

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Theoretical Concepts and Definition

2.1.1 Theories of Symbol

There are many definition of symbol, especially in literature but here the definitions of symbols which only easy to be understood that will be chosen. Chadwick (1971: 2) states “symbolism can be defined as the art of expressing ideas and emotions not by describing them directly but by defining them through overt comparisons with concrete images”. The authors of the literature works give some symbol in their work to show their ideas or expression in the story. It makes the reader may find the difficulties to understand about the story, but it is the uniqueness and challenge of the story. The reader who reads or enjoys literature works may be more interesting and challenging to find the hidden message or idea of the story by interpreting the meaning of the symbols in the story.

Kennedy and Gioia (2005: 200) define “symbol in literature is a thing that suggests more than its literal meaning”. A thing in the story may have more than usual meanings. It suggests the reader to find as many as possible meaning in order to understand about the story.

According to Symons in Beebe (1968: 8) “without symbolism there can be no literature; indeed, not even language”. Symbolism in literature is very important in order to express the idea or emotions of the author. Symbolism is one of the elements in literature work that makes it unique, interesting, and special. Many authors give symbol into their work to make it more meaningful

and colorful. “Language in a literature work must use a symbol to show something special, fleeting, and vague which cannot be sent by direct statement or description, but only by using symbols which will serve to suggest it to the reader” (Wilson in Beebe, 1968:10).

In addition, Styan (1983: 3) elaborates “the application of symbolism to the stage is straightforward in drama, and symbols on the stage are not new”. In the theatre an object or thing or situation can immediately suggest an idea or feeling of the story. It helps the audiences to more interest in the story, because they are not only to understand it by seeing the gesture from the player but also from an object on the stage.

2.1.2 Recognizing Symbols

Before we discuss about symbol deeply, better to us understand what is a symbol? Price (1911: 22) defines that symbol is anything which stands for another thing or for other things. He adds “in order to stand for another thing or other things, a word, term, or sign must be, by established convention or by individual use, a part of the idea or ideas for which it is used as the representative, for example, the cross symbol for Christianity “(1911: 22-23). In literature, some symbols are hidden or appear directly, so the reader must be careful to interpret the meaning of the symbols by reading the story as much as possible. When we read or reread the story, some real symbols will be found.

Some symbols will be interpreted differently by some readers. It is normal thing, but the important is the interpretation must have relationship with the theme and context of the story. Recognizing the symbol can be done

by most readers, but to understanding the meaning of the symbols requires critical analysis. It is important to avoid make the symbol means too much or too little. Chadwick (1971: 1) states “symbolism can be used to describe any mode of expression which, instead of referring to something directly, refers to it indirectly through the medium of something else”.

Symbol represents many things in a literature works. First, it can represent the theme of the story which is the main message the author hopes to convey to the reader. Some symbols may bring a hidden meaning or author’s meaning to show about the theme. Barton and Hudson in Badri (2009) state “a literary symbol designates an object or a process that not only serves as an image itself but also refers to a concept or abstract idea that is important to the theme of a work”. Second, symbol can represent the character. It is usually called symbolic character. “Symbolic character is more a portrait than a person” (Kennedy and Gioia, 2005:201). By using some symbols, the author describes the characteristics. It also helps the reader to define the character deeply. Third, symbol can create a plot. Moreover, it can cause the conflict that is important in a story. Without conflict the story would not have happened. Fourth, symbol can provide understanding of the setting. Miller & Cluley in Khotimah (2007: 15) state that setting often takes on such deep psychological significance that it becomes a major form of symbolism. It helps the reader knows where and when the story takes place by interpreting the symbol.

Stanton in Wulan (2010: 30) states that in fiction, symbolism can make three effects based on the using. The first is symbols that appeared in an important event in the story show us the meaning of the event. Second, one

symbol that is appeared repeatedly, reminds us about some constant element in the story. And the last, one symbol that is appeared in the different context will help us to find the theme of the story.

Fromm in Cirlot (1971: xxx) states that there are three kinds of symbol which are different in degree, the first is conventional. It is comprised of simple acceptance of a constant similarity exposed of any visual or natural source, for example the symbols that used in industry, road, mathematics, and in other fields. It has the same meaning for all the people. The second is accidental. It hops from definitely temporary conditions and suitable to associations made through casual contact such as wave the hand is a symbol to say good bye. The last is universal. It is the symbol which as the existence of the basic relation between the symbol and what it represents. It is obvious that this relation does not always have the same power. Because of that, as we have already pointed out, it is difficult to classify symbols accurately.

2.1.3 Interpreting Symbols

Symbol may be appears to inform the meaning of thing indirectly, for example a sword that is hold by the player on the stage or in the story can be meant as the buffeting or self defense by the audience or the reader. Because symbol has complex characteristic, so to understanding about symbol, the reader has to have wide knowledge (Wulan, 2010: 30).

Harmon in Badri (2009) states “a symbol is like an image in doing the same thing but different from it in going beyond the evoking of the objective referent by making that referent suggests a meaning beyond itself”. It is difficult to state what a symbol represents because there are many possibilities

in meaning. The meaning of the symbol also depends on the context and events of the time. Other factors which affect the meaning are the events of the story and how they may be represented through a symbol. An example of symbol which has different meaning is fire; first it can represent purification and the removal of evil. In another meaning it can also represent passion, sexuality and also something which is strong or wild. The meaning of the symbol depend on the theme, setting, event, and plot of the story, it is important to be known in order to be able to interpret the actual meaning of the symbol.

Mckee (2003: 63) elaborates “there is no single correct representation of any part of the world and, in the same way, there is no single correct interpretation of any text”. The statement above is valid too in symbol interpretation. Different thinking, knowledge, and culture of some people may make the meaning of symbol will vary based on the ways in which they use. There is no the certain rule to judge the meaning of a symbol is correct or false. Mckee (2003: 03) adds “Doing textual analysis, we’re interested in finding out likely interpretations, not in deciding which of them the most correct one is”.

Kennedy and Gioia (2005: 228) state that there are four important things to writing about a symbol. The first is, avoid vagueness. Not every image, thing, or event in a literature work is symbolic. In literature, few symbols are hidden and most of them are appear clearly. It is important to make sure which is the truly symbol of the story. Reread the story as much as possible until we can find the real symbol.

Second, begin the writing by listing the specific object, people, and ideas with which particular symbol is associated. There are some objects or things in the story. They may become important to support the theme or plot. List them and identify which is the symbol of the story.

Third, identify an exact place in the story where the symbol links itself to the other thing. Some symbols may appear in an important event in the story. They can show us about the meaning of the event where they take place. Moreover, some symbols have relationships with each other to show about the theme deeply.

The last, a list of associations doesn't need to be long; it only needs to be accurate and reasonable. Some symbols that have relationships between each other may give the message about the story. The interpretation of them doesn't need long explanation. It must be reasonable with the context of the story. To understand the meaning requires critical analysis. Some readers are usually making the meaning of symbol too much or too little. So, it needs wide knowledge and experience. Badri (2009) elaborates "literary symbols serve to extend the meaning of a text beyond what is explicitly stated". While the writer intends to express certain meaning about symbol, but sometimes the reader will express the meaning that goes over the writer's meaning.

According to Ifissel (2008) in www.slideshare.net/Ifissel, a symbol can have variety meanings; they are personal, contextual, cultural, and universal. They will be discussed as follows:

2.1.3.1 Personal is a meaning of symbol associated with our experiences. Every person who uses this way may have different interpretation. Its interpretation is differentially based on their

knowledge, feeling, and experience about the symbol or thing. Every people has own interpretation about the thing. For example dog, one person may have great affection for dog because it is reputed as beautiful pet. Meanwhile, another person may feel fear for dog because it is reputed as wild animal and excrement, especially for Muslim people. As the result, the reader may interpret symbol too much or too little than the writer intended. So, it is important to not only use personal association to interpret the symbol but also derive the meaning of symbol from universal and cultural meaning. Some symbols in *A Doll's House* interpreted by personal meaning, they are macaroons or forbidden macaroons, tarantella or tarantella dance, letter, doll, and Doll's House. These symbols may have different interpretation to every people. One of these symbols is doll, according to Rousseau in Cirlot (1971: 84), "doll or puppet symbolized as a form of deviation of the maternal instinct; in short, a hangover from, or regression to an infantile state". In another meaning, doll is symbolized as a pretty girl or woman of little intelligence, sometimes used as a term of address (thefreedictionary.com: 2012).

2.1.3.2 Contextual is a private meaning created by the author.

Sometimes, the authors give some symbols in their work to make it more interesting and unique. Besides that, there are some important and hidden messages behind the symbols of the story. Symbol may have the meaning about the structural

of the story such as theme, character, plot, and setting. The author hope to have the same interpretation about the symbol with the reader, but it may impossible to happen because the readers have different knowledge and experience with the authors. The interpretation about the symbol doesn't need correct or exact meaning, but the most important is the interpretation is not far from the context moreover the author's intention. So, the author's messages of the story can be accepted by the reader by interpreting the symbol.

2.1.3.3 Cultural is a meaning of the symbol that influenced by our culture. People around the world have different culture depend on their group or ethnic and the place where they lived. As the result, they have different opinion, view, and understanding about something includes the symbol interpretation. For example dog represents faithfulness in Chinese's culture, but in India or Muslim culture, dog represents impurity.

