A DECONSTRUCTION ON THE BINARY OPPOSITION OF
THE MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SUSAN
GLASPELL’S *TRIFLES*

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*
in English Letters

By

RADIASKA KARISTANTYA PUTRA
Student Number: 104214112

ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
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January 14th, 2016
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I certify that this undergraduate thesis contains no material which has been previously submitted for the award of any other degree at any university, and that, to the best of my knowledge, this undergraduate thesis contains no material previously written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of the undergraduate thesis.

Yogyakarta, December 15, 2015

[Signature]

Radiaska Karistantya Putra
Mother love is the fuel that enables a normal human being to do the impossible.

Marion C. Garretty
Hi, Mom!
*waves*
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to give my gratitude to Allah SWT for the blessing, so that I can finish this undergraduate thesis fluently.

I dedicate my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my Advisor, Ni Luh Putu Rosiandani, S.S., M.Hum, for the guidance from the beginning until the end of the process of writing this thesis. I also dedicate my gratitude to my Co-Advisor, Drs. Hirmawan Wijanarka, M.Hum.

I would like to acknowledge the help provided by not only colleagues but also my best friends Fanny Herdioktavi, Indy Tiara Sari, Frisca’ Irvyani, Jessica Novia, Christian Dwi Nugroho for all good times we spent together. I owe special thanks to Moh. Erfan Hanindo, Abbi Aulia Sujono, Praditya Wiradipati Nur Fattah and Fadlillah Ahdiyat, who are not only my friends, but also a fountainhead of all the best that has occurred to me.

I would like to express my deep love and gratitude to my dad, Hari Istata for his constant support and understanding throughout my research and to my brother, Rahadian for his prayers and support in all aspects of my life.

I cannot express my gratitude for my mom in words, whose unconditional love has been my greatest strength. This thesis is dedicated to her. I love you, Mom.

Radiaska Karistantya Putra.
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ABSTRACT

RADIASKA KARISTANTYA PUTRA. A Deconstruction on the Binary Opposition of the Male and Female Characters in Susan Glaspell's Trifles.
Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University, 2015.

Trifles is a well-known play of Susan Glaspell that was written in 1916. It consists of one act. In this thesis, the writer analyzes the binary opposition of the characteristics of male and female characters in the play. Therefore, the writer tries to identify the binary opposition of the characteristics and examine with Deconstruction perspective by relating them to the gender stereotype.

There are three problems that are formulated in this study. The first question is used to describe the characteristics of the male and female characters in this play. The second question is used to give the evidence about the existence of binary opposition in the characteristics of the male and female characters. The third question is used to examine the binary opposition in the characteristics of male and female characters related to gender stereotype using the Deconstruction perspective.

The method that is used in this study is a library research. Here, in this study the data are collected from written texts such as printed books and other printed writings that are related to this study. This study is also supported by some online articles and essays that are collected from websites.

In the text play of Trifles, male and female characters are clearly presented as a binary pair of ‘superior’ vs. ‘inferior’. Moreover, some of their characteristics are also presented as binary oppositions. Furthermore, when these binaries are connected to the gender stereotype, there is a finding that male characters are the cause of superiority because the characteristics of male characters are considered as dominant and powerful. Nevertheless, the female characters are only considered as the one who undergoes the superiority since their characteristics are less dominant and weak.

However, when Deconstruction theory is applied in this case, there is a new finding that denies the fact in the text. This new finding deconstructs the text in Trifles since based on this new finding, the female’s characteristics are regarded as the cause of the superiority. The gender stereotype of male’s superiority is not shaped because of the characteristics of the male characters that are dominant and powerful. But here, the superiority appears because of the characteristics of female characters that let the superiority in the text happens.
ABSTRAK


Akan tetapi ketika teori Deconstruction digunakan untuk mengkaji hal ini, hasilnya adalah muncul kesimpulan baru yang menyangkal kebenaran yang terdapat dalam cerita Trifles. Dalam hal ini, muncul kesimpulan baru bahwa karakteristik-karakteristik perempuan lah yang dianggap sebagai penyebab adanya superioritas. Stereotip gender dari superioritas laki-laki terbentuk bukan karena karakteristik tokoh laki-laki yang dominan dan kuat, tetapi karena karakteristik-karakteristik dari tokoh perempuan yang membiarkan superioritas di dalam teks terjadi.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Sexually, human beings are divided into two, male and female and also for people, they are divided into male (man) and female (woman). Above these biological differences, society builds social construction about a sequence of the right attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and activities for certain kind of sex that is identity of a person. This fact brings a stereotype that men and women are different in quality. The differentiation between male and female as the result from social construction or social culture condition causes unfairness toward women. Moreover, this kind of situation, where in a normative way the society placed male’s position in a higher rank than female’s still existed until now.

Women are treated differently from men, and this condition contradicts the human right which claims that people are born with an equal right. Women’s position is under men. Women are discriminated by men as stated by Montagu that in almost every society there is belief that men are superior and women are inferior. From the past, women are treated badly. They were exploited mentally and physically by men (1953: 23-28).

Therefore, as the result of the gender stereotypes in the society, the phenomenon of gender stereotypes also could be found in literary works. One of the works which shows gender stereotypes which can be seen is a play entitled *Trifles*. 
*Trifles* is a one-act play by Susan Glaspell which was written in 1916. It was first performed by the Provincetown Players at the Wharf Theatre in Provincetown, Massachusetts on August 8, 1916. *Trifles* tells the story of two investigations into the murder of John Wright. The male characters carry on the official investigation while the female characters carry on their own unofficial investigation. As the title of the play, *Trifles* suggests, the concerns of women are considered to be mere trifles, unimportant issues that bear little or no importance to the true work of society, which, of course, is being carried out by men. This play was chosen because there are many sentences that show gender stereotypes in the dialogue of the play. The gender stereotypes are seen through the role of male and female characters which show the distinctions between both characters which are unequal and are constructed by the society.

Here based on the fact about the presence of gender stereotypes in *Trifles*, the topic of a deconstruction on the binary opposition of the male and female characters related to gender stereotype is chosen because this study wants to support the idea about the existence of gender stereotype in *Trifles*, and also this study aims to show the importance of observing the purpose of the author in a literary work from more than one angle. Thus, this study takes deconstruction as the perspective to observe the characteristics of the male and female characters in this play through the gender stereotype because deconstruction perspective can see the hidden meaning behind the text and can reveal what the text actually means. In the end, this study is hoped to
give a result, the hidden meaning behind the text, in order to give a comparison, so that a better justification can be concluded.

B. Problem Formulation

In order to specify the discussion, there are several questions related to the topic that will be used to guide the study. The questions are formulated as follows.

1. How are the male and female characters characterized in *Trifles*?

2. How do those characteristics of the male and female characters reflect the idea of binary opposition?

3. How does the Deconstruction perspective examine the binary opposition of those characteristics related to gender stereotype?

C. Objectives of the Study

This study has several objectives. The first objective of this study is to explore the characteristics of the male and female characters. The second is to give evidence about the presentation of the binary opposition which reflected in the characteristics of the male and female characters in the play. The third is to deconstruct the binary opposition of their characteristics in its relation to the idea of gender stereotype.

D. Definition of Terms

To help us to understand this research, we should have a better understanding about the definition of Binary Opposition. The term of binary opposition appeared in the late of twentieth century called Structuralism, although this term then developed
in Post-Structuralism. The meaning of binary is a pair; otherwise opposition is closer to contrary. In a simple way, binary opposition is a pair of contrary things, this pair is contrast because if the one is present the other would be absent, but this pair cannot be separated though they are in contrary because they depend on one to each other. This is because within binary oppositions we do not only find an oppositional relationship between the two involved, we also find a strange complicity. Takes for instances, light vs. darkness. If there were no darkness, we would not have light either because we would not be able to recognize it for what it is.

In this binary opposition term, as stated previous, about present and absent, it is believed that texts introduce sets of oppositions that function to structure and stabilize them. Quite often these oppositions are implicit or almost invisible. They might be hidden in a text’s metaphors, for instance or else only one of the terms involved is explicitly mentioned. That explicit mention, then, evokes the other, that called as absent term (Bertens, 2003: 128-129).

As well as understanding about Binary Opposition, it is important for the reader to have an understanding about the term Gender. According to Arliss (1991: 8) Gender is a behaviorally determined category. It is socially and culturally constructed and not assigned at birth. The labels masculine and feminine may be understood as gender terms that cannot be assigned at birth, but must inferred based on the individual’s behavior and elaborates that usually a child assigned male at birth behave masculinely, according to cultural standards, and a child assigned female behaves femininely (1991: 7).
According to *International Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* (1996: 510), gender is behaviors and cultural values society assigns to feminity and masculinity, which are defined over time; what is feminine is by definition is mismasculine.

Next, the writer assumed that the readers also need an understanding of Deconstruction.

The post-structuralists literary critic is engaged in the task of ‘deconstructing’ the text. This process is given the name deconstruction, which can roughly be defined as applied post-structuralism. It is often referred to as reading against the grain or reading the text against itself. A way of describing this would be to say that deconstructing reading uncovers the unconscious rather than the conscious dimension of the text, all the things which its overt textuality glosses or fails to recognize (Barry, 2002: 70-71).

Deconstruction is known as a method of reading a text which derived from philosophical scope. This method is popularized by Jacques Derrida in his works in the 1970’s. This terms appear as the development of post-structuralism.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Studies

Ratna Kumalasari in her study entitled “Susan Glaspell’s View toward Women’s Position in Her Age as Seen in Her Trifles’ Female Characters” states there were three main problems discussed in her thesis. The first problem was about the contribution of each female character based on the characteristics, the second was about the women’s position in Susan Glaspell’s age seen in female characters in the play, and the last problem was about Susan Glaspell’s views toward women’s position in her age. Kumalasari used feminism perspective to analyze how Susan Glaspell reveals her female characters in Trifles, then presenting the social condition especially women’s positions around the time of the writing of Trifles, which is pictured in her female characters. The main concern of Kumalasari’s study is Susan Glaspell’s views toward women’s position in her age.

