

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Poetry, as Holman (1981:341) says, is a term applied to the many forms in which human beings have given rhythmic expression to their most imaginative and intense perceptions of the world, themselves, and the interrelationship of the two.

Originally poetry expression comes from the past. It comes from the early tribal ceremonials and races that have no written literature which includes poetic and rhythmic forms. Their first poetry may be associated with music and dance, for example if they experience great events such as flood, war or migration, they preserved these events in music and dance.

Poetry deals with emotions. It presents the emotion of the poets which is connected with what he experienced, had been attached to, had seen, etc. Poetry is also imaginative. A poet will not directly illustrate innocence, for example, as a newly born baby but he might be using the nature phenomenon like sunshine, song birds, merry bells and wrap it up in a beautiful scenery and wordings, and the poet

expects the reader to share the same imaginative minds and to respond to it in the same way.

Poetry also has significance. It contributes to the store of human knowledge or experience, meaning it is an artistic expression of the human mind. Poetry tries to tell us 'something that cannot be said'. In poetry we feel the existence of an idea, significance, a meaning, an attitude and a feeling.

In poetry also, we could find beauty. Some poets might have different references about beauty. For Shelley beauty means the song of the skylark, while Whitman finds it in a leaf of grass.

The poet, like the artist and musician, is different from most other people because of his sensitivity to beauty in all various forms. Shelley says that poetry turns all things into loveliness; it exalts the beauty of which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed. In short, a poet is a poet chiefly because of this sensitivity.

Characterized by an extraordinary imaginative language and a forcefulness and suppleness of rhythms, Blake's poetry possesses a remarkable muscularity and exuberance. It never loses contact with the ordinary realities of life.

His interests ranged over poetry, philosophy, psychology, paintings and printing but he expresses himself

mostly through the poetry, painting and printing. Bowra (1984:27) says, 'In them Blake speaks of himself from a purely personal point of view. It is true that he uses his own remarkable symbols, but not quite in the same way as in the prophetic books, and certainly not with the same desire for a new mythology to supplement or correct that of the Bible.'

2.1. Literary Approach

As the theoretical background in this thesis, the writer would use the thematic approach which is used to find out the central idea of the literary work or what the author wants to say in his literary work.

The term 'thematic' comes from the word theme meaning the central or dominating idea in a literary work. In poetry, fiction and drama it is the abstract concept which is made concrete through its representation in person, action and image in the work (Holman, 1980:443).

Beardsley and Monroe (1962:102) say that the speaker in a literary work may emphasize and focus the attention upon something in the situation that makes us think, as he is supposedly thinking, of an abstract concept. The concrete images of the poem, the significant object on the stage, the climatic events of the story therefore become symbolic,

allowing for broader meaning. These meanings are known as the **themes** of the works. As suggested by Little (1966:27), the theme of the work is the key to its total meaning or message, and plan or structure. Theme is the controlling idea, the insight or concept to be revealed. The theme both unifies a work and emerges from a unified work.

In literary works such as poetry, a theme is seldom very obvious. A theme needs not always be a moral or a message but it can be what a story is about or what the happenings add up to. Notwithstanding the fact that a theme can be achieved through symbolism, figurative language, denotation and connotation, in this thesis the writer would only focus on the analysis through the symbolism used in the poem.

So, in connection with the former statement that the thematic approach is used to detect the central or dominating idea, the writer would also try to find the dominating idea in Blake's "The Ecchoing Green" through the analysis per stanza that leads to the idea of innocence revealed in the poem.

2.2. Symbol

Poetry has many elements such as denotation and connotation, tone, imagery, figurative language (for example

personification, symbol, etc.) and since the writer would examine the given poem mainly through symbolism used by the author, the writer would only discuss symbolism.

A symbol is an image so loaded with significance that it is not simply literal, and it doesn't simply stand for something else, it is both itself and something else that it richly suggests, a kind of manifestation of something too complex or too elusive to be otherwise revealed (Barnett, 1963:84). In literature the term symbol usually refers to a concrete image employed to designate an abstract quality or concept. It may make a simple equation, but it is usually complex and may elicit different interpretations. A symbol usually leads to the entire work.

There are three types of symbols: natural, private and conventional symbol (Potter, 1967:186-189)

A natural symbol is the symbol which is found in external nature - all man's physical environment except what he has created by himself. The light, the sun is the example of natural symbol of inspiration, knowledge, hope, vitality and other similar qualities; the sea is a natural symbol of mystery and profundity, illusion and mutability while flower is a symbol of youth, innocence, and impermanence.

Private symbol is that which is developed or created by particular persons, often specific individuals. They are also developed by individual authors, and if these symbols

are really private, meaning, unconnected with conventional or natural symbolic values, they can be very troublesome to inexperienced readers.

Conventional symbols are those whose significance is due ultimately to an agreement, oftenly unspoken, between men, or to the position or function of the symbol in the environment that man has himself developed.

2.3. State of Innocence

Literally, 'innocence' means or symbolizes the clean, pure soul, without evil or sin (Hornby, 1984:439). According to the Webster Dictionary, it means free from guilt, blameless, sinless, harmless, or simple (1991:697) and a child is considered as an innocent person for he or she is simple, harmless, blameless and still far from being sinful. Children are considered innocent people because they still undergo the stages of development of life. Later, they become adult, and experienced, and their lives are no longer simple and sinless. As John Locke expresses it: the just born child still has a mind like a white and empty board. Only later, along with his growth, the board will be written or drawn on with many things, and leaving his or her mind no longer innocent.

Another meaning of 'innocence' is the condition of childhood where someone is not aware of evil things. His mind is still simple, and he is happy when he gets love, care, and protection not only from God, but from his parents as well.

The love of God is expressed in another poem of Blake's, "The Shepherd" in which God is pictured as a shepherd who always stays close to his flock of sheep or lambs, in this case mankind. In the New Testament, the Shepherd is described as being careful and watchful (John 10:11). In defining it, the Webster Dictionary (1969:211) states that 'lamb' is a young and innocent person. Lindsay (1989:31) suggests that the 'lamb' is identical with the 'child' for "child and lamb are united in the Incarnation and in the Agnus Dei".

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS