DECONSTRUCTING BINARY OPPOSITION OF ANTAGONIST CHARACTER IN RAMAYANA STORY BY C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Shochifah Diyah Puspitasari[1*], Ken Widyatwati[2], M.Suryadi[3]
[1]ifahshochifah@gmail.com , [2]kenwidyatwati@gmail.com, [3]mssuryadi07@gmail.com

UNIVERSITAS DIPONEGORO

ABSTRACT

Ramayana is the famous story from India that have retold in many versions and translated into many languages. *Ramayana* has unique way in depicting characters between the protagonist and antagonist. In the story of *Ramayana*, Ravana as the antagonist character also has some good personality such as the way he treats Sita. According to the issues, the researcher tried to analyze binary oppositions in the story of *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari by using the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida. This research is a qualitative descriptive research that focus on the antagonist character in this story namely Ravana. The data were taken from the quotations in the book to find out or explain the deconstruction analysis in the Ramayana retold by C. Rajagopalachari. The result of this research showed that the binary oppositions are found in the antagonist character, Ravana. Thus, it can be concluded that Ravana as antagonist character actually has a character who brings humanity, love, and kindness.

Keywords: Binary Opposition, Deconstruction, Ramayana

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading literary works will bring us to know and understand about the meaning and the purpose of the works. Therefore, it is important to know the whole story especially in narrative works such as novel, short story, etc. Understanding the story including to know the purpose and the meaning of it can be started by knowing the elements that form the basis of the story. In narrative works there are two elements, those are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are some elements that build the literature itself (Hendrick et al., 2019: 61). Intrinsic elements that have to be understood are plot, setting, character, characterization, theme, point of view, etc. While, extrinsic elements are elements that based on the author's subjectivity about the beliefs, attitudes, and views of life that become the background of the works (Marlina et al., 2021: 363). This elements consist of religion, culture, politic, and economic background of the author (Purwahida & Sabila, 2021: 284). Thus, from both elements can be known what does the writer means in that work.

From those two elements, intrinsic elements are elements that usually become the focus of the literary work or become the topic of many researches. In intrinsic elements there are two points that usually more prominent and become the focus of the reader. Those are plot and character/characterization. According to Noermanzah, (2017: 29) plot is a series of logically

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interacting stories from various thematic elements of the text that cause changes from the original situation as presented at the beginning of the story. According to Suharman (in Saenal, 2016: 4) character are all actors who build the storyline. Character is one of the intrinsic elements in a novel. Characters are actors in the story. While, characterization is a method to analyze the development and personality of the main character. It deals with the process of creating images of a person in fiction (Putri, 2017: 2). The relations between plot and character is very strong. According to Tu & Brown (2020: 77) a plot without a character is just a series of events, and a character without a plot is just a person's profile. Therefore, to be something in a story needs the combination between plot and characters. If the plot and characters/characterization are interesting, it will attract the readers to continue read and finish the story.

Generally there are two types of character, main character and supporting character. Main characters consists of protagonist and antagonist. Protagonist is a character that has good personality (Mustomi & Munir, 2018: 78). In fiction, this character usually becomes the lead or the major in story. The protagonist will have a conflict with the antagonist and have to solve that conflict. While Antagonist is a character that isdescribed with bad impression attached to it. This character usually will oppose the protagonist and creating conflict. Antagonist will be hated by the readers because it causes a lot of problems and make their beloved character (protagonist) have to suffer. But in the other, antagonist also has a big role in creating the good plot of the story.

Ramayana is the famous story from India that have retold in many versions and translated into many languages. The *Ramayana* is a classic story that tells the story of the life journey of a prince named Rama. This story includes how Rama found and finally married his wife, Sita, then exiled in the forest for many years because of the promise his father gave to one of his consorts, then how he saved Sinta who was kidnapped by the giant king named Ravana, and caused Rama had to fight with Ravana (Nurhidayat & Rasidin, 2019: 67). This work becomes very popular in many countries because the content of the story of Ramyana is very easily accepted by all levels of society. It because some aspects in the story of *Ramayana* intersect with things that often occur in real life. This classic story entitled *Ramayana* contains teaching materials that are suitable not only for a certain group but almost for all (Miana & Suroso, 2020: 325). Although the basic teachings used in *Ramayana* story are Hinduism, these teachings are also acceptable and in accordance with other religious teachings and other life teachings. The simple example is about the story of Rama who is willing to leave all his wealth and throne to carry out his father's promise to his wife. In this part of Rama's story, the teachings conveyed are about how a child should be devoted to his parents. This is not only taught in one religious teaching but in many religious teachings even in teachings that are not related to religion though.

Some of the teachings that are very close to everyday life are about humanity, love and kindness. Humanity, love, and kindness are basic human traits that usually make someone judged as a good person. Love in this case is not only about love between human beings but also love for all creatures on this earth. Likewise the depiction of love in the *Ramayana* story which includes love for various things. Humanity and kindness, which are often benchmarks for human character, are also very relatable to everyday life (Mastrantonio, 2023). A real example as the embodiment of love humanity and kindness in everyday life is about how humans should respect and care for the universe. In which the 3 aspects of the *Ramayana* story are conveyed not only through characters who have a background as protagonists.

However, these teachings are also conveyed through the attitude and character of the antagonist. This unique description is also one of the reasons why the author chose *Ramayana* as the scope of research.

Some previous studies have been found related to the research. The first is a study by Sugara (2019) entitled Study of Deconstruction Characterization of Rahwana In *Ramayana* Novel by Sunardi DM Related to Character Education and Cultural Value. In this research, there has found six character values that can be learned. There are religious, work hard, democratic, love the country, care for the environment, and are responsible. He also finds four cultural values. There are religious systems, language, equipment and technology system, and systems of art. A similar study also done by Siti Ulfa and Suroso in their paper entitled Deconstruction of Heroism Short Story Dongeng Rama dan Sinta by Sapardi Djoko Damono discusses the deconstruction of Rahwana in the short story 13" Dongeng Rama and Sita" by Sapardi Djoko Damono. This research found some binary oppositions to deconstruct the character of Rahwana from an antagonist figure becoming a figure of every woman's dream (Miana & Suroso, 2020; Sugara, 2019). The differences between these two researches and this research are (1) this research used the story of Ramayana retold by C. Radjagopalachari, while these previous researches used a different version of the Ramayana story, and (2) the previous research analyzed heroism and cultural values in the characterization of Ravana, while this research analyzed about humanity, love, and kindness of Ravana.

Ramayana has the unique way in depicting characters between the protagonist and antagonist. As the other narrative works, *Ramayana* has main characters that described very uniquely by the authors (Sudirana, 2019). In addition to having a unique character depiction, *Ramayana* is also touted as a depiction of stories about battles between nations in India. These nations are, Aryan Nation, Dravidian Nation, and Rakshasas. The Aryans are described as a nation whose inhabitants have white skin, sharp noses, and good looks (beautiful and handsome). The Aryans in the *Ramayana* story are symbolized by Rama and his society. Next is the Dravidian Nation. The Dravidians are the indigenous people of India. This nation has physical characteristics in the form of a short body, dark skin, big eyes, and curly hair, which is then symbolized in the *Ramayana* story as the Vanara (a monkey army). This army of monkeys eventually became followers of Rama because they did not have power. And the third nation is the Rakshasas. This nation is described as a cruel nation, tall, big, and has a scary impression. This Giant Nation is described as the Ravana nation and his people in the land of Lanka (Chuanwen, 2022).Of course, this shows that humanity, love, and kindness are the very opposite of the depiction of antagonistic nature. But if we review again, in the story of *Ramayana*, Ravana as the antagonist characters also has some good personality such as the way he treats Sita. And Rama, who known as the definition of perfect hero also makes some mistakes that cannot be said as the simple one. Instead of doing unhuman acts to Sita, Ravana chooses to serve Sita as a queen of his kingdom. So, it is possible if antagonist character with those all bad natures related to it sometimes has god things in his/her self. According to the issue that have explained before in the background, the researcher tries to analyse binary oppositions in the story of *Ramayana* retold by C.Rajagopalachari by using the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida. The focus of this research is an antagonist character of this story namely Ravana.

B. METHOD

This research employed qualitative research method. According to Charter and Thomas (in Sya'roni, 2017), qualitative method is a method to analyse and interpret the data on phenomena that are not easily reduced to number. This study also use the qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative descriptive research is a research that is used to describe many kinds of phenomenon which faced along the process of analysis based on the documents that had found. The form of the data in this research is the form of a word, including a description or quotations from particular events. The data is taken from the quotations in the book to find out or explain the deconstruction analysis in the *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari.

In this type of research, the researcher collects, classifies, analyzes, and explains the conclusion based on the data of the analysis. The researcher uses the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida by using binary opposition to understand things in more detail (Gasché, 2000). In this research the data collection procedures that was used by the researcher is observation technique. The observation techniques was done by reading and observing the data. In this case the data was in form of book of *Ramayana* retold by. C. Rajagopalachari. Applied this techniques, the researcher took field notes to take many forms such as a description of what have been observed (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). The several stages in collecting data are as follows: 1) reading (including triangulation method), 2) identifying, 3) classifying, 4) interpreting, 5) inventorying, 6) and reporting. After doing several stages in the research, such as reading a book and then classifying the quotations, the writer wants to interpret the quotation based on Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory. With these quotes the author can see that the quotes shows binary opposition which is a reference in deconstructing a thing. With this the researcher wants to answer research questions based on the data that has been collected.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This findings revealed the personality of Ravana and other characters in *Ramayana*, retold by C. Rajagopalachari, which will show the result of this research. In this part, three points become the focus of the research. First is what the meaning of humanity constructed in *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari are. The second is what the meaning of love constructed in *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari are. And the last one is what the meaning of kindness constructed in *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari are. Then, the new meaning will be the final result of the analysis.

