

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Basic Consideration

Poetry is one of media for human to show their feeling. What they feel is not showed directly. They describe it in string of extraordinary words. In fact, poetry is different with other literary works. They have same function to entertain readers but their ways to share message to readers are different. It is because poetry is more limit than others. It is limited by rhyme and stanza and it contains of extraordinary words. Extraordinary words mean a word or collection of words that have deep meaning and diverge from actual meaning. For example is “The sick Rose”. This is one of title of William Blake’s poems. Generally, a rose is not sick but wither, because sick is a feeling for human only. But in a poem, it can use to describe a condition of a flower. Thew (as cited in Tuloli, 2000) stated it as “special language” (p.5) and it reputed from everyday language.

Besides the using of language, reading poetry is also different with reading other literary works. Every reader has different perception when they read it because they also have different ways to give a meaning in poems. The reader can get general meaning based on what they read only but some of them get specific meaning based on what they analyze after they read it. It is like what Junus (1985) said that the readers divided into two kinds. They are “ordinary readers and ideal readers” (p. 52).

Ordinary readers mean readers that reading literary works based on explicit meaning. Riffaterre (1978) called it “heuristic” (p. 5). The aim of ordinary readers in general is “to get an entertainment of the literary works.” (Didipu, 2014, p.13). While ideal readers, they read while give an interpretation, critiquing, and analyzing the implicit meaning in a literary works. “Hermeneutic” is a term that given by Riffaterre (1978, p5) for readers such ideal readers. Didipu (2014) with his own term “critical readers” (p. 13) added that this kind of readers also involved their feeling and their critical thinking in reading literature works.

According to Riffaterre (1978), “poetry expresses concepts and things by indirection”. (p.1). Relation with the differences of kinds of readers in take a meaning, it can be said the analyzing of poetry is needed by readers to know clearly about interpretation of the indirection meaning. And to get the meaning in poetry, a reader needs knowledge about comprehension of meaning because Riffaterre (1978) continued that “a poem says one thing and means another” (p.1). Thus, the kind of reading like ordinary reading is not enough to make readers get the deep meaning in poetry. Moreover, poets have different style in write their works. The style can be diction or language that they use in their poetry. Because they cover their imagination in limitation of words, so they always put their message as a puzzle behind symbol of words. To understand that, a reader needs an analysis to interpret the symbol that contain in every single word. And here, Semiotics approach can help them to solve the problem. Semiotics is known as a study about symbol. Sebeok (1978) described

that “semiotics is a discipline which investigates all forms of communication insofar as this takes place by means of sign system (codes)” (p.14).

In general, there are many approaches or literary analyses that use to interpret meaning in poetry. But, semiotics is reputed precise to use in literary analysis especially in poetry. It is because as Endaswara (2003) stated that “semiotics relied that every kind of literary works has their system themselves. Despite it contain of a small symbol only, it would not escape from semiotics reach” (p. 64). Besides that, Riffatere (1978) also believe that the kind of meaning that readers find in a poem is influenced by the semiotics mechanism in the text itself.

There are several famous experts who gave their contribute in semiotics domain such as Ferdinand de Saussure with his theory of dichotomy of sign (signified and signifier), Charles S. Pierce with his theory of trichotomy of sign (i.e., first trichotomy are qualisign, sinsign and legisign; second trichotomy are icon, index and symbol; and third trichotomy are rheme, discent, and argument); Charles M. Morris with his theory of three dimensions of semiotics (i.e. pragmatics, semantics and syntactic); Michael Riffatere with his theory of Semiotics of poetry (i.e., semantic indirection that is produced by displacing, distorting, and creating meaning; heuristic and hermeneutic reading; matrix, model and varian; and hypogram); Roland Barthes with his theory of denotative, connotative and myth concept; and so forth. These theories are popular in theoretical bases of some studies. But every researcher has their opinion when they choose and use one of the semiotics experts’ theories.

In analyzing poems through semiotics approach, Riffaterre theory is reputed accurate to use as a theoretical base in analyzing the meaning of poems. It is because Riffaterre theory focuses in how to analyze poetry specifically. He emphasized in four important things in interpret the meaning of poems. They are semantic indirection that produced by displacing meaning (interpret meaning based on analyzing diction that having displacing meaning process), distorting meaning (interpret meaning through the finding of diction that having distorting meaning process), and creating meaning (interpret meaning based on analyzing diction that having creating meaning process); heuristic reading (reading poems based on explicit meaning only) and hermeneutic reading (reading poems based on implicit meaning); matrix, model and varian (to find out the theme of poems based on the analyzing of keywords in poems); and hypogram or intertextual relation (the relation of poems with other text, story and condition that can be a basic inspiration for poets to create their works). Thus, Riffaterre's theory of semiotics can help reader to find out the meaning of poems clearly and comprehensively.

One of the best works of poets that interest to be analyzed is William Blake's poems. It is because his poems contain of more symbols and specific characteristics of diction. Blake's style in write his poems is so impressive. He shared more lessons about life through his poems, but to interpret these all are not easy because he covered his imagination in complicated symbols and he chosen beautiful words to represent his message in his poems. It can see from one of his poems entitled "The sick Rose"

O Rose, thou art sick!
 The invisible worm
 That flies in the night,
 In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
 Of crimson joy:
 And his dark secret love
 Does thy life destroy.

(P1, L1-L2)

If readers read the poem based on heuristic or explicit meaning only, they probably find that the poem is not different with other poets' poems. But if they read it by hermeneutic with pay attention to the implicit meaning, they will see the power of words and imagination that Blake used in this poem. It is proofed by the numbers of words that have displacing meaning. Blake used "the sick Rose" to displace an afflict women. Blake used "sick" not "wither" to show the condition of the rose. Rose is a beautiful flower, so there must be something happen that make the rose being sick.

Beside that, Blake used "invisible worm" to displace a playboy. Worm always attach on a flower as a parasite than move to other flowers. If a flower does not give benefit anymore, the worm will taste other flowers. It is like a playboy habit. "Flies in the night" is used to displace the habits of a playboy that relate to the party, drink, and free sexs. While, "the howling storm" is used to displace his effort to never give

up in persuade the girl for be his girlfriend and “bed of crimson bed” is used to displace mire the girl in sins.

The using of language above showing how creative Blake in choose his words to represent the message in his poems. Besides that, readers also can see Blake’s way to hide message by make contradiction with the reality and mock something through the contradiction. It can see in line two in second stanza of his poem entitle “The Angel”.

And I wept both night and day,
 And he wiped my tears away;
 And I wept both day and night,
And hid from him my heart's delight.

(P2, S2, L1-L 4)

And hid from him my heart's delight is a contradiction. This line of poem tells about human hide their heart’s delight to ignore their innocence. They hide it because they know that their religion is not allowing them to do that. Actually, Blake used this line to mock human for contradiction situation because in the fact, they cannot hide their heart’s delight because actually their religion knows that human are more interest to do sins than virtues. That is why God create a hell and a heaven to punish and reward human from all of sins and virtues that they do in this life. Thus, it is possible to hide a secret from the maker of secret itself.

Besides the using of language, Blake also made the visualisation in his poems have a meaning. For example in one of his poems entitle “A Poison Tree”. In the first stanza he wrote:

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

(P3, S1, L1-L4)

In the stanza, Blake described about how the difference when someone showed his anger to his friends and his enemy. If readers see the typography of the stanza, every line of the stanza is start from “I”. There must be a reason why Blake formatted the stanza like that. If the four “I” are combine each other, they will create a vertical line. The vertical line has a function to separate two things. If it is related to the stanza of the poems above, it can create a meaning about the separating of someone’s anger to his friend and his enemy.

The other example is in “The sick rose”. Blake wrote this poem briefly in two stanzas only. It is create a meaning about the girl’s life destroyed in short time because of the dark love of a playboy. If it situation is related to other story, readers are remind with the story of expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. When Satan could not persuade Adam to break God’s prohibition, he moved to Eve. Eve as a girl was deceived easily by Satan. This shows that how girls easy to be persuaded by other people. This example describes that Blake’s poems have the wealth of reference with other texts or story.

Moreover, Blake’s poems are interest to be analyzed because his poems are popular. There were some singers and Group bands adopted his poems into their own songs. Such as Hubert Parry in 1916 made a classical instrument for sing one of

Blake's poems entitled "Jerusalem"; Greg Brown in 1986 released an album called Songs of Innocence and of Experience that contain of songs based on Blake poems such as "The angel, the Tyger, London, A poison tree, the little black boy, Ah, sunflower, The sick rose, etc"; The Doors band in 1960 who naming their band based on one of stanzas in Blake's poem and Victor Vertunne released an album in 2011 that contained of 13 songs that adopted from Blake's poems. Victor sang one song collaborate with Deborah Eckman and two songs with Leo Vertunne and to download these songs are not free in online music stores.

Beside that, Blake also is a unique poet because almost his poems painted by himself. If other poets wrote their poems in words only, Blake made his different. He painted it before and then he wrote the poems under the painting. Thus, beside entertain people through poems, he also entertain them through his paintings and automatically, people who reading his poems will see and know his paintings too.

There are four poems of Blake that interest to be analyzed. These four are "The Sick Rose, The Angel, A Poison Tree, and The Little Black Boy". Blake created two books that contain of collection of his poems. The titles of the books were "Songs of Innocence" that created in 1789 and "Songs of Experience" that created in 1794. "The little black boy" was one of his poems in his book "Songs of Innocence" and "The Sick Rose, A Poison Tree, and The Angel" were in his "The Songs of Innocence".

These poems are chosen to be analyzed because they are popular and be parts of songs in Greg Brown and Victor Vertune's albums. These poems also contain of more complicated symbols and good to be analyzed by using theory semiotics of Riffaterre. Beside that, people who inspetigated this poems are not too much. Thus, through the finding of semiotic concept of Riffaterre is going to help the readers to know the meaning of the poems deeply.

Problem Statement

Based on basic consideration above, the main problem that be investigated in this study is how the semiotics concept of Riffaterre in four of William Blake's poems (i.e. The Sick Rose, The Angel, A poison Tree and The Little Black Boy)?

Objective of Study

The objective of this study is to describe semiotics concept of Riffaterre in four of William Blake's poems (i.e. The Sick Rose, The Angel, A poison Tree and The Little Black Boy).

Reasons for Choosing the Topic

There are several reasons why the topic of this study is chosen:

1. Poetry is more challenge to be analyzed because its language is different with other literary works. Its language contain of more symbol and extraordinary words that used by poets to hide their feeling and imagination. Not all of readers

can interpret that. That is why analyzing poetry is more given some different sensations than other literary works.

2. Semiotics is chosen because semiotics is study about symbol. It can help readers in interpret the meaning of symbols that contain in poems.
3. Semiotics theory of Riffaterre is more specific than others in analyzing poems because he made several ways to interpret the meaning of poems. Besides that, his theory focuses in semiotics of poetry only, thus it can help readers to find out the meaning of poems clearly and comprehensively.
4. William Blake's poems are interest to be analyzed because he was not a famous poet like Edgar Allan Poe, Maya Angelou, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Bishop, William Wordsworth, etc but his poems are popular among their poems. There were some singers and group bands adopted his poems into their own songs.
5. The Sick Rose, The angel, A Poison Tree, and The Little Black Boy are four of Blake's poems that good to be analyzed because dictions in these poems have specific characteristics. Blake represented meaning in complicated symbols and he made everything in these poems have a meaning. Besides that, these poems are popular, but people that investigated the meaning of these poems are not too much. Hopefully, semiotics concept of Riffaterre can help readers to know the meaning of these poems deeply.

Significances of study

This study is expected to give contribution in teaching and learning process in several fields. First is in teaching and learning English literature, this study is expected to enrich the teaching of poetry subject in English department especially in semiotics analysis that focused on Rifaterre's theory. Based on previous studies of English department students of UNG, semiotics analysis was investigated based on Pierce's theory only. Thus, through this study, the students can see how the concept and how to apply semiotic theory of Rifaterre in analyzing literary works especially in poems.

Second is in teaching and learning English education, analyzing poems can be a good media to use in the class in order to stimulate students' critical thinking. Through the analyzing of poems, students are habitually to solve problems and get additional knowledge from what they have analyzed in poems.

Third is in teaching and learning linguistics, the semiotics theory of Riffaterre can be used as a reference in how to interpret meaning especially in semantics subject. Semantics as a branch of linguistics that study about meaning. Through semiotic theory of Riffatere, students can see the kinds, concept, and how to interpret meaning that related to semantic subject.

Besides in teaching and learning process, this study also is conducted to share information to readers about the meaning of William Blake's poem based on semiotic theory of Riffaterre. Moreover, these poems are so popular but people that analyzed

these poems were not too much. Thus, for them who want to know the interpretation of Blake's poems especially "The Sick Rose, The Angel, A Poison tree, and The Little Black Boy", this study can help them to get the information of the interpretation of the poems.

Scope of Study

The scope of this study is analyzing four of over a hundred of William Blake's Poems. These are "The Sick Rose, The Angel, A Poison Tree, and The Little Black Boy". And to analyze the poems used semiotics concept of Riffaterre.