

DECONSTRUCTION PERSPECTIVES TOWARD THE CHARACTERS IN LANGSTON HUGHES' *FATHER AND SON* SHORT STORY

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ABSTRACT

This research was concerned with the deconstruction perspective of Colonel Norwood, Bert Lewis, and Coralee Lewis' characters' meaning in Langston Hughes' *Father and Son* short story. The research aimed to describe the characters represented in the story and deconstruct to reveal a new meaning. The researcher used a qualitative research design, and the method used in this research was descriptive. The data in this research were narrations related to the three characters obtained by reading the short story and note-taking the data. The results of this study showed that Colonel Norwood held the binary opposition of superior vs. inferior, bad person vs. good person, powerful vs. powerless, and surrounded vs. lonely, while Bert Lewis and Coralee Lewis held the same binary opposition of inferior vs. superior, good person vs. bad person, but the differences Bert Lewis had the meaning of unloved vs. loved and selfish vs. selfless, while Coralee Lewis held the meaning of ugly vs. beauty. The evidence could be seen by undermining the marginal meaning in the text. Therefore, the text of *Father and Son* short story displayed the meaning in the text was undecidable because many possibilities by all characters could be replaced by a new meaning.

Keywords: post-structural, deconstruction, binary opposition, *Father and Son*

ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini berkaitan dengan perspektif dekonstruksi dari makna tokoh Colonel Norwood, Bert Lewis, dan Coralee Lewis dalam cerpen *Father and Son* karya Langston Hughes. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan tokoh yang direpresentasikan dalam cerita dan mendekonstruksi untuk mengungkap makna baru. Peneliti menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif, dan metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif. Data dalam penelitian ini adalah narasi terkait tiga tokoh yang diperoleh dengan membaca cerpen dan mencatat data. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Colonel Norwood memiliki oposisi biner superior vs. inferior, orang jahat vs. orang baik, kuat vs. lemah, dan dikelilingi*

vs. kesepian, sementara Bert Lewis dan Coralee Lewis memiliki oposisi biner yang sama yaitu inferior vs. superior, orang baik vs. orang jahat, namun perbedaannya adalah Bert Lewis memiliki makna tidak dicintai vs. dicintai dan egois vs. tak egois, sementara Coralee Lewis memiliki makna jelek vs. cantik. Bukti bisa dilihat dengan memperhatikan makna marginal dalam teks. Oleh karena itu, teks cerpen Father and Son menampilkan makna yang tidak dapat ditentukan karena banyak kemungkinan oleh semua tokoh dapat digantikan dengan makna yang baru.

Kata kunci: *pos-struktural, dekonstruksi, oposisi biner, Father and Son*

A. INTRODUCTION

The use of language is important to contribute in literary works that have been written throughout history. Its contribution is important, especially in literature, where many authors use language to construct their literary works. According to Wellek and Warren, Language is material for a literary artist to make a selection to give a language in every literary work. It was quite a work as a compiled block of marble into sculpture (177). It means that the language has the same function as the structure that built the literary work. Language is an essential part of literature and how it can be implemented into literary works.

Literature is a reflection of reality, although its function is as information through literary work by human nature. Bennet and Royle stated that literature it is implied in certain interpretations of replication or metaphor, in ideas of realism and naturalism, in the concept of representation, in metaphors that depict literary writings as presenting a view onto the outside world or as displaying a mirror up to reality. The text itself assumed that the author wrote it on purpose and the reflection of the human representation of reality (27). Since literature was structured with a purpose, it could give a reader another point of view or interpret the meaning of literary works, whereas poststructuralist would offer a new way of understanding the works.

The new way of reading literary text in this era has many ways and can be interpreted with many meanings. According to Dobie, the poststructuralists contended that texts are fluid, dynamic objects that continually acquire new meaning through repeated readings and interactions with other texts, resulting in a continuous diversity of meanings (158). As structuralism made the text rigid, the post-structural does the opposite by changing the way of reading to find a new meaning besides the literary criticism best known as Deconstruction. Deconstruction is used in literary criticism that is focused on providing concrete examples for learning, and it provides appropriate justifications for establishing a text's borders, coherence or unity, and distinct meanings. Deconstructive reading aims to show how opposing meaning within the text themselves reduce the seeming certainty of its structure and meanings into an infinite range of incompatible and undecidable possibilities (Abrams 55).

As in the literary text used to conduct this research with deconstruction theory, *Father and Son* is a literary work in the form of a short story that allows the reader to find another interpretation of the character. The purpose of this research is to examine Colonel Norwood,

Bert Lewis, and Coralee Lewis' character based on deconstruction perspective. The researcher hopes this research can be useful for similar future researchers to explore in-depth deconstruction theoretically in interpreting literary works based on a different perspective on how to interpret the character or another meaning of the text itself.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher used some theories that related to this research as mentioned below:

1. Short Story

A short story is a brief work categorized as prose fiction. The terms for analyzing its component of elements are the same as the novel, and its narrative text are applies to the short story. Like a novel, it has the same element structures, such as genre, characters, and plot. According to Abrams, the short story and novel have their effects that the management of elements can achieve different outcomes. As Aristotle described it as magnitude or a distance to differ from a novel, the short story has its own dimension (286).

Edgar Allan Poe stated in Cuddon's *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* that a story focuses on a particular or single impact, with the aim being the sum of all possible effects. A scene, an episode, an experience, an action, the portrayal of a character or characters, the events of the day, a meeting, a dialogue, or a fantasy may all be topics for a short story (653). The short story plays straight details about the plot concentrating on the object of the idea with a simple story without a lack of essential elements that involves characters, experience, event, and action.

2. Character

Character is a type of person, which is the main element that can be found in the short story. Characters are the persons who play an important role in the story that represents real life, such as human being in narrative literary work. Characters as Abrams stated that Characters are the people shown in a dramatic or narrative work that the reader interprets as possessing specific moral, intellectual, and emotional attributes based on what they say and how they say it in the dialogue and what they do in action (32-33). In detail, characters were created whereby people in books are like the actual characters, emphasizing the reality of the person and the fictionalization of characters.

The fictional characters have two types of character classifications that act differently from one to another in the story. In Kenan's *Narrative Fiction*, those are flat and round character. Forster stated, Flat characters are comparable to "humor," "caricatures," and "types." They maybe stated in a single line because, in their most basic form, they are built around a single notion or attribute (42). Flat character were not developed well in the story but can be recognized and give an in-depth impression. Unlike flat type, round character were well developed along the story as Forster stated, "Round characters are defined by contrastive

implication, namely those that are not flat. Not being flat involves having more than one quality and developing during the action.” (42). A round character is needed to be a three-dimensional character because their particularity and how the plot could depend on them.

3. Characterization

There are two ways to present the character based on a textual indicator that the author can use to describe them. These definitions describe the character itself in direct and indirect presentations to understand them. This type of presentation is to explain the character directly to name a type of character's traits. Direct presentation refers to the characterization by how the characters are depicted easily. The first type name the attribute is an adjective that reveals the qualities of the character (e.g., ‘he was cold hearted’), an abstract noun is a character that is difficult to describe or defined by senses (‘his charisma filled by generosity’), another kind of noun (‘He was a real chad’) or part of speech (‘he hated himself’). (Kenan 61)

The second type is different from the first one as the character's traits are not mentioned in direct ways, but this type could give the reader a chance to display and illustrate them in many ways that characters can imply. According to Kenan, several kinds of indirect presentation reveal the characterization in various ways, as enumerated in the following discussion (63).

a. Action

In stories, characters frequently do action one-time and recurring acts of two different categories of behavior. One-time activities often contribute to a turning point in the story and tend to bring out the character's dynamic side. (63)

b. Speech

Speech is the part where the characters often make a conversation that creates the plot but also implies the characters themselves while in a silent activity of the mind. There is an inner contradiction, and the underlying cliché clearly plays a part in stressing the specious logic characteristic in such manners. (65-66)

c. External Appearance

External Appearance is a feature of knowing the characters' attributes as an external description for characters. The importance of this characterization is to explicate the trait of characters in detail by the narrator. (67-68)

d. Environment

The environment is often the place of the characters' physical surroundings. There's a correlation between the environment and external appearance that help the reader to understand the situation between the characters' surroundings (room, house, street, town) and human environment (family, social, class) as well used as trait-connoting metonymies. (68)