1. The Meaning of Humanity Constructed in *Ramayana* Retold by C. Rajagopalachari

The first collection of binary oppositions is used to reveal the forms of humanity contained in parts of the story *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari. Humanity is a trait that should exist and be inherent in every human living on this earth. Humanity can also be interpreted as an attitude or behavior that humans do to other humans. According to Dayusman et al., (2023), humanity involves things related to human's dignity, fraternity, and justice. Humanity in the social environment is usually synonymous with things that smell good. Some points will be discussed about humanity in the *Ramayana* story, which will be represented through the opposition between Arya and the Rakshasas.

The first discussion is about bullying and being bullied. The central conflict in the Ramayan story is about the battle between Rama's group, which in this discussion represents the Aryans against Ravana, the representation of the Rakshasas because Ravana had kidnapped Sita, Rama's wife. This turned out to be a general description of the *Ramayana* story. Even if we look deeper, the cause of the significant conflict in the *Ramayana* story is because of the bullying carried out by Rama and Lakshmana (Aryan) against Ravana's younger sister, Surpanakha (Rakshasas).

This is told in an episode where Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita are resting on the bank of the river, and then comes Surpanakha, the female giant. Seeing Rama's beautiful and charming face, Surpanakha was attracted and fell in love with Rama. Surpanakha tried to seduce and offer love to Rama with the aim of Rama wanting to marry him, but Rama refused and made Surpanakha a joke for him and Lakshmana. It turned out that this joke went too far, which infuriated Surpanakha. Rajagopalachari shows this in the episode "The Surpanakha Episode":

"The moment I set eyes on you," she continued, "I fell in love with you." (p.83)

This quotation explains how Surpanakha confesses to Rama about her interest in the beauty of Rama. However, Rama replies to the confession with a rejection. Rama not only refused, but he also offered to Surpanakha to try to seduce Lakshmana. Rama said that Surpanakha would be more compatible with Lakshmana than having to be with Rama, who was already married. Then after that, Lakshmana even made a joke by telling Surpanakha that she was more compatible with Rama. This joke finally made Surpanakha angry and think that all this happened because of Sita's presence. She also intends to abolish Sita.

Then further on how Rama and Lakshmana injured Surpanakha is explained as follows: Rama intervened just in time to save Sita. The farce had gone too far and threatened to become a tragedy. Rama shouted to Lakshmana,

"Look, I have just been able to save Sita. Attend to this monster and teach her a lesson."Lakshmana at once took up his sword and maimed Surpanakha and drove her out. Disgraced and mutilated, Surpanakha uttered a loud wail and disappeared into the forest (p.84).

Based on the quotation, it can be interpreted as what Rama and Lakshmana did to Surpanakha. Even though Rama did that to save Sita, hurting Surpanakha is not something that someone who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu should do. Moreover, the cause of this chaos is the impact of his actions, namely, making Surpanakha a joke. He should have done better. He was able to resist Surpanakha well and did not hurt her.

From the quotation and explanation, it can be understood that in this section, Rama and Lakshmana, who in the *Ramayana* story is considered the protagonists, actually act as bullies. On the other hand, in this section, the Rakshasas, considered antagonists in the *Ramayana* story, are victims of bullying, resulting in conflict between the two parties.

The second point discussed in this study is about oppressing the weak and defending the weak. Several parts of the Rajagopalachari version of the *Ramayana* story describe how Ravana, as an antagonist, also has human traits such as compassion, sympathy, empathy,

and a sense of wanting to defend the weak. After discussing the part when Surpanakha was made a joke by Lakshmana and Rama, which ultimately caused Surpanakha to be injured, in this section, the researcher will discuss how it resulted in Ravana's wrath. Knowing his sister was injured and came to him with a bloody body, Ravana became angry. He was looking for the reason why his sister could be injured. After knowing the cause, Ravana grew angry.

