



**The Deconstruction of Masculinity in Daphne du Maurier's
*Rebecca***

THESIS

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**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITAS JEMBER
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
2026**



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Submitted to the English Department Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember
as one of the requirements to obtain the degree of Sarjana Sastra in English
Studies

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DEDICATION

This thesis I dedicated to my beloved parents Hairul Umam and Tutik Sri Mulyati, for their unconditional love, endless prayers, moral and support, unwavering encouragement throughout my academic journey, and my unforgettable brother, Yoga Rizwan Priyatna. Thank you for all the motivation and life lessons he taught me.

MOTTO

“For indeed, with hardship (will be) ease. Indeed, with hardship (will be) ease.”

(Qur'an, Surah Al-Insyirah [94]: 5-6)

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “The Deconstruction of Masculinity in Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca*” is my original research. I assert that this research has not been published for another degree or diploma in another university or institution. I also confirm that the references have been properly credited following proper academic guidelines. This declaration is written without any intervention from anyone.

Jember, 28th July 2026

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ABSTRACT

Masculinity has been a social issue that can also be covered in literary works. In this context, this issue is brought up in *Rebecca*, portraying Maxim de Winter, the main male character, as a masculine figure. According to his behavior, his wealth, and his relationship with other characters in the novel. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with textual analysis. The theoretical framework of this research is the concept of masculinity and Deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida. This research aims to prove how deconstruction theory works by deconstructing Maxim de Winter's masculinity. This research unveils that binary oppositions have the same position and power. Binary oppositions are interrelated and act as complementary and not as the opposite of certain meanings.

The findings expose that Maxim represents traditional masculinity deconstructed his own masculinity by showing the side of him that does not represents traditional masculinity. By analyzing the binary oppositions, *différance*, presence and absence which are the important parts in deconstruction theory, this research found that meaning is always unstable according to the context of the meaning itself which is linear to deconstruction theory found by Derrida.

Keywords: deconstruction, masculinity, hegemonic masculinity

SUMMARY

The Deconstruction of Masculinity in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*;

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This research examines *Rebecca* (1938) written by Daphne du Maurier with masculinity as the main issue. The aim is to find out how masculinity can be deconstructed. This thesis is conducted using Deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The main focus is on the traditional description of masculinity and characterization. Through close reading, this research examines the traditional masculinity ideal by following the steps to deconstruct meaning based on the theory in order to make a new perspective on how people view certain concepts.

The findings present that the characterization of the main male character Maxim de Winter is unstable. The contradiction of him as the ideal representation of a masculine man based on hegemonic masculinity by Connell leaves a space that can be analysed with deconstruction theory by Derrida. This characterization shift exposes the paradoxes of masculinity portrayed in *Rebecca*. The main goals of deconstruction theory are to make a new reading or perspective against the hierarchy in binary oppositions.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background for conducting the study, and the research question, and the purpose of the research. This chapter also contains the synopsis of *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier.

1.1 Background of Study

Masculinity in gender studies is the result of social construction. Manliness, or masculinity, may be a development formed by authentic and ideological forms that come about in numerous distinctive masculinity traits. Manliness is not something static or scientifically defined; rather it can be seen as a dynamic concept that evolves as it interacts with various educational and belief systems (Connell, 2005). In general, traditional masculinity places high on strength, power, fortitude, action, control, independence, self-satisfaction, male solidarity, and work (Barker, 2004).

Rebecca is a novel written by Daphne du Maurier and published in 1938. It is one of du Maurier's famous works, considered a classic of Gothic literature. This novel is known for its atmospheric and suspenseful scenes. The connection of Rebecca's spooky impact includes to the mental pressure and confusion all through the story. This novel is interesting to explore because there is a visible portrayal of *Rebecca*'s main male character, Maximilian de Winter. Maxim is described as a dominant, charismatic wealthy man who nurtures the woman who becomes his partner. He fits the standard of being a masculine man as shaped by the culture. He is masculine in terms of wealth, appearance, demeanor, and behavior. This topic can be best elaborated by deconstruction (Derrida, 2016) since it allows the study to unravel how masculinity is portrayed inside the novel.

Most of the story is told in flashback. An obedient, awkward young woman was in Monte-Carlo for work as an assistant to a socialite, and met Maximilian de Winter.

He was a wealthy widower because his wife, Rebecca drowned in a sailboat accident. After getting to know each other, they were officially married and lived in Manderley. The tension emerged when the heroine became obsessed with being Rebecca. She was wearing the same costume as Rebecca due to the suggestion of their sinister housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers at the annual costume ball in Manderley. Maxim was so upset because of her action and asked her to change. Then Mrs. De Winter confronts Mrs. Danvers who builds up the inferiority in her saying that Maxim does not want her and lures her to commit suicide. The rockets were set off at the same time as a sign that some divers found Rebecca's body in the cabin of a sunken sailing boat. Maxim then reveals the truth about his first wife—he was not in love with Rebecca. She was so manipulative and mean that she began having numerous extramarital affairs. Maxim was so fearful about the scandal and getting a bad reputation, he offered her to live privately as she wanted but she should appear as his perfect wife. On the night of her death, Rebecca informed her husband that she was pregnant and that the father was one of her lovers. Maxim was furious and shot Rebecca then put her body in a sailboat.

This study focuses on deconstructing masculinity as displayed by the male main character in the novel *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier, published in 1938. *Rebecca* is a very interesting gothic novel with a romantic story that has been adapted into the movies *Rebecca* (1940) and *Rebecca* (2020) remake by Netflix. The novel talks about an ambiguous relationship between a romantic couple. Instead of portraying the masculine side, the novel shows how Maxim as the main male character deconstructs the value of his masculinity. This novel even twists the values of masculinity which are identical to men's personality. My basic assumption from the issue related to *Rebecca* is that the male character embodies the characteristics of masculinity and this is the trait that is deconstructed in this study. Despite showing his domination and powerful demeanor, he shows his weakness when he gets into trouble with the female characters in the novel, which contradicts traditional masculinity.

The deconstruction theory by Derrida is a philosophical approach that defies the standard concept of meaning and truth by separating the standard meanings of the texts (Royle, 2000). Deconstruction is a method for reading texts as a strategy that is usually assumed to be reading against texts, but also all cultural statements because the whole deconstruction statement is not merely shown to be a text that already contains certain values, ideology, and goals. Deconstruction is not limited to only involving itself in the discourse, both spoken and written, but also other powers that effectively transform the nature of discourse (Kristeva, 1980). This textual research is important to be applied to real cases in real life to position each gender in the same position and power which aims to create a respectful society and reduce gender-based mistreatment because this research shows gender equality prominently.

1.2 Research Question

The character of Maxim de Winter in the novel described as an ideal man in society. Things that are considered ideal can be seen from how the other characters in the novel describe Maxim de Winter, as the main male character, from his characteristics, wealth, and masculinity. Yet, there are things that can be deconstructed. According to the issue, the problem is:

How is masculinity in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* deconstructed?

This problem underlies the objectives that are discussed in the following sub-chapters.

1.3 Goals of study

The research on masculinity in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* aims to:
deconstruct the portrayal of masculinity in the character of Maxim de Winter in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The second chapter shows the previous research and the theoretical frameworks that the author uses to help analyze the data. The review of the previous research is an important part of the research; it proves the originality of the thesis and shows that this research has never been conducted by other researchers. The previous research is taken from some theses that applied similar theories and had topics that were close to the research. The theoretical framework explains the applied theory and how deconstruction theory is applied.

2.1 Previous Research

The first previous research is *The Popularity of the “Feminine Monster”* by Salman (2020). The researcher focused on the analysis of gender in *Rebecca* using Marxism theory. This study mainly discussed the feminist characteristics in *Rebecca* that criticized patriarchy from the author. The research used a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the issue between the deconstruction of feminism and the characters in *Rebecca*. The findings of this research reported that Rebecca successfully represented her character as the “feminine monster” who was still in charge of power at Manderley in her absence by deconstructing her femininity that had been shown in advance.

The second research is the thesis titled *The Gothic Heroine in Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier written by Pärn (2020). The study discussed how the researcher considered du Maurier as the heroine of the novel who deviated from Gothic tradition built by Ann Radcliffe in the 18th century. Even though the most noticeable deviation of gothic novel in *Rebecca* was the lack of happy ending which was a common event for the female Gothic character, there were more important things that should have been highlighted such as the threat did not come from the abusive husband character but from Mrs. de Winter’s thoughts. Instead, she showed her passiveness, active imagination, and some insecurities that created the terror in the novel.

The third research I use is the research by Legiana & Hetami (2020) called *The Obsession of Women Characters in Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca* which explored how each women character in the novel namely Rebecca, Mrs. De Winter, and Danvers had interrelated obsessions. The study showed that Rebecca had an obsession with wealth, and power in Manderley and a desire to take over the house, which indicated Narcissistic Personality Disorder symptoms. The next character mentioned was Mrs. de Winter who always sought for husband's attention and had an obsession to replace Rebecca's position in Manderley by eliminating the memory of Rebecca in her husband's mind. On the other hand, the maid of Manderley, Mrs. Danvers was Rebecca's worshiper who always refused Mrs. de Winter's existence in Manderley. The study uses Freud's psychoanalysis approach to examine the issue.

The fourth previous research is a journal article written by Aprilia & Arianto (2021) called *Deconstruction Analysis in The Goldfinch Novel by Donna Tartt*. The study focused on the binary oppositions found in *The Goldfinch* analysed by Derrida's deconstruction theory that aimed to show the new meaning by deconstructing the existing meaning and to broaden the perception towards binary opposition as an attempt to find a deeper and implicit meaning.

The fifth previous research is *Deconstruction Perspective Toward The Character in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" Short Story* by Romlah et al. (2019). The study examined the deconstruction of the characters in the short story by showing the deconstructing strategy processes end with the discovery that the characters in the short story deconstruct their own characteristic.

After comparing these previous research studies, I pointed out several similarities and also differences between my study and the previous research. The similarities between these previous research articles with mine lie in the theory and the object. The similarity between my research and the thesis by Salman (2020) focused on analyzing how the character of Rebecca successfully represents the "feminine monster" by deconstructing the feminine side of Rebecca in the novel by using Marxism theory. The difference between this research and mine is the issue

of the novel. I am pinpointing the deconstruction of masculinity of Maxim character using deconstruction theory. The similarity between this current study and the second research written by Pärn (2020) is our research share the same object. She analyzes the plot of *Rebecca* and compares it to the previous Gothic literary works. Meanwhile I will be analyzing the deconstruction of Maxim's masculinity as the main male character in the novel. My research and the research done by Legiana & Hetami (2020) focus on the portrayal of the obsessions of female characters in the story. The difference is we use different theory. They use Freud's psychoanalysis approach and I use deconstruction theory by Derrida. The next research by Aprilia & Arianto (2021) focused on the binary opposition as the topic of the research contains in *The Goldfinch* novel which is analyzed using deconstruction theory indicate the gap with this research that discussing about masculinity by using deconstruction theory. The gap between this research with the previous study written by Romlah et al. (2019) is the object of the research. They deconstruct the characters in *The Yellow Wallpaper* and this research deconstructs the masculinity of the main male character in *Rebecca*.

These previous research articles contribute to my understanding as we have the same topic to discuss, it is about the deconstruction of masculinities. These research studies also give me more understanding about the theory and how to apply it in my research.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Deconstruction is an analysis technique that aims to unveil and weaken binary oppositions and hierarchies in texts and language. Deconstruction attempts to disrupt fixed meanings and open up new interpretive possibilities by exposing language's inherent inconsistencies and ambiguities (Derrida, 2016). He contends that language is inseparable, unsteady, and contains inconsistencies and complexities. These inconsistencies and complexities uncover the restrictions of conventional philosophical frameworks. He assumes that these resistances are not steady, but depend on each other for their meaning. He suggests that one term within

the parallel resistance regularly dominate and marginalizes the other, establish power structures.

Deconstruction has four theoretical concepts: traces, binary opposition, *différance*, and presence and absence (Derrida, 2016). (Derrida, 1982) has systematized the steps of deconstruction. The first step is to identify the hierarchical oppositions in the text. Typically, the privileged and unprivileged terms are systematically identifiable. Second, reversing the binary oppositions by showing the dependency between the conflicting things. The third step is introducing a new term or a new idea which apparently cannot be connected to the previous opposition.

A. Trace

Trace refers to the remainders or marks left behind by the play of *différance*. These traces are the signs of the absent meanings inside language and thought (Derrida, 2016). Derrida contends that language is always pointing beyond itself, deferring meaning into something else that does not actually exist. It indicates that meaning is formed by the trace, which reveals the nearness of other possible connotations.

The concept of trace asserts that meaning is never fully fixed or stable. however, always change depends on the context and situation, with the trace of meaning, absence, and other possibilities hidden under the surface of language.

B. Binary Opposition

Binary oppositions are dynamic rather than static or fixed, and they are always in conflict with one another. In Derrida's philosophy, binary opposition points out its deconstructive, hierarchical, and dynamic dimensions. Derrida suggests opposites are connected instead of separate and complementary (Bennington, 2017). In Western philosophy, binary oppositions are structured hierarchically, with one term privileged over the other. Derrida argues that the privileged term belongs to the *logos*, representing truth or the "truth of the truth," a concept known as *logocentrism*. Derrida views *logocentrism* as a tradition in

Western philosophy that assumes privilege belongs to speech, while writing is regarded as inferior. Writing is considered a contaminated form that exists outside the realm of speech (Ritzer, 1975).

Deconstruction is connected with Derrida's erasure of binary oppositions. Deconstruction means to unveil, eliminating text in order to find and show the assumptions of the text. Deconstruction involves conceptual hierarchy opposition, such as black and white, day and night, male and female. Speech is more privileged compared to writing. The goal of deconstruction is not only to reverse the order of binary opposition but also to show that the binary oppositions are connected. Deconstruction attempts to show the gap in the text, unfamiliar assumptions that underlie the way it works (Barker, 2004).

C. Différance

Within the framework of Saussurean linguistics, *différance* denies the existence of an absolute signified or any fixed meaning. The signifier is indirectly connected with the signified to construct meaning. Meaning does not automatically reside in a sign because the meaning of a sign is distinct from the sign itself. Norris (2003) illustrates how "difference" challenges the assumption of a stable, referring meaning by stating that meaning is constantly in motion, postponed by an infinite chain of signifiers. This concept is critical in deconstructing the binary opposition that has been shaped by Western thought.

D. Presence and Absence

Derrida claims that the belief in absolute presence in which something is either entirely present or completely absent is a simplification of reality. He believes that absence can manifest as a type of presence, and that presence might be interpreted as a type of absence, and that presence might be interpreted as a type of absence. That point of view is critical for comprehending texts, as previous meanings strongly impact the present (Leithart, 2004).

Deconstruction of presence and absence uncovers a complex relationship between these states, questioning the basic binary commonly used in metaphysical

discourse; by identifying the interconnections of presence and absence, Derrida opens up new perspectives on texts and the essence of being itself. This complex perspective pushes us to examine how we perceive and understand both the present and absent in our lives as well as in philosophical discourse.

Deconstruction does not give an authoritative interpretation or solution but instead points to opening up numerous points of view and imaginable outcomes. It challenges the thought of a singular, settled truth and encourages readers to engage critically with writings and concepts. By analyzing the inherent contradictions and complexities inside language and thought, deconstruction seeks to divulge the covered-up presumptions and power dynamics that underlie conventional philosophical and linguistic systems. Deconstruction employed in this study to analyse the data, particularly to deconstruct the concept of masculinity as shown in the novel *Rebecca*.

The concept of masculinity that approves men's power against women and against other men is dominantly affected by culture. Men tend to occupy a higher position in the gender hierarchy because masculinity serves to maintain patriarchal social relations. Instead of describing the characteristics of all men, the hegemonic masculinity found by Connell consists of the practices, behaviors, and values that confirm and maintain men's dominant position in society (Connell, 2005).

According to Connell, Masculinity is a point in gender relations, the practices involving men and women positioned in gender, and also the result of these practices physical experience, personality, and culture (Connell, 2005). The concepts of hegemonic masculinity by Connell serve as framework to examine the construction of Maxim's masculinity in *Rebecca*. Through this framework, the study examines how he embodies the dominant standard of masculinity and subsequently reveals the paradoxes that emerge through deconstructive analysis.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three explains the methodological framework and analytical tools used to strengthen the analysis. This chapter contains the type of research, data collection, data processing, and data analysis.

3.1 The Type of Research

The research analysis for my research is qualitative data provided in the form of words and sentences, which is the main objective of my research. I chose qualitative research in order to carry out detailed research. Qualitative research is a methodological strategy for deeply exploring and understanding complicated phenomena. Unlike quantitative research, which is concerned with numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research attempts to reveal the underlying meanings, patterns, and processes that guide human behaviour and experiences (Yin, 2011). The qualitative data are collected from the relevant text, dialogues, and narration of the novel related to the topic of the research. One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it enables researchers to conduct in-depth and comprehensive investigations of topics of interest. It also provides researchers with the flexibility to select specific topics because it is not constrained by the limitations associated with other types of research (Yin, 2011).

Based on the explanation above, this study adopts a qualitative research method because it seeks to conduct an in-depth analysis of the data from *Rebecca* to examine the deconstruction of Maxim de Winter's masculinity. According to the theory of deconstruction by Derrida, this research will use the selected data in the story that will be studied by deconstruction theory.

3.2 Data Collection

Collecting data is a very crucial process in conducting research. The data is used to broaden the perspective related to the topic of the research, which is masculinity. Yin (2011) emphasizes the importance of combining multiple sources of evidence to enhance the accuracy and validity of research findings. This procedure, known as triangulation, involves the use of multiple sources of evidence,

including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. This study applies the documentary method as the technique of data collection.

To collect the data, this study employed a close reading of *Rebecca*, paying particular attention to representations of masculinity in Maxim de Winter's character. The primary data consisted of the novel's narration, descriptions, and dialogues. The secondary data were collected from various sources, including books, journal articles, and previous studies on the theory of deconstruction, to support and strengthen the analysis of this study. The next step was to take the relevant dialogs/narrations that reflect masculinity traits. The final step was to identify and categorize the data from the novel that were relevant to the deconstruction of the main male character's masculinity. After the data had been verified, the next stage was to conduct in-depth analysis employing Derrida's Deconstruction theory.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

According to Yin (2011), data processing in the context of qualitative research is a set of systematic steps involving organizing, coding, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. The collected data will be explained and scrutinized to identify the pattern (Yin, 2011). The aims of the data processing and analysis were then identify the patterns and find the answer of the research question.

The collected data then examined by referencing *Of Grammatology* by Jacques Derrida. I am using the process of the deconstruction reading strategy (Bressler, 2007). The first step is to identify the binary oppositions in the story by determining which terms are privileged and which are marginalized. The second step is to examine the ideas, concepts, and values that underlie these oppositions. In this step, the study explains the fixed meanings attributed to the characters in the novel. I also showed the comments from the previous researchers related to analyzing characters of *Rebecca*. It is important as secondary data to confirm my statement. The third step is reversing the binary opposition in the novel. The fourth step is disassembling the fixed meaning of the characters in the novel. The next step

is to examine the characters in *Rebecca* from different perspectives in accordance with the newly inverted binary oppositions. The final step is to demonstrate the undecidability of the characters' perspectives in the novel. These steps of examination are intended to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the findings of how masculinity can be deconstructed in *Rebecca* using the deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida. This chapter also explains how I deconstructed the main male character's masculinity step by step and allowed meaning to stay unstable.

4.1 Binary Opposition

Binary opposition is a system that consists of two correlated categories which are formed based on the hierarchy. These categories are called binary. The relation of these binaries is unequal. Traditionally, binary oppositions are structured hierarchically, with one term being considered superior and the other inferior. In many cultures, men are commonly associated with strength, toughness, and other characteristics that are regarded as superior within the gender hierarchy (Ashraf, 2014; Connell, 2005). This also reflects the traditional description of masculinity. Such traits are generally regarded as more desirable than submissive traits, which are traditionally viewed as inferior within the gender hierarchy.

Binary opposition can be found in the male character in this novel, Maxim de Winter. He has binary oppositions related to his traits throughout the novel. Maxim actualized the patriarchal culture over the female characters. He occupies the privileged position within the binary opposition because, as a man, he is represented as more powerful than Rebecca and Mrs. de Winter, who are constructed as submissive. However, a deconstructive reading reveals paradoxes, including the murder he committed and the submissiveness that stems from his fear of losing his reputation.

I serve the binary opposition data in the form of Presence and Absence since they are related to binary opposition. Presence and Absence are effective in showing the binary oppositions of Maxim de Winter.

4.1.2 Presence and Absence

Presence and absence are basic concepts in deconstruction theory that criticize meaning stability. Traditionally, presence is regarded as the dominant,

reliable, and primary term, whereas absence is viewed as subordinate and secondary (Connell, 2005). Western philosophical tradition always attempts to find the truth from reality. Derrida called this the metaphysics of presence.

Metaphysic of presence assumes that truth is present and directly accessible. The purpose of this metaphysic is to find the whole truth from reality, and that truth is considered as presence, which is referred to as Being. This concept is closely associated with logocentrism, which refers to the tendency to privilege the *logos*, or spoken language, over writing because speech is believed to establish the presence of both the speaker and the listener (Derrida, 2016). Derrida points out that “spoken” is seen as something authentic, meanwhile “written” usually is identical with the opposite.

In this research, I divided two major binary oppositions of Maxim de Winter. The first binary is Maxim as a dominant, ruling, and powerful man; and Maxim as an inferior, fragile, and vulnerable man. The privileged representation of Maxim is subsequently referred to as Presence because it reflects the traditional interpretation of masculinity, whereas the marginalized representation of Maxim is referred to as Absence.

In *Rebecca*, Maxim’s masculinity and authority cannot stand on their own. There must be traces from both Mrs. de Winter and Rebecca to highlight his masculinity and how it is deconstructed. In this part, I present the trace of his masculinity by showing his power against Mrs. de Winter. In his relationship with Mrs. de Winter, Maxim is portrayed as a dominant, protective, and mature man. I am pointing out how Maxim’s presence and absence appear in the novel below:

1. Maxim’s Maturity

Maxim is showing his maturity using choice of words that show his domination to her. The way he refers her implies his masculinity.

“No, I’m asking you to marry me, you little fool.” (p. 50)

Maxim's use of the phrase "little fool" positions the narrator as an inferior and dependent figure within their relationship. Conversely, Maxim is portrayed as the

superior figure who exercises control over the narrator's life choices. He keeps his treatment to Mrs. de Winter with the intention of making his domination prominent not only by the words but also by his gesture,

He pulled me beside him, and put his arm round my shoulder, still looking straight ahead of him, his right hand on the wheel. He drove, I remember, even faster than before. "I supposed you are young enough to be my daughter, and I don't know how to deal with you," he said. (p. 40)

This dialogue demonstrates that Maxim's gentle gesture not only reflects emotional maturity but also reveals the trace of a power relation in which Mrs. de Winter is positioned as a vulnerable figure who relies on his authority.

2. Maxim's Physical Domination

Maxim de Winter's dominance in his relationship with Mrs. de Winter is conveyed not only through his verbal expressions but also through his subtle body language, which reinforces his authority. In several scenes, Maxim is portrayed as standing taller, speaking more assertively, and displaying dominance over Mrs. de Winter through his physical presence (McGivern & Miller, 2017). The novel also told the readers about Maxim's masculinity from his body language and physical presence. Men's physical presence in relationships is strongly connected with expressions of masculinity, influencing everything from body language and attitude to closeness, and emotional connection (Begiato, 2020). This connection between physical presence and masculine identity forms relationship dynamics, affects communication patterns and impacts relationship satisfaction generally. Maxim's physical language is visible as Mrs. de Winter described his posture.

We all waited, watching the door. And Mrs. Danvers came into the room. Perhaps it was because I had generally seen her alone, and beside me she had seemed tall and gaunt, but she looked shrunken now in size, more wizened, and I noticed she had to look up to Favell and to Frank and Maxim. (p. 331)

This shows Maxim is physically prominent compared to Mrs. Danvers. His gesture indicates that he has confidence of his masculine identity. Men who feel safe in their masculine identity might keep an open, relaxed posture that accepts connection. At the same time, those experiencing insecurity about their social

position might show a more rigid or unwelcoming attitude (Rowlands, 2011). However, there are some parts of the novel where his depression of covering the truth about Rebecca affects his physical appearance because the truth is starting to reveal itself.

In moments of heightened vulnerability, Maxim expresses his physical dominance by pulling Mrs. de Winter into his arms with force, positioning her within a gesture that is simultaneously protective and commanding. This shows his need to maintain his control even as his emotional balance collapses.

He put his arm around me and pulled me to him very close. My reserve was broken, and my shyness too. I stood there with my face against his shoulder. “You’ve forgiven me, haven’t you?” Maxim said. (p. 256)

In the emotionally charged moment about his murder confession, Maxim was still able to express his affection by showing his physical dominance over Mrs. de Winter. She describes that she can feel the tension, the desperation delivered through his gesture. This physical dominance leads him to reconstruct the masculine identity, which is represented by affectionate protecting gestures, that has just been deconstructed by weakness and truth. As his voice begins to stutter, his physical gestures become more dominant, revealing how deeply his masculinity is rooted in the exercise of control.

