

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Man is created in the image of God. In the image of God himself, He created the human being, male and female. This image of God explores the innocence, being free from sin, and having pure soul. From childhood to adulthood, man has to undergo many steps and stages, and endlessly filling his blank sheet of innocence with spots of worldly experience.

As the word 'innocence' suggests, in the very beginning of his life, man does not have to worry about anything, no hard work is expected from him, and no evil manifestation can be expected from him; he simply does not know about evil things yet, he just plays and everything is provided for him, so that most of the time he feels happy and secure. In childhood, happiness seemed to be based, not on law and reason, but on love, protection and peace. He has love, care and protection from God and his parents. This point of view embarks from the excess of economic security. On the contrary, while growing up, man gets experience, and starts to know about evil things and stops being submissive to the environment. He starts setting up his wants and demands. In

doing so, it is indispensable that so many times he has to protect and guard himself because there are no parents to protect and guard him in all his adventures. It is the time for him to do everything on his own.

The state of innocence interests the writer and in this thesis the writer would like to examine the innocence as seen in William Blake's "The Ecchoing Green". This poem is found among the other poems compiled in Songs of Innocence which is a complete and self-sufficient work of around the 1790s. Songs of Innocence is the first of Blake's poetical works to be published by his process of 'illuminated printing' i.e. relief etching on copper followed by handtinting in water color.

The Songs of Innocence is also considered as Blake's most perfect poetic achievement. We can find a complete expression of what he wanted to say. The songs are beautiful and because of Blake himself, with the help of his wife, who made the designs and color them, the work looks perfect. Frances Winwar (1969:138) says, regarding the work, that 'Designs of flowers and faces and innocent figures flowing with the grace of growing plants filled the margins, all with delicate wild flower tints. If the angels read in heaven, it must be such books they read'. Later, this Songs of Innocence became a series of combination with Songs of Experience in 1794.

This Songs of Innocence is realized through the mouths of little children expressing the feeling of piety, joy and naive tenderness onto the beauty of the world. Legouis (1971:262) is convinced that everything in the collection is an expression of love and tender feeling and of beliefs in goodness in nature.

The Songs of Innocence focuses on children. Gardner (1969:78) suggests that in Songs of Innocence the poem is not followed by a pious silence, which in itself is satirical. He also indicates that the new context only highlights the focus in the poem, which is upon children. The children's domination symbolizes innocence as Kennedy (1970:145) says, the central situation of Innocence is that of a child or young animal delighting in life; fear is not necessarily totally absent, but when danger threatens, a parent-figure (father, mother, God or angel) is at hand to give reassuring love.

Songs of Innocence consists of nineteen poems. These poems are called 'songs' because originally it is the song which is sung by the piper. Later, it is written down so everybody who cannot hear the song can enjoy it also by reading it. All the songs in the sequence talk about children, happiness, love, care, laugh, joy and all kinds of things that brings peace and illustrates the innocence.

The poem "The Ecchoing Green", in particular, illustrates the innocence presented by the children playing in the garden since early morning till sunset, after which they go back home to take their daily rest.

The choice of only one poem to be analyze here is that the writer thinks that this poem represents innocence in all aspects in the world such as flora, fauna, human being, and nature. The given poem interests the writer because the poem is describing a sequence of events that, later, through the analysis on symbol will reveal the sense of innocence. The poem itself is talking much about nature, joy, children, happiness, birds, flowers which all give a comforting feeling to the reader and by analyzing the poem further, the reader will find more comfort in further reading on the poem. Compared with other poems in Songs of Innocence, the poem "The Ecchoing Green" talks much about nature which is the simplest symbol of innocence. Through the symbolism of nature which is expressed in the simple, but meaningful, wordings, the poet explains so much about his concept of innocence he wanted to share with the reader. With the fact that 'his poems tested rather severely the imagination capacity of their readers', as Samuel Palmer wrote to Alexander Gilchrist (Johnson 1979:505), the writer finds it very tempting to try to know what he is saying in his Songs of Innocence, and his poem "The Ecchoing Green" in

particular. The human being are growing up, moving from childhood to adulthood. Being as an adult now, with all the experiences, the writer feels that she needs something as a bridge to the past which gives beautiful memories, and she feels that the poem "The Ecchoing Green" is just the right medium to bring it back.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

This thesis is primarily written for analyzing the poem "The Ecchoing Green", showing the innocence revealed in the poem itself through the analysis of symbol, and study the other poems contained in Songs of Innocence as the supporting facts as the concept of innocence.

