

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of The Research

Literature can be interpreted from many kinds of perspectives, it may be defined from objective or intrinsic perspective. From those two notions of knowledge, the different interpretation might be found. Abrams, in his book *The Mirror and The Lamp*, states literature based on objective approach is an isolation art from the external elements (1953: 26). We should only focus on the internal side of its work. It is the same if we want to criticize a literary work, the criteria of establishing the criticism comes from its own characteristics or intrinsic elements.

As the supportive argument, there is an opinion from Eliot regarding to this knowledge in Abrams's book. He says "... when we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing" (1953: 26). It means we cannot find or relate anything to something more than itself; we have to focus only on its own element or intrinsic element such as theme, plot, and more.

Literature can also be defined from intrinsic perspective as well, it makes the definition of literature from objective perspective even more understandable and clearer. Based on Rene Wellek and Austin Warren's book *Theory of Literature*, literature is structured by its own element. If we want to define what literature is, we

only see it from inside. There is no more than itself, nothing from outside a literary work can be considered (1956: 9).

Symbol, as one of intrinsic elements, is a representation of author's goal and intention. Laurence Perrine, in his book *Literature*, says a symbol presents more than itself and it can be in form of an object, a person, a situation, and other types. Those forms of presentation may have a literal meaning in the story, but it can also suggest or give another meaning (1974:211)

One of Laurie Halse Anderson's novel, entitle *Speak*, shows this feature. As the writer, Anderson was born in Postdam, 1961. Her most noticeable work, *Speak*, was published in 1999. In *Speak*, Anderson tells a story of a girl, Melinda Sordino, who becomes silent because of a terrifying incident until she dares herself to 'speak' up about what happened. Since the story tells mainly about the condition of Melinda becomes silent, it creates the curiosity about what happened toward Melinda. Melinda, as the main character, is the one who delivers the symbols in the novel. Those symbols increase the quality of this novel as they help the readers to discover the truth beneath the story.

As for the explanation above, symbols must have a significant impact for the story. Anderson, as the author, puts the symbols in her novel with certain intention. She uses several symbols as the hint for the readers to understand about the story. Melinda delivers those symbols to strengthen the solid theme for the story. As it is mentioned before, symbol can be analyzed in the novel itself. One of the approaches, New Criticism, supports this type of analysis. It is used in this thesis to explore the

symbols in the novel. It also includes the analysis of the meaning from the symbols and how it reinforces the solid theme for the story.

Since this thesis applies New Criticism as the specific theory, the writer must exclude all the extrinsic elements in analyzing the object of the research. The writer only focuses on the element that can be found from inside the text or the formal element. One of them, as the prominent element, is the symbol. By analyzing the symbol, the writer can see how Anderson builds the theme of isolation as the solid for the story. Thus, the role of symbol is important in developing this thesis.

The symbol is also important in the story, the author of a literary work can put the symbol in the story in order to deliver what they want tell toward the readers. Anderson, as the author of *Speak*, uses some symbols. Those symbols are Melinda's tree painting, mirror, and Melinda's lips and mouth condition. The readers may not notice they got helped by those symbols in understanding what Anderson wants to share to the readers.

There are main reasons why *Speak* is chosen as the object of this research. First, this novel has many symbols. There is possibility that the readers are not aware of it, this research will try to explore and show it. Second, the position of the symbols in the novel is raising the curiosity about what happened to the main character, Melinda. Thus, the readers need to understand the meaning of those symbols and its role toward the story.

## 1.2. Identification of The Problem

It is believed that *Speak*, as the object of the research, has several symbols such as Melinda's tree painting, her lips and mouth condition, and mirror. Those symbols are existed and visible but hard to be understood directly if the readers do not pay enough attention. As the prominent and important feature from the novel, those symbols will be evaluated in this thesis in order to make the symbolism in *Speak* clear and understandable for the readers. So then, the existence of symbols in *Speak* can be understood easier by the readers.

## 1.3. The Scope of the Research

The writer will have discussions based on the following scope in this research, they are:

1. The meaning of symbols found in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*
2. The role of symbols in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*

## 1.4. Research Question

From the background of the research and the identification of problem, this thesis has three main questions as the research question.

1. How does the author present the meanings of the symbols in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*?
2. What is the role of symbols to strengthen the theme of Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*?

### 1.5. Objective of the Research

This research is aimed to explore and to analyze the symbolism in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*. This research started by evaluating the meaning of the symbols found in the novel and the solid theme of the novel.

