

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL IN WASHINGTON IRVING'S THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW AND RIP VAN WINKLE

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Abstract

The research aimed to discuss the natural and supernatural symbolism in Washington Irving's The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Rip Van Winkle. The objectives of the research were to describe what the meanings of natural and supernatural symbolism were. After described the meaning, the symbols in the stories would be related to the main characters. The theories that are used in this study were symbolism to find the meaning of natural and supernatural symbolism in both stories. The gothic theory was to support the symbolism theory related to supernatural symbolism. The theory of setting also supported the theory of symbolism. The technique of data collecting was library research, while the method of this research was descriptive. There were two approaches used in the study. They were psychological and structural approach. The result of the research showed that supernatural aspect had an impact to people who experienced it. The first story told about Ichabod Crane, he was good teacher from big city. He taught in Sleepy Hollow because of his duty. He had interest in horror story. But the urban legend of Sleepy Hollow made him leave the village. The second story was about Rip Van Winkle who disappeared for almost twenty years. He had been sleeping for that time after encountered with the ghost of Hudson crew. His experienced then became a story among travellers in his village.

Keywords: *Symbolism, Supernatural, Gothic.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In early 19th century, the era of American Literary, many authors published their works, one of them was Washington Irving. His famous supernatural short stories are *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*. Most of supernatural genre has suspense that keeps reader to reads until the end to know the fate of the main character. Therefore, the supernatural genre has some fans from people who interest in horror and mystery with unpredictable outcome. The two stories tell how supernatural have affect to the life of people who experience it. Moreover, the research focuses on two problems the first one is the natural and supernatural symbols appear in the stories. The second problem is the main character related to the natural and supernatural symbols.

Some theories are applied to support finding the answer from the problem statements. They are theory of symbolism, gothic, supernatural and setting. Symbolism is the important element in literature, because they represent something than itself. In a literary sense, William Harmon states, "a symbol combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect" (2012, 244). *Symbolism* is the use of one object or action to represent or suggest something else.

The word Gothic originally referred to the Goths, an early Germanic tribe, then came to signify "germanic," then "medieval". In horror-gothic literature, the element of mystery

has function to build up the feelings of terror. "The principal aim of such novels was to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and a variety of horrors"(Abrams, 1990:111).

The supernatural is a key defining element in the Gothic. Whether they invoke the supernatural directly or rely upon the imagination of the reader to provide it, Gothic writers use the supernatural to build suspense, and create special effects for the reader. Lovecraft defines that the phenomenon of dreaming likewise helped to build up the notion of an unreal or spiritual world; and in general, all the conditions of savage dawn-life so strongly conduced toward a feeling of the supernatural, that we need not wonder at the thoroughness with which man's very hereditary essence has become saturated with religion and superstition. (1934: 33)

The last theory is setting. Setting is an important part of any story because it can create atmosphere where and when the events take place. Setting is an environment and surrounding about place and time. According to Hudson (1960:158) setting is a whole environment of the story, including the custom and tradition, habits and the characters way of life. The environment will support the plot of the story.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The main data of this research are famous gothic literature by American author, Washington Irving. The short stories are *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*. The main characters in first story are Ichabod Crane, Brom Van Brunt, and Katrina Van Tassel. The story about Ichabod's experience when he encounter the urban legend from Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman. The second story about Rip that has been sleep for twenty years after met with the ghost of Hendrick Hudson crew at Katskill mountain. The research is said to be descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is used to help researcher described the natural and supernatural symbols in words found in these short stories. Meanwhile, library research is used as the technique to collect the data. It means the researcher collects some necessary books from the references and other sources, like browsing internet in order to find out more relevant references.

This study uses two approaches. The Psychological approach is applied to analyze the characters in the story to learn their habits and conditions. Wilbur S. Scott in *Five Approache of Literary Criticism* states that psychological approach is an approach to art that can generate three kinds of illumination: first, provide a more precise language with which to discuss the creative process; second, goes back to the study of the life of an author as means of understanding hs art; and third, can be to explain fictious character (1962:71-72).

According to Wilbur S. Scott structural approach is an approach which is used to analyse the word constituent. The appreciation and evaluation will be clear and easy to understand, so we will discover the truth (1962:83). It means that structural approach will help the researcher to understand the words or phrases in finding out the meaning. It will be applied to find the meaning of some supernatural symbols in the story.

There are some steps to conduct this research, first is read the short story to find the topic that is going to be discussed using library research. The related theories of simbolsm, gothic and supernatural will be use. The next, by using psychological and structural approach the researcher will describe the topic of this study. Psychological approach is used to analyze the characters traits and habits, meanwhile structural approach to analyze the words or phrases that describe symbols in the story. The last is to conclude the result of the data.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL SYMBOLS IN *THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW* AND *RIP VAN WINKLE*

Some symbols in the two short stories contain realistic and supernatural element. In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* there are 2 realistic symbols and 3 symbols of supernatural. While *Rip Van Winkle* contains 2 realistic and 2 supernatural symbols. To answer the first problem, this study discuss about the symbols and the meaning.