To be able to do so, the writer would spend some time elaborating on the meaning of innocence, examining Blake's ideas and background of ideas, and presenting some supporting ideas such as Locke's and Keynes's on symbolism and innocence as used by Blake in his poems, to aid the analysis.

Based on the background above, the problem discussed in this thesis is formulated as follows :

1. What is Blake's concept and ideas about innocence?
2. Through the analysis of symbol, how does the poem "The Ecchoing Green" reflect the innocence?

1.3. Objective of the Problem

The objective of the problem in this thesis is formulated as follows:

1. To find out Blake's concepts and ideas about innocence through the literary studies and any other studies, comments or critics on Blake from other sources.
2. To reveal the innocence in the given poem through the analysis of symbol.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The present study is conducted to be as follows:

1. To state or show the innocence contained by the poem "The Ecchoing Green" through symbolism, giving clear understanding about Blake's ideas, concepts and symbolism especially about the Innocence.
2. To give more knowledge and understanding in literature especially on William Blake and particularly in reading the Songs of Innocence.
3. To remind the reader the beauty of their childhood, the value of honesty, faith, love, secure feeling, trust and protection.
4. To remind the reader that there was a time in childhood with a different point of view and way of life which is different from that of the adult world. During

childhood we still don't know about evil things. It is expected that after reading Blake's Songs of Innocence, we realize that sometimes we do something evil and bad although maybe not in purpose. So this reading and studying the poems might bring a kind of salvation for the soul and as a reminder that we don't need to do something evil or bad.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

The writer will limit the analysis on the symbol which will be used to reveal the discussed problem in the thesis through the thematic approach.

1.6. Theoretical Background

The writer would use the thematic approach which is used to detect the central idea of the literary work or what the author wants to say in his literary work.

Poetry has many elements, such as denotation and connotation, figurative language (for example symbols, personification, etc.), tone, imagery, etc. In this thesis the writer will focus her attention on examining the symbols used in the poem as the literary theory.

1.7. Method of the Study

The method that will be used here is the analytic method as suggested by Holman (1980:115), that is to get at the nature of the work as an object in itself through the detailed analysis of its parts and its organization.

McCrimon (1967) says in Writing with Purpose that the analytical pattern breaks the subjects into parts and deals with each part in turn. The movement within the pattern is from the subject to its main divisions; the divisions then subdivided and, if necessary, the subdivisions are further divided.

Furthermore, Elliot in his Essay on Swinburne, says that the above mentioned intention of the analytic approach is to explore the literary work in order to show what goes on in it. In connection with this matter, Daiches (1981:188) suggests that Elliot wishes to surprise the reader into paying proper attention to the true life of work.

Only through analysis is one able to know what is going on in a piece of work. Consequently, the writer is convinced that the analytic method is the most suitable for her analysis on the literary work of Blake's.

This thesis is purely based on library research. Through this research the writer collects data from books, references, encyclopedias, dictionaries and some other printed materials connected with the problems under

discussion. The main source is, of course, the poem "The Ecchoing Green" itself. And besides, the writer would use some critical essays on Blake and his works. There are still more references used in this thesis as listed in the Bibliography.

The writer would then be able to analyze the data provided by these sources.

The writer will also use the eclectic method which means that she uses more than one approach to analyze the poem as Daiches (1956:391) says, 'There is no single 'right' method of handling literary problems, no single approach to work of literary art that will yield all the significant truths about them'.

1.8. Definition of Key Term

Innocence: the condition in which one is really pure, free from sin, harmless, doesn't know about evil things and only have love, care and protection from the people who loves him.

Song: a piece of music sung or composed for singing or for poetry, verse, a relatively short metrical composition suitable for singing.

1.9. Organization of Chapters

In the attempt to achieve the objectives of the present study as stated in section 1.3, this thesis starts with an introduction in chapter one, followed by chapter two which is discussing the theoretical framework, which includes the literary approach which will be used in this thesis, the explanations and definitions about symbol which is the basic to analyze the poem, then continued with the review on the state of innocence. Chapter three deals with the analysis itself, after which the writer draws her conclusion of the library research she has done in chapter four. The last part would be the Appendix I which contains the poem and Appendix II which describes the Background of the Author, his life and ideas.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK