzing the data, the objective approach is used. As what Abram states that : ...”the Objective Orientation which on principle regard the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analysis as a self sufficient entity constituted by its parts

in their internal relations and to be judged solely by criteria intrinsic to its mode of being (1976 : 26). In short, this study is focused on the work itself that is the novel entitled *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, without any tendency to the external factors of the novel. Elfride Swancourt as the main character is analyzed by observing everything related to her character such as her thought, action, feeling, speech, comments from other person in the story and her existence.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Flaws of Elfride Swancourt revealed in the novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*

1. Inexperienced

The word 'inexperienced' here means she is a girl who live in retirement. She has no experience in making love relationship with a man until she met a young handsome architect, Stephen Smith.

"It was her first experience with a man in having a treatment such an adult woman. Here was a temptation: it was the first time in her life that Elfride had been treated as a grown-up woman in this way-offered an arm in a manner implying that she had a right to refuse it. Till tonight she had never received masculine attentions beyond those which might be contained in such homely remarks as

'Elfride, give me your hand,' Elfride, take hold of my arm,' from her father (Hardy, 1995: 36).

The above statement implies that Elfride in her middle age has never been accepted a treatment as an adult woman from a man. It is her first love, so in her opinion to Stephen that love is new and fresh and by making love relationship between two different people, it can be seen the differentiation between man and woman feels about love.

"Love is new and fresh to us as dew; and we are together. As the lover's world goes, this is a great deal. Stephen, I fancy I see the difference between me and you – between men and women generally, perhaps. I am content to build happiness on any accidental basis that may lie near at hand; you are for making a world to suit your happiness" (Hardy, 1995: 49).

According to Elfride, for her love is new and fresh because it is the first time she feels in love. She also has the first experience in kissing with Stephen Smith. There is no response of replying the kissing because she has never been kissed before by a man. It is clearly stated on the statement below:

"Oh, my Elfride! He exclaimed, and kissed her. It was Elfride's first kiss and so awkward

and unused was she; fall of striving-no relenting. There was none of those apparent struggles to get out of trap which only results in getting further in: no final attitude of receptivity no easy close of shoulder to shoulder, hand upon hand, face upon face, and in spite of coyness, the lips in the right place at the supreme moment. That graceful though apparently accidental falling into position, which many have noticed as precipitating the end and making sweethearts the sweeter, was not here, why? Because experience was absent. (Hardy, 1995 48 – 49)

At her first kiss, she confesses to Stephen that she has never been kissed before by a man

“...and no lover ever kissed you before?”

“Never”

“I knew that; you were so unused, you ride well, but you don’t kiss nicely at all; and I was told once, by my friend Knight, that is an excellent fault in woman” (Hardy, 1995: 50)

She doesn’t know how to greet the guest. Expression of uneasiness and ashamed showed when she meets her new mother, a stepmother, Charlotte Troyton.

“An expression of uneasiness pervaded her countenance; and altogether she scarcely appeared woman enough for the situation.

Elfride persuasively looking with a deal of interest, not unmixed with surprise at the person towards whom she was to do the duties of hospitality (Hardy, 1995 : 99).

It is proved that living in retirement makes a person be inexperienced in encountering the society. Although her father has introduced her to Mrs Troyton, her stepmother but she just stand up, silent, without knowing what she should do when she meets her new stepmother.

”Here, Charlotte is my little Elfride”, Said Mr. Swancourt with the increased affection of tone often adopted towards relations when newly produced. Poor Elfride, not knowing what to do, did nothing at all; but stood receptivity of all that came to her by sight, hearing and touch. (Hardy, 1995 : 99)

Elfride has no experience in serving the guest. She has to ask first to her father about what she is going to do. It occurs when the guest from London named Stephen Smith comes to her house to make the Church’s Restoration.

“Then I hope this London man won’t come; for I don’t know what I should do, Papa”

“Well, it would be awkward, certainly”

“I should hardly think he would come today”

“Why?”

“Because the wind blows so”

“Wind, what ideas you have, Elfride! Who ever heard of wind stopping a man from doing his business? The idea of this toe of mine coming on so suddenly,.....If he should come, you must send him up to me, I suppose, and then give him some food and put him to bed in some way. Dear me, what a nuisance all this is!

“Must he have dinner?”

“Too heavy for a tired man at the end of a tedious journey”

“Tea, then?”

“Not substantial enough”

“High tea, then? There is cold fowl, rabbit-pie, some pasties, and things of that kind”

“Yes, high tea”

“Must I pour his tea, Papa?”

“Of course; you are the mistress of the house”

“What? Sit there all the time with a stranger, just as if I knew him, and not anybody to introduce us?”

“Nonsense, child, about introducing; you know better than that. A practical professional man, tired and hungry, who has been traveling ever since daylight this morning, will hardly be inclined to talk and air courtesies tonight. He wants food and shelter, and you must see that he has it, simply because I am

suddenly laid up and can not. There is nothing so dreadful in that, I hope? You get all kinds of stuff into your head from reading so many of those novels” (Hardy, 1995 : 6 - 7)

2. Childish

Her childish makes her jealous and angry with Stephen because he is always fond of praising his best friend, Henry Knight in front of Elfride. She doesn't want Stephen to like or even praise someone else beside her although Henry is a brilliant man.

“I was thinking how my dear friend, Knight would enjoy this scene. I wish he could come here”

“You seem very much engrossed with him” she answered, with a jealous little toss. He must be an interesting man to take up so much of your attention”

“Interesting! Said Stephen, his face glowing with his fervor; noble, you ought to say”

“Oh yes, yes; I forgot” she said satirically.

“You think always of him, and like him better than you do to me!”

“No, indeed, Elfride, the feeling is different quite. But I do like him, and he deserves even more affection from me than I give”

“You are not nice now, and you make me as jealous as possible!” she exclaimed perversely. “I know you will never speak to any third

person of me as warmly as you do to me of him” (Hardy, 1995: 52)

“I don’t care how good he is; I don’t want to know him, because he comes between you and me. You think him night and day, ever so much more than of anybody else; and when you are thinking of him, I am shut out of your mind”

“No, dear Elfride, I love you dearly”

“And I don’t like you to tell me so warmly about him when you are in the middle of loving me. Stephen, suppose that I and this man Knight of yours were both drowning, and you could only save one of us. Yes – the stupid old proposition – which would I save?”

“A-ha, I know, you would save him and let me drown, drown, drown; and I don’t care about your love!”

“Are you offended, Elfie? Why don’t you talk?”

“Save me then, and let that Mr Clever of yours down, I hate him. Now, which would you?”

“Really, Elfride, you should not press such a hard questions. It is ridiculous”

“then, I won’t be alone with you anymore. Unkind, to wound me so!” she laughed at her own absurdity but persisted. (Hardy, 1995: 52 – 53)

3. Doubtful and Fickle

Elfride has a characteristic of doubt in making the decision. It is proved when she is going to have a runaway wedding with Stephen in Plymouth.. before that she has promised Stephen that she would marry him because of her deepest love although it is not permitted and blessed by her father. Everything has done in order that she always be together with Stephen, but when they are in London’s train, she changes her mind to go back to her hometown, Endelstow. Her vacillation has defeated her love, she doesn’t care about her reputation in the eyes of the Endelstow society for the thing she has done with her lover. It is supported by the dialogue below:

“O Stephen,” she exclaimed, “I am so miserable! I must go home again – I must – I must! Forgive my wretched vacillation. I don’t like it here – nor myself – nor you!” Stephen looked bewildered, and did not speak.

“Will you allow me to go home?” she implored “I won’t trouble you to go with me. I will not be any weight upon you; only say you will agree to my returning; that you will not hate me for it, Stephen! It is better that I should return again; indeed it is, Stephen”

“But we can’t return now” he said in a deprecatory tone

“I must! I will”

“how? When do you want to go?”

“Now, can we go at once?”

Elfride keeps forcing Stephen to return to Endelstow. She feels uneasy to be in London because the situation is different from her village. She doesn't care about Stephen's enticement and compromise her reputation in the eyes of the society. The only one thing that she cares is returning to Endelstow.

“If you must go, and think it wrong to remain, dearest” said she sadly, “you shall, you shall do whatever you like, my Elfride. But would you in reality rather go now than stay till tomorrow, and go as my wife?”

“Yes, yes – much – anything to go now. I must; I must!” she cried

“we ought to have done one of two things,” he answered gloomily

“Never to have started, or not to have returned without being married. I don't like to say it, Elfride – indeed I don't; but you must be told this, that going back unmarried may compromise your good name in the eyes of people who may hear of it”

“They will not; and I must go”

“O Elfride! I am to blame for bringing you away”

“Not at all, I am the elder” (Hardy, 1995: 91-92)

4. Disloyal

However, promise is just a promise. She forgets her promise to be loyal to Stephen since she meets a London man, Henry Knight, the man who review her writing, the feeling of sympathies grows up without realizing that it has made her feeling to Stephen disappear.

“What were you so intent upon in me? He inquired,” as far as I was thinking of you at all, I was thinking how clever you are! She said, with a want of premeditation that was startling in its honesty and simplicity.

An arrival is an event in the life of Elfride, Henry necessarily an engrossing one. Elfride has fallen in love with Henry. In the evening when she goes to bed, for the first time she sleeps without thinking of Stephen at all. (Hardy, 1995 : 129)

Elfride also fascinates with Henry. In originally wishing to please the highest class of man of man she has ever intimately known, there is no disloyalty to Stephen Smith. She beguiles herself by saying , “perhaps if I has not so committed myself, I might fall in love with Mr. Knight. The week of Knight's absence makes her life gloomy and distasteful.

