

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF VALAK IN *THE NUN* MOVIE

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I declare that this graduating paper is really my work. I am completely responsible for the content in this graduating paper. All sources that I have used or quoted have indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Yogyakarta, July 30, 2020



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THE DECONSTRUCTION OF VALAK IN *THE NUN* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

Movie is a motion picture that is shown in a screen and has a meaning. *The Nun* is a horror movie, because it shows a lot of frightening scenes and aims to make viewers afraid, panic, and thrilling at the same time. The movie talks about a devil named Valak who disguises as a nun. Valak comes to the world in the middle ages and summoned from hell by Duke of St. Carta, ruler of the Romanian who inhabited St. Carta castle before the building was converted into a church. Valak had appeared in a sacred room under the castle ground, but before long the castle was attacked by Vatican troops, meanwhile Valak was sent back to hell with a relic containing the blood of Jesus Christ. However, during World War II Valak reappeared because his basement was destroyed by air bombardment. Valak wearing clothes like a nun, she is the main character in this movie. The writer wants to analyze how Valak as a main character and portrayed as a nun but has contrasting behaviors with nun. The writer tries to find some contrasting aspects between Valak and Nun through the binary opposition theory and deconstruction theory. The analysis aims to find who is better between Valak and Nun. This research uses qualitative method. As a result of this research, the writer found that all the traits that Valak had had positive impacts on humans and for all traits the nun had almost only give positives for them.

Keywords: *Binary Opposition, The Nun, Valak, Deconstruction, Horror.*

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ABSTRAK

Film merupakan kumpulan gambar bergerak yang ditampilkan melalui sebuah layar dan memiliki makna. *The Nun* merupakan film horror, karena banyak menampilkan adegan yang menakutkan dengan tujuan memberikan rasa takut kepada penonton. Film ini menceritakan tentang seorang iblis bernama Valak. Valak muncul di dunia dipanggil oleh Bangsawan St. Carta, penguasa Romania yang mendiami Puri St. Carta sebelum bangunannya dijadikan gereja. Valak sempat muncul di ruangan keramat bawah tanah puri, namun tak lama puri itu diserbu pasukan Vatikan dan Valak dikirim kembali ke neraka dengan sebuah relik berisi darah Yesus Kristus. Namun, semasa Perang Dunia II Valak muncul lagi karena ruang bawah tanah puri hancur oleh bombardir udara. Valak berpakaian seperti biarawati, dia adalah karakter utama dalam film ini. Penulis ingin menganalisis seorang Valak yang digambarkan seperti biarawati tetapi memiliki sifat yang berlawanan dengan biarawati pada umumnya. Penulis mencoba untuk mencari aspek-aspek yang berlawanan antara Valak dan Biarawati melalui teori oposisi biner dan teori dekonstruksi. Analisis ini bertujuan untuk mencari siapa yang lebih baik antara Valak dan Nun. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah, segala sifat yang Valak miliki banyak memberikan dampak positif bagi manusia dan segala sifat yang biarawati miliki hampir seluruhnya memberikan dampak positif bagi mereka sendiri.

Kata Kunci: *Oposisi Biner, Valak, Dekonstruksi, The Nun, Horror.*

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MOTTO

“Not all bitches appeared evil. Not all angels appeared good”

(Adeirra)

“Do not judge a book by its cover”

(Wise man)

**Maybe you hate something, even though it is very good for you,
and maybe you like something, even though it is very bad for you;**

Allah knows, you don't know.