3. Maxim’s Material Wealth

The description of Maxim’s wealth to construct an image and power. Identity is not merely a decorative thing. It is a matter of status and respect (Hirschmann & Thomas, 2022). He lives in Manderley, a symbol of his identity as an upper-class English landowner. Every corner in Manderley reflects the controls and pride of his social status.

“Because life at Manderley is the only that ever interests anybody down here.” (p. 139)

The narration above describes how sophisticated Manderley was. His wealth also functions as a source of power, as Manderley is portrayed as a magnificent and prestigious estate among the social elite in the novel, symbolizing wealth, status,

and social authority. This suggests that Manderley symbolizes Maxim's masculinity through its association with his wealth and the de Winter family's social and financial status, as wealth is an important source of power and prestige in society (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

“Yes, there it was, the Manderley I had expected, the Manderley of my picture postcard long ago. A thing of grace and beauty, exquisite and faultless, lovelier even than I had dreamed, built in its hollow of smooth grassland and mossy lawns, the terraces slopping to the gardens, and the gardens to the sea.” (p. 63)

The quotation depicts the splendor of Manderley through descriptions of its landscape and natural surroundings, emphasizing the aristocratic privilege associated with owning such an estate. The details of Manderley consistently evoke wealth and luxury, reinforcing its image as an aristocratic estate.

I saw through one of the mullioned windows that the hall was full of people, and I heard Maxim swear under his breath. “Damn that woman,” he said; “she knows perfectly well I did not want this sort of thing,” and he put on the brakes with a jerk. “(p. 63)

The people Mrs. de Winter saw were all staff of Manderley. They greeted them as the master of the mansion and also as an aristocratic landowner. The number of staff is an indicator of material wealth.

“The rooms in the west wing are very old, the bedroom in the big suite is twice as large as this; a very beautiful room too, with a scrolled ceiling. The tapestry chairs are very valuable, and so is the carved mantelpiece. It's the most beautiful room in the house. And the windows look down across the lawns to the sea.” (p. 72)

This quotation shows how Manderley becomes the manifestation of wealth and Maxim's identity. The ownership of Manderley and its possessions signifies the social status of the de Winter family. Through her marriage to Maxim, Mrs. de Winter also acquires this aristocratic status and privilege. These quotations from *Rebecca* clearly demonstrate that Maxim's material wealth plays a significant role in constructing his identity and reinforcing his power, thereby establishing him as a respected figure in the novel (Connell, 2005).

4. Maxim's Authority in Manderley

As the owner of Manderley, Maxim exercises complete authority over the estate and everyone who works there, reinforcing his position as the head of the household. This authority can also be interpreted as a form of symbolic power that represents and reinforces his masculine identity. The dialogue below demonstrates how easily Maxim could replace Mrs. Danvers if he chose to, despite her dedication to managing and maintaining Manderley. This suggests that Maxim is largely indifferent to the possibility of replacing her.

“Don’t mind her,” he said; “she’s an extraordinary character in many ways, and possibly not very easy for another woman to get on with. You mustn’t worry about it. If she really makes herself a nuisance we’ll get rid of her. But she’s efficient, you know, and will take all housekeeping worries off your hands. I dare say she’s a bit of bully to the staff. She doesn’t dare to bully me though. I’d have given her the sack long ago if she had tried.” (p. 73)

The dialogue revealed how Maxim willingly expelled Mrs. Danvers from Manderley for Mrs. de Winter. Protecting his wife's well-being is regarded as a masculine trait because protection is closely associated with masculinity through the exercise of power and dominance. Consequently, his authority is presented as unquestionable, and those around him are expected to comply with his commands (Kimmel et al., 2004). His reassurance to Mrs. de Winter also suggests a strong mentality that no one dares to disturb him and Mrs. de Winter. He also explicitly states that Mrs. Danvers would not dare challenge him because he occupies a higher position than she does within the hierarchy of Manderley. Additionally, he does not hesitate to discharge her if she really breaks the rules.

His authority is also reflected by how he would act if he were in trouble, like Mrs. de Winter did when she tried to hide that she broke the china cupid to avoid getting trouble with Mrs. Danvers,

“Don’t be a little idiot. Anyone would think you were afraid of them.” (p.135)

Maxim said the passage and told Mrs. de Winter to not showing any signs that she was afraid of people talking bad about her. He prevented her from doing that regarding her status as Mrs. de Winter.

5. Maxim’s Resistance Against His Crime

In this specific moment, Maxim gives a clear demonstration of his reassertion of power and the ability in a high-risks problem. He takes charge decisively rather than showing fear and hesitation.

“Frank is not to leave this room,” he said. “I’m going to manage this thing alone. Colonel Julyan will be here in exactly ten minutes.” (p. 319)

The sentence “Frank is not to leave this room” is not used a suggestion or request. It is a declarative or a command to establish authority over him in front of others. The next sentence, “I’m going to manage this thing alone.” Is a form of clarifying his leadership. The use of “I” puts full responsibility and control on himself.

6. The Valor of Maxim de Winter

Maxim was also showing his masculinity and dominance by his decision-making in unfortunate situations in a very calm manner and controlled emotions as a form of bravery. His obsession with preserving his reputation plays a significant role throughout the story. It is proven by how he handles his problem in a crisis below:

“Don’t interfere with this, Frank.” He said, “this is my affair entirely. I’m not going to give way to blackmail.” (p. 318)

The context of this passage from Maxim happened when he told Frank, his trusted right-hand man. Maxim convinced him that he could solve his own problem and did not need help from Frank. Maxim's trait is considered masculine because he attempts to solve his problems independently without allowing others to interfere in his personal affairs. This is particularly evident through his commanding manner when he interacts with Frank. This demonstrates how he emphasizes his independence.

“You think you can frighten me, don’t you, Favell?” said Maxim. “Well, you are wrong. I’m not afraid of anything you can do. There is telephone, in the next room. Shall I ring up Colonel Julyan and ask him to come over? He’s the magistrate. He’ll be interested in your story.” (p. 318)

This conversation takes place when Favell, Rebecca's cousin and lover, attempts to blackmail Maxim regarding Rebecca's death. However, Maxim remains

calm and resolute, refusing to give Favell any opportunity to manipulate or threaten him. He decides to involve Colonel Julyan, the magistrate of Rebecca's death investigation, demonstrating his willingness to deal with the issue directly rather than lead to intimidation. This indicates Maxim's toughness and authority in an unfortunate situation. Men who value social respect are tend to see beneficial effects from intervention and are more confident in getting involved as observers (Leone et al., 2016). In the other hand, Favell judged Maxim for standing up for Mrs. de Winter and considered it as vulnerability. Men who consider avoiding feminine traits important are often judged or may lose their respect when they demonstrate behaviors associated with care or support (Leone et al., 2016). However, Maxim maintains his determination to defend his wife.