Hariyus Kristian Valentino in his study entitled “Blunt Satire to the Male-Dominated Society as Seen in Susan Glaspell’s Trifles” says that there were two main problems discussed in his thesis. The first problem was about the characteristics of each character which represent the society of American in 1900’s, the second problem was about how Susan Glaspell bluntly satirizes the male-dominated society in that era. Valentino also used feminism perspective to analyze how Susan Glaspell
characterizes her characters in *Trifles* and how those characterizations satirize the male-dominated society.

All studies of Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* above use feminism perspective in analyzing the characters in the play. In this thesis, the writer tries to develop the study of Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* from deconstruction perspective by analyzing the binary opposition of male and female characters related to gender stereotype which is can be found in the play. However, all those studies are use as the references for the writer to enrich this study.

**B. Review of Related Theories**

1. **Theory of Character and Characterization**

   Christopher Russel Reaske argues that in a play, there is no narration or description about the characters since all the characterization is conveyed through dialogue. The combination of speeches and actions throughout a play, small asides and jokes, the short angry speeches, the length diatribes help our mind understand the characters in a drama as people who might really exist (1966: 40). Reaske also says that there are some devices of characterization made by the dramatist to help us analyze the characters in a drama. Some of these devices as follow:

   a. The Appearance of the Character

   In the prologue or in the stage directions the playwrights often give description on the characters’ physical sense. We can learn from the stage directions
how they look, how they walk onto the stage and how they dressed up. For short, from their appearances, we can put our first understanding of certain characters in a drama.

b. Asides and Soliloquies

All of the further characterization established through dialogue. We learn how they speak, and we understand them specifically when they speak in short aside or in longer soliloquies. From these, we can tell if the characters are antagonists or protagonists.

c. Dialogue between Characters

The language or diction that the characters use when they talk to other characters throughout the drama also gives contributions in revealing their personalities.

d. Hidden Narration

The playwrights always implicitly give a clue about the characters through other characters. If often occurs in a drama when a certain character narrates something about another character.

e. Character in Action

As characters become more engaged in the certain situations, we can gradually learn more about them. When they get involved in the action of the play, the must perform particular acts which later will slowly reveal their motivations in behaving that way (Reaske, 1966: 46-48).
2. Theory and View of Deconstruction

a. Theory of Deconstruction

Deconstruction is not actually in the scope of literary field. It derives from philosophy scope, since Derrida’s deconstruction method is influenced by other philosophers’ works.

Derrida’s method always involves the highly detailed ‘deconstructive’ reading of selected aspects of other philosophers’ works, and these deconstructive methods have been borrowed by literary critics and used in the reading of literary works (Barry, 2002: 68).

In Of Grammatology, Derrida stated that deconstruction concerns about the unseen rather than the obvious one. It is just like in the previous quotation.

A deconstructive reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of patterns of language that he uses...[It] attempts to make the not-seen accessible to sight (1975: 158-163).

Deconstruction suggests about ‘reading the text against itself’. It denies any final explication or statement of meaning. It questions the presence of any objective structure or content in a text. “The practitionerers of deconstruction celebrate the text’s self-destruction, that inevitable seed of its own contradiction, as never ending play of language” (Guerin, 1999: 340).

Deconstruction identifies textual features like structuralism, but it concentrates on rethorical rather than grammatical. It also accepts the analogy of text to syntax, like Ferdinand de Saussure’s theory. When structuralism finds order and meaning in the text as in the sentence, deconstruction finds the contrary, it concerns in disorder and constant tendency of the language to refute its apparent sense: text are...
found to deconstruct themselves rather than to provide a stable identifiable meaning (Guerin, 1999: 340).

As the raise of deconstruction method, there are some terms which are commonly used in the practice of this method. They are called ‘transcendental signified’, ‘logocentrism’, ‘binary opposition’, ‘phonocentrism’, and ‘metaphysics of presence’. These terms are connected to one another.

i. Transcendental Signified

Transcendental signified is an external point of reference on which people may build a concept. Unlike other signified, the transcendental signified would have to be understood without being compared to other signifieds or signifiers. The meaning would originate directly by itself, not differentially or relationally, as other signifieds do. The transcendental signified would then provide the center of meaning, allowing those who believed in them to structure their ideas of reality around them. Such a center of meaning can not subject itself to structural analysis because by so doing it would lose its place as a transcendental signified to another center (Bressler, 1999: 124).

In more simple words, transcendental signified is the starting point of deconstruction process. Here, in order to practice this method, it is necessary for a reader to find out the ‘transcendental signified’ because it will provide the ultimate meaning, being the root of everything. This will make sure that there is “something” inside it and has its meaning (concept).
ii. Logocentrism

According to Derrida, Western metaphysics has invented a variety of terms that function as centers: god, reason, origin, being, essence, truth, humanity, beginning, end, and self, to name a few. Each can operate as a concept that is self-sufficient and self-originate and can serve as a transcendental signified. This Western proclivity for desiring a center Derrida names logocentrism: the belief that there is an ultimate reality or center of truth that can serve as the basis for all our thoughts and actions (Bressler, 1999: 124).

It means that Derrida is very aware that people’s thought cannot escape from the concept of center, something that can be the basis for others. So, here he provides a term, which is called as logocentrism. It is also explained that decenter any transcendental signified will automatically allow the concept of center to operate, because by decentering the old center, it will result on the establishment of the new one.

iii. Binary Opposition

Because the establishing of one center of unity automatically means that another is decenter, Derrida concludes that Western metaphysics is based on a system of binary oppositions. “For each center, there exists an opposing center” (God vs humankind for instance). In addition, Western metaphysics holds that in each of these binary operations or two opposing centers, one concept is superior and defines itself by its opposite or inferior center. For example, we know light because we know dark.
The creating of these hierarchal is the basis of Western metaphysics to which Derrida objects (Bressler, 1999: 125).

After realizing the concept of center, Derrida concludes that in every center there is an opposite center. The relation in this concept is complex since the one is superior to another, and also their meaning depends on each other.

iv. Phonocentrism

In the binary opposition Derrida declares that one element will always be in a superior position, or privileged, whereas the other becomes inferior, or non-privileged. For instance tall vs. short, tall is the privileged, otherwise short is non-privileged, since people would say “How tall are you?” not “How short are you?” for asking someone’s height. In this case, the word ‘tall’ becomes the ‘privileged’ one since it has better sense than short (Bressler, 1999: 125).

Here, Derrida aims that in every binary opposition there is a terms which has better attribute that makes it becomes accessible than another (which has worse attribute). Derrida also states that those attribute given on the two of binary opposition are constructed by the society.

v. Metaphysics of Presence

Derrida coins the phrase metaphysics of presence to encompass the ideas such as logocentrism, phonocentrism, the operation of binary oppositions, and other notions that Western thought holds concerning language and metaphysics. His objective is to “demonstrate the shaky foundations on which such beliefs have been established”. By deconstructing the basic premises of metaphysics of presence,
Derrida believes he gives us a strategy for reading that opens up a variety of new interpretations heretofore unseen by those who are bound by the restraints of Western thought (Bressler, 1999: 126).

The last term that Derrida gives is metaphysics presence, in this part he wants to show that Western thought, including the ideas he gives before are unsteady and by deconstructing their logic Derrida believes that he provides a new way to interpret the text.

The methodology of the deconstruction itself also has some steps and terms. The first is ‘acknowledging binary operations’ in Western thought. Derrida derives this idea from Platonic and Aristotelian thought. In this case speech is awarded presence, and writing is absence. This makes writing which is inferior became the symbol of speech, a second-hand representation of ideas. Once the speech/writing hierarchy or any other is recognized and acknowledged its elements can be easily reversed. The reversal is possibly done because truth is never elusive. It is always possible to decenter any center which is found. But, it does not mean neither to substitute one hierarchy for another nor to involve it in a negative mode. Derrida says that when the hierarchy is reversed, it becomes possible to examine the values and beliefs that give rise to both the original hierarchy and the newly created one. This examination then reveals how the meanings of terms arise from the differences between them (Bressler, 1999: 126).

The next is ‘arche-writing’, this is Derrida’s explanation about the reason of the reversal hierarchy. He argues that redefining of the term “writing” will allow him
to assert that writing is actually precondition for prior to speech. According to his metaphysical reasoning, language is a special kind of writing, which is called as *archi-écriture* or *arche-writing*. Using traditional Western metaphysics that is grounded in phonocentrism, Derrida begins to reverse the speech/writing hierarchy by noting that language and writing share common characteristics (Bressler, 1999: 126).

‘Supplement’ is Derrida term, which is used to refer to the unstable relationship between elements in a binary operation. For instance, in speech/writing, writing supplements speech and in actuality takes the place of speech (arche-writing). This ‘supplementation’ happens in all binary opposition (Bressler, 1999: 128).

The last term is ‘différence’. It is believed that understanding the différence is also the basic key to understand deconstruction. As the etymology of this word, which comes from French word differer, this words means to differ or to be different from. Derrida’s aim by this différence is nothing can be studied or learned in isolation, since the meaning of something is known because it differs from something else, which is related (Bressler, 1999: 129).

Later, in the practice, a deconstructor must consider about the presence of multiple interpretations in a text and that makes the text itself to be reread and reinterpret countless times. In order to avoid the mistake in deconstruction process, then it is suggested that deconstructors must seek to override their own logocentric and inherited ways of viewing a text, and find the binary opposition at work in the text itself. These binary opposition operation restrict meaning, for they already assume a fixed-interpretation of reality, for instance the existing of bad and good, or
male and female. By knowing these hierarchies presuppose a fixed and biased way of viewing the world, then deconstructors are hoped to find out the binary opposition operating in the text and then reserve them. By doing that (reversing the hierarchies), deconstructors can argue that fixed views and the values associated with such strong bases.

By identifying the binary operations that exist in text, deconstructors can then show the preconceived assumptions on which most of us base our interpretations. For example, we all declare some activities, being, or object to be good or bad, valuable or worthless, significant or insignificant. Such values or ideas automatically operate when we write or ready any text. By reversing the hierarchies on which we base our interpretations, deconstructors wish to us from the constraints of our prejudice beliefs. Such freedom, they hope, will allow us to see a text from exciting new perspective that we have never before recognized (Bressler, 1999: 130).

