

Semiotic Touch in Interpreting Poetry

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Abstract: Poetry is a poetic work of art. The poetic word already contains a unique beauty for poetry. Poetry is a medium for people who want to express their feelings. The language used by poetry is trimmer and more intensive than the language used for daily conversation. This intensive disclosure is what makes poetry valuable in the eyes of humans. Semiotics is a scientific discipline and analytical method that can examine the signs contained in an object to find out the meaning contained in the object. This study uses a literature review method where the technique used is to collect reading materials and literature specifically and then analyze the content of the study based on the focus of the problems discussed. After finding the matrix or keywords in a poem, the next step in studying poetry based on the approach is determining the theme. The theme is determined to get the main essence in a poem.

Keywords: poetry; semiotics; interpretation

I. Introduction

Giving meaning or concretization of a literary work to benefit and contribute to people's lives (literary connoisseurs/readers) can be done with various existing approaches and theories. Academically-scientific meaning and concretization of literary works can be done through several theoretical approaches and methods such as formalism, structuralism, historical, semiotics, Etc.

The accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study results and the meaning of a literary work seem to depend on three things: the type of literary work being studied, the literary approach and theory used, and the ability of the literary reviewer himself. From the point of view of literary works, each genre (drama, prose or poetry) has its own rules, characteristics and styles that distinguish one type of work from another. Furthermore, in terms of the existing approaches and theories used, each literary approach and theory has advantages and disadvantages. At the same time, the assessor variable is highly dependent on their abilities and experience. In other words, a literary approach's theory has a gradation of suitability, compatibility, accuracy with a particular literary work.

Although literary theory and its application in a literary study have different gradations, all literary theories and approaches can be used to examine, study, and explore a literary work. However, each theory and literary approach has its strengths and weaknesses in its implementation. For example, a study of prose may be more suitable to be studied using a genetic structural approach. Alternatively, a drama may be more suitable to be studied sociologically, literary reception theory is more generally used to study novels, or a poem may be more suitable to study with semiotic theory's dynamic structural theory. Or historical or a combination of two or more existing theories.

To capture the meaning and nature of a literary work, methods are used according to the nature of the literary work itself. It is crucial to understand that literary works use the medium of language in their expression. On the other hand, before the language becomes a literary work, it already has its meaning according to its rules. In Pradop (2003), Preminger said that the meaning of language before it was used as a medium in literature was in the first-order semiotics system.

II. Review of Literatures

Poetry is a poetic work of art. The poetic word already contains a unique beauty for poetry. However, what is the nature or characteristic of the so-called poetry? Djoko Pradopo said it was difficult to formulate a poetic definition. He only says that something is called poetic if it evokes feelings, attracts attention, elicits a clear response, or generally causes emotion (Badrun, 1989, p. 1). Because of its poetic nature, we need to find the essence of the meaning of poetry.

Poetry is one of the branches of literature that has attracted the interest of researchers and literary enthusiasts from the past until now (Yahya, 1983, p. 1). Plato argues that poetry comes from full inspiration, such as the inspiration of Sufi experts or prophets or feelings of overflowing love. Sigmund Freud added that inspiration is a magical way for the sama'i (world) poet to convey desires that cannot be conveyed in the real world.

Poetry can be defined as language that says more and more intensively than what daily language says (Siswantoro, 2010, p. 23). Etymologically, the term poetry comes from the Greek *poeima*, which means 'making' or *poesis* 'making' and in English 'poem' and poetry. Poetry is defined as 'making' and 'making' through poetry. Someone has created a world of his own, which may contain messages or descriptions of certain atmospheres, both physically and mentally (Wijaya, 2014, p. 62).

From the physical, Reeves limits that poetry is an expression of language that is rich and full of allure. According to Colridge, poetry is the language of choice. That is, the poet has chosen strictly.

According to Abrams, poetry is an indirect expression in words, or rather the rhythmic words of several emotions that dominate one powerful feeling or feelings that arise directly from within the poet. Poetry is a medium for people who want to express their feelings. The language used by poetry is trimmer and more intensive than the language used for daily conversation. This intensive disclosure is what makes poetry valuable in the eyes of humans. As a literary work, poetry has its characteristics. Namely, it has a density in its writing. As a genre, poetry is different from novels, plays, or short stories. The difference lies in the density of the composition with strict conventions so that poetry does not give the poet open space to freely create.

It is challenging to interpret the meaning of a poem or poem in words because if the sentence is mentioned, it will dominate the human soul by providing a mirror with various viewing angles. Furthermore, the various viewing angles depending on the person and the soul who sees it and his desires. Robert Forst said that poetry begins with pleasure and ends with wisdom. However, learning to read poetry is an experience that, at first, is annoying and ends in confusion. This is because the composition of poetry is different from writing or the way of everyday speaking, and poetry often does not show themes and meanings (Badrun, 1989, p. 1).

