

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains introduction of the research. Specifically, it presents general description of background of the research, research questions, purpose of the research, research methodology, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and the organization of the research.

1.1 Background

Fairy tale is one of the former types of storytelling that have been told from generation to generation in childhood stage. Most people understand fairy tale as a kind of story intended for children. Thus, fairy tales as genre are commonly considered as children literature, although “the truth is that historically fairy tales are for both old and young” (Brewer, 2003: p. 25). Fairy tales with their anonymous nature belongs to everyone. It has strong moral values depicting good and evil side that consciously or subconsciously internalized and referred in our real life situation (Sarumpaet, 2010). Therefore, fairy tales rely on plot to convey the messages underlying in their story.

In conventional discourse, character existence in fairy tales is often considered inferior to the plot. From Aristotle’s view, agent as the actor who performs action is more important, “while psychological characters are optional” (in Nikolajeva, 2002: p.11). This notion tends to see the actions and events related to the actor are profound to the resolution of the story rather than deepening the view to actor psychological features. Thus, plot is viewed as superordinate in constructing the wholeness of a story.

However, like any other literary works, fairy tales employ characters with their characterization also to construct the development of a story. Their characteristics then develop through the plot in their narrative structure. It emphasizes the fact that many mainstream classical children literature including fairy tales are mostly plot oriented. In addition, Nikolajeva (2002) argues that

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development in contemporary children fictions specifically have shifted into more character-oriented. Therefore, character and its characterization in children fictions can be treated as fundamental as plot in the narrative structure—and it can include fairy tales.

Generally, characters in fairy tales always interlink with magical events to help them pursue their goals. Their characteristics are often described by various aids of magical devices. As Tolkien notes in his work *Tree and Leaf*, magic is a vital characteristic with its particular mood and power to trigger a "eucatastrophe—a sudden joyous turn" in the story which defines fairy tale's distinction (as cited in Pinsent, 2002). This magical aids whether in a form of a mystical creature, animals or inanimated objects, all come to the same function as the helper of protagonists. It is a rare case to see the main character is endowed thoroughly with his or her own magic. Hence, mainly the protagonist characters in popular classic fairy tales will start their journey with the help of magic to pursue their goals, fortune or 'happily ever after' ending. While along the journey, whether the protagonists develop into more better person and vice versa or keep steady as they were before, the magical things that still happen surround them greatly influences their characteristics development. Overtime, this narrative pattern in fairy tales is retold and rewritten in similar way.

However in modern day, some authors have reconstructed particular elements in fairy tales such as character and plot from their traditional archetype. These changes and developments in fairy tales had happened significantly since postmodern era in the mid of twentieth century. The author may reconstruct the classic one or create a whole new character with different archetype traits, re-shaping the narrative plot from its convention, and so on; but still, it cannot be detached from intertextuality with the precedent works. In this matter, deconstruction mostly appears in the process to change, modify or subvert some parts of the narrative structure and meaning interpretation delivered from the story.

Deconstruction as its primary focus on internal inconsistency of texts, can trace the process of character's re-construction or substitution in the story. According to Jacques Derrida (1966), deconstruction in its core basically intends to reveal doubtness to what seemingly structured unified text into a fractured one. It does not mean that the text is being torn aimlessly. By peeling the hidden meaning in polarization of binary opposition on the text, deconstruction can show that the dominant one may be subverted into the marginal one and vice versa. Specifically, the deconstruction of characters portrayed in the fairy tales can hold a pivotal role in constructing and modifying particular interpretation to the meaning underlined.

To understand this deconstruction process, it is necessary to employ binary opposition system to define the construction of meaning on text. Each component of binary set means something as well as the relationship and hierarchy between the components. In Derrida's (1966) view, one of each binary pairs within any particular culture tends to be more highly and positively valued than the opposite. It requires classification of each components, considers the dominance-subservience or power relationship within it, and explore reversals in order to emerge the metaphysical existence of the hidden meaning (in Linsley, 2012).

Whereas, most research by postmodernist and feminist scholars on fairy tales nowadays often deal with the deconstruction of characters or self-conscious identity in the narrative story. A previous study on fairy tales conducted by Doughty (2004) analyzed two-female authors' techniques to undermine and rewrite deconstructively fairy tale icons of heroines and hero impersonating as real, in conflict between literature and reality. Deriving from classic fairy tales such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*, other studies on fairy tales (Redies, 2004; Tautz, 2008; and Williams, 2010) also demonstrate how certain postmodernist authors like Coover (1996) and Jelinek (1998-2003) use deconstructive narrative strategies in their literary works. They utilize focalization shifting in plots, emergence of self-conscious or self-reflexivity characters, and metanarrative structure deconstruction.

Distorting from the fixed images in conventional fairy tales, all these methods aim to reveal instability of the authoritative convention of narrative patterns which seems natural as it is intended to be. They do not change the conventional fairy tales into a 'new' one, but rather expose complexity of fairy tales in reproducing narratives about how scripted gender roles are often unsatisfying and stereotyped in the world of narration, and it is often reflected in the reality.