4. Deconstruction Theory

Jacques Derrida is a French philosopher born in 1930 and one of the most influential and complicated thinkers of the second half of the 20th century. He is the originator and named the deconstruction theory. In 1976, he published his book *Of Grammatology*, which he contributed to literary criticism (Abrams 56). Deconstruction requires a suspension of notice that Attempts to preserve the arrangement of absolutes that is generally accepted and leads to inconsistencies. It opposes such simplicity by flipping the oppositions, detaching meaning, deconstructing hierarchies, and providing a new set of meaning-possibilities that result from the new relations of difference. (Dobie 161)

According to Derrida, all Western thinking exhibits the same behavior, generating pairs of binary opposition in which one of the individuals is given a privilege, preventing the system's play into hidden and marginalizing the other individual. The dichotomies between nature and civilization are central to Rousseau's works. The world of nature is excellent, pure, virtuous, noble, and ever-present. In comparison to nature's complete presence, culture is corrupt and decadent. (Powell 25-49)

According to Bressler, deconstruction can be applied by a deconstructionist to studying a method of analyzing or decoding a text by using the following steps: First, discovering the binary opposition. The second, comment on the operation's values, concepts, and ideas. The third is reversing present binary operations. The fourth is dismantling the previously fixed views of characters that held. The fifth, accepting the possibility of various perspectives or levels of meaning on the new binary inversions. The last step is allowing the text of the short story to be undecidable. (118)

C. RESEACH METHOD

The researcher uses a qualitative research design and the method used in this research is descriptive method for interpreting and describing the three characters meaning of Colonel Norwood, Bert Lewis, and Coralee Lewis through deconstruction in Langston Hughes' *Father and Son* short story. The data of this research are narrations connected to the characters of Colonel Norwood, Bert Lewis, and Coralee Lewis in Langston Hughes' *Father and Son* short story

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Colonel Norwood's Character

a. Superior vs. Inferior

Colonel Norwood is depicted as a superior person. Superior is a person with a higher status and better thinking that can use their authority to give the order to accomplish things without giving a hand to do their favor (Laine 13). From the beginning, Colonel

Norwood's superiority is revealed through indirect presentation of speech towards Bert Lewis when Bert coming back to home for holiday and Colonel made a speech as below:

“This Boy, however, was not his real son, for colonel Thomas Norwood had no real son, no white and legal heir to carry on the Norwood name.” (Hughes 128).

From his speech, he showed a higher status within himself, which made him superior. Colonel Norwood did not want his name to be attached by someone who did not have the same race as him, even though he was the one who made Coralee born all his children, especially Bert Lewis. In this case, he does not want to acknowledge any of his children to use Colonel Norwood's surname because, for him, no one of his slaves has equal status to him.

In the previous analysis, Colonel Norwood's character's fixed view was a superior person. The researcher also found that Colonel Norwood is also an inferior person. Riach stated that inferior people are caused due their class, caste, age, gender, or other reason in society (16). Colonel Norwood becomes inferior was when Bert indirectly underestimates him because of his physical appearance.

"To hell with the old man," Bert said. "He ain't no trouble! Old as he is, what can he do to me?" (Hughes 144)

Colonel Norwood becomes inferior because Bert indirectly underestimates him when Bert's mother warns Bert that Colonel gave him a threat after what he was doing in the county. Bert did not mind his father's intention toward him if he got threatened. In this case, Colonel was being inferior towards his age because Bert knew the old man could not do anything as he used to be strong, and then now became strengthless to become a threat to Bert.

b. Bad Person vs. Good Person

Besides Colonel Norwood's superior character, he is also described as a bad person. Bad person is a person who gives an outcomes and consequences, such as undesirable, harmful, and unpleasant actions (Baumeister et al. 325). Colonel Norwood recalled when he had beaten Bert when he was fourteen years old. He was in a great temper at that time when he has beaten Bert for calling him papa in front of his guest.

“The Colonel had knocked him down under the feet of the horses right there in front of his guests. And afterwards he had locked him in the stable and beaten him severely.” Hughes (129)

Colonel showed a harmful action when Colonel Norwood had a business with his guests where he showed his horses to his guests. Bert called him 'papa' in front of Colonel Norwood's guests to call him for dinner. However, that is a sensitive word for Colonel Norwood, where Bert is mulatto skinned that calling him 'papa' in front of his guests. Then, Colonel does a bad action that harms Bert by beating him severely because he does not want his guests to know if he had a child from a black servant.

