
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Deconstruction of the Other Side of Midun's Protagonist in Novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati: Jaques Derrida's Deconstruction Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Deconstruction is a form of a refutation of assumptions that have been considered true. This study aims to deconstruct the protagonist Midun in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati that the protagonist is not always true because this novel has a dominant protagonist. Actually, behind the characterization of the protagonist, there are other characters inherent in the character that should not focus on one domination which is considered the focal point of truth. This research uses the critical analysis method with the Derrida deconstruction approach, initiated by Jacques Derrida. This study uses text analysis methods and techniques to understand the characters of Midun in the *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati. Although it often appears in the literary space, that is, in a story, there are protagonists and antagonists, even though each character is a character, there is no specificity between the protagonist and the antagonist. The protagonist has a different side or a bad character, and vice versa. The antagonist character also has a good character. The results showed that the main protagonist, Midun has other characters that are not good.

KEYWORDS

Derrida's deconstruction, the other side of the character

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1. Introduction

Literary work is a form of experience or a picture of human life. Literature is also a reflection of the culture at the time the literary work was created. So, literary works are actually cultural products that have broad dimensions. Literary works are created to be read, enjoyed, and understood so that they can be useful in people's lives. The author tries to convey certain messages to the reader through literary works. One of the means to convey the message is through the characters presented in the story. Characters are fictional individuals who experience events or actions in various story events (Sudjiman, 1991). Characters are generally in the form of humans and sometimes also in the form of animals, plants, and inanimate objects that are brought to life.

There is no guarantee that the reader will be able to capture the meaning in a literary work according to the author's expectations. However, there will always be one dominant meaning that develops for the reader. The dominant meaning is influenced by the logocentric concept of western thought, through binary opposition, which states one thing is better than another. This makes readers tend to believe in one dominant meaning as absolute truth so that they do not see or judge literary works objectively with a two-way assessment through two different perspectives. This singular meaning occurs in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati, published by Balai Pustaka.

The purpose of this paper is to refute the assumption that has been considered true, accompanied by the evidence in the text of the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat*. The author wants to prove that the protagonist is not always right. The author wants to reveal the other side of the characters in the *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* story. With the appearance of the other side, it is hoped that readers will not only focus on one meaning that has so far dominated understanding and is considered an absolute truth among readers.

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According to Derrida (Aminuddin, 2002), deconstruction opens the way in thinking and marking activities in the process of tracing meaning networks to form understanding. For Derrida, deconstruction is also writing, in the sense that it does not only refer to writing as a performative form but also as a process of developing understanding, compiling understanding, and forming propositions that take place continuously in thinking activities. Deconstruction is a deep effort to overcome the limitations of understanding the picture of meaning. As a process of compiling, an understanding marked by redubbling (repetition) deconstruction starts from the metaphysics of binary opposition. In this step, the reader tries to find the opposition and the contradiction.

In addition, another assumption about deconstruction is a theory that opens itself to be interpreted by anyone with a broad dimension. Any attempt to define deconstruction will be hit because Derrida refuses to limit the notion of deconstruction in one definition. Deconstruction is a textual strategy that can only be applied directly if we read the text and then play with it in parodies. Furthermore, it can be said that deconstruction is anti-theory or even anti-method because the analysis in it is play and parody.

Junus (1996) views deconstruction as a new perspective in literary research. Deconstruction actually provides an impetus to find things that have not received attention so far. It is possible to conduct intellectual exploration with anything without being bound by a rule that is considered universally applicable.

According to deconstruction, the reading of literary works is not intended to emphasize meaning as is usually done. It is intended to find the contradictory meaning or the ironic meaning. The deconstruction approach intends to trace elements of aporia, namely in the form of paradoxical meanings, contradictory meanings, and irony meanings in the literary works that are read. The elements and forms in work are sought and understood in the exact opposite sense. Elements that are not important are tracked and then emphasized, given meaning, roles, so that their role will be seen in the work in question. For example, an unimportant story character relates only as a peripheral character, a peripheral group figure. After being deconstructed, he becomes an important character with a prominent function and meaning so that he cannot be left alone interpreting the work (Nurgiyantoro, 2010).