Deconstruction as what has been stated in previous quotation consists of some terms which are connected one to others. The reader should concern more about these terms in order to practice this method. A careful reading and awareness of questioning is a must for the practitioners of this method, because by questioning the existing meaning in a text, it will result on the new meaning of that text (Derrida’s aim of the Deconstruction practice).

b. View of Deconstruction

This view is not the same as the theory of deconstruction because the theory concerns on the practice of the deconstruction method. Whereas, this view is given in order to give additional information about deconstruction and other terms which are related. It is defined that Poststructuralism is identical with deconstruction.
Deconstruction itself arises out of structuralism. It purposes to fix the weaknesses in structuralism (Guerin, 1999: 340).

The term Poststructuralism itself, emerged in France in the late 1960’s (Barry, 2002: 65). At this time, Barthes’s work moved from structuralist phase to post-structuralist phase. The difference in his works can be seen from his essay “The Structural Analysis of Narrative” (1966) and his book *The Pleasure of the Text* (1970). Those works are differ in the movement of interest from seeing text as something produced by the author into seeing a text as something produced by the reader. Here, the author is considered to be absent. The claim to decipher a text becomes futile.

The second figure who influenced the development of poststructuralist is Jacques Derrida. The starting point of poststructuralist may be taken from his work, *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (1966). In this paper, he suggested about decentering of our intellectual universe, which results that there are no absolutes or fixed points, so that the universe we live in is decentered or inherently relativistic. “Instead of movement or deviation from known centre, all we have is ‘free play’ (Barry, 2002: 67).

Derrida’s rise was signed by the publication of his three books in the following year (translated as *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology, and Writing and Difference*). They consists of Derrida’s method, which always involves the highly detailed ‘deconstructive’ reading of selected aspects of other philosophers’
work, and then the practice of these deconstructive methods is called as deconstruction (Barry, 2002: 68).

From the fact above, Deconstruction is actually a method of reading a text popularized by Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction has many steps in the process.

3. View of Binary Opposition

In Poststructuralism, Jacques Derrida, who is a French philosopher, introduced the idea of binary opposition. Derrida included this binary opposition in his method, which is called as deconstruction for its practice. This term appeared together with the terms like, transcendental signified, logocentrism, phonocentrism, and metaphysics of presence (Bressler, 1999: 123-126). His insight was that these binary opposition or he preferred used term binary pairs are not equal; a culture tends to favor one side of each binary pair and judge it in a more positive or privileged light (in the relation to phonocentrism). It is just like written in Literary Theory: The Basics.

One of these terms always functions as the centre. It is privileged, in poststructuralist terms. Some terms have always been privileged-good, truth, masculinity, purity, whiteness-others may be found either in the centre on the margin (Bertens, 2003: 129).

In other words, one half of a binary pair is somehow “culturally marked” as positive, and so is more valued within a group, society or culture, whereas its opposite is “marked” as negative.
Bertens then writes that Derrida suggested this “privileging” works because of a kind of ‘presence’ and ‘absence’. He also gives an example to consider the importance in “man/woman” binary pair. Freudian psychoanalitical theory (named after the early 20th Century psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud) proposed that the idea ‘man’ has historically and stereotypically been “marked” by a positive ‘presence’ or what is called as privileged by Derrida, whereas the idea, ‘woman’ has been “marked” by a negative ‘absence’ or non-privileged. For example the word ‘walkman’, why is it not a ‘walkwoman’? Did the original manufacturers and their public relation believe that listening to walkman is typically male activity that would be of no interest to girls and women? This does not seem likely. It is a lot of reasonable to assume that they used the ‘man’ in walkman to give their product a positive image that would boost its sales. In this case, we have an implicit binary opposition in which the masculine terms is the privileged one (Bertens, 2003: 129).

4. Theory of Gender Stereotype

Gender means differences in terms of behaviors between male and female. In this concept, there are some characteristics attached both to male and female that are socially constructed (Fakih, 1996: 71). The path to masculinity or femininity is a construction of basic biological structures and the biological interpretation made by our culture. Every society has numerous ‘scripts’ for its member such as learning to play feminine or masculine. Since infants, we have been learning and practicing special manner created by our society to become men and women. Gender is a set of
roles which, like mask and clothes in theatre, convey other people whether we are feminine or masculine (Mosse, 1996: 2-3).

Many causes can originate gender differences. They are formed, socialized, strengthened, even socially and culturally constructed, among other things, by religion and the state. The long and established socialization and reconstruction process makes it difficult to differentiate whether these behavior differences are social construction or biological destiny determined by God. Nevertheless, we can overcome the confusion by using this method; characteristic attached to each of the two sexes which are exchangeable are social construction (1996: 9-10).

Gender application and implication in society are influenced by culture. Gender differences have caused gender inequalities such as gender stereotypes. According to Arliss, stereotypes are negative images of individual that imposed on others who they believe to category based on race, age, occupation, place of origin, and of course gender (1991: 12). Stereotypes based on gender difference are usually found in society. In society that still keeping patriarchal values, the stereotypes always put women on a disadvantage. In such society women are consider to be submissive, fragile, sensitive, dependent, and emotional while men are aggressive, strong, independent, and rational.

The reality of unfair treatment received by women is because of the stereotyping of women by the society. Women are considered to be weak and passive creature while men are strong, active, and more intelligent than women, that is why
society separate the labor system between men and women. Men are given productive job which gives them more benefits in salary, and women are just vice versa, they get reproductive job like house work, which brings them into dependent conditions.

5. Theory of Patriarchy

Simone de Beauvoir in her novel entitled *The Second Sex* argues that the society sets up the male as the positive norm and women as the negative, second sex, or ‘other’. She starts with the biological theory, in which she argues that women are constructed ‘differently’ by men in social arrangement. Women get menstruation every month, they have uterus, vagina, and get pregnant, while men have penis, moustache and physically they are stronger than women. These ‘conditions’ of women make them considered as weak creatures (1992: 37).

Kate Millet says that patriarchy begins through psychosocial conditioning in the family which operated in all economic and social structures. It is a fundamental part of all representations as these are permeated by male powers. Patriarchy is also known as sexual politics. It deals with the relationship of man and woman; one person is controlled by another (1992: 61-64).

Hartmann states that there are four crucial elements of patriarchy. Those are heterosexual marriage, female childbearing and housework, women’s economic dependence on men, and the state and numerous institutions based on social relation
among men, such in unions, professions, universities, churches, and armies (1993: 14-15).

In the patriarchal system, Alberdi says, the genders have been hierarchically structured from the superiority and dominant by the masculine gender over feminine gender. In this system, the position and the social status of the female are lower than male. Moreover, Alberdi mentions that gender violence is a central element in the patriarchal system which maintains the relations of dominations and inequality between men and women, based on physical and psychological (http://www.conferencia/conf_003.html).

C. Theoretical Framework

There are some theories and reviews needed in order to find the answers of the questions in the problem formulation. They are theory of character and characterization, theory of deconstruction, and also theory of gender stereotype. Otherwise, the views are about view of binary opposition.

The theory of character and characterization is needed because it is significant to analyze the main characters and how they are characterized in this play, so that their characteristics are also figured out as the finding of their characterization. It is suitable to answer the first question in the first problem which concerns on the characteristics of the main characters.

The next theory is deconstruction theory. This theory is necessary because it has role to ‘deconstruct’ the gender stereotype. This theory is used as the base to
examine the gender stereotype from a different perspective, and uncovered the hidden meaning implied in gender stereotype. In order to have clear picture of deconstruction, the view of deconstruction is added. This view is used to give the background idea about deconstruction since it is used as the basic point of view in doing the analysis of this study.

The next is the view on binary opposition. The essence of this view is similar with the view on deconstruction. This view is used to give background of knowledge or the idea about binary opposition.

The next is gender stereotype theory. This theory is also important because it has role to explain the stereotype of gender that has been developed in the society. The last theory is theory of patriarchy. This theory supports the theory of gender stereotype because the stereotypes of gender are mostly formed in patriarchal society.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

This thesis takes Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* as the object to be analyzed. The writer finds the play in *The Harper Single Volume American Literature*, Third Edition by Donald McQuade. It was published in 1999 by Longman, New York. *Trifles* was written by Susan Glaspell during her stay in Greenwich Village in 1916 for *The Players* in New York. Now, it is regarded as the most powerful and compelling work of hers.

*Trifles* is an one-act play. It consists of seven characters. Two of them never appear, but the readers can know them through the conversation of the other five characters about both of them.

Generally, the play tells about the murderer of John Wright, which was done by his wife, Minnie Foster (Mrs. Wright). County Attorney, the Sheriff, and Mr. Hale (male characters) try to find the evidence and motive of that murder. Not only them, but also Mrs. Peter (the Sheriff’s wife) and Mrs. Hale join in the investigation. In the process of investigation, several times the male characters mock the female characters; assume that what female characters say, do and think are all about trifles. However, at the end of the story, the female characters find the evidence and motive of the murder. The female characters find that Mrs. Wright killed her husband because he killed her bird. The bird, which liked to sing, was such a representative of
Mrs. Wright who once liked to sing. Mrs. Wright’s talent of singing was “killed” by her marriage with Mr. Wright because he did not like singing. Therefore, she was furious when her husband also killed her bird.

B. **Approach of the Study**

There are many approaches that can be used in discussing a literary work, but selecting of an appropriate one is a must because approach must have relation to the topic of the study in order to gain more intense conclusion. Here, the deconstruction is chosen as the approach since this study concerns about the inaccessible thing in the text, so that this approach is hoped to be able to describe that thing in a deeper analysis.

Guerin stated that deconstruction finds disorder and constant tendency of the language to contradict its apparent sense. Therefore, in deconstruction, the texts are found to deconstruct themselves rather than to provide a stable identifiable meaning (1999: 340).

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that the meaning in a text is not constant; it may or must change, because there is no final meaning. The impossibility of the final meaning here is a kind of deconstructionist interpretations in which “before a deconstructionist reading arrives at that point, it has first uncovered the structure that operate in a text and shown us how these structure can be dismantled by making use of elements of the text itself.” (Bertens, 2003: 133).

