

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN "ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT"  
BY ROBERT FROST**

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**Abstrak :**

*Di dalam puisi terdapat makna tersirat yang dapat diungkapkan dengan cara mengetahui jenis bahasa figuratifnya terlebih dahulu. Tulisan ini mengklasifikasikan jenis jenis bahasa figuratif yang terkandung di dalam puisi karya Robert Frost berjudul Acquainted with the Night. Juga menjelaskan makna dari setiap bahasa figuratif yang terdapat dalam setiap baris puisi tersebut.*

**Kata Kunci :** puisi, figuratif, dan makna

### **1. Background**

Poems are closely related to human civilization and a lot of people give different definitions to poems. Poem is the fusion of sound and sense or a melting together of sound and sense; it means that the division is impossible because as one reads for sense he is either consciously or unconsciously being influenced by the sound of the poem (Knickerbockers, 1963:310).

The poet was using many techniques to make their poem interesting to read. One of these techniques was to use what is called figurative language; which was a special way of using words. The poet had a story to be told and the language use must portray every emotion and feeling possible on the paper. If the poet did not create an image in the reader's mind, he would lose the reader's attention and to held the attention of the reader was the poet goal.

Robert Frost is famous American poet which has heavy use of Figurative Language. Robert Frost's poems were chosen to analyze because they were reach in a lot of kinds of figurative language.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

Based on the background above, the problems are :

1. What kinds of figurative language are used in the *Acquainted with the Night* written by Robert Frost?
2. What is the meaning of the poem based on figurative language?

## **3. Aim of Study**

Related to the problems above, specific aims of this study aimed at:

1. Analyzing the figurative language used by the poet to express the message.
2. Analyzing the meaning of the poem in figurative language.

## **4. Research Method**

Methodology was very important and it provided the crucial steps that are used in conducting scientific research. The research method used in this study classified into three parts:

### **4.1. Data Source**

The data of this study was taken from poem written by Robert Frost, *Acquainted with the Night* in 1928. This study focused on the analysis of figurative language in the poem written by Robert Frost. This poem was chosen because they utilize many kinds of figurative language to analyze.

### **4.2. Method and Technique of collecting data**

The data was collected from the poem by Robert Frost that contain many figurative language. Read it intensively, understanding it, and finally writing down all the information relevant to the topic of discussion were the methods that were done.

### **4.3. Method and Technique of analyzing data**

The collected data were separated per stanza, and then all the information relevant to the topic of discussion transcribed. After that, the data were separated per

line and be analyzed based on the theory of figurative language of *Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963)*, and supported by the other theories which are relevant. In the process of analysis it could be seen each kind of figurative language.

## 5. Analysis

*Acquainted with the Night* stated about a man who share his experience when he was walk alone around the city in the night, and it was raining. He walked through most of lane in the city, and in a random lane, there was the watchman, but the man passed him by. He doesn't even look nor greet the watchman. He walked until the main city was left behind, and he kept on walking although it was cold and dark. One moment, he heard a cry from a far, echoed from one house to another, from one street to another. The man stopped his walk and looked back, he was hoping that cry was a call for him to come back to the city, or just to saying last good bye. Upon knowing that cry was not for him, he looked at the luminary clock in the sky to know the time, and then kept walking.

Frost uses so many metaphors in this poem. This poem itself was a metaphor of someone's experience about depression and loneliness, but those things can be passed by, as someone has been one acquainted with night, walked out and back in rain, and out walked light. This poem was also an irony by two things. First was someone who consciously avoiding people but still feel loneliness and need someone to be with. And second was someone who felt lonely in the city, in which the city was a place that full of many kinds of people.

Five stanzas found in this poem that could be analyzed based on the theory of figurative language proposed by *Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963)*.

Stanza 1        I have been one acquainted with the night.  
                  I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.  
                  I have out walked the furthest city light.

In stanza one, there was an introduction of the story about a man who walked on the city in the middle of the night. He felt alone, depressed, and hopeless. There were personification, metaphor, symbol, and hyperbole found in this stanza.

In the first line *I have been one acquainted with the night*, there were personification, symbol, and metaphor. The personification in word *night*, which was not living thing, so we could not acquainted with it. And second was symbol in word *one*. It was numerous symbol that meant singular. And then there was a metaphor in word *night*.

*Night*, because of its darkness, may represent many things. It could be depressed, bad things, evil, loneliness, and death. But night could not harm people until the man in this poem gets acquainted with it, so *night* in this poem could be mean loneliness.

