

THE HISTORICAL APPROACH OF WORDSWORTH'S POEM *THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*

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ABSTRAK

Revolusi Perancis dipengaruhi tulisan-tulisan romantis selama periode tersebut. Penyair yang berbeda digambarkan isu yang berbeda mengenai revolusi seperti kejayaan Napoleon, penyair melarikan diri ke alam dalam mendapatkan jauh dari dunia nyata dan masalah-masalahnya, korban perang dan berbagai situasi yang realistik lain yang efek dari perang. William Wordsworth dan Samuel Taylor Coleridge adalah dua tokoh utama dari periode romantis dan tulisan-tulisan mereka memiliki dampak yang besar pada masyarakat dan semangat anti-revolusioner. Revolusi Perancis telah mengilhami Wordsworth untuk mengatasi tema demokrasi dan hak asasi manusia dan untuk mempertimbangkan fungsi revolusi sebagai bentuk perubahan. Pada awalnya, Revolusi Perancis didukung oleh penulis karena kesempatan itu tampaknya menawarkan perubahan politik dan sosial. Ketika harapan mereka merasa frustrasi dalam tahun kemudian, Wordsworth menggunakan semangat revolusi untuk membantu mencirikan Filsafat puitisnya.

Ada dua teori utama yang diadopsi dalam penelitian ini. Pertama adalah Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1955 : 309) yang menyatakan bahwa sebagai langkah pertama dalam memahami puisi, akan sangat membantu untuk membuat parafrase akal polos . Arti dari setiap bagian dari puisi itu membantu untuk menentukan makna seluruh puisi, dan pada gilirannya keseluruhan puisi membantu untuk menentukan arti dari setiap bagian. Dan yang kedua adalah Wellek dan Warren teori tentang pendekatan biografis dalam hal analisis ekstrinsik, untuk menemukan hubungan antara kehidupan nyata dari para penyair dan cerita ia mengatakan dalam puisinya. Pembahasan penelitian ini difokuskan pada latar belakang sejarah puisi dan menganalisis puisi itu sendiri dengan melihat pesan dalam puisi dan pengalaman Wordsworth.

Kata kunci: romantis, puisi, sejarah

1. Background of the Study

Generally, the literary works can be grouped into four types; they are drama, poetry, fiction and essay. From those four types of literary works, poetry is considered to be the most interesting to analyze since the language used in a poem is in the form of artistic language.

Knickerboker & Renninger, (1963; 307) says that “poetry is the hymn of praise. Good talk about poetry is nevertheless rare and even the best of it will rest on fallow ground until we ourselves have learned how to penetrate the inner life of a few poem”. Poem is a medium not only to express the feeling of the poets but also to make us enter

into these feelings about the things, persons, situations or ideas in the poem. Poetry is able to give entertainment, satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment to the reader. This is because there is great difference between language in a poem and our daily language, in that poetic language is stylized with aesthetic or artistic effect.

Actually there are a lot of things we can talk about poetry. But in this study the historical background is focused. Sometimes metaphorical language or in Greek ancestor “metaphoric” means to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning (Knickerbocker, 1955:637) is also discussed. Generally there are some figurative languages in literary work such as: antithesis, hyperbola, idiomatic expression, irony, metaphor, metonymy, paradox, personification, simile and synecdoche.

Frequently, the readers still face difficulties in understanding the idea and message of a poem. In order to find out the hidden ideas of the poem, the readers should have basic knowledge about figurative language, since the ideas in a poem are mostly conveyed through the use of figurative language.

2. Problem of the Study

Through highlighting, there are two problems which need to be discussed as follows:

1. What is the message in *The French Revolution* that the poet intended to deliver to the readers?
2. How does Wordsworth’s visit to France help the readers to understand the poem?

3. Aims of the Study

This writing is intended to fulfill three aims: the general, specific, and academic aims. The general aim of this writing is to apply theories related to poetry in order to get

better understanding of the poems of William Wordsworth entitled *The French Revolution*.

Meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out the critical estimate of the poem and what message the poet wants to convey.

The last is academic aim, which is to give contribution to English Department, so this writing can be used as reference to help the student who takes the same topics.

4. Research Method

There are three aspects of the research of the study; they are source, data collection and data analysis.

4.1. Data Source

The data is taken from a poem entitled *The French Revolution* by William Wordsworth (cited by Mukherjee, 2000; 285) which consists of 40 lines.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and make of note all the information relevant to the narrator and his father as the focus of being discussed and then the data were identified in accordance with their types then descriptively presented. They are several types of collecting data:

1. Reading the story carefully, selecting and taking note the selected items based on the related topic.
2. Finding out how Poe makes Roderick Usher inter-related with his twin sister Madeline Usher and what message the writer wants to show to the readers?