5. Fainthearted (Chicken Heart)

Elfride is discourage in facing the reality. Therefore, she doesn't tell the truth to her fiancé, Henry Knight about her past life with Stephen. She feels fear when se and Henry go to church and see Stephen's father, John Smith at the vault and Henry asks her to go there. Elfride's heart flutters like a butterfly. She is scared when she knows that Stephen is down in the fault. She is afraid to meet Stephen while she with Henry and Stephen knows that she is now as Henry's fiancé and would marry soon while in the fact that she is still as Stephen's lover too. Hence, she doesn't go down the vault when Henry calls her to go with him to meet Stephen by giving a flimsy reason of afraid toward to remnants of mortality.

"I am afraid the air is close" she said appealingly

"Oh no, ma'am" said John "we white – limed the walls and arches that day 'twas opened, as we always do, and again on the morning of the funeral; the place is a sweet as granary"

"The I should like you to accompany me, Elfie; having originally sprung from the family too"

"I don't like going where death is so emphatically present. I'll stay by the horses whilst you go in; the may get loose"

"What nonsense! I had no idea your sentiments were so flimsily formed as to be perturbed by a few remnants of mortality; but stay out, if you are afraid by all means"

"Oh no, I am not afraid, don't say that" (Hardy, 1995 : 208)

Elfride keeps stepping forward some paces in advance and has not heard Henry unconscious allusion to her. She looked shook with the situation and turned pale but she told to Henry that she got unwell because she goes downstairs to the vault when Knight expresses his anxious to her but she keeps hiding her own secret.

"God heavens, Elfride", Henry exclaimed, how pale you are! I suppose I ought not to have taken you into that vault. What is the matter?"

"Nothing", said Elfride faintly "I shall be myself in a moment. All was strange and unexpected down there, that it made me unwell. (Hardy, 1995: 213)

Besides that, Elfride decides to go to Mrs Jethway's house to ask her not telling her fiancé, Henry Knight about her scandal, but

she doesn't meet that widow, so she writes a letter on a piece of paper.

"Dear Mrs. Jethway – I have been to visit you. I wanted much to see you, but I can not wait any longer. I came to beg you not to execute the threats you have repeated to me. Do not, I beseech you Mrs Jethway, let anyone know I ran away from home! It would ruin me with him, and break my heart. I will do anything for you, if you will be kind to me. In the name of our common womanhood, do not, I implore you, make a scandal of me.

Yours,

E. Swancourt (Hardy, 1995 : 243)

6. Docile

Mr Swancourt forbides Elfride to marry a man from low class because he is such a man who emphasize the social stratum and wealthy as major points. Elfride obeys the commendation of her father although she has to sacrificed her own happiness.

"Yes; she would save herself from a man not fit for her – in spite of vows. She would obey her father, and have no more to do with Stephen Smith" (Hardy, 1995: 204)

She promises to her father that she would forget Stephen after her confession about her backstreet relationship.

"I can assure you that at the present moment there is no more of an understanding between me and the young man you so much disliked than between him and you. You told me to forget him; and I have forgotten him!"

"Oh, well; though you did not obey me in the beginning, you are a good girl, Elfride, in obeying me at last (Hardy, 1995: 206)

She promises to obey her father's words but she asks him not to tell about her first man to her fiancé, Henry Knight.

"I can't say; but promise – pray don't let him know! It would be my ruin! (Hardy, 1995: 206)

The Effect of The Flaws to Elfride's life, she suffers physically and spiritually. She gets harsh treatment from her family. Her home is not her home anymore now. Her father is bitter and harsh upon her and though Mrs Swancourt is well enough in her way, it is a sort of cold politeness that is not worth much and the little thing has a worrying time of it altogether. Physically, she misses from the crags and she becomes unwell for weeks after. She doesn't care what has happened and wishes to die. She loses two men that she loves very much but she proves to her father to marry a noble man who has the same social stratum, from the high class. She accepts Lord

Spenser Hugo Luxellian's proposal to be a wife even though after five months later she dies.

V. CONCLUSION

The main character A Pair of Blue Eyes, Elfride Swancourt has some flaws within her character. She is inexperienced, childish, doubtful and fickle, disloyal, fainthearted and docile. Those flaws have led her life into a tragic life. It can be concluded that she is incapable of improving or even changing her flaws within her character. The Effect of The Flaws to Elfride's life, she suffers physically and spiritually. She gets harsh treatment from her family and dies five months later after marrying Lord Spenser Hugo Luxellian, a man from high class, same social stratum with her.

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