

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about the background of the study, the research question or the problem statement, the aim of the study, and the significance of the study.

Background

Talking about literature, it certainly discusses the theory of literature that supports or helps us to read and reveal what literary works can mean. The theory of literature (sometimes called a critical literary theory or literary criticism) is a method for analyzing the literature systematically. Moreover, it is a way that helps the reader to find meaning in literary works (A Brief Overview of Literary Criticism, n.d.). Literary work is a way to express human expression delivered by the writer in the form of written, and sometimes, oral. It is because humans can express their feeling through written and oral (Krystal, 2014; Massari & Sidek, 2014; Rexroth, 2019). The author expresses their feeling, thought, ideas, and imagination through literary works which has moral values that can be applied in real life or human life. Their works mostly talk about the real situation that happens in society.

In discussing literary works, deconstruction, as one of the literary criticism theories, can not be separated from the literature. It is because this theory criticizes western philosophers who think structuralists. This term of structuralist refers to the theory of structuralism by Ferdinand de Saussure. Structuralism is a concept about language and its structure. Language, according to Saussure (as

cited in Waterman, 1956), can be defined as “an inherited social system of arbitrary sign, and the active individual use of that system”. Furthermore, Norris (2006, p. 9) stated that language exists because of the system of difference and the key concept of the system of difference in language is binary opposition. For example, good and bad, right and wrong, etc. In this binary opposition, the first term is superior to the second term. From this, it can be concluded that a structuralist sees language as something absolute and its meaning cannot be changed. This affects social life where humans are always focused on the privileged or the first term, and creating social class differences in society. This phenomena becomes one of the themes in literary works that affect the meanings produced by the author always centers on one group and the other groups considered as the marginalized.

This structural concept is rejected by Jacques Derrida by providing a new way to read the text. Deconstruction provides new idea, new point of view, and also new way to understand the meaning of literary works. Saifi (n.d.) explained that deconstruction is a way of thinking critically by finding the binary opposition in understanding the relationship between the text and the meaning and reverse it. It helps the readers to think and express the text with new ways. It means that the meaning that came from the author in the text, do not interpret the true meaning. The deconstruction approach on literature is often called deconstructive. A French philosopher Jacques Derrida is the expert in deconstruction. Derrida believes that there are other thoughts that can be the alternative thought in addition to think something that already exists. Deconstruction criticism does not mean to destruct

a concept without a solution, but it provides a new concept to replace the old concept as one of the solutions (Wattimena, 2009). Derrida's solution can also be applied to the novel as a literary work.

This research uses the theory of deconstruction by Jacques Derrida in the novel. Novel, as one of the literary works, is a long-form narrative of prose fiction that tells a story about specific human experiences (Prahl, 2019). The way novel brings the story such as plot, setting, characters, structure, and dialogue can make the people understand, especially novel brings the story completely. The novel that will be used as the object of this research is *Maleficent* novel written by Elizabeth Rudnick.

Maleficent novel is an American fantastical fiction novel that released in 2014. This novel is written by a senior editor, an author, a full-time editor, and a pop-culture aficionado, Elizabeth Rudnick (Elizabeth Rudnick, n.d). This novel tells about the relationship between a fairy godmother who had large wings and horns with her adopted daughter, Aurora. They lived in a place called Moors. A peaceful kingdom which was lived by magical creatures and led by Maleficent itself. On the other hand, there was a kingdom that was lived by humans and led by King Stefan. The two kingdoms are lived next to each other and became a rival. They were involved in war several times.

The main character, Maleficent, was a witch and also the guardian of the Moors. She was described has large wings, horns, and an evil face. She also could do a magic and fly. In opposite, the other main character, King Stefan, which was

the king of the human Kingdom, described as an ordinary human and not like the description of Maleficent. He also had wife and daughter named Aurora. Through their visual portrayal using structuralism reading strategy, it can be concluded that King Stefan has good character due to his normal human look and Maleficent has bad character due to her evil look. However, there were several events in the story that changed the depiction of these two main characters. It can be achieved by using deconstructive reading strategy. As seen in the citation below.

"I'm not afraid:" Maleficent told him. "Besides: I've never seen a human up close." She peered through the brush and made out the figure of a boy about her age.

"What did he take from the pool?" she asked.

Balthazar screeched, answering her.

A stone. She sighed. "Come out!" she said to the brush.

"No!" came a defiant voice from behind it. "They mean to kill me. And besides, they're hideous to look at. "

Balthazar screeched once more: this time quite offended.

"That's extremely tucle!t Maleficent chided. To Balthazar she said: "Don't listen to him. You're classically handsome." She turned once more to the brush, her patience wearing thin "It's not

right to steal but we don't kill people for it. Come out. Come out

this instant!" (*Maleficent*, 2014, p. 39)

As what have been discussed before, Maleficent was described had horns, and could do magic and fly. Her description in the novel was not like human and it indicates that she was a witch. It gives the meaning that her character in this novel portrayed as bad. However, in the dialogue above, there was phenomena where Maleficent did good things. It can be seen in the way she defended Balthazar, a guard of the Moors and the way she convinced Stefan that stealing was not right and they would not kill him. On the other hand, Stefan was described as a normal human and it gives the meaning that his character in this novel portrayed as good. However, he did bad thing which was stealing the precious stones from the Moors.

Because of the phenomena that happened in these two main characters, this research will discuss the deconstruction on the characters and it will be consider as the problem in this research. This kind of problem refer to the theory of deconstruction by Jacques Derrida where the theory rejects the hierarchy opposition provided by structuralism theory. This theory believes that the given text does not always give the permanent meaning, also about the concept of something good does not always be good and reverse. Thus, this research will address the depicted of two main characters in the novel, which are Maleficent and King Stefan in the novel entitled *Maleficent*.

Research Question

Based on the background above, which explains the phenomena in *Maleficent* novel where the depiction of the two main characters was not as it seems. It is very interesting to analyze the depiction of each character to get the other meaning, besides the rigid meaning given by binary opposition of structuralism. It shows that there are other meanings of the characters that contained in the text of the novel. It is because this is not a common thing that normal people will do when they read and analyze the novel, the readers are always centralized by the meaning provided by the author. This kind of phenomena refers to deconstruction theory. Thus, the research question of this research is based on the following question: “How are Maleficent and King Stefan characters depicted in *Maleficent* novel based on the deconstruction theory of Derrida?”

Aim of The Study

The aim of this research is to analyze the characters and characterization of King Stefan and Maleficent. Along the story, these two characters experienced many events that affect the depiction of their characters in the story. This research wants to know the depiction of the two main characters in *Maleficent* novel based on the deconstruction theory of Derrida.

Significance of The Study

The result of this research is expected to help the other researchers especially English Department students as one of the sources of literature and to understand more about the related topics. Besides, the results of this research provide

information that can help the readers to find the other meanings of phenomena and provide knowledge that we, as humans, cannot see and judge something from one perspective. Even though the object of this research is fictional characters that appear in the novel, they can represent human life.