

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the introduction to the research that will be conducted by the researcher. In this chapter, the researcher would like to discuss the research background, identification of the problems, limitation of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Research Background

Etymologically, literature comes from the Latin litterature (littera = written letters). The term literature in Latin is used to refer to grammar and poetry. Meanwhile, the English term literature, the German term literature, and the French term litterature mean all kinds of language usage in written form. In Indonesian, the word literature is originally derived from Sanskrit. According to Teeuw (in Suarta and Dwipayana, 2014:4) says that the word literature comes from the word lite which means “to direct, teach, give instructions, or instructions”, while the ending lature is defined as “tool or means”. Thus, the word literature can be interpreted as a tool for teaching, a manual, a book of instruction, or good and beautiful teaching. Besides that, according to (in Suarta and Dwipayana, 2014:5) Not only can literature be defined based on its fictionality or imaginative nature, but literary works can actually be viewed through the use of language as a medium. From this, there is an understanding that the term literature is used to refer to the use of language in written form.

Furthermore, Literature produces several literary works, including poetry, drama, and prose. According to Kosasih (2011:221) Prose is a literary work that is organized in the form of a story or narrative is considered more relevant. Prose is usually fictional in nature which is defined as something imaginative, not really happening. Examples of prose are short stories and novels. One of the novels in the form of fictional prose is a novel entitled “If Cats Disappeared from The World” by Kawamura.

“If Cats Disappeared From The World” by Kawamura has gained international success since published in 2012, it has been sold for 2 million copies across the world. This book has also been translated into 11 languages (Kawamura, 2012:134). Kawamura himself is not only an author, he is also a producer who has produced famous Japanese movies with Makoto Shinkai such as *Your Name*, *Tenki No Ko*, *Suzume no Tojimari*, etc. Kawamura directed "*Duality*" in 2018, which has been chosen for the short film competition category at the Cannes Film Festival. He produced "*Mirai*" by Mamoru Hosoda, which premiered at Cannes' Director's Fortnight. The film has been nominated for the Oscars 2019 or the 91st Academy Awards® Animated Feature Film, and it won Best Animated Feature-Independent at the 46th Annie Awards. He also co-created "*The Makanai*" with Hirokazu Koreeda, a Netflix original series in 2023. His feature film directorial debut, "*A Hundred Flowers*," based on the novel he published in 2019, won the Silver Shell Award for Best Director at the San Sebastian Film Festival. He produced Hirokazu Kore-eda's

"*Monster*," which received the Best Screenplay and Queer Palme awards at the 76th Cannes International Film Festival.

"If Cats Disappeared from the World" is a noteworthy example of a literary work that heavily employs symbolism in its narrative. Written by Kawamura, the novel has been published in 2012. Known for its emotive storytelling and profound symbolism, the book garnered critical acclaim and resonated with readers worldwide, earning accolades for its unique narrative. This novel told the story of a postman whose world revolves around the comforting presence of his feline companion and his mother. Living a quiet life estranged from the father, they find peace in the routine of their job and the companionship of their beloved cat. However, their peaceful life is abruptly shattered when he learns that a tumor has grown in their cat's body and eventually taken its life. One day they find happiness when another cat comes to their house and stays with them, however this newfound happiness is cut short when they realize that the mother also has a tumor and ultimately succumbs to it.

Now living alone and still in his grief, the postman is confronted with another tragedy, he is also diagnosed with a chronic last stage tumor which only left him a short time to live. Now facing the harsh reality, the Devil comes to the postman with a surreal proposition: the Devil offers him an extra days of life in exchange for every item in the world that disappears. Realizing a chance to prolong his impending departure and burdened with tragedies of his life, the postman agreed upon The Devil's proposition. The Postman and The Devil embark on their journey together.

The researcher found that what is interesting about this novel is the use of the symbols in this novel, the first thing is phone, is one of the symbols used as the bargaining tools with the devil, phone in the story are crucial, as it provides the most possible way for the postman to contact people, whether in works, but especially those who were close to him. Phone also signify the positive side of the postman, as it gave him the ability to communicate better with his ex-girlfriend. But, the postman decides to make phones disappear as his initial choice to extend his life. He chose to get rid of phones because in his perspective, there is no one he needed to call anyway.

The second symbols he chooses to offer to the Devil to prolong his life is Movies. When removing these two symbols from the world he didn't really consider how human life might change if they're taken away forever. The third symbols he choose to remove is clocks, this time, he started to consider how the removal of these items will affects others, since clocks is the main source of his father's income as a clock artisan, but since he is already left his father after his mother's death, he choose to remove clocks anyway.

The story continues until the postman do not found the right choice as his fourth, this time The Devil choose to make Cats disappear from the world, facing with the Devil's pick, The Postman started to contemplate as his cat is his only companion, his only surviving memories and a living remnant of what is left of his family. In the end, the postman chooses to face his death instead, and he starts to mend his relationship with his father, to make sure the cat will be fine even after his death. The story told in this novel, are shown as a journey of acceptance, and teach us

to remember what's important to human in their life, on the other hand, the story also shown how things we own, ended up controlling our life.

In creating literary works, authors often use symbols to make their stories more interesting, because humans are always attracted by symbols. Understanding symbols requires a keen eye for details and an openness to exploring layers of meaning within a piece of literature or art. It involves a process of analysis and interpretation beyond the literal depiction of objects or elements. In order to understand a story thoroughly, readers must connect with characters to understand the true meaning of the story. According to Smith (2002:7) symbols are used as a creative way to represent abstract ideas or themes. For instance, a recurring symbol like a rose might represent beauty, love, or passion. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," the green light at the end of Daisy's dock symbolizes hope, the American Dream, or unattainable aspirations (Pawlowska, 2022:5). Such symbols provide readers with a visual or conceptual cue, this symbols in the narrative invites the readers to contemplate the underlying themes or messages within the narrative.

Characters themselves can become symbols, one character that looks or shown to be simple, might actually represent broader concepts or ideologies. In George Orwell's "*Animal Farm*," a political allegory that depicts the Russian Revolution through the story of farm animals. The character of Napoleon symbolizes totalitarianism and political corruption (Mutar, 2022:4). These symbolic representations allow authors to create multi-layered, allegorical tales that resonate with readers on different intellectual and emotional levels.

The stories of “*If Cats Disappeared from the World*” might seem to be simple at first glance, but in fact this novel cannot be read only once to understand the symbols in this novel. Furthermore, semiotic itself adalah sebuah study yang sering digunakan dalam menggunakan The selection of this novel as the object of this research is because it is interesting for researchers to study because this novel heavily employs symbols in the story. The story's use of symbols provides an opportunity for a thorough examination, and the scarcity of existing research on the novel prompts an exploration into its less-explored aspects. Furthermore, the intention behind this research that will be conducted by the researcher is to contribute to the understanding of the novel's themes, characters, and narrative within the existing academic discourse.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that symbols often used by authors in their stories to appeal to readers, this makes the researcher interested in knowing how the use of symbols in a novel, especially this novel. Based on all the explanations and problems identified before, researcher feels the need to do research to further analyze and understand the meaning of symbols used in “*If Cats Disappeared from the World*” novel by Kawamura by using Peirce’s semiotics analysis upon researching this novel as an object, in analyzing literary works, semiotics helps in analyzing symbols used within the stories. The objective is to understand the meaning of each symbols significance and analyze how these symbols interact and are used to influence the narrative which ultimately helps to appreciate the story even more.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

As previously stated, symbols are frequently used in novels to improve the story. Understanding symbols in novels, however, requires a keen eye for detail. For example, the green light at the end of Daisy's dock in "The Great Gatsby" symbolizes hope. In addition to "The Great Gatsby," the Japanese novel "If Cats Disappeared From The World" by Kawamura contains symbols that can be studied. This novel follows the story of a postman who has a tumor and has only a short life expectancy. However, he has been given a deal with the Devil, whom he named Aloha. Aloha offers to throw away valuable object in the world in exchange for one extra day of life per object. The postman disposes of phones, movies, and clocks. But when the postman couldn't think of anything else to do, The Devil decided to make cats disappear from the world, but the postman chose to face his death instead because his cat is his only companion, his only surviving memories, and a living remnant of what remains of his family.

This novel has been copied up to 2 million times within the world and translated into 11 languages. And also Kawamura is a producer who has worked with Makoto Shinkai on well-known Japanese films such as *Your Name*, *Tenki No Ko*, *Suzume no Tojimari*. Furthermore, this research will focus on how the symbols are interpreted and how they contribute to the character development of the characters. This study will also employ Peirce's semiotic theory. As previously mentioned, these object of research is interesting to researchers because the novel employs various symbols contained within its narrative. These symbols play a crucial role in shaping

the characters and advancing the plot, providing a deeper understanding of the themes and messages the author intends to convey. By analyzing these symbols through Peirce's semiotic lens, the study aims to uncover the underlying significance of these narrative elements and their impact on the overall storytelling.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

The analysis of this research is focused solely on items and the cat used as bargaining tools with the devil within "If Cats Disappeared from the World" novel by Kawamura. Researcher utilizes Peirce's semiotic analysis as the primary method for examining the meaning of each symbols used in the novel "If Cats Disappeared from the World."

1.4 Research Problems

Based on the previously mentioned problems identified, the research problems of this study is separated into two main questions, which are:

1. What do the symbols of Clock, Phone, Movie, and Cat in the novel "If Cats Disappeared from the World" symbolize that were used as negotiating tools with the devil?
2. How do these symbols of Clock, Phone, Movie, and Cat contribute to the narrative and character development of the main character within the story of "If Cats Disappeared from the World" novel?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on the two research problems questions mentioned above, the main objectives of this research are:

1. To understand the meaning contained within the symbolization of the symbols as bargaining tools in the novel "If Cats Disappeared from the World" by Kawamura.
2. To know how these symbols contribute to the narrative structure and character development of the novel.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study hopefully could be used both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, this research is expected to be useful to strengthen an understanding of the meaning of symbols in literature. This research also contributes to understanding how symbols can be used to influence storytelling and character development in novels.
2. Practically, by understanding the symbols in "If Cats Disappeared from the World," this study offers new insights that enhance readers' comprehension of narratives within the novel.

As the explanation mentioned above, Kawamura is a well-known author, as well as a producer, director, screenwriter, etc. One of his works is his first novel entitled "If Cats Disappeared from the World" which has sold over a million copies in Japan. The researcher would like to analyze "If Cats Disappeared from the World" by

Kawamura with the aim of exploring the meaning contained in each symbols because this novel heavily employs symbols in its use. The researcher would also like to see how the symbol contributes to characterization of the main character itself. This research is expected to be beneficial to the understanding of the meaning of symbols in literature and to give new insights that enhance readers' comprehension of narratives within the novel.