It is clear that deconstruction can be applied to this study in its relation to the practice of uncovered the hidden meaning of the text. Because as what is written
before, deconstruction is a way to observe a text from different perspective, which concerns on the study of the unseen thing, which is hidden in the text.

C. Method of the Study

The method that was used in this study was library research. Library research meant that the study was done by reading and collecting data and information from any written texts that related to this study. Here, what meant by written were the printed books and other writings. This study was also supported by some online articles and essays which were collected from browsing many websites. This online articles and essays were also only the relevance data, which were considered useful for this research.

In this study there were also primary data and secondary data. The primary data was the main source of the data in this study. It was the play itself, *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell. Otherwise, the secondary data were taken from various sources. They were data about theories and also some views such as theory of character and characterization, theory of deconstruction, view on binary opposition and view on deconstruction. Those secondary data were collected from some printed books and also online essays and articles from websites.

Some steps are also done in order to do this study. The first step was reading the text of the play, so that the story of the play could be understood, because by understanding the story, the aspects that were significant for this thesis also could be figured out. Second, a topic was decided for specifying this study. The topic was ”the deconstruction study on the binary opposition of the characteristics of male and
female characters in the relation with gender stereotype”. It was chosen since this study wanted to observe the other side of gender stereotype, which was not obviously stated in the text. The last step was collecting data and information which were significant for this research. After the data were collected, then the analysis was derived by answering the questions in the problem formulation using the knowledge that gained from the collected data and information.

The characters that were regarded significant in the story were analyzed through the theory of character and characterization. After that, the idea of gender stereotype was observed using theory of gender stereotype. Then, after the characteristics of those important characters and the idea of the gender stereotype were figured out, the view of binary opposition was used to find how it was reflected in their characteristics. Otherwise, the theory and view of deconstruction was used as the basic to deconstruct the gender stereotype in the text through the binary opposition of the characters, and also hopefully it would be found a different result with the story which explicitly written in the text. At last, all of those discussions were summed-up, so that a conclusion could be drawn.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

A. Characteristics of Male and Female Characters

The male and female characters are presented with different characteristics. They have distinctive features in their characteristics, which are obviously seen in this story. Here are the characteristics of male and female characters as what is stated in the story *Trifles*.

1. The Characteristics of Male Characters

The group of male characters is presented as the superior. Susan Glaspell shows the superiority of the male characters by characterizing them with dominant and powerful characteristics. It is because the superior is powerful and dominant and the inferior is weak and less dominant. These words below are about the characteristics of male and female characters that are shown in the play.

a. Sarcastic (Mr. Henderson)

Mr. Henderson is the county attorney who was young, respected and honored. Mr. Henderson is a sarcastic person. The most obvious evidence about Mr. Henderson’s sarcasm can be seen from his opinion about the condition of the kitchen.

*The County Attorney, after again looking around the kitchen opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.*

MR. HENDERSON. Here is a nice mess. (McQuade, 1999: 982)
Mr. Henderson’s words above shows his opinion about the kitchen that is in a mess condition with term ‘a nice mess’ which is sarcasm. Sarcasm itself means the use of words that opposite of what you really want to say especially in order to insult someone or to show irritation. In this case, the term ‘a nice mess’ is used to show the condition of the kitchen which is really messy, and it is not a nice thing.

In patriarchal system, it is a common fact that the men cannot respect women’s hard work. They believe that women’s work is not a real work because women are physically weak and emotional. This belief results a kitchen as the best place for women to work. Mr. Henderson’s sarcastic characteristic which is categorized as rude and impolite shows his superiority over women because he has no respect towards women in his society.

b. Careless (Mr. Henderson)

As a county attorney, Mr. Henderson should pay attention in every detail of the information. But in this investigation, he missed some important information related to the murder case. Actually, the information that he missed are the clues to the evidence that he was looking for. His careless characteristic can be seen from the dialogue below.

HALE. I spoke to Wright about it once before, and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself.
MR. HENDERSON. Let’s talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.
(McQuade, 1999: 980)
The dialogue above shows us that Mr. Henderson is careless because he skipped the information about Mr. Wright’s psychological condition that is told by Mr. Hale. He assumes that this topic is not important to be discussed in doing investigation. In fact, the psychological condition of Mr. Wright is closely related to the murder case since this aspect is the root of the murder. The other evidence can be seen through the dialogue between Mrs. Hale and Mr. Henderson below.

MRS. HALE. No, I don’t mean anything. But, I don’t think a place’d be any cheerfuller for John Wright’s being in it.
MR. HENDERSON. I’d like to talk about that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. (He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.) (McQuade, 1999: 983)

When Mrs. Hale talks about the atmosphere of the house before the murder happened, once again Mr. Henderson doesn’t regard this information as something important for the investigation. He assumes that the atmosphere of the house is something that is unimportant too.

In patriarchal system, women are considered to be unproductive and less important since they are deemed to have no analytic ability. It causes men to regard women’s opinion as unimportant things too. Just like what Mr. Henderson did towards Mr. Hale, his attitude shows his superiority over Mrs. Hale by ignoring her opinion.

c. Cynical (Mr. Peters and Mr. Henderson)

Mr. Peters is a middle life Sheriff who joined to look for the motive of the murder of Mr. Wright. He is cynical towards women’s things by regarding them as unimportant things. When Mr. Henderson asked him if there is something important
in the kitchen area, he cynically answers that there is nothing important in the kitchen. The evidence can be seen through the dialogue below.

MR. HENDERSON. *(Looking around).* I guess we’ll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around here. *(To the Sheriff).* You are convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive?

MR. PETERS. Nothing here but kitchen things. *(McQuade, 1999: 982).*

Kitchen is regarded as a ‘women area’, the place where women should be and the women should work at. By regarding kitchen things as unimportant things, Mr. Peters is being cynical towards women’s things. He has belief that kitchen things are unimportant things and would not point to any motive of the murder case.

Just like in the previous discussion, patriarchal system considers women to be unimportant. In this case, Mr. Peters’ attitude shows his superiority over women by regarding kitchen things as unimportant things.

d. Apathetic (Mr. Wright)

Mr. Wright never appears in the play, but his characteristic can be seen from the dialogue of the other characters. He was an apathetic person by not giving any concern toward his social life. He doesn’t like to socialize with others and showing no interest in social things because he assumes that folks talked too much. All he asked was peace and quiet. The evidence of this characteristic can be seen through Mr. Hale’s words below.

MR. HALE. Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place; and as I got here, I said, “I’m going to see if I can’t get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.” I spoke to Wright about it once before, and he put me off, saying folks talked to
much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself… (McQuade, 1999: 980)

The way Mr. Wright responses Mr. Hale’s invitation to join the party telephone shows his lack of interest towards others and society. He does not want to be included in the social activity and asked for peace and quiet. However, quiet here does not mean peaceful, but empty, lack of conversation.

In patriarchal society, men are considered to be independent. It shows their superiority in society by being an independent person. It also shows their power and ability to live their life without being dependent on others.

e. Arrogant (Mr. Hale)

Mr. Hale is another male character in the play. He is the neighbor of Mr. and Mrs. Wright and the first person who discovers the murder happened in Mr. Wright’s house. He is an arrogant person based on the dialogue found in the story. The evidence of his characteristic can be seen from the quoted dialogue below.

MRS. PETERS. (To the other woman). Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. (To the Lawyer). She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire’d go out and her jars would break.
MR. PETERS. Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin’ about her preserves.
MR. HENDERSON. I guess before we’re through she may has something more serious than preserves to worry about.
MR. HALE. Well, women are used to worrying over trifles. (McQuade, 1999: 982)

The dialogue above shows that Mr. Hale insults women over their (women) concerns. He assumes that what women worry is all about trifles, small things that are unimportant. It is clear that his words are offensive toward women. It represents the
situation of patriarchal society where the men consider anything related to women are unimportant. His statement which is disrespectful and arrogant toward women shows his superiority over women.

f. Intolerant (Mr. Henderson)

The other characteristic of Mr. Henderson is intolerant. It can be seen from the way he takes the responsibility in doing the investigation. He doesn’t involve the female characters into the investigation process. He doesn’t even want to accept any opinion from the female characters. The other evidence of his intolerant can be seen from the dialogue below.

MR. HENDERSON. Dirty towels! (Kicks his foot against the pans under the sink.) Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?
MR. HALE. (Stiffly). There’s a great deal of work to be done on a farm.
MR. HENDERSON. To be sure. And yet… (With a little bow to her.) …I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. (He gives it a pull to expose its full length again.)
MRS. HALE. Those towels get dirty awfully quick. Men’s hands aren’t always as clean as they might be.
MR. HENDERSON. Ah, loyal to your sex, I see.. (McQuade, 1999: 982)

The conversation above shows that Mr. Henderson is intolerant towards Mrs. Hale opinion. He rejects Mrs. Hale’s idea about the dirty towels and believes that his own argument is the right one. He even directly said that Mrs. Hale’s idea is just based on her loyalty of sex. This clearly shows his intolerance towards women, in this case, Mrs. Hale.

In patriarchal society, women do not have a chance to prove that they are able to do what men do, therefore they become the object of the society and considered to
be in the second place after men. In this case, Mr. Henderson’s intolerance shows his superiority over women since he regards women’s opinions are not acceptable.

g. Hard (Mr. Wright)

Mr. Wright is the husband of Minnie Foster and who was murdered. According to Mrs. Hale, his neighbor, he was a hard person. People would not enjoy the time of day with him. He does not like something crowd but silence. It was right that Wright’s house was quiet that he did not do something that physically cruel. However, quiet here does not mean peaceful, but empty, lack of conversation. He preferred silence to having conversation with his wife, therefore, the house seemed to be quiet. This hard character of John Wright was the way he showed his masculinity, strength and authority that no one could drive him.

MRS. HALE. But he was a hard person, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—like a raw wind that gets to the bone. (McQuade, 1999: 987)

From the statement of Mrs. Hale, we can take a clue that John Wright was a serious person, did not like crowd and cheerfulness. Hard person must be very strict and no-mercy character. What he wants must be obeyed without any complaint. He would do anything he wants, and would forbid or even destroy what he does not like.