Based on the analysis conducted using Derrida's deconstruction in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati, it was found that the characters were deconstructed by the author. The protagonist presented by the author is Midun. According to the understanding of the truth of most people, the protagonist is a character who has good qualities or characters. The character is known for the dominance of good things, but it turns out that there is another side or other character from Midun that is contrary to the protagonist, namely a character or character that is not good.

2. Literature Review

The identification step carried out in accordance with what has been mentioned by Derrida in (Norris 2008) identifies the hierarchy of oppositions in the text; usually, it can be seen which terms are systematically privileged and which are not. In the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati, the author brings up dialogues that are in opposition to the dialogue that is privileged by the public through Minangkabau earth culture.

According to Derrida (Faruk 2012), paired opposition represents an ideological way of seeing. Ideologies draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not. Derrida suggests that critics seek to break down the oppositions with which people are accustomed to thinking. By using the method of deconstruction, the critic can parse these oppositions. It shows how one term is actually implied, inherent in another term.

The characteristic of deconstruction, according to Derrida, is a form of rejection of logocentrism and phonocentrism, which not only always creates one center but also gives birth to binary oppositions and other hierarchical dichotomous ways of thinking. According to Goldschmit (Haryatmoko, 2016), deconstruction always looks suspiciously at all forms of opposition or negation because it hides the relationship of dominance and hierarchy. One of the strategic steps is to neutralize the opposition after reversing the existing hierarchical relationship.

The first strategy of deconstruction is to reverse existing oppositions. Derrida denies such binary oppositions and rejects a single truth. The minimal pattern of deconstruction stages is, first, reconstruction. In this case, it displays the dominant reception of the text that is read based on the problem formulation and arranges the things that become the focus of reading based on the problem formulation as it is in the text. Second, deconstruction is by showing a hierarchical relationship between elements in binary oppositions that contaminate each other, showing the distance between the author's intentions and what is in a systematic and argumentative manner, and the last is showing logical inconsistencies or statements in the text. The last is reinscription. The final results are written after finding binary oppositions, additional meanings, and logical iterability relationships in the text.

Understanding literary works, we often do denotative readings that make us fixated on only one understanding. Other meanings are often unthinkable because they may be secondary meanings desired by the author. However, the existence of other meanings has proven that understanding a text is never single and holds the potential for new interpretations that are often unexpected (Al-Fayyadl, 2006). In dismantling the character, the writer at the same time melts the boundaries of the character. The character is seen as a role regardless of the size of the role of the character. In other words, after deconstruction, there are no more major and minor characters and no more protagonists and antagonists.

The strengths of the characters shown in this text can be said to be the main opposition which can later be contradicted by the negative side of the character; in the chapter, *Bermain Sepak Raga* tells about the soccer game played by certain people from various villages. In this chapter, Midun becomes one of the central figures who is described as having various advantages, and one of them is his character which is very liked by all circles of society. Midun, who is identical to his noble character, does not have a cunning mind, and Midun is very loved by the community.

Deconstruction is a way of reading text as a strategy. Deconstruction is not solely aimed at writing but all cultural statements because the whole statement is a text which by itself already contains certain values, prerequisites, ideologies, truths, and goals. Deconstruction is not limited to involving only discourse studies, both oral and written, but also other forces that effectively transform the nature of the discourse in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati, which was first published by Balai Pustaka in 1929, consisting of fifteen chapters with 206 pages.

This novel tells about the struggle of a young man's life, which was accompanied by events of life's miseries but ended in the enjoyment and happiness of life during his youth. Midun full of trials and problems. The problem came from none other than a nephew of the ruler in his village, Kakak. Kakak hates Midun because of her beauty and demeanor. Kakak hopes that people can like him as much as they like Midun. However, because Kakak's attitude is so impudent, the villagers hate him. This makes Kakak jealous and has a grudge against Midun, so he keeps trying to harm Midun. With his patience and sincerity, Midun finally got out of his troubles and got a better life.

In the end, Midun got all the happiness as a result of the patience, hard work, and honesty that he had all this time. Meanwhile, Kakak was arrested by the police for abusing his position. The conflict that occurs between Midun as the protagonist and Kakak as the antagonist, along with the characters who directly support both parties, have divided the characters of each character. All the good traits are found in the protagonist, while the antagonist is identified with bad traits. The main character of this novel is Midun.

