CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

2.1.1 Metaphor

In literature, metaphor is a cognitive tool that allows individuals to understand abstract concepts by relating them to more concrete experiences, thereby influencing thought and communication (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:453–454). Metaphors allow writers to convey complex ideas, emotions, or concepts in a more visual and imaginative way. Metaphors can also provide depth and complexity to texts, inviting readers to make deeper interpretations of literary works (Lakoff, 2008:17–38). For example, in the poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost, the "road" is a metaphor that represents the journey of life (Girsang et al., 2023: 9670).

As an important tool in literary language, the function of metaphor is to shape one's understanding and reasoning about abstract concepts by framing them in terms of more concrete experiences. Metaphors allow individuals to comprehend complex ideas and emotions by relating them to familiar concepts, thus influencing how one thinks and communicates. The use of metaphors in literature also provides room for diverse interpretations, as metaphors often allow readers to discover deeper meanings or subliminal messages according to their individual experiences and perceptions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:126).

2.1.2 Symbolism

Symbolism is a construct where elements that lack specific assignment or reference embody ideas and feelings, often working together to create deeper meanings within a literary work. In literature, symbolism serves as an embodiment of complex ideas and feelings to facilitate deeper emotional connections, convey

multifaceted meanings, and enhance the aesthetic experience while referencing external realities (Lecky, 1965:140–142). Symbols may come in forms of events, characters, or physical objects. For example, in the poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost, the "yellow wood" symbolizes the broader chaos of life that one experiences upon making a choice (Albertpushparaj, 2021: c618).

Furthermore, literary symbols, which include images, actions, structures, and forms, function through their relationships and contexts within the work. This relationship enables individuals to analyze and derive meaning from the symbols, suggesting that while symbols may not refer to concrete realities, they still connect to broader ideas and human experience, thereby creating a semblance of reality within the literary context (Lecky, 1965:140–142).

2.2 Extrinsic Elements

2.2.1 Theory of Isolation

Isolation is the feeling of disconnectedness from parts of oneself (intrapersonal), from others (interpersonal), or from the world (existential) that represents a fundamental aspect of the human condition (Yalom, 1980:355–362). No matter how close individuals become to another person or how deeply individuals understand themselves, there is always an unbridgeable gap. This gap represents a collective and universal experience of isolation, ranging from the selves, others, and the world. Yalom's conceptualization of isolation underscores the nature of isolation, emphasizing its presence in the realms of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and existential experiences.

Intrapersonal isolation refers to the feeling of disconnection from one's own thoughts and emotions, taking on an observer role rather than actively engaging in life. On the other hand, interpersonal isolation refers to the feeling of disconnection from

others, often characterized by a sense of being misunderstood or unable to form genuine connections even when surrounded by people (Brown et al., 2021: e100461).

Unlike intrapersonal and interpersonal isolation that primarily involve a lack of connection within oneself or with others, existential isolation highlights the fundamental gap between individuals and the uncertainty surrounding others' experiences, contributing to a pervasive sense of disconnection (Yalom, 1980:355–362). This form of isolation is closely related to the concept of existential crisis, which refers to a period of intense questioning about one's life, purpose, and meaning. When an individual begins to believe that life may not inherently have meaning or purpose, it can lead to existential angst, a deep sense of anxiety, confusion, and desperation that often accompanies it (Farr, 2021:275–282).

In general, theory of isolation posits that individuals can become estranged or alienated from themselves and others due to various factors, such as societal norms, destructive behaviors, or a lack of authentic connections, suggesting that true fulfillment comes from genuine human connections and self-awareness.

2.2.2 Theory of Desperation

According to Hannan & Hackathorn (2022:4490–4500), desperation is conceptualized as a psychological state where individuals feel a complex emotional urgency, often arising from stress, anxiety, or situations lacking control, motivating behaviors with an intense need for relief. Drawing from the notion that desperation has often been seen as a component of broader psychological concepts like depression or suicidal ideations, Hannan & Hackathorn propose that desperation isn't viewed as a consistent trait and differs from stress or anxiety. Rather, they regard desperation as an emotional response because it varies depending on specific external factors (situational context).

When individuals face intense emotional distress and an urgent need for resolution, their decision-making processes are shaped by this state of desperation. The emotional distress associated with desperation motivates individuals to seek relief through specific behaviors. Desperation significantly influences decision-making, especially in high-stress situations. Hannan & Hackathorn create a tool to measure desperation called "State Desperation Scale". This tool contains two components, namely (i) the emotional aspect and (ii) the motivational aspect. The emotional aspect reflects the intense emotional distress associated with desperation, while the motivational aspect represents the urgent need for relief.

Desperation arises when individuals are unable to find meaning and fulfill their potential. In situations where meaning remains obscure or potential remains unrealized, individuals may channel despair into action, seeking ways to reach a desired resolution. Thus, authentic connections and self-awareness are integral to overcoming despair and achieving a sense of purpose (Parveen, 2015:194–202).

2.2.3 Theory of Alcoholism

According to Jellinek (1960:33–45), alcoholism is a chronic and potentially fatal condition marked by loss of control over alcohol consumption, obsessive thoughts about alcohol, continued consumption despite negative consequences, and the emergence of tolerance and withdrawal symptoms. Alcoholism can occur due to uncontrollable dependency on alcoholic substance where sufferers will find the engagement toward alcohol substance as something rewarding despite the significant negative impacts on occupation, health, and society that the sufferers may face. This pattern of repetitive physiological dependency on alcohol substance is considered as a sign of addiction (American Psychological Association, 2015:36).

As a coping mechanism, Jellinek (1960:111–156) suggests that alcoholism progresses through four stages. It starts with "relief drinking" that marks the initial phase labeled as "pre-alcoholic phase", to "problematic drinking" known as "prodromal phase", to "binge drinking" known as "crucial phase", and lastly to "severe drinking" known as "chronic phase". Through the phases, individuals shift from relief drinking to consuming alcohol to directly cope with stress, anxiety, or depression. Jellinek's model underscores the interplay between alcohol use and psychological coping strategies, emphasizing the importance of addressing underlying emotional factors in comprehensive approaches to alcohol addiction treatment.

2.3 Research Method

2.3.1 Research Approach

Based on the background of the research that reveals the phenomena of isolation, desperation, and alcoholism as a coping mechanism in *Bluebird* and *Alone with Everybody*, the writer uses psychological approach in literature. According to Benyei (2016:68–83), in literature research, psychological approach in literature research focuses on understanding how literary works reflect psychological processes, character motivations, and emotional experiences, including the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The theories that are used in the approach are Yalom's theory of isolation, Hannan & Hackathorn's theory of desperation, and Jellinek's theory of alcoholism.

2.3.2 Method of Data Collection

The writer employs a library research method for the process of data collection in this research. According to George (2008:1–13), library research method is a process of identifying and accessing sources offering factual information or personal/expert opinions pertinent to a research question, serving as an essential component across various research methodologies.

Related to the method of data collection, the writer uses primary and secondary data as the source for this research. Primary data refers to information created at the time of an event or phenomenon, typically by participants, witnesses, or researchers, and can include written accounts, images, or recorded observations, with its classification depending on the research context (George, 2008:189–190). The material of a primary data functions as the primary source for the researcher in generating an objective data. In this research, the writer employs two primary data, namely two of Charles Bukowski's poems, *Bluebird* and *Alone with Everybody*.

On the other hand, secondary data refers to the interpretation of evidence related to a study's subject, often found in books or articles written by experts, and can also be created by researchers when they present insights or arguments based on existing evidence (George, 2008:193). The secondary data of this research are a compilation of journal articles, web articles, essays, books, dictionaries, theses, and dissertations found on the internet.