

DECONSTRUCTION IN THE SHORT STORY *BURUNG KECIL DAN HUJAN* BY YANUSA NUGROHO

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Abstract

*This study explores the concept of deconstruction within the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* by Yanusa Nugroho, applying poststructuralist theory to uncover how binary oppositions, decentering, and difference are utilized to challenge established meanings and hierarchies. Deconstruction, a method pioneered by Derrida, questions fixed values, revealing the fluidity and instability of meaning within texts. By identifying binary oppositions and analysing how they are dismantled, this research examines the displacement of traditional centres of power in the narrative. Through the concept of difference, the analysis highlights how meanings in the text remain open to multiple interpretations, destabilizing conventional understandings. This qualitative study aims to deepen the appreciation of poststructuralist methods in literature, demonstrating how *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* resists fixed interpretations and presents a space for new readings of cultural narratives.*

Keywords: *deconstruction, decentering, difference, binary oppositions*

INTRODUCTION

In various aspects of life, our minds are already controlled by polarities in judging everything. What we know is about things that are in opposition to each other, for example black and white, good and evil, light and dark, superior and inferior, and other oppositions. We tend to ignore the things that lie in between those poles, that between black and white there is gray. Poststructuralist is a school of thought in literature that questions views about things that are considered established. One of the concepts in poststructuralism is the concept of deconstruction. According to the meaning of the verb, to deconstruct a poem means to transpose it into prose and, by setting aside meter and rhyme, to reveal the rules of poetic composition. Deconstructing also means dismantling the parts of a whole (Beilharz, 2002). Thus, we can gain an understanding that when we analyze a text by deconstructing it, it means that we have dismantled the parts of the text that constitute a whole. The concept

of deconstruction is very interested in how binary oppositions work and examines the logic that underlies those oppositions. By examining two opposing things in each hierarchy, deconstructionists can trace the distribution of power between these two extreme opposites (Supriyadi, 2014). This deconstructive view questions values that are considered established and have long been accepted by society by shaking up hierarchies and eroding absolute truths and existing systems of power. "Poststructuralism is not just a theory or an approach; it is a perspective that teaches us to understand that meaning is never fixed and absolute" (Barthes, 1977). "Awareness of the plurality of meanings and interpretations leads us to understand that texts not only contain messages that can be read in conventional ways, but are also open to a wider range of possible meanings" (Foucault, 1980).

In recent studies, the application of deconstruction to literary works continues to grow. For example, Aziz et al. (2020) explore the deconstructive reading of narratives in contemporary literature, emphasizing how deconstruction challenges accepted narrative structures and opens up alternative readings. Similarly, Patel (2022) demonstrates the power of deconstruction in disrupting binary oppositions in postcolonial texts, revealing how these texts question long-standing cultural dichotomies. Additionally, studies by Johnson and Williams (2021) highlight how deconstruction has been applied to modern digital narratives, offering a fresh perspective on how digital media breaks down traditional storytelling forms.

The concept of deconstruction is understood as a form of effort to empower implied meanings – logic that tends to be forgotten due to certain priorities and choices of a text (Al-Fayyadi, 2005). This concept unravels or unravels the implied meanings in texts that tend to be forgotten or marginalized due to certain priorities that a text has. Text operations and sign dissemination are direct consequences of deconstructive reading (Al-Fayyadi, 2005). The dissemination of signs makes a text likened to a tunnel with many long, endless corridors or a labyrinth with mirrors reflecting off each other, where we as readers are abandoned, left alone, to search for any signs or clues that can be used as a guide. "In the world of post-structuralism, text is more than a means of communication; it is a space for the liberation of meaning that is not bound by certain limitations" (Derrida, 1967). "In the process of deconstruction, even what seems clear and obvious can be revealed as a doubt filled with ambiguity and uncertainty" (Macey, 2000).

