CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Previous Study

In the previous study, the writer will explain several other studies as support for the theory and see their relevance to the topics discussed in this study. The previous studies and the theory used by the writer could be used as guidelines to do the analysis and help answer the research question in this research paper. The following are the five studies:

The first previous study is a journal article written by Distiana Khiranti Wulansari (2023) entitled Willowdean's Women Empowerment in Breaking the Social Stereotype Toward Texas Beauty Standard in the *Dumplin* by Anne Fletcher Film. The purpose of this analysis is to (1) to find out the beauty standards established by the Texans; (2) to analyze the bad treatment of Willowdean and some of her friends who are outside the standard of beauty because of a stereotype; and (3) to describe how Willowdean and her friends have broken stereotypes and created new beauty standards. This analysis uses sociological and feminist approaches. The result of this analysis shows the female character gets the bad impact of beauty standards which are discrimination and oppression.

The second previous study is a thesis written by Resty Maudina Septiani, Rima Devi, and Zurmailis (2021) entitled Fighting Body Ideal Construction in America as Expressed in Julie Murphy's *Dumplin*. The aim of this research is to uncover Julie Murphy's perspective on combating discrimination arising from societal constructs in the novel Dumplin. The analysis reveals that the author's worldview

portrays social groups engaged in the resistance against body ideal construction, including NAAFA, The Fat Acceptance Movement, and the Body Positivity Movement. These groups strive to challenge and reshape the prevailing norms of body idealization, which are identified as the predominant social constructs in society, as depicted in Murphy's novel Dumplin. This research is important because it discusses different topics in the same novel.

The third previous study is a thesis belonging to Christine Aprilia (2021) entitled Binary Oppositions as the Result of Deconstruction Analysis in the *Goldfinch* Novel by Donna Tartt. This paper endeavors to conduct an analysis of the binary opposition present in Donna Tartt's novel, "The Goldfinch." The research delves into the binary opposition of major characters in the novel, employing Derrida's conceptual framework, particularly the theory of deconstruction by Jacques Derrida, which falls under the umbrella of a poststructuralist approach. The research outcome identifies five binary oppositions: good – bad, valuable – worthless, honest – dishonest, caring – ignorant, and crowded – silent. These binary oppositions manifest within the characters of the narrative, representing facets of individuals found in the real world. The exploration of people's perceptions regarding specific human characteristics reveals deeper layers and opposing sides to these characteristics. This approach can help the writer understand the post-structuralist approach and Jacques Derrida's theory.

Fourth, a journal with titled Deconstructions Perspective Toward the Characters in *Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper* Short Story by Imas Romlah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, Fatimah Muhajir (2019). This research focuses on the deconstruction of

characters in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" short story, aiming to provide a description of the characters through the lens of Derrida's deconstruction theory. The analysis reveals that ten characteristics of the narrator are opposites of each other, six for John, and four for Jennie. Initially fixed views portrayed the narrator as an isolated, inferior, weak, mad, and imaginative woman. However, through deconstruction, the narrator emerges as a free, superior, strong, normal, and realistic woman. Similarly, John, initially seen as a bad, superior, and strong husband, is revealed through deconstruction to also be a good, inferior, and weak husband. Likewise, Jennie, initially perceived as a perfect woman, can be reconsidered as having traits that align with being a bad woman after deconstruction. This analysis underscores the fluidity and complexity of character attributes when subjected to deconstructive scrutiny. This approach is important because of the same deconstruction theory taken by Jacques Derrida.

The last previous study is a thesis by Nurul Azizah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, and Nita Maya Valiantien (2022) entitled Deconstructing the Main Characters in Khaled Hosseini's The *Kite Runner* Novel. The objectives of this thesis are twofold: to delineate the fixed meanings associated with the characters of Amir and Hassan in the novel and to explore how Derrida's deconstruction theory can facilitate the discovery of new meanings for these characters. Employing a descriptive qualitative method and a deconstruction approach, the research results revealed three characteristics for each character that held opposing meanings. Initially, Amir's character was depicted as selfish, superior, and cowardly. However, a deeper analysis unveiled the opposite facets of his character: selflessness, inferiority, and

bravery. Conversely, Hassan, initially described as uneducated, brave, and good, also exhibited opposing characteristics. The new meaning attributed to Hassan portrayed him as educated, cowardly, and possessing negative qualities. This analysis highlights the dynamic nature of character interpretation through the application of deconstruction theory. This analysis is important because uses the same theory.

However, there is a distinct lack of research specifically employing deconstruction as a theoretical framework. This study seeks to fill this gap by employing deconstruction to unravel hidden meanings and nuances that contribute to the deconstruction of feminist value. This research sees the feminism values with different perspective. Although previous studies offer valuable insights through sociological and feminist lenses which potentially ignore the deeper complexities and nuances contained in the text likewise the contradictions and ambiguities in the novel's narrative.

Based on previous research, approaches involving deconstruction theory apply a poststructuralist perspective. This approach provides an analytical framework that allows researcher to critique and explore hidden meanings in characters and narratives, by the principles introduced by Jacques Derrida which is included in the post structuralism approach.

2.2 Post-Structuralist Approach

Post-structuralism in both literary and philosophical contexts, stands in opposition to the structuralist approach. Barry (2014) highlights that post-structuralism

criticizes structuralism for not fully embracing the implications of its language-related views in intellectual framework. Unlike structuralism, which concentrates on the form and structure of a text, post-structuralism diverges by providing a unique perspective on language, emphasizing its dynamic and fluid nature in shaping meaning and intellectual systems. Post-structuralism rejects the idea of universal truths and argues that meaning is always contingent and context-dependent (Kobis, 2019). Post-structuralism argues that to understand an object, it is necessary to study the system of knowledge that produced the object. Post-structuralism emphasizes that the text is not only analyzed based on its structure but based on other knowledge outside the structure of the text such as history and culture.

One of the main focuses of post-structuralism is on the role of language in shaping reality. This considers language not only as a tool for conveying ideas but also as forming and changing meaning itself. Language not only reflects reality but also mediates the formation of meaning, creating reality itself through the play of symbols and signs (Akhter, 2019). Therefore, a deep understanding of the role of language in shaping reality is the key to understanding the complexity of human interactions with the world around them.

The post-structuralist approach plays a significant role in literature due to its influence on various aspects of literary analysis. In this perspective, a literary work is viewed as having multiple facets open for discussion. Post-structuralism asserts that the meaning of language is liberated and not constrained by any fixed structure. Despite this freedom, it does not imply that meaning is derived solely from external

sources. According to the post-structuralist view, the meaning of a text is still rooted in the internal dynamics of the text itself.

Post-structuralism was known by French philosophers, such as Michel Foucault who was famous for the concept of power which was used to understand how power relationships shape knowledge, identity, and society. Foucault (2000) argued that power is not only repressive but also productive, namely creating and shaping subjects. Its influence on history, media studies, and criminology to understand social control and the justice system.

Judith Butler for the concept of gender performativity to understand how gender is shaped through action. Butler (1988) argues that gender is not something that is given naturally, but is formed through the actions we take. Its influence on gender studies, queer studies, LGBTQ+ activism to understanding gender fluidity, promoting equality and diverse gender expression.

One of the most famous concepts of post-structuralism is Deconstruction by Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is the process of uncovering and questioning assumptions hidden in language, texts, and other systems. Derrida (1988) argues that meaning is unstable and is always produced through differences between words, concepts, and identities.

The influence of deconstruction in challenging beliefs in the stability of meaning has made it one of the most famous and controversial theories within the scope of post-structuralism. Therefore, the research will use deconstruction theory to answer

research questions that have been formulated to see the consistency of feminist values.

