

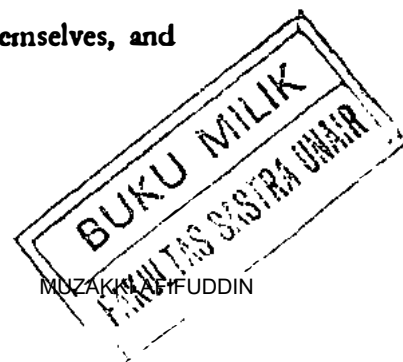
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In reading a literary works especially poetry, sometimes people find that the words inside are full of imagery, or metaphor, or another figures of speech. In those figures of speech especially metaphor, lie symbols. Those symbols lie in metaphor and may be enhanced in vividness, complexity, or breadth of implication. This may conclude that symbols are the center in metaphorical sentence in poetry. But what is a *symbol*? In a book by Barnet and his friends titled *An Introduction to Literature*, a *symbol* is an image so loaded with significance that it is not simply literal, and it does not simply stand for something else that it richly suggests. It is a kind of manifestation of something complex or too elusive to be otherwise revealed (344). In a book by Blair: *Better Reading 2: Literature* (1948), a *symbol* is anything used to represent something else, as a word is used to represent an idea. In *Literature* the term usually refers to a concrete image employed to designate an abstract quality or concept.

Now, when reading many poems, when finding the words that stand as symbol or it seems that it stands as a symbol, people always try to find the meaning of the symbol by thinking about it over and over. But it does not say that a symbol stands for x or y, because some poems are rich in suggestions that cannot be defined with much precision. So, in facing this problem, Barnet says that symbols can be differentiated into two: conventional and unconventional symbol. Some symbols are conventional because they are standing for something other than themselves, and



some symbols are unconventional because they, however, may also give rise to rich, multiple, indefinable associations (343). This means that people should be very careful in finding the association/s of a symbol.

Poetry, as the writer has talked above, is the major hit in symbol. This leads the writer to the poets themselves. Many poets use symbolism, e.g. British Modern poet: Ted Hughes, American poet: Carl Sandburg, T. S. Eliot, etc. The one that the writer is going to talk about is T. S. Eliot and his work, *The Waste Land*.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He was a descendant of an old new England family whose first member in America, Andrew Eliot. Eliot took his AB and A.M. degree in Harvard. His major interest was philosophy. After a year in Paris he returned to Cambridge to complete a Ph.D. dissertation in philosophy. He left Harvard before receiving the degree to study at Oxford in England. He decided to make England his home. A man of dignified mien, Eliot eschewed the Bohemian life of poets, dressing conservatively, even to adopting the English clerk's bowler and tightly furled umbrella.

In 1917 his first volume of verse, *Praefrock and Other Observations* was published. It made him a major poet and he became a leader to the revolt against the Gregorian school of poetry. *The Waste Land* in 1922 brought Eliot acclaim from readers and critics on both sides of the Atlantic. He was hailed as the voice of his generation and one of the greatest poets of the century.

At that time, there are two strongly opposed tendencies influenced all American poetry after 1915. The one was a use of the colloquial speech popularized by Sandburg, Lindsay, and Masters and heightened by Frost; the other was a striking

departure from both the consistent conversational tone and the traditional "poetic" language to which such poets as E. A. Robinson and Edna St. Vincent Millay remained loyal. The abrupt break in idiom was brought about by T. S. Eliot, who brought it from France. Eliot, borrowing the method from Laforgue, Valéry, and Rimbaud, used the technique of the Symbolist school with such skill that he soon had a host of imitators on both sides of the Atlantic. Some were unable, some unwilling to follow Eliot's inner difficulties and despairs, and only a few were uninfluenced by them. The formula was, roughly, this: To reveal man in his complex relation with the universe the poet must show him not only concerned with the immensities but with trivialities of daily life, with a sense of the past continually interrupting the present, and with swiftly contradictory moods disputing dream and action. This was, obviously, a difficult if not impossible program to achieve in any one poem or a set of poems. It was, however, attempted and suggested by the variety of effects: by a rapid leaping from image to image with a minimum of "explanatory" metaphors; by a liberal use of discords, juxtaposing these images and prosy statements, following lyrical passages with deliberate banalities; by the continual play of free association, in which one idea prompted a chain of others, accomplishing an emotionally (or literally) progress, often gaining a new series of overtones, often sacrificing all continuity—Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, Crane's *The Bridge*, and Eliot's *The Waste Land* being the most famous examples of the mood "mixing memory and desire."

The Waste Land is the most famous and influential poem of our time. In it Eliot makes his most complex allusions, fitting together quotations from many

sources in order to bring to bear upon his present statements numerous literary associations in a medley of parallels and ironic contrasts. Many of these references are explained in Eliot's own "Notes on *The Waste Land*," in his *Collected Poems*.

The poem is divided into five parts in five titles. The first is *The Burial of the Dead*, the second is *A Game of Chess*, the third is *The Fire Sermon*, the fourth is *Death by Water*, and the fifth is *What the Thunder Said*. Each part connects each other into one unity under the title *The Waste Land*. So the structure depends entirely upon juxtapositional relations between fragments and the theme is spread in those parts so that they also make a unity in the theme.

The Waste Land develops the theme of the meaninglessness of modern life. The spiritual barrenness and the meaninglessness of life implied throughout the poem. The godless and dying which inhabits the waste land is in need of regeneration. In other words, *The Waste Land* is highly concerned with the regeneration of the fragmented world.

The need for regeneration is suggested by the sublimated myth of The Fisher King, and it is this myth that gives *The Waste Land* its structure. In "Ulysses, Order and Myth," Eliot identifies this method of giving a literary work structure, as the mythical method. The mythical method relies on allusion and fragmentation to bring into sharp relief the contrast between a past which had meaning and significance and a present in which belief is dead, and thus is the perfect vehicle to present Eliot's vision of a world devoid of coherence and meaning.

Densely allusive and constructed of fragments, *The Waste Land* becomes cohesive through the juxtapositional relations between fragments. In those

fragments, Eliot exposed many symbols of emptiness of life. He exposed them in many ways: in words, in phrases, even in depicting the references. Those intertextual references build up the main theme also.

Because symbols are the most interesting part and the most used to express the feeling of the author in the poem, in this thesis, it is needed to describe the theme through the symbols and the intertextual references, part by part, and then unite them into one main theme. By knowing the theme will increase the ability to understand more about the poem—the things inside the poem and outside the poem. Therefore theme is needed in understanding poetry even all genres of literary works.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Considering the reason above, the analysis will be based on the following questions:

1. What is the contribution of the symbols to the theme?
2. How do the symbols express the emptiness of life in the poem?
3. How do the intertextual references build up the symbols of emptiness of life?

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The first purpose is to find everything about the contribution of the symbol in developing the theme of the poem.
- The second purpose is to find out the way the symbols express the emptiness of life in the poem.

- The third purpose is to find out the way the intertextual references help the symbol in building up the theme.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The thesis is expected to be useful for further literary research concerning with this poem or at least it will improve the writer's ability in analyzing the literary work into the better one. This thesis will also be a contribution to the study of literature especially in analyzing poetry.

By analyzing the emptiness of life, the writer hopes that this writing will enlarge our understanding about life itself and the writer will have a better perspective of life. It is also important to know that the cause of the emptiness is the degeneration of faith.

In this poem, the examples of the degeneration of faith are very clear. Degeneration of faith is a situation where human's belief in God is decreasing in his life. This will cause the subject/human will live in many problems that will make human do many sins and feel guilty. Human will also feel that there is something empty in their life.

E. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

To avoid a broadening of the analysis, it will be limited on the poem itself, helped by the notes Eliot made and other readings. The center of the analysis is the contribution of the symbols that express the emptiness of life. The symbols are

analyzed to find the meaning. The intertextual meanings of the symbols are also analyzed so that it can support in revealing the meaning of the poem.

F. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Considering the scope and limitation above, the writer will use the Semiotics approach. This approach is used to study the signification by attempting to describe the conventions and semiotic operations responsible for the interpretations.

The writer uses some methods in studying this poem. The Intertextual method is used to reveal the interrelationship between the poem and the references that Eliot had written in the "Notes of The Waste Land" and other readings.

The Negative Hermeneutics method is also used to find the interpretation and the contribution of the symbols with a modern concept to question and undermine the meaning.

G. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The library research is started by collecting the data from many references and books of different sources, study, and libraries that is relating to the analysis of the poem.

To describe the meaning of the symbols and references, the descriptive analytic method is also applied in order to clarify the analysis of the meaning of the poem.

H. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

To avoid misunderstanding in studying this analysis, there are several terms which are needed to be explained further. They are:

- **Empty** : a condition of having nothing inside, not meaning anything.
- **Emptiness of life** : a condition in life in which the subject has nothing meaningful, or in which the subject does not get satisfaction in life. This term becomes the theme of the poem.
- **Fragment** : separate or incomplete part of something.
- **Juxtapositional** : a state of being placed side by side.
- **Intertextual** : a state of a text having relation with other texts outside.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK