

AN ANALYSIS OF LOVE EXPRESSION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMON PEOPLE AND THE SPEAKERS THROUGH FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN JOHN DONNE'S "A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING" AND "THE SUN RISING"

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the employment of figurative language and to reveal the love expression differences between the common people and the speakers of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and "The Sun Rising" through the employment of figurative language. This research applied qualitative method. The textual analysis method was used to analyze the data. The main data of this research were words, phrases, sentences related to the employment of figurative language in John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and "The Sun Rising". The key instrument of this research was the researcher herself. The researcher employed some steps during the data collection, i.e. reading, note making, interpreting, and categorizing. In conducting the data analysis, the researcher passed some steps, namely identifying, classifying, re-reading, and making interpretation. To gain data trustworthiness, the researcher asked her colleges to do triangulations in order to check the data. The results of this research showed that there were seven types of figurative language found in the "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and "The Sun Rising". Those types of figurative language were personification, metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, apostrophe, and hyperbole. After categorizing and interpreting the data, the researcher found out that the employment of figurative language was significance to evoke the readers' imagination, to reinforce the love, and to make the love expression unforgettable. Besides, the significances of figurative language employment make the speakers' love become different from common people's love by analogizing and dramatizing the love expression.

Key words: *Figurative language, poetry, love expressions*

BACKGROUND

Love is a large concept that both men and women are enthusiastic to talk about every time and everywhere. They tend to share and express their love vigorously. Some of them tend to show their love through their gesture and speech. They will express their love immediately toward the one whom they love. Some others prefer expressing their love through a certain medium.

Poem is an example of written media that is commonly used to express love. The poem writers, known as poets, tend to talk about love in their poems through the complex words and

symbols. They select uncommon words and organize them with the help of some intrinsic elements to make the love in their poems become more beautiful and complex (Frederik, 1988: 18). The organized and selected words in love poems will also invite the readers to experience the feeling of love in it. Perrine (1977: 4) stated that poems are written to broaden, widen, and deepen the readers' feeling and understanding. The understanding of the poems can be obtained through the participation of the readers in the experience that is portrayed in the poems. After fully reading and participating in the love

experience of poems, the readers are able to deepen their awareness toward their own love feeling or toward the love feeling that they never acquaint before.

However, the readers will not be aware of the love experience expressed in the poems unless the words in the poems are vivid. To make the love expressions become vivid and imaginative, the poets employ figurative language to stimulate the imagination of the readers toward the love. Even, as stated by Frederik (1988: 21), a good poet must invent “new figurative statements”. The figurative language is significant to convey the love in the poems. This element helps the readers to sharpen and deepen their understanding and imagination of the love that is meant in the poems.

One of the poets who tend to invent some innovation in using figurative language is John Donne. He has written many complex poems, some of which express the love of the speakers. Two of his most well-known love poems are “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising”. Both poems express the deep love of the poems’ speaker that is different from the love of common people. The speaker of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, for example, ensures his lover and the readers that their love is inseparable by giving some analogized illustrations. The speaker compares himself and his lover to twin compasses to portray their temporary separation. The same way is also applied by the speaker of “The Sun Rising” who compares his lover to all states and himself to all princes to indicate how powerful his love is.

Therefore, the researcher is willing to conduct a research related to John Donne’s “A

Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising”. The topic in which the researcher is interested to analyze is John Donne’s style in using figurative language to express the speakers’ love. The researcher will also explore the research object by analyzing how the figurative language can make the speakers’ love become different from common people’s love.

To analyze the topic, the researcher uses objective theory. Objective theory is one of four critical theories proposed by M.H. Abrams. This theory emphasizes the importance of intrinsic elements in creating the meaning of a literary work. Thus, here, the researcher uses objective theory to prove how the speakers depict their love to be more powerful than the love of common people through the employment of figurative language.

