

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this Review of Related Literature, the writer will discuss three things, i.e. the theory of imagery, concepts of symbol, correlation of imagery, symbol and death. These theories will help the writer in his analysis of the perception of death in Christina Rossetti's poems.

2.1 Correlation of Imagery and Death

Images are fanciful or imaginative descriptions of people or objects stated in terms of our sense. Imagery has an important role in a literary work so that the author will put it carefully in the work. He or she cares of how or where to put it, so that the readers can get the right meaning. To give them an exact experience in reading his or her literary work, he or she uses imagery to present his or her experiences so the readers will "feel the right responses" (Edgar Robert: 65). In other words, the readers should have rich experiences of imagery to get the right responses. Those experiences can be found in everyday speech, too, so it would be a kind of practices for the readers to get those experiences.

According to Christopher Russel Reaske in his book entitled How to Analyse Poetry (85), states that when we discuss the imagery of a poem, we look at each of the images in particular and then try to arrive at some general

understanding of what may or may not be a *pattern of imagery*. When a pattern of imagery is found in various works by the same poet, or in various parts of a long poem or play, we can speak of *recurrent patterns of imagery*. Usually critics attempt to relate the various images to each other in order to arrive at a greater, less obvious (hidden) meaning in a poem. There is always a certain amount of mystery surrounding images because we can never articulate their precise meaning. When we study the imagery of a poem we are studying the entire world in which the meaning of a poem dwells. This is the world that the poet has carefully created through his or her decision to select certain words and images rather than others.

According to H. Coombes in Literature and Criticism (1957:143), “An image can possess attractive qualities and yet not fulfil the central function of clarifying or illuminating the subject to which it is relevant.” It means that in making or writing a poem, the poet must always pay attention in giving some imagery clearly within in order to the reader can easily understand what actions are happened in the poem.

Our experience of a rainy season, for instance, may consist partly of certain emotions we feel and partly of certain thoughts we think, but most of it will be a cluster of sense impressions. It may consist of seeing the cloudy or dark sky; of hearing the wind passing; of smelling damp earth; of feeling a cold wind against our cheeks.

According to X.J. Kennedy in An Introduction to Poetry (1993:136), imagery can be of many kinds such as visual imagery, auditory imagery, and tactile imagery. It could be an experience of sight or something that can be seen by a person's eyes in his or her mind which later is called visual imagery. So in reading a poem, the readers will be able to see in their minds everything which is written in the literary work. It means that the visual imagery which are used there will give the readers some kind of "mental picture". Lynn Altenberd and Leslie L. Lewis in their book A Handbook for the Study of Poetry (1970: 98), state that the visual imagery gives "an effect in the mind much like that produced by our perceiving a visible object through the eye, the optic nerve, and the appropriate regions of the brain". The example of this imagery in Christina Rossetti's "**A Green Cornfield**" is:

"The earth was **green**, the sky was **blue**:
 I saw and heard one sunny morn
 A skylark hang between the two,
 A singing speck above the corn;
 . . .
 The cornfield stretched a tender **green**
 To right and left beside my walks; . . ."

The speaker's description of the scenery in the poem is quite real. The speaker lets the readers 'see' the scenery by themselves. They can 'see' the blue sky and the birds are flying at the sky. Also, the green color of the cornfield besides the pathway of where she walks is very clear and fresh in the readers' imagination.

While auditory imagery is a kind of imagery sensed by a person's sense of hearing. It is as if he or she hears something when reading a poem which has

auditory imagery. It is as if he or she ‘hears’ something when reading a poem which has auditory imagery. In “**At Home**”, the example of auditory imagery can be found in the second stanza:

“I Listened to their honest **chat**:
 Said one: “Tomorrow we shall be
 Plod plod along the featureless sands,
 And coasting miles and miles of sea.”
 Said one: “Before the turn of tide
 We will achieve the eyrie-seat.”
 Said one: “Tomorrow shall be like
 Today, but much more sweet.”

The speaker tells us that she can hear the conversation of her friends in a room. At the readers’ imagination, first, they can ‘see’ that there are some persons in the room. Then, they also ‘hear’ the conversation of those people. That is the use of auditory imagery, so the readers will be able to experience the auditory in a poem like the poet experiences.

Tactile imagery is experienced by a person’s sense of touch. So the reader will be able to feel something “touching” his or her skin when he or she reads a poem. He or she can “touch” the hing and feel its roughness or smoothness. The use of this kind of imagery in one of Christina Rosetti’s poems, “The Lambs of Grasmere, 1860”, is on the second stanza, line 5-8:

“The little shivering gaping things
 Soon knew the step that brought them aid,
 And **fondled** the protecting hand,
 And **rubbed** it with a wolly head

In the last two lines of this stanza, the readers can ‘feel’ the gentleness of the little lamb’s wolly head. It is as if their hands are touched by the lamb itself.

These three kinds of imagery are usually found in details of a poem. Sometimes, it is also tempting to think that imagery is just the decoration of the poems (Kennedy, 1993: 69), which means that it is used to ‘decorate’ the poem so it will be more interesting to read.

The use of imagery can help us to enjoy reading a poem and to understand it well. When reading a poem which has given imagery in it, we will be able to get involved in the world of the poem we read “as directly and unmistakably as we experience life itself” (Knickerboker, 1960: 216-7). In this case, imagery has an almost similar function as in everyday speech. In our conversation, sometimes we mention some words that can give imagery to the person we talk to. He or she will be able to imagine them in his or her mind as if he or she has experienced those things himself or herself.

While in Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing (1999:89), Edgar V.Roberts says that imagery refers to “sensory experiences transmitted through literary form”. Sensory experiences mean everything which is sensed or experienced by one of a person’s five senses. Then they are transmitted or transferred through words. As a result, the readers will be able to experience everything that are mentioned in a certain literary work just by reading it.

In Writing Themes About Literature (1983:199) Edgar V.Roberts, it is stated that “the use of imagery allows the readers to experience and visualize exciting moments of great discovery, and thereby share the poet’s attitudes”. So, the purpose of giving imagery in a literary work by an author or a poet is that he

or she wants his or her readers to experience what he or she experiences in the work. Thus, he or she will help them by putting the imagery, whether it is visual, auditory, or tactile imagery. Furthermore, he or she also wants the readers to be able to understand his or her work well.

According to the writer's opinion, imagery may be defined as the representation through language of sense experience. The word image perhaps most often suggests a mental picture, something seen in the mind's eye. In other words, it can be said that visual imagery is the most frequently occurring kind of imagery in poetry. The purpose of applying imagery in a poem is to evoke vivid experience. The imagery may be used by the poet in such a way as to convey emotion and suggests ideas as well as to cause a mental reproduction of sensations.

Relating imagery and death needs so much strategies in order to appear correlation within. Death and its concept are absolutely empty. No picture comes to mind. The concept of death has a use for the living, while death itself has no use for anything. All we can say about death is that it is either real or it is not real. If it is real, then the end of one's life is a simple termination. If it is not real, then the end of one's embodied life is not true death, but a portal to another life.

Death is an aspect of life that everyone becomes acquainted with sooner or later. From the writer experiences he is more familiar with death than he could ever want to be. Poetry is something that is very difficult for people to follow but

when it deals with concept that the writer is familiar with, then he is able to associate with the soul of the author.

In every poetry writing, all authors certainly use many imageries having a picture or describing condition relating with topic in it. We can think that the use of imagery towards death is necessary to apply due to the fact that by using an appropriate imagery that we are going to describe about death, the meaning or perception of death can easily understood. For example, we can see in this quotation “the girl sees her mother’s eyes are closing slowly”. From such visual imagery, people know that her mother is dying or going to die. It is so clear in understanding. Of course the use of imagery and the topic (death) in poetry or other literary works have a correlation each other.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that the imagery and death in Rosetti’s poems have a correlation each other, how they define the death with a good visualization or point of view. Therefore, it can be worse in the meaning or perception if there is no a good correlation each other.

2.2 Correlation of Symbol and Death

Many poems are based on symbolic statement. The poet offers something on the concrete level which symbolizes something either on the abstract level or on another, unstated concrete level. When we discuss symbolism in poetry we are concerned with the representation of one world by another. If there are some picture or representation is repeated over and over again it becomes a symbol, for example, if a poet uses the word “sun” every time he obviously is speaking about

goodness, the sun may be said to be a symbol of goodness. Poets who express themselves symbolically usually think in terms of another invisible world which can never be literally experienced. Instead they feel that it can be symbolized by objects and visible things in this real and concrete world. The poet wants to suggest imaginatively what he other worlds like and this resort to our present world is the only way in which he can make the suggestion.

Laurence Perrine in Sound and Sense (1972:200), states that a symbol may be defined as something that means more than what it is. Symbols can be of many kinds, they are varied in the degree and definition that their authors give them. It means that every poet has his or her own definition in determining the meaning of a symbol. The poets can be more specific in identifying them, but sometimes they do not identify them at all. So, it means that the readers have to read the poem a few times in order to find the symbol in it. Although the meaning of the symbols can be more or less open, it does not mean that the readers can interpret it as they like it. The meaning might be in a great difference or even does not fit at all. That is why the interpretation must be tied closely to the facts of the poem.

Sometimes the readers think that symbol represents a meaning of something. However, in the book entitled Approaching Literature (1969:144), Mark says that “the symbol does not ‘stand for’ the meaning”. In reading a work in literature, the readers have to read it thoroughly in order to understand what the author means. Sometimes in delivering what he or she means by something, he or she conveys it through a symbol. In determining the symbol, a close reading is very much needed because sometimes “a symbol is something that is itself and yet

stands or suggests or means something else”. Thus, the readers will be able to point out and analyze what the symbol means after that. They have to know that symbol “evokes an object that suggests the meaning”.

In the book entitled Interpreting Literature (1960:249), K.L. Knickerboker states that “a symbol is something which is used to represent another thing”. There are authors or poets who use symbol which is already known broadly, such as a red color which symbolizes anger, a lamb which stands for gentleness, and others. However, there are also authors or poets who have their own symbols instead of the conventional ones. It happens due to the fact that conventional ones are already inadequate to deliver messages in the era which is always progressing. So, the readers also have to learn and recognize everything that happens around them in order to understand what the author means by giving such symbols.

As stated by Lynn Altenbernd and Leslie. Lewis in A Handbook for the Study of Poetry (1970:173), a symbol “will usually evoke the emotions that surround the symbolized thing”. The use of symbol can give a certain sense of the whole story or poem. It means that a symbol also has an important role in the literary work. The symbols can be some things in the environment or simply a word put in the work to symbolize something else. The readers have to be able to catch the meaning of the symbol in the work. So, they have to be sensitive with what happen around them to be able to understand the whole work.

Christopher RuselReaske in his book entitled How to Anlyze Poetry (105), states that symbols are concrete and recognizable; they are emblematic and visual

as images are sometimes only suggestive and even vague. Some symbols have been used again and again and thus by this use have become “archetypes” in literature. When we mention archetypes we should be careful to realize that there are *public symbols* and *private symbols*. That is, some symbols, through repeated use, have the same connotations whenever they occur; others, in contrast, are products of a particular poet’s imagination and remain fairly mysterious. If a poet has a private symbol it often remains private unless, or until, someone decides that it has some particular meaning which becomes clear when one has observed carefully how the symbol functions in every poem in which it is discovered.

In order to show how mechanically symbols operate, we can see in George Herbert’s “Virtue”:

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
 The bridal of the earth and sky –
 The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
 For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
 Thy root is ever in its grave,
 And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
 A box where sweets compacted lie,
 My music shows ye have your closes,
 And all must die.
 Only a sweet and virtuous soul,

Like season’d timber, never gives;
 But though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.

In Herbert's poem, the 'day' of the first stanza symbolizes the expression of spirit, happiness and joy which it describes about the end of human struggles of something that get a success or achieve the goal as they want to, eventhough, there are so many sacrifices in it, while 'the dew' as a complement of those happinesses and as an expression to refresh the tired soul. The 'rose' in the second stanza symbolizes beauty and bravery which in this poem the rose pictures a good result of a bravery in getting a virtue or goal in his or her life. The 'spring' in the third stanza symbolizes the expression of joy or mirth which it brings to grow the new soul and spirit. It proves that all struggles that human does have given goodnesses for him or herself or other people. In the contrast, the rose and the spring of the third all *symbolize* impermanence or mutability. Actually, all three will literally pass away and yet the important point is that some things do pass away while virtue, in contradistinction, can be permanent. This is the point of the poem and it is forcefully stated through the use of symbols.

We can also see the use of symbols in the pieces of Wallace Stevens'

"Peter Quince At The Clavier" :

In the green water, clear and warm,
 Susanna lay.
 She searched
 The touch of springs,
 And found
 Concealed imaginings.
 She sighed
 For so much melody.
 . . .
 She felt among the leaves,
 The dew
 Of old deviations.

The color 'green' is included in the conventional symbols in poetry, which it symbolizes comfort, inexperience, hope, new life, immaturity, and refreshing human color. The color 'green' in the first line symbolizes the poet's hope to search or reach a new life. It can be said that the character, Susanna, is exhausted in going through her life. She wants to acquire something good for a better life, perhaps a freedom. Here, freedom as a motivation or spirit for Susanna to do many things in order to make her life becomes meaningful. The 'springs' in the fourth line symbolizes birth or new beginning. Probably, Susanna feels so fatigued or even curbed in her life so that she hopes to get a new beginning of her life to fix it all and raise up from her fatigued. If we compare the 'green' to the 'spring', they are almost have the close meaning or have the same direction towards the poet condition or expression explained in the poem. From the poem above, it can be seen there is a contrast condition where the poet uses the 'melody' in eighth line to show Susanna's attitude in facing her fatigued. The 'melody' symbolizes a joyful, pleasure, and comfort. Susanna is a good woman and she never surrender with a bad or tiring condition. She keeps to entertain herself, eventhough, the condition makes her life so bad and uncomfortable to go through. The 'leaves' and the 'dew' in the fourth and fifth lines of the second stanza are the element of life which express a freshness and coolness of condition. On the other words, there is no emptiness, weakness, and exhaustion in such condition. Therefore, all symbols which are given in the poem have the close relationship with each other towards the direction in conveying the fatigued or

exhausted condition that Susanna feels in Wallace Stevens' "Peter Quince At The Clavier".

When we talk about death, it has no content so we must speak of death symbolically. For those who think death is real, death is a blank wall. For those who think it is not real, death is a door to another life. Whether we think of death as a wall or a door, we can not avoid using one symbol or another. We often say that a person who dies is relieved of suffering. However, if death is real, then it is symbolical even to say that the dead do not suffer, as though something of them remains not to suffer. As there are already many speculations about some sort of 'next life,' we will focus on the view that death is real and marks the final end of an individual's life.

We may explore the symbol that death is a wall a bit further. Each of us is born facing this wall. From that moment on, every step we take is towards it, no matter which way we turn. There is simply no other direction to take. Like a fun house mirror, the wall of death show us our living fears and distorted images of ourselves. All we see when we look at death is a reflection of our own lives.

In correlation, symbol takes part in conveying death beautifully. It makes the expression or meaning or perception of death looks soft and does not feel taft in explaining that death is the end of everything. If using the truly words, people feel that there is no value or mystery of death hidden in literary work, moreover, death has no a good picture, eventhough, there is a bad meaning which is hidden in it. For instance, if we uses "a black rose", people will have an assumption that

the meaning of black rose is dead. Due to the fact that the color 'black' symbolizes death, sadness, or dying. We know that people will arrive the dead person by wearing a black suit as an expression of mourning.

From the illustration above, we can conclude that symbol and death has a close correlation in life, especially in literary works that the topic (death) takes part. And, it is not good or lack of patience value in conveying the meaning of death without using symbol to make it soft.