

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In order to analyze a work of literature, someone may consider the elements outside the work itself, or focus attention to the work itself as a whole entity. In his well-known book *Theory of Literature*, Wellek and Warren (1949) points out that here are two major methods to studying literature, there are extrinsic method and intrinsic method. Extrinsic method covers all environmental factors from the author of the story such as biographical, psychological, sociological, philosophical, and other arts (music, sculpture, painting), while the intrinsic element is cover what in the works itself by putting aside the environmental factors and focus on the work itself such as plot, characters, setting, world-view, and tone (p. 221).

Another intrinsic element, relevant to this research, is symbolism. Symbolism has big part in literary work because “Symbolism (is) one of the most important aspects of serious imaginative literature” (McMahan, Day, & Funk, 1986, p. 58). Symbol is the common thing used by people to make something become easier to be understood by other. A symbol is something solid that represent things more than itself (McMahan, Day, & Funk, 1986), for example, white dove as a peace symbol or black cat as a bad luck symbol.

To sum up, symbolism in literature is like a tool for the author to deliver their messages, so they will be understood by the reader completely. The sense

of messages will be different when the author uses symbolism. By using symbol, one message can become powerful. In a case where a male character wants to say that a women's pretty face will not last forever, the author will not use a blunt expression like "Pretty women will be pretty among the ugliest as they are getting old " but he will say "You know, flower will wither someday" instead. Upon reading the expression, the reader will wonder why the author say 'flower' that 'wither,' then reader will use their imagination to interpret the meaning of "flower" in relation to "women", and to interpret the meaning of "wither" in relation to "getting old." When the reader understands what the symbols relate to, it means the author succeeds to get reader's attention.

Symbolism does not only give powerful message (Green, 2013), but also adds the richness of a story and shares the author philosophies (O'neal, 2013). For example, when a woman says to a man 'the best part of you is your eyes because I can see myself in it,' it makes the sentence richer because this one sentence can be interpreted differently by different people. Some readers can only catch the literal meaning of 'eyes' as the best part of the person or some other readers can recognize the symbol represented by eyes which means that the woman wants to say that the man is her soul-mate. The example of the author's philosophies can be found in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel by *Lewis Carroll* where he puts his philosophies on mathematician concept in this novel. In the part where Alice falls into a rabbit hole and eats cake that changes her into 3 inches height and where Alice smokes a hookah pipe and is back to her normal size, *Lewis Carroll* wants to show his philosophies about

mathematics' limited concept that Alice needs to eat the right balance to make herself into the right size (Bayley, 2009).

After the explanations about symbolism as a tool for the author, people can find that not only the author that gets advantage by using symbolism in their work but the reader could gain some advantage. The use of symbolism in literary work could help to broaden reader's mind because like the example *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* before, people could understand about mathematic concept by read it. To recognize symbolism, there are some processes where people should use their imagination. Without imagination, understanding literary works which have many symbolisms are difficult. That is why people who read a lot of literary work can gain advantage. That is the reason symbolism is one of interesting topics to be examined.

Here I try to find out how symbolism is used in *The Little Prince* by *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*. The symbolism in *The Little Prince* novel will be the object of analysis in this thesis in which the researcher examines the symbolism and explains the meaning of the symbols in this novel. This novel is originally written in French and translated into English. It was published on 6 April 1943 in both languages. The Little Prince is not an ordinary novel because the written style is like children's book but the writer addresses all ages especially adults. Some people also call this novel an autobiography of the author who is an aviator who experienced being lost in Sahara Desert (Le Petit Prince Licensing). This novel has been translated into over 250 languages and gets most vote for the best book of the 20th century in France (Goodreads.Inc, 2007). The most fascinating feature about this book is the fact that the author uses symbols to

deliver his message to adult in children's writing style. The author's style might sound childish, but his way to deliver symbols has a deep meaning when people see it from different point of view. The author, in my opinion, succeeds to tone down the complexity of the story into children's level. The main purpose of this research is to find the symbols used and their meanings in the novel.

1.2. FIELD OF THE STUDY

The field of this study is literature, especially symbol using Symbolism Approach

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is symbolism in *The Little Prince* novel. Although there are a lot of symbolisms in this novel but I only focus on major symbols and their meaning in *The Little Prince*.

1.4. PROBLEM FORMULATION

This study has purpose to address this following question: What are the symbols and their meanings in *The Little Prince*?

1.5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to find out the symbols and their meanings in *The Little Prince* novel.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to offer more knowledge about symbolism in *The Little Prince* and Pickering and Hooper's theory is used to identify the symbols and their meanings. As the writer knows, readers should train themselves and read a lot of book to understand symbolism in stories. Therefore, from this study

hopefully the readers can get a lot of information about symbolism in literature especially written texts employing many symbolisms.

1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- symbol

Symbol is a thing that is not concrete and always stands for or gives more meaning than itself (McMahan, Day, & Funk, 1986). The other related term is symbolism which refers to symbols which appear in literary works. The study of symbol is called symbolism.

