

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Literature is a creative product of the art. On the other hand, literature is the form and creative result of the art whose object is a human and life by using a language as a medium (Semi, 2003: 8). Rahardjo (1988: 15) states that English literature is written, oral, or performed literature which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards life by using the media. Literature isn't the real social life, but the social image of the society that is poured in a story. As the creative art that uses human and the kind of life, literature isn't only the medium to deliver an idea and theory, but also the system of human think. Literature is the kind of culture, especially the art, as the other products of the art. It contains beauty substance of happy, pleasant, emotional, interesting, however refreshes the reader feeling. It is the art to be enjoyed basically, beside that is to be heard, be read, be spoken, and be shown in order to be understood.

Literature is generally divided into three kinds, they are prose, drama, and poetry. Prose uses language in verse form, example novels, short stories, novelette, etc. Abrams (1999: 70) states that 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. Poetry is the art of poets; poems, in verse form, example ballads, epics, lyrical poetry, etc (Rahardjo, 1988: 7).

One of the important elements of the literature works that make it unique, interesting, and special is symbolism. Stanton in Wulan (2010: 14) defines symbolism in literature is used by the authors to show their idea or emotion. Symbolism is the using of a concrete object to represent an abstract idea. It is the meaning of things. In literature, symbol is a thing

that suggests more than its literal meaning. 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. 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. It helps the reader knows where and when the story takes place by interpreting the symbol.

Symbolism in literature is very important in order to express the idea or emotions of the author. “Without symbolism there can be no literature; indeed, not even language” (Symons in Beebe, 1960: 8). Symbolism in literature may be hidden or appears directly in literature works so that the reader must really think and study the work to control the author’s meaning. Many authors give symbol into their work to make it more meaningful and colorful.

“Whenever we come upon the problem of symbolism, we are likely to be confused by a double-fixedness that invites misinterpretations” (Beebe, 1960: 40). Symbol in a literature works may have different interpretation in meaning to every reader. It is may happen because the readers have different think, emotion, and point of view to the literature works. The most important thing to remember when writing about symbolism is to avoid far interpretation. To interpret a symbol in literary works must has a relationship between the meaning and the context of the story, and it can be covered by theme, plot, and characterization. Many readers do not realize that the ability to identify symbols is more important than their satisfaction in

reading literary works. It is important to learn how to understand when an author is using a symbol, and how that symbol represents the theme, character, setting, and plot.

*A Doll's House* is one of the famous literary works of Ibsen. It was written in 1879 and has three act play in prose by the Norwegian playwright Ibsen. It premiered at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 21 December 1879. It was controversial when first published because criticized 19<sup>th</sup> century marriage norms. “*A Doll's House* which has theme about woman’s struggle for independence and self-respect made Ibsen an internationally famous author and controversial figure” (Gwynn, 2006: 201). Mayer (2008: 3) states that “today’s teachers are in a unique position to share the historic, theatrical, and cultural significance of *A Doll's House*”. Even though it was made in 1879 but the originality, life messages, and contribution of the story to our life is still suitable until today. It is one of an eternal literature works of Ibsen. Because of that, many teachers use *A Doll's House* as the material in literature subject to their students.

This story is begun by Nora who brings some parcels and Christmas tree to celebrate Christmas day and because her family has been recovered from bad financial. But, Helmer as her husband doesn’t accept her activities. He regards Nora is spendthrift. His bad treatment to Nora is described by calling her using some animal symbols. In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen uses symbols to represent about character, theme, and setting. Some symbols are not appears clearly so we have to read frequently to understand how and when those symbols are used. The interpretation of symbols in *A Doll's House* is important to help the reader reveals about the theme, characters, and setting of the story.

Henrik Johan Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828, in Skien, Norway. He was the eldest of five children. His father, Knud Ibsen was a sea captain, was born in Skien in 1797 and married Marichen Cornelia Martie Altenburg, the daughter of a German merchant, in 1825. “Ibsen universally acknowledged as the first of the great modern playwrights” (Gwynn, 2006:

201). Ibsen began to write in earnest in Grimstad. He wrote satire and elegant poetry. Ibsen is a dramatic Norwegian master. All his literature works based on the story of his life around 18<sup>th</sup> until the first of 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is always concerns to the middle class. It influences social life between aristocracy and middle class at that time indirectly. Because of that, he became the father of the social problem play (Gassner, 1963: 135).