2.1.3.4 Universal is a meaning that is given to a thing by most people and cultures. It is the composite between personal from most people with cultural. For example lion is symbolized as power and pride both to most people and in many cultures. Sometimes, we find difficulties to differ between universal and cultural. So, we have to interpret the symbol by our personal and view from cultural meaning. Universal symbols have the same meaning for the people, because they have same and agreed meaning for all people, they can be used to

suggest interpretation more universal for reader or audience of literature works. But, symbol may appear in literature works in a number of different ways to suggest a number of different things or interpretation. Louis (2011) in www.scribd.com/symbolism-in-literature states that commonly symbol can form a word, a figure of speech, an event, the total action, or a character. Some universal symbols are as follows:

2.1.3.4.1 Animal Symbol

Many animal symbols are used in the story or literature works. Cirlot (1971: 10) defines “the symbolism of any given animal varies according to its position in the symbolic pattern, and to the attitude and context in which it is depicted”. He adds that for the purposes of symbolic art, animals are divided into two categories (1971: 11). They are natural and fabulous. Natural is often in opposing pairs such as frog, owl, eagle, etc. fabulous is in the middle position between the world of fully differentiated creature and the world of unformed matter. “The examples of fabulous animals are winged horse, dragon, etc. Pegasus’ wings which is symbolized as the spiritualization of a lower force” (Cirlot, 1971:11). Venefica (2011) in www.whats-your-sign.com/animal-symbolism-squirrel.html states “the common meaning of squirrel is energy, play, prudence, balance, socializing, preparation, and resourcefulness”. Another animal symbol is skylark. “Its’

song is common interpreted as a cheerful one; to be joyful is to be as happy as a lark” (Lyman: 2009 in contributor.yahoo.com/user/Darryl_Lyman.html).

2.1.3.4.2 Color Symbol

Color symbolism is one of the most universal of types of symbolism, and has been consciously used in the liturgy, in heraldry, alchemy, art, and literature (Cirlot, 1971:52). Many colors of our life are often symbolized to other things. The color black common symbolizes death, evil, mysterious, and bad things. Rohrer (2012) states “black symbolized power, sexuality, sophistication, formality, elegance, wealth, mystery, fear, evil, unhappiness, depth, style, evil, sadness, remorse, anger, anonymity, underground, good technical color, mourning, death (Western cultures)”. Conroy (1921: 48) states that black color is purely the color of sadness, a sign that our lives have been lost of the happiness and the existence of someone’s love. Another color symbol in the story is green. Rohrer (2012) elaborates “green symbolized as Nature, environment, healthy, good luck, renewal, youth, spring, generosity, fertility, jealousy, inexperience, envy, misfortune, vigor”.

2.1.3.4.3 Season

Cirlot (1971: 282) elaborates “the seasons consists of four phases of the sun’s orbit and hence correspond to the phases of the moon as well as to the four stages of a man’s life”. Every

season is reflected about human's life. Louis (2012) in www.scribd.com/Symbolism-in-Literature.html states "season spring symbolizes new beginnings and birth, whereas season winter symbolizes death, old age, weariness and sometimes hopelessness". Christmas season symbolizes birth, change for better. As the setting of time in *A Doll's House*, Christmas is symbolized Nora's life which is become better after survive from bad condition.

2.1.3.4.4 Thing / Object

There are many symbolic objects in the literature works, especially in drama. The first is clothes or dress. "Clothing or dress is an important symbol because it effects first impression as well as subsequent judgments of a person" (Hurlock in Khotimah, 2007: 12). He adds "by their clothes, people try to symbolize there: desire for attention, individuality, sex appropriateness, autonomy, maturity, identity with a specific group and success" (2007: 12). Ring is symbolized as the bond of marriage. Cirlot (1971: 273) states "ring is a symbol of continuity and wholeness, it has been used both as symbol of marriage and of the eternally repeated time-cycle". Tree is symbolized an increasing trend, with its roots underground and its branches rising to the sky (Eliade in Cirlot, 1971: 347).

2.3 Drama

Literature is generally divided into three kinds; they are prose, drama, and poetry. As the kinds of literature, drama contains the uniqueness and beautifulness,

especially when it is presented on the stage. No one knows about the exact date of the birth of drama, but according to the legend it originated in Greece over 2500 years ago, rites of worship of the God Dionysus, who was associated with male fertility, agriculture, and seasonal rebirth. In this festival, a group of fifty citizens of Athens would perform hymns of praise to the God (Gwynn, 2006: 3). Rahardjo (1988: 44) defines “Drama, unlike other kinds of literature, is written not primarily to be read by an individual reader but to be represented on stage by actors for the entertainment of an audience, and hence to attract mass response”. Drama is different with other kinds of literature works. It can be enjoyed by the audiences on the stage. They don’t need to read repeatedly in order to fulfill their satisfaction in enjoying the beautifulness of literature works. Rahardjo adds that drama has purpose to move people emotionally, to arouse their interests, and to satisfy those interests (1988: 44). There are some supported factors to make drama can run well and the satisfaction of the audience can be loaded. They are action, dialogue, audience, stage, etc. Abrams (1999: 70) states “drama is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue”. As the kind of literature works, drama is more concern to the performance on the stage than the beautiful writing in a book.