We can conclude that poetry is an inner experience voiced through language by poets. Because poetry is presented to create an inner experience, when reading poetry, we are often a bit difficult to find the meaning or theme of the poem. The experts' explanations above show that poetry has a very complex definition because poetry itself is present in a way that is also complex to explain. Inner experience is an experience that is difficult to analyze physically. The poets try to express the inner experience through language. Robert Frost said that poetry is expressed differently from writing or everyday language, so that poetry readers must activate their imagination so that they find the poet's experience through his poetry.

Semiotics is a scientific discipline and analytical method that can examine the signs contained in an object to find out the meaning contained in the object. Semiotics comes from the Greek "Semeion", which means sign. Semiotics is the study of signs (signs). In Zerst's view, anything that can be observed or made observable can be called a sign. Moreover, signs are not limited to objects (Zerst, 1993:18).

The word semiotics is derived from English, namely semiotics. Another name for semiotics is semiology. Both have the same meaning, namely the science of signs. Both semiotics and semiology come from Greek, namely semeion, which means sign.

Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects events of all cultures as signs (Sobur, 2001). Semiotics consists of theories about how signs represent objects, ideas, circumstances, situations, feelings, conditions outside the signs themselves.

Semiotics is one of the studies that has even become a tradition in communication theory. The semiotic tradition consists of theories about how signs represent objects, ideas, circumstances, situations, feelings and conditions outside the signs themselves.

According to Littlejohn (2009: 53) in his book *Communication Theories of Human Communication*, edition 9, Semiotics aims to find out the meanings contained in a sign or interpret these meanings so that it is known how communicators construct messages. The essential components of semiotics consist of a sign (sign), a symbol (symbol), and a sign (nal). These three problems are included in the scope of semiotics because they allow communication between subjects and objects in the path of understanding as a fundamental component of semiotics. The explanation when the semiotic component is as follows (Danesi, 2010:4):

2.1 Sign

Signs are part of the science of semiotics that marks something or a situation to explain or notify the object to the subject. The sign always points to something tangible, such as objects, events, writing, language, actions, events, and other signs.

2.2 Symbol

A symbol is a thing or condition that leads the subject's understanding of the object. The relationship between the subject and the object is tucked in the sense of inclusion. A symbol is always associated with signs that have been given cultural, situational, and conditional characteristics. A symbol is a sign that means dynamic, particular, subjective, figurative, and figure of speech. In literary works, whether in poetry, fictitious stories or dramas, there are various kinds of symbols, including colour symbols, object symbols, sound symbols, atmosphere symbols, tone symbols, and symbols of imaginative visualization generated from facial expressions or typography.

2.3 Cue

A sign is a thing or condition given by the subject to the object. In this situation, the subject always does something to inform the signalled object at that time. So, cues are always temporal. If the user is suspended, the signal will change to a sign or symbol. All three (signs, symbols, and signs) have nuances, namely minimal differences regarding language, colour, Etc.

III. Research Methods

This study uses a literature review method where the technique used is to collect reading materials and literature specifically and then analyze the content of the study based on the focus of the problems discussed. This research was conducted by trying to compile and translate the results holistically to find reasonable data for later analysis.

The semiotic analysis seeks to find the meaning of signs, including things hidden behind a sign (text, advertisements, news). The sign system is very contextual and depends on the user of the sign.

The thinking of sign users is the result of the influence of various social constructions in which the sign user is located (Kriyantono, 2006). Peirce distinguishes the types of signs into icons (icon), index (index), and symbols (symbol) based on the relationship between the representamen and the object. Can be described as follows: (1) Icon: something that performs the function as a marker similar to the shape of the object (seen in pictures or paintings); (2) Index: something that performs the function of a marker indicating the signified; and (3) Symbol: something that performs its function as a marker which by convention has been commonly used in society (Sobur, 2002). Sign types, such as icons, indexes, and symbols, have different nuances. The difference between icons, indexes and symbols can be seen in further studies.

In semiotic analysis, the research method used is a qualitative approach. This is because the basic assumption of semiotics is the study of signs, wherein interpreting it each person will vary according to culture, ideology, experience, and others.

IV. Discussion

4.1 Semiotic Nature

There are several variants of words related to semiotics, such as semiotics, semiotics, semiology or semantics. In general, the word means meaning or meaning. Cobley and Janz, quoted by Ratna (2004), say that semiotics comes from the word seme, Greek, which means interpreter of signs. Meanwhile, other literature explains that semiotics comes from semeion, sign. (Sinha, 1988:3) in Kurniawan (2001) mentions that the word semeion seems to have been derived from inferential Hippocratic or asclepediatric medicine where the 'sign' still meant something that indicated the existence of other things, such as smoke overcoming fire.

