

**SYMBOLISM**  
**IN EDWARD ALBEE'S *THE ZOO STORY***



**RESEARCH PAPER**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Everything in this world which are around us can symbolize something . They represent their own meaning which is different one another. The word “ symbol “ derives from the Greek verb ” Symballein “ which means to throw together and its noun “ Symbolon “ which means mark or sign. ([www.aspirennies.com/private/SiteBody/Romance/Poetry/Styles/poemx7.shtml](http://www.aspirennies.com/private/SiteBody/Romance/Poetry/Styles/poemx7.shtml)).

Symbol is a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning in addition to itself (Kennedy 1983 : 600). It is an object , animate , or inanimate, that stands for or points to a reality beyond itself. Symbols, however, also indicate their own reality. For example, a rose usually symbolizes a woman who is not only beautiful and attractive, but sometimes she can also hurt someone. Then, a lion can be a symbol of strength and courage.

Symbols are often used in literature. Symbol in literature is a thing that suggest, more than its literal meaning ( Kennedy 1983 : 600 ). Some writers use words in their literary work to symbolize or represent something or messages that they want to convey to their readers. The more we read and study literature, the more we will find words that always function symbolically. For example we can find symbolism in the conversation of a play. Symbolism itself is the applied use of symbols : iconic

representation that carry particular conventional meanings ([www.wikipedia.org/symbolism](http://www.wikipedia.org/symbolism)). Symbolism exists in all aspects of stories from written literature to motion pictures, symbolism helps the writer to express a deeper meaning by using images that signify something beyond the obvious. According to Carl and Jung, symbolism is also the part of the very fabric of the play functioning within as well as enlarging its surface meaning.

A drama that applies symbolism in the conversation between its character is *The Zoo Story* which was written by Edward Albee in 1958 in New York. It was published by Signet Books with 49 pages. Originally, it was rejected by New York City producers, therefore it was first staged in Europe, exactly in West Berlin at the Schiller Theater Werkstatt on September 28, 1959 and then it was continued to be played in America for the first time exactly on January 14, 1960 in The Provincetown Playhouse New York City. The public shouts acclaim for Edward Albee who fired the American Theater with his blazing new talent. There are some public responses and they are as follows :

Harold Clurman, from *The Nation* : He said that *The Zoo Story* interested him more than any other new American play thus far that season.

Whitney Balliett, from *The New Yorker* : she believes that it was not realistic, but neither was it purely illusory. It was the fashion of a comic nightmare, fantasy of the highest order and it was a play for the resilient young and the wise old and all these paunchy, sluggish target in between had best stay away.

The entire drama tells us about the conversation between two characters on a park bench in New York City's Central Park and they are Jerry and Peter. Jerry comes from middle low class society and uneducated man while on the contrary, Peter comes from high class society who seems to have everything in his life that makes his life perfect. The two men meet, they exchange information. Jerry tells Peter about his life because he needs someone to talk, and he forces Peter to listen to the story of Jerry and The Dog, and the reason behind his visit to the zoo, until Jerry dies of the hand of Peter although he does it unintentionally.

There are at least three aspects that make this play interesting to study. Firstly, the writing technique of Edward Albee in the entire dialogue. In this play, he uses simple sentences so that they are easy to understand. In the conversation between the two characters, he uses the combination between short and long sentences. Secondly, the landscape and the way it affects every aspects of the story, and it is only in a bench. Thirdly, the sociological concerns especially in social life and its relationship. He symbolizes social discrepancy through the characters of this play, and they are Jerry and Peter and also from the things around them during the conversation.

As the explanation above, the writer is interested in analyzing the meaning of symbols employed in Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*. Therefore, the writer proposes a research paper with the title “Symbolism in Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* “.

## **B. Literary Review**

Before analyzes it, the writer has read other papers that are relevant with her analysis, especially about the approach . They are as follows :

1. Khotimah with the tittle Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea* ( UMS , 2006 ). The aim of her research is to analyze how symbolism is employed in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea*.

2. Muhammad Alex Arsyad with the tittle Symbolism in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* ( UMS , 2007 ) and the aim of his research is to analyze the meaning of symbol employed in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*.

The literature reviews above show that both of them use symbolism in analyzing a novel. As far as the writer knows, at least among the students of universities at Surakarta, the study of drama or play using symbolism has not been taken. That point has become the main concern of the present researcher in conducting this research paper.

## **C. Problem Statement**

Based on the introduction above, the writer proposes a problem statement. The major problem of this study is “ What are the meaning of symbols employed in Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* ? “

#### **D. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows :

1. To analyze the structural elements of the play script by finding character and characterization, setting, plot, and theme.
2. To analyze the meaning of symbols employed in Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*.

#### **E. Benefit of the Study**

The benefits of this study are as follows :

##### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

It gives contribution to the larger body in knowledge that can be used by the other literature researchers who are interested in analyzing Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*.

##### **2. Practical Benefit**

To enrich the writer's knowledge about literature work, especially in analyzing the meaning of symbols which are employed in a drama or play.

#### **F. Research Method**

In analyzing this study, the writer uses qualitative method.

##### **1. Object of the Study**

The object of this study is *The Zoo Story* play script which is written by

Edward Albee in 1958. It was the eleventh printing and published in 1959 by Signet Books with 94 pages .

## **2. Type of the Data and the Data Source**

In this study, the writer uses two sources of data and the text as its type of the data. And they are as follows:

- a . Primary data source is taken from the dialog of the play itself.
- b. Secondary data source is taken from other data that have relation with the research, includes books, homepage, research approach books, and other relevant books.

## **3. Technique of the Data Collection**

The method of data collection in this study is library research or document analysis.

## **4. Technique of the Data Analysis**

The writer uses descriptive analysis. Firstly, the writer analyzes its structural element and then analyzes the object of the study by finding the meaning of symbols which are applied and the last drawing conclusion from the analysis.

## **G. Paper Organization**

The research paper is divided into five chapters :

Chapter I is the introduction, covering Background of the Study, Literary Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefit of the

Study, Research Method, and Paper Organization.

Chapter II is Underlying Theory, covering Notion of Symbols, Types of Symbols, Symbol in Literature, Major Principles of Symbolism, Structural Elements of Drama , and Theoretical Application.

Chapter III is Structural Analysis , this chapter explains Structural Elements of Drama, and it consists of Character and Characterization, Setting, Plot, Style, and Theme.

Chapter IV is Symbolism Analysis that consists of Character Symbolism, Setting Symbolism, Plot Symbolism, Style Symbolism, and Natural Object Symbolism.

Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion.