



BINARY OPPOSITION IN *FAST AS THE WIND* NOVEL BY NAT GOULD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to reveal the binary opposition of Hector Woodridge, one of the characters in Nat Gould's novel *Fast as the Wind*. This article applies the qualitative method and objective approach. The data in this article were quotations such as words, texts, or sentences that were obtained from *Fast as the Wind*. This article will also focus on analyzing the character using Derrida's deconstruction theory. This article analyzed the character Hector Woodridge via binary opposition that provides a different view from the story. The findings show three opposite characteristics of Hector Woodridge. The previously fixed thoughts of Hector Woodridge are vengeful, sane, and grateful. After the previous view was deconstructed, the different views are forgiving, mad, and ungrateful. This article tried to signify the different views of Hector Woodridge through binary opposition.

Keywords: *binary opposition, deconstruction, Hector Woodridge, different view.*

INTRODUCTION

What characters do in a story can have opposite meanings. Binary opposition can be used to understand such opposite meanings. Many writers use binary opposition to deliver their meanings. In British context, the application is common. One of the British authors, Nathaniel (Nat) Gould (1857-1919), a journalist and novelist, born on December 21, 1857, in Cheetham, Manchester, Lancashire, England, is one of them. He is a prolific writer who wrote over 130 novels and stories. Some of his notable works are *The Chance of a Lifetime*, *A Gamble for Love*, and *A Turf Conspiracy* (*Books by Nat Gould | Nat Gould, n.d.*). Most of his novel's themes are horse racing. One of his works, *Fast as the Wind* novel, is also worth to be analyzed with deconstruction.

There are tons of works that have been studied with the approach and theory. Up until this article is made, the binary opposition analysis of the characters in the novel *Fast as the Wind* has not been researched. Even the book itself has no related research found in its name. However, there are lots of research related to benar oppositions in literature. One of them is an

article by Bargad (1988), entitled "Binary Oppositions in the Poetry of Amir Gilboa" which studies grammatical aspects of the poems. It talks about the metaphors, structure of the poems, and other aspects at the semantic level and the binary oppositions in it focus mainly on feelings and positions in the poems. However, other studies about the novel focus more on intrinsic elements such as characters and settings.

Aprilia and Arianto (2021) studied binary opposition in the novel *The Goldfinch*. Their analysis found binary opposition about the character and things. Still, they managed to find 4 binary oppositions that the characters represent. The article itself uses the deconstruction of binary oppositions proposed by Jacques Derrida. The theory is used to dismantle general views of binary opposition in the novel. Romlah et al. (2019) also did similar research but focused more on each of the characters in *The Yellow Wallpaper* short story by Gilman. All of the characters have a common similarity; they presented the good vs. bad binary opposition. Bowta and Puluhulawa (2018) also did a similar study but concentrated the character only on the main character, Frankenstein. They put each binary opposition regarding Frankenstein's personality, behavior, and ability. On the other hand, Ammai (2015) did a comparative study that concentrated on the characteristic of the character, Hilarion and Luxima. The arrogance that is represented by Hilarion and the patience that is represented by Luxima are the two characteristics that Ammai was focusing on.

The theory that is used in this article is the binary opposition proposed by Jacques Derrida. Barry (2017) states that Derrida is one of the post-structuralism theorists. His theory is about the deconstruction binary opposition in the post-structuralism approach that seeks contradictions, conflicts, paradox, and linguistic quirks to show textual disunity. Derrida (1978) aims to pull apart the general view of the text, giving new sight of meaning to the text. Deconstruction by Derrida is said to have binary oppositions, two different elements that have connections with each other, such as up and down.

This article is focused on other aspects besides the characters in the novel such as the plot, theme, settings, etc. Hector Woodridge reveals some characteristics that have some opposite view in *Fast as the Wind* novel by Nat Gould. This article aims to find the binary opposition of Hector Woodridge in the novel.

