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HOTEL SANTIKA BANGKA, 20 - 22 SEPTEMBER 2018

Sastra Menanamkan Harmoni Kehidupan

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**FINDING THE VOICE OF THREE LEARNER WRITERS' POEMS IN
CREATIVE WRITING CLASS OF ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY**

Wedhowerti

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out the voice of three learner writers' poems in Creative Writing class of English Letters Department Sanata Dharma University. Poetry writing as part of creative writing is a way to find the voice of learner writers. The process is personal, unique, and individualized. It is of multifaceted faculties, i.e. emotion, cognition, language, and socio-culture. Therefore, the voice reflects each learner writers' unique character, background, and personality. This research is an individual action research focusing on a single classroom. Three poems are selected randomly out of thirty. The three learner writers have different language choices in order to voice their voice or to create a more powerful idea. The choices are word play, diction, metaphor, repetition, and capitalization. The first poems' voice is corruption cases and dark phenomena during new order era. The second poems' raises the phenomenon of hoax. The third poems' clearly criticizes the construction that society makes on women.

Keywords: voice, learner writer, creative writing, poetry writing

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui suara dari tiga penulis pemula puisi di kelas Menulis Kreatif Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Sanata Dharma. Penulisan puisi sebagai bagian dari penulisan kreatif adalah cara untuk menemukan suara penulis pemula. Prosesnya bersifat pribadi, unik, dan individual. Proses dari fakultas yang memiliki banyak sisi, yaitu emosi, kognisi, bahasa, dan sosial budaya. Oleh karena itu, suara mencerminkan karakter, latar belakang, dan kepribadian penulis yang unik. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan individu yang berfokus pada satu ruang kelas. Tiga puisi dipilih secara acak dari tiga puluh. Ketiga penulis yang belajar memiliki pilihan bahasa yang berbeda untuk menyuarakan suara mereka atau untuk menciptakan ide yang lebih kuat. Pilihannya adalah permainan kata, diksi, metafora, pengulangan, dan kapitalisasi. Suara puisi pertama adalah kasus korupsi dan fenomena gelap selama era orde baru. Puisi kedua memunculkan fenomena tipuan. Puisi ketiga dengan jelas mengkritik konstruksi yang dibuat masyarakat pada wanita.

Kata Kunci: suara, penulis pemula, penulisan kreatif, penulisan puisi

INTRODUCTION

Creative writing has long been an interesting topic to discuss. The angles of discussion regarding it vary. The discussion might start at where ideas to write come from, who the learner writers are, and what kind of voices those writers produce. Harper asserts that creative writing involves personal and social activities with the intention of producing art and communication (2010: x). Since the nature of creative writing is to communicate ideas to readers, then it entails multifaceted faculties, i.e. emotion, cognition, socio-culture, and language. Zhao mentions that creative writing is not only for the sake of language or literary purposes, but also for achievements of certain self-identification and hence self-esteem (2015: 2). Those are achieved through a series of long processes. Another definition is provided by Harper stating that creative writing involves a set of activities, or process, that can be discovered by the investigation of disseminated works (2010: 1). Creative writing is also a very individualized practice (Harper, 2013: 3). Therefore, it is very personal and unique.

Harper's definition on creative writing clearly points out that disseminated works are the key to discover the contents including voice. Before exploring more on voice, the definition of voice itself is worth noting. Abrams and Harpham define voice as a pervasive authorial presence, the particular qualities of the author's ethos (2012: 287). Voice is of something unique. It defines and conveys the writer's character, background, personality, and even attitude. Mills suggests that "your voice will be generated by what you write about, the recurrent places, aspects and qualities of the world you represent, by the images you choose to highlight, the types of story or story-like events that hold for you a special fascination" (2006: 5). In other words, every writer has a unique voice including voice in a poem.

Finding voice of a learner writer's poem entails some matters. One of them is the connection between inner life and the words on the page (Hunt and Sampson, 2000: 16 as cited in Spiro, 2014: 26). Poetry writing itself is such an encompassing term. It is related to the writer, language, readers, and responses giving. In writing a poem, a writer is bound to her/his background knowledge,

socio-culture, psychological state, and society. McLoughlin mentions that ‘poetry is experiments in language using all of the features of language, that produces responses in the reader that are not confined to language or conscious cognition’ (2013: 41). As explained previously that creative writing including poetry writing is a very individualized practice, then every writer, in this case is learner writer, has something to tell to readers or society in her/his unique individualized manner through voice in a poem. The following paragraphs will discuss poetry writing and all its aspects in Sanata Dharma University.

Creative writing itself has become a compulsory subject in universities. In English Letters Department of Sanata Dharma University, Creative Writing is a compulsory subject to take in semester five. In the previous semesters, the students have taken paragraph and multi-paragraph writing, genre writing, and essay writing. One of the main objectives of Creative Writing in English Letters Department is to enable students to write a simple short story, play script, and poem. In this paper, the researcher focuses the attention on poetry writing as the other genres will be studied further in the future.

The objective of this research to is find out the voice of three learner writers’ poems. As learner writers, they realize that their voice does matter. Poetry writing belongs to everybody of any background. Mills asserts that

‘Writing as art is now practiced by people from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, representing differences of age, gender and sexuality. All these voices are actively sought by audiences and readers whose numbers reflect a similar range of culture and experience’ (2006: 3).

In every first meeting of poetry writing, the researcher always asked the students ‘Do we need to be broken -hearted to write a great poem?’ Poetry writing is very personal as well as political in nature. Mills observes that all writing is influenced by the conditions of its production (2006: 6). There likely be an implied atmosphere or circumstance. Again, Mills suggests that ‘your voice will be generated by what you write about, the recurrent places, aspects and qualities of the world you represent, by the images you choose to highlight, the types of story or story-like events that hold for you a special fascination’ (2006: 5).