A. Natural Symbolism in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

1. Ichabod's Appetite

Ichabod Crane not only has uncommon behaviour when he eats, but also the way he eats shows that he is greedy. The huge appetite of Ichabod symbolizes gluttony and greedy. The desire of eating big meals again and again never ends. It shows that there is no way to satisfy his hunger. The gluttony and greedy can be connected why he chases his love to the daughter of rich farmer in the village, Katrina Van Tassel.

His appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow (TLoSH, 2008: 5).

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat... his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash (TLoSH, 2008:7).

Not only does Ichabod that never satisfied of food show his gluttony, but he wants something more. The daughter of Baltus Van Tassel is the key to achieve his dreams to become a rich man. If he succeeds to take Katrina's heart and marries her, Ichabod will be the son in law that can inherit the wealth of Van Tassel.

2. Songs of Psalm

The time Ichabod sings a psalm is not only when he is teaching choir in his Sunday class, but also in specific time. For example, when he is afraid of something then he sings psalm to distract his mind from fear.

His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes... were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, "in linked sweetness long drawn out," floating from the distant hill, or along the dusky road (TLoSH, 2008:5).

He believes that psalm can protect him from bad things. In Christian's belief, people sing songs of psalm is that they praise the Lord. Some songs of psalm include lyrics to repel evil with God's protection. With his believes Ichabod sings some songs to encourage him and drive away the evil. In this story, the song of psalm is symbolizes as the repellent of evil.

B. Supernatural Symbolism in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

1. Dark Forest

The forest itself symbolizes about the mystic condition that happen in the Sleepy Hollow. Forest is known as the living place of many wild animals. The forest which has thick tree, there is always not enough sun light brightening what is inside the forest. As a result, thick forest usually becomes dark although it is in the mid day.

... by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination,—the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree toad, that

harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost (TLoSH, 2008:5).

There are many sounds from wild animal in the forest. The sound of toad in the tree which is like crying for something that can be heard a long the forest path. These sounds can drive people to feel uncomfortable when passing through forest.

2. Big Tulip Tree

The big tree is one of the favorite haunts of the Headless Horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tulip-tree is a symbol of the supernatural arises in the reality of the story.

In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising gain into the air (TloSH, 2008:14).

The tree is an important element in the story, for it signals a transition into the realm of the supernatural, as if the tree itself were a kind of portal. The portal connects as a gate between Sleepy Hollow to another realm. This realm by means is the place where the headless horseman comes from.

3. The Headless Horseman

The main antagonist who is also the core element of horror in the story of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow is the headless horseman. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War. The body of the trooper has been buried in the churchyard. The ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow (TloSH, 2008:2).

The headless horseman symbolizes the fear of people. People have their own fear. In this small town however, they believe in supersition. This reason makes the figure of headless horseman feared even more. For Ichabod, the headless horseman shows that he does not fit to live in the country place because he is from a big city. The urban legend beats him in the end of the story. The fear caused by the headless horseman haunts Ichabod. At first he does not care too much about the urban legend told by local people. He tries to adapt when living in small town like he does never before. After living for a while in Sleepy Hollow, he realizes that the life and environment are too much different from city's life. He sees and experiences by himself the terror of the headless horseman that people talked about. The headless horseman puts terror in his life. Therefore, the headless horseman symbolizes fear.

C. Natural Symbolism in *Rip Van Winkle*

1. The Inn

The inn is the place where people are gathering to swap stories among their friends. This place is favourites among villagers because it serve place to stay and fill their need of beers and food.

Here they used to sit in the shade through a long, lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. (RVW, 2008: 8)

Rip loves to visit the inn in the middle of the day as he does not want to work in his farm. The inn symbolizes laziness, because some men in the village only drink, tell and listen to stories each other. The bad is they do this every day as it is become their routine activity. From the bad behaviour makes a bad personality. This is happen when laziness becomes part of Rip's life.

2. The Dog

As we know that dogs are human's best friend. They are friendly animal that most people keep them as pets in their house. Dog usually will submit to its master and follow where its master go. If treated well, the dog may bond a strong relationship with the owner. In the story Rip has a domestic dog named Wolf, his dog makes a good companion for Rip.

"Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart. (RVW, 2008:9)

The dog in this story symbolizes loyalty. Rip's dog, Wolf has such kind of the same character as Rip himself. His dog is calm by nature and watch Rip's back as Rip also takes care of Wolf. Wolf can feel the emotion of Rip and it is always there to make things better for Rip. Rip and Wolf always go to woods hunting some animals together. As in the story shows that Wolf is always loyal to its master, Rip. And thus in this discussion the dog symbolizes loyalty.