(al – Baqarah: 216)

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DEDICATION

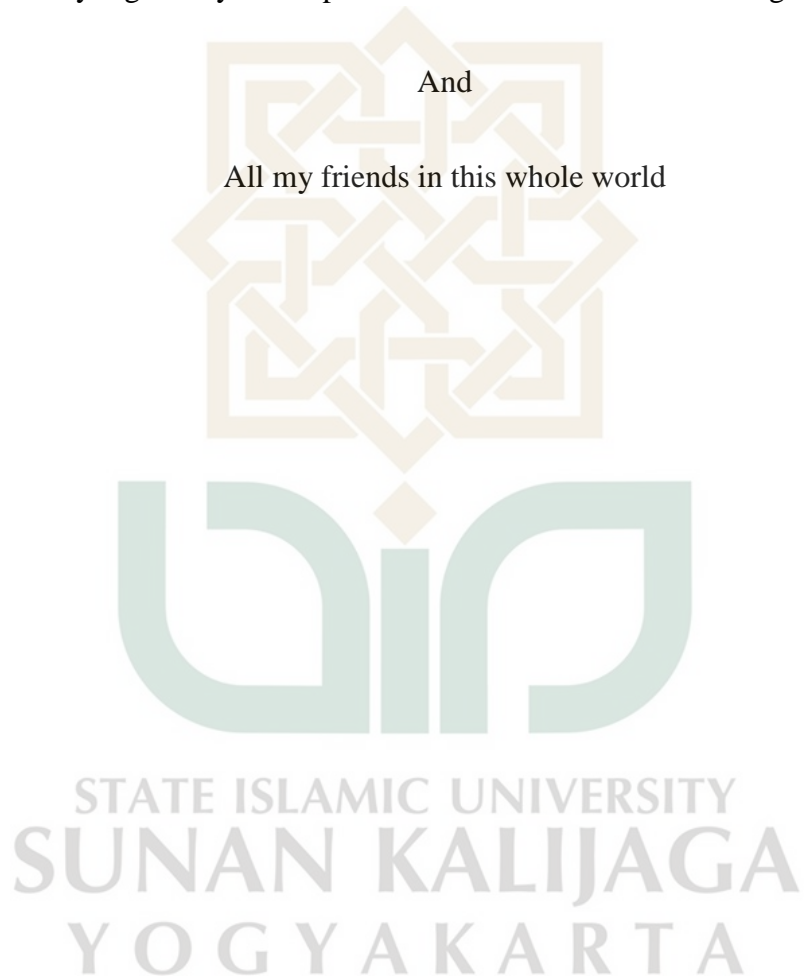
Sincerely, I dedicate my graduating paper to;

My beloved father and mother

My big family in Ponpes Miftahul Huda Al-Azhar Citangkolo

And

All my friends in this whole world



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Finally, the researcher realizes that there are many shortcomings in this study. Therefore, critics and suggestions are needed to improve this paper, and the researcher hopes that this graduating paper will be useful for all.

Yogyakarta, 14 July, 2020



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

The word *literature* or *litteratura* derives from the Latin *littera* “a letter of the alphabet”, and the term *literature* can be defined as the imaginative work expressed through words or writings. According to Klarer (1999: 1), literature refers to all written accounts, and this statement is also supported by Abrams. He stated that literature has existed since years ago, equivalently with the French *belles-lettres* (fine letters), as fictional and imaginative writings limited to poetry, prose, fiction and drama (2009: 177-178).

Nowadays, there are many forms of literary works, such as novel, drama, prose, short story, poem, and movie. These also include in popular culture products that have a big role in human life. James Campbell states that popular culture is intimately connected with education, mass communication, production, and ability to access knowledge (in Intellect, 2013: 3). This becomes the reason why popular culture can influence people’s life especially their lifestyles. For example, Indonesian teenagers mostly follow the Western fashion trends from top to toe even though Indonesia is located in the Southeast Asia. It proves that globalization has affected people over the world especially teenagers.

One of the popular cultures that has many devotees is movie. Movie is a motion picture that is shown in a screen and has a meaning. Turner said that

movie combines the separate technologies and discourses of the camera, lighting, editing, set design and sound that contribute to the meaning (1999: 57). Thus, movie becomes more interesting because it provides story visually. This is why the writer chooses movie as the object of his graduating paper.

Moreover, movie is also one of the products in popular culture that represents everyday life. Richard Barsam, in his book *Looking at Movie*, declared that movie has evolved into a complex form of artistic representation and communication: they are at once hugely influential, wildly profitable global industry and a modern art-the most popular art form today (2010:2).

