CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF SEVERUS SNAPE ON HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE: A DECONSTRUCTION APPROACH

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ABSTRACT	This study is a research into the Binary opposition of Professor Snape's character in the novel namely Harry Potter: The Sorcerer's stone. The importance of this study is to introduce a theory on how readers could enhance engagement and comprehension on understanding the character in the literary works and furthermore improve the critical thinking of the readers. In the previous study most of them analyze binary opposition for all characters in the literary works, but in this study binary opposition analysis only applied to one character. This study aims to deconstruct a characterization of Professor Snape in the novel which is very complex through the binary opposition analysis. The method of this research is qualitative research, using observation as data collection method, and using the step which is stated by Jacques Derrida, there are ; reconstruction, deconstruction, and reinscription as methods of data analysis. In the novel there are 3 binary oppositions of Professor Snape there are; protecting-threatening, love-hate, and loyalist-traitor. The conclusion of this study is that binary opposition can be contained in only one character. Furthermore, the concept of binary opposition can make the reader's perception of the attitude, speech and ulterior motives underlying Professor Snape's characteristics can be explored in depth to reveal both sides of the characterization showed in the novel.
Keywords	**Deconstruction, Binary opposition, Character analysis, Harry Potter, Professor Snape**

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a production, not just an imitation. Literature is a spontaneous and significant emotional outpouring (Luxemburg et al., 1984). Literature is a great thing, both written and spoken. Literature is also a mirror of real reality, processed in the author's imagination and described in language (Abram, 1981). The goal of the birth of literature is to express a concept, thought, or message in a concealed (indirect) way through the medium of language. Literature is a form and outcome of creative art work whose subjects are humans and their lives, utilizing language as a medium. Therefore, literary creativity must be able to give birth to beautiful works and strive to channel the demands of human beauty.

Literature is a work such as poetry, prose, novel, movie script and many more (Welleck & Warren, 2013). In this study, the topic focuses on revealing the binary opposition in the characteristic of Severus Snape from the Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone novel written by J.K Rowling. This study will be limited by the characters that are considered as an antagonist character in the story that have a big impact along the plot.

Novel is a literary work which is formed in a narrative story. The story is supposed to entertain the reader. However the experiences and life problems are usually the important points in the story, fictions must remain as an interesting story, remain as a coherent structure building, and still have an aesthetic purpose. (Nurhamidah, 2024)

Every piece of literature contains characters, who are essentially fictional individuals that play a crucial role in advancing the narrative from the very beginning all the way through to the conclusion. These characters, whether they are heroes, villains or supporting figures, help to shape the story and engage the reader throughout the entire journey of the plot (Andriana, 2019). According to Zahroni (2016) Character is a belief system and practice that guides actions. Thus, understanding one's character allows insight into individuals' responses to various situations. Ultimately, there are no significant differences between character and individual traits.

J.K. Rowling's novel Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone was chosen as the subject of this study due to its worldwide popularity and influence, both in terms of literature and popular culture. JK Rowling's first book, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, has been awarded the 30 from 30 award at The British Book Awards, also known as The Nibbies. As a work rich with elements of fantasy, mythology, and symbolism, the novel presents various narrative structures and concepts that can be analyzed through the deconstruction approach and binary opposition theory. The deconstruction approach proposed by Jacques Derrida provides an opportunity to uncover hidden layers of meaning within the text and examine the instability of meaning within the narrative structure, especially when we unpack the underlying binary opposition.

The researcher analyzed the complexity of Professor Snape's personality in the novel Pulang using Johari Window theory, Pulang is an action genre novel and fantasy fiction in which there is fighting action. In the first book of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, the character of Professor Snape appears and manifests the role of ambiguity between a protector and an enemy. On the one hand, his rude behavior and dislike for Harry leads the reader to associate him as an antagonistic figure. On the other hand, his covert actions, such as preventing further damage when Harry is in danger during a Quidditch match, indicate a protective role that neither Harry nor the readers are aware of.

Previous studies on deconstruction analysis include Putri (2016), which examines the narrative structure of Tennessee Williams' novel Summer and Smoke using a Saussurean deconstruction approach. Putri elaborates on the symbols that embody the main character's beliefs, successfully uncovering the meanings behind these symbols. In contrast, Nurhamidah (2024) focuses on character and characterisation in Putu Wijaya's novel Putri, employing a post-structuralist approach that emphasizes how readers' interpretations vary based on context, challenging Saussure's notion of stable meaning in language.In addition to these studies, Marwan (2022) takes a different route by utilizing a feminist deconstructionist lens to analyze gender dynamics in Ayu Utami's Saman. Marwan argues that the text subverts traditional gender roles, revealing how societal expectations shape and often confine female identities. Through this framework, Marwan highlights the fluidity of gender representation, offering a critique of patriarchal narratives and an examination of women's agency within the story.

Collectively, these scholarly contributions illustrate the diverse methodologies within deconstruction analysis, showcasing how variations in critical focus can yield distinct interpretations of literary texts. As each scholar probes different elements—be it character, gender, or class—deconstruction remains a powerful tool for unveiling the complexities inherent in literature, prompting ongoing dialogue about meaning and interpretation in the works of contemporary authors.

What is new in this research is the object of the research which is binary opposition of Professor Snape character while in previous study many of them analyze a whole book and many characters that have binary opposition or binary opposition of one character

and another. In this research the analysis of binary opposition is just from one character; it is Professor Snape. That analysis makes this research new from before regarding the binary opposition analysis on just one character with complex characteristics that is told in the novel. The purpose of this study is to dissect the complex characterization dynamics of Professor Snape's character by using the scope of binary opposition analysis as conceived by Jaques Derrida.

The reason why researchers chose this novel and Professor Snape as an object of the research is because the novel itself has a very good story as well as the popularity, and the Professor Snape itself has very dynamic and complex characteristics in this novel which the reader could be very confused by his personality. The chapters under analysis in the novel Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone range from chapter seven (The Sorting Hat) to chapter seventeen (The Man with Two Faces). The selection of only these specific chapters is based on the focus of the research, which is Professor Snape. Therefore, the researcher has chosen ten chapters that highlight Snape's first appearance through to the final chapter, due to limited time of doing this research.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

This research is using a qualitative research method, which according to Cresswell (2014) a qualitative method is used to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups ascribing to a social or human problem. This research also uses descriptive research design, descriptive research is research design used to examine the situation involving identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon (Williams, 2007).

This research uses observation as data collection technique, observation studies involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behavior in a natural setting. Observation is a way to collect the data by senses (vision, hearing, touch, and smell). Observation used to explore, understand, and documents from the object of the research (as stated by Gorman and Clayton (2005) in Kumar (2022)).

Therefore this research will analyze the data deeply regarding the issue, which in this research is binary opposition of Professor Snape in 'Harry Potter The Sorcerer's Stone' novel. This will explain how the complexity of Professor Snap's personality could have binary opposition itself. The style of displaying the data will be in descriptive and narrative style. Researchers could make an interpretation regarding the data, as mentioned in the qualitative method which was stated by Cresswell.
There are several steps to analyzing character especially on their binary opposition which stated by Derrida, there are;

a. Reconstruction
The process of reinterpreting existing text, in order to create new meaning but without destroying the original context. Researchers would analyze the utterance in the text, and decide what binary is that.
b. Deconstruction
The process of uncovering the inherent contradictions and binary oppositions that exist in the text. This emphasizes that interpretation is subjective and dependent on context, thereby challenging the idea of fixed meaning. Researchers would read the whole book and finally decide what actually happened in the utterance, because there could be hidden meaning in the utterance contextually.

c. Reinscription

This process exists alongside deconstruction, where new meanings are introduced into the text based on insights gained during deconstruction. This process recognizes the existence of multiple interpretations and the instability of meaning. The last process is for the researcher to explain again why some utterance may have another meaning apart from textual meaning.

In practice researchers would decide what binary opposition contains in Professor Snape character and then insert the dialogue that leads to that interpretation, and then the explanation would be written in each dialogue, which contains 'why do researchers think so'.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Threatening-Protecting

One day there is a competition where Harry competes and there is an incident in that match where Harry's broom is being unstable in the middle of the match, and Hermione assumes that it was Snape who threw magic to make Harry fall.
Chapter Eleven : Quidditch (172)
"I knew it," Hermione gasped, "Snape — look."
Ron grabbed the binoculars. Snape was in the middle of the stands opposite
them. He had his eyes fixed on Harry and was muttering nonstop under his
breath.
"He's doing something — jinxing the broom," said Hermione.
"What should we do?"
…
Hermione had fought her way across to the stand where Snape stood, and
was now racing along the row behind him; she didn't even stop to say sorry as
she knocked Professor Quirrell headfirst into the row in front. Reaching
Snape, she crouched down, pulled out her wand, and whispered a few, well
chosen words. Bright blue flames shot from her wand onto the hem of Snape's robes.
It took perhaps thirty seconds for Snape to realize that he was on fire. A
sudden yelp told her she had done her job. Scooping the fire off him into a
little jar in her pocket, she scrambled back along the row — Snape would
never know what had happened.
It was enough. Up in the air, Harry was suddenly able to clamber back on
to his broom.

As the result of interfering Snape jinx Harry is back to control his broom. The assumption seems right this far, because when Snape falls the magic seems stopped also. In this part Snape was described as the person who is being a threat for Harry because of that incident.