D. Supernatural Symbolism in *Rip Van Winkle*

1. The Mysterious Man

In the story there is stranger in the woods who calls Rip's name and he is the one that makes Rip travel to spirit world at the beginning. All the mysterious events start from this point.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" he looked around, but could see nothing... "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. (RVW, 2008:10)

In the story, only the mysterious man that can speak the current language and communicates with Rip. The friends of this mysterious man on the other hand cannot communicate with Rip. As he is the gatekeeper that can let the living travel through the gate and come inside the spirit world.

2. The Frightening Hendrick Hudson Party

There are some people enjoying themselves in the amphitheatre surrounded by perpendicular precipices. The party play nine-pins, drink, and dance together in there. They wear the same attributes as the mysterious man.

On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in quaint outlandish fashion...

The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, (RVW, 2008:11) that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country (RVW, 2008:18)

Rip just barely knows that the party he met actually is the spirit of Hudson crew. This is at least answer everything, from their outfit, their faces and acts. All of those are not like normal human do. The urban legend said that every twenty years the crew always revisit the Katskill mountain to see the scene in this area. Their intention to show how to

appreciate what nature gives to people's life. The crew of Hudson party symbolizes the unsettling of life.

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL SYMBOLISM RELATED TO THE MAIN CHARACTER IN *THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW* AND *RIP VAN WINKLE*

In this chapter will discuss about the symbols of natural and supernatural has some connection to the main character in the two stories. From the previous discussion, the researcher has reveals the meaning of natural and supernatural symbols. The symbols have some effects that change the main characters life. From the story *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the main character has new life after the supernatural main event occurs. In the story of *Rip Van Winkle*, the main characters also get some impact in their life after they experience the supernatural event. Furthermore, the deep discussion about the natural and supernatural symbols relate to main character will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.

A. Natural and Supernatural Symbols Related to The Main Character in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

1. Ichabod Crane

Ichabod Crane is one of the main character in the story entitled *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. He is a smart guy from a big city, Connecticut. As a teacher, he was sent by his city to teach another region of America. He end up in the small town named Sleepy Hollow, where his duty as a teacher begins. The discussion about natural symbolisms relates to Ichabod is in which his imagination is given full sway is in his fantasies about owning great wealth.

His imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming Katrina (TLoSH, 2008:7)

Ichabod has desire to win Katrina's heart, and marries her. Katrina is famous for her beauty among the girls in Sleepy Hollow. At first Ichabod only sees this as his goal, later on he wants to become a rich man if he can marries Katrina. Ichabod desire leads his inner greediness to make a move to Katrina.

The discussion about supernatural symbolisms relate to Ichabod Crane. Ichabod has a book of witchcraft story and he reads it a lot in his spare time. He loves to listen to those stories from local people, stories about witchcraft, the unusual thick mist around the village and local urban legend the headless horseman.

He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's "History of New England Witchcraft," in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed (TLoSH, 2008:5).

Ichabod is not a brave hero in this story, he just has interest in horror story. In some night after the party at Van Tassel's place, he goes to home alone through woods. On his way back to home, he encounters with the famous headless horseman. Not sure what he sees in the shadow of the woods, Ichabod start to flee. That why he is so frightened at the end and so willing to believe that it was indeed the headless horseman that he has encountered. The terror of his fear actually comes to live chasing him. The headless horseman chases Ichabod and eventually catches up with him. The next morning Ichabod cannot be seen again in the village, people found only his hat remain at the bridge.

"If I can but reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath...

Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. (TLoSH, 2008:16)

There is no trace or clue of him in the house or the bridge that can lead people to find him. It seems that Ichabod fled back to big city because he cannot stand to live in Sleepy Hollow. For view next years from his disappearance, some villager see Ichabod live in big city of New York. He studies and climbs a carrier in political world in there.

The natural symbolisms related to Ichabod daily life. The symbols show how Ichabod personality is. Ichabod is a good teacher, later he become a greedy person who want a girl and her wealth. The supernatural symbolism related to Ichabod fear. Although sometimes he can overcome his fear with songs of psalm, in the end he still cannot escape the terror of headless horseman.

2. Brom Van Brunt

The country man who has the all good physical attributes among his friends in the Sleepy Hollow. Brom considers as the leader of his gang. He is the muscle also the mind of this brotherhood. They will do what Brom says to them.

Bones and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the schoolhouse at night, in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there (TloSH, 2008:9).

Bones gives some pranks to Ichabod school to make sure that place is haunted by some spirit. He and his gang sucessfully manage to enter the school and places traps in there. This shows when Ichabod start to teach his students, and he feels like the school become mess and there is some kind of smog. He thought it is the works of evil spirits.

