

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Literature can be defined as the mirror of society's views and beliefs. It reflects the social, political, and cultural value of any society. Literature is created in various literary works; one of them is a short story. The short story is not similar to a novel, because the text of the short story is less than a novel, limited character, setting, the point of view and so forth. Like usual works, The short story reflects people's views, convictions, and dreams in a very creative and imaginary way to show certain phenomena (Santee, 2010: 321). The authors use significant ways to explore their ideas or thought, like using various symbols. The aspect of a symbol will become a phenomenon also in short story. This symbol can be used as the representation of a country or region to tell their identity to another country, or it is used as a way to communicate to society (Perrine, 1974).

Peck and Martin (1984:72) explain that:

A symbol is only used when a writer wants to express an apprehension of something in his mind which is not directly observable in the everyday world. The symbol is not expressed directly by the author, but it is expressed by the object, figures, character, and colours where it represents abstract ideas or concept.

It means a symbol that used by the authors as to represent something in their work, or it can be a sign of speech in which a person, item, or scenario represent something further to its literal. A Literary symbol can be as an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning as well (Perrine, 1974: 93). Those of things show the concept of different forms. Generally, it is an

object representing another to give an entirely different meaning much deeper and more significant, which is sometimes an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. For example, colour, winter, darkness, and cold are real things, but in literature, they are also likely to be used as a symbol of death (Peck & Martin, 1984:111).

One of the most attractive studies in short story is the symbol of death. The symbol of death is any object that refers to death. It describes loss and sadness in many countries (Peck & Martin, 1984). For example, black colour in the West, the colour used for death and mourning is black. Black is associated with the underworld and evil. The creation of symbol always relates to the living of human, that can be effected by tradition that made by society; but, they may have various meanings. Moreover, the symbols also may have a different interpretation in meaning. It becomes one of an issue in studying symbol, especially the symbol of death. Several countries believe that black colour refers to bad luck, and mystical; however, in certain countries, like German, Spanish, the black colour is symbolized as the elegance and formality (Jennifer, 2010). Such the symbols also can effect from the myth, believe, religion that become a universal pattern to the living of human being.

There are many authors that express their thought, and experience by using various symbols in literary works; one of them is Shirley Jackson. Shirley is an American author who was best known for her short story *The Lottery*. She was born in 1916 in San Francisco and died in 1965 in Bennington, Vermont, leaving behind her husband and four children. She attended Syracuse University, which

gave her an opportunity to work as an editor on the campus' humor magazine. The Lottery's first publication in *The New Yorker* received more responses from its readers than any other short story. Her works are mostly categorized as mystery or horror, that used creative words, with fully rhetoric, especially in using the significant symbol to describe her perspective toward the society's life.

The Lottery tells specific things concern to tradition, The belief that played with various unique symbols created by the author's perspective. There are kinds of objects, such as character name, black colour, wooden box, a black spot that are used to symbols the death and also tradition. There are some characters inside the story, such as Mr.Summer, Mr.Graves, Mr.Martin, Mrs.Delacroic and Mrs. Hutchinson, who is stoned because she gets the black spot for signing the death (Shirley, 1948). However, after reading the short story, the writer found there are several symbols still in unclear meaning, that make the writer interpret based on the writer's understanding. For example, the story narrates about a tradition in a small village in a New England, using a game that is known as the lottery, in which people know that this game relates to competition; however, the author has a different perspective in this short story that create the lottery is like an event or ritual to gain a serious decision (Shirley, 1948).

Therefore, the writer attracts to analyze this short story, because the writer believes the usage of symbols that has a connection to tradition, the belief of what presented inside the story can provide significant knowledge to readers. The writer will analyze the symbol of death that interpreted through various symbols inside the story. The reason for choosing this topic to be analyzed in Shirley's *The*

Lottery is because of the specific issue about the difference of interpretation in symbol, especially symbols that have a connection to the end of human life. The death is such the sensitive topic to be discussed because there must be many people concern on it. However, this short story presents several symbols about the death of someone that still have absurd meaning, and finally, it gives more critiques to Shirley's work. In Addition, also the book is worthy to be analyzed because it provides useful moral values, like the pride of winning something. When a character wins the lottery in this story, he or she wins death by stoning. And, how the society fight to achieve their expectation to avoid the loss, then they can accept it with a peaceful heart, without revolting, as it was done by Tessie Hutchinson who is the unlucky loser that giving protest that the lottery is not fair.

The Lottery is a short story written by Shirley Jackson, first published on June 26, 1948 issue of *the New Yorker*. The story describes a fictional small town which observes an annual ritual known as "The Lottery," which results in the killing of one individual in the town. The lottery was organized by Mr. Summers, as the main character of this story. Every day as becoming a tradition in this small village which was set in a small village, contain 200 people in the family. Every day, Mr. Summers and his staff call the villagers to gather around at 10.00 a.m, and many people have stones with them. Mr. Summers brought the black box with everyone's family on pieces of paper. He calls up the men of each family to draw a piece of paper. After everyone draws, it turns out that the Hutchinson family picked the marked piece of paper. So they put more pieces of paper in the box, and then everyone in the Hutchinson family picks a piece of paper out of the box. This time Tessie Hutchinson picked the paper with the black dot. The entire time

she was bitching about the lottery. So, she went up in front of the people, and her "prize" was getting stoned by the townspeople (Shirley, 1948).

The writer will analyze the symbols of death in one of collection short story *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson, by using a semiotic approach. (Peirce, 2001: 241) Stated that: "Semiotic is the study of signs and symbol and their meaning and the use, especially in writing, or method to analyze the sign, Semiotics is considered as the theory of the production and interpretation of meaning." Its means that it explains the representation of meaning from what the own perspective of the author using signs to deliver her ideas, thought, and identity to make a common conclusion in what people accept.

Based on the definition, the writer only focuses on several symbols that interpreted the death, like the name of characters, and significant objects inside the story. To analyze the symbol, the author applies the theory symbolism that proposed by Roland Barthes (1972), in which it is conceptualized by the term of interpretation of symbol into three main parts, such as denotation, connotation, and Myth. Therefore, this research will provide significant knowledge, especially to foreign language learners in interpreting the meaning of the symbol of death, so that they can realize that each symbol applied in literary works is not a work decoration but must have a connection to life.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the explanation in the background of the study above, the writer formulates the research question into what are the symbols of death used in Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*?

1.3 Research Objective

Regarding the research question, this research aims to mention and describe the symbols of death used in Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*.

1.4 Uses of the Study

This research provides two significant uses that are theoretical and practical uses.

The uses will be presented below:

1.4.1 Theoretical Uses

The writer expects the result of this research can help the readers to enrich their knowledge about symbols of death that used in literary work, like a short story, in which it still may have related to human's life. In addition, this research is expected to be used as the future reference for new researchers, who are going to analyze the same topic with this present research.

1.4.2 Practical Uses

The writer wants to enlarge the reader's knowledge about a semiotic study from *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this research, the writer narrows the discussion only to analyze the symbols of death inside the short story by Shirley Jackson in *The Lottery*. The writer focuses to figure out every sign that is used to symbolize the death, that has relation to human's life. In the story, the symbols of death can be found in the name of characters, and other objects that are connected to their ritual or tradition in winning the death.