SYMBOLISM IN ARTHUR GOLDEN’S

MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature is flow of thinking, and expression of feelings, thoughts, and ideas, which have been expressed into something permanent. Naturally, a literary work contains the nature of life and human experience of life. The author of literary work always tries to make the reader understand and feel, as they are involved in those experiences. Barnet (1963: 8) states “literary work also presents a special kind of delight and some short of truth in various factual proportions”. The researcher should make sure on the concern in comprehending the work of literature since to some extent all literary work is symbolic.

Literary works, absolutely, which contain extreme theme is very rich of symbols. It means that all aspects, which have been presented by his extreme theme of novels, plays, poetry, and short story, are totally symbolic; there is no doubt about that ideas of workaday world, its decencies, passion, or rationale, are unwanted indeed are disturbing. Only two things counted, the first is the language itself: the linguistics structure of words, their connotation, sound, etymologies, etc. the second is symbol: the fire, ice, heaven, hell, sign, tools, soul life, death, wind, water, trees, animal, mountain, etc. explored and developed by all researchers around the world.

The symbol is not arbitrary, and is more discovered than created by many authors. Some literary works are regarded symbol as corresponding to ultimate reality or to supernal beauty. The twentieth century has seen many books of travel and adventure. Many writers have made their own rules they are naturally conscious that they need new spirit and values as well as new
technique of how they can deliver all the message they have into such unique and different way. Most of them make a starting point by doing such an adventure traveling or move to another place just try to find sources as much as they can, and then they try to bring the reader understand and feel as they are involved on those experiences through their literary works. They try to put every single flow of thinking, message, thought, and idea into observable symbol.

Originally, literary works contain suggestions science, good manners, social values, and also religious values. The authors hide those aspects into symbols, the better works they will have, and the more eternal it will be. Moreover, by the use of an effective symbol, authors are able to put every single point and every single detail concretely and compactly. More often, the symbol is so general in its meaning that it is able to suggest a great variety of more specific meaning. Perrine (1966: 83). We- as the literary readers, are expected to dig some new and existing experiences through literary works, because in fact, we do not only get experiences by involving directly into such action, but we can get it through reading some literary works as well.

*Memoirs of a Geisha* is a classic novel, which is written by Arthur Golden. Arthur Golden was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was educated at Harvard College, where he received a degree in art history, specializing in Japanese art. In 1980 he earned a M.A. in Japanese history from Columbia University, where he also learned Mandarin Chinese. Following a summer at Beijing University, he worked in Tokyo, and, after returning to the United States, earned a M.A, in English from Boston University. He resides in Brookline, Massachusetts, with his wife and two children.

The story of *Memoirs of a Geisha* is about the strikingly pretty child of an impoverished fishing family, Chiyo taken to faraway Kyoto and sold into slavery to a renowned geisha where she is renamed Sayuri. Initially reluctant, Sayuri must finally invent and cultivate an image of herself as a desirable geisha in order to survive in Gion’s cruel hierarchy.

For a good author is a person who can awake the imagination up from the reader’s also can bring the readers to his own world. To represent his idea an author may used symbols. Symbols appear if the reader pays attention to the words. Each story of a novel symbolizes the author’s life or experience. In his introduction to literature, Barnett states that: “a symbol is an image so loaded with significance that is not simply literal, and it does not simply stand for something else; it is both itself something and something else that is richly suggests a kind of manifestation of something too complex or too elusive to be otherwise revealed” (Barnett, 1963: 469). There are no components of experience which are only symbols or only meanings. In such an instance, the written word is a symbol and its meaning is the spoken word, and the spoken word is a symbol and its meaning is the dictionary meaning of the word, spoken or written. But often the written word effects its purpose without the intervention of the spoken word. Accordingly, then, the written word directly symbolizes the dictionary meaning.

Based on the facts above, the researcher decides to analyze the novel from Arthur Golden: “*Memoirs of a Geisha*” using symbolism approach.

**B. Review of Related Study**

There are some researchers in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta who studied Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Anggarwati (UMS, 2006), conducted a study entitled *Anxiety in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha: Psychoanalytic Analysis*. In her research
paper, she focuses on the anxiety of the major character of the novel. She uses Psychoanalytic Analysis. The researcher finds out that anxiety raises because of drives from system personality. When id wants to satisfy soon, superego must consider with moral it will arise conflict in the personality. Then if the conflict cannot be solved, it raises the anxiety and the person will be suffering.

Another research was conducted by Astuti (UMS, 2007), entitled A Comparison between Novel and Movie Version of Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha: A Structural Analysis. In her research paper, she finds out the similarities and differences between them. She uses Structural Analysis. The differences lie on limitation characters and characterization, setting of place, plot and point of view. Beside, the similarities lie on the character and characterization, setting, plot, and theme.

In novel version, there is only one major character (Sayuri), but there are two characters (Sayuri and Hatsumomo) in movie version. The setting of the novel version is takes place in Japan and United States of America, while in the movie version, the story happen in Kyoto, Japan.

Both the novel and movie version have the same plot, but in the novel version, the beginning describes Yoroido, where Chiyo (Sayuri) and her family live in poverty. While in the movie version, the filmmaker introduces Chiyo, Satsu, Mr. Tanaka, Mr. Sakamoto, and Mrs. Sakamoto. In the novel version, the author uses the first person point of view. While in the movie version, the filmmaker uses third person point of view.

Another research conducted by Arsyad (UMS, 2007), entitled Symbolism in Nathanial Hawthorne’s the House of the Seven Gables. In his research paper he finds out the core ideas as well as message in Nathanial Hawthorne’s the House of the Seven Gables by analyzing the
symbols in this novel.

The researcher finds out the core idea of the novel that every people’s bad action will get punishment and the wrong doing itself not only will bring bad impact for them but also for the other.

However no researcher has conducted a research on the symbolism in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha. Thus the writer decides to analyze the novel from different analysis by using symbolism. The title is “Symbolism in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha”.

C. Problem Statement

Concerning the idea, which has been presented in the previous background of the study, the problem statement is: “How is symbolism employed in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha?”

D. Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is the symbol that employed in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha, viewed from Symbolism perspective.

E. Objectives of the Study

In this research paper, the objectives of the study of symbolism in Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha are as follows:

1. To analyze the novel in terms of its structure (structural analysis)

F. Benefit of the Study

In conducting the research paper, the researcher hopes that the study will have benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give some contributions to the larger body of knowledge, particularly literary studies on Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

2. Practical Benefit

To give deeper understanding in literary field, just as the reference other researcher in analyzing this novel in different perspective or spectales.

G. Research Method

The research method of this study will be explained into five parts, namely (a) object of the study, (b) type of the data and data source, (c) type of the study, (d) technique of the data collection and (e) technique of the data analysis

1. Object of the Study

The researcher took the Arthur Golden’s novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* as the object of her study.

2. Type of the Data and the Data Source

In study there are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources.

a. primary data source

b. Secondary data Sources

The secondary data sources are the author’s biography, the background of the American Literature, and many other pieces of relevant information to the analysis of this research.

3. Type of the Study

In analyzing Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha* the writer uses descriptive research, so it does not need statistic to explore the materials.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher follows such steps, they are:

a. Reading the novel carefully and repeatedly in order to get the best understanding of all messages, ideas and other significance points as well as its structure elements.

b. Reading some relevant books to get the theory being used to analyze the novel, data and information to support her study.

c. Collecting all the sources and take the significant data, then write some notes of the important part of the sources.

d. Writing the data on papers.

e. Classifying the data into groups according to the category of the elements of literary study.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

Technique of data analysis in this research paper is descriptive analysis. It means that the writer identifies and reveals the meaning of symbols employed on the structural analysis in Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

H. Research Organization
The paper is arranged in five chapters. The first is introduction, which covers the background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, and research method and research organization. In chapter II, the researcher presents the underlying theory. Moreover, in chapter III the reader may find the structural analysis of the novel. On the other hand, chapter IV consists of the analysis of symbol in Arthur Golden’s “Memoirs of a Geisha”. Finally, the researcher gives a short conclusion and suggestion in chapter V.