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# THE CONSTRUCTION OF MONSTROUS WOMEN *THÉRÈSE DESQUEYROUX* BY FRANÇOIS MAURIAC

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## ABSTRACT

Issues of domestication, minority, and discrimination have frequently put women in inferior position in society. When women seek equality, they are often framed as embracing monstrous attitudes. This study focuses on François Mauriac's novel titled *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (1927) with the intention of exploring the meanings and the significations in its construction of women as monsters. It has been observed that women are depicted as monsters because their struggle for freedom is seen as a challenge to the patriarchal system. The aims of this study are to find out and to describe the influential aspects in the construction of women as monsters and how such construction creates meanings. The study relies on content analysis method and follows three steps of analysis: collecting data relevant to monstrosity, classifying data based on the themes and problems related to the topic, and analyzing the data using Barbara Creed's theory of *the monstrous feminine* (2007). The study results in the finding that the construction of women as monsters is strongly correlated with the deep institutionalization of patriarchy in French culture.

**Keywords:** *object, femininity, maternity, monster, Women*

## ABSTRAK

Penempatan perempuan pada posisi inferior dalam banyak narasi disebabkan oleh faktor-faktor domestifikasi, minoritas, dan diskriminasi. Ketika perempuan memperjuangkan kesetaraan, mereka dianggap membangkang dan disimbolkan sebagai monster. Konstruksi monster terhadap perempuan ini terlihat pada novel François Mauriac berjudul *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (1927). Tulisan ini mencoba memahami makna dan pemaknaan konstruksi perempuan sebagai monster dalam novel tersebut. Studi ini menemukan bahwa perempuan digambarkan sebagai monster karena perjuangan mereka untuk mencapai kebebasan dianggap menentang struktur patriarki. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah menemukan dan mendeskripsikan aspek-aspek yang berkaitan dengan proses pemonsteran perempuan dan bagaimana proses tersebut dimaknai. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis isi cerita dan dilakukan dalam beberapa tahap. Tahap pertama adalah pengambilan data yang relevan dengan pemonsteran. Tahap kedua adalah pengklasifikasian data sesuai dengan tema dan permasalahan tentang pemonsteran perempuan. Tahap terakhir adalah analisis data temuan dengan teori Barbara Creed (2007) tentang *the monstrous feminine*. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa konstruksi perempuan sebagai monster berhubungan erat dengan kultur patriarki yang sudah terinstitusionalisasi di dalam budaya Prancis pada masa ketika novel tersebut ditulis.

**Keywords:** *object, feminitas, keibuan, monster, perempuan*

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## INTRODUCTION

Every human being has the right to live equally in society. However, the prevailing social structures and systems contain values that restrain certain elements in such right and put limitations on women's movement. Women are often presented as individuals who always submit themselves to the prevailing system because they have no choice.

The structural patriarchy puts men in the ruling, the central, and the all-encompassing positions (Rokhmamsyah, 2016: 32). Patriarchal culture gives men superior power over women. This kind of culture can be found virtually in every part of the world, including in France. Women are given only minimal opportunities in the public sphere, economically, socially and politically (Amalia, 2010). The gender division between men and women based on the dominating patriarchal system is also an indication of the limited space for women's movement. Moreover, gender division is often associated with physical and psychological differences between men and women. Women are considered physically and psychologically weaker than men, and therefore they are made vulnerable to constrictions and discriminatory treatments (Sakina & Siti, 2017: 72).

For example, women in most of critical works concerning horror films are perceived merely as victims. Only a few of these works discuss the representation of women as monsters (Creed, 2007: 26). In *The Monstrous-Feminine*, Barbara Creed challenges this patriarchal viewpoint by claiming that the prototype of all monster definitions is the female reproductive body (Creed, 2007: 2). The term *the monstrous-feminine* introduced by Barbara Creed refers to maternal construction and femininity as horrible figures in patriarchal ideology (in Suhendi, Priyatna, & Muhtadin, 2017: 123). With this concept, women are usually portrayed in a degrading light of monstrosity or in opposition to the existing system. In other words, monsters are often closely associated with the existence of women. Women maternal body and femininity are considered as something that can disturb or threaten the established order, namely patriarchy. Moreover, patriarchy needs to continue to be the controlling system, and therefore it attempts to remove women and femininity the prevailing social order by constructing them as something horrible (Suhendi et al., 2017: 124).