3. Methodology

This research used the critical discourse analysis method with the Derrida deconstruction approach, which was initiated by Jacques Derrida. Data collection techniques used in this study are reading and note-taking techniques. Reading technique is the most important thing. Data is not generated without going through the reading process. Reading in scientific works is done by giving attention that is really focused on the object (Ratna, 2010). The reading technique, in this case, means that the researcher reads the entirety of the two data sources in the form of novels. This is done to obtain data as research material. The note-taking technique was used to record the data found after the reading process. The findings are the other side of Midun's character.

The type of data used is qualitative data in the form of a description of the observations. Data analysis techniques using reading and note-taking techniques were carried out by reading data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs describing the contents of the novel, then interpretation was carried out, followed by categorization according to characterizations, then analyzed by reading repeatedly and concluded. Based on the description above, the purpose of this research is to deconstruct the protagonist Midun in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati that the protagonist is not always true because this novel has a dominant protagonist.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Other Side of Midun's Character

4.1.1 Can't Reading

Midun is a person who is blind to Latin letters, aka unable to read and write. He can only read and write in Arabic letters, which are commonly known as surau writings. In ancient times illiteracy of Latin letters was common because many Indonesians did not go to school. However, this shortcoming made Midun unable to do anything that required the ability to read Latin letters, such as arranging passports for himself and Halimah in order to sail to the island of Java. This can be seen in the quote:

- (1) "For me, the matter of the pass letter is dark. That's why I hope that you will be the one to help in this matter." (Sati, p. 122).

His blindness to Latin letters also had another impact on him. Midun was easily deceived by a merchant of Arab descent. Midun, who only borrowed f 250,- was asked to pay double the amount. Midun feels cheated; Midun finally refuses to pay his debt to the merchant, and finally, Midun is reported to the police. Unfortunately, the Arab merchant had evidence in the form of a debt agreement; Midun finally lost the trial and was again detained in prison in Glodog. This can be seen in the following quote.

- (2) Midun was really surprised to hear Sheikh Abdullah's words. He knows the money he borrowed, only f 250,- suddenly now it is f 500,- ? So he said worriedly, he said, "How much, Sir? F500,-? Why is it 500,-?, even though I received money from Mr. only f 250,-? "Yes, f 500,-!" said Sheikh Abdullah as well. "Midun has to pay f 500 now because so much is written in debt." (Sati, p. 156).

4.1.2 Having No Manners

Midun's impoliteness can be seen from his attitude, which directly blames others at the night market. Midun didn't think that his statement would offend others. After saying the words, Midun immediately left the other person because he saw that the person's face suddenly changed, maybe because he was holding back his emotions. Midun's attitude can be seen in the following quote.

- (3) Midun really hated hearing those words; he could hardly contain his heart. Suddenly it was too late, then said, "God can determine whether a person's luck is happy or not, but this stone" Midun and Maun immediately walked to Lepau Nasi, because when they were about to speak again, they saw the face that had the stone changed suddenly (Sati, p. 73).

Midun's blatant attitude is the right thing to do from a religious perspective. However, it is a mistake when viewed from the Minangkabau manners, which teach this attitude. What Midun said was true, but he said it in front of the crowd and embarrassed the owner of the stone. Midun should have had a private conversation and not embarrassed the owner of the stone in front of the crowd in order to protect other people's feelings.

4.1.3 Habit of Depending on Others

Midun is a character who cannot be independent without the help of others. Everything that can be achieved cannot be separated from the help of others. If there were no other people, Midun's life would just stagnate there; there would be no changes and developments in his life. Midun is a person who is not independent, lacks self-motivation, and is not creative. Midun's path to success always rests on the help of others. He is waiting for his good fortune to be shaped and directed by other people starting from Midun's life in the village, in prison, out of prison, and in Betawi. There is always one person who supports and helps his life. Midun has a dependence on many people as follows.

Midun's dependence on Maun, Haji Abbas, and Pandeka Sutan when Midun was still living in his village is shown in the following quote.