MRS. HALE. No, Wright wouldn’t the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too. (McQuade, 1999: 988)

From the statement above, we can see that he could not accept what he did not like. See for example, the bird, the only thing that could make his wife entertained...
with its voice, he killed it because of the noise that he did not like without any consideration to his wife.

The characteristic of Mr. Wright emphasizes that he was a dominating person in his family. He could order anything he wanted to do without considering another member of the family, his wife. By doing this, it is proven that he was superior to his wife.

2. The Characteristics of Female Characters

a. Incisive (Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale)

Mrs. Peters is the wife of the sheriff, Mr. Peters. Glaspell characterizes her as an incisive person. Her characteristic can be seen from the way she observes everything that she found inside the house of Mr. Wright in detail. Her findings lead her to discover the clues and motives of the murder case later on.

(The County Attorney, after again looking around the kitchen opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.)

MR. HENDERSON. Here is a nice mess.

(The women draw nearer)

MRS. PETERS. (To the other women.) Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. (To the Lawyer.) She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire’d go out and her jars would break. (McQuade, 1999: 982)

From the dialogue above, we can see that Mrs. Peters in incisive because she recognizes what happened behind the freezing fruit by analyzing the weather, fire and the jars. She could understand Mrs. Wright’s mind, while the male characters cannot.

The other female character that is also an incisive person is Mrs. Hale.

MRS. HALE. (Who is standing by the table). Well, I don’t see any signs of anger around here. (She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the
table, stands looking down at the table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy). It’s wiped here. (Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.) Wonder how they are finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more tidy there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

(McQuade, 1999: 984)

From Mrs. Hale’s saying, we can see that she is an incisive person. She was observing the detail situation of the kitchen in Mrs. Wright’s while even the men regarded those as unimportant things.

MRS. HALE. (examining another block.) Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It’s all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn’t know what she was about! (After she has said this, they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.)

(McQuade, 1999: 985)

The quotation above shows us that Mrs. Hale is truly an incisive person. She pays attention to every detail around her, even to the sewing done by Mrs. Wright which is so messy. She is wondering why it looks as if Mrs. Wright didn’t know what she was doing while the rest of the sewing has been so nice.

MRS. HALE. I should think she would ’a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS. PETERS. I don’t know, unless it got sick and died. (She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again; both women watch it.)

MRS. HALE. She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (Silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things.) Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don’t you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

(McQuade, 1999: 987)
The way Mrs. Hale analyzes the relation between the bird and Mrs. Wright is really sharp. She can understand that Mrs. Wright really wanted the bird to represent herself, since Mrs. Wright is similar to the bird. Both Mrs. Wright and the bird are real sweet and pretty and also like to sing.

When the discussion above is related to the reason why they are analyzing the kitchen, bird cage, and the sewing, it is found that because the men do not involve them to the investigation and command them to stay in the kitchen area. All women can do is just obey what the men said and analyzing the things that are considered to be unimportant by the men. It supports the idea of patriarchal system that women are obedient that shows their inferiority in the society.

b. Cheerful (Mrs. Wright)

Mrs. Wright is the wife of Mr. Wright. She is the suspect of the murder case in this story. When she was young, she was known as Minnie Foster who is a cheerful person. The evidence of her characteristic can be seen from Mrs. Hale’s words below.

MRS. HALE. (Examining the skirt). Wright was close. I think maybe that’s why she kept so much to herself. She didn’t even belong to the Ladies’ Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn’t do her part, and then you don’t enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all was to take? (McQuade, 1999: 984)

The quotation above states that Mrs. Wright used to wear pretty clothes and be lively when she was young. In this case, her pretty clothes symbolize the way she lives her life in a cheerful way. She also joined a choir group which shows that she
likes to sing. From the explanation above, we can conclude that Mrs. Wright has a cheerful characteristic.

But, in this case, we are talking about the characteristic of Mrs. Wright when she was young before her marriage with Mr. Wright. After the marriage, her characteristic does no longer exist because of the dominance of her husband that totally changes the way she lives. In patriarchal society, the marriage affects women position in family which makes them to have a restricted area of socialization and be secluded from the environment. This is the reason of the change of Mrs. Wright’s characteristic. It shows that Mrs. Wright is inferior in her own family because her life is controlled by her husband.

c. Sociable (Mrs. Wright)

Mr. Hale’s words also tell us the other characteristic of Mrs. Wright, which is sociable. When Mrs. Wright was young, she joined the choir as one of the town girls singing. It means that she made a lot of friends by joining a choir group in town. It can be seen from what Mrs. Hale’s said about her.

MRS. HALE. . .when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all was to take? (McQuade, 1999: 984)

The quotation above shows that Mrs. Wright has willing to engage in activities with other people in her society by joining a choir group. As a part of choir group, the members should have sociable and friendly characteristic to be accepted in a team because choir group is not an individual work, it needs a cooperative ability in order to work together as a team. From the explanation above, we can conclude that Mrs.
Wright is a sociable person too because she was a part of a choir group and accepted there.

This characteristic is also owned by Mrs. Wright when she was young and does no longer exist after the marriage. In patriarchal society, the marriage also affects the job-differentiated between men and women. It results the women to work in their golden cage (house) which make them have no friend and being no more a sociable person. It shows their inferiority because their lives are controlled by the men too.

d. Curious (Mrs. Hale)

The other characteristic of Mrs. Hale that can be found in the story is curious. The event that shows her characteristic is when the men do the investigation upstairs and not include the women to it, she still doing the ‘unofficial’ investigation by herself. It means that she is curious about the motives of the murder too.

\[\text{MRS. HALE.} \ldots \text{wonder how they are finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more tidy there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against hers! (McQuade, 1999: 984)}\]

We can see that Mrs. Hale is a curious person because she wants to know everything around her. She is curious about what the men findings, about Mrs. Wright’s mind, about the sewing and everything around her.

\[\text{MRS. PETERS. She was piecing a quilt. (She brings the large sewing basket, and they look at the bright pieces.)}\]

\[\text{MRS. HALE. It’s log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn’t it? I wonder if she was goin’ to quilt it or just knot it? (Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The Sheriff enters, followed by Hale and the County Attorney.) (McQuade, 1999: 985)}\]
In the quotation above, her curiosity can be seen through her words that wondering if Mrs. Wright was going to quilt the sewing or just knot it. By analyzing it, she can understand that there is something wrong with Mrs. Wright’s mind when she did the sewing. From the analysis above, we can see that Mrs. Hale is eager to know more everything around her.

The events of the appearance of this characteristic are also the result of patriarchal system. They are staying in the kitchen because the men asked them to. It shows that the women are obedient towards the men and proves that the women are inferior in the society.

e. Tolerant (Mrs. Peters)

The other characteristic of Mrs. Peters is tolerant. It can be seen through her response towards men’s attitude laughing at her discussion with Mrs. Hale. She is tolerant to the men’s thoughts because she respects them.

MRS. HALE. (Resentfully). I don’t know as there’s anything so strange, our takin’ up our time with little things while we’re waiting for them to get the evidence. (She sits down at the big table, smoothing out a block with decision.) I don’t see as it’s anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS. (Apologetically). Of course they’ve got awful important things on their minds. (Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the table.) (McQuade, 1999: 985)

The dialogue above shows Mrs. Peters’ willingness to allow the existence of the men’s opinion which in fact she does not fully agree. By responding in an apologetically way, it shows that she understands and accepts the different ideals and beliefs of others, in this case the men. This event reveals the characteristic of Mrs. Peters which is tolerant.
In patriarchal society, women get no power to fight against men, besides that their love for their husband and the society rules blinded their heart in seeing their worth as a woman. This tolerant characteristic represents their inferiority in the society because it shows that they are powerless.

**f. Sympathetic (Mrs. Hale)**

Mrs. Hale is also characterized as a sympathetic person. She shows her sympathy towards Mrs. Wright about what happened to her. She regrets that she had not visited Mrs. Wright more often to cheer her up.

*MRS. HALE.* ...But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters, I wish I had come over sometimes she was here. I—*(Looking around the room.)*—wish I had.

*MRS. PETERS.* But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

*MRS. HALE.* I could’ve come, I stayed away because it weren’t cheerful—and that’s why I ought to have come. I—I’ve never liked this place. Maybe because it’s down in a hollow, and you don’t see the road. I dunno what it is, but it’s a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—*(Shakes her head.)*

(McQuade, 1999: 986)

The dialogue above shows that Mrs. Hale can understand the feeling of living in a lonesome place by Mrs. Wright. She responses to the suffering of Mrs. Wright and has desire to help by visiting her more often in order to cheer her up. It shows us that she can feel other’s people pain and struggles as though they were her own. From the analysis above, we can say that Mrs. Hale is a sympathetic person.

In patriarchal society, the women are considered as weak and emotional. The characteristic of women which is sympathetic is considered as emotional and shows that they are dependent on others as human being.
B. The Binary Opposition of the Characteristics of Male and Female Characters

The concept of binary opposition which means “in every center, there exists its opponent” is reflected in Glaspell’s play entitled *Trifles*. Here, the reflection of the binary opposition concept becomes clearer when the discussion is concerned on the way Glaspell writes this play. Glaspell creates the female characters as the center, the protagonist, in which it takes readers’ interest. The presence of female characters in this play has a certain meaning since the female characters are significant because they are the root of all the actions and the events that happened in this play.

However, in binary opposition concept, it is said that the establishing of one center means that there is another which is automatically decenter. Based on that concept, it is concluded there exist the opposite center (female characters’ opponent) in this play. Here, Glaspell puts male characters as the antagonist in order to complete the binary that needs a pair of opposite things. In this case, a pair of opposite things is needed because the binary opposition concepts will not operate if there is only one element. The female characters become male characters’ opponent since they are the characters that undergo much male characters’ actions, so that the story in this play looks like male characters’ actions toward female characters. By knowing that fact, it is obvious that male characters’ presence in this play is used to help in describing female characters. Female’s characteristics in this play become easily understood by the readers because their characteristics are well explained with the help of male characters’ existence.
Related to the discussion about the characteristics of male and female characters, it is also clear that female characters can be defined as the inferior by comparing female’s characteristics and male’s characteristics, in which male characteristics are closer to superiority. Glaspell creates male and female characters as binary oppositions, superior vs. inferior. Here, female characters represent the inferior and male characters represent the superior, since the female characters are featured with powerless attributes and the male characters are featured with powerful attributes.