Colonel Norwood is also considered a good person. Despite his bad behavior throughout the story, he still has a good side. A good person is caring, helpful, loving, and trustworthy (Smith 341). Colonel Norwood was known as a man full of hatred and ignorant, but there was also a good character presented in his action as the narration below:

“Colonel Norwood never would have admitted, even to himself, that he was standing in his doorway waiting for his half-Negro son to come home. But in truth that is what he was doing.” (Hughes 128)

Colonel has known a character who does not even care about people like Bert. He never acknowledged him as a son, but throughout the story, he is curious about Bert. After six years away from home, Colonel wanted to see him change of growing up Bert into a young adult. As Colonel remembered, Bert is different from the other kids of Cora because he was the baddest of them all. It was the thing that Colonel wanted to see him when he grew up. In this case, Colonel has a good side by loving Bert and misses him for not seeing him for a long time.

c. Powerful vs. Powerless

Colonel Norwood is also a powerful person when the narrator shows the power he has. Powerful is defined as having domination to influence people by creating a system of thought for local social control (Haugaard 1-2). Colonel greatly influences his county and becomes respectable because of his powers. People in the county acknowledge Colonel, as the narrator mentioned when Bert comes home.

“Then he saw the gradual rise of the Norwood plantation, the famous Big House, surrounded by its live oaks and magnolias and maples, and its many acres of cotton.” (Hughes 134).

From the narration above, the famous Big House with its name “Norwood plantation” means every people in the county acknowledges him as a wealthy person. In addition to the previous explanation, the narrator shows his influence “For the Colonel and Mr. Higgins, being political powers in county,” (Hughes 137). This means the correlation between his famous big house and his political powers indicates that he was influential in the county.

Colonel was depicted as a powerful character in the previous analysis. Besides his powerful character, he was also a powerless character. The definition of powerless is the expectation or belief that one's actions cannot influence individual and societal results (Seeman, 2002). It can be seen in his action to protect his power image. Hubbard mentioned that Colonel could not let himself be publicly known for having a relationship with his mistress in the county because it could break his empowerment (16).

“Why that yellow buck comes to my store and if he ain't waited on quick as the white folks are, he walks out. He said last week standin' out on my corner, he wasn't all nigger no how; said his name was Norwood -- not Lewis, like the rest of Cora's family; said your plantation would be his when you passed out -- and all that kind o' stuff, boasting to the niggers listening about you being his father.” The Colonel almost dropped the phone. (Hughes 143)

From the narration above, the friend of Colonel, Mr. Higgins, had called Colonel from the phone, and he told him that Bert was making trouble in the Post Office and telling people that he was a son of Colonel Norwood. This could endanger the credibility of his power, and if they knew he had the son of a black servant, he would lose his political power. From the first sight of their relationship, it means dropping the credibility of Colonel's political power through his own action. It was also undermined through Bert's action that made public knows what the actual relationship they have after all this time that made Colonel powerless.

d. Surrounded vs. Lonely

Colonel Norwood is known to be a famous person surrounded by everything in his life. Surrounded is becoming all around by someone and something ("Surrounded." 2009). Colonel was surrounded by his friends, slaves, cotton field, and power throughout his life. This was presented in indirect presentation of his environment.

One night, there was a party there. A great many people came from the Junction, and even seventy miles off from in town, by horse and by carriage, by train, and even some by that new-fangled auto-buggy that most of the plantation hands had never seen before. The Negroes were all excited at having so many white folks around. It was the Missus' birthday. There were great doings at Big House Plantation. (Hughes 132-133)

Colonel was known has everything in his life. People around the county came to the big house for a party that he held for his wife birthday. He became surrounded because all his guests from his county came to the big house. He also becomes surrounded because he has slaves that work on his land. And the other thing he has was a large garden with so many plantations on the backyard of his house and his house was acknowledged by most people in the county as a symbol of power.