2.3   Deconstruction Theory

Deconstruction is part of the post-structuralist approach. Barry (2014) explains that deconstruction involves analyzing a text beyond its inherent structure. Jacques Derrida pioneered deconstruction as a literary theory, asserting that the meaning within a text is rife with contradictions and opposing forces (Derrida, 1988). In contrast to the structuralist approach, which predominantly relies on the internal structure of the text, deconstruction posits that beyond the text's structure, multiple meanings emerge, subject to variations based on the content of the text itself.

One of the central concepts in deconstruction is "diférance," of the French word. Difference shows that meaning is always delayed and depends on difference, where a word or concept gets its meaning through its difference from other words or concepts. Diférance shows the fragility and uncertainty of meaning and highlights that there is no absolute existence or certain truth in language.

According to Derrida (1988), the realm of literary texts is characterized by the absence of absolute meaning. Instead, these texts perpetually generate multiple interpretations, with each reader contributing their distinct viewpoint and opinions. This diversity in interpretation arises as readers engage with the text, and these various meanings take on new dimensions when linked to different events or life situations.

Post-structuralists perceive these evolving interpretations as essential to the intricate process involving signs, objects, and binary oppositions (Andersson, 2018). In this perspective, readers have the capacity to interpret a text beyond its immediate context while still considering its relation to the overarching reading text. This underscores the idea that a text, in the view of post-structuralism, does not possess a singular, fixed meaning. Therefore, deconstruction does not mean "destructively dismantling" the text, but rather exploring the complexity and plurality of meaning contained within it.

When applying deconstruction to a literary work, the reader is invited to detail the structure of the language and identify how the text itself creates opposition and difference. In revealing the uncertainty of meaning, deconstruction examines the relationships between words and concepts that are considered to be opposites, opening up space for alternative interpretations.

In the practice of deconstruction, Derrida uses text and language analysis to show how these texts contain internal contradictions and inconsistencies in meaning. He rejects the view that texts have one fixed meaning that readers can identify or understand. On the contrary, Derrida (1988) points out that any attempt to identify a particular meaning in a text always gives rise to the potential for other possible or even contradictory meanings. Deconstruction analysis often involves breaking down structures and words to reveal the uncertainty of meaning hidden within them.

In its essence, deconstruction challenges conventional thinking and provides an open and dynamic framework for understanding literary texts. This makes it remain

relevant in literary studies because it continues to face and combat limitations in reading and interpreting texts. Deconstruction theory allows literary studies to continue to develop, investigating new dimensions in texts, and providing a deeper understanding of the complexity of the literary world.

Deconstruction, as a theory that breaks down boundaries in understanding meaning and language, opens up opportunities to dig deeper into the feminist values depicted in a novel. Deconstruction theory, which emphasizes the uncertainty of meaning and breaks down binary oppositions in thought, provides an analytical framework for exploring in depth how representations of feminist values can be found, tested, or even conflicted in literary texts. As well as uncovering hidden layers that may not be visible at first glance.

2.4   Concept of Feminism

Talking about feminism means talking about women's struggle to get their rights. According to Hooks (2015), Feminism is a conceptual ideology primarily focused on addressing the status of women in society and striving for equality between women and men. The overarching goal of feminism is to foster a new vision where women are recognized as valuable individuals with equal opportunities to shape their destinies in every facet of life, free from male domination.

Feminist values refer to the principles or values firmly held by the feminist movement (Stephanie & Nancy, 2011). These values include the principles of equality, rejection of discrimination, empowerment of women, and the elimination of stereotypes. Feminism and feminist values mutually support and strengthen each

other. The feminist movement was born from awareness of the injustice and inequality experienced by women in various aspects of life, and feminist values became the basis for the change efforts carried out by this movement. However, consistency in implementing feminist values is not always easy to achieve, with the challenges and contradictions that lie ahead.