When he saw Surpanakha, his younger sister, come to him in a very terrible state, in the "Path of Destruction," it is described that Surapanakha came before Ravana with conditions like hell manifesting in front of his eyes. Surpanakha's body was covered in blood, and part of his body was mutilated. In this part, the author said:

> *Gorgeously dressed and bejeweled as he sat on his throne, surrounded by his ministers in the midst of the splendor of the despoiled world, there suddenly appeared before him like the vision of the doom to be, his sister Surpanakha, bleeding and mutilated, a shape of pain and sorrow and shame. While all looked at her with horror struck eyes in stunned silence, her anguish broke out in burning words. (p.91)*

Seeing his sister's pathetic condition, Ravana's pain and sadness finally caused him to intend to avenge his sister's revenge on the person who had injured Surpaneka, the Rama. This problem finally leads Ravana to kidnap Sita and make her a tool for revenge against Rama. This episode also explains how Surpanakha persuaded Ravana to kidnap Sita,

> *The one desire that now burned in her heart was to avenge herself by bringing disgrace on Sita. In order to use Ravana for this purpose, she described Sita in such glowing terms to him and kindled his lawless passion. The rest of her talk was ancillary to her main purpose. Reference to the honor of the race, the security of his empire, the slaying of his kinsmen and so on was only to serve her main purpose which was to rouse Ravana's lust and make him desire Sita and he was caught in the snare. (p.93)*

From this episode, we can see that what Ravana did at that time was merely a form of his humanity. He felt sorry for his sister, whom he loved so much, and was hurt and even humiliated by other people. The sense of responsibility to maintain his dignity as the king of giants requires Ravana to take revenge on Rama. As Ravana said to his other sister, Maricha:

".....this renegade from dharma, proud of his strength and for no other reason, has mutilated the face of my sister and insulted our race. My sister who has suffered this pain and shame had come and complained to me. If, with all this, I sit still and do nothing, would I still be a king? (p.93)

What Ravana said to Maricha was a form of his human spirit and leadership to defend the honor of his nation, namely the giant nation. This is made clear by the words of Ravana:

> *"To avenge myself I have decided to carry off Rama's wife from the Dandaka forest. To disgrace and punish this Rama is a duty I owe to my race. (p.93)"*

With these reasons and evidence, the behavior that, for most readers in general, is a deviant act is a manifestation of the attitude of humanity towards the family and country he leads. From this explanation, it can be underlined that Rama and Lakshman, with their power, hurtSurpanakha, who, even though he was part of the giants but here he was a weak person. Meanwhile, Ravana, who finally decided to take revenge on Rama, was a form of concerned for his younger sister. Ravana's action can be said to be a form of defense of the weak.

The third point is about the powerful and powerless. The Rama side represents power in this discussion, and the Ravana side represents powerlessness. This can be said so because Rama, with all his strength, was able to injure Surpanakha. Whereas supposedly, the strength and majesty described in Rama it was able to make Rama act much wiser. For example, not hurting Surpanakha, talking nicely about the misunderstanding between him and Surpanakha so as not to anger Ravana, apologizing to Surpanakha, and ending the conflict.

On the other hand, in this section, the Ravana and Surpanakha camps are described as the powerless side. As explained in various episodes in the *Ramayana*, no one can match Rama's power because he is Lord Vishnu's incarnation. While Surpanakha, no matter how much strength she has, will not be able to defeat Rama, causing her to be oppressed and injured because she cannot fight Rama and Lakshmana.

From the set of binary oppositions, it can be concluded that humanity in the *Ramayana* story is described through Ravana's attitude, who decided to take revenge on Rama for what Surpanakha had experienced. It is a part of his responsibility as a brother to take care of his sister. It is related with the statement of Sugara (2019: 80) that Ravana is the one who brings the responsibility. Surpanakha's injury is a form of humiliation to Ravana, and his people, the Rakshasas. While Rama as the protagonist who acts as a hero, actually brings the brutal nature shown in several parts of this story, as previously mentioned.

2. The Meaning of Love Constructed in *Ramayana* Retold by C. Rajagopalachari

The second set of binary opposition discusses several things that will answer about the meaning of love in the story of *Ramayana*, retold by C. Rajagopalachari. The word "love" has many meanings in this world. It can be presented as a feeling of humans toward other God's creatures.

The meaning of love is so vast. Philosophically, love is a good trait that inherits all forms of kindness and feelings of compassion. Love is a feeling in a person caused by the forming factor. Love can also be interpreted as an emotion of strong affection and personal interest (Wulandari et al., 2023: 252). In other words, love is an active action or action taken by humans towards other objects in the form of attention, self-sacrifice, empathy, obedience, and many more. Not only can it be felt by humans, but basically, love can also be felt by all living things on this earth. The expression of love can also be used to describe various feelings, such as feelings for friends, family, fellow creatures, and even feelings for oneself.

The first opposition is about rejecting love and giving love. These represent the two opposite parties, the Aryans and the Rakshasas. *Ramayana* is a classic story about the love story between Rama, Sita, and Ravana. Rama and Sita as representatives of the Aryans, and Ravana were representatives of the Rakshasas. In this first opposition, Rama and Sita are two people whom both reject love. Accepting or rejecting love is everyone's right. However,

in this case, Rama and Sita's rejection of love is an excessive rejection of love. As the protagonist in the story, these forms of rejection should not be carried out by Rama or Sita, which in this *Ramayana* is told as a parable of gods and goddesses. Some of the forms of refusal will be shown in some quotations bellows:

> *"Base and wicked fellow! Your destruction is near. Leave this ashRama if you would escape with life" she said, hissing like an angry cobra (p.99)*

> *"You ask me to accept you. How foolish! Can the craw approach the swan? Can a heinous sinner be allowed near the sacrificial fire?" (p.103)*

The rejection of love comes from Sita, shown in the part when Ravana offers Sita sincere love. As a daughter who is known as the incarnation of a goddess and is very practicing dharma, Sita should be able to refuse Ravana's offer of love with a polite word and a gentle attitude. However, Sita rejected Ravana by using harsh language and making fun of Ravana. Not only that, but Sita also cursed Ravana. Those words came from Sita, who explains that instead of rejecting Ravana with polite words, she chooses to reject Ravana by saying that Ravana is a wick, foolish, and sinner. Even Rajagopalachari said that Sita hissed like an angry Cobra.

While on Rama's side, the researcher clearly described his refusal in the previous part. It is about how Rama refuses the love offered by Surpanakha and ultimately ends up being violent by Rama against Surpanakha. In the story of the *Ramayana*, it is described that Surpankha was covered in blood, Rama cut his nose off, and his hand was also cut off. Based on these explanations, it can be understood that Rama and Sita have shown bad qualities in the *Ramayana* story retold by C. Rajagopalachari.

Meanwhile, Ravana and Surpanakha are representations of the giants who, in the *Ramayana* story, are the antagonists who cause conflict in *Ramayana*. They become a picture of how sincere love is given. These forms of love include: Ravana, known as evil and heartless figure, has sincere affection as an embodiment of his love for Sita. When he was about to take Sita to Lanka, Ravana tried to say his intentions with all his heart without hurting Sita. In the episode "Dear Jatayu," Rajagopalachari recounts this incident as follows:

> *Sinner and Rakshasa though he was, he had an instinct that made him wish to win her heart; he wished not to ravish but to secure Sita's willing consent and make her his wife. (p.98)*

In this case, it can be understood as the sincerity of Ravana's love for Sita. His sincerity in loving and winning Sita's heart made him willing to wait and not force his will to have Sita. If he wanted, he could have forced Sita with the strength and supernatural powers he had to make Sita his wife. Nevertheless, his sincerity in loving Sita makes him want sincerity from Sita. Not a compulsion.

In another episode, when Ravana manages to bring Sita to Lanka and put her in Ashoka's garden, Ravana, who is famous as a very unsympathetic character, treats Sita with love and sincerity. This is indicated by the words of Ravana himself:

> *"Give her whatever she wants, clothes or gold or jewels. Serve her and do her honor as you would serve and honor me," (p.101)*

Ravana addressed these words to the demons guarding Sita in Ashoka's garden. Even after that, Ravana added his orders to the demons not to hurt or hurt Sita's heart and make her angry. The attention that Ravana gave to Sita even relieved Sita because even though she was kidnapped, she was treated very well by Ravana.

Another attitude shown by Ravana in treating Sita that illustrates how sincere he is in loving Sita is the attitude of how Ravana gave all his possessions and everything he had to Sita. Not only that, he even offered to Sita to consider himself and all the gods who were loyal to him as Sita's servants. Ravana, who is very arrogant and often shows off his power and greatness, is willing to leave it all as long as Sita is willing to become his consort. This is indicated by the words of Ravana:

> *"...O beautiful one! I bow my head at your feet and beg you for your grace. I am your slave. Forgetting my greatness and power, I thus beg for your favor. Never in my life have I bowed in this way before anyone." (p.102)*

Ravana's form of love is increasingly seen when Sita, whom he loves so much, refuses his love request. Even Sita uses harsh words and ridicules Ravana. However, because of Ravana's love for Sita, he respects the decision and gives Sita time to change her mind and fall in love with him. During this waiting period, Ravana treated Sita well, like a queen. Sita was not held captive in a place that made her sad. Sita is placed in Ashoka's garden, which is very beautiful. They are decorated with fruit and flowers blooming. This shows that despite kidnapping Sita, Ravana still treats her as a woman he loves. According to some evidence and explanations above, it can be concluded that the first opposition regarding the rejection of love and giving love gives a little picture of how love itself is represented in the *Ramayana* story.

The second opposition is rough and soft. After knowing how the love offered by the giants was then reciprocated by the rejection by the Aryans, namely Rama and Sita, rough and gentle were chosen as a form of opposition that described how the giving and refusal of love more clearly.

In the previous section, it was explained that both Rama and Sita rejected the love that had been given to them harshly so that, as previously mentioned, this form of rejection was not appropriate or should not be done by Rama and Sita, who called incarnations of gods and goddesses. These forms of rejection which have been explained very clearly, are evidence that Rama and Sita, as representatives of the Aryans, display their rough traits, especially in matters relating to love.

On the other hand, when he received these rejections, Ravana, who in the *Ramayana* story was described as a character who was evil, cruel, and rude, actually faced the rejection gently. Ravana still treats Sita well, as a man treats the woman he loves. Ravana served Sita sincerely, even though he was willing to give anything Sita wanted. Ravana could have killed Sita when she refused Ravana and even cursed Ravana. However, because of the sincere love he gave to Sita, Ravana chose to treat Sita gently.

The tenderness and sincerity of Ravana's love did not only show to Sita but included many things, namely his love for his people, his family, and his country. The love symbolized by Ravana has a higher degree than just Rama's love for Sita, which is a form of love for a partner. The nature of love in Ravana is not only there for Sita. However, he also shows his love for his family and his country. Like a parent, Ravana loves his son, Indrajit. When he learns that Indrajit lost against Rama and Vanara's army to save his country, Lanka, Ravana feels hopeless and very sad. Because he was so desperate, he almost ended his own life. In this section, C. Rajagopalachari explains:

> *But the father's heart would not thus be denied, and again he cried: "What! Is Indrajit gone? The world is now empty for me. Oh son, you have left your mother Mandodari and your dear wife and myself heart-broken and disconsolate. Nothing remains to us now but revenge and despair. (p.192)*

In addition to his sincere love for his son Indrajit, Ravana also has sincerity and love for his brother. This is evidenced by his decision to take revenge on Rama after learning that his younger sister named, Surpanakha, was injured by Rama. In addition, Ravana is also very fond of his younger brother, namely Kumbhakarna. Kumbhakarna is his most loyal brother, willing to sacrifice to fight against Rama. However, in the end, Kumbhakarna had to die on the battlefield. Kumbhakarna's death brought great sorrow to Ravana, as illustrated in the following quotation:

> *When the Rakshasas told this tale, Ravana felt that his own life had left him. After recovering He swooned. Consciousness, he cried in grief and anger: "Ah mighty warrior! How could you go to Yama's world leaving me behind? My right hand is cut off! How did Rama kill you, you whom in the whole world no enemy dared approach? I see the gods rejoicing in their heavens at your fall. The Vanara are dancing with delight. Of what use is this kingdom to me? Why should I cling to life when my dear brother has left me? Yes, I have to torture and slay the man who killed this dear brother of mine!"(p.190)*

After seeing some quotations and explanations on the set of binary opposition, it can be concluded that the meaning of love is contained in the *Ramayana* story. If all this time, readers in general only judged that the love in the *Ramayana* story was only the magnitude of Rama's love for Sita so that he was willing to fight against Ravana, then this study found another meaning of love that is greater than just Rama's love for Sita. That is Ravana's love for Sita, his people, and his family. All forms of struggle or battles carried out by Ravana in the *Ramayana* story are a form of proof of the love in him and his sacrifice for the people he loves.

3. The Meaning of Kindness Constructed in *Ramayana* Retold by C. Rajagopalachari
The third set of binary oppositions will answer the third question in this research, which is about the meaning of Kindness constructed in the story of *Ramayana* retold by C. Rajagopalachari. Before discussing one by one the binary oppositions that describe kindness in *Ramayana*, the author will give a general understanding of what kindness is. As a human being, being kind is one thing that must be applied in everyday life. According to Mastrantonio, (2023: 111) Kindness is a genuine concern, care, and consideration for another person's wellness and well-being. Being kind means avoiding things that can harm or hurt others. Kindness becomes the opposite of cruelty. Kindness itself means actions that have a

good impact. In the *Ramayana* story, the aspect of goodness is inherent in every episode of the story.

The first opposition that will be the topic of discussion is selfishness and unselfishness. This first opposition was chosen to describe the meaning of kindness because being selfish or not can be an indication of whether someone is considered good or not. Selfish and unselfish in the *Ramayana* story are very clearly depicted in various parts of the story. In this case, Rama and its surroundings represent the Aryans, who historically were immigrants who took over the power of the Dravidians in India. Looking at this history, we will see more deeply whether the selfishness in the *Ramayana* story can describe the selfishness of the Aryans who seized territory from the Dravidians. However, in this analysis, the researcher uses the Rakshasas to oppose the Aryans. Rakshasas are depicted through the figure of Ravana and his surroundings.

The central conflict in the *Ramayana* story is about the battle between Rama and Ravana to save Sita, who was kidnapped and brought to Lanka by Ravana. Rama did various things to save Sita. If you look at the story's core, it can be concluded that Rama did everything as a form of sacrifice for his love for Sita. He did anything so that Sita could come back with him and be safe. However, if we look more deeply, is it true that the rescue of Sinta is a form of Rama's struggle for his love? Because looking at some aspects of Sita's savior, it can be concluded as a form of saving Rama himself.