In reality Snape tried to protect Harry instead of threatening him. It could be known from the dialogue between Harry and Quirell in the final battle scene.
Chapter Seventeen : The Man With Two Faces (257)
"But Snape tried to kill me!"
"No, no, no. I tried to kill you. Your friend Miss Granger accidentally
knocked me over as she rushed to set fire to Snape at that Quidditch match.
She broke my eye contact with you. Another few seconds and I'd have got
you off that broom. I'd have managed it before then if Snape hadn't been
muttering a countercurse, trying to save you."

"Snape was trying to save me?""Of course," said Quirrell coolly. "Why do you think he wanted to referee
your next match? He was trying to make sure I didn't do it again.

It is clear that in this dialogue, Snape does not try to kill Harry in a match but it was Quirell, instead Snape was the one who countered Quirell magic, and even he wanted to be referee in the next match in order to make Harry more safer and make sure that quirell would not do that again. Until then Snape is also described as the protector of Harry while in several chapters before he is assumed to be the one who is threatening Harry.

With the analysis above it fulfilled the criteria of binary opposition. This tension between the assumption of Snape as a threat and the reality of him as a protector reflects the deconstructive process at play. Derrida's deconstruction of binary oppositions suggests that both sides of the opposition are never fully separate or fixed; they are always in flux and subject to reinterpretation. In the case of Snape, we learn that he inhabits both roles — he is both a protector and a potential threat, depending on the perspective and the information available at a given moment in the narrative. He appears as a threatening figure in opposition to Harry's protection, but later, the truth reveals that Snape's actions were in fact protective, undoing the binary opposition of good vs. evil. This destabilization of Snape's role highlights the complexities of character development and the way assumptions can be deconstructed in narrative storytelling

3. 2 Love-Hate

Professor Snape in this novel described as a person who is really being hateful to Harry especially, it could be told by this dialogue;

Chapter Eight : The Poison Master (128)

"Potter!" said Snape suddenly. "What would I get if I added powdered root
of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"
Powdered root of what to an infusion of what? Harry glanced at Ron, who
looked as stumped as he was; Hermione's hand had shot into the air.
"I don't know, sir," said Harry.
Snape's lips curled into a sneer.
"Tut, tut — fame clearly isn't everything."
He ignored Hermione's hand.
"Let's try again. Potter, where would you look if I told you to find me a
bezoar?

The exchanges between Snape and Harry highlight the fluidity of the teacher-student relationship but Snape's continued pressure on Harry brings to light Snape's hidden resentment towards Harry. It is indicative that while Snape maintains control through his authoritative position, Harry's admission of ignorance becomes the catalyst for a shift in the dynamic. Rather than simply submitting to authority, Harry's acknowledgment of his limitations invites Snape to misuse his position as a teacher to express his hatred through arrogant behavior. While Snape ignores Hermione who knows the answer. In this situation Snape clearly had something up to with Harry. Making Snape character is having a hateful personality especially towards Harry. From a Derridean perspective, this interaction exemplifies the concept of "différance," where meaning is not fixed, but rather exists in a state of flux. The binary opposition between teacher and student is challenged through the relationship of hate and affection as Harry's vulnerability becomes a form of strength. His willingness to express uncertainty opens up a space for dialogue, potentially allowing him to question Snape's teachings and methodology.

Furthermore, this dynamic can be explored through the lens of power relations in education. Although Snape's role as a teacher places him in a position of authority, the reality is that learning is an interactive process. Every interaction has the potential to reshape the roles of teacher and student. Harry's intellectual evolution throughout the series reflects the idea that knowledge is not simply given, but built through experience and engagement.

In another dialogue it also tells that Snape cares about Harry.

Chapter Sixteen : Through The Trapdoor (239)

"You want to be more careful," said Snape. "Hanging around like this,
people will think you're up to something. And Gryffindor really can't afford to lose any
more points, can it?"
Harry flushed. They turned to go outside, but Snape called them back.
"Be warned, Potter — any more nighttime wanderings and I will personally
make sure you are expelled. Good day to you."

In that dialogue Snape warned Harry to be more careful if he did not want to be expelled. Researchers infer that this is part of caring, because if Snape really hated Harry he would not have warned him about such things that could potentially make Harry expelled. The dynamic between love and hate in Snape's character is noteworthy in its complexity. His deep affection for Lily contrasts sharply with his animosity towards James Potter, which affects how he treats Harry. This conflict highlights that love can coexist with resentment, ultimately leading to harmful behavior.

Snape's fixation on Lily further complicates his character since it drives him to protect Harry while also projecting his unresolved emotions onto him. This combination of feelings demonstrates that love can inspire both protective actions and vindictive behavior, challenging the idea that love is always positive. As Snape navigates his relationship with Harry, it becomes clear that unresolved emotions can heavily influence how individuals interact, potentially distorting their motivations. Harry serves as a constant reminder of the love Snape lost, complicating their relationship dynamics.