Recent studies have supported these ideas, particularly in the context of contemporary media and literature. For example, Smith and Thomas (2023) argue that digital narratives offer endless possibilities for deconstructing traditional notions of authorship and meaning, aligning with Derrida's idea that meaning is never fixed. Furthermore, Lee (2021) investigates how deconstructive readings of classical literature reveal not only its inherent contradictions but also the complex power dynamics present in the text.

The short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* (2013) by Yanusa Nugroho is one of the short stories that can be analyzed using the concept of deconstruction. *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* is a short story with strong poststructural values. It also contains an existing established discourse, namely the story of Prince Palasara. When reading the short story, it is as if we are interpreting or rereading the established discourse about the story of Prince Palasara, which is one of the *wayang* stories that is widely known to the public. *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* is not

just a story that entertains its readers but also refers to established discourses and other developing discourses, both inside and outside the text. "*Burung Kecil dan Hujan* is a good example for analyzing the theory of deconstruction, because this text contains a number of binary oppositions that are not only criticized, but also refined in unexpected ways" (Derrida, 1978). "The use of elements such as the discourse of Prince Palasara in this short story creates space for resistance to established meanings in traditional culture" (Foucault, 1977).

Recent scholarship on deconstruction in Indonesian literature has explored similar patterns. For example, a study by Santoso (2022) analyses the way binary oppositions in traditional Indonesian folklore are critiqued and deconstructed in modern narratives, much like Nugroho's short story. Similarly, Tan and Suharto (2023) highlight how contemporary Indonesian writers utilize deconstruction to challenge historical narratives and bring attention to marginalized voices, often echoing Derrida's thoughts on shifting centers and power structures.

The poststructural analysis of the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* with the concept of deconstruction is focused on questioning established values by shaking hierarchies and eroding absolute truths in existing power systems. Therefore, resistance and dismantling of the center will appear dominant in this analysis. "The aim of deconstruction is not to replace one meaning with another, but rather to show that meaning can never be fully achieved" (Culler, 1997). "By dismantling hierarchies and binary oppositions, deconstruction creates space for possibilities of meaning that are marginalized by the established system" (Caputo, 1997).

From the background that has been described, a problem can be formulated: what the concept of deconstruction in *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* is. The analysis aims to reveal and describe the concept of deconstruction in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* by Yanusa Nugroho. The concept of deconstruction that will be revealed in this analysis includes the blurring of binary opposition in the dismantling of the establishment, the strategy of decentering, and the concept of difference in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*. "Every theory of deconstruction, in Derrida's view, contains a resistance to all forms of absolutism in meaning, and opens up countless possibilities for re-reading" (Derrida, 1976). "Poststructuralist thought introduces the concept of text as an entity that is never finished and continues to develop, as each reading provides the possibility for changes in meaning" (Eagleton, 1996).

As a main characteristic of poststructuralist theory, both in philosophy and literature, deconstruction is one of the theoretical methods that is very difficult to understand. Compared with poststructuralist theories in general, the definitive difference and characteristic of deconstruction as put forward by Derrida is its rejection of logocentrism and phonocentrism which as a whole give rise to binary oppositions and other ways of thinking which are hierarchical and dichotomous in nature (Ratna, 2004). The concept of deconstruction takes into account other things beyond binary opposition in analyzing a text without ignoring the binary oppositions that exist in the text. This concept focuses on the blurring of binary oppositions which seems to give readers the freedom to question the established values found in texts that are seen as endless and to acknowledge that there is

no single meaning in a text. "According to Derrida, 'difference' plays a key role in revealing instability in a text. It is not something that can be seen, but something that is present in its absence" (Derrida, 1968). "Resistance to the center in deconstruction is not a complete rejection, but rather an attempt to divert our attention to the marginalized, which is often hidden in the text" (Ratna, 2004).

Poststructuralist groups generally view that the main problem that needs to be raised has the main objective of rejecting the existence of a single center. According to Derrida (Ratna, 2004), in the effort to find new centers, the subject will always be involved with the existence of a center. In this connection, what needs to be noted is, on the one hand, the awareness that the center is plural, not singular. On the other hand, what is meant by center is function, not reality or another being. For this purpose, the concept of decentering, a structure without a center and without hierarchy, was also introduced. The way to do it, for example, is by understanding and studying something that was initially considered less important, such as secondary characters, minor themes, female characters and so on, even in empty spaces so that it influences the entire contents of the text and the social universe so that the center shifts continuously (Ratna, 2004). Thus, it can be concluded that the shifting of the center is what dismantles the hierarchical system, logic, and values that are considered established/standard in a text. "By shifting the center, deconstruction not only changes the way we read texts, but also opens up new possibilities for understanding the social relations contained within them" (Spivak, 1988).

In deconstruction theory, the concept of difference is known, which is an unplanned game strategy with the aim of disturbing the stability of the text and diluting the single understanding formed through opposition or hierarchy built by the text. Therefore, according to Derrida (Al-Fayyadi, 2005), difference is not something that is present and exists, but it is also not something that is absent (as opposed to presence), but rather a game that overcomes the category of presence/absence. Perhaps difference is a mockery, a mockery of logocentrism and the grand ambition of metaphysics to conquer everything. Like a ghost, difference plays between presence and absence; its existence is its absence, and its absence is its existence. Difference shadows every text with other possibilities that offer surprises, often unexpected but enough to make us anxious because it is as if we have lost the meaning.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative approach with deconstruction analysis based on poststructuralism theory. This study aims to reveal the concepts of deconstruction contained in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* by Yanusa Nugroho. The analysis process begins with the selection of texts that are considered to contain strong poststructuralist elements, especially in terms of binary oppositions, decentering, and the concept of difference. The first step is to identify binary oppositions in the text, such as opposing concepts, and then analyze how these oppositions are dismantled in the text. Next, the analysis focuses on the displacement of the center, by examining how minor or secondary elements in the story (such as certain characters or themes) contribute to the shift

in center in the narrative, which in turn affects the overall meaning of the text. This process is continued by applying the concept of difference to assess how the meaning in the text is not fixed or stable, but rather fluid and open to various unexpected interpretations. The results of this analysis will be understood through a deconstruction perspective, which reveals how the short story dismantles established values, shakes hierarchies, and presents unstable meanings. Thus, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which literary texts can be analyzed through a poststructuralist deconstruction approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Blurring of Binary Oppositions in the Dismantling of the Establishment

Burung Kecil dan Hujan by Yanusa Nugroho is a short story that can be seen as a literary work that challenges established literary positions and standard values in society. The concept of deconstruction suggests that in order to dismantle or explain a text, it is necessary to blur the binary oppositions in the text and dismantle the established values and logic that previously existed.

The concept of heaven and hell mentioned in *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* does not refer to the concept of a beautiful place and a scary place but can refer to the meaning of comfort/calmness and noise by looking at the context of the story. Heaven is symbolized by a small bus stop filled with people taking shelter from the rain in the story, and hell is depicted by a traffic jam filled with many vehicles plus the loud sound of horns making the atmosphere even more complicated. A small bus stop that is symbolized as a small heaven in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the road filled with many vehicles seems to escape from its established logic, namely that heaven is a beautiful place surrounded by various pleasures, but this is not the impression of a small bus stop that does not have any facilities for the people who take shelter under it, apart from a roof that protects them from the pouring rain. While the concept of hell is related to everything that is terrible and full of torture, in the story it is mentioned that the depiction of hell is a row of cars with the sound of horns heard amidst the patter of rain. The implied meaning found in the text is that hell is not only everything related to terrible things or torture because the hell depicted in the story is hell in another form, namely hell symbolized by a row of vehicles whose drivers only care about themselves and are impatient. Their impatience was evident by the sound of their horns honking in unison. They seem to not care about other people and anything around them. That is the picture of hell based on the concept of deconstruction in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, namely a condition where people lose tolerance and compassion to others. This was very different from the scene seen at the small bus stop which was filled with many people because they were still able to greet each other, talk, share stories, and even love other creatures, namely two birds that perched on the right and left shoulders of a man who was taking shelter under the small bus stop. The image of the bus stop is an image of heaven in the concept of deconstruction with the blurring of the meaning of heaven that has existed in the minds of many people.

Di luar halte, berderet mobil-mobil dengan tangkai-tangkai *wiper* bergerak ke kanan-kiri. Di sela dengkingan klakson, sebetulnya di luar halte, alangkah neraknya. Tapi, di bawah halte kecil pinggir jalan ini, kurasakan betapa surganya, dan... karenanya aku tak mau mengucapkan sepatah kata pun pada burung kecil ini; aku takut dia akan terkejut, dan berniat terbang... tapi, di luar halte ini, hanya ada neraka. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

Another blurring of binary oppositions that can be found in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* is the concept of the virtual and real worlds. The virtual world in relation to the internet and the use of social media, which has so far only been used as a means of entertainment by people as an escape from the difficulties of life, is a world that can make people who enter this world become figures who ignore other people around them because those who are busy exploring the virtual world will tend to become people who are passive, selfish, and less sensitive to the conditions around them. This view of the virtual world is refuted in this short story because the female student, who was initially only focused on her gadget, began to talk about the photo she uploaded on Facebook to a man whose shoulders were perched with two birds. A female student, who was previously immersed in her enjoyment of the virtual world, was finally able to free herself from her established values regarding the virtual world. The student was able to lighten the stiff and silent atmosphere at the bus stop because she started telling about the comments she received on Facebook after she uploaded a photo of a man with two small birds perched on his right and left shoulders. This condition finally continued with the story of Prince Palasara which was told by the man to the female students and the people at the bus stop. After hearing the story of Prince Palasara, they seemed to realize something they had forgotten. They learned many things from the puppet (*wayang*) story, that humans must have love for others and their surroundings. Everything that happened at the bus stop started in the virtual world, a world full of indifference, but in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, the view of the virtual world can be shaken because that is where the beginning of the familiarity that was then created at the small bus stop began.

Di samping dunia nyata, ada juga dunia lain, dan dunia maya...lalu, akankah ada dunia yang berlabel lain lagi? Tetapi, benarkah ada dunia itu semua? Ah... pikiran kacau itu datang lagi.

Belum lagi pikiranku pupus semua, tiba-tiba juga entah dari mana, seekor burung kecil lain tiba-tiba ribut, terbang agak kacau dan akhirnya hinggap di pundak kiriku. Aku terkejut, demikian juga orang-orang di sekitarku. Si mahasiswi tertawa geli. Dia memotret lagi.

"Ini lucu banget, deh..." komentarnya entah kepada siapa dia berkata.

"Kaya' sirkus aja..." komentar entah siapa lagi.

Lalu di bawah halte itu pun menjadi hidup. Ada yang tertawa, komentar entah apa, lalu mengembangkan percakapan dengan cerita entah apa lagi. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

On the other hand, the real world that should be filled with various concerns and good and quality communication between individuals has instead transformed into a place that seems foreign because there is no greeting and joy, what can be found is the complexity of life that makes people not have time to think about the interests of others and tend to ignore the surrounding environment. In the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, this can be seen from the depiction of the chaos of the road filled with rows of vehicles whose drivers do not greet each other, they are only able to sound the horn as a symbol that they want to quickly escape from the chaos of the road. The concept is actually the opposite because the real world found in short stories is a foreign real world, where there is no sense of affection, and is full of indifference.

The concept of deconstruction is also found in the story of Prince Palasara which is told by the male character to the female students and the people at the bus stop. In the puppet (*wayang*) story of Prince Palasara which is known by the public, it is mentioned that Prince Palasara keeps little birds on his head, this is different from what the male character does in the short story of *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* who lets two birds perch on his right and left shoulders so that he gets the nickname Prince Palasara from one of the Facebook users who commented on the photo uploaded by the female student. Right and left are symbols of good and bad, that even the best human being must have a bad side within him, which in the short story is symbolized by 'left'. Good and bad are two things that give meaning to each other because there cannot be good without bad, conversely there cannot be bad without good. We will learn about good by seeing bad, and vice versa.

Hujan reda. Satu demi satu orang-orang meninggalkan surga kecil bernama halte ini, melanjutkan perjalanan mereka hari ini. Burung-burung itu pun, tanpa berkata apa apa, lantas mengepakkan sayap kecil mereka, terbang begitu saja. Yang tertinggal memang ruang kosong di pundak kanan-kiriku. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

When good and bad disappear in a person, what remains is anxiety because there is actually something else between good and bad. It is neither in favor of good nor evil. This resembles the emptiness depicted by the empty space on the right and left shoulders of the male character in the short story because the two birds perched on his shoulders had flown away when the rain stopped.

The disclosure of deconstruction is also seen in the form of language in the short story which uses a combination of standard and non-standard language. This is a form of dismantling the establishment in the use of short story language. The short stories that we know generally use one form of language, for example only standard language, or only non-standard language, where generally the use of language in a short story is uniform. This is different from the language used in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* because the language form used is a mixture of standard and non-standard forms. The mixture of these two forms of language is what creates something different that leads to rejection and resistance to the established language used in the short story.

"Ini lucu banget, deh...." komentarnya entah kepada siapa dia berkata.

"Kaya' sirkus *aja*...." komentar entah siapa lagi.

Lalu di bawah halte itu pun menjadi hidup. Ada yang tertawa, komentar entah apa, lalu mengembangkan percakapan dengan cerita entah apa lagi. Si mahasiswi kemudian membacakan komentar-komentar yang ada di FB-nya... dan seterusnya. Riu, tapi tak membuat dua ekor burung ini terganggu sama sekali. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

From the quote above, it is clear that the language used in the short story is a combination of standard and non-standard language which creates a form of language non-uniformity in a text. This is a form of dismantling the established form of language that we recognize from a text, thus providing an offer of language with its own variety that can be recognized from a combination of standard and non-standard language varieties plus the use of foreign words or utterances in English as a typical form of language in comments on social media, in this case Facebook. In addition, the use of periods which seems to be wasted is also an indication of the dismantling of the establishment of the use of standard punctuation which is commonly found in texts.

The Concept of Decentering

Decentering can be interpreted as a structure without a center and without hierarchy. This concept is known as the concept of the elimination of the 'center'. How it works is by understanding and studying something that was initially considered less important, for example secondary characters, minor themes, female characters and so on, even in empty spaces so that it influences the entire contents of the text and the social universe so that the center shifts continuously (Ratna, 2004).

We can find forms of the concept of decentering in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* by Yanusa Nugroho. The female student in the short story is not the main character in the short story, but her presence seems to be the key to the entire story in the short story because the actions she takes are the beginning of the closeness that is created at the small bus stop. The short story not only focuses its story on the main character in the story, but also on the secondary characters in the short story who are able to build the core of the entire story. At the beginning of the story, readers might think that the position of the female student character is not important, but in reality, the character who was initially considered less important actually becomes the figure who brings the entire story to life.

"Tadi itu aku tulis sebagai status di Facebook. Makasih, ya, Om. Sampai ketemu lagi...." Dia melambaikan tangan dan taksi berhenti. Taksi berjalan dan menyisakan kekosongan.

"Ya, sampai ketemu lagi, anak cantik. Semoga tidak di dunia dongeng...." gumamku sambil berjalan pelan-pelan meninggalkan halte bus. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

The quote above is the last sentence in the short story. We can see that the secondary character, the female student, leaves a deep impression in the story, even her departure leaves emptiness for the man/main character in the short story which refers to the loss of the joy that previously filled the small bus stop where they took shelter from the rain. The female student figure was also the one who finally started to build familiarity at the bus stop.

The concept of decentering can also be studied by looking at the minor themes in the story. If the main theme that the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* might have is about caring or kindness, then the minor themes could be the use of social media, familiarity in public places, or rain. The use of social media is one of the minor themes in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*. Even though the use of social media in society is not something that is discussed continuously in the short story, this theme is able to give color to the entire content of the short story. The theme has become something that can reveal the chronology of the story in a coherent manner that contains an explanation of something that started the story that happened at the small bus stop. In the story, it is mentioned that all the incidents that occurred at the small bus stop started from the actions of a female student who was just messing around uploading a photo of a man with two birds on his right and left shoulders.

"Ih, lucu...." mahasiswi itu *nyeletuk*. Lalu tanpa ba-bi-bu dia memotret kami—maksudku, aku dan si kecil yang kedinginan ini. "Boleh aku *upload* di FB, ya, Om?" pintanya. Aku tersenyum saja, diam tak bergerak, karena takut mengejutkan si kecil kuyup ini. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

Unexpectedly, the photo uploaded to Facebook received many responses and comments from other Facebook users. Finally, it became something very interesting to discuss for the female student, the man, and the people at the bus stop who turned out to be interested in the topic of discussion about the photo uploaded by the female student to Facebook. This incident finally led the male character in the short story to tell the story of Prince Palasara to everyone at the bus stop. It turns out that the story left a special impression on the people who heard it, so that awareness arose within them of the importance of caring for others and everything around us.

Difference in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan*

The concept of difference is an unplanned game strategy with the aim of disturbing the stability of the text and diluting the single understanding formed through opposition or hierarchy built by the text. Difference is not something that is present and exists, but it is also not something that is absent (as opposed to presence), but rather a game that overcomes the category of presence/absence. Perhaps difference is a mockery, a mockery of logocentrism and the grand ambition of metaphysics to conquer everything. Like a ghost, difference plays between presence and absence; its existence is its absence, and its absence is its existence.

The difference can be seen in the short story excerpt below, namely the excerpt about the rain stopping which should have left joy but seemed to leave emptiness for the

people who had taken shelter at the small bus stop during the rain. The rain that stops does not refer to the rain that really stops, that is, there are no drops of water falling from the sky, but it can refer to the return of people's enthusiasm to continue their lives with a better way of thinking, for example by emulating the kindness of Prince Palasara. Rain stops may also be related to the eradication of all the bad things that people have. Their evil deeds dissolve and disappear as the rain subsides. The understanding of the rain stopping in the short story is a deconstructive understanding because it is a form of difference that overshadows the text which is then able to give rise to other possibilities that offer surprises beyond what people previously thought as described by following quote from the short story:

Hujan reda. Satu demi satu orang-orang meninggalkan surga kecil bernama halte ini, melanjutkan perjalanan mereka hari ini. Burung-burung itu pun, tanpa berkata apa apa, lantas mengepakkan sayap kecil mereka, terbang begitu saja. Yang tertinggal memang ruang kosong di pundak kanan-kiriku. (*Burung Kecil dan Hujan*, 2013)

CONCLUSION

The deconstruction contained in the short story *Burung Kecil dan Hujan* (2013) by Yanusa Nogroho dismantles the values and logic of the establishment that have long been known and accepted by many people. The dismantling of this establishment can be done by blurring the concept of binary oppositions that exist in the story. The concept of deconstruction is also marked by the existence of decentering (removal of the center) and difference, which is a strategy that aims to disturb the stability of the text and dissolve a single meaning. What is being dismantled is the relationship between binary oppositions in understanding the establishment of two opposing things, the form of language in the text, the elimination of the center by understanding and examining secondary characters and minor themes of the short story, and the disclosure of an absence to refer to existence and vice versa with the aim of disturbing the stability of the text and diluting the single meaning so that it can be interpreted that a deconstructive text contains various surprises that were not previously thought of by the readers.

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