Such a kind of thought “How male characters can be defined as superior if there are no female characters as the inferior that undergo the male characters’ domination” is just like in the case of ‘smart’ and stupid. As in the binary opposition concept, the meaning of smart will be easily defined by understanding the meaning of stupid. In this case, the understanding of stupid will find out the meaning of smart. Based on the concept of binary opposition, it can be concluded that male characters in this play will not be portrayed as superior without female characters’ help as the inferior, the characters that have to be dominated because of the male characters’ attitude which is dominating. In other words, by analyzing female’s characteristics will help to find out male’s characteristics.

In previous subchapter, the characteristics both male and female characters are already analyzed. Based on that analysis, there are some characteristics of male and female characters which are opposed one to each other as a binary opposition. Those characteristics are listed and compared, so that the binary opposition on the
characteristics of these two characters becomes clearly accessible and can be analyzed.

In this subchapter, the characteristic of each character represents the characteristic of their gender since their attitudes are only accepted by the other characters with the same gender. For example, when Mr. Henderson is being intolerant toward female characters, the other male characters agree with his attitude of being intolerant toward women. The other example is when Mrs. Hale is being sympathetic by showing her sympathy towards Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Peters as the other female character agree with her attitude and showing the same feeling towards Mrs. Wright. So, we can say that the characteristic of a character in this play represents the characteristic of their gender too.

1. Intolerant (Male) vs. Tolerant (Female)

Susan Glaspell characterizes the male characters in this play as intolerant persons. This characteristic is represented by Mr. Henderson. He does not tolerate the female characters in many ways. He does not include them to the investigation and not even accept their opinions. Otherwise, the female characters have the opposite characteristic, which is tolerant. This characteristic is represented by Mrs. Peters. She is very tolerant towards male characters’ thoughts and attitudes to show her respect. As the part of elements in binary opposition, Mrs. Peters’ characteristic as tolerant person and Mr. Henderson’s characteristic as intolerant person depend on one another.
2. Apathetic (Male) vs. Sympathetic (Female)

The male character in this play is also characterized as an apathetic person that is not concerned towards others around, this characteristic is represented by Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright’s thoughts that folks talked too much and his attitude that he does not like to socialize with others show his zero interest towards his social life. Again, here, Susan Glaspell also attributes the female characters with the opposite of apathetic. Mrs. Hale as one of the female character is characterized as a sympathetic person. She is a person who can show her sympathy, in this case, towards Mrs. Wright. She regrets that she did not come to see Mrs. Wright more often just to cheer her up. In this case also, Mr. Wright’s apathetic and Mrs. Hale’s sympathetic depend on one another. Their characteristics give influence on the finding of their meaning as apathetic and sympathetic.

3. Careless (Male) vs. Incisive (Female)

Susan Glaspell presents the male character as a careless person that missed important information that can lead them to the important clue of the murder case. This characteristic is represented by Mr. Henderson. He does not want to discuss the topic chosen by the female characters because he assumed that the topic is not important for the investigation. The existence of Mr. Henderson’s careless characteristic in this play is also completed by the presence of the female’s characteristics incisive. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in this play are presented as incisive person that makes them pay attention to the details of everything in the house. Their incisive characteristic leads them to an accurate ‘informal’ investigation.
that found the important clues of the murder case. In this case also, Mr. Henderson’s careless characteristic cannot be separated from Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters’ incisive. They are strongly connected in meaning of their characteristics.

4. **Hard (Male) vs. Sociable (Female)**

The characteristic of male character that is presented in the play is a hard person. This male character that represents this characteristic is Mr. Wright. This can be seen from the dialogue of other character about him. It is said by Mrs. Hale that Mr. Wright was a hard man even just to pass a day with him like a raw wind that gets to the bone. This characteristic is the opposite of Mrs. Wright who is a sociable person when she was young. She joined the town choir and made lots of friends. It just the same with previous binaries, in this case, Mr. Wright’s characteristic as a hard person also depends on Mrs. Wright’s sociable. They are strongly connected in meaning.

Based on that comparison, it is clear that Glaspell puts male and female characters in opposite side. Moreover, she characterizes the male and female characters as pairs of opposite things. In the analysis above, it is found that most of male characteristics are the opposite of female’s characteristics, and also vice versa. Here, as the example, when male character is characterized as an intolerant person, then the female character is characterized as a tolerant person. It is just the same thing for the rests.

According on the analysis above, the characteristics of male and female characters are strongly connected although they are in opposite. Their characteristics
depend on one another. Their meaning clearly stands when the two elements of the binary present together. For example, male character as an apathetic person needs female character as sympathetic person so that the male character’s apathetic is clearer in front of female character who is sympathetic, and also female’s sympathetic is obviously seen when she faces male character. Otherwise, female character as an incisive person also needs the presence of male character as a careless person in order that female character as incisive can be seen obviously, and also male character as a careless person needs female character as incisive so that his careless is easily understood.

C. The Examination of Deconstruction Perspective on the Binary Opposition of the Characteristics of Male and Female Characters that Relates to Gender Stereotype

By considering the results of the previous discussions (the characteristics of male and female characters and also the binary opposition of their characteristics), it can be concluded that the story of *Trifles* is telling about the stereotype that men is superior and dominant toward women by considering the attributes of their characteristics. The male characters are featured with strong and powerful attributes and the female characters are featured with weak and powerless attributes.

Here in this last discussion, this domination that is done by the men becomes an important aspect since their superior attitudes are directly connected to the characteristics of the male and female characters (that reflects the idea of binary
opposition). Furthermore, their superior attitudes are also used to broaden the
analysis. Also due to the fact in this domination, the male character is the one who
practices the domination, so that this event straightly gives us a portrait that male
character is the superior. Otherwise, the female character becomes the inferior and
cannot be considered as the superior at all.

In this discussion, relating the characteristics of male and female characters
that are consisting binary oppositions to the gender stereotype is necessary to be done
because this finding of “male is superior and female is inferior” becomes clearly seen
and accessible. It is just like in this subsequent discussion.

1. Textual Fact

It is already known in previous discussion that the binary opposition idea is
actually reflected in the characteristics of male and female characters. There are
found four binary pairs that are drawn from the characteristics of male and female
characters. When these binary pairs of those characteristics are related to gender
stereotype, there are several facts found in the text:

a. Male (Intolerant) vs. Female (Tolerant)

As already known in the previous analysis, Susan Glaspell characterizes Mr.
Henderson as an intolerant person and Mrs. Peters as a tolerant person. In this binary
opposition, it is clear that Mr. Henderson possesses the intolerant characteristic that
has strong and powerful attribute rather than the characteristic that is owned by Mrs.
Peters. This fact automatically makes the readers to regard Mr. Henderson as the
superior in this play. Otherwise, based on this fact also, Mrs. Peters is easily regarded
as the inferior in this play. Moreover, this image that Mr. Henderson is the superior and Mrs. Peters is the inferior becomes clearer when it is related to the gender stereotype. Referring to the fact in the gender stereotype that women are considered as weak and passive while men are strong, active, and more intelligent, it is easy to judge Mr. Henderson is superior and Mrs. Peters is inferior rather than the opposite thing.

b. Male (Apathetic) vs. Female (Sympathetic)

Again, in the previous discussion, it is clear that the characteristics of male and female characters are presented in binary opposition. Here, when Mr. Wright is characterized as an apathetic person, Mrs. Hale is characterized as a sympathetic person. According to the attributes of these two characteristic, it is understandable that apathetic is more independent than sympathetic, so that it is not a complicated thing for the readers to judge that Mr. Wright is the superior and Mrs. Hale is the inferior. When this fact is related to the gender stereotype, it is clearer that Mr. Wright is the superior, the one that does the domination and Mrs. Hale is an inferior person that becomes the dominated person. Mr. Wright’s apathetic is considered as the aspect of superiority because by ignoring the society around will not be a problem for him and shows his power as an independent person. However, Mrs. Hale is the inferior person because her sympathetic is considered as the evidence that she realizes as a human being, she needs others to live her life.
c. Male (Careless) vs. Female (Incisive)

Also in the previous analysis, Susan Glaspell characterizes the male and female characters in binary opposition. In this case, when Mr. Henderson is characterized as a careless person, the female characters, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are automatically characterized as incisive person. Different from the two previous binaries that always state male’s characteristics are featured with better attributes rather that the female’s characteristic, here it happens the opposite thing. They are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters that possess incisive characteristic, the characteristic that is featured with better attributes rather than Mr. Henderson’s careless characteristic. However, it does not make a finding that makes Mr. Henderson as inferior and Mrs. Hale & Mrs. Peters as superior. In this binary, the finding is still the same because when this binary opposition is related to gender stereotype, it is also found that Mr. Henderson is still the superior, the character that does the domination, and both Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are the inferior, persons that should experience the domination of the men. This finding is based on the fact that Mr. Henderson’s carelessness is the element of superior because it shows us that Mr. Henderson does not want to discuss the topic chosen by the women, which the topic is regarded as unimportant thing for him. Mr. Henderson, as a dominant person, has his own standard of which topic is worthy to be discussed or not. Here, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters become incisive since they are not allowed to get involved to the investigation and stay in kitchen area, where the evidence of them murder case are mostly found there.
However, in this case, the female characters are inferior. Their topic of discussion is considered as something that is not worth discussed by the male characters. Moreover, they are not allowed to join the investigation which is done by the male characters. It is very clear that the women should obey the men’s command in both the discussions and actions.

d. Male (Hard) vs. Female (Sociable)

Here, based on the previous study, it is found that a binary opposition reflects the characterization of both male and female characters. This finding states that the male character, Mr. Wright, as a hard person is opposed by the female character, Mrs. Wright, as sociable person. In this case, the word hard has more powerful meaning rather than the word sociable, so that it also straightly makes Mr. Wright is considered as superior to Mrs. Wright. According to this fact, it is noticeable that Mr. Wright is the superior and Mrs. Wright is the inferior.

