

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Research

Symbols have an important role in our lives; it uses to deliver specific meaning that cannot be express with words. Without symbols, our life will merely be uninteresting and boring experiences. In literature, symbols hold important role in assisting the delivery of meaning or message of the author to the readers whether it is expressed or implied. Therefore, by comprehending the symbols the readers will know and understand the meaning of the message even though the context is hidden in the story. There are many literary works that contain symbols with particular meanings, one of them Peter Shaffer's *Equus*.

Peter Shaffer was born in Liverpool 1926 and passed away at the age of 90. He was a famous British playwright and screenwriter, and also was inducted into American Theatre Hall of Fame in 2007. His famous works are *The Salt Land* (1954), *The Prodigal Father* (1957), *Five Finger Exercise* (1958), *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), *Black Comedy* (1965), *The White Liars* (1967), *Shrivings* (1970), *Equus* (1973), *Amadeus* (1979). According to Literature British Council, Shaffer has won several awards such as William Inge Award for Distinguished Achievement in American Theatre, Evening Standard Drama Award, Tony Award, New York Drama Critics' Circle, Academy Award and Golden Globe. Most of his works dominantly use archetypal symbols; one of them is *Equus* which will be discussing in this research.

Peter Shaffer's famous play, *Equus* tells a life of a boy named Alan Strang who blinded six horses with a metal spike in the stable he worked in. This is due to his guilt toward horses which he tends to consider horses as his love and has tendency to consider the horses as his

Gods. The reason for his attitude and his attraction to horses is because of the way his parent treated him, and the effect of different religious perspective from his parent.

There are some reasons why this research chooses *Equus* as the object of the research. First, is that this research assumes that *Equus* contains unique symbols that represent sexual human desire. The second reason is that the play has a significant role in British drama; according to british drama council, it has been played for 1209 times and one of 100 longest-running shows in Broadway, and contains nudity in it, and has an interesting way of showing a relationship between man and horse. However, the way of the author using a sexuality is impressive and rarely use by other author of plays.

### **1.2. The Identification of Problems**

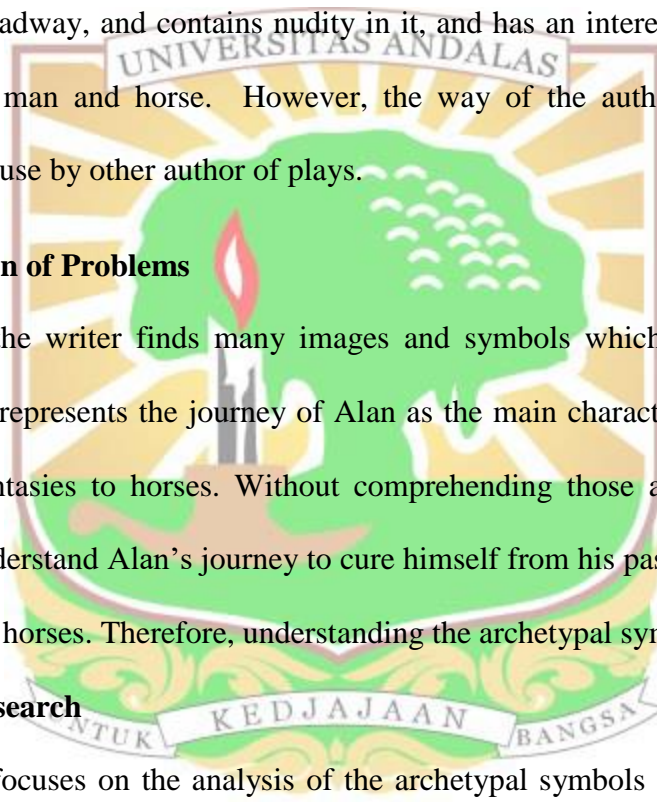
In the story, the writer finds many images and symbols which later are classified as archetypal images. It represents the journey of Alan as the main character to heal himself from his unique sexual fantasies to horses. Without comprehending those archetypal symbols, the readers will fail to understand Alan's journey to cure himself from his past and the reason behind his act of blinding the horses. Therefore, understanding the archetypal symbols is crucial.

### **1.3. The Scope of Research**

The research focuses on the analysis of the archetypal symbols that appear in the story and how each symbol deepens people's understanding of Alan's personality and his attitude. This research is basically an intrinsic analysis because of its main focus the archetypal symbols involved in main character's journey and the roles of the symbols in assisting the discovery of main character's personality and conflict that appear throughout the play.

### **1.4. The Research Questions**

This research will answer the following questions:



1. What are the symbols the author represent in *Equus*?
2. How do the symbols affect the conflicts that appear in *Equus*?

