

William Blake Poem “A Poison Tree”: Element Analysis

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Abstract. *Literature is one of the important things in language. There are various types of literary works, one of it is poetry. Poetry is defined as a literary work used by the author as a medium in expressing all the imagination, feelings, or emotions of the author. The process of casting imagination is done by adding supporting elements of poetry to give an element of beauty to each line of poetry. This analysis aims to find out the element that contain the poem titled “A Poison Tree” by William Blake. This research is used descriptive qualitative to describe all the elements that found in the poem. Based on the result, there are nine elements found including the imaginary, the metaphor, the symbol, the paradox, the allusion, the meaning and idea, the tone, the rhyme, and the rhythm.*

Keywords: *literature, poetry, element of poetry*

INTRODUCTION

Literature is an imaginative work that is used to describe human life in a society that can be understood, enjoyed, and utilized by society (Harmon, 2014). As stated by Harmon (2014) literature comes from the Latin word 'littera' which means letter, which refers to the entire body of writing. Literature is a term used for works such as drama, lyrics, novels, and short stories (Cuddon 1976: 465) cited from (Harmon, 2014). Literature has terms that are broad enough to confuse the reader so that some experts define the literature as follows (Harmon, 2014). According to (Pradopo 1994: 26) cited from (Harmon, 2014) literature is a picture of human life that is focused on the truth and everything the writer wants to tell in caste works. With this, readers can find out the characteristics of the author related to the life around him (Harmon, 2014). Literature is a term used to describe creative and scientific writing but is more often used in creative imagination works such as poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction (Pradopo, 1994: 26-27) cited from (Harmon, 2014). (Ibid: 472) cited from (Harmon, 2014) says that if we describe something like "literature" as opposed to another it will carry a qualitative connotation which states that the work is very good, far better than usual literature. Hirsch (1978: 34) cited from (Harmon, 2014) defines literature more subjectively. According to him, literature is a literary work that includes medical tests that are important to be taught by

literature teachers to students when this literature has not been taught in other schools or universities (Harmon, 2014).

Perrine & Laurence, (1882: 2) said poetry is one type of literary work that has been known to many people. Many people use literary works of poetry as a medium in expressing feelings in the form of written works. Poetry writers write their poems by expressing all their feelings in an essay by using certain elements to bring their writings to life. Poetry writers come from various circles and from various parts of the world. This proves that the literary work of poetry is one of the literary works that can be felt by the audience by channeling the emotions expressed by the poet in his poetry. (Perrine & Laurence, 1882: 2) said that poetry can provide comfort and pleasure for its readers. Copy for entertainment, poetry is also used as a medium of learning and has an important role in life (Perrine & Laurence, 1882: 2).

According to Anindita, Satoto, & Surmarlam (2017: 40), poetry comes from the word 'poesis' which means 'to create' which consists of two things, namely body and spirit. Sayuti (2008: 3) stated in Anindita, Satoto, & Surmarlam (2017: 40) poetry is a form of expressing language with emotional, imaginative, and pay attention to the sound aspects expressed by poets based on the writer's personal and social experiences. In Irmawati (2014: 35), Robinson stated that poetry is a language that can transmit an unspeakable emotional reaction. Wordsworth in Irmawati (2014: 35) defines poetry as an imaginative expression of someone that involves spontaneous strong and rhythmic feelings.

Another understanding is expressed by Tiyah (2011: 1) Poetry is something that is expressed in the form of writing and sound that involves people in groups. The word poetry defines something a little strange in nature, where poetry is in the form of writing that does not require a command sign, but can speak through symbols and other elements known as musical sounds or can also be called painting, architecture, and the language of sculpture (Tiyah, 2011). : 1) in (Abrams & Stillinger, 2000: 1139).

Poetry can be divided into elements, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements of poetry are the constituent elements in poetry, while the extrinsic elements of poetry are the constituent elements outside the intrinsic elements (Tiyah, 2011: 1). Intrinsic elements of poetry consist of constituent elements in poetry such as themes, characters, plot, context, background. The intrinsic elements of poetry really only see the inner elements that compose the poem. To be able to assess the intrinsic elements

in poetry, we must look at the poem objectively. An objective assessment is carried out because in determining the intrinsic elements only look at the elements in it. While extrinsic elements come from sociology and physiology of the poet.

According to Damono (2007: 4) poetry is an expression of expression from the heart into a language that has rhythm and beauty value. Poets use language as a tool to record their life experiences and they are written into poetry by Damono (2007: 4). In making poetry, it is better to use thoughts, feelings, obsessions, ideas, and imaginations that you want to put into writing poetry. In the creative process, Tiyah (2011: 2) said that poetry uses imagination. In this case the imagination used is not fantasia or imagination but real experience, language experience, thought experience, and most importantly the personal experience of the author Tiyah (2011: 2).