- (4) Just as Tuanku Laras was about to answer, Haji Abbas also came to the office. On behalf of Midun's teacher and father, he asked for forgiveness from his students. Especially when Midun was sick. So Tuanku Laras said, he said, "Because of Haji's request, I forgive Midun. But I hope the child is taught a little not to be so impudent. Too, yeah, really too, hurt a lunatic. People who are not perfect sense, of course, do not understand anything. If we fight, of course, we will go crazy too." (Sati, p. 40).

Midun's dependence on the Turigi figure when he was imprisoned in Padang is shown in the following quote.

- (5) "Since the fight broke out, Midun has been rather happy to work a little. Even though it's heavy, it doesn't do despicable work anymore. Because it has been normal since yesterday, Midun no longer feels heavy. Not a single prisoner dared to disturb him. No matter how the prison officials instigated a fight with Midun, they didn't want to. Moreover, Midun and Turigi are like a child with a father, increasing people's fear of Midun." (Sati, p. 103).

Midun's dependence on Halimah's grandmother when Midun wanted to help Halimah and keep her hiding place a secret is shown in the following quote.

- (6) "After a week, Halimah did not bring Midun rice anymore. The grandmother did not come to Muara either. That in Midun's mind does not make anything, because of course it is not possible that he will continue to be accompanied by rice people." (Sati, p. 114).

Midun's dependence on Pak Karto when Midun wanted to help Halimah until her departure to the island of Java is shown in the following quote.

- (7) "Not long in between, Midun has returned from dropping off the grandmother. Halimah was told to hide in Pak Karto's room. Whether day or night, Halimah must stay in the room for a while." (Sati, p. 122).

Midun's dependence on Sheikh Abdullah Al-Hadramut in getting a job when he arrived in Betawi is shown in the following quote.

- (8) "After arriving at Betawi station, Midun went with Sheikh Abdullah al-Hadramaut to his house in Kmapung Pekojan. So Midun stayed with him in his house. It took Midun a month to walk back and forth according to the Arabs doing business." (Sati, p. 158).

Midun's dependence on Mr. Hoofdcommissaris, who has given Midun a decent job to assist Midun in arranging his move to his hometown, is shown in the following quote.

- (9) "I have been here for almost six years; I really want to see my mother and my younger siblings. I don't know if they are still alive now or not. Therefore, if Sir's permission, I would like to ask, how is it good for my dream to come true." (Sati, p. 197).

4.1.4 Not Courageous and Has No Principles

Midun is a good figure in the eyes of many people. He has also received instruction from Haji Abbas, his father, who is famous as a martial arts expert and an expert in religious knowledge. However, Midun still does not dare to face Kacak, who always annoys Midun in various ways. In fact, if Midun dares to face Kacak, it is very likely that he will win, and the villagers will also defend him. When serving his sentence in Padang, too.

Halimah often gives Midun rice, and her maid is also bullied by the greedy foreman Saman. Mandur Saman himself was actually afraid of Midun because he had seen how agile the young man was and also Midun's close relationship with Turigi, the most feared and respected person in prison at that time. He always gave the rice along with the side dishes that were delivered to Midun to the foreman Saman because Midun was afraid that his punishment would increase as the foreman Saman threatened him. In that case, it was clear that Midun actually had a timid soul.

- (10) "It's not a joke foreman Saman to scoop rice with his side dishes. Hardly chewed, continued to enter the stomach. When he was full, he left. Midun just nodded his head at the greedy foreman Saman. There was a little left of it, but he didn't eat it either." (Sati, p. 113).

4.1.5 Likes to Talk Bad about Other People

Midun has a habit of talking about the disgrace or ugliness of others. This habit is usually owned by women. However, Midun's character also likes to talk bad about other people, as shown in the following dialogue between Midun and Maun.

- (11) "Fine, I also really like doing business," replied Maun. "If you're good at running a business, it's really going to go up quickly. But the fall is easy too. Look at His Majesty Sutanitu! From being as rich as possible to be as poor as possible. Now his mind isn't perfect anymore." "You're right. Because Sultan Sutan was very greedy for money and very stingy, too, he was punished by God. Maybe he traded too much profit, then God was angry. Don't be stingy anymore. His shirt was black, which had a shiny neck because he hadn't washed it. It doesn't even smell bad. The money is turned upside down first and then spent." (Sati, p. 68).