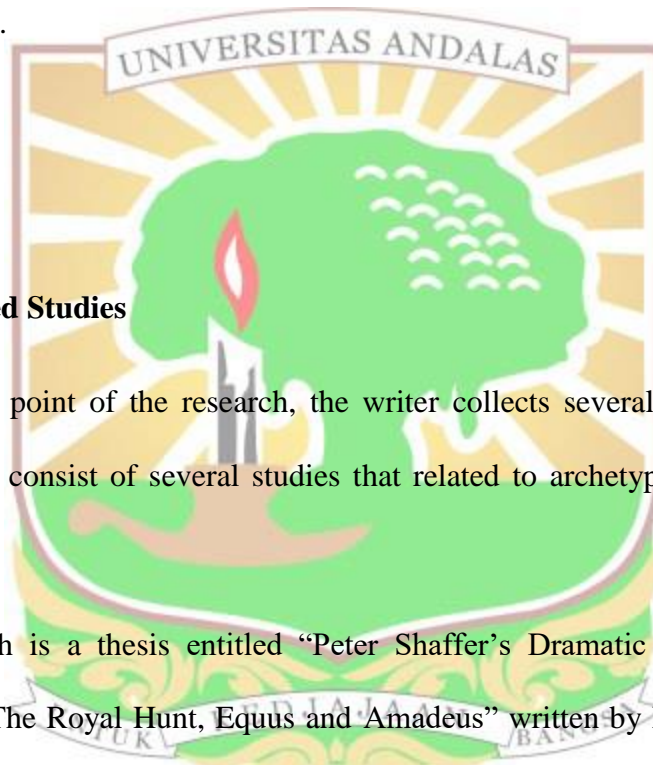
### **1.5. The Objective of the Research**

The objective of the research is to find the meaning of the archetypal symbols in Alan's journey. Not only to find the meaning of the symbols, but this research also reveals that through the archetypal symbols. The next objective is to find how conflicts appear and affect main characters of the story.

### **1.6. Review of Related Studies**

As a starting point of the research, the writer collects several sources to support the analysis. The sources consist of several studies that related to archetypal as the theory of this analysis.

First research is a thesis entitled "Peter Shaffer's Dramatic Vision of The Failure Society: A Study of The Royal Hunt, *Equus* and *Amadeus*" written by Fushan Lai from Simon Fraser University (1989). Lai exposed the failed society that is shown by Peter Shaffer in his plays, how middle-aged protagonist gains confrontation inside his life after seeing young protagonist, who is untainted by the society and filled with a sense of the divine. Lai's research supports similar idea that this research conducts, even though it lacks the focus toward the story which only explores the highlight of the story.



The second is a thesis by Veronika Stoskova from Masaryk University (2013) entitled “When a Moment of Love Becomes a Crime of Passion: Equus A Play by Peter Shaffer”. In writing this thesis, Stoskova succeeded to prove the symbols of worship and the imaginary border between madness and insanity, the religious and Ancient Greece imagery in Equus, and the clash between Atheism and Christianity. Stoskova only focuses on the religious symbols, not the entirety of the symbols that the story actually contains.

The third journal entitled “The Archetypal Criticism in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*” written by Nimer Abuzahra and published by Hebron University, Palestine on May 2017. He succeeded to show what kind of symbols that appear in *The Great Gatsby* and analyze how the symbols represent the journey of the main character in the story. Nimer generally explained so many symbols from the story, he not only focuses on the main character, but almost all characters of the story.

The fourth research a Comparative Analysis of George Simmel’s Essay “The Stranger” (1950). George Simmel essay discussed not only the influence of society on the alienation and subjugation but also how people played a part in its own estrangement. This conceptualization of the stranger and its associated characteristics also can be applied to the African American experience. Based on this study, the writer believes that the concept about society and conflict by Georg Simmel is applicable to analyze the African American Experience, life and society because Simmel expressed many of his ideas in essays on a wide range of subjects, including art and literary criticism, women’s rights, and city life.

This research takes the last review from a thesis entitled “Archetypal Symbolism in William Faulkner’s *Light in August*” by Judith E. Penfold from Lakehead University (1971). The research from Penfold not only discusses about archetypal symbolism itself but he combines

it with a psychological issue too. Penfold discusses about the spiritual journey of the main character, as it will also help this research with the same pattern of journey that this research will conduct.

Judging from some reviews of the research above, this research has not found any research that applied the archetypal theory on *Equus* as the object. Thus, this research will be definitely different. However, this research will use some thesis and journals above as the supporting sources in analyzing the data. Those researches above are beneficial for this research in part of the way this research applied archetypal theories.

## **1.7. The Theoretical Framework**

### **1.7.1 Archetypal Criticism**

This research lies in the field of archetypal analysis. The archetypal theory is proposed by Carl Gustav Jung who has studied myth and religion. According to Carl Gustav Jung, the word of archetype in etymology is divided into ‘arche’ which means “root” and “origin” and ‘typos’ which means “patten” or “model”. Jung sees the individual personality as the product and container of its ancestral history. So the archetype is the firs original model upon which all other similar people, object or concept are divided, copied, patterned or emulated. The archetype, therefore, is actually “inherited forms”.

