

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents about the background of the study, problem formulation, the objective of the study, limitation of the study, significance of the study and the last, organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The symbol is indeed so closely connected with life and culture, even we live surrounded by symbols. It is almost impossible to personal or social live without symbols. As we know, the clothes we wear are symbols; food that we eat is symbol; the house we live is symbol, as well as the world is also a symbol. It cannot be denied that the actions or human behaviors are strongly influenced by the meaning of symbols around society.

Social actions exist when someone captures the symbols around society. Human actions cannot be separated from the symbols and the meaning of symbols that have existed there. Behaviors along with a series of symbols in maximum persuasive of humans, such as leader (king), honor, and wealth creates a unique behavior from individual and social groups. For example, someone who wants to grade or higher status in society than others; he will do everything in order to achieve it. In reality, there is a man that wants to be a leader or a president; he will follow the presidential election until he becomes president because president is a symbol of authority.

Symbol is a part of semiotic theory. "Semiotics is the signs" (Jabrohim, 2012:123). Scientists consider that the phenomenon of social or society and

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culture is the signs. Semiotics learns about systems, rules, and conventions which have meaning (Jabrohim, 2012:123).

The figure who is considered as the Founder of semiotics is the two people on his day, working separately, namely Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Sander Peirce (1829-1914). The sign is not only one kind but also there are some, based on the relationship between the signifier and signified.

Semiotics is the signs. Signs have two aspects: signifier and signified. Signifier is the form of formal marking something called signified, while the signified is something which is marked by the signifier that the meaning (Pradopo, 2012:119).

For example “mother” is the sign which is marked the meaning “woman who born us”. We know that the word “mother” is the signifier and has meaning she is the human that born children and the meaning itself is the signified. So the mother becomes symbol of the women who can bear a baby.

According to Sebeok in Kull ejournal stated that semiotic is a science that learnt about diversity and need more knowledge to understand what it is signs and to make the analysis with the semiotic.

Semiotics is a study of diversity. The application of the concept of semiosis across all living species requires a clear understanding of differences between types of semiosis, which in its turn involves a more profound understanding of what a sign is, and what life is (Kull, 2005:28).

Symbols are in everywhere; symbolism exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. It is the use of an object, person, situation or word to represent something else, like an idea, in literature. Literature in

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the form of script or work also contain the meaning of signs, that is as nonverbal signs. According to Sebeok in his ebook;

Symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way..... Words in general are symbolic signs. But any signifier - object, sound, figure, etc. - can be symbolic. A cross figure can stand for the concept ' Christianity' ; a V-sign made with the index and middle fingers can stand symbolically for the concept 'victory' ; white is a color that can be symbolic of ' cleanliness,' ' purity, ' or ' innocence , ' but dark of 'uncleanness,' ' impurity,' or ' corruption ' ; and the list could go on and on. These symbols are all established by social convention. (Sebeok, 2001:23)

From the quote, it means that we can find more than one meaning from the word, for example white is symbol of purity and black is symbol of hate or hostility for example. Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as signs in everyday speech, but of anything which stand for something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. Semioticians study how the meanings are made and how the reality is represented.

Symbols are everywhere for example in the house, such as the chair. Chair is an object that we use to sit and that is simple form of symbol. Chair itself as signifier and the meaning that is an object for human seat as signified. So semiotics is concerned to everything that has a sign. Sendera takes from Umberto Eco's book entitled 'A Theory of Semiotics ', 1979:7, "who indicated that 'semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting

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for something else “(2014:5). It means that semiotics can identify by a sign and the sign can be identified by something else.

A story may contain a symbol, it is like the novel by Elizabeth Gilbert. Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat, Pray, Love* 2006 is a novel which describes the personal life of the writer where she has everything related to her life such as having a modern home, successful career and beloved husband. She is actually an American modern woman, educated and ambitious eventually she feels unhappy and unsatisfied. In contrast, she becomes panic, sorrow and hesitates. She feels her divorcement, depression, failure of love and loss of handle life therefore she decides to look for the meaningful life. All of those problems put her life in terrible way. Then, she tries to recover all of problems by selling everything she has, leaving her occupation, her lovely people and visiting three different countries alone with the purpose of knowing the meaning of life.

Gilbert decides to write the word “*eat, pray, love*” as the title of her novel definitely has a purpose. Unconsciously, she may create symbols in the title of her novel and it keeps the reader curious with what Gilbert wrote. So, based on the brief explanation, the writer decided to analyze this novel using theory of symbol or semiotics theory to understand the meaning of symbol in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel and to know about the deep meaning of symbol around modern society in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel.

1.2. Problem Formulation

1. What are the meanings of symbols in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel?
2. How does the portrayal of Symbols of Gilbert's life among modern society in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel?

1.3. The Objective of the Study

1. To explain the meaning of life in the *Eat, Pray, Love* Novel by Elizabeth Gilbert.
2. To analyze the portrayal of symbols of Gilbert's life among modern society in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

Based on the problem formulation, this study limits the discussion around the meaning of symbols and the symbols of Gilbert's life among modern society as reflected in *Eat, Pray, Love* novel.

1.5. Significance of the Study

1. It is expected that the readers can take positive lessons from the analysis conducted in this study and the readers are easier to understand the story of *Eat, Pray, Love* Novel.
2. It is expected that the readers know more in the depth about the meaning of symbol and the symbols of Gilbert's life among modern society in *Eat, Pray, Love* Novel.

3. This study is expected to be useful for researchers and other students of English literature to improve knowledge about symbols and semiotic theory.

1.6. Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I presents introduction, which consists of background of the study, problem formulation, objective of the study, limitation of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter II is review of related literature, which is divided into synopsis, review of related literature, Roland Barthes semiotic and modern society. Chapter III refers to research method which is divided into type of research, data collecting method, types of data and analyzing the data. Chapter IV is about finding and discussion; it contains the analysis and the discussion of symbols and semiotics theory in the novel. Chapter V presents the conclusion and suggestion.