We can find the representation of women as horrible figures in many literary works. These works contain inequalities in presenting women. They are represented as negative individuals. This representation, for example, can be found in children's fairy tales such as *Sleeping Beauty* with *Maleficent* as the woman character who cursed a princess to make her sleep forever, the story of *Cinderella* with a stepmother character who was cruel to her daughter in, and *Snow White* with a witch character who gave a poisoned apple to the princess, and so on (Farhati, 2018). When you want to explain the good and bad aspects in almost all children's stories, there are simply three figures: first is a man as a strong figure and also a savior; second is a woman as a weak and beautiful figure who needs man to help her; and the third is the figure of a witch as a woman who committed a crime (Udasmoro, 2011).

In myths, the majority of monsters are also depicted as female figures. An example is a witch who always appears as an old woman who can perform terrible actions such as killing, eating humans and causing natural disasters (Aprilia, 2015). Some myths feature vampires that are associated with women who like to suck blood and turn their victims into something like them (Creed, 2007: 28). In classical myths, there is a monster figure named Sirens that is depicted as a large bird with a woman's head. She would sing a magic song to prey on sailors who are sailing in the sea. Moreover, one of the famous myths around the world is the myth about Medusa who is visualized as a terrifying female figure who has a large head full of hissing snakes with their long fangs as her hair. Anyone who looks into her eyes will turn into stone (Creed, 2007: 29). This depiction of women as monsters in myths and literature appears in various forms or figures. This construction of women as monsters occurs so frequently that it has become a common sense in different practices and cultures.

According to Creed, every culture has its own understanding of the horrible image of women (Suhendi et al., 2017: 126). In the novel entitled *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (2017; 1927) written by François Charles Mauriac, femininity and maternity are constructed as terrifying phenomena. In this novel, the individual who is able to fight against the established structures that repress her is represented by the main character who is both a woman and a mother. However, this ability is presented by the author in a contradictory

way, namely as a monster that is devoid of morals. The gruesome and abject depiction of a woman is represented in the character whose name is Thérèse Desqueyroux. Abject is a term used by Kristeva which means something that does not respect boundaries, positions, and rules that interfere with identity, system, and order (Creed, 2007: 51; Kristeva, 2010).

According to Braidotti (1994), monsters cannot be defined just in terms of physical deviations, but also in accordance with broad deviations that include the character, the role, and the social factors. In the novel, the characterization of Thérèse is shaped by her hatred for marriage life and motherhood and by her horrid actions that violate the social norms such as poisoning her husband and refusing to accept the child as her biological daughter. From the narrative above we can see that the monstrous construction of women is clearly reflected in the character of Thérèse Desqueyroux and in her resistance against the existing social structures and systems (Arjani, 2007).

The novel seems to attribute the female characters with a *double punishment*, namely the inferior position. The reason for this is that because the prevailing social structures and systems have placed women in second position. The female characters are also portrayed in a negative way in the novel. Indeed, at the beginning of the story, female characters have an agency to be free from the values that restrict them, but the efforts are presented by the author in a contradictory way (Ilma, 2016; Putri, 2014). Women are represented as dangerous and immoral figures in the novel.

The author seems to resent women's freedom because he assigns double punishment to women. He narrates a woman who strives to achieve freedom in a negative way in his novel. It makes women seem to have no choice. If women do not accept their inferior position and want to be free or fight against the patriarchy, they will be considered deviant by the society in which they live.

Women's resistance to the social structures and systems that shackle them is represented in a negative way in *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. The focus of this study is this issue particularly in relation to women's portrayal as monsters. Women in this novel are portrayed as having the ability or strength to fight against the social structures in the novel. However, at the same time she is also depicted as a terrifying figure like a monster.

Besides finding the aspects through which

women are represented as monsters, this study aims to find the implications of the construction of women's monstrosity in the novel. This study is also intended as a response to the construction of monstrous women who have become a common phenomenon in different cultures and practices.

The use of the term *monstrous-feminine* is to express the meaning of women's feminization in relation to the influence of gender factor in the construction of women's monstrosity. When women are represented as monsters, it is almost always associated with maternal function and femininity in a terrible image (Creed, 2007: 47-48). The concept of female monstrosity, according to Barbara Creed, is closely related to the idea of women as horrible, frightening, and abject individuals. With this notion, a woman is usually represented as an ugly and old person who can perform terrible actions. The implication is that this characteristic must be removed so as not to disturb the established social order, and so that the subject can continue to be the subject.

According to Kristeva, the harmful object must be excluded from the subject, pushed far to the imaginary border line that separates the self from those that threaten it (Creed, 2007: 53; Kristeva, 2010). This exclusion is necessary to make the subjects in accordance with their respective roles.

According to Creed, maternal identity and femininity are associated with the abject as a form of patriarchal ideological construction. The point is that *monstrous-feminine* is constructed as an abject because it can disturb the established order that consists of patriarchy and masculinity. Therefore, in order for the subject—patriarchy—to be able to continue as the subject, the abject—women's maternal aspects and femininity—must be removed. One of the exclusion mechanisms is to construct women and their femininity as something horrible (Suhendi et al., 2017: 124).

In this qualitative descriptive study, the researchers will analyze the content of the story in the novel titled *Thérèse Desqueyroux* by François Mauriac in order to understand the complete picture of its meaning and to present the description of the data. These data are words, sentences and paragraphs in the text of the novel that are related to the topic of discussion, namely women's monstrosity. Overall, this study is carried out in five stages. In the first stage, the researcher reads the whole text of the novel to

understand the essence of the story and the issues reflected in the novel for further investigation. In the second stage, data that are relevant to the research problem are collected in a table. The data are arranged in the table in order of the page and the time of event in which they appear in the text. In the third stage, the data are classified based on the aspects under study and the research problems. Afterwards, the data are analyzed according to the *monstrous-feminine* theory. The results of the analysis are later presented together with the supporting data. The last stage is to draw conclusions on the results of the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Construction of Monstrous Femininity

Women tend to be associated with their feminine side. Femininity includes emotional sensitivity, patience, tenacity, irrationality, loyalty, submissiveness, and weakness (Krissetyoningrum, 2014: 5). There is a term *tomboy* to describe women who tend to be masculine in the sense of showing bravery, physical strength, stylish like men, etc. The terms femininity and masculinity were born from a patriarchal culture which result in differences between the two that are based on the social construction of how men and women should behave.

In the novel, the femininity aspect of Thérèse is alluded to and constructed as something horrible. Femininity is represented in stark contrast to the construction of femininity in patriarchal culture. Women are characteristically gentle and caring according to the construction (Rahman & Jackson, 2010). However, in the novel, Thérèse Desqueyroux is not a woman who cares about her surroundings. She lets her husband take an excessive dose of drug, for example.

*Thérèse ait songé à l'avertir qu'il a doublé sa dose habituelle. ...Il demande: "Est-ce que j'ai pris mes gouttes?" et sans attendre la réponse, de nouveau il en fait tomber dans son verre. Elle s'est tue par paresse, sans doute, par fatigue. (Mauriac, 1927: 50-51)*

Thérèse thought of reminding her husband that he had already taken twice as much medicine, already exceeding the usual dose. ... then he asked: "Have I taken those drops?" and without

waiting for an answer, he had already dripped it back into his glass. Thérèse said nothing, maybe because she was tired. (Francois Mauriac, 2017: 85-86; Indonesian-English self-translation)

In the novel, Thérèse Desqueyroux is portrayed as a woman who does not care for her family and protect them from accidents. She does not have affection for her family either (Zulkarnain & Wiyatmi, 2018). It is contradictory to the construction of femininity in reality. Women are commonly perceived as sensitive and affectionate for their families (Rahman & Jackson, 2010; Udasmoro, 2017)2010; Udasmoro, 2017. Thérèse is depicted as a woman who is brave but trespass social boundaries. She often opposes her husband's opinion. She does not remain silent while knowing something that she considers to be true by others. This can be seen in the following quote.

*..., la jeune femme lui demanda pourquoi ses parents étaient hostiles à ce mariage. Il crut qu'elle se moquait de lui, la supplia de ne pas commencer à soutenir des paradoxes.*

*Mais elle insistait: "Nos familles me font rire avec leur prudence de taupes!..."*

*"Je ne te répondrai pas: quand tu te lances, le mieux est d'attendre que ce soit fini". (François Mauriac, 1927: 25-26)*

... the young woman asked why her parents were so against their marriage plans. Bernard thought his wife was making fun of him, so he asked Thérèse not to start again with her habit of always arguing.