4.2 Trace and Absence

Trace is a concept that refers to the residues of meaning that continuously influence every text. The characteristic of trace is mysterious and imperceptible. The usage of trace is to reveal how meaning is always dependent on other signs. There is no absolute meaning of a sign because other signs are always taking part of forming a meaning that becomes the identity of a sign. This concept suggests that completely new meanings do not exist because meanings are not entirely independent from previous meanings. (Derrida, 2016), stated that we can only find the truth from the traces, not merely from the truth itself.

Trace is the effect of absence in a constant process in sign structure. Absence is a crucial point in meaning construction since meaning is dependent to différance that connects with absence. Therefore, all signs in texts are always deferred. In this sub-chapter I will serve the data of trace along with the absence.

Derrida argues that the belief in absolute presence, which assumes that something is either entirely present or completely absent, represents a simplification of reality (Derrida, 2016). He believes that absence can manifest as a type of presence, and that presence might be interpreted as a type of absence. That point of view is critical for comprehending texts, as previous meanings strongly impact the present (Leithart, 2004).

1. Maxim's Immaturity

Behind all those personas of Maxim as a leader, a husband, and the master. Although Maxim prominently demonstrates his authority as the owner of Manderley, he also reveals a vulnerable state through his childish behavior, despite his mature image, particularly in his relationship with Mrs. de Winter.

“Do you?” he said. “Do you?” He held me very tight, and his eyes questioned me, dark and uncertain, the eyes of a child in pain, a child in fear. (p.113)

Mrs. de Winter noticed the unusual behavior of him which was a part of his unstable masculinity as the impact of his trauma with Rebecca. Maxim's domination contains trace of emotional instability and trauma from the past that indirectly present in the text, but still affecting his traits. His exaggerating treatment to protect and to control Mrs. de Winter is a compensation of his failure related to his relation with Rebecca where his previous masculinity deconstructed. Maxim's masculinity trace is also can be seen from his tendency to keep the emotional gap from Mrs. de Winter and isolates himself from openness in their relationship.

2. Maxim's Weak Appearance

In the moment of increased vulnerability, Maxim express his physical dominance by pulling Mrs. de Winter into his arms with fierce, putting her in a body language that is both protective and commanding. This shows his needs to maintain his control even as his emotional collapses. There are some parts of the novel where his depression of covering the truth about Rebecca affecting his physical appearance because the truth is starting to reveal itself.

He put his arm around me and pulled me to him very close. My reserve was broken, and my shyness too. I stood there with my face against his shoulder. “You’ve forgiven me, haven’t you?” I said. (p. 256)

In the emotionally charged moment about his murder confession, Maxim's masculinity is rooted in his control. He was looking for comfort, support, and validation from Mrs. de Winter. Maxim held her to make her empathize his concealment and to express his dependency. He tried to reassure himself that Mrs. de Winter would not leave him. Yet, based on deconstruction theory, this occurrence

also exposes the fragility of his dominance. This data indicates the binary opposition of Maxim showcasing masculinity through paradoxical actions, in one side he showcases fragility but in the other, he wants to manipulate Mrs. de Winter.

His face was white and his eyes strained and wretched with dark lost look they had when I first met him. (p. 111)

This narration explains the occurrence when Mrs. de Winter enters the unoccupied small cottage near the beach. Maxim was not happy with Mrs. de Winter actions because she nearly found out the evidence of the murder he did. He tried to hide it until his face was white as the result of his anxiety. The sentence clearly explains how he turns pale because he was so afraid if someone find the truth about Rebecca's death. This indicates that his dishonesty has a role in his masculinity.

3. The Downfall of Manderley

Rebecca is the story of Mrs. de Winter as the new wife of an aristocrat, most of the story is the flashback of her memory, in the beginning of the story which is Mrs. de Winter flashback memories, she states that Manderley is no in existence.

The house was a sepulchre, our fear and suffering lay buried in the ruins. (p.3)

Throughout the novel, Manderley is not just a setting but a part of Maxim himself. It represents how wealth, status, control, and the traditional masculine role of the "master of the house". From the outside, it was a grand and imposing symbol of power, and Maxim is seen as its rightful, commanding figure. However, as the truth of Rebecca starts to unravel his inability and his dependence in appearance, it becomes clear that this image of control is only a pretence.

In the end of the story the conversation between Maxim and Mrs. de Winter clarifies how his wealth, control, and power vanish along with the burned down Manderley.

He did not answer and I went on watching the sky. It seemed to get lighter even as I stared. Like the first red streak of sunrise. Little by little it spread across the sky.

“It’s in winter you see the northern lights, isn’t it?” I said. “Not in summer?”
 “That’s not the northern lights,” he said. “That’s Manderley.” (p. 371)

This conversation between Maxim and Mrs. de Winter in the very last part of the novel shows the readers that Manderley as a monument of de Winter’s family legacy and wealth was burning down. This symbolic narration when Manderley was in flames can be the sign of the end of Maxim’s material wealth. He no longer has the estate to hide behind. He is stripped of everything that gave him traditional masculine significance: his home, heritage, and reputation. The supposed dominance of masculinity is shown to rely on suppression and structure, when that structure falls apart, so did the man who depended on it. In the end, Maxim’s identity is no longer defined by his mastery or possession, but survival and lost.

4. Maxim’s Mental Breakdown

At first the novel describes Maxim de Winter as a mature and wealthy man who owns Manderley. He was portrayed to be an implementation of traditionally masculine. Manderley was under his command and he had a very crucial role in it especially after Rebecca, his first wife died.

“I don’t want to look back on those years,” he said slowly. “I don’t want even to tell you about them. The shame and degradation. The lie we lived, she and I. the shabby, sordid farce we played together...” (p. 265-266)

The narration says Maxim was laughing after his confession about his disharmonious relationship with Rebecca gives him mental break down, it was a disturbing and hollow response to trauma. His breakdown made Mrs. de Winter anxious and showed his unravelling emotional state. He had no control compared to Rebecca in Manderley when she was alive. All things in Manderley were all due to her. He actually was not so powerful as the master of Manderley. The novel also told the readers about Maxim’s masculinity from his body language and physical presence. This mental breakdown led him into distress and lost his stoic trait. he could not think about how to save his reputation and solve the problem. His fear is visible as he shows his vulnerable state which can be seen when he is giving up and cannot stand for himself.