RESEARCH METHOD

Ferdinal, Seswita, and Sandika (2020) asserted that literary critics can examine literary works from many angles, either qualitatively or quantitatively, by using various methodologies

and theories. The writer used an objective approach and a qualitative method in this analysis. One method used in qualitative research, according to Jackson et al., was participant observation, in which the writer first picked the text or item that was appropriate for the analysis, then the writer noticed activities and recorded them in the form of notes (23-26). Additionally, the writer made these steps to collect the data to be more specific in this article during the time of the observation. First, the writer properly studied and understood the *Fast as the Wind* novel. Hector Woodridge in the narrative was also recognized by the writer. To obtain secondary data, the writer analyzed earlier studies that had examined the characteristics in the same way. Then, the writer provided some necessary data as supporting evidence. Last but not least, the writer made sure the collected data was correct. The words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or narrations from the text that are connected to the topic are the sources for the research's data. The data sources for this study were then split into two types. First, we looked at the primary data source, which was Nat Gould's novel *Fast as the Wind*. The second was secondary data obtained from earlier studies on *Fast as the Wind* and works with similar theories and approaches, such as journals, articles, theses, etc.

To analyze the character, the writer used the method by Kenny (1933). First, the writer studied the life-likeness of the character, such as the character's freedom, choice, and relevance to the reader. Then the writer judged the character by its relevance to the writer and the way the character is a factor of the story. Second, the writer studied how the character is portrayed. There are three methods to describe a character, discursive, dramatic, and contextual. Also, the writer could use mixing methods of those three. Furthermore, it is also important to pay attention to the character's development and motivation (pp. 24-37).

The theory that is used in this research is binary opposition (deconstruction) proposed by Jacques Derrida. Guerin et al. (2005) explained that deconstruction, unlike structuralism which tries to find the order and meaning in the text, tries to find disorder and constant learning of language to contest its obvious views. As the result, the text tends to deconstruct itself rather than having an unchanging meaning. Zima (2002) also adds that deconstruction rejects present truth. Stocker (2006) also said that the reason for structuralism is destruction because structuralist analysis always brings meaning and consciousness to the pure structure and does not bring in to destroy the text subject to analysis.

The writer then used the deconstructive reading strategy by Bressler (1998) to analyze the data, following these steps: The writer first identified the story's characters' binary oppositions. The writer commented on anything related to binary oppositions in the story in

the next step. The writer tried to explain the fixed viewpoints of the story's characters in this step. The writer also put a few comments from earlier researchers who had made similar observations about Hector Woodridge in the *Fast as the Wind* novel and other works in this step. It would be the secondary information to support the claims made by the writer. The writer then tried to reverse the current binary operations in this step. The next step involved the writer deconstructing previously held fixed views of Hector Woodridge. The writer then accepted the possibility of various perspectives of interpretations of Hector Woodridge in the story based on the new binary inversions in the fifth step. In the final step, the writer left character interpretations in the story open.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results and findings indicate that there are the fixed views about Hector Woodridge and the different views of him from a binary opposition view. His fixed views are vengeful, sane, and grateful. While his opposite views are forgiving, mad, and ungrateful.

Vengeful vs. Forgiving

Based on the Oxford Dictionary, the word vengeful means seeking to harm someone in return for a perceived injury. In this case, Hector Woodridge seeks to harm Lenise Elroy, his ex-lover, in the same suffering as much as he had suffered. In the story, the fixed meaning of Hector Woodridge is a vengeful person. He seeks revenge on his ex-lover because she left him to suffer so much after the trial. "How he hated this woman, who had fooled him to the top of his bent and done him so great an injury! She must suffer" (p. 132) is what Hector thinks about Lenise Elroy. He believes that she must suffer as much as he had experienced before. It is also proved in another passage:

If Mrs. Elroy did not know he was Hector Woodridge, then indeed his brother had a weapon in his hands which might help him to awful vengeance; the mere possibility of what might happen made Pictonshudder. Hector had suffered terribly, but was it sufficient to condone an act of revenge, the consequences of which no one could foresee? (pp. 194-5).

The phrase "awful vengeance" based on the previous fixed view, is described as a vengeful person. Also, the phrase "suffered terribly" and "revenge" is the proof of his motive for revenge. Even though he has, however, this can be proved otherwise as he is also a forgiving person. He forgives Lenise Elroy for everything she has done, and he delivers his revenge in a forgiving way. It is shown in the passage:

He had loved her deeply, he loved her now, he had always loved her, even in his bitterest moments in prison, when he had framed a terrible revenge...He kissed her again as he held her in his arms. "This is my revenge, Lenise," he said. (pp. 249-250)

The word "kissed" is placed as a way for him to forgive Lenise. Also, the phrase "my revenge" showed that he just wants Lenise to confess. As the word "revenge" in the Oxford Dictionary means to avenge (oneself or another), usually by retaliating in kind or degree. This means that the revenge he wanted is in the way that the revenge to be is by showing how much he loves her. This means that he already forgive her for what she had done. While he intended to make her suffer as much as he had experienced before, he chose to forgive her.