Consistency of the feminist value occurs when individuals or groups actively and consistently fight for feminist principles in all aspects of their lives. This includes supporting gender equality in everyday actions, opposing gender discrimination, fighting for women's rights, and promoting awareness of gender stereotypes and gender oppression. Consistency also involves the correspondence between a person's or group's rhetoric and actions in support of feminist principles. Meanwhile, inconsistency of the feminist value occurs when there is a discrepancy between what is expressed as feminist values and the daily behavior or actions of the individual or group. This can be a situation where a person or group claims to support gender equality but takes actions or supports policies that actually conflict with feminist principles.

In the context of beauty standards, feminist values emphasize the importance of fighting stereotypes that are detrimental and limit women's views on beauty. Feminism rejects the idea that beauty is defined only by certain gender-biased standards, such as an extremely thin body, fair skin, or certain facial features (Furtuna, 2016). In contrast, feminism advocates awareness of the diversity of beauty and respect for all body shapes, skin colors, ethnicities and physical features. Apart from that, feminist values also highlight the importance of shifting the focus

from mere physical appearance to other more meaningful qualities, such as intelligence, courage, independence and personality. It aims to free women from the pressure to always conform to unrealistic beauty standards, as well as to promote self-acceptance and positive self-confidence.

Feminism recognizes the importance of empathy and solidarity as the main driving forces of social change. By recognizing the shared experiences of women across time and space, the feminist movement seeks to eliminate all forms of inequality in which women have long been involved. This involves recognizing the challenges and obstacles faced by women from different backgrounds. At the heart of feminism lies the fundamental value of equality (Jamili & Roshanzamir, 2017). This encompasses not just legal and political equality, but also social, economic, and cultural equality. Feminists strive for a world where women are judged and treated not based on their gender, but on their merit and capabilities.

Feminists acknowledge the roots of their movement in the pervasive oppression and exploitation experienced by women, emphasizing the necessity for fundamental change. Beyond advocating for women's equality and empowerment, the feminist movement also strives for parity and recognition of men's rights (Stephanie & Nancy, 2011). This includes the right for men to experience equality and respect, as well as the autonomy to make decisions regarding their bodies and lives, both within and outside traditional family structures. Essentially, feminism aims for a society where gender-based discrimination is dismantled, and individuals of all genders enjoy equal opportunities and autonomy.

2.5 Beauty Standards Concept

The concept of beauty is a different thing according to the views of each individual. Beauty can be seen in appearance, character, and attitude. Several concepts may be mistaken in the meaning of beauty itself, such as a beautiful girl must be white. Beauty is not an objective concept at all and is totally about perception and differs from one individual to another (Karupiah, 2015). He said that beauty has very little to do with the object or the person. According to Mills (2018), beauty is not a quantifiable quality that can be objectively measured, documented, or referenced. Instead, it is a subjective experience that exists solely in the mind of the beholder. Also suggests that each individual's mind interprets and perceives beauty in a unique way, highlighting the subjective nature of aesthetic judgments.

The concept of beauty reflects the perception and assessment of physical appearance that is considered attractive or aesthetic in a culture or society. For example, in Southeast Asia, some countries value fair skin as a symbol of beauty, while in African countries, dark skin beauty is considered the desired standard of beauty. In America, exotic skin, almond or brown eyes, thick lips, blonde hair and a slim and tall body are the beauty standards they apply. This is a continuously developing view, one of which is influenced by social norms.

Each culture has a unique view of beauty that is reflected in their values, norms, and traditions. For example, what is considered a beauty standard in one country may be different from what is considered a beauty standard in another country. Beauty standards can also change over time. Fashion trends, changes in cultural values, and developments in media technology can influence society's view of

beauty and lead to changes in beauty standards from one generation to the next. Thus, the beauty standards are not static or universal, but can vary significantly depending on the cultural, social and historical context.

However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the beauty paradigm. There is a growing movement that emphasizes the importance of celebrating uniqueness and authenticity rather than adhering to traditional beauty standards. Modern concepts of beauty tend to value diversity, realizing that true beauty cannot be measured by narrow standards. For example, beauty campaigns that speak out about diversity and encourage acceptance of differences, such as the "body positivity" campaign which emphasizes the importance of celebrating bodies as they are.