In line two, *I have walked out in rain—and back in rain* there was a metaphor. Word *walk* was a metaphor of continues things, one step after other. The next word was in a word *rain*. It was cold and could make you sick if you continuously walked through it. So it could be said that word *rain* was meant as problem, disease, heartache, and hard life.

And last line of stanza one is *I have out walked the furthest city light*, there were hyperbole and symbol. First, it was called hyperbole because we as a human being cannot out walked the furthest city light. Next, symbol found in word *city* and *light*. *City* was of community and unity, many kinds of people living in the same place, and *light* was a symbol of hope, righteous, and good things. So in this line it can be said that the man was lonely and hopeless, out of people and out of hope.

Stanza 2        I have looked down the saddest city lane  
                  I have passed by the watchman on his beat  
                  And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain

In stanza two, there were two examples of figurative language found, metaphor and hyperbole. This stanza told us about the man who passed through the

watchman and the man did not even want to look at him. He chose to avoid watchman, as an only other human in this poem.

In line four *I have looked down the saddest city lane* there was metaphor in *saddest city lane*. It could be mean that the *city lane* was a phase of the man's life, and the man was remembering about the worst and saddest phase of his life.

In line five *I have passed by the watchman on his beat* there was metaphor in *watchman*. The meanings of a word *watchman* could be a lot. It could be people in a society, religion, idealism, moral, or God. The man just passing it through and avoid those. It could be said because of ashamed feeling or the man feel that no one was going to understand him.

In line six *And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain*, was a hyperbole in *dropped my eyes*. It was too over reacted to someone who did not want to explain something.

Stanza 3        I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet  
                    When far away an interrupted cry  
                    Came over houses from another street

In stanza three there were three examples of figurative language found, there were irony, metaphor and personification. There was irony between line seven and five. Metaphor found in line eight. Last, line nine was personification.

In this stanza, the man heard a cry and it made him stop. In line seven *I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet* was an irony with line five in stanza two *And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain* the man stopped by the sound but he did not stop by watchman. He avoided people but expects there was someone who care for him and call him.

In line eight *When far away an interrupted cry*, there was metaphor in word *cry*. *Cry* has a meaning an expression, reaction, or opinion from people to the man.

And in the last line of stanza three, line nine, *Came over houses from another street* it was a personification. Activity *came over* referred to *cry*, according in the previous line, which could not came over from houses to streets.

Stanza 4      But not to call me back or say good-bye;  
                  And further still at an unearthly height  
                  One luminary clock against the sky

In stanza four, there was only one examples of figurative language found. There is only a metaphor occur in line twelve.

This stanza stated that the man realized that the cry was not to call him to come back to the city, or it was last goodbye from people to wish him good luck, but maybe the cry was an expression of anger and cursing words from people to him, so the man chose to ignore it and continue walking. At the end he was looking up to see the luminary clock, which is against the sky.

In line twelve *One luminary clock against the sky*, *luminary clock* referred to the moon, because the setting was night, in the sky, and moon's rotation could be used to predict time. The moon itself was metaphor of fate, which rotating in human life, sometime it was dark and sometime it was shine so bright, sadness and happiness could happen in every human, it was only a matter of time.

Stanza 5      Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.  
                  I have been one acquainted with the night

In stanza five, last stanza, after the man look at the moon, he realized that he was lonely and no one cared for him, there was no one beside him and no one get an effect of his happiness or sadness, so after all that was not a big deal anymore.

This stanza and this poem have an ending line which was same with first opening line. It could be said that the loneliness and sadness of this man come more than one time and it was never ending. There were paradox, personification, symbol, and metaphor can be found in this stanza.

In line thirteen, there was paradox in *neither wrong and nor right*. This line was also a personification, because *the luminary clock proclaimed the time*, which was an activity of human being.

And in the last line, line fourteen, it was a repetition of first line in stanza one. Personification belongs to *the night* which cannot be acquainted with, symbol of single person in word *one*, and word *night* as a metaphor of loneliness.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on Knickerbocker & Reninger theory, there were six figurative of language that found in *Acquainted with the Night* poem. Those were irony, symbol, metaphor, hyperbole, paradox, and personification. Metaphor was the most dominant figurative language in this poem, it appeared in every stanza. It used to help reader got the meaning easily, by a simple comparison with night life. This poem told us that loneliness, sadness, problems, and bad perception from society could be passed through by us.

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