THE ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN WILLIAM BLAKE’S POEMS
(A STYLISTIC APPROACH)

Abstract

The ability to understand a literary work including poem is needed. A poem that is written by English poet contains the richness of literary works, such as the values of morality and humanity. In the period of Romanticism, there were a lot of great poets, such as: William Blake. The problem of this research is what Romantic elements are found in William Blake’s poems. The aim of this research is to find the Romantic elements in William Blake’s poems. In this research, the writer uses descriptive-qualitative method; it means all the data are in the form of words and sentences. The source of data in this research is six William Blake’s poems (“Night”, “Jerusalem”, “A Poison Tree”, “I Heard an Angel”, “I Saw a Chapel”, “The Garden of Love”).

Through the analysis of the Romantic elements in William Blake’s poems, the writer can conclude that the Romantic elements are found in William Blake’s poems. The Romantic elements are found in William Blake’s poems are Romantic element of nature, Romantic element of imagination, Romantic element of emotions, Romantic element of first person point of view, and Romantic element of exotic.

Key Words: Poems, Romanticism, Romantic elements.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research

The ability to understand a literary work including poem is needed. A poem that is written by English poet contains the richness of literary works, such as the values of morality and humanity.

In the period of Romanticism, there were a lot of great poets, such as: William Wordsworth (1770-1890), William Blake (1757-1827), Lord Byron (1788-1824), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1854), John Keats (1795-1821), and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). They were called as Romantic poets. Their work stressed on feeling and because of that, Romanticism period is also called as the main period of poetry.

The writer tries to focus on the elements of romanticism that influenced William Blake’s poems and analyze it. The writer uses six William Blake’s Poems which are: “Night”, “Jerusalem”, “A Poison Tree”, “I Heard an Angel”, “I Saw a Chapel”, and “The Garden of Love”. This research is entitled “THE
ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN WILLIAM BLAKE’S POEMS. (A STYLISTIC APPROACH)

Problem of the Research

1. What romantic elements are found in William Blake’s poems?

Aim of the Research

1. To find the romantic elements in William Blake’s poems.

Significance of the Research

The contribution of this research is to give more information about William Blake’s poems and to understand more the meaning of William Blake’s poems.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Poem

The English word poem is originally from Greek word poeima meaning something made, created for some people. Poem is a work of art. A poem requires two parties to work: a reader and a listener. (Robert, 1986:142), and according to “A Dictionary of Literary Theory” (1998:678), poem is a composition, a work of verse which may be in rhyme or may be blank verse, or combination of the two or it may depend on having a fixed number of syllables.

Romanticism

Romanticism derives from the word romance, generic name applied to prose fiction that is conceived in terms of the fanciful and realistic rather than in terms of observation and faithful description of fact. (Hart, 1948:650)

The word romantic is also defined to originate from arcaheic French romanz, which later developed into roman, which means West European Language. In the 12th century, the word roman refers to every written in people’s language. In the 13th century, the word refers to every literary art in the prose form. Since the 17th century, it means experienced another development; it leads
to literary work in form of epic prose which then developed not only comprehend prose but also poetry. (Pongs, 1967:99)

The dates of Romantic Period are not précised and the term romantic is it not widely used until after the period in question. Conventionally, the period began in 1798, which has been signified by the publication by Wordsworth and Coleridge of their “Lyrical Ballads”, and ended in 1832. The Romantic Period was an era in which a literary revolution took place along side social and economic revolutions. In some histories of literature, the romantic period is called “The Age of Revolutions” (Carter, 1997:217)

At the end of the 18th century, Romanticism marks the beginning of a new period in traditional English literary history. The first edition of the *Lyrical ballads* (1798) by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge is commonly considered to be the beginning of a new period in which nature and individual emotional experience play an important role. Romanticism may be seen as a reaction to the enlightenment and political changes throughout Europe and America at the end of eighteenth century. In addition to Wordsworth and Coleridge, the most important representatives of English Romanticism include William Blake, John Keats, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Mary Shelley. (Klarer, 2004:66)

**Elements of Romanticism**

The basic of important elements in romanticism can be recognized into some categories, they are:

**Nature**

The Romantics greatly emphasized on the importance of nature, and one of the main characteristics of Romanticism in poetry is the beauty of nature found in the country life. This was mainly because the Industrial Revolution had taken men from the peaceful country live towards the city life, transforming man’s natural order. As Abrams quoted “It makes people move away from traditional farming families and their beliefs. Nature was not only appreciated for its physical beauty by the romantics, but also for its ability to help the urban man find his true identity”.
For few among the writer of this romantic era were amazed on the nature’s composure also the silence. This new romanticism starting point is not only astonishment about external nature in poem but also their interpretations about the extraordinary nature, various, intimate and sociable. Because that character looks most dominant and become superiority of the poet at that era (Abrams, 1957:155-156)

**Imagination**

Imagination is a sight, the most delightful of all our sense. The imagination Furnishes with idea in our mind. It was elevated to a position as the supreme. The Romantics tended to define and to present the imagination as our ultimate “shaping” or creative power, the approximate human equivalent of the creative powers of nature even deity. Imagination is the primary faculty for creating all art. The poet was seen as someone who possesses imagination in the highest degree and is therefore able to see and hear clearly and deeply into the real essence of things.

