

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### B.1 Theoretical Framework

This research uses a theoretical framework based on Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory, character, characterization, personality transformation, and plot. This approach aims to explain the paradox inherent in the main characters. The following section provides a detailed explanation, which is:

##### B.1.1. Deconstruction Theory

Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, introduced the deconstruction theory. Born in El-Biar, Algeria, in 1930, Derrida originally named Jackie, chose to use 'Jacques' in his professional life (Edkins & Williams, 2009). At nineteen, Derrida moved to France for the first time as a student (Derrida, 2016). Deconstruction is one of Derrida's most widely recognized contributions. According to Balkin (1996, pp. 361-367), deconstruction made its first breakthrough in the United States. This occurred at Cambridge University when Derrida was asked by a journalist to define deconstruction (Edkins & Williams, 2009). Etymologically, the term comes from the French '*déconstruire*,' meaning to dismantle. Influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure and Heidegger, Derrida developed deconstruction beyond their ideas. In *Critical Theorists and International Relations* by Jenny Edkins and Nick V. William (2009), Derrida published three major books in 1967: *Speech and Phenomena* (1973), *Writing and Difference* (1978), and *Of Grammatology* (1998). These works

explain Derrida's thoughts on deconstruction, arguing that speech and writing are not entirely different but form a "system of writing in general" (Derrida, 2016).

According to Derrida (1997, p. 7) in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, deconstruction is not a method or tool applied externally but something that occurs within the text itself. Deconstruction is not merely a way of reading, but a form of criticism based on careful analysis. Contradictions that deconstruct a text already exist before one engages in deconstruction (Edkins & Williams, 2009). Although there is no concrete definition of deconstruction, Spivak, in the preface of *Of Grammatology*, emphasized that the task is to dismantle (*deconstruire*) the metaphysical and rhetorical structures in the text, not to reject or discard them but to reinscribe them differently (Derrida, 2016).

Royle (2000), in his journal "What is Deconstruction?", defines deconstruction as a method of critical analysis applied to literary texts, questioning the ability of language to represent reality adequately. Deconstruction, a post-structuralist theory, examines a text from various perspectives, not just its structure. This aligns with Aprilia and Arianto (2021, p. 47), who state that deconstruction explains how a text can be understood by examining opposing elements, known as binary opposition. According to Grag (2021, p. 47) binary opposition are pairs of opposite things and concepts like nature/culture, white/black, God/man, faith/reason, speech/writing, etc. Derrida posits that reality can be accessed through concepts, quotes, categories, and

human mind functions by creating binary oppositions, privileging one while marginalizing the other.

In *Of Grammatology*, translated by Spivak (2016), Derrida outlines rules for reading, interpretation, and writing: "To locate the promising marginal text, to disclose the undecidable moment, to pry it loose with the positive lever of the signifier; to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle to reconstitute what is always already inscribed." Consequently, deconstruction analyzes texts from the perspective of marginalized or less important elements in a hierarchical structure. Derrida focuses on concepts like *phonocentrism/logocentrism*, *différance*, reversal/displacement, and imprinting (Aker, 2022, p. 341). *Phonocentrism* or *logocentrism* relates to the human desire to place a "central" presence at the beginning and end. Derrida (2016) define *différance* as never being a sensible plenitude. This concept emphasizes that the meaning of a word or concept is never fixed, always in flux, dependent on the differences that make it up, and always postponed, never fully present or complete. This aligns with binary opposition, where meanings are derived from the relationship between opposing elements. Therefore, based on Papadelos (2007, p. 54) one word does not have meaning but can only be defined through association with other words. Clearly, binary opposition is defined as a text as having opposite sides and not always having one absolute meaning.

In conclusion, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory provides a framework for understanding complexity in literary and cinematic texts,

specifically in characterization. Using deconstruction analysis in the movie *Elemental* (2023), this research reveals that the main characters personality transformation contributes to redefining the meaning of relationships. Deconstruction allows this research to look beneath the surface, unveiling the underlying contradictions and interactions that shape personality transformation.

### **B.1.2. Characters, Characterization, and Personality Transformation**

In literary works, characters are significant in bringing the storyline presented and making the movie more alive. According to Abrams and Harpham in their book *A Glossary of Literary Work* (2015), a character is a person who represents a drama or narrative work, whom the reader interprets as having moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities through inferences from what the person says and their distinctive way of speaking-dialogue-and shaping what they do-action. Meanwhile, Kenney, in his book entitled *How to Analyze Fiction* (1966, pp. 24-38) reveals that most characters in fiction have similarities with people in life. In this case, what is meant by similarity or relevance is how characters in fiction pay attention to the relationship between characters and other story elements and between characters and the story as a whole.

Therefore, Kenney (1966, pp. 24-38) emphasizes that character must be considered as a part of the story's internal structure. Behind that, Kenney (1966, pp. 24-38) also revealed that a character should be complex and not necessarily the same as a person in the real world. This allows the writer to have the power to explore a variety of characters more creatively. Foster in *How to Analyze Fiction*

(Kenney, 1966, pp. 24-38) divides characters into two types, which are flat and round characters. Flat or simple characters are characters that have less representation of human personality than the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession in character. Then, round or complex characters are obviously more lifelike than simple ones because, in life, people are not simply embodiments of a single attitude, and all the character sides are portrayed in the story.

According to Kenney (1966, pp. 24-38), there are three types of characters based on the frequency of their involvement: main characters, secondary characters, and supporting characters. Every character in a narrative work always carries inherent characteristics. This is in line with the definition of characterization, which, according to Aquino (1976) in Pratiwi et al. (2021, p. 75) explains that characterization is a way of analyzing the development and personality of the main character related to the method of building a fictional picture of a person complete with the characteristics, traits, and motivations of that person. Meanwhile, according to Pebrianti (2023, p. 54), characterization is the process of character building through dialog, action, and what the author tells about the characters in the film. In the context of this research, personality transformation is a profound change that occurs in a character that significantly alters their self-perception and interaction. This is in line with McAdams (1995) in Trimurti, Susanto, and Karima (2023, p. 207), which states that personality is a psychological structure that influences one's patterns of thinking, feeling, behavior and forms the basis of one's identity. Meanwhile, in the context of

literature, the term personality transformation is better known as character development. This is based on Trimurti, Susanto, and Karima (2023, p. 207), character development is the process of the transformation of the personality of the character itself, which shows unique characteristics.

Furthermore, Hasyim, Sodik, and Yosephin (2021, p. 99) state that writers develop characters to create exciting story plots. Meanwhile, according to Lole, Utami, and Ariyaningsih (2021), the development of the main character can be shown in the types of characters based on their development, whether flat, static, dynamic, or round. On the other hand, the definition of character development is the change experienced by an individual through the course of the story due to the conflict faced by a person who can build a unique three-dimensional character with depth, personality, and clear motivation (Hasyim, Sodik, & Yosephin, 2021, p. 102).

In conclusion, the examination of character, characterization, and personality transformation is crucial to understanding the dynamic interactions in this study. Along the complex process of characterization, the research imbues the characters in the film with different traits, motivations, and developments, creating a rich characterization that engages the audience. Through examining character, characterization, and personality change, the research gains deeper insight into the depth of the evolving traits of the relationships depicted in the movie *Elemental* (2023). From this lens, personality transformations not only advance the plot but also redefine the meaning of relationships.

### B.1.3. Plot

Following the identification of characters, characterization, and personality transformation, the plot plays an influential part in forming a literary work. In the exploration of the main character's personality transformation in the movie *Elemental* (2023) and how it redefines the meaning of relationships, the plot plays an important role in this exploration because it helped form a framework for developing and revealing the characteristics and emotional journey of the characters. According to Egan (1978, p. 456) if the story is 'the action itself,' then the plot is how the reader learns of the action. In other words, the story is "a general term for character and action in narrative form," while the plot is a more specific term intended to refer to action alone (Egan, 1978, p. 456). This is in line with Morgan (2013, p. 65) who states that plot is an essential element of narrative. Meanwhile, Kenney (1966, p. 38) revealed that the plot in the story helps the process of character development (Darmayanti, Jayantini, & Juniarta, 2024, p. 34).

In conclusion, the plot is integral to understanding character development and personality transformation in narrative works. As outlined by Egan and Morgan (1978, p. 456), a plot is not just a sequence of events but also a framework through which the audience can experience the journey of the characters. In the context of *Elemental* (2023), the plot is crucial in shaping and revealing the main character's emotional and psychological transformation. By guiding the audience through the characters' actions and interactions, the plot helps redefine the

meaning of relationships in the narrative and this study. This exploration underscores how plot structure contributes to the thematic depth of the story, providing a richer understanding of the personality transformation and their evolving relationship dynamics. Through this lens, the plot becomes an element that intertwines with characterization and personality transformation to convey the story's core message.