In the previous analysis, Colonel is described as surrounded character. Besides previous characters, Colonel is also lonely. Following the meaning of lonely itself is a feeling of being desperate to be alone ("Lonely", 2022). In the previous analysis, it was described in a hidden meaning towards his speech and action of Colonel for being a hypocrite.

"No wonder his young white wife had died years ago -- having to live with him -- although, according to Aunt Tobie's version, the Colonel had humored her in every way. He really loved her, folks said, and had sworn after her death that he would never marry again. He hadn't – he had taken Cora." (Hughes 137).

Colonel cannot hold himself to live alone by taking Cora to his house with the same bedroom. In this case, Colonel is considered to be a lonely person because he has a feeling of desperate and afraid being alone after his wife's death, and he took Cora to be his mistress, that accompanied him throughout his life.

2. Bert Lewis' Character

a. Inferior vs. Superior

Bert Lewis is depicted as an inferior person. In this case, Bert was inferior by his caste since he was born a mulatto, and lived in an environment where white people were dominant over black people in the county.

“Hell of a way to live,” Bert thought, the night before his arrival, **sitting in the Jim Crow car bound for south Georgia.**” (Hughes 135).

Bert is known to be inferior because of his caste or race and lower class when the narrator describes the transportation that Bert uses as a particular vehicle that separates or distinct the transportation from racial identity. Jim Crow car is a regulation for black people to separate places or locations from white people.

From the previous character analysis, Bert was depicted as an inferior character. Despite his inferior character, the researcher found Bert also superior. His superior character appeared when he thought he was different from all his brothers and sister by his showing his bad manner since he was a kid.

“There were other unpleasant memories of that same saucy ivory-skinned youngster playing about the front yard, even running through the Big House, in spite of orders that Coralee's children and all other pickaninnies keep to the back of the house, or down in the Quarters. But as a child, Bert had never learned his place.” (Hughes 129-130)

From the narration above, Bert as a child, never learned his place from being inferior. Colonel Norwood had ruled that no one of his black people were allowed to pass the front of the big house. As a kid, Bert still played around in the front of the big house, and even his mother told him not to pass the front of the house. This is a sign that he is superior in his better thinking.

b. Unloved vs. Loved

Throughout the story, Bert also depicts himself as unloved since he grew up as a young adult. Unloved is a feeling of being neglected and not being cared for (“Unloved”, 2022). Bert realized himself as an unloved person through his speech.

“Bert didn't want to come home. He felt he had no home. **A brown mother, and a white father; bed for him in a nigger cabin down on the edge of the cotton fields.**” (Hughes 135)

Bert was jealous of his mother, who lived in the big house, while he lived in the cabin or the quarter. Bert's sense of feeling was being neglected by his father and mother. He

also felt not being cared as he was only mean to be a worker with the rest of his brother and sister.

In the previous analysis, Bert was described as unloved because his status did not give him enough love. However, after the researcher further read, Bert is also considered a loved person. Loved can be admired and favored (“Loved” 2022). Bert noticed he will never get love by chasing his father's attention, but on the other side of meaning, Colonel Norwood gives him a special attention to Bert’s external appearance, which he never realized.

“He was aware too, standing in the midst of this group, of a tall young man in sporty white trousers, black-and-white oxfords, and a blue shirt. He looked very clean and well-dressed, like a white man. **The Colonel took this to be his son, and certain vibration shook him from head to foot.**” (Hughes 130)

Colonel Norwood has always given special attention to Bert because of his differences from other black people. The way Bert dressed attracts Colonel to approach him. From the previous analysis, this plot is known to be the indignity of Bert because Colonel would not take his hand for a handshake. Colonel Norwood knows he cannot take his hand with Bert in front of black people around him. But, Colonel was convincing himself by admiring and favoring Bert from his appearance.

c. Good Person vs. Bad Person

Bert is also described as a good person when showing his hope to his father that someday they can be together. This was presented in an indirect presentation of speech where Bert's speech.

“And he was never homesick for the plantation - but he did wish sometimes that he had a home, and that the Colonel would treat him like a son.” (Hughes 137)

The narration above shows us that Bert has a good character toward his father. He shows his loving side to Colonel with a heart of hope to think they could be together someday. Bert wanted Colonel to acknowledge him as his child since he was nearly white-skinned, and he wanted to live as a father and son.