From the quote above, it appears that Midun and Maun were talking bad about Sultan Sutan. Such behaviour is commonly called gossip, which is a bad habit. This habit includes actions that contain sin and can also cause conflict in society because of changes in information from word of mouth.

4.1.6 Don't Know Gratitude

Apart from being dependent on other people, Midun is also an ungrateful person. This can be seen in the following storyline. Midun did not meet Turigi in prison when he returned to Padang even though he knew that Turigi was sentenced to life, even though Turigi had saved Midun's life from being beaten while Midun was serving his sentence in Padang. Midun did not meet Grandma, who used to be Halimah's errand boy, even though Granny was the only link between Midun and Halimah when they left the city of Padang.

4.1.7 Not Prioritizing Parents

In Minangkabau land, children's respect for their parents is very important. In Minangkabau, there is a marantau tradition, but returning home is something that is always expected. A person wanders aims to change his life and then returns to his hometown with better conditions. Midun went to wander not because of following the tradition but because of circumstances and opportunities. Because of the restlessness of his heart, he did not return to Bukittinggi when he was released from prison. However, in this case, there is one thing that is odd about Midun's decision. He left the land of Minang; he did not meet face to face with his parents.

- (12) His departure was only conveyed in a letter, this caused sadness for both his parents, especially his father. Midun didn't remember that at all when he made his decision. The reason for leaving was not at all-wise. Illustrated in the following quote, "Midun's heart is a bit lazy to go home, considering his enmity with Kacak." (Sati, p. 115).

Even when he was in Java, Midun did not remember his parents at all. Because he never sent a letter to just give news or just ask about the condition of his parents. Even when he already has a good life and is about to get married. Even though he already had money and a little knowledge at that time, Midun should have been able to send letters to his hometown.

4.1.8 Having an Imperfect Marriage

Minangkabau is one of Indonesia's areas thick with customs, including in terms of marriage. In Minangkabau society, the ideal marriage is a marriage carried out with a religious procession and accompanied by a traditional baralek procession. In terms of marriage, for the Minang community, the prospective husband or wife of their child comes from the same area, or at least both are Minang people. Have clear origins and tribes or tribes.

According to the Minangkabau people, the ideal marriage is a marriage between close relatives (Navis, 1984: 194). Furthermore, A. A. Navis said that marrying an outsider, especially marrying an outsider, was seen as a marriage that could damage their traditional structure. First of all, the child born from this marriage is not a Minangkabau ethnic group (Navis, 1984: 19). Children born from marriages with women who come from outside the Minangkabau will be considered non-ethnic children because the Minangkabau community adheres to a matrilineal kinship system. The lineage is drawn from the mother's side. If the mother has no tribe, neither will her child.

This is not found in the story, so Halimah's character is still a foreigner, not a Minangkabau ethnic group, until the end of the story. At that time, Midun, who was already an assistant demang in his village, should have carried out a traditional procession so that his wife Halimah and his son Basri could have the same ethnicity and position as other Minangkabau people. Then when viewed from the traditional procession, Midun and Halimah's marriage is also not in accordance with the prevailing custom in Minangkabau. Midun's marriage was not in accordance with the procession commonly carried out in Minangkabau; he did not inform and did not ask permission to marry his extended family. This causes the Midun family to not know Halimah's family. Until the end of the story, Midun's biological mother only knows her daughter-in-law and granddaughter without knowing who the in-laws of her child are.

- (13) Three days later. Midun and Halimah's marriage took place. Two days and two nights the equipment was held, it was very crowded because many friends and acquaintances of Halimah's father were present in the equipment. Likewise, many of Midun's friends came from Betawi (Sati, p. 187).

5. Conclusion

Derrida's deconstruction analysis has succeeded in revealing the other side of the protagonist in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* by Tulis Sutan Sati. Each character is a character. There is no consideration of the protagonist and antagonist. Behind the protagonist, it turns out that there is a negative side that seems invisible to the reader. The Midun character in the novel *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat*, who is famous or synonymous with his moral nobility in the local community, turns out to have bad qualities, advantages, and disadvantages like humans in general. In the storyline, the characters cannot be separated from the core of the story. No matter how small the character's role is in the story, he still helps build the integrity of the story. If one of the characters is omitted, a new possibility will appear that will change the course of the story. New possibilities will also arise if one of the characters performs an action that is different from what is told.

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