## **B.2 Review of Related Research**

The study of deconstruction to find a new meaning in the relationship of characterization changes in main characters in a movie is being done by various researchers. According to the literature review of several current studies, there are topics and research results that are considered relevant and required to support the study being conducted, such as:

The earliest research study is "Deconstruction of *Maleficent* Characters in the Movie titled "*Maleficent*" by Widyahening and Wardhani. (2021) discusses maleficent character deconstruction, female image deconstruction, and character values. The authors find in this research that *Maleficent's* existence is deconstructed into a figure of a magic woman who is kind, compassionate, motherly, and always maintains the calm and safety of Princess Aurora, who is not her biological daughter. With these results, deconstruction can change the character's persona and support other characters. Widyahening and Wardhani (2021) analyzed the "*Maleficent*" movie's data using the content or text-based deconstruction survey theory technique and qualitative approach. They concluded

that the deconstructed female characters succeeded in changing the female persona shown in the film.

Subsequently, the second study entitled "The Deconstruction of Main Character in *Guru Aini* Novel by Andrea Hirata: Derrida Perspective" by Kurniawati, Nia, Zuriyati, and Saifurrohman (2020). This research uses Derrida's deconstruction theory to examine the thought forms of Guru Desi's main character and the reversal of the binary opposition hierarchy. In other words, this research wants to show Guru Desi as the main character in the novel. Guru Aini is bad-tempered, intolerant, and apathetic, but her character differs from what the author implicitly writes. This research shows that after reversing the binary opposition hierarchy, Guru Desi has a patient character and positive characteristics such as tolerance and optimism. Kurniawati et al. (2020) Data from a novel entitled *Guru Aini* is using a qualitative approach. In addition, this study also explores how the author portrays the main character as having a negative character.

Following the previous two studies, the third study is entitled "*I'm Not Stupid* Movie by Jack Neo Analysis Based on Deconstructions Theory" by Anggraeni, Agustine, and Damayanti (2019). In this study, the researcher analyzed the film's relationship between the adults and the children to show how family education is not only about academic ability but also cognitive ability. In other words, this research criticized and interpreted the characters using a deconstruction perspective. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research used data taken

from the movie *I'm Not Stupid* and found that the film tells the story of a child who is not good at math and English but is very good at what the child likes, which is drawing.

As for the fourth research entitled "Deconstruction of Peter Pan's Character in *Edward Kitsis' and Adam Horowitz's Once Upon a Time, Season Three (2013)*" by Safira, Nur Aeni, and Sudja'ie (2020). This study aims to determine the deconstruction of Peter Pan's character in *Kitsis' and Horowitz's* work as described in Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Using qualitative methods with data taken from two works, *Barrie's Peter Pan* and *Horowitz's Once Upon a Time, season three* found the deconstruction experienced by Peter Pan as a character who experienced a change in characteristics from hero to villain. Safira, Nur Aeni, and Sudja'ie (2020) analyzed the deconstructed character of Peter Pan as someone who does not always tell the truth about anything and is fearful.

Previous studies on this film are "The Analysis and Contextual Meaning of Idiomatic Expression in *Elemental: Forces of Nature* Movie" (2023) by Mustafiroh, Ambarini, and Suwarti (2023). This research aims to find out the types of idiomatic expressions in the film *Elemental: Forces of Nature* and to know the contextual meaning of the idiomatic expression in the script of that movie. Using the descriptive qualitative method and collecting data from the film and the researcher found four types of idioms: simile idioms, phrasal verb idioms, metaphor idioms, and cultural and historical idioms. In contrast to the research that will be conducted using Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory, this

research focuses more on the contextual meaning and idioms in this film. Mustafiroh, Ambarini, and Suwarti (2023) concluded through this research that understanding an idiom's meaning can be understood by looking at the original meaning and the context in which the idiom is said or pronounced.

The last research is a study titled "Binary Oppositions Depicted in The Characterization of *Lemony Snicket's Ersatz Elevator*" by Larasati (2023). This study aims to analyze and categorize the different characters that are opposite to each other, forming a binary opposition. Using qualitative research methods and data taken from the novel, it is found that characterization and binary opposition show an imbalance of power between adult and child characters as they have opposite traits to each other and their responsibilities as respected roles. Larasati (2023) they concluded that the characterizations found in the characters have binary oppositions in the novel, such as greed-gratitude, indifference-caring, and brave-cowardly. In addition, this study revealed that all the pairs are between Baudelaire's adult and child characters, proving that adults are considered more logically developed and become protectors for children. Meanwhile, the weak characters of the children in the novel prove that they are the ones who have common sense and are repeatedly able to save themselves from danger.

In conclusion, the review of related research demonstrates the broad application of deconstruction theory in analyzing personality transformations and relationships in various literary and cinematic works. These works collectively demonstrate that personality transformations frequently involve complex shifts in

traits and roles, contributing to a richer understanding of narrative dynamics. The diverse application of deconstruction across these studies confirms its versatility in revealing layers of character interaction and transformation.