### 1.6. The Review of Related Studies

Since this research focuses on the symbolism, it is a must for the writer to understand more about information of symbolism in different literary works. When it is done, the writer can relate with the object of the research, so it would make the argument in this research clear and strong. There are lots of experts that have already studied about this topic, particularly about how to interpret a meaning of symbol.

The writer reads these five related studies, all of these five studies have the similarity with this research. As the first and the second studies, it discusses the same object of the research, which is *Speak*. The rest of the studies discuss how to define and analyze the symbol inside from a literary work. As the first related study, it is a thesis written by Resty Maudina from English Department Faculty of Humanities of Andalas University. Her thesis entitled *Society's Contribution to Silent Tendency of Sexually Assaulted Child as Reflected in Laurie Halse Anderson's Speak*, it is written in 2018. This thesis shows the reflection of social problem in America around 1999. Specifically, it is about the silent tendency of sexual assaulted is influenced by society. The parents, friends, and teachers, are also giving the contribution toward this issue. This thesis has a good and positive thing for the readers, it is because the writer can see the connection between fiction and the society. By relating a literary

work with the society, the readers may aware of the function of literature. A literary work also gives alternative solution for our problem in society.

The second related study comes from a thesis written by Widya Agustin from English Department Faculty of Humanities of Andalas University. Her thesis entitled *Reduction of Young Adult Sexual Violence as Reflects in Laurie Halse Anderson's Speak* and it is written in 2016. This thesis discusses about the way to reduce the sexual violence. Widya finds how Melinda, as the main character in this novel, is capable to eliminate the next possibility of the sexual violence to happen. While for Anderson, her novel makes the contribution in the real life. It becomes a part of curriculum in many schools in USA for the teaching material. This thesis gives the readers something important, since this novel is realistic fiction so there must be a correlation between this novel and the writer. Widya can prove it in the way how the main character's action and the achievement the writer has achieved. The analysis of this thesis is the best point, Widya answers the research question and she puts the answer in the analysis, the answers are based on the story and also based on the information about the writer in the real life. Thus, the readers will gain more knowledge about the topic she discusses in the thesis and the positive points from *Speak*.

The rest of the related studies are about how to define the symbols in a literary work. The third related studies comes from *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, this article written by Sandamali with title “Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and The Sea*” and it was published in December

2015. This article depicts the function of the symbolism in the novel. This article also shows how Hemingway uses symbols in his novel, he uses it as the thing that makes his novel even better. From this article, the helpful part is in the theoretical part. In that part, Sandamali puts more than one theorist as the guidance in order to analyze a work with symbolism. This article makes a good analysis because Sandamali can define a symbol from the story and explain the symbol's meaning. In this article, she finds the symbols in type of person or characters and in type of the object.

.As the next related studies, it comes from a thesis written by Yessy Monica Sari from English Department Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Sebelas Maret University. Her thesis entitled *Symbolism of Love and Death in Christina Rosseti's six poems*, it is written in 2015. This thesis examines the use of symbols in poetry. It is proven by the writer by doing close reading toward those six poems. The result shows the symbols engage with the theme, love and death, as the main theme in the six poems. Thus, the writer of this thesis makes a good analysis by connecting the idea of the main theme with the symbols. Yessy interprets the symbols carefully by doing close reading, so then she can analyze the symbols and its relation with the love and death as the main theme.

As the last related studies, there is a thesis written by Sadouki Chaima entitled *Symbolism in William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies* and it is written in 2015. Sadouki was majoring English language in Department of Foreign Languages in Mohamed Kheider Biskra's University. Sadouki analyzes the function of the symbols in this novel, that is to clarify the theme of the novel to the readers. This thesis gives a

good finding as the best point. Sadouki identifies the symbols first, then she defines the meaning of those symbols. As the finding, she finds the symbols in type of person and in type of the object. She also shows the function of the symbol, it can be seen in the interpretation the meaning of the symbol. So then, the readers can understand the way how to interpret a symbol. It is because this thesis interprets the symbols in a good order. Thus, people can follow this thesis if they want to analyze the symbols in a literary work. This thesis gives a massive contribution for this research since it also discusses same topic about the function of symbols in a literary work. The contribution mainly helps the writer in analyzing some symbols in *Speak* so the writer could make a better and good analysis for this research.

### **1.7.Theoretical Framework**

In this research, the objective approach is used as the basic approach. This approach, based on Abrams's in his book *The Mirror and The Lamp*, identifies the function of intrinsic elements from literary work, there is no intrusion from any external elements. Objective approach connects with all the elements from inside, the whole parts of a literary work's intrinsic elements builds the structure of its own self (1953: 27). It can be said there is an integration between the literary work with its own elements from inside, this integration makes a literary work 'distinguish' their identity from any external elements. As it happens, we can analyze a literary work from their own elements or intrinsic elements.