In this imagination process, elements in poetry try to analyze more deeply and fundamentally where all elements in poetry have a function in building images in poetry. In poetry, the image is a representation of the words that are written by the author. One of the poems that uses the imagination process as described above is "A Poison Tree" by William Blake. In his poetry, he uses many elements of poetry that can build the image of the poem. Elements that uses by William Blakes in his poem is really good and interesting to be analysis.

Therefore, based on the explanation above, to make poetry more interesting and beautiful to read, it certainly requires several elements that must be added in poetry. One of them is figurative language. In the poem "A Poison Tree" by William Blake, there are elements of figurative language that are interesting to analyze. So in this paper, the author will analyze the figurative language in William Blake's poem, A Poison Tree.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection is done by applying literature study. This means, the author applies the data that the author takes through the library and other written materials from books or the internet. Data was collected by reading poetry repeatedly to find the elements contained in the poem, then recording and making data and grouping them according to the subject matter.

In analyzing this data, the researcher carried out a process of systematically searching and organizing data in order to increase understanding of the data. In analyzing the data, the writer uses content analysis techniques with an intrinsic approach that focuses on figurative language. The main instrument in this research is the researcher himself (human instrument). In qualitative research, the position of the researcher is as a planner, executor of data collection, analyzer, interpreter of data and finally becomes a reporter of research results. The researcher uses a theory-based framework to determine figurative language in poetry which will be used as a data source.

To describe the data, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative method is used to describe data in the description form to make it. In this study the researcher used descriptive qualitative method to describe all the element that found in the poetry. Based on the result there are nine elements of poetry that found in the Poison of Three by William Blake.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Finding

After conducting the analysis, the researcher found several elements of poetry contained in William Blake's poem which will be explained as follows:

a. The Purpose of the Poem

"A Poison Tree" is one of the famous poems that wrote by William Blake (Wolosky, 2008: 85). This poem aims to express the author's feelings about his anger toward his enemy and his friend. It can see in the 1st stanza where there is explain about the author's anger toward his enemy and his friend with a different response. In this poem, the speaker has anger feelings towards his friend and his enemy; when he told his wrath to his friend, the anger feeling is gone, but to his enemy, he did not tell it. The speakers of this poem also express how the anger he kept at his enemy until he can't handle his anger and finally explodes to make his enemy die. He kept his anger in check and looked after it very well; after that, he treats his anger like he is growing a tree. He watered it with his tears and shone it with a smile to keep his anger awake and growing well until he brought him on the top of his anger which is symbolized by the growth of a red apple. At this time, his foe realized this and tried to steal the anger that caused him to die. In this

poem, the writer also gives an implicit message to the reader where anger that is honestly expressed will find a suitable solution, but if anger is buried, it is like maintaining negative emotions and energy in oneself.

b. The Imagery

Poetry has several elements that make it exciting and meaningful for readers, or poetry lovers, one of these elements is imagery. According to Lonners (2003: 2), imagery is the words generated by the mind to describe an event that aims to produce physical perceptions so that the reader has the experience or the sense-impression itself. In William Blake's poem "A Poison Tree" there are some imagery used by the author there are visual imagery, organic imagery, and kinesthetic imagery. Visual imagery can be seen in the fourth and ninth lines, the word grew and grow is the visual imagery because It helps the reader imagine the changing size or amount of the author's anger that continues to grow every day. In the tenth line, "till it bore an apple bright" this imagery helps the reader imagine the speaker's wrath that grows every day as a tree that grows and puts the author on the top of his anger until produces poisonous apple. The sixteenth line, "My foe out outstretched beneath the tree" gives the impression to the reader that his anger made his enemy die under the tree. The organic imagery can be seen in the first, second, and fifteenth line. "Angry" is a sign to represent strong feelings against someone who hurts the author, and "glad" in the fifteenth line shows pleasure feelings inside him. Kinesthetic imagery can be seen in the 5th line "watered" shows an action to nurture his wrath as a grown plant, 7th line, "sunned" describe an action from the speaker that he/she sunned his wrath with his/her smile, and 13th line "stole" describe an action from the foe that sneak in the author's garden secretly in the night. William's imagery is exciting and helps the reader imagine the emotions contained in this poem. So that imagery is an important intrinsic element to use in a poem.