Brandes in Fjelde (1965: xxii) elaborates “in the literature study that affected Ibsen so deeply, had written that, looked at from the historical point of view, a book, even though it may be a perfect, complete work of art, is only a piece cut out of an endlessly continuous web”. Almost all Ibsen’s works have been published successfully around the world. They have been translated into English and played in many theatres around the world. He has made a big change in literature works especially in modern playwright.

Gassner (1963: 135) elaborates “He also made himself as the master of retrospective exposition, it is because he introduced all his expository material in the early part of the play by revealing it spot by spot throughout the whole line of the drama, showed us the power of the past over the present “.

Considering the importance of symbol in literature works, it is interesting to analyze the symbol in *A Doll’s House* by Ibsen. This research has purpose to reveal the possible meaning of symbols in drama *A Doll’s House* connected to represent the theme, plot, and characters in the story.

As far as the writer knows, there is no the research that analyzes about symbol and its meaning especially in drama. Many writers analyze about other structural approaches such as conflict, setting, plot, and character in a literature works, especially in drama. The research that analyzed drama is the research that had been conducted by Bertha Tiku (STIBA, 2003) in her thesis entitled *the psychological Conflict on the Main Characters of “A Street Car Named Desire” by Tennessee Williams*. Another research which analyzed about symbol is the research of Husnul khotimah (Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya, 2007) in her skripsi entitled *a study of symbols in the glass menagerie by tennessee Williams*. Based on above

views, can be emphasized that the analysis on this research is based on symbolism theories and applies them to analyze the possible meaning of the symbols are used in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. Therefore, it can be declared that this research is original, analyzing different kinds of literature works.

Based on the explanation above, it is interesting to discuss and analyze the symbols in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen based on the symbolism theory and this skripsi is entitled: "the analysis of symbols in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen".

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

From the explanation and related to the background of the study above, the problem of the study can be formulated as follows:

- 1.2.1 What symbols are used in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen?
- 1.2.2 What are the possible meanings of the symbols in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study is intended to:

- 1.3.1 Find some symbols that used in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen
- 1.3.2 Describe and analyze the possible meaning of the symbols in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.

## **1.4 Operational Definition of the Key Terms**

The using of the specific key term in this research must be undoubtedly defined, especially the meaning of symbol and some definitions related to this study, it is important in order to more understand about this study, they are as follow:

### **1.4.1 Symbol**

"Symbol in literature is a thing that suggests more than its literal meaning" (Kennedy and Gioia, 2005: 200). Ibsen gives many symbols in *A Doll's House*, even

though they are not appears clearly. So, the reader or audience has to give much attention in order to know and understand the important symbols in the story. There are eleven important symbols in the story. It is based on how important the symbols in order to reveal about the theme, plot, setting, character, moreover the hidden messages of the story. Those important symbols are Christmas tree, macaroons or forbidden macaroons, skylark, squirrel, clothes or dress, tarantella or tarantella dance, black cross, letter, doll, ring, and Doll's House.

#### 1.4.2 Doll's House

Based on Dictionary of English Language, doll is a child's usually small toy having the likeness of a human, a pretty child. In slang, doll is an attractive person, a woman, a sweetheart or darling, a helpful or obliging person. Meanwhile, in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995), house is building made for people to live in, usually for one family.

Based on the above views, *Doll's House* is interpreted as a place of a family that is lived by nice and attractive woman. The husband and other members of family can feel happy because of her. She can entertain her family. Moreover, she looks like a plaything to her family's happiness.

#### 1.4.3 *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

*A Doll's House* is one of the famous literary works of Ibsen. it was made on 1879 and has three act play in prose by the Norwegian playwright Ibsen. It was premiered at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 21 December 1879.

#### 1.4.4 Drama

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”. As the kind of literature works, drama is more concern to the performance on the stage than the beautiful writing in a book. Abrams (1999: 70) states that drama is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the action, and utter the written dialogue.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The thesis is intended to offer both theoretical and practical contribution in the field of literature. Theoretically, this study is expected to apply the literary theories into the data.

Practically, this thesis is expected to be worth reference for those who conduct research in the field of literature, especially drama for further studies.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

In order the study enables to answer the formulated problems appropriately, it is important to emphasize its scope and limitation. The scope of this study is focused on:

1.6.1 The symbols that used in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

1.6.2 The analysis of the research is made based on the theory of symbol.