

READING LOVE IN RUMI'S "THE ALCHEMY OF LOVE"

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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Reading Love in Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love"

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ABSTRACT

"The Alchemy of Love" is one of the poems that has love theme. This poem explain the God's affection and love to His creatures. This research will explain love in Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love". It uses descriptive-qualitative method. The kind of this qualitative research is library research. It applies Ransom's New Criticism Theory. This research found four thematic intrinsic elements. Thematic ambiguity in this poem is indicated by the phrase "the alchemy of love". In concrete meaning, alchemy of love means that love interpret such chemical something can be re-arranged. Meanwhile, alchemy of love also become an abstract that love cannot be described for sure. Then, thematic Irony in this poem was found in phrase "You are the master alchemist." This word is used to show that God is able to do whatever He want. The thematic tension of Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" poem is the contrasting between world life and the hereafter life. Paradox that found in this poem is that love is two things between imagination and reality. Love is something existence and not-existence.

Keywords: Love, "The Alchemy of Love", Ransom's New Criticism Theory

READING LOVE IN RUMI'S "THE ALCHEMY OF LOVE"

Oleh: Faila Shufah

ABSTRAK

"The Alchemy of Love" adalah salah satu puisi yang memiliki tema cinta. Puisi ini menjelaskan kasih sayang dan cinta Allah pada makhluk-Nya. Penelitian ini mencoba untuk menjelaskan cinta yang tergambar dalam puisi Rumi "The Alchemy of Love". Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif. Jenis penelitian kualitatif ini adalah studi pustaka dengan menggunakan teori *New criticism* oleh John Crowe Ransom. Penelitian ini menemukan empat unsur intrinsik tematik. Ambiguiti tematik dalam puisi ini ditunjukkan dengan frasa "alchemy of love". Dalam arti konkrit, *alchemy of love* berarti bahwa cinta diibaratkan sebuah benda yang dapat diubah-ubah. Sementara itu, *alchemy of love* juga mengandung makna abstrak yang tidak dapat dijelaskan dengan pasti. Kemudian, ironi tematik dalam puisi ini ditemukan dalam frasa "You are the master alchemist." Kata ini digunakan untuk menunjukkan bahwa Allah mampu melakukan apa pun yang Dia inginkan. Tension tematik dalam puisi Rumi "The Alchemy of Love" adalah adanya perbedaan antara kehidupan dunia dan kehidupan akhirat. Paradoks yang ditemukan dalam puisi ini adalah bahwa cinta adalah dua hal antara imajinasi dan kenyataan. Cinta adalah sesuatu yang ada dan tiada.

Kata Kunci: Cinta, "The Alchemy of Love", Teori New Criticism

MOTTO

“If you have never got problems, you will not process”



DEDICATION

*For My beloved Mom,
My beloved Father in Your Heaven,
and my big families*



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Literary work is a work created as a result from human's thought. According to Jim Meyer, the prototypical literary works are written texts marked by careful use of language, literary genre (poetry, prose, fiction, and drama), read aesthetically, intended by the author to be read aesthetically, and contained many weak implicatures (1997: 3). Then, Stein Haugom Olsen in his journal *The "Meaning" of a Literary Work* also says that literary work is a verbal expression, a verbal construct or an utterance, and that as such its peculiar nature is defined through the special *way in which it means* (1982: 13).

Poem is a form of literary works. It is interesting and different from the others. "Poem differs from some kinds of prose in usually being more concrete and specific. That is, it communicates experiences, emotions, attitudes, and propositions by dealing with a particular situation or event that implicitly embodies abstract generalizations" (Lynn, 1966: 4). Poem is a piece of writing arranged in lines, usually with a regular rhythm and often with a pattern of rhymes (Oxford, 2008: 339).

Poems have many kinds of themes, including love, hate, life, death, war, peace, and others. According to