Sane vs. Mad

In the story, the fixed meaning of Hector Woodridge is a sane man. He is falsely accused of murdering the husband of his lover. Then he is imprisoned and manages to escape. However, he suffers a lot during his escape. Still, He is just a normal man who suffers through many awful experiences. His brother and this is shown in the passages:

"Your illness has changed you in a very strange way. I can hardly believe you are Hector sometimes," (p. 126)

"Yes; he is alive and well. No one recognizes him as Hector Woodridge;" (p. 243)

The words "changed", "alive", and "well" depict that he is sane once again. He regained his sanity back. But, on the other view, he is also a madman. Even his brother admits it. Also, he realized it. After he left the prison and suffered too much on his way to his brother's yacht, he is described as a madman. When he tried to board the yacht,

"Hector trembled with excitement; he was unstrung, he had suffered much; the chase over the moor, the battle with the hound, the naked flight, hunger, exposure, the fear of being taken, the suspense of the past few days brought on a burning fever." (p. 71)

Presently Hector came across a coil of rope. He seized it with both hands and wrestled with it in his fierce grasp. "Strangling someone," thought Ben. "You beast, you're dead, ha, ha, ha, I've done for you!" and the weird laugh sounded doubly strange on the water. Hector rose and pulled off his coat, then stripped off his shirt. (p. 72)

"He was taken away on the Sea-mew. He went mad, was insane for some time, then he fell dangerously ill;" (p. 243)

The sentence and phrase "I've done for you" and "stripped off" show that he has almost lost his mind. He has gone mad. He tried to board his brother's yacht, but instead of thanking

him, he rushed himself to the captain. Furthermore, Hector admits that he has gone mad and insane for that time.

Grateful vs. Ungrateful

"You did a very kindly action, and I am sure the man, whoever he is, will never forget it, or you. Perhaps at some future time, he may repay your kindness. Who knows? There are some strange chances in the world, so many ups and downs. I should not look at all wonder if you met him again in a very different sphere" (p. 181).

Hector Woodridge is a grateful person as described in the word "repay." He wanted to repay the kindness that had been given to him on his way to find his way back home. As Pollock (2011) said, every benefit received, the gift given, or the act of kindness created a debt that should be paid back, even if only with time. His feeling of a must repay his debt for the kindness is proved in the passage, "There was a man on Dartmoor, and there was Brack: they must be rewarded for their kindness, for the help they had given him" (p. 132).

The phrase "must be rewarded" proves that he feels that he must be repaid for their kindness in saving him during his tough time. However, another passage proves him ungrateful for all of the kindness that he got.

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The phrase "rose and pulled off his coat" shows his ungratefulness after being saved by Captain Ben. Bergler (1945) also proved that complicated forms influence the study of this ungratefulness and aggressiveness of someone in neurotics, and it has been proved in numerous literary and poetic quotations. It means that Hector's ungratefulness after being saved is influenced by something in the neurotic field, as he also showed it aggressively.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Gould, in his *Fast as the Wind* novel, tries to give an expected, fixed view of Hector Woodridge. However, with deconstruction theory, there were several binary oppositions that Hector Woodridge portrays in the story. With Derrida's deconstruction theory, several binary oppositions stand as the result of deconstruction analysis. Hector Woodridge has several fixed views about himself, such as vengeful, sane, and grateful. However, he also

shows that he has different opposite views, such as forgiving, mad, and ungrateful. He showed his forgiving view when he decided not to punish Lenise as much as he had suffered. He was mad when he boarded his brother's yacht and attacked Captain Ben. He was also ungrateful when he attacked Captain Ben, who was the one that saved him. It is possible to investigate perceptions of specific human characteristics in greater detail and find differing views. The idea of binary opposition leads to the conclusion that character analysis requires a deeper understanding of the subject than simply looking at them from the outside.

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