Research Method

This research employed a qualitative research. The textual analysis method was used to analyze the data. The main data of this research were words, phrases, sentences. Then, the main data sources of this research were John Donne’s “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising”. The researcher also used the secondary data in the form of books, articles, e-books, and websites related to the topic discussed in this research. The key instrument of this research was the researcher herself.

To analyze the collected data, the researcher passed some steps, namely identifying, classifying, re-reading and making interpretation. First, the researcher identified the data from the poems by making some notes according to the types of figurative language. Second, the

researcher classified the data into some categories based on research objectives. Third, the researcher re-read the data and arranged the data. Last, the researcher made the interpretation of the findings based on the understanding of the theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Wren and Martin (in Siswanto, 2010: 115), figurative language is the use of language which deviates from daily expression or the common way of thinking, which enables the poem to achieve a special effect. In this research, the researcher finds out that the figurative language that the speakers of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising” employs is effective to convey their love feeling. The researcher identifies seven types of figurative language, which are personification, metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, apostrophe, and hyperbole. Among those types, personification is the most frequent type that both speakers employ in these two poems since the researcher identifies 37 occurrences of this figurative language. In contrary, synecdoche and apostrophe are the least one because they only occur one time. Though those types of figurative language occur in different frequency, all of them bring out the same significances in expressing the speakers’ love in these two poems.

1. Metaphor

One of the occurrences of metaphor lies in line 5 of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”. In that line, the speaker of the poem says, “So let us *melt*, and make no noise,” to his lover, who is crying hard for sending him off. The speaker intentionally uses the word “melt, which is

deviated from its denotative meaning. By inviting his lover to melt with him, he intends to express that he wants himself and his lover to be united in the same love so that they always feel close by each other.

2. Simile

The occurrence of simile lies in line 24 of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, which says, “Like gold to airy thinness beat.” (John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”: line 24). In this quotation, the speaker uses the word “like” to compare the temporary separation to gold-making process. To obtain the best quality, the gold must undergo a harsh process of beating. Here, the speaker assumes that separation is also a harsh process that the speaker and his lover have to endure to expand their love. By being separated and missing each other, the speaker believes that their love is getting bigger when they finally meet again.

3. Personification

Personification is the most frequent type of figurative language that occurs in both “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising.” One of the occurrences of personification lies in line four of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, which says “The breath goes now and some say, No:” (John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, line 4). The breath in that quotation does not literally go for it has no capability to walk and go in the real life. The real meaning of “the breath goes now” in that line is actually a death. When someone is dead, he spontaneously stops breathing. For that reason, the speaker personifies “the breath” as if it went

and left the body to imply that the virtuous men are already dead in more emotional way.

4. Metonymy

The researcher only identifies three occurrences of metonymy in both poems, one of which lines in line 4 of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, which says, “The breath goes now, and some say, No:” To describe the arguments between the virtuous men’s friends intensely, the speaker employs the personified metonymy in that expression by mentioning “the breath”, which substitutes ‘life’. This term is commonly used to signify a life because it is a kind of air that a living individual take into and send out from their lung. Thus, the statement “the breath goes now,” indicates that the person is already dead because he stops breathing.

5. Synecdoche

This figurative language appears in line 20 when the speaker expresses that he always thinks and misses his love by saying, “Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss” (John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, line 20). “Care less, eyes, lips, and hands” in that quotation are parts of his lover’s characteristic and body, which he uses to describe his longing. Saying that he misses his lover does not cover his whole longing because what he misses is not only the lover herself but also everything about her. He misses her “careless”, which is the distinctive characteristic of his lover that always remains in his mind, and her “eyes, lips, and hands” which are the most attractive parts of her body that he always thinks of. Through that synecdoche, the

readers are able to participate in his feeling and apprehend how much he misses his lover.

6. Apostrophe

In line 1 of “The Sun Rising”, the speaker draws attention by calling out the sun as “Busy, old fool, unruly Sun”. The sun itself is something that people uncommonly talk to. Therefore, this statement is identified as apostrophe, not as ordinary addressing. He addresses the sun with some negative adjectives to demonstrate his irritation feeling and emphasis his underestimation toward the sun. This apostrophe is an opening part that begins the speaker’s vocalizations addressed to the sun in the entire poem.

7. Hyperbole

The researcher identifies nine occurrences of this figurative language in “The Sun Rising” only, one of which lies in line 13, which says, “Ip could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,” (John Donne, “The Sun Rising”, line 13). In this quotation, the speaker tries to deflate the power of the sun, whose beam is stronger than any lights in the world, in order to make his love look more powerful. He sensationalizes how great his love is by stating that he, with the power of his love, is capable to make the strong sunbeam disappear at a twinkling of an eye. In reality, this kind of phenomenon is impossible to happen. The speaker, in fact, has no capacity to conceal the sunbeam at all.

The employment of the seven types of figurative language in “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “The Sun Rising” plays the important role in conveying the speakers’ love. It

enables the speaker of each poem to express his love in outstanding ways since those types of figurative language bring out several significances in expressing the speakers' love. From the previous explanation, the researcher concludes some significances of the figurative language in expressing speakers' love, which are to evoke imagination, to emphasize the speakers' love, and to make the love expression become memorable.

After analyzing John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and "The Sun Rising", it can be assured that the employment of figurative language does intensify the speakers' love expression in these two poems. Even, by employing the figurative language, the speakers can communicate his love feeling in unique ways so that it becomes different from the common people's love. Therefore, in this last discussion, the researcher explains the way the speakers make their love become different from common people's love in these two poems.

Through figurative language, the speakers compare their love to common people's love. That comparison, then, deepens the quality of their love so that it looks more precious than common people's love. However, the comparison between the speakers and common people's love are not stated clearly. Through the help of figurative language, the speakers cover-up the comparison in two ways: analogizing and dramatizing their love.

1. Analogizing the Speaker's Love

In the beginning of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", the speaker presents the analogy about the sincerity of virtuous men in

facing death. "As virtuous men pass mildly away, / And whisper to their souls, to go," (John Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", line 1-4) tells about the virtuous men who are sincere to die because they have faith about the existence of a better eternal life that waits for them after death. The speaker presents this analogy to make his lover understand that there is nothing to worry about letting him go. Unlike death that separates the soul from the body forever, their farewell only endures for a short time. He will come back soon after finishing his business so that she should believe in him and their love.

2. Dramatizing the Love Expression

Dramatizing is another way conducted in these two poems to make the speaker's love expression become outstanding. As an example, the speaker of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" dramatizes the way he ensures his lover about their great love. "Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears; / Men reckon what it did, and meant; / But trepidation of the spheres, / Though greater far, is innocent" (John Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", line 9-12). In the quotation above, the speaker presents dramatic comparison to ensure his lover about their love. The speaker assumes that their love is bigger than common people's love. To highlight that love, the speaker gives a comparison between their love and common people's love by presenting an imagined dramatic resemblance for each of them. Their love is illustrated as the trepidation of the sphere, which shows no harm but is possible to destroy the world anytime. In contrast, the common people's love is compared to the moving of the earth, which always

frightens people though it is smaller than the trepidation of the earth.

These two ways are effective to make the speakers' love become outstanding. They enable the speakers to convey deeper feeling that is implied through the employment of figurative language. Moreover, the analogy and dramatization of the speakers' love in these two poems need high cogitation, which not all common people understand. Therefore, these two ways enable the speakers to communicate their love in different expression from common people.

CONCLUSION

The speakers of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and "The Sun Rising" employ seven types of figurative language to strengthen their love and make it become different from common people's love. Those types of figurative language are metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, apostrophe, and hyperbole. Among them, personification ranks the most frequent type employed by both speakers in these two poems. The figurative language employments are effective to convey the speakers' love through three significances, which are to evoke imagination, to emphasize the speakers' love, and to make the love expression become memorable. The speakers also employ the figurative language to make their love become different from common people's love by making some analogies and dramatization in their love expressions.

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