However, before the term semiotics was used widely, two experts used the word somewhat differently. For followers of Saussurean, they prefer the word semiology (semiology). As for Pierce, admirers who grew up in France often use the word semiotics (Sayuti, 2000).

The difference between the two primary schools in using the term semiotics or semiology also lies in the role given to reality. For Saussure, reality has an impact on the mind or mind, then its existence continues and is independent of that reality in the form of an

image, and the image, in turn, affects the perception of reality itself. For Peirce, the reality is outside the mind and are two separate things. Moris, a supporter of Peirce, added that there is a dualism between external and internal. Processes that appear externally are no different from internally (Masionmbow and Hidayat, 2001).

Returning to the essence of the notion of semiotics, the meaning of semiotics is quite numerous and relatively varied. For example, semiotics study signs in human life (Hoed, 2008). Alternatively, some define semiotics as the science of signs, studying socio-cultural phenomena, including literature as a sign system by Preminger in Pradopo (2007). Also, semiotics is a branch of science that deals with the study of signs and everything related to signs, such as signs and processes that apply to Zoest's signs (Soekawati, 1993).

Eco, a modern semiotic expert in his book *The Name of the Rose* (1979), says that semiotics is a science that deals with signs where a sign is anything that can significantly replace something else. Something else does not have to exist or exist. So semiotics is the study of something that can be used to lie in Eco, 1979 in (Ratna, 2004). Then, (Berger, 2000) in Ratna (2004) argues that semiotics is a science including imperialistic science to be applied to various fields, including the symptoms of contemporary culture. Signs are anything that says about something other than themselves. Signs are not only a communication process but also a better understanding of the world. Thus humans are also often called *homo semiotics* (Ratna, 2004).

Even though they are the same, signs in specific contexts may have different meanings for different groups of people. For example, the swastika symbol for Hindus is a religious symbol, while the swastika is a Nazi symbol for certain people. Alternatively, Jakarta is not just designating the capital city of the Republic of Indonesia, but as a sign, Jakarta can represent something else, for example, a symbol of power, corruption, hegemony, prostitution, and others (Ratna, 2004).

4.2 The Nature of Literary Semiotics

Although the study of semiotics, in general, has developed for a long time, the study of semiotics in the field of literature has only developed rapidly since the early 20th century. Various ways (modes) of discourse have the meaning of Pradopo in (Jabrohim, 2001). Literary language is a language that exists in a language that has its characteristics and nuances. Literary language is a language with a second model system. As stated by (Lotman, 1977), literary language is a language full of metaphors, connotations, and other dual interpretation characteristics, not an ordinary language but a communication system full of cultural messages.

(Culler, 1981) Pradopo argues that there are two levels of meaning in the repertoire and semiotic studies of literary works, namely the meaning of the first-order semiotic system (first-order semiotics) and the second-order semiotics system (second-order semiotics). 2007).

Before becoming a literary work in principle, language also has meaning (meaning). Therefore, language is also called a first-order semiotic system by the conventions of the language itself. (Preminger, 1974) Pradopo said that in its subsequent implementation is the search for literary meaning at the second level (second-order semiotics), namely the meaning of language into literature, then the meaning of literature is called (significances) or meaning. This meaning is called the meaning of the meaning (meaning of meaning) or the significance of the meaning of Preminger (1974) in (Pradopo, 2007). The literary language full of metaphors connotations with the nature of creativity and imaginativeness is the main factor why a sign system dominates literary works. What needs to be observed is that literary signs

are not limited to written texts. The relationship between writers, literary works, and readers also provides a rich understanding of signs (Ratna, 2004). Literature in literary works or manuscripts contains the meaning of signs as nonverbal signs. For example, the cover of a novel, the arrangement of colours, and the typology of writing are all considered a sign system full of interpretation. For example, the book *Jakarta Undercover* (a type of personal experience expressed in a story) by Emka (2002) with a typical cover image and colour is full of interpretation.

Thus, the semiotic method in the study and meaning of literature is principally the search for signs in the form of vital signs, icons, indexes and symbols. It should also be noted that literary texts are rich in icons, indexes and symbols such as social, political, advertising, Etc.

4.3 Steps of a Semiotic Approach in the Study of Poetry Meaning

Research, study or literature review using a semiotic approach in principle is a search for the meaning of a literary work with a semiotic approach itself. Applying a semiotic approach to research, study or literature review must follow theoretical and systematic steps. However, it is also possible to take systemic steps without ignoring the main steps in semiotic studies (Kinayati, 2006).