Additionally, Snape's complex feelings extend beyond his interactions with Harry to his role in the larger wizarding world. His commitment to fighting alongside Dumbledore and the Order stems more from loyalty to Lily's memory than from a pure desire to do good, placing him in morally ambiguous situations.

3. 3 Loyalist-Traitor

One of the main plots in the novel is that there is someone who tried to steal the sorcerer's stone, and so much dialogue that implies Harry and his friend suspect Snape as the one who worked with Voldemort and tried to steal the stone. There is so much proof that leads into this assumption, one of the most convincing ones is when Harry found out Snape was threatening Quirrell in the forest forcing him to tell what he knew about Fluffy the three headed dog that guarded the stone.

Chapter 13 : Nicolas Flammel (203)

"Have you found out how to get past that beast of Hagrid's yet?"
"B-b-but Severus, I —"
"You don't want me as your enemy, Quirrell," said Snape, taking a step
toward him.
"I-I don't know what you —"
"You know perfectly well what I mean."
An owl hooted loudly, and Harry nearly fell out of the tree. He steadied
himself in time to hear Snape say, "— your little bit of hocus-pocus. I'm
waiting."

"B-but I d-d-don't —"
"Very well," Snape cut in. "We'll have another little chat soon, when
you've had time to think things over and decide where your loyalties lie."

In this part Snape was suspected to force Quirrell to tell him what he knew about Fluffy, and how to get past it, that was what Harry thought. So with that knowledge harry is getting more convinced that Snape is really trying to steal the sorcerer's stone.

Chapter 13 : Nicolas Flammel (204)

"So we were right, it is the Sorcerer's Stone, and Snape's trying to force
Quirrell to help him get it. He asked if he knew how to get past Fluffy — and
he said something about Quirrell's 'hocus-pocus'— I reckon there are other
things guarding the stone apart from Fluffy, loads of enchantments, probably,
and Quirrell would have done some anti-Dark Arts spell that Snape needs to
break through —"

Harry finally comes to the conclusion that Snape is really trying to steal it but somehow Quirrell is standing in Snape's way that makes it hard to steal it. In fact, when Harry sneaked into the place where the sorcerer's stone was placed and suspected Snape was already there because he saw Fluffy was sleeping before. He thought that Snape was already one step ahead of him to get into that stone place, he was surprised because the one standing there was not Snape but it was Quirrell.

Chapter Seventeen : The Man With Two Faces (257)

"You!" gasped Harry.
Quirrell smiled. His face wasn't twitching at all.
"Me," he said calmly. "I wondered whether I'd be meeting you here,
Potter."
"But I thought — Snape —"
"Severus?" Quirrell laughed, and it wasn't his usual quivering treble, either,
but cold and sharp. "Yes, Severus does seem the type, doesn't he? So useful to
have him swooping around like an overgrown bat. Next to him, who would
suspect p-p-poor, st-stuttering P-Professor Quirrell?"
…

Harry still can not believe what he saw because the proof he gathered this whole time alwasys pointed to snape. Harry questioned Quirrell on how each proof he found pointed to the wrong way.

Chapter Seventeen : The Man With Two Faces (258)

"I saw you and Snape in the forest —" he blurted out.
"Yes," said Quirrell idly, walking around the mirror to look at the back.
"He was on to me by that time, trying to find out how far I'd got. He
suspected me all along. Tried to frighten me — as though he could, when I
had Lord Voldemort on my side. . . ."

The truth behind Snape threatening Quirrell in the forest is ; Snape does not try to force Quirrell to tell him how to get past Fluffy but he wanted to know how far Quirrell had gone with his betrayal. Based on that dialogue, Snape was loyal to Dumbledore and was never a traitor.

With that it fulfilled the binary opposition theory, because Snape was described as a loyalist who will never betray Hogwarts but somehow in several chapters, there were characters who thought Snape was a Traitor. That creates conflict in the reader's mind which one to believe either characters who said Snape was a traitor or the ones who said Snape was a loyalist that never betrayed Hogwarts. With that Snape has binary opposition between loyalist-traitors.

4.   CONCLUSION

The binary oppositions that have been found in the character of Professor Snape contained in the novel Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling and analyzed using deconstruction theory proposed by Jacques Derrida. Based on the findings of the results and discussion, the binary oppositions that were identified from the compound character of Professor Snape are Threatening-Protecting, Love-Hate, Loyalist-Traitor. Assessing a person's character requires in-depth knowledge of what that person has experienced. So in this case the reader's perception of the attitude, speech and ulterior motives underlying Professor Snape's characteristics can be explored in depth to reveal both sides. The idea of binary opposition shows that evaluating someone should not be limited to their outward appearance, but should also understand their character and personality more deeply.

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