How is voice produced? Spiro says that voice is reflected through language choice (2014: 29). The writers are aware of their choice. As the learner writers come from different background, they might be producing different voice. Any aspects they would like to describe are evident in their choice.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher did an action research as an attempt to find the voice of three learner writers' poems. In doing so, the researcher employed individual action research focusing on a single classroom (Ferrance, 2000: 6). There are three five poems selected randomly out of thirty poems of class C of fall semester 2017. In selecting the poems, the researcher used random sampling technique.

DISCUSSION

The learner writers submitted their poem along with the background of writing it. The three poems are written and discussed as follows.

The Game

Scorpius

Cygnus

Delphinus

watching

The cub

The orphan

The wolf

playing

The Alpha

The Omega

Lupus Rex

ruling

The villagers

The guardian

The sheriff
confined
The witness
as true as a Saint
hanged
executed
by the corrupted Fool.

(Aloysius Bagas A.P., 2017)

The learner writer truly expresses his becoming a millennial person. This is evident from his word choice that becomes the title of the poem, *The Game*. Millennial people are famous for their hobby of playing game. *The Game* represents the spirit of the era. The word *game* is easily and widely understood.

Bagas tells the readers about the massive corruption cases and other dark phenomena during the new order. He chooses the Werewolf Game along with the characters to speak the truth about what was happening during the era so that it is easily understood by the people of his generation. Scorpius, Cygnus, and Delphinus are the famous characters of the game. They represent those powerful people in the structure who are solely watching and observing the game.

The cub, orphan, and the wolf represent the ‘juniors’ and the cronies. These are the products the powerful people successfully produced. They are playing the game. Bagas shows more characters who are ruling namely the Alpha, Omega, and Lupus Rex. Those are hand in hand with the ‘juniors’. All of them are the cronies.

The third stanza shows how the human rights activists, truth speakers, and protesters are arrested sometimes without any trial process. The fourth stanza has the same meaning with the third one on how truth speakers are killed. Bagas uses the metaphoric term *Saint* to emphasize that the person who he refers to is really an honest truth speaker. Meanwhile, he capitalizes *Fool* to emphasize that the *Fool* is of powerful entity. The second poem is to be written and discussed as follows.

Wrong Believers

People in my generation;
Most of them are exploited
By untrusted source of knowledge
Believing in famous but zero truth news

Eaten by the poisonous words of sly snakes
Spreading and convincing lies to others
Denying all of the truths that haunting them
Making everyone hate each other

Throwing rocks to the crowded field
Never looking at their own shadows
Fooling themselves,
In front of everyone

Being fooled but still feel confident
Not feeling ashamed or guilty,
Whenever they got hit by the reality
And just ignore it the rest of their lives
(Cenintya Deany, 2017)

As a learner writer, Deany becomes aware of what is going on in society. There are well-organized hoaxes. Her background knowledge she gains in Journalism is reflected how she speaks up the truth about people believing in hoaxes.

The first stanza begins with *people in my generation*, her generation. Hoax industry spreads all over the world having millions of believers as the stream of internet flows rapidly. She entitles her poem *Wrong Believers* meaning that they believe in something wrong and it means they are wrong. She chooses everyday, easy-to-understand language to convey how millennials people become exploited

by the industry without realizing it. To emphasize the wrongness, she chooses a metaphoric term *zero*.

Their not being aware of being exploited also results in being poisoned. Hoaxes poison and eat a lot of people alive. Not only do they become victims, but also spreaders of hoaxes. *Throwing rock* is chosen to represent the ignorant hoax spreaders spreading a heavy, sharp thing. Spreaders also at the same time fool themselves for they do not realize that they are dealing with lies. The degree of ignorance is shown in the last stanza. The spreaders still feel confident. The confidence persists even though they might be confronted and they are proven to be wrong. Eventually, it brings about two notions, confidence and ignorance. The third poem is written and discussed on as follows.

The Beleaguer

Be woman must be demure
Shy and reserved
Walking around with allure
Do anything for served
Act like white little pure

Be woman must be ingénue
Smile when they called
That's the need for the grew
Making beauty for stalled
Without feeling blue

Be woman must be with benevolence
Live like beautiful bird
Beauty without arrogance
Even get blurred
Live still with the elegance

Be woman must be in hearth
Taking care the birth
Even when it is the fourth
Keep taking care the girth
Without pass the garth
(Lesi Anggrid, 2017)

Being a student of English Letters Department equipped with knowledge of gender and gender studies makes Anggrid aware of how women and their positions are in society. Women are constructed to be like what society wants as in the first stanza. The repetition *be woman* at the beginning of every stanza emphasizes how “an ideal woman” should be (as society demands). If a woman wants to be considered as ‘an ideal woman’ then she must do this and do that. If she does not then she is not.

Anggrid is also good at rhyming the poem. Moreover, she wittily chooses words with exactly the same word arrangement in the last stanza (all words are end in -rth). This word play brings about a powerful idea to present to readers.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, every learner writer has unique and personal voice. The voice he/she raises on the poem reflects and is bound to socio-culture, background knowledge on current situation, and even political situation and history. The three learner writers in this research have clearly stated their voice through different language choices namely repetition, diction, word play, metaphor, and capitalization. These are the efforts in making the ideas more powerful in nature. New orders’ political situation, hoax industry, and society’s construction on women become the principal voice that the poems raise.

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