“A word or image is symbolic when it implies something more than it is obvious and immediate”(Jung, Carl, *Man and His Symbol*, 1964: 20). A lot of symbolism in literary works actually has been realized by Jung. He considers that the use of archetypal symbols has their own power in producing interpretation through author’s style, “the archetypes thus have their own initiative and their own specific energy. These powers enable them both to produce a meaningful

interpretation (in their own symbolic style) and to interfere in a given situation with their own impulse and their own thought formations.” (Jung, 1964:79).

Archetypal are universal symbols, but symbols are more specific in its characteristic. Some symbols might sometime have distinctive meaning evnthough it has similar context to begin with.

These are the archetypal images according to A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature by Guerin (2005):



## 1. Colors

- a. Red is the symbol of blood, sacrifice, violent passion and disorder.
- b. Green symbolizes growth, sensation, hope, fertility; in negative context it may be associated with death and decay.
- c. Brown represents quality in everything - a comfortable home, the best food and drink and loyal companionship. It is a color of physical comfort, simplicity and quality. In a negative perspective it can also give the impression of cheapness and stinginess in certain circumstances
- d. Black (darkness) symbolizes chaos, mystery, the unknown; death; primal wisdom; the unconscious; evil; melancholy.
- e. White symbolizes highly multivalent, signifying, in its positive aspects, light, purity, innocence, and timelessness; in its negative aspects, death, terror, the supernatural, and the blinding truth of an inscrutable cosmic mystery.

## 2. Horse

It represents: power, freedom, animal desire.

### 3. The Archetypal Woman

(It is divided as the Great Mother - the mysteries of life, death, transformation); the Female Principle associated with the moon); the Demon Lover (the male counterpart of the Terrible Mother): the devil, Satan, Dracula. (Guerin et al: 187)

### 4. The Wise Old Man

He (savior, redeemer, guru) is the personification of the spiritual principle, representing "knowledge, reflection, insight, wisdom, cleverness, and intuition on the one hand, and on the other, moral qualities such as goodwill and readiness to help. According to Guerin "The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or a lucky idea." (188)

### 5. Six

According to Astrovera "The number six has significant role in bible, because it is the number of man, it represents the man's imperfection. It implies man cannot exist without God and Christ. The number six only related to man. According to the bible "Man was created on the sixth day in the creation of universe." Also six days were given to man to do their works and the seventh day for resting from their works. Six's form is a continuous curve without angle, without line. It is the total love. It is almost spiral, it is on the point of going towards the infinity. Six is also the form of the foetus in gestation.

### 1.7.2 Theory of Conflict

In literature, conflict is the central issue and makes the story move. There are two types of conflicts in literature, which is Internal conflict and external conflict, according to [education.seattle.com](http://education.seattle.com) conflicts are:

## 1. Internal Conflict

### Man vs. Self

"Man vs. Self" is the only the conflict that appears inside character mind, it can be struggle with his morality, fate and his belief. It involves in the decision of the character, wheter it is right or wrong.

## 2. External Conflict

- a. Man vs. Man: is probably the most conflict that occurs in dramatic story, it mostly occurs when a character struggles againts another character. these struggle can be form moral, religious or social differences, it can be either verbal or physical.
- b. Man vs. Nature: "Man vs. Nature" this conflicts occurs when a character is struggle againts the force of nature, for example a character that lost all his belonging because of an earthquake.
- c. Man vs. Society exists when a character struggle againts their culture and government or againts society norms and values. For example; a boy who choose an animal as his sexual interest, and he is judge by the society because it againts the society norms and values..
- d. Man vs. Fate: occurs when a character is being force to follow his destiny. It forces the character conscious or unconsciously to act based on his fate. For example, Harry Potter consciously believes that he is destined to defeat Voldemort by his own hand.

## 1.8. The Methods of Research

In conducting this research, there are three steps which have to be followed. The first step is collecting data using library and internet research. The research is started by exploring the concept which related to the object of the research, *Equus*, and the theory that will be used,



archetypal analysis. The play *Equus* uses as the primary source while journals, thesis and literary theory books use as the secondary source.

The second step is analyzing data. The method of analyzing data is descriptive analysis. Fraenkel and Wallen said that “descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques...” (1993: 23). The analysis is started by analyzing the intrinsic elements and further analysis is applied to the fictitious characters of the novel. Firstly, the archetypal symbols involved in the journey to self-purification are identified. They are water, colors, the archetypal woman, the wise old man, the tree and the abandoned or murdered children. Secondly, explaining the meaning of each symbol and how they give meaning to the main character’s journey in the story.

The last step is presenting the result of data analysis. At this point, the analysis comes to several points. The data is presented using descriptive method, since the research is a qualitative research. Fraenkel and Wallen said that “descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques...” (1993: 23).