4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis of the poem is related to the theoretical basis in order to be able to find message conveyed in the poem and to determine their meanings through an interpretation. The analysis of the data is presented descriptively.

5. Analysis

This study focused on the way William Wordsworth responded to the French Revolution. William Wordsworth made a significant change in his attitudes to the Revolution. In the early phases of the Revolution Wordsworth responded to it in an enthusiastic way and he acts as a supporter of the Revolution charmed by its basic principles – liberty, equality and fraternity. He believes that the Revolution and its principles is a cure to social injustice and inequality that are symbols of the old regime that had been overthrown by the Revolution. Gradually, he becomes more skeptical about the Revolution, especially about the actual political processes in France – rivalry of different political fractions, violence and injustice. Wordsworth became disappointed by the politics in France and its outcomes while he remained a fanatic supporter of the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Among the shaping factors in Wordsworth's life and poetry, *the French Revolution* (1789) particularly stands out. Influenced by his reading of William Godwin, Wordsworth was an early supporter of the revolution, believing in the ideals it seemed to champion and rebelling against social inequity, against great injustice.

The French Revolution is certainly significant for any consideration of Romantic poetry, furnishing a central concern, a focus on transformation, evident not only thematically but formally. In this sense, you might want to stress the ways in which Wordsworth's poetry departs so markedly from the poetry of the preceding period. But significant, too, is the broken promise of the revolution, and it is possible to understand

the preoccupation with nature as a retreat from the revolutionary fervor that first engulfed and then thwarted and frustrated Wordsworth and his contemporaries.

In the first half of the poem, Wordsworth gave the readers the picture of the Revolution as the breaking forth of a new life that would change the condition and situation of the earth. The Revolution had its strong admirers everywhere and the revolutionaries could get as much help and support as they asked for. They were all bound together with feelings of love and humanity and felt that this as the occasion of great rejoicing. Wordsworth blended the reaction of the revolutionaries into celebrated lines:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive line 4

But to be young was very heaven line 5

Time had come for all that was meager and stale in “custom, and statute” to change into something new and wonderful (line 6-7).

France seemed to be like a country in romance. Reason was a great enchantress and was assisting the work of creating a new world (line 10-11).

Not only some places like French but the whole world seemed to be undergoing some kind of transformation. Promises are usually enjoyed more than fulfillment, and Revolution held forth mighty promises. So it was really a time of great rejoicing. The inert were roused and lively natures were just caught in rapture (line 12-18).

In the latter half of the poem, Wordsworth described two types of men, the lofty and the meek and called upon both these types to work to make the world an abode and happiness. The lofty were the people who had fed their children upon dreams (line 19-20). They were the playfellows of fancy. They were swift, subtle and strong. They had entertained grandest passions. (line 21-25).

They meek were gentle lot. Their thoughts were in keeping with gentle motions. They had perhaps been making plans for their own minds. But now it was time for both, the meek and the lofty, to fill their desire, for they had stuff at their hand, as flexible as they could wish, and they had many helpers as they needed.(line 26-35).

Now it was time for them to exercise all their skill and create a heaven for themselves, not in some Utopian land, or in some subterranean fields, but here, in this very world, which is the world of all of us, for it is,

the place where in the end

We find our happiness, or not at all. (line 36-40).

6. Conclusion

In his descriptions focused on revolutionary festivities and brotherhood of the people. He was impressed by the basis ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. Wordsworth praised freedom and equality, but he did not speak about their practical use. Wordsworth's thinking appeared a strong aspect of democracy as he stressed the fact that individuals who led the country should be chosen for their virtues and knowledge and not for their noble origin.

Wordsworth now realized that the Revolution is not only struggle for great ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. He found out that these ideas were only empty concepts when majority of people lived in starvation and poverty. The Revolution and its aims and outcomes now were clearly defined shape. It was not only a change for human nature to born again, Wordsworth left this, however enthusiastic, abstract concept, he now realized that Revolution was also a chance to improve the miserable conditions of the people.

A spirit of revolt and indignation against all social iniquities pervaded Wordsworth for years, together with a sympathy, which never left him, for the poorer and humbler members of the community. When he came back to England, he drew near the

Jacobins without becoming one of them; but he was a decided reformer. Alienated from his own country when it went to war with France, he heartily hated king, regent and ministry.

7. Bibliography

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