The headless horseman, it can be interpreted as the most top prank from Brom to Ichabod. Brom has the information about Ichabod, and he has a perfect plan to keep Ichabod away from Katrina and if can keep him away from Sleepy Hollow. The plan of headless horseman is the final execute moves by Brom. He disguise as the ghostly figure of headless horseman. When the ghost throws its head, actually he throws a pumkin with great power to Ichabod that makes him fell down. And finnaly Ichabod had not been seen in Sleepy Hollow, then Brom married with Katrina.

B. Natural and Supernatural Symbols Related to The Main Character in *Rip Van Winkle*

1. Rip Van Winkle

Rip Van Winkle is the main protagonist in the second story of this research. He is living in a small Dutch settlement in Katskill area. Rip in the story describes as a simple, good-nature man who is kind and considerate neighbour.

The natural symbolisms found that relates to Rip. It can be seen as Rip occasionally goes to the inn almost everyday. He spends time in the inn to tell stories of Indian or just gossip about the village. This activity becomes his behaviour, so almost at the middle of the day Rip will be in there talking with his friends. His dog always beside Rip wherever he goes. His dog share common behaviour as Rip's. Wolf is a good dog which will play with the children just as like Rip usually do. When Rip goes to woods looking for animals to hunt, Wolf will goes beside Rip.

at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. (RVW, 2008:10)

In the event when Rip encountered with the mysterious man, Wolf stand and bark at him. The dog knows there is a danger or something mysterious presence approaching them. That why Wolf bark to the mysterious man to scare him away.

The next discussion about supernatural symbolism relates to Rip. When Rip goes deep in the woods hunts squirrel, he heard someone called his name. He met the mysterious man carrying a keg of liquor. Rip helps the man carry the keg to his place. This is when the supernatural element begins. The mysterious man lead Rip to travel the gate between real world and spirit world.

Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky, and the bright evening cloud. (RVW, 2008:11)

Normally, human that still life cannot enter the spirit world but Rip goes there with the gatekeeper himself so he can enter the spirit world. From the quotation above, the way where those strange men gather is surrounds by rocks and wild plants. The portal to go inside spirit world always disguised as wild and creepy place so no one would go in there. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep. (RVW, 2008:12)

Rip does not know what to do. The mysterious man and his friends play nine-pins and drink by themselves. They do not talk to Rip any single words. They just party and enjoy the evening. In his mind Rip also deserve a drink after the long walks carrying the keg to this place. Without no one watches Rip, he takes a drink and tastes it for a sip. He likes the rum, and so he drinks more. The supernatural element is show when Rip wakes up after twenty years deep sleep. The liquor is not ordinary beer or rum made by human, it is what the spirit drinks. The liquor has magical effect that traps Rip in deep sleep without killing him. The place and the liquor have something to do with the time. While on the real world already passed twenty years, for Rip it is just one night sleep.

2. Judith Gardinier and Rip Van Winkle Jr.

Rip has children, there are Judith and Rip junior. Although Rip is famous around children in the village, his own children seem rarely to hang out or play with him. His children more close to his wife than Rip.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, (RVW, 2008:6)

Rip's children are naughty like wild orphan street kids. Rip does not enough time to teach manners to his children. It is because Rip usually avoids being home as he will have to listen to his nagging wife all the time.

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree." Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. (RVW, 2008:17)

The supernatural effect toward Rip's children is after he was missing for some years. Twenty years has passed, the condition in the village is different from when Rip last saw it before. Now his children grow to adult. The quotation above is when Rip explain himself

as Rip Van Winkle, but the people in the inn refers to young man that leaning against a tree. Rip Jr. appearances is just looks like Rip in his youth. After the reunites of Rip and his children, now Rip is live with Judith. In the end of the story, Rip still occasionally can be found in the inn. He tells his story to many travellers that stop at the inn. Many of them believe the story about Rip and Hudson crew.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, people usually do not care about what their surroundings. They only care about themselves. They should be aware of the other life that may live near our world, as the spirit world is not much different from real world. The two stories share common events of supernatural in human society. From the story of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, some symbols can be revealed. There are Ichabod's appetite symbolizes his greedy, the songs of psalm symbolizes the repellent of evil, the dark forest symbolizes the mystical condition of Sleepy Hollow, the big tulip tree symbolizes the portal from the spirit comes to real world, and the headless horseman symbolizes fear. The first story can be concluded as the explained supernatural because in the end of the story the headless horseman is Brom's prank. From the second story *Rip Van Winkle*, can be found some symbols. There are Wolf symbol as loyal, the inn as laziness, mysterious man symbolizes the gatekeeper and the Hudson party symbolizes the unsettling business in life. The second story can be concluded as the accepted supernatural because the supernatural element of the ghost of Hendrick Hudson crew cannot be explained.

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