c. The Metaphor

According to Pradopo (2006: 61) in Ulfa (2016: 3), figurative language describes comparisons, imagery, and equations. This figurative language can make a poem more beautiful, more alive and make the message in the poem easier to convey to the reader (Ulfa, 2016: 3). One part of figurative language is a

metaphor. According to Puadah (2017: 2), metaphor is a form of figurative language that is implied without the use of the conjunction "like" and "as". In William Blake's poetry, the author uses several metaphors in trying to beautify this poem. The first metaphor can be found in the five and six-line "and I watered it in fear" "night and morning with my tears". Those lines are metaphors of how the author's kept and grew his anger and watching and felt his anger growing bigger every day. The next metaphor is in the seven-line "And I sunned it with smiles", sunned is the metaphor for the things that the author does to cover up and caring his anger so it can grow. And the last metaphor is "Till it bore an apple bright" in this line, the apple is the metaphor for the peak of the author's anger. The author uses this metaphor I found to beautifying and clarifying the meaning of this poem.

d. The Symbol

Poetry is one of the literary works that is used as a medium to express feelings, thoughts, and media to express criticism. Poetry has several elements that make it even more beautiful, namely symbol, rhyme, theme, rhythm, and figurative language. According to Meyer (1999: 2144) in Rosmaidar and Fitraturrehmahi (2012: 14), symbols are abstract things such as events, people, or works that can provide an additional depiction of a literary work. Through symbols, readers will find it easier to know what is being told in the poetry (Rosmaidar and Fitraturrehmahi, 2012: 14). In his poem "A Poison Tree", William Blake also uses symbolic elements to connect the meanings. There are two symbols he uses, namely the symbol of the tree and an apple. The tree symbol symbolizes or describes the ever-growing anger experienced by the speaker in poetry towards his enemy. The choice of the symbol "tree" in this poem is very appropriate, where the tree will continue to grow over time as the speaker's anger in this poem will continue to grow. At the same time, the symbol of apple in this poem symbolizes the "fruit" of his anger and actions. This is related to the symbol of a tree, where the tree will continue to grow and bear fruit, the same way that rage that continues to grow over time will produce "fruit" of anger which tends to be wrong.

e. The Paradox

Poetry has several elements that make it exciting and meaningful for readers, or poetry lovers, one of these elements is paradox. According to (Wahid, 2013: 13) paradox is a real contradiction which can be in the form of a situation or a statement which is somehow true. In a paradox statement, it usually comes from one word that is used figuratively or has more than one meaning (Wahid, 2013: 13). This poem by William Blake also has an element of paradox which is located in the title section, namely poison and tree. Poison tree is included in the paradox because poison in this case means something dangerous that can harm and can lead to death. On the other hand, trees symbolize life because trees produce oxygen that can provide life for living things. So that trees and poison in this poem contradict each other where trees should provide oxygen as a source of life for humans, not produce poisonous fruit that can end human life.

f. The Allusion

Poetry has several elements that make it exciting and meaningful for readers, or poetry lovers, one of these elements is allusion. Allusion is "a covert, implied, or indirect reference" (Oxford English Dictionary in Irwin, 200: 287). Allusion is a part of the reference which is used implied, or indirectly (Irwin, 2001: 287). The reference of William Blake's poetry titled "A Poison Tree" was from Old Testament stories in Genesis Chapter 2 and 3 "Tree of Life" and "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" (Chiramel, 2015: 7). Kathleen Raine in (Chiramel, 2015: 7) stated that William Blake was influenced by Jacob Boehme about "Tree of Life" and "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" which are perceived as eternity and others are perceived as distant worlds.

In the story of Adam and Eve chapter 3, told about Adam and Eve who ate the fruit from a tree of life which resulted in them having to get out of the garden that God gave them. The story of Adam and Eve Chapter 3 has an allusion with "A Poison Tree" created by William Blake which tells the story of a poison tree. A poisonous apple tree that continues to grow due to the resentment that continues to be buried until it causes bad things to happen to the people around the tree. So that the allusion used by William Blake comes from the story of Adam and Eve in Chapter 3 which focuses on three things, namely garden, apple and tree.

g. Meaning and Idea

Meaning in poetry is the experience expressed by the author through his writing (Perrine & Laurence, 1982: 58). Meaning in poetry can be divided into two, total meaning and prose meaning. The reader's experience when reading a poem or the experience being communicated known as total meaning and prose meaning is a paraphrase of a poem in summary form (Perrine & Laurence, 1982: 58). In William Blake's poem "A Poison Tree" the prose meaning is about the author's anger to his enemy where he does not tell his anger feeling and growing it until his enemy dead. It can be seen in the first stanza where the author tells about the different anger toward his enemy and his friend. In the second stanza, the author's talked about how he treats his anger until it grows bigger every day. In the third and fourth stanza, the author's spoken about his anger that resulted in his enemy's death. The total meaning is I feel sad because in this poem I see that the author harbors and cultivates his anger until he is at the peak of his anger and causes his enemy to die. The idea or the message in this poem is the importance of expressing or talking about what we feel especially anger. If we harbor the offense, that anger will continue to grow, which can lead the anger more bigly and can harm us.