“I knew it would happen one day,” said Maxim, “even when I went up to Edgecombe and identified that body as hers. I knew it meant nothing, nothing at all. It was only a question of waiting, of marking time. Rebecca would win in the end. Finding you has not made any difference has it? Loving you does not alter thing at all. Rebecca knew she would win in the end. I saw her smile, when she died.” (p. 273)

This passage delivers how bad his mental state. He was portrayed as a calm person but his desperation demolishes his rationality until he implicitly said that the late Rebecca has won taking over Manderley and left her influence in there which polluting Maxim’s legacy.

5. The Surrender of Maxim de Winter

Toward the end of the novel, he shows his surrender. It marks a huge twist where he stops fighting, stops controlling and gives himself up to the judgement.

“I’m ready to do whatever you care to suggest,” he said quietly. (p. 340)

This brief words from him when he was in crisis reflects a loss of control and helplessness when the investigation was start. He just submitted to fate and judgement and was not in capacity to defend himself over Rebecca’s death. The description of him presenting that he has control and applied it for himself that counted as maturity and one the masculinity traits (Barker, 2004) which considered as dominant traditionally.

6. Powerless Maxim

In the other hand, Favell judged Maxim for standing up for Mrs. de Winter and considered it as vulnerability. Men who think it is important to avoid feminine traits often judged or even lose their respect if the help someone (Leone et al., 2016) yet, Maxim maintain his will to defend his wife. Yet, he also shows his fear of being left by Mrs. de Winter. He appears so weak and fragile in the middle of the story. The conflict affects him severely and there is a narration shows how it drained him physically as well.

He took my face between his hands and looked at me. For the first time I saw how thin his face was, how lined and drawn. And there were great shadows beneath his eyes. “How much do you love me?” he said. I could not answer. I could only stare back at him, at his dark tortured eyes, and his pale drawn face. (p. 256)

This narration described how Maxim was frustrated of Rebecca's dead body discovery and he ask Mrs. de Winter if she still loves him after his murder confession to reassure himself if she would not leave him despite, he never shows his affection to her in the beginning of the story. He is making sure that Mrs. de Winter will still love him when he tells her that he is the murderer of Rebecca in uncertain way with wounded eyes. Mrs. de Winter often describe him as a figure who is emotionally difficult to reach, as in the narration,

His face was a mask. His smile was not his own. The eyes were not the eyes of a man I loved, the man I knew. They looked through me and beyond me, cold, expressionless, to some place of pain and torture I could not enter, to some private, inward hell I could not share. (p. 216)

4.3 Différance

This sub-chapter shows that although Maxim is Mrs. de Winter's husband, she keeps feeling like she is an outsider who does not have access to Maxim's deepest feeling. In a deconstructive way, this isolated personality is keeping trace of the traditional masculinity failure that demand men to be always strong, rational, and unemotional. Maxim chose to hide his emotion to maintain the sturdy and steady man image. The trace of vulnerability and trauma that he wanted to deny is even clear. Maxim is not fully present emotionally because he is still haunted by the previous experience that has not finished yet. When Mrs. de Winter is trapped deeper in her cluelessness, Maxim does not give her any explanation, instead he let the confusion happen that indirectly disprove his superiority and Mrs. de Winter inferiority. This position is unfavourable because his refusal to be more honest implying the trace of fear if Mrs. de Winter knows the truth, he will lose his masculine image he built. This is deconstructed masculinity paradox, the desire to dominate emerge from the deepest fear of losing powers. Therefore, Maxim is not present as a consistently strong man, but as a figure who is defined by absence, doubt, and trauma trace that constantly shaping his action in the relation.

The novel not only talk about the relation between Maxim and Mrs. de Winter but also with Rebecca that shows different image Maxim has with her. Rebecca was his first wife, who was described as dominant, smart, independent and intimidating

woman. These traits make Maxim cannot control her and their relation does not fit the patriarchal norms (Karim et al., 2018). The relation is the cause of Maxim's trauma and defeat. This analysis of trace aims to present that Maxim's inability to control Rebecca left trace of the masculinity failure that haunted him.

The relation between Maxim and Rebecca shows the most extreme form of masculinity crisis hidden behind wise aristocratic man. Although Maxim socially is the head of the household, but psychologically he is in an inferior position against Rebecca. When he finally revealing the truth to Mrs. de Winter, he said,

“You thought I loved Rebecca?” he said. “You thought I killed her, loving her? I hated her, I tell you. Our marriage was farce from the very first.” (p. 263)

The passage above marks emotional outburst from his defeated feeling that he holds for some while. The hatred itself is a form from the inability to control a woman who is considered stronger than him. The trace of defeat is even clearer when he stated that Rebecca knew that Maxim would sacrifice everything for his reputation which is proven by the narration below,

“She knew I would do as she suggested: come her to Manderley, throw the place open, entertain, have our marriage spoken of as the success of the century. She knew I would sacrifice pride, honour, personal feelings, every damned quality on earth, rather than stand before our little world after a week of marriage and have them know the things about her that she had told me then.” (p.265)

This statement unveils that he feels belittled and humiliated as a man. The pinnacle of masculinity failure happens when Maxim killed Rebecca, which marks that he loses control and authority that should have built the identity of traditional masculinity. By taking Rebecca's life away, Maxim attempts to reclaim his long-lost authority which contradicts his goal, instead, it leaves a trace of inner urgency and destruction that he hides with his calm personality the whole time. After the murder of Rebecca, her power is still lingering in Manderley and keep haunting him which means Rebecca's trace never really disappear. This influence also shows the failure of Maxim's masculinity will always there even when he tries to rebuild his role through the new relationship with Mrs. de Winter. This thing tells that Maxim's

masculinity never totally present and stable. Absence, and trauma are the factors that always follow him in the power relation with women.

Maxim in the novel is portrayed as a masculine character based on his wealth. Masculinity which there is connection about masculinity and social structure that shows the practice of strong working class man (Connell, 2005; Kimmel et al., 2004; Kimmel & Messner, 2012) but the social class is also prominent in masculinity values (Madrid, 2017). This masculinity is highlighted in Maxim's ownership of Manderley, a mansion that shows his wealth and power where most of the story takes place in.