For William Blake, imagination is the source of mankind’s redemption. Blake saw himself as a visionary and a prophet. His were not “conjured” imaginings, but clear visions the angels he saw and spoke to be actually present to his eyes. (Heath & Boreham, 1999:102)

**Emotions**

Unlike the Neoclassical age which focused on rationality and intellectuality, Romanticism placed humans’ emotions, feelings, instinct, and intuition above everything else. While the poets in the former era adhered to the rules and regulations while selecting a subject and writing about it, the Romantic writers trusted their emotions and feeling to create poetry. This belief can be confirmed from the definition of poetry by William Wordsworth, where he says that “poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”. Be chosen a concept of romanticism means the quality of admiring feeling rather than thought, (Summers, 1992:1141)
First person point of view

As the Romantic Period emphasized on emotions, the position or role of the artist or the poet also gained supremacy. In romanticism, the poet or the artist was seen as a creator of a piece of work which reflected his individuality or inner mind. It was also for the first time that the poems written in the first person were being accepted, as the poetic persona became one with the voice of the poet. (Heath & Boreham, 1999:24)

Exotic

The Romantics even developed the love of the exotic. Hence, in many of the literary as well as artistic works of that period, the far off and mysterious locations were depicted, and also the belief in supernatural things which was unreal.

Some of Romantic poet not only inclined runaway to inside of the feeling with their own world dream but also find the emotional experiences in the external world in the form of far things, fine in time or place. They go with full of spirit and follow the past and hope for the next future.

Their emotion is really influenced by suggestion appeal and mystery. They carve “supernatural things which are weird and really beautiful”. They are contaminated by amazed feeling about greatness and nature’s composure, likeness about unnatural things and scary. They are also really interested in “mystery that is inside the beauty”. That entire thing has a form of Romantic literary characteristics which is known as exotic. (Noyes, 1967: XXV-XXVI)

Stylistic Approach of Poetry

Stylistics is the study of varieties of languages whose properties position that language in context, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. A variety, in this sense, is a situational distinctive use of language. For example the language of advertising, politics, religions, individual authors, etc., or the language of a period in time all are used distinctively and belong in a particular situation. In other words, they all have ‘place’ or are said to use a particular ‘style’.
Stylistic approach starts from assumption that language has important role and duty in attendance of literary works. Language cannot be discharged from literary works. No language no art. Beauty of literary work is most caused by ability of writer exploits language flexing so that makes strength and beauty. (Semi, 1990:81)

RESEARCH METHOD

Method of research

In this research, the writer used the descriptive-qualitative method. According to Sumanto (1994:14), descriptive-qualitative study is a method in research that focuses on observation to the indication in present time.

Descriptive-qualitative research is a kind of research that gives illustration of explanation about a condition as clearly without any treatment to the object that researched.

Source of Data

The sources of data in this research are the William Blake’s poems ("Night", "Jerusalema", "A Poison Tree", "I Heard an Angel", "I Saw a Chapel", "The Garden of Love") and books that related to this research and also from the internet.

Technique of Collecting Data


2. Underline the data that are related to the Romanticism elements

Technique of Analyzing Data

Classifying the data into five categories:

- Romantic element of nature
- Romantic element of Imagination
- Romantic element of emotions
- Romantic element of first person point of view
- Romantic element of exotic
RESULT OF STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Discussion


The Romantic element that influenced William Blake mostly is Romantic element of first point of view. William Blake uses the word “I” (dramatized voice) as the speaker in all those poems. As the Romantic poet, Blake uses the word “I” in his poems in order to reflect his individuality or inner mind. It makes the readers think that William Blake himself as the speaker.

The writer also finds in William Blake’s poem, certain Romantic element dominate in certain poem. For examples in William Blake’s poem “Night”, is dominated by the Romantic element of nature, and in “A Poison Tree” is dominated by the Romantic element of emotions. This domination happens because William Blake wants to emphasize the subject and the theme of his poems.

These Romantic elements also have function to strengthen the meaning of a poem. In William Blake’s poem “Jerusalem” which is about critic to Industrial Revolution in England, the Romantic elements of nature and imagination use as the criticism for it. He describes the natural thing that is found in country life because he thinks that the Industrial Revolution has taken men from the peaceful country life towards the city life. It makes people move away from traditional farming families and their beliefs. Blake also uses his imagination to describe that city of Jerusalem is built in England and he describes supernatural thing, something that people start not to believe it.
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the Romantic elements in William Blake’s poems ("Night", “Jerusalem”, “A Poison Tree”, “I Heard an Angel”, “I Saw a Chapel”, “The Garden of Love”), the writer can conclude that the Romantic elements are found in those William Blake’s poems. The Romantic elements are found in William Blake’s poems are Romantic element of nature, Romantic element of imagination, Romantic element of emotions, Romantic element of first person point of view, and Romantic element of exotic.

Suggestion

The writer would like to suggest the readers to read these poems ("Night", “Jerusalem”, “A Poison Tree”, “I Heard an Angel”, “I Saw a Chapel”, “The Garden of Love”), in wide range perspectives. So they can gain more interest from these poems. There are some possibilities to be searched for readers who want to read these poems for scientific purposes. Also the writer suggest the readers especially the students majoring English literature who want to analyze these poems to compare it further with other William Blake’s poems in order to get a broader subject and description than this