h. The Tone

The tone in literature is the attitude of the author's toward the audience, subject, or themselves (Perrine & Laurence, 1982: 62). As stated by Perrine & Laurence (1982: 62) tone is an essential part of meaning and it used in giving a stronger emotional meaning in poetry. William Blake, in his poem "A Poison Tree" also uses tone in providing emotional coloring in his poetry. In this poem, the tone used is negative tone, where William Blake emphasizes arrogant and angry tones. Throughout this poem, the speaker builds feelings of anger, and at the end, the speaker raises a tone of arrogance because his enemy is dead, and he is happy about it. This tone can be seen in the first line and the third line, the writer uses the word "angry" which shows very clearly that the speaker feels angry with his friends and enemies. In lines 15th – 16th, the speaker is clearly delighted to see his enemy die after getting angry with him. In lines 5th - 6th, the speaker talks about "watering" his wrath, where watering is a metaphor for the accumulation of

anger he buries. In the tenth line, there is a poisoned apple as a symbol of uncontrollable anger that ends up killing someone. Apple also means pride in this poem, where holding feelings of resentment can be dangerous.

i. The Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of accented vocal sounds (Perrine & Laurance, 1882: 72). Rhyme sounds can be masculine and feminine, called feminine when the rhyme sound involves two or more syllables, and masculine when it involves only one syllable (Perrine & Laurance, 1882: 72). As stated by Perrine & Laurance (1882: 72), there are two types of rhythm; internal-rhyme and end-rhyme. When a rhyming word or more is in a line known as internal rhyme and rhyming word at the end of the line known as end rhyme. In this poem, the author uses end rhyme with an AABB rhyme pattern. This end rhyme can be seen in every stanza, in the first stanza, the rhyme pattern is AABB with the end word “friend (A), end (A), foe (B), go (B)”. In the second stanza, the pattern of the rhyme is CCDD and continues until the last stanza. This rhyming pattern gives an excellent effect to the poem sounds.

j. The Rhythm

Rhythm is the repetition of a wave-like movement or sound (Perrine & Laurance, 1882: 77). All languages involve some sort of alternation of accented and inaccessable syllables so that all languages have to some degree a rhythm (Perrine & Laurance, 1882: 77). The rhythm that we can tap with our feet is called the meter (Perrine & Laurance, 1882: 77). In the language of metrics, accents are arranged so that they appear at intervals of time that appear to be the same, and this interval is marked as foot tapping. In this poem, the author uses iambic tetrameter and trochaic trimeter to make the rhythm sound good. The iambic tetrameter can be seen in the second line where it means each line has four or tetra iambs. The trochaic trimeter means that each line has three trochees.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings, the researcher describes some of the research findings that the authors have previously mentioned. The researcher found nine types of poetic elements contained in this poem including imagery, metaphor, symbol, paradox, allusion, meaning and idea, tone, rhythm, and rhythm. For the imagery there are three

kinds of imagery used by the author including visual imagery, organic imagery, and kinesthetic imagery. For the metaphor, the researcher found three metaphors in the poem. In this poem also uses symbols. There are two symbols he uses, namely the symbol of the tree and an apple. Furthermore, regarding symbols, the symbols used in this poem are located in the title "poison and tree". For the allusion, the researcher found that the author of this poem was inspired from Old Testament stories in Genesis Chapter 2 and 3 "Tree of Life" and "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil". Next is about the tone, the tone used is negative tone, where William Blake emphasizes arrogant and angry tones. For the rhyme, the author uses end rhyme with an AABB rhyme pattern. In this poem, the author uses iambic tetrameter and trochaic trimeter to make the rhythm sound good. The last is about the meaning (prose meaning and total meaning _and idea. The prose meaning is about the author's anger to his enemy where he does not tell his anger feeling and growing it until his enemy dead. The total meaning is I feel sad because in this poem I see that the author harbors and cultivates his anger until he is at the peak of his anger and causes his enemy to die. The idea or the message in this poem is the importance of expressing or talking about what we feel especially with the anger feeling.

CONCLUSION

In William Blake's poem entitled "A Poison Tree" found several elements used in this poem. Elements that the writer found in this poem are; the purpose, imagery, symbol, paradox, allusion, meaning, idea, tone, rhyme, and rhythm. This poem tells the story of a person with feelings of anger towards his friends and enemies. The anger he has for his enemies he keeps and develops so quickly that he can extinguish his enemies. In this poem, Blake illustrates to the reader that harboring anger is the same as growing anger that will become big enough to hurt yourself and those around you.

William Blake's poem "A Poison Tree" has a message in the form of how we should respond to the anger we feel at other people. In this poem, the writer finds that the anger we feel towards someone, whether family, friends, or enemies, should be expressed to relieve the anger. Because if we keep the anger, then the negative energy in the body will continue to grow until it can hurt ourselves and those around us.

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