Concerning the issue, deconstruction phenomenon also seems to happen in a compilation of wizarding classic tales titled *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* by Joanne Kathleen Rowling (2008) which implicitly re-constructs the classic type of hero and heroine characteristics, and slightly reverse the conventional values in fairy tales narrative structure. This compilation portrays five different tales with diverse protagonist characters from age and gender aspects. Departing from these facts, the research aims to examine the deconstruction of central characters in five tales of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, where binary opposition operates and controls the meaning interpretation derived from the stories. The research aims to analyze how reconstruction of particular characters type in the tales is constructed wholly or just partially in creating new perspective of interpretation.

1.2 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What binary oppositions govern hero and heroine characters in *The Tales Of Beedle The Bard*?
2. What do the dominant binary oppositions in the tales mean in the perspective of deconstruction?

1.3 Aims of the Study

According to the research question above, this research aims to analyze:

1. To identify the binary oppositions governing heroes and heroines of each story in five tales of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*.

2. To make meaning for the deconstruction of the central characters in the five tales whether it is fully deconstructed or just partially.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research explores further into the analysis of deconstruction of main characters in constructing different character type in fairy tales. The research utilizes Derrida's (1966) deconstruction theory as a basic framework in analyzing the issue. Theory of Character proposed by Nikolajeva (2002) is also employed as the tool to analyze the characters' typology development as deconstruction phenomenon occurs on them. The research is expected to offer a different perspective in understanding the issue of character reconstruction in fairy tales especially in reconstructing particular character types that can create new perspective of interpretation. It is also expected to see the differences of these fairy tales over the classic fairy tales. Thus, it is expected that the elaboration in the findings and conclusion merit and broaden the knowledge in children literature study, especially in fairy tale sub-genre.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research is conducted within a descriptive qualitative method with textual analysis approach. The collected data were gathered from textual sources, not in quantitative form, but it is analyzed in form of description, elaboration, and interpretation of the findings. As Belsey (2002) says, textual analysis is essential to research in cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts (cited in Griffin, 2005). Hence, this research is underscored in the form of description established from multiple textual writings.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data were collected from the five short fairy tales compiled in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* written by Joanne Kathleen Rowling (2008). The fairy tales consist of five short tales as follow: “The Wizard and The Hopping Pot”, “The Fountain of Fair Fortune”, “The Warlock’s Hairy Heart”, “Babbity Rabbity and Her Cackling Stump”, and “The Tale of Three Brothers”. The compilation provides textual evidences for the data analysis in form of dialogues, actions, character descriptions, and author’s forewords in *Introduction* for each of the short tale.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

In conducting this research, a close reading is executed to draw the pattern of binary expositions which govern the central characters in the tales to find textual evidences from phrases, dialogues or character descriptions. In understanding this further, Hease (2004) notes that “close reading is required to come to grips with the complex cultural conversation, coding, and personal voices attached in the language structures of the fairy tale” (p. 30). Afterward, the data are listed and categorized regarding to binary oppositions between the dominant and subservience. It is also being classified according to their type of character viewed from various aspects. Then, these findings are elaborated further in deconstruction analysis on textual stage. The findings are interpreted based on the theoretical frameworks in the term of the deconstruction that happened to the hero and heroine characters. The final step of the research is drawing conclusions and providing suggestions for further research related to the same issue.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misconception and misunderstanding, there are some significant terms have to be clarified here:

1. **Binary Opposition:** A conceptual opposition which one binary concept is privileged over the opposite concept. One binary is superior

and defines itself by the existence of its opposite or inferior binary (Bressler, 1994).

2. **Character:** The persons represented in dramatic or narrative works, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from their *dialogue* or *action* with the ground of *motivation* (Abrams, 1999).
3. **Characterization:** The way of author in showing and telling the characteristics of character in the narrative (Abrams, 1999).
4. **Deconstruction:** A term to refer to a new approach of reading endeavouring to see how text means rather what text means based on the structure (Castle, 2007).
5. **Fairy Tale:** A form of short artistic narrative using marvelous motifs in addition to motifs referring to social reality in a way that influences the development of the plot (Abrams, 1999).
6. **Narrative:** A story involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do. This storytelling is a basic mean for human to make sense of the world, provide meaning to human experiences and organize human lives (Abrams, 1999).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research consist of five chapters. It is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter focus on introduction of the research including the background of the research, research purposes, research questions, the significant of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

The second chapter discuss the theoretical frameworks and the literature reviews as the foundation of the research in analyzing the data.

CHAPTER III

In the third chapter, the discussion revolves around the research methodology describing the steps and procedures of the research as well as the data resources in conducting the study.

CHAPTER IV

The fourth chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research. It is the part where the discussion of findings in the research is elaborated and interpreted.

CHAPTER V

In the last chapter, this section provides the conclusion of research and further suggestion for future research in the focused study.