In order to save Sita, Rama injured many innocent people. This is evidenced in several parts of the *Ramayana* story. The first is his selfishness, making him angry and angry with the goddess of the sea. As the incarnation of the God Vishnu, a figure known and exalted for his nobility and heroism, Rama shows hatred for the sea goddess, who cannot repay his asceticism. Rama shot hisdwellers, such as fish, to die from Rama's arrows. Rama should have been a little patient and not rude. In addition, to save Sita, Rama also killed the Monkey King named Vali. It is said that while searching for Sita, Rama met a Wanara named Sugriva. Sugriva, expelled from his kingdom at his fault, asked Rama to help kill his brother Vali and reclaim the kingdom's throne. Because of Rama's selfishness in saving Sita, Rama is willing to help Sugriva and kill Vali. This disrespectful attitude towards Rama can be seen through the following quotation in the episode:

> *Astounded at being hit and laid low, when he least expected it from an unknown quarter, Vali looked round in perplexed surprise and saw Rama and Lakshmana approaching him bow in hand. With tears of indignant wrath, and in a voice faint with approaching dissolution, he accused them of ignoble perfidy in dealing causeless death to a person engaged in combat with another. (p.118)*

Not only that, but the cruelty of Rama is also conveyed to Vali who expressed his disappointment,

> *"Rama," he said, "you are the son of Emperor Dasaratha. Born of a noble race and famous by your own exploits, how did you bring yourself to do this deed? The world is full of praises for your valor and virtue. And yet, while I was absorbed in a battle with another, you came unseen, and from behind, shot a fatal arrow at me. How false and undeserved is your reputation for manly virtue, for truth and forbearance! What will the world think of you now? What harm have I ever done to you? Did I come out*

> *to fight with you? You have killed me like an assassin concealing yourself behind the trees. For a royal prince to kill an innocent person in this way is grievous sin. You are unworthy for kingship [....](p.118)*

Rama did evil things that hurt others in order to save Sita. In the case of love, unscrupulous acts are never justified. Let us take a closer look at why Rama went to the heart of hurting others to save Sita. A passage in the *Ramayana* story explains that Rama was unfortunate when Sita was kidnapped. This is because Rama said that he could not live without Sita.

> *"Lakshmana, Sita is nowhere. The Rakshasas have captured her and torn her to pieces and eaten her up. How can I live any more? My end is near. (p.105)*

Rama cannot live without Sita. As a Hero, Rama should be able to deal with it more calmly and not think like it is the end of it all. Rama's selfishness can also be said as a place to show the strength that is in him. If he cannot live without Sita, saving Sita is Rama's attempt to save himself.

On the other hand, Ravana, the representative of Rakshasas, actually shows his unselfishness. First. Ravana was not selfish to injure Sita, which he could have done so quickly. Ravana is also not selfish in forcing Sita to be his wife, even though he can do just that with his power. Ravana also decided to fight against Rama instead of having to apologize and return Sita. Ravana did this to maintain the dignity and honor of his nation, as well as the honor of his younger sister, Surpanakha. As a knight and a king, of course, Ravana will not stand by when the pride and honor of his people are destroyed by others. In deciding against Rama, Ravana also involved representatives of his people. That is, Ravana did not fight Rama just because of Sita. From these comparisons, it can be concluded that Rama, the protagonist in the *Ramayana* story, has an egotistical nature, which symbolizes a bad attitude towards him. Meanwhile, as an antagonist, Ravana lowers his ego to make decisions and then defend his people and nation.

The second opposition to finding the meaning of kindness in the *Ramayana* story is respect and disrespect. The researcher will start by discussing Rama, who did not respect Sita. When Rama managed to defeat Ravana in battle, Sita was finally able to meet again with Rama. The moment that should have been a happy moment between Rama and Sita turned out to be a sorrowful moment for Sita. The reason is that Rama even doubts the sanctity of Sita,

> *"I have slain the enemy," said Rama. I have recovered you. I have done my duty as a Kshatriya. My vow is now fulfilled." (p.196)*

Based on the quotation, Rama said that he fought to complete his duty as a knight. Not only that, Rama also continued,

> *"It was not for mere attachment to you that I waged this grim battle but in the discharge of duty as a Kshatriya. It gives me no joy now to get you back, for doubtfulness envelopes you like a dark cloud of smoke." (p.196)*

From this evidence, it can be seen so clearly that without respecting Sita, Rama doubted Sita's loyalty to Rama. Ravana shows the opposite when he takes and detains Sita in Lanka. Ravana did not destroy Sita's chastity at all. Ravana takes care of Sita as well as her honor.

Ravana also respects Sita's decision to reject it by giving Sita time to think and not forcing Sita.