Despite his good character, Bert also has a bad character. His bad characters became heightened when a conflict started between Bert and Colonel.

"Why don't you shoot?" Bert said again as his hands sought his father's throat. With furious sureness they took the old white neck in their strong young fingers. "Why don't you shoot then, papa?" (Hughes 146)

From the narration above, Bert is taking a bad action by doing a harmful thing. He killed his father by choking Colonel’s neck. The conflict between them begins to heighten

just because Bert is refused to be Colonel's son. The other bad thing is that Colonel only threatened him with a gun but had no intention to kill Bert, but Bert was unfairly doing harmful things to Colonel that got his father killed.

d. Selfless vs. Selfish

In the story, Bert also has his character as a selfless person. The selfless definition is described as kindness or concern for the well-being of others and can be said as altruism (Salmieri 136). Bert is being selfless when he is caring or minding his mother, which can be seen in his action.

“He always getting into mischief, playing pranks and worrying his mother at the backdoor of the Big House.” (Hughes 136)

As a child, Bert always played around the Big House and sometimes looked for her mother, working all day long as a mistress in the Big House. Since he was born, his mother only slept in the Big House because Bert and other Cora's kids were taken care of by Cora's mother, Aunt Tobie. In this case, Bert is showing his kindness concerning his mother, who works in the big house.

Bert was depicted as selfless in his kindness in caring for others. However, from the perspective of his selfless action, a hidden meaning led him to be a selfish character. The definition of selfish is concerned with having self-interest and pleasure for personal profit (Dubois 2).

“The Colonel did nothing -- to Bert. But he lit into Cora, nagged and scolded her for days,” (Hughes 140)

Colonel had several times asked Bert to do some work in the field, but Bert did not even take a single task to do it. Cora also asked to give Bert an order to do work, but he did not do the job given to him. This made his mother got a negative impact on Colonel by scolding her for a long time. Bert does not care what happened to his mother and does not even think about the consequence his mother got day by day. This means Bert is considered to be selfish because he only thinks of himself or is self-interest most of the time that not concerned with others.

3. Coralee Lewis' Character

a. Inferior vs. Superior

Coralee Lewis is the mother of Bert and other kids (Willie, Bertha, Sallie). She is depicted as a mistress who works only to help Colonel Norwood's needs. Since she was depicted as a mistress, she was an inferior character with a lower class. Throughout the story, she is obedient to Colonel Norwood and presents in the indirect presentation of the environment.

“This boy was a son by his Negro Mistress, Coralee Lewis, who kept his house and had borne him all his children.” (Hughes 128)

From the narration above, Coralee Lewis has handled all the burdens she has at the same time. She kept her children and worked in the Big House as a mistress. Cora has a gender role in which he obeys the patriarchal system enacted by Colonel Norwood, which makes her inferior.

In the previous analysis, Cora was depicted as an inferior character who has a role as a mistress for Colonel. Despite her status as an inferior character, she also has a superior side towards Colonel Norwood through her speech with him.

“Somehow 'nother Cora was able to put it in the Colonel's mind and keep it there until the last child, Sallie, got sent off to Atlanta.” (Hughes 135)

Colonel is known were not to be easily controlled by others, especially his servant. However, Cora has a special privilege towards Colonel by showing her superiority for having better thinking. The influence that Cora has can make Colonel suddenly become obedient to her. This also made Cora become a higher status for giving authority to Colonel by schooling her children without giving a hand to accomplish it.

b. Good Person vs. Bad Person

Cora is depicted as a good person and mother to her kids. She was often depicted as a caring person to her children in the story can be seen from her speech below:

“But he didn’t need to scar him all up,” Bert remembered Cora’s saying when she saw the black and blue marks on his back.” (Hughes 136)

From the narration above, Cora shows her good character as she was caring what happened to Bert. She reprimands Colonel in her mind that Colonel should not beat Bert mercilessly. The event happened when Bert said papa in front of the Colonel’s guest. Cora said that she was not born all her children being beaten to fulfilled Colonel’s temper. She also warned Bert to go away or keep a distance from Colonel to avoid this happening again.

Cora was described as a good person in the previous analysis of character. Deep down in her good character, there was a bad character that she had done with her child. Cora is a loyal mistress of the big house that took the rule much serious, even to her kid through her action as the narration below.