Moreover, this finding is also strengthened by the gender stereotype that is portrayed in the story. In the relation of this binary to the gender stereotype, the readers can simply regard that Mr. Wright’s hard characteristic is actually a way to show his superiority towards Mrs. Wright. Due to this fact, it is clear that Mr. Wright’s domination is dragging Mrs. Wright, who used to be sociable, to live her life in a hard way and is not allowed to socialize with others anymore.

From this discussion, it can be concluded that after the characteristics of male and female characters are related to the gender stereotype, the male characters are regarded as the superior, and the female characters are regarded as the inferior. This
finding is based on the fact in this play that seems to state male’s characteristics (intolerant, apathetic, careless, hard) are featured with powerful and dominant attributes. They are the aspect of the superiority. Otherwise, female’s characteristics (tolerant, sympathetic, incisive, sociable) are considered as the elements of inferiority because their attributes are less dominant and less powerful than the characteristics of male characters.

In other words, the story of *Trifles* is constructed by the existence of male and female characters because they always stand in opposite side, so that they are always in conflict. Additionally, Susan Glaspell also embellishes them with some characteristics that are in opposition. In example, when male character is characterized as something, then female character is characterized as the opponent of that something (male characteristic), and it also occurs the same rule for the opposite situation, when female character is characterized as something then the male character is also automatically characterized as the opponent of the female’s characteristic. These characterizations on male and female characters become a pattern that may control the text to let the readers to the climax of the story in the play (the domination that is done by the male characters). This pattern of arrangement also automatically sets an accessible image to the readers that male characters are superior and female characters are inferior. Here, it can be said that this image of male’s superiority and female’s inferiority as the textual fact because this image is based on the story of the text.
However, the possibility of the different finding is widely open when this phenomenon is analyzed by deconstruction perspective because “deconstruction aims to give a strategy for reading that opens up a variety of new interpretations heretofore unseen by those who are bound by the restraints of Western Thought” (Bressler, 1999: 126), in which it also often said in more simple word as “reading the text against itself, with the purpose of knowing the text as it cannot know itself” (Barry, 2002: 71).

As the explanation of the application of that theory which tells about the possibility of various interpretations, here Mrs. Hale’s words are taken as the example. These words are the same words that express the action of Mrs. Wright.

MR. HENDERSON. (cross to up left door facetiously) Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?
MRS. HALE. (standing center below table facing front, her hand against her pocket) We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson. (McQuade, 1999: 990)

In this case, the discussion is concerned on the answer of Mrs. Hale that sounds as “She (Mrs. Wright) was going to tie the quilt”. This discussion demonstrates that the ambiguity in a text results the inconstant meaning in a text.

It can be said that these words may be interpreted as the describing way to illustrate Mrs. Wright’s method to murder her husband, Mr. Wright. For example, these words can be interpreted as “She (Mrs. Wright) knots the rope around her husband’s neck when she chokes him”.

Meanwhile, the similar case also occurs in the characteristics of the male and female characters. As already discussed, some of their characteristics are the
that controls the story in this play in order to reach the conflict or the climax. However, since these characteristics represent the binary opposition, they have and operational system that can be described as “the male characters who are featured with dominant characteristics (intolerant, apathetic, careless, hard) are superior in society, and the female characters who are featured with less dominant characteristics (tolerant, sympathetic, incisive, sociable) are regarded as inferior”. However, that finding is opposed with this succeeding discussion.

2. The Rejection on the Textual Fact

It is already mentioned that the first step in Deconstruction method is to find the transcendental signified. Here, what is meant by transcendental signified is “an external point of reference on which people may build a concept. This transcendental signified also would provide the center of meaning allowing those who believe in them to structure their ideas of reality around them” (Bressler, 1999: 124). In the application of this theory on the text of Trifles, it can be concluded that this transcendental signified is the finding of the presence of male and female character as a binary pair, in which “male is superior and female is inferior”.

According to Deconstruction theory, the idea of logocentrism is defined as: “the belief that there is an ultimate reality or center of truth that can serve as the basis for all our thoughts and actions” (Bressler, 1999: 124). In this case, the finding of “the male characters are superior and the female characters are inferior” also becomes the example of logocentrism since in this play; the image of this finding is the center
that directly influences the readers’ interpretation about the story of the play. This influence can be seen in the discussion of the binaries of the characteristics of male and female characters that are related to gender stereotype, that reaches an outcome as male characters are superior and female characters are inferior.

However, in the Deconstruction theory, it is also known about binary opposition, which means “for each center, it presents the opponent of that center” (Bressler, 1999: 125). By knowing about this binary opposition, it can be concluded that the finding of male characters are superior and female characters are inferior is not final, because there is such a belief about the existence of the other finding.

The idea of binary opposition is also supported by idea of phonocentrism. In phonocentrism concept, it is believed that “one element in the binary opposition is always superior so that this superior element will always more accessible than another (the inferior)” (Bressler, 1999: 125). By considering to this idea, the it is derived a conclusion that in the text of Trifles, there is another center besides the center of “male characters are superior and female characters are inferior”.

However, this (another) center is not accessible because it is inferior. Here, this discussion aims to raise this inferior center, so that it becomes accessible in this play and also can be the way to open a variety of text interpretation.

In order to become clearer, these concepts (transcendental signified, logocentrism, binary opposition and phonocentrism) are applied to examine the previous session (the binary opposition of the characteristics of male and female
characters that are related to gender stereotype). Here, the outcome results as these following cases.

a. Male (Intolerant) vs. Female (Tolerant)

Based on the previous analysis, this binary opposition ‘intolerant’ vs. ‘tolerant’ makes Mr. Henderson regarded as the superior and Mrs. Peters as the inferior. Moreover, when it is related to the gender stereotype that is portrayed in this story, the male characters are the ones that dominate the female characters. Here, Mr. Henderson’s intolerance is regarded as a dominant characteristic that makes him superior. Otherwise, Mrs. Peters is considered as inferior because she is tolerant towards men’s sarcasm and humiliation. From this event, it can be concluded that an image of a superior closely refers to someone who gives zero tolerance towards others, and also the person that undergoes the domination and still giving tolerance becomes the inferior automatically. However, by considering this fact, there is another opinion that denies the finding of “male characters are superior and female characters are inferior” because in this scene of the gender stereotyping, Mrs. Peters’ characteristic (as a tolerant person) also possible to be categorized as the cause of domination. Mrs. Peters’ tolerance here can be said as the cause of domination since it gives Mr. Henderson space to do the domination by being intolerant. Here, Mrs. Peters’ tolerance directly makes Mr. Henderson to be considered as a superior because after the gender stereotype portrayed; it will remain a stigma that states Mr. Henderson is an egoistic person because he responses to Mrs. Peters’ tolerance with
an intolerant treatment. In other words, Mrs. Peters as a tolerant person gives superior judgment on Mr. Henderson’s image.

MRS. HALE. *(Resentfully).* I don’t know as there’s anything so strange, our takin’ up our time with little things while we’re waiting for them to get the evidence. *(She sits down at the big table, smoothing out a block with decision.)* I don’t see as it’s anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS. *(Apologetically).* Of course they’ve got awful important things on their minds. *(Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the table.)* *(McQuade, 1999: 985)*

Rendering the above quotation (Mrs. Peters’ words) that is also taken as the evidence of Mrs. Peters’ tolerance, it is right to say that Mrs. Peters is a tolerant person. However, this tolerance also becomes an irony for Mrs. Peters. This Mrs. Peters’ tolerance is an irony when it is understood as “Mrs. Peters allows the men to practice the domination”. According to that quotation, it is known that Mrs. Peters as a tolerant person that tolerates the men’s sarcastic and humiliating attitude. In that conversation, it is also clear that Mrs. Hale disagrees on the men’s attitude in humiliating them by laughing at their discussion. Mrs. Hale thinks that her discussion with Mrs. Peters is not something to laugh about. Based on this fact, a conclusion can be drawn, here it is that Mrs. Peters’ tolerance is the source of the domination practice since it can result an assumption, “if Mrs. Peters is not tolerant; she will probably not allow the men to dominate herself and Mrs. Hale’. By realizing this situation, then if Mr. Henderson is not allowed to do the domination, the superiority will never occur because Mr. Henderson will never get a chance to practice his domination. In conclusion, it can be said that Mrs. Peters’ fault (by her tolerance) that makes Mr. Henderson becomes sarcastic and humiliating is the actual root of the domination
since it is more vital rather than Mr. Henderson’s characteristic (intolerant). Also, it can be said that Mrs. Peters’ tolerance contributes to Mr. Henderson’s image as an intolerant person (superior image).

b. Male (Apathetic) vs. Female (Sympathetic)

In this binary ‘apathetic’ vs. ‘sympathetic’ that is related to gender stereotype, the image of the male character, Mr. Wright, is also dominant because his characteristic as an apathetic person is seen as the root of superiority. Mr. Wright’s apathetic characteristic becomes the cause of the domination since it results on an outcome as his egoistic act. However, by her sympathetic characteristic, Mrs. Hale is never seen as the source of the domination. Moreover, it can be said that her sympathetic shows that Mrs. Hale needs others and realizes that Minnie Foster also needs her to live as a human being. By realizing that they need each other, they (Mrs. Hale and Minnie Foster) are considered as inferior because it shows their incapability of living without others.

MRS. PETERS. But I’m awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.
MRS. HALE. It would, wouldn’t it? (Dropping her sewing.) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(looking around the room)—wish I had.
(McQuade, 1999: 986)

From those words, it is clear that Mrs. Hale wishes that she had come over to Mr. Wright’s house when Minnie Foster was there just to cheer her up, because she knows that the house is not cheerful enough to be lived in. It shows that she realizes
her incapability as human being of living alone without others and makes an inferior image since she is incapable to live without others.

According to the discussion above, there are at least two suppositions that can be derived. The first one, it can be said that Mrs. Hale’s sympathetic itself that shows her incapability of living without others. So that, by considering this supposition, it can be said that Mrs. Hale is inferior while Mr. Henderson’s apathetic towards others shows his capability of living without others, that makes an image that he is superior.