From some of the things that have been discussed previously, it is clear how respect and disrespect are used as a tool to express kindness in the *Ramayana* story. In addition, the *Ramayana* story also explains how Ravana respects his people so that he is respected and loved by his people. It is shown as follows:

> *Prosperity[…]. His kindness made him realize that the feasibility of living for the people in his country is the main thing. This is evidenced by the form of retribution and the attitude of the people of Alenka to Ravana, who submits respect, and loves Ravana without coercion. In the episode "Ravana calls a council again," Rajagopalachari narrates:*

> *As the Lord of Lanka, accompanied by his retinue, passed majestically through the royal street, his people bent low their heads and folded their hands and invoked victory for him. As he entered the hall, drums and trumpets sounded loudly and filled the eight quarters. (p.167)*

From the author's explanation, it can be concluded that Ravana is a good king and leader, at least for his people and country. There is no misery and deprivation among the people living in Lanka. Once again, it proves that Ravana is a victorious king.

After discussing one by one the binary opposition, it can be concluded that Ravana, as the representation of Rakshasas, brings the nature of kindness. Kindness here means how one should be kind to others in life. As reflected in Ravana, he respects women, respects his people, and he also prospers the country and the people he leads.

After going through the previous two processes, namely finding the binary opposition and changing the hierarchy, a new meaning can be found from the results of the deconstruction, namely Ravana, who is known as the antagonist in the deconstruction to become the protagonist. The results of the discovery of the new meaning are discussed in detail as follows:

The protagonist is the main character who brings good qualities. The protagonist can be indicated by the following three points, namely: 1) bringing good attitudes and habits, 2) defending the truth, and 3) resolving conflicts (Tu & Brown, 2020, p.80). After going through the deconstruction process, Ravana fulfills all these indications. The first discussion is that the protagonist brings good attitudes or habits. As previously explained, the goodness of Ravana in the Ramayana story is proven as the analysis that has been carried out by researchers. Kindness from Ravana is a form of fulfilling the first indicator of the protagonist's character.

Followed by the second indicator, defending the truth in context is the result of a representation of Ravan's humanity. It can be said that Ravana's humanity is explained through how he defends his younger sister, Surpanaka, who is a victim of Rama's crimes. This is a manifestation of the right attitude to defend. The truth here is that it is not permissible to injure and physically insult women. So Ravana fought Rama who had done

the wrong thing to his sister. With this, the second indicator as a protagonist can be fulfilled by Ravana, namely defending the truth.

The last indicator is resolving conflicts. The conflict in the Ramayana story is a fierce battle between Rama's troops and Ravana's troops. Why didn't Ravana give up and admit defeat? Because as a knight the way to solve a problem is to fight. This has become a natural thing in the ancient kingdom. Ravana fought against Rama as a form of his love for his country Lanka and also a form of his love for Sita. Ravana will not allow his country to be destroyed by Rama, nor will he let go of the woman he loves. Thus Ravana chose to fight and lose honorably rather than having to surrender and admit defeat to Rama whom from Ravana's point of view was the source of the conflict.

This was also emphasized by Rama when in the end Ravana lost and died in the battle against Rama. Rama told Wibisana (Ravana's brother) that Ravana had fought like a true warrior. Ravana also fought like a hero. Rama goes on to say that Ravana is now in heaven. This explanation confirms that the fighting and resistance carried out by Ravana is a form of Ravana's way of resolving existing conflicts. Thus Ravana also fulfills the third indicator as a protagonist.

From these three indicators, it has been proven that Ravana fulfills all three to be said to be the protagonist. Through these steps, the final result is that deconstruction is applied to the Ramayana retold by C. Rajagopalachari through three steps. The first is finding binary oppositions, then changing the existing hierarchy, and continuing with finding new meanings that are different from the existing meanings in the text. Then from the three-step determination, a new result is obtained, namely that Ramayana which initially had the character Ravana as the Antagonist character was deconstructed into Ravana in the Ramayana story as the protagonist.

The new meaning constructed after stages is Ravana is considered as protagonist as he decided to battle with Rama and he chose his death to protect the dignity of his younger sister, his kingdom, and his people. Ravana's form of struggle
is proof that he, Ravana is a hero not a villain

D. CONCLUSION

Deconstruction is applied to the *Ramayana* story retold by C. Rajagopalachari in order to find other meanings or values contained in the *Ramayana* story. Binary opposition is used to find the meaning of humanity, love, and kindness in the story *Ramayana*, retold by C. Rajagopalachari. The meaning of Humanity, lobe, and kindness in *Ramayana* are represented by Ravana, an antagonist character in *Ramayana*, retold by C. Rajagopalachari. The researcher also concludes that the understanding or assessment of a literary work is not limited. The assessment can change according to the point of view used to read or understand a literary work. In this study, this is represented by an analysis of the character Ravana, usually known as an evil character, full of hatred and inhumanity. However, from the point of view of deconstruction, Ravana can be judged as a character who brings humanity, love, and kindness.

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