

## ABSTRACT

Suroso, Marsudi. 2006. *On Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace: A Deconstructive Operation*. Thesis, Department of English Literature Faculty of Letters State University of Malang. Advisors: (I) A. Effendi Kadarisman. MA. PhD., (II) Moch. Nasrul Chatib. SS. M.Hum.

Keywords: Deconstruction, *Differance*, literature,

A deconstructive reading assumes that there is no meaning stability, and that there is no possibility to determine meaning of a text. What deconstruction does towards a text, a literary work in this case, is an analysis of structures of language, of operations of rhetoric and convolutions of thought. To deconstruct Tolstoy's *War and Peace* means to prove that there is no meaning stability and possibility to determine this novel. His statements in "*Some Words about War and Peace*" clearly indicates that there is an effort to determine the meaning of *War and Peace*, and an attempt to put *War and Peace* as a mere representation of what is in his mind. This deconstructive operation will make *War and Peace* not representation of what Leo Tolstoy wants to say.

Tolstoy gives us a description how the notion of war only brings badness to human civilization. However, in the novel itself, we can find explanations how the notion of war has important reason to be done. Both countries have committed to fight each other for the glory of their own countries. *War and Peace* has shown to us that its main characters, Pierre and Natasha, find the harmony of life when they have experienced the terror of war. The notion of war, which has been described by Tolstoy as worthless activity, appears to be something valuable, as what the novel has described.

Tolstoy's description on the notion of human freedom is also in contradiction with what *War and Peace* has explained about the notion of freedom. Tolstoy takes a moderate deduction by concluding that "the more abstract and therefore the less connected with the activity of others our activity is, the more free it is and, on the contrary, the more our activity is connected with other people the less free it is." If freedom exists in the condition of less connection with other people, it will be impossible to obtain freedom since human is naturally created to be social creature which means that human will always be connected to everything co-existing with him.

If Tolstoy is right with his conception that regards the less inevitability means the freedom and the more inevitability means the less freedom, why, in *War and Peace*, do we find many inconsistencies made by Tolstoy in describing the notion of human's freedom? If freedom exists in the condition of less connection with other people, why does Tolstoy describe Natasha Rostov a girl with mental illness when she decides to isolate herself from the family life and the external world? Tolstoy also describes the solitary life of Natasha's mother, after the death of her husband and her son, as an abnormal life. Tolstoy also inconsistently describes Pierre Bezukhov as the

man with well understanding of the essence of freedom. If Pierre is described as the man who has known that freedom, exists in the condition of less connection with external world, why does Pierre, in the story, find the real freedom when he decides to live in companionship with other people and feel a joyous feeling of freedom when he lives together with Natasha as a married couple? Why does Tolstoy propose that Pierre's faith in an ever living, ever-manifest God gives Pierre the complete, joyous sense of freedom, which constitutes his happiness? *War and Peace* has shown to us that freedom does not exist in the condition with less inevitability, as Tolstoy has proposed. It shows that the more we are connected with external world, the more we feel our freedom and the less we are connected with external world, the less we feel our freedom.

In discussing the significance of historical figures in history, we also find that Tolstoy contradicts his own discussion. He does not regard historical figure the most significant actor in causing historical events, as what the historians have proposed, since in history, the involvement of all people, is the cause of historical events. Tolstoy has described historical figures as those who have the smallest part in historical events. Historical figures, for Tolstoy, are history's slaves. But when describing the event of 1812, Tolstoy sees that the activities of historical figures, involving in the event, have produced Franco-Russian war. All of those contradictions obviously indicate that *War and Peace* can be different from what its author wants to say through the novel.