“Yet Bert, as a child, in the Big House visiting or helping Cora, would often dart out the front way when he thought the Colonel was in town or down in the South Field, or asleep in his library. Cora used to spank him for it, but it was a habit he kept up until he went away, a big boy, to Atlanta.” (Hughes 137)

From the narration above, the opposition character of Cora, who was known to be a good and caring mother, changed into bad character. It was proved when Cora had to do a harmful thing by hitting Bert for restricted him from entering the big house from the front door.

c. Ugly vs. Beauty

Cora is described as an ugly person in the story. Her ugliness appearance was described indirectly in the story. Following the definition of ugly itself, ugly is the perspective of faces that look unpleasant, which is contrary to human acceptance (Goble 7). She is described as ugly indirectly through her action when Colonel returns from the military, where he marries another woman.

“But Cora remembered often seeing the Colonel. Young and handsome, tall and straight, **he drove over the plantation roads with the wisp of a pretty little lady he had married.**” (Hughes 132)

From the narration above, Cora thought she was the only woman that Colonel knew all along her life. Since Cora was a teenager, Colonel used to play with her, knowing Cora often brought milk every morning and night to the big house. Colonel also forgets the memories they had in the past with Cora during his early married life with a more pretty white woman he preferred to marry because Cora is more unpleasant to look at than the white woman.

After the previously fixed views are analyzed, Cora is considered a beautiful woman. Dealing with beauty means beauty is common sense about an image of a woman deemed socially acceptable (Dinurriyah 88). Cora’s beauty is described through the indirect presentation of her external appearance when she took a change in her appearance.

“**The white man came up to her, took her brown face in his hands and lifted it at the moon. “You’re out mighty late,” he said.**” (Hughes 133)

From the narration above, Cora tried her best to change her appearance before she entered the big house to bring the milk there when Colonel held a party. She combed her hair and oiled it better to take pride in herself. Cora got outside to refresh herself, but comely, Colonel reached Cora, where she sat alone. He touched Cora’s face and took her face up to the moonlight as a meaning of her beauty and pleasant to look.

The research concerns the deconstruction of three characters in the short story entitled *Father and Son* by Langston Hughes. The character analysis was described through Kenan’s *Narrative Fiction* to find its meaning. After describing the character’s previous meaning, deconstruction is applied to determine the opposite meaning of the characters. The story itself presents the author’s intended privilege meaning through the subject matter of race that is portrayed in the short story. Then, deconstruction involved taking elements by subverting the meaning from author’s expectation to the readers, because the meaning is all equal without

being privileged it. It can be said that the fixed meaning in the text was not always become the truth because the meaning is more beyond interpreted by a reader and undecidable.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous chapter presented in the finding, the researcher discovered the pair of binary opposition in the three characters. The researcher also identified which fixed views each character holds in its pair of binary opposition. Fixed views were presented directly and indirectly to determine the character. Through the character analysis, the researcher found Colonel Norwood is a superior, bad person, powerful, and surrounded character. Bert Lewis is an inferior, unloved, good person and selfless character. Cora is an inferior, good person, and an ugly character.

By applying deconstruction theory, the researcher found the other side of those three characters' meanings. From the fixed views, the researcher can determine how the previous characteristics pair opposite from the previously fixed views. This can happen through deconstruction strategy reading which double reading was explained by Bressler, giving a new perspective toward the characters. The new perspective that these three characters hold is Colonel Norwood is an inferior, good person, powerless, and surrounded. Bert Lewis is a superior, loved, bad person, and selfish character. Coralee Lewis is a superior, bad person, and beauty character.

Moreover, deconstruction theory is applied to many literary works that brought a new reading strategy. The meaning that held fixed views can be reinterpreted into a new meaning hidden from the surface of literary works. It is proven in *Father and Son* short story that the meaning in the text is undecidable because many possibilities represented by the characters can be replaced by a new meaning.

The researcher suggests that other students related to English Literature use and understand deconstruction because it is challenging and offers a new way of reading strategy by undermining the hidden meaning in literary works. The researcher also suggests that from this research can give a new way of understanding for further researcher in studying this research with another topics or theory such as discrimination, feminism, and etc.

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