In specific way, this research applies New Criticism. New criticism focuses only on the text itself as the way to find the meaning from a literary work. It denotes



any types of extrinsic part outside the literary work such as the author's social life, the author's background, and more. Louis Tyson, in his book *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*, states author's background, as one of the extrinsic part of the text, cannot be the guidance for analyzing a literary work (2006: 136). Many author of the literary work are already dead, what will happen if a research finds some questions that cannot be answered from any kind of information about the author of the literary work.

Tyson also says the point in using New Criticism is to gain more our focus in reading a literary work, as the assistance for our analysis, there are formal elements from the text itself (2006: 150). It is believed the formal elements and the meaning of a literary work are linked together. Thus, new criticism concludes the focus in analyzing the literary work is in the formal elements from the text or a literary work. Later, these formal elements will build the theme, as the content, of a literary. From those two components, they will establish an organic unity in a literary work.

In new criticism, the formal element is used to find the theme of the literary work. According to Tyson, Formal element is the 'evidence' in a literary work. It is used to assist the analysis of the text itself. These formal elements are images, symbols, metaphor, rhyme, point of view, setting, characterization, plot, and more (2006: 137). These formal elements are the important assistance for the analysis. The formal elements must be analyzed deeply in order to find the meaning of a literary.

As the researcher, the writer must do close reading. Tyson states close reading is the thorough examination from the comprehensive connection between formal elements

and its theme and this is the way the organic unity of a text, or literary work, can be found (2006: 141)

In this research, the focus is mostly about the symbol. Symbol, as states in *Dictionary of Literary Work* by M. H. Abrams and G. G. Harpham, is a property of an object and it gives a kind of idea as the replacement of logical presentation (2012: 394). Symbol can replace the truth-real or the complex meaning of a logical idea in real life. It is changed into an acceptable object, so the readers can understand those ideas in easier way.

From Rene Wellek and Austin Warren's book *Theory of Literature*, it is told a symbol is something that continuously occurs in a work (189). This paper will focus on the symbol as Wellek says "If it persistently recurs, both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol" (190). So then, we may define a symbol in a literary work based on the occurrence, especially when it occurs consistently.

The writer also sees Sandamali's journal article, *Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea*, due to this article also shows the way to define a symbol. Before the symbols are found, she analyzes the plot and the setting as the intrinsic elements of the story. By analyzing those elements, Sandamali can see how many times a symbol occurs in the story. She defines a symbol from the symbol's appearance, or she defines a symbol when it occurs consistently and persistent.

In Sandamali's journal article as well, she also explains the way how to define the meaning of those symbols. The symbol's meaning can be found inside the text itself,

it cannot be from outside of the text. Since this thesis applies New Criticism, the writer also tries to find the meaning of the symbol by seeing the text itself. The writer also uses *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (2001) written by Michael Ferber. From the dictionary, the writer gets a preliminary meaning of a symbol. Thus, the writer can continue to explain the meaning of a symbol.

### **1.8.Method of the Research**

In order to collect the data, the writer applies Library research method; read more and deep the primary source which is Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*. As the secondary data, the writer will gather information particularly more journal articles and book that relate to the symbolism topic.

In analyzing the data, there are several steps. It starts by reading the novel first to find the symbols of the novel. After the symbols are found, those symbols are analyzed. The analysis continues by seeing how the symbols strengthen the theme of the object of the research. The writer applies the objective or intrinsic approach as the grand theory, then the New Criticism is used in analyzing the data as well.

In presenting the result of analysis, the qualitative method is used in this thesis. Based on Robert C. Bodgan and Biken's opinion in their book *Qualitative Research for education* (2007), they explain Qualitative research is descriptive since this the way of collecting data are in form of words rather than the collection of numbers or pictures (5). As it explains, the explanation is in the descriptive or the result is presented in type of words rather than numbers.

ant because they have connection with the next chapter. Those important things are what the writer finds in theme, plot, and setting.

The writer finds the salvation from the isolation as one of the themes, it is important because the writer argues that theme becomes the solid theme. In order to prove it, the writer tries to find the unity between the theme and the formal element. One of them, as the prominent element as well from the story, is the symbol. As it is explained, the symbol can be defined in Plot and The Setting. Thus, the analysis of plot and the setting help the writer to define the symbol because the writer knows how many times a symbol occurs in the story. When it occurs consistently, it can be defined as a symbol.

In short, the writer finds important things from the chapter two in the theme, plot, and analysis. It helps the writer to define the symbol from the story, as the way to prove one of the themes as the solid theme in the next chapter.