However, from the same discussion, it also can be drawn another supposition (the other supposition). By knowing the fact that it is Mrs. Hale’s sympathetic itself that creates an image that she is inferior because it shows incapability, it can be concluded that the cause of Mr. Wright’s image as a superior is created by Mrs. Hale’s incapability that is portrayed from her sympathetic characteristic, because there is such an opinion like this following: “if Mrs. Hale is not sympathetic towards others, the image of her as an incapable person will never occur in this story”. So, if Mrs. Hale is not showing her incapability by being sympathetic, the image that being apathetic will not be considered as a superior characteristic. In conclusion, it is Mrs. Hale’s sympathetic that creates an image that Mr. Wright is superior and Mrs. Hale is inferior.

c. Male (Careless) vs. Female (Incisive)

In previous discussion, the finding about this binary of ‘careless’ vs. ‘incisive’ that relates to gender stereotype also results that Mr. Henderson is the superior side. This finding arises since according to the previous analysis about this binary, the
gender stereotype that states Mr. Henderson is superior and Mrs. Hale & Mrs. Peters are inferior created because these female characters are only able to obey Mr. Henderson when he suggests them to stay in the kitchen area, which is considered as ‘women area’ and not getting involved to the investigation. So that, since the female characters stay in the kitchen, they can only observing the smaller area than the male characters do that makes them can observe more incisively than the male characters do. Mr. Henderson’s suggestion that asked the female characters to stay in the kitchen shows his domination and superiority since he regards kitchen as an area which is not important for the investigation.

However, by realizing the relation between ‘careless’ vs. ‘incisive’, it raises another possibility that opposes this finding. It can be said that the cause of the gender stereotype that male is superior and female is inferior is not the careless of Mr. Henderson but the incisive that is possessed by Mrs. Hale & Mrs. Peters.

d. Male (Hard) vs Female (Sociable)

Here, according to the previous analysis on the last binary, Mr. Wright (Hard) vs. Mrs. Wright (Sociable) that relates to gender stereotype, it is found that Mr. Wright as a hard man is considered as the superior, and Mrs. Wright as sociable person is considered as the inferior. This finding is based on the fact that in the text that seems like to say that Mr. Wright’s hard characteristic is the cause of the domination, because here Mr. Wright does not allow Mrs. Wright to socialize with others. Otherwise, Mrs. Wright’s sociable is not regarded as the cause of the
domination because she is no more sociable since her marriage with her husband, Mr. Wright, who is a hard man.

According to the discussion on the four binary opposition pairs of the characteristics of male and female characters, after *transcendental signified, logocentrism, binary opposition* and *phonocentrism* are applied, it is found that the meanings between the binaries are unstable. From this discussion also, since these binaries are unstable then the elements are always can be reversed. This reversal is needed because as written in the next step of deconstruction process that is called as *metaphysic of presence*, this reversal is necessary because this reversal then will provide a variety of new interpretation about the text (Bressler, 1999: 126).

As what are seen in the above discussion, the reversals are done by examining the operation of the binary pairs in the text and also by knowing the difference between elements in the binary pairs. The understanding on the difference in the elements of the binary pairs on the characteristics of male and female characters becomes the key in this method since as what written about *différence*, “the meaning of something is known because it differs from something else that is related” (Bressler, 1999, 129). From the above discussion, it is clear that the meaning of male characteristic (Intolerant) is known because it is different from the meaning of female characteristic (Tolerant). Likewise, it is also the same rule for the opposite case, the meaning of female characteristic (Tolerant) is also understood by realizing the difference between female’s (Tolerant) and male’s (Intolerant). In the rest of the binary, it is just the same. Male’s (Apathetic) can be understood since it differs from
female’s (Sympathetic), and so does female’s (Sympathetic). This female’s (Sympathetic) is known because it has different meaning from male’s (Apathetic). Meanwhile, in male’s (Careless) vs. female’s (Incisive), it is clear that the meaning of male’s (Careless) and also female’s (Incisive) arise automatically by understanding the difference between them. In the last binary, male’s (Hard) vs female’s (Sociable) it is also known that the difference between them is the key to understanding their meaning.

After all, when all of process in Deconstruction process are completed, it is concluded that by knowing the existence of the binary opposition in a text and by reversing the hierarchies in the binary opposition, deconstruction method opens a new possibility of interpreting a text. This conclusion is just like this following quotation about deconstruction process.

By knowing the binary operations that exist in text, deconstructors can then show the preconceived assumptions on which most of us base our interpretations. For example, we declare some activities, being or object to be good or bad, valuable or worthless, significant of insignificant. Such values or ideas automatically operate when we write or read any text. By reversing the hierarchies on which we base our interpretations, deconstructors wish to us from the constraints of our prejudice beliefs. Such freedom, they hope will allow us to see a text from exciting new perspectives that we have never recognized before (Bressler, 1999: 130).

Finally in this case, the ‘new interpretation’ is found as the rejection to the structural of the text of Trifles. In example of this play, the finding in the text that says “male characters are the superior side since their characteristics are more dominant than other characters (female), and also the image of “female characters are
the inferior since their characteristics are less dominant, and they undergo the domination” is denied by another interpretation that is found as “although male characters are dominant and female characters are less dominant, the actual root that causes gender stereotype shaped is not the male’s characteristics, but the female’s characteristics”.

In other words, by realizing the different in their characteristics of male and female character, it is found another interpretation of the story of *Trifles*. Here, the “new interpretation” deconstructs the reality in the text that presence as “male character is the superior who causes the domination and female character is the inferior who experiences the domination”. This “new interpretation” can be said as a deconstructive reading to that textual fact since based on the discussion using the Deconstruction method, it finds that male and female characters only play their role, in which the characteristics of female here is considered as the cause of the domination. As already mentioned before, here female characters become the cause of the domination after the relation between the characteristics of both male and female character are understood. In this case, there is presence an image that states male’s characteristics and female’s characteristics are embellished in binary opposition purposely, in which female’s characteristics that are less dominant (according to the analysis on the characteristics) are placed as the inferior element toward male’s characteristics that are dominant (also based on the analysis on the characteristics), so that actually male’s domination in this play is possible to be occurred not because of their own action, but the domination can be happened
because of female’s inferiority fails to resist male characters (that is superior), in which this female’s inferiority also makes male character is able to take an advantages from female’s failure into their way to dominate female characters.

In summary, although male characters are presented with many dominant characteristics, they should not be judged as the superior since the gender stereotype is not shaped by their own characteristics. The person that should be regarded as the root of superiority is the female characters because not only their characteristics are the cause of the gender stereotype shaped, but also these female’s characteristics that let the occurrence of the domination directly makes male’s image becomes superior in this story of Trifles.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*, it is clear that Glaspell presents male and female character as a pair of binary opposition, in which male character represents “the superior” and female character represents “the inferior”. Moreover, it is also found same cases in their characteristics. In the characteristics of male and female character that are analyzed in this study, there are found four binary pairs like these following:

1. Male (Intolerant) vs. Female (Tolerant)
2. Male (Apathetic) vs. Female (Sympathetic)
3. Male (Careless) vs. Female (Incisive)
4. Male (Hard) vs. Female (Sociable)

When these binaries are connected to the domination event that is done by male character, it results on the finding of the textual fact that male character is the superior person that causes the domination. Meanwhile, female character is considered as the inferior that undergoes the domination in this case.

This finding of “male character is superior and female character is inferior” is caused by the elements in those four binaries. Based on those four binaries, it is simple to judge that male character is the superior because they possess the elements that are dominant towards other characters, the female characters in this case, so that these characteristics of male character are considered as the cause of domination. In
the text of *Trifles*, male character is the person that practices the domination so that this fact supports the idea that male character is the superior. Meanwhile, female character is never considered as the superior because their characteristics are less dominant and closely weak. Moreover, in those four binaries, it also can be said that the characteristics of female character become the inferior side because of their characteristics are getting dominated by the male’s characteristics.

Otherwise, after the Deconstruction perspective is used to examine the phenomena of these four binaries that are highly connected to the domination event, it results different perspective. There is “new finding” which is found as a rejection to the finding in the text play. In this “new finding”, it finds an image that actually the domination does not occur because the male characters as the superior. The domination in this play occurs because the female characters as the inferior are unable to resist the male characters which are superior. Here, female’s failure is caused by the elements in their characteristics that are always weak in front of the elements in the characteristics of male characters. At the same time, these characteristics of female character are not only the cause of the occurrence of the domination, but also slander a portrait that male character is the superior. Male character is dominated by the female character because here by the presence of the characteristics of female character, male character is clearly seen as the inferior since the domination actually happens because of female’s failure (the characteristics of female character that make them unable to resist male character).
Likewise, in the application of Deconstruction perspective, the finding that “male character is the superior and also female character is inferior” is only the part of Deconstruction process that is called as logocentrism idea. Since logocentrism based on transcendental signifieds, it can be said that this image of “male character is superior and female character is inferior” is the result of gender stereotype that based on transcendental signifieds of “male character is dominant and female character is dominated”.

In other words, when the Deconstruction is used as the perspective to examine “the reflection of binary opposition idea in the characteristics of male and female characters that are already related to gender stereotype”, it results on “new finding” that “female character is the one who should be judged as the dominant person” because their characteristics are considered as the cause of the domination. However, this idea of “female character is dominant” rejects the textual image in the play that tells “male character is the dominant person and female character is the dominated person”. Here, the image of “male character is the superior and female character is the inferior” is only the results of the characterization that Susan Glaspell uses to present these two groups of character (male and female) in order the story can flow and reach the conflict. In which, as what written before, this finding of “male character is dominant and female character is dominated” also becomes the starting point of the Deconstruction process (transcendental signifieds and logocentrism).
Moreover, it also can be said that in this “new finding” male character is dominated by female character. In this case, male character is dominated by female character because male character is only slandered as the dominant person. Male character is slandered as the dominant person when considering the “fact” that the actual cause of the domination is the female character itself (female character’s failure to resist male character).

After all, based on the above discussion, it also can be said that the actual dominant person is not male character although they possess dominant characteristics. The actual dominant person is the female character because even though the characteristics of female are closer to weak, these characteristics are the key of the domination to be occured in the play. It can be said that female character is the actual dominant person because they drive male character to practice the domination.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