Although the semiotic approach has the ultimate goal of obtaining the final meaning of a literary work as well as other approaches, the process towards that goal must follow systematic processes and steps that theoretically will guide the researcher or reviewer to get the meaning of the literary work. . In other words, before the final meaning of a literary work is obtained, there is an intermediate meaning that must be obtained first or alternative meanings obtained before formulating the final meaning of the literary work.

The main steps of literary meaning according to the semiotic approach are a) heuristic reading and b) refractive reading or hermeneutic reading (Riffatrr, 1978) in Jabrohim (2001).

4.4 Heuristic Reading

Heuristic reading can be interpreted as reading a poetry text linearly based on its linguistic structure. This means that this reading refers to reading by the conventions of the first order semiotics system. This reading also involves rereading according to the structure of the language itself (Jabrohim, 2001). Heuristic reading, in principle, is reading poetry based on normative grammar, morphology, semantics and syntax. This reading produces the poem's meaning as a whole according to the normative grammar according to the poem's grammar. The results of the heuristic reading have not provided the meaning of the poem as expected by the author. For example, Chairil Anwar's line of poetry "*Sebuah Kamar (A Room)*" reads:

"A window surrenders this room to this world."

The line of poetry above is not a normative language logic. This line is essentially a form of deautomation and defamiliarization. To get the first-level meaning of the line "*Sebuah jendela menyerahkan Kamar ini pada Dunia ini*" "*A window gives this room to this world*" must be naturalized or rearranged (read again) according to normative linguistic patterns. Based on the heuristic reading, the line becomes "*Through the window, the outside world (people) can see this room.*" It is sometimes necessary to insert certain words or synonyms in brackets to clarify the meaning in its application.

Consider the following example:

"Sebuah jendela menyerahkan kamar ini pada dunia ini" (pola asli)

"Melalui jendela, dunia (orang) luar dapat melihat kamar ini" (hasil heuristik)

"A window surrenders this room to this world" (original pattern)

"Through the window, the outside world (people) can see this room" (heuristic result)

4.5 Retroactive or Hermeneutic Meaning

In principle, the results of heuristic readings do not provide the true meaning of a literary work (poetry), but the results of this reading provide convenience and away or reference to obtain the true meaning of a poem. For this reason, it is continued with retroactive or hermeneutic readings.

Retroactive reading or hermeneutics is the reading of the second-order semiotics system (second-order semiotics), which provides interpretation or interpretative meaning (hermeneutics). Hermeneutic reading refers to the meaning of language based on literary conventions. This reading is critical because the language of poetry uses many figurative languages, metaphors or ambiguous meanings, Etc.

Returning to the example above, "Through the window, the outside world (people) can see this room" (heuristic result). If it is interpreted 'What room or whose room?' The answer is a 'room', namely 'me' room seen from the outside through a window. With a window, the outside world (people) can see or know the secrets of the room of theme and his family..... followed by the following line "The moon that shines inside wants to know more." and so on (Pradopo, 2005).

4.6 Matrix or Keyword Search

Although in general, there are two main steps of interpreting literary works with a semiotic approach. The next step can be done, namely the search and reading of the matrix and continued with the search for the formulation of the theme of a literary work (poetry). This is done because sometimes the results of hermeneutic readings are also not maximal in giving the meaning of a literary work (poetry). It is necessary to take further action, namely looking for a matrix or keyword and continuing with the discovery of the poem's theme. Riffaterre (1978) in (Pradopo, 2007).

Keywords are not always in the form of words that are manifested physically but are often presented implicitly. Therefore they need to be concretized or become textual keywords. Matrix or keywords can be words, combinations of words, part sentences or simple sentences. Matrix is a keyword, a word that is the key to interpreting the poem's meaning. Matrix actually also leads to a theme, but the matrix is not a theme or is not a theme yet. By finding the matrix, the theme will also be found.

4.7 Theme Determination

After finding the matrix or keywords in a poem, the next step in studying poetry based on the approach is determining the theme. The theme is determined to get the main essence in a poem. The theme also provides essential information about the message that the poet Riffaterre (1978) wants to convey (Pradopo, 2007).

V. Conclusion

Based on the previous descriptions and explanations, several things can be concluded, including 1) Theoretically, interpreting a poem theoretically is relatively complicated and

complex compared to other literary works because poetry is a language in language. 2) It must be realized that the study results of literary works are only in the approximation zone of the truth. This means that the truth of literary studies tends to be subjective. However, it must be carried out in an objective scientific manner based on existing scientific standards to find the truth. 3) the semiotic approach provides a solution to get the meaning of poetry close to the truth (approximation zone of the truth).

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