But his wife persisted: "Our family made me laugh by trying to cover up what really happened! ..."

"I'm not going to answer: every time you bring it up, the best attitude is to wait until you're done ..." (Francois Mauriac, 2017: 41-43; Indonesian-English self-translation)

Thérèse Desqueyroux continues to oppose Bernard until her husband choses to remain silent. Meanwhile, Bernard considers his wife to have complicated thoughts because she keeps challenging the reality. Thérèse's attitude shows that she cannot take things for granted (Nasiru, 2017)each titled: *Perselingkuhan Istri Lakino Lipu*; *Putri yang Hilang*; *Lagumba dan Wa Ure-Ure Ngkamagi*. Three of

them narrated women in prototype uniformity, in a concept that is more fluid than some kindergarten like Bawang Putih Bawang Merah or Cinderella. Fluidity mean that the liberation of women from all forms of subordination: a class polarization that took shape into archetypes dichotomous construction. The characters are identified as women who are not only clever, but also able to make decisions in determining their fate. This study will address two issues: 1, particularly for Bernard who always carries the surname as an excuse, because Thérèse thinks that her family has caused her suffering. However, this depiction of Thérèse makes it seems like she always creates problems because every time she brings up family problems in the argument between herself and Bernard, she looks to criticize her family. This indicates that the depiction of Thérèse's unresponsive attitude has represented her femininity in a negative light (Kardiansyah, 2017).

Undergoing a situation that is not comfortable for her, Thérèse struggles to escape from the values that have been holding her down. However, her bold attitude is again portrayed in a contradictory way. She tries several times to poison her husband. After the lunch incident, she secretly drips Bernard's medicine into his glass so that her husband would take an overdose of the medicine.

*... Le premier jour où, avant que Bernard entrât dans la salle, je fis tomber des gouttes de Fowler dans son verre.* (François Mauriac, 1927: 51)

*... On the first day I started dropping Fowler into the glass before Bernard came into the room, I remember still repeating my promise.* (François Mauriac, 2017: 87; Indonesian-English self-translation)

Thérèse's behavior of trying to poison her husband to achieve her goals clearly shows that Thérèse is not a weak and faithful woman. She is willing to commit a crime to achieve her goals. Thérèse's unfaithful attitude towards her marriage can also be seen in the following excerpt which shows that she chooses to be banished from the family rather than enduring her current situation.

*Elle allait dire: "... Je consens à être rejetée; brûlez toutes mes photographies; que ma fille même ne sache plus mon nom, que je sois aux yeux de la famille comme si je n'avais jamais été." Et déjà*

*Thérèse ouvre la bouche; elle dit: "Laissez-moi disparaître, Bernard."* (François Mauriac, 1927: 56)

Thérèse wanted to say: "... I will accept my fate: banished; burn all pictures of me; let my own daughter does not know my name, let it be like I was never in the family." However, Thérèse already said: "Let me go, Bernard." (François Mauriac, 2017: 95; Indonesian-English self-translation)

The story also portrays Thérèse as an irrational woman. On her way home from the court, Thérèse tells herself that what she has done is not a crime. Yet she is well aware that she has deliberately planned to poison her husband.

*"Moi, je ne connais pas mes crimes. Je n'ai pas voulu celui dont on me charge. Je ne sais pas ce que j'ai voulu. Je n'ai jamais su vers quoi tendait cette puissance forcenée en moi et hors de moi: ce qu'elle détruisait sur sa route, j'en étais moi-même terrifiée."* (François Mauriac, 1927: 9)

"But I, I don't know my crime. I don't want other people to accuse me like this. I don't know what I want. I never knew where the strength from within and from outside me took me: everything that was damaged on the way, I myself was terrified to imagine it" (François Mauriac, 2017: 13; Indonesian-English self-translation).

The above quotation demonstrates that Thérèse commits her crime without any reason. She is described as an innocent woman who does not know what she has done. Even when she is about to carry out her plan, she realizes that what she is going to do is a dangerous thing. It can be inferred that she is a hypocritical woman because she is afraid to imagine what she has done even though she plans it herself. It can also be inferred that she is crazy enough to not realize her own motive in committing a crime and that what she has done was a crime.

In the above quotations we can see how Thérèse Desqueyroux struggles to get rid of her values and chose to commit crimes. The characterization of Thérèse in the novel makes her appear to be a dangerous and horrible woman because she is capable of poisoning her own husband. She represents a

woman who always causes problems and humiliates her family's name by demeaning her femininity in being irrational, disloyal, courageous, and unyielding. However, the author shows what should be positive in Thérèse as a brave and strong woman in a negative way, which is constructing it as something horrible. This proves that whenever women behave outside the predetermined boundaries and attempt to free themselves from the existing social norms, they will be considered a threat. As a consequence, this kind of behavior is constructed as something terrible so that they can be removed and be made no longer a threat to the society.

### Maternal Aspects

Maternity or what is called *motherism* or motherhood is something that is related to the experience or process of being a mother or a period when women have children, give birth and take care of them (Udasmoro, 2017). In patriarchal ideology, maternity is constructed as a horrible phenomenon according to the concept of *monstrous-feminine* proposed by Creed in her book, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminist, Psychoanalysis* (2007). Creed provides an overview of the film *Alien* (1979) which features *monstrous-feminine* as an archaic mother. In the film, there is Nastro, an aircraft control computer called Mother. Although mother figure in the film is not shown in the form of a woman as a mother, it is represented in the depictions of birth, death, blood, darkness, and a scary atmosphere (Creed, 2007: 80).

Blood, vomit, saliva, sweat, and tears are the abjects because they are something that must be secreted by the body. This corresponds to the logic of menstruation and childbirth, which removes certain amount of blood from the body and is often symbolized as the dirty aspect of a woman's body (Prabasmoro, 2006). Menstruation and childbirth make women constructed as the abject as they experience these two occurrences. In patriarchal symbolic system, these two things are a threat for the integrity because they are considered power. Therefore, in its *monstrous-feminine* construction, it touches on the maternal aspect (Creed, 2007: 194).

In Kristeva's view, mother's body is constructed as a monster or an object because it disturbs the subject (Kristeva, 2010). The mother does not let go of the child who wants to break free to become a separate subject. The mother-child relationship is

seen as related to conflict because the mother's body becomes a place of conflicting desires in which she is reluctant to let go of her grip on her child (Creed, 2007: 64).

In *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, the characterization of Thérèse as a monster-like woman that alludes to its maternal aspects is not constructed through blood, darkness, death, or her reluctance to let go of her daughter who wants to be a separate subject. Instead, this representation of *monstrous-feminine* is conveyed by the absence of motherhood in her personality for her daughter, Marie. Since she is still pregnant, Thérèse does not want the baby she is carrying to be born. She prays to God to grant her wish. In reality, mother normally takes a very good care of her child and look forward to the birth of the child she is carrying because there is a maternal instinct in her. This is not intended to justify that women must have a femininity as constructed by the patriarchal order in the form of compassion. However, this tends to be related to a sense of humanity, namely the compassion that each individual should have.

*Elle avait compté-les mois jusqu'à cette naissance; elle aurait voulu connaître un Dieu pour obtenir de lui que cette créature inconnue, toute mêlée encore à ses entrailles, ne se manifestât jamais.* (François Mauriac, 1927: 33)

She counted the months in which she lived until the moment of birth; how she longed for a Supreme Being to bless her so that this unknown creation, still mingled with his guts, would never materialize. (François Mauriac, 2017: 54; Indonesian-English self-translation)

Thérèse Desqueyroux also feels that she does not have any ties with her daughter because of the absence of motherhood in her. This is indicated in the clause "since the body is detached from the body" which means that since the baby is born, she no longer has any ties with her. This feeling of having no connection with Marie makes Thérèse refuse to the idea that there is a facial resemblance between her and her daughter.

*Les exclamations coutumières: "Celle- là, vous ne pouvez pas la renier", jetaient la jeune femme dans des sentiments extrêmes qu'elle ne savait pas toujours dissimuler. "Cette enfant n'a rien*

*de moi, insistait-elle. Voyez cette peau brune, ces yeux de jais. Regardez mes photos: j'étais une petite fille blafarde."*

*Elle ne voulait pas que Marie lui ressemblât. Avec cette chair détachée de la sienne, elle désirait ne plus rien posséder en commun. Le bruit commençait de courir que le sentiment maternel ne l'étouffait pas. (François Mauriac, 1927: 48-49)*

The screams that are usually heard (The child is unmistakable) make her very emotional and she cannot hide it forever. "That child doesn't look like me," she said. "Look at her tan skin and black eyes like agate. Take a good look at my photo: when I was a child I was pale white."

She didn't want Marie to resemble her. Since that body separated from her body. Rumors began to spread that her motherly feelings were dull, not touching her. (François Mauriac, 2017: 82-83; Indonesian-English self-translation).

Moreover, the representation of Thérèse as an archaic mother in the novel is evident in the absence of a sense of care and responsibility for her role as a mother. She prefers to be lost so that Marie does not need to know her as Marie's mother. That way, Thérèse is no longer needed to be responsible for Marie.

*Thérèse imagine qu'elle aurait pu être ainsi effacée, anéantie, et que plus tard il n'eût pas même été permis à sa fille, à sa petite Marie, de retrouver dans un album la figure de celle qui l'a mise au monde. (François Mauriac, 1927: 5).*

Thérèse imagines that she also can be eliminated just like her grandmother who has been destroyed and later on, Marie, her beloved daughter, will not be given the chance to find the face of the woman who had given birth to her in the world in the family album (François Mauriac, 2017: 4; Indonesian-English self-translation).

Thérèse does not have the slightest concern for Marie. She is never curious about Marie even though she has not seen her daughter since her exile. This explains that Thérèse does not have any feeling, affection, responsibility or bonding feeling for her child since birth.

*"Tu ne me demandes pas des nouvelles de Marie?"*

*"C'est vrai. Parle-moi de Marie."*

*Anne parut de nouveau méfiante, hostile; depuis des mois, elle répétait souvent, avec les mêmes intonations que sa mère: "Je lui aurais tout pardonné, parce que enfin c'est une malade; mais son indifférence pour Marie, je ne peux pas la digérer. Une mère qui ne s'intéresse pas à son enfant, vous pouvez inventer toutes les excuses que vous voudrez, je trouve ça ignoble." (François Mauriac, 1927: 73)*

*"You didn't ask about Marie?"*

*"Oh yeah, tell me about Marie."*

Anne's face was again suspicious, hostile; in the last few months, she has often repeated her words with the same intonation as her mother: "I will forgive her, everything, because she is sick somehow: but her attitude of not caring about Marie is totally unacceptable to me. A mother who doesn't pay attention to her child, you can find all sorts of excuses, it's still cruel." (François Mauriac, 2017: 124; Indonesian-English self-translation).

Thérèse with her dull motherly feeling that is devoid of affection, care, and responsibility for her child is a representation of an archaic mother in the novel. In this representation of monstrosity, the depiction of Thérèse as a monster is created by means of a distorted maternal side.

## CONCLUSION

The construction of maternity and femininity as a monster is associated with the abject as a form of patriarchal ideological construction. This construction has its root in the perception that women are capable of disrupting the established values of patriarchy and masculinity. Another factor that contribute to the construction of women as monsters is the maternal power held by women. Maternal power is one of women's natural characteristics is considered a threat to the patriarchal system, especially the power to experience menstruation and childbirth. In these two experiences, women produce dirty blood. Blood is the same as sweat, dirt, saliva, and the like which must be secreted from the body. Something that must

be secreted from the subject is an abject.

This idea explains that women are not being punished because they can act outside the boundaries that have been determined in the patriarchal order. However, women are constructed as monsters because of their maternal strength with which she is considered capable of threatening patriarchy. The social construction of gender that sees women as weak, obedient, and so on in a patriarchal setting is a way to limit women's space so that these powers will not dominate.

The construction of monstrous woman is assigned to the character in *Thérèse Desqueyroux* named Thérèse because she is not obedient to the patriarchal order. This is a form of punishment she has to receive because she does not comply with the order. The feminine trait that is mentioned in Thérèse's monstrous construction in the novel tends to be associated with women who are supposed to have emotional sensitivity, patience, tenacity, irrationality, loyalty, submissiveness, and weakness. However, Thérèse is shown as a woman who is not caring, sensitive, and compassionate, and a woman does not care for her family. She is also shown as a brave and strong woman. However, these supposedly positive traits—being brave and strong—are presented in a negative way. For example, her struggle for freedom is presented in a contradictory way, namely by making her a character that commits a crime. Regarding her maternal aspect, she is described as a woman who hates motherhood, who does not have love and responsibility for her child. The construction of Thérèse as *monstrous-feminine* always goes against the predetermined boundaries and is always negative.

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