Movie has many genres such as horror, action, drama, comedy, crime adventure, etc. The genre that shows a lot of frightening scenes and aims to make viewers afraid, panic, and thrilling at the same time is horror. Additionally, horror movies are also captivating and entertaining in a cathartic experience. This makes the writer chooses horror movie especially *The Nun* since it has a nun as a devil in it but is undoubtedly the scariest movie that can traumatize people who watch it (cosmopolitan.com).

The Nun talks about a devil named Valak. Set in 1952, before the Annabelle terror occurred in 1955, Father Burke (Demian Bichir) was sent by the Vatican along with Sister Irene (Taissa Farmiga) to Carta Monastery in a small village placed in Romania. Both of them were assigned to investigate the suicide of a nun in that monastery. They were accompanied by a local resident named Frenchie (Jonas Bloquet). After arrived, they found a nun died with her head

hanging outside the monastery. Father Burke thought whether the nun's death was pure suicide or there was something behind it. The suspicion of father Burke and Sister Irene got stronger when they received a bad reception at the monastery, like a tightly closed door and also the appearance of Valak in a nun figure who passed behind them.

After entering the monastery, father Burke and Sister Irene split up to look for something that they could find for a guidance. After they split up, Sister Irene met a nun, she told her about the history of the monastery which had dark secrets, and on the other hand some of nuns preferred to be silent than talked to the two emissaries of the Vatican. They preferred to continue praying to God to survive from the terror of Valak. After they listened to the story, the terror came to them, Valak terrorized Father Burke and Sister Irene who almost made them give up to investigate the case, but they did not want to give up and they fought against Valak with confidence that finally made her lose and went to hell. In the end of the story, the gate between the world and hell in the monastery is sealed, so Valak cannot return to the world anymore.

The nun is one of the movies in Conjuring Universe, so there are several movies in the conjuring universe. The sequence of the release date can be sorted as; The Conjuring (2013), Annabelle (2014), The Conjuring 2 (2016), Annabelle: Creation (2017) and The Nun (2018), while the sequence of story the Conjuring universe is; The Nun, Annabelle: Creation, Annabelle, The Conjuring and The Conjuring 2, so this movie is a Conjuring universe prequel. Even though this

movie was made in 2018, but from the story published, this movie is the beginning of the existence of Valak appeared in *The Conjuring 2*.

The reason why the writer chooses this film is because of the character. Characters are the life of literature and become the main objects of every author or reader (Andrew and Nicholas, 2004: 60). The character of Valak in this film is depicted through a nun. According to Cambridge Dictionary, a nun is defined as 'a member of a female religious group whose members promise to obey the order of the leader of the group, to be poor and not to marry' (dictionary.cambridge.org). A nun should be a kind, religious, obedient and holy, but Valak turns 180 degrees because she becomes a cruel devil, likes to terrorize humans. From the character of a Valak, the writer wants to compare between a nun based on the Catholic rules with Valak who has a contrasting attitude with a nun. The writer wants to analyze between Valak who is depicted as a nun and a nun based on the Catholic rules because both of them have very contrasting aspects from the nun's character. The catholic rules mean that the writer only takes the definition of how nun is, the characteristic and how to be a nun. After getting all the contrasting aspects between Valak and Nun, the writer deconstructs them and examines each of the aspects that have been obtained.

The moral value that can be learnt from this movie is honesty, kindness, amenity, and patience. The nun has all of those traits. Contrasting with Valak, she has no all of those traits, because she is a devil that is more intelligent than human

being, but she uses it for his own goal. This has been explained in Qur'an, surah Al-Baqarah verse 34:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“And (mention) we said to the angels, “prostrate before Adam” so they prostrated except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers”. (www.quran.com).

This verse is a sign of the glory of God to Adam, who is also bestowed upon his descendants. So glorious was Adam, so that God also ordered angels to bow to Adam. The point is that when God told angels to bow to Adam, devil was included in that command. Even though the devil is not one of the angels, he has resembled and imitated their behavior. Therefore, the devil is included in the command addressed to the angels. The devil was refused to bow to Adam, because he feels that Adam has no special power. The devil was created from the fire while human from soil, so that he deems that his position is higher than human. After refusing, the devil was thrown from Jannah to the world.

Nun is a woman that adheres a Catholic religion, and it is one of the Abrahamic Religion. As Mohammad Zazuli said in his book *Sejarah Agama Manusia*, Abrahamic Religion is a religion that adheres to monotheism, originated in the Middle East and has an Abraham's teaching concept. All of the religions are Jews, Christians, and Islam (2018: 5). The main point of this research is to analyze how Valak as a nun can have a contrasting behavior with the real nun and

to find out how ideal Valak (devil) and a nun (human) should be by using deconstruction theory.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background of study above, writer wants to analyze between Valak (devil) who is depicted as a nun, and a nun (human) based on the Catholic rules by using binary opposition and then deconstruct it using deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida.

1. What are the contrasting aspects between Valak and nun based on catholic rules?
2. How ideal should Valak (devil) and a Nun (human) be?

1.3. Objectives of Study

The objective of this graduating paper is to analyze the contrasting character between Valak and a nun based on catholic rules in *The Nun* movie by using Binary Opposition theory. Then, the writer deconstructs it by applying Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory.

1.4. Significances of Study

The significance of this study is to explain the differences between Valak and a nun based on catholic rules, whereas Valak is depicted as a bad figure and a nun is supposed to be a good figure. This research also can be used as a reference to other researchers who want to discuss about *The Nun* movie or binary opposition theory and deconstruction theory.

1.5. Literature Review

After doing a thorough reading, the research discussing *The Nun* movie with binary opposition theory and deconstruction theory has not been found yet, but there some other researchers who analyze other different movie titles as the object of study with the same theories as chosen in this research.

The first research was a graduating paper written by Lintang Putri Sayekti in 2018 released by State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga entitled “The Deconstruction of Alice in *Alice Through The Looking Glass Movie*”. The author analyzed about how Alice as a woman can behave like a man by becoming a ship captain. Moreover, this is a library research that also employs qualitative method which takes the data from the movie.

The second research was conducted by Nurrochmah in 2018 from Islamic State University Sunan Kalijaga. The research is entitled “Binary Oppositions of The Parents’ Figure in *Coraline Movie*”. The author has a different object with similar focus, using character and characterization. She analyzed the parents’ character, and this research also uses qualitative method to analyze it.

The last is a graduating paper written by Sri Rahayu entitled “A Binary Opposition in The Film *Music Within*” published in 2011 from State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah. It is similar with the literary review that was explained above that this research has a different object. In this research, the author wants to know about superiority and inferiority between Richard and Art, and she also uses orientalism theory as a supporting theory.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1. Binary Opposition Theory

Binary opposition is a theory that discusses about the opposite meaning of something, according to Storey, “binary opposition divides the world into exclusive categories that produce meaning, such as man/woman, black/white, good/bad, rich/poor” (Storey, 2009: 115). Binary opposition always shows the difference of two things but related each other. Both of two things have always related each other, because they show either the presence or the absence of one and the same thing (Bertens, 2001: 62). From that statement, the writer wants to apply the theory to this research by analyzing the nun’s character between Valak and a nun based on the Catholic rules.

1.6.2. Deconstruction Theory

The theory used for this research is deconstruction theory proposed by Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction theory is the first version of post-structuralism paradigm and created to criticize the structuralism. One of the theories from structuralism is binary opposition. As written previously, binary opposition is a theory that shows a combination of opposites that have relation each other. According to Carter in his book *Literary Theory*, there is a hierarchy that argues ‘something’ appears because of the opposite. It means that something appears because of other things, for example: the word ‘light’ implies the word ‘dark’. Deconstructive aims to invert the hierarchy that is dependent each other (2006: 110-111). Deconstruction theory exist because of Binary opposition, and this

theory is to confirm that any good thing is not always be good as well the bad thing is not always be bad.

There is a connection between deconstruction and binary opposition. It is shown by Bertens in his book *Literary Theory* and mentioned in Derrida's statement "at the heart of deconstruction is the effort to dismantle the cover-ups that text use to create the semblance of stable meaning: their attempt to create 'privileged' centers – implicit or explicit binary oppositions – with the help of all sorts of rhetorical means" (2001: 131).

1.6.3. Movie Theory

Movie theory as the third theory is selected to support the main theory to analyze *The Nun* movie. The writer uses mise-en-scene and cinematography theory by Amy Villarejo. According to Amy on her book *Film Studies: The Basic*, mise-en-scene theory aims to analyze all things shown in the movie, such as setting, lighting, costume and hair, make-up, and figure behavior to see which characters are formed (2007: 29).

Then, cinematography in movie theory explains the framing technique and camera angles which are divided into seven types, as follows:

- a. The extreme long shot (ELS);
- b. The long shot (LS);
- c. The medium long shot (MLS);
- d. The medium shot (MS);
- e. The medium close-up (MCU);

- f. The close up (CU);
- g. And the extreme close up (ECU) (2007: 38).

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

This is a library research using qualitative method to analyze the main character in *The Nun* movie. The writer looks for the data by watching the movie and read some books or journals related to this research. The literatures supporting this research are obtained from printed books and electronic books.

1.7.2. Data Sources

There are two data sources used in this research. They are referred as primary and secondary data. The primary or main data from this research is *The Nun* movie. The writer watched the movie repeatedly to understand the whole story. The secondary data are used to support the main data, some of which are books, journals, websites, electrical sources related to the research, and papers.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

There are some steps to conduct this research. First, watching the movie; second, selecting the data from the movie; third, marking the information with binary opposition theory and deconstruction theory which relate to this analysis; last, collecting the data marked from the movie.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

In analyzing the data found in *The Nun* movie, first the writer sorts the data from the movie and looks for the data needed to be analyzed by applying

binary opposition theory. Second, the writer also employs deconstruction theory to analyze the data from the previous analysis using binary opposition theory. After analyzing the data with binary opposition theory and deconstruction theory, the writer can draw the result. Then, the writer concludes what have been analyzed previously.

1.8. Paper Organization

This chapter is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is Introduction, which includes the Background of Study, Research Questions, Objectives of the Study, Significances of the Study, Literature Review, Theoretical Approach, Method of the Research, and Paper Organization. Chapter two describes the intrinsic elements of *The Nun* movie. Chapter three is Analysis. It provides the analysis of the differences between Valak and a nun based on catholic rules and also the deconstruction from the result of the analysis applying binary opposition theory. The last chapter is the conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

This research analysed *The Nun* movie, which is about a devil named Valak who is depicted as a nun. Binary opposition between Valak and a nun is found in the movie. Thus, the writer was interested in conducting the research on binary opposition in the movie under the title “The Deconstruction of Valak in *The Nun* Movie”.

The writer explains what the movie is about in the first chapter, the intrinsic elements of the movie in the second chapter, and the analysis of the movie in the third chapter. The main character of the movie is the focus of the analysis. Data were classified and then analysed using deconstruction theory, binary opposition and film theory. Data are classified into: lie vs. honest, dirty vs. clean, defy vs. obey, angry vs. patient, and devil vs. angel.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that: (1) both Valak and nuns have positive and negative sides; (2) Valak gives a lot of lessons to humans: and (3) as human beings, everyone can focus on the positives. Focusing on the positives allows people to do more good things and change their perspectives, as a wise man says, “don’t judge a book by its cover.”

4.2. Suggestion

This movie tells a story about a devil named Valak, who is depicted as a nun. Her attitudes are highly contrasting with nuns. Many values can be taken from this movie. As it is mentioned above, everything cannot be judged by one side because there is another side that may have so many good things. The writer hopes that this research could be an advantage for everyone and especially those who want to conduct research using deconstruction theory, binary opposition and film theory. The writer hopes that he can be more productive and useful for others.



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