“Never mind, I'll take you to Venice for our honeymoon and we'll hold hands in the gondola. But we won't stay too long, because I want to show you Manderley” (p. 52)

The dialogue above happened when Maxim decided to ask Mrs. de Winter to be his wife. He stated that he wants to take her to Venice and mentioning about Manderley. Manderley was always be his pride and legacy of de Winter family which was well known for their wealth and considered as the high-class socialites and their title was inseparable from Manderley.

Until he married Rebecca it turns out that he lives in pretention, he reveals the truth that he had no control compared to Rebecca in Manderley when she was alive. All things in Manderley were all due to her. He actually was not so powerful as the master of Manderley. He added the narration when could not behave Rebecca's sly personality and behavior as her husband and as the official owner of the mansion:

“The beauty of Manderley that you see today, the Manderley that people talk about and photograph and paint, it's all due to her, to Rebecca.” (p. 266)

The passage above clarifies about how vulnerable he was. He was far from how people see him including how Mrs. de Winter thought about his previous marriage. Maxim's masculinity is deconstructed through trace because his identity as dominant male figure is always shaped, haunted, and weakened by the ambience of Rebecca. The trace of Rebecca's also affects Maxim mental state. He still thinks about the influence of her.

He put his hands over mine and looked into my face. "Rebecca has won," he said. (p. 257)

He implies that Rebecca is successfully takes over Manderley. He cannot get rid of her. This moment that clarifies where Maxim's masculinity is fully broken by Rebecca's trace. Even though Rebecca is dead, Maxim feels defeated by her. His identity as a strong, commanding man collapses, admitting he feels powerless and emotionally trapped.

"Her shadow between us all the time," he said. "Her damned shadow keeping us from one another. How could I hold you like this, my darling, my little love, with the fear always in my heart that this would happen? I remembered her eyes as she looked at me before she died. I remembered that slow treacherous smile. She knew this would happen even then. She knew she would win in the end." (p. 257)

The passage above clarifies how Maxim is haunted by the memories Rebecca left. Just with her remaining memories, they are enough to weakened Maxim's power. This meaning shift is also happened in the relation of his masculinity with Mrs. de Winter. In the relation with Mrs. de Winter, Maxim explicitly shows his role as a masculine figure, socially and psychologically stable. However, in his own internal perspective, the meaning of masculine identity experiencing deferment. He acted like he did not regret committed murder to Rebecca,

"I only mind for you," he said. "I don't regret anything else. If it had to come all over again I should not do anything different. I'm glad I killed Rebecca. I shall never have any remorse for that, never, never. But you. I can't forget what it has done to you. I was looking at you, thinking of nothing else all through the lunch. It's gone forever, that funny, young, lost look that I loved. It won't come back again, I killed that too, when I told you about Rebecca... It's gone, in twenty-four hours. You are so much older..." (p. 291)

This is the peak moment if *différance* process, Maxim lost his self-control in front of other people. He said "I'm glad I killed Rebecca.", which he always tried to hide before Rebecca's body found. It left him with regret and demand for Mrs. de Winter acceptance,

"We'll start again, once this thing is behind us. We can do it, you and I. It's not like being alone. The past can't hurt us if we are together. You'll have children too." (p. 311)

The trauma of his failure controlling his spouse made him looking for a partner who would not challenge him like Rebecca. In the other side, Mrs. de Winter shows up as a character with shy personality, obedient, and insecure which make a save space for Maxim rebuild the illusion of dominant masculinity. When the truth revealed itself, this illusion destroyed but Maxim still hopes for Mrs. de Winter to accept him. In the narration above, he reassures Mrs. de Winter that he still deserves her. The power he points out earlier is always depending to his conviction that Mrs. de Winter will always support him.

Through the deconstruction theory we can see that the masculinity traits that is shown by the main male character in *Rebecca* is deconstructed. He did not experience character development; he got character regression instead. The character development of Maxim that highlights his masculinity is further deconstructed as the narrative unravels. He showed most of his weaknesses throughout the novel. He made the female characters appeared more masculine while he was in an unfortunate situation such as Rebecca who was able to control him and the Manderley, and when Mrs. de Winter protected him when Rebecca's dead body found. These contrasts happened as the results of Maxim's masculinity disappeared.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the result of the findings I found from *Rebecca*. The focus of this thesis is how to explain the masculinity of the main male character deconstructed and to show that the binary oppositions are all equally powerful. The connection of each binary is not to oppose one and another but to form a concept or idea with comparison of these binaries. The process of forming the concept using binary opposition also affected by how trace exist between every signs. In this novel, the most prominent binary opposition is Maxim's masculinity met the femininity of Mrs. de Winter and Rebecca. Trace plays role as the bridge between binary oppositions. Meaning of a sign cannot be exist without the existence of other signs. The trace of Mrs. de Winter's and Rebecca's femininity that were implicitly exist play a huge role to distinct Maxim's masculinity. This also deeply interconnected with the presence and absence in Deconstruction Theory. The readers of the novel most likely easily can tell that Maxim plays a role of a person who was masculine. The opening of the novel told us that he was wise and mature man from the very first and he became the main male character in the novel so this can be considered as the presence of the binary opposition from the novel. Meanwhile, the existence of Mrs. de Winter's and Rebecca's femininity was hidden. This hidden femininity is the absence. All the concepts in Deconstruction theory formed a method which I use to break down Maxim's de Winter Masculinity.

Based on the analysis, Maxim appeared masculine but he demolished his masculinity after constructing his masculinity as his image to the society. He also told Mrs. de Winter that he could not handle Rebecca with his power which means Rebecca was more powerful than him. In the closing of the novel Mrs. de Winter had a role as the problem solver for Maxim's problem. It appears that their traits are not stable. The result of this research answered the research question, Maxim and his masculinity deconstructed his masculinity itself which is synchronic with deconstruction theory that says meaning is always unstable and always fluctuates (Derrida, 2016).

This research contributes literary works research development, especially for the implementation deconstruction theory to criticize the representation of

traditional masculinity. This research contributes the enrichment of research references that using deconstruction theory approach for literary works. However, since the usage of deconstruction theory is relatively limited, this study focuses on the hegemonic masculinity of Maxim de Winter, it can provide future research to explore other characters in *Rebecca* from the different characters using other gender studies approach, such as feminist literary criticism about how Rebecca appears dominant without denying her femininity in order to give more understanding gender representation and make alternative interpretations. Therefore, this research can create possibility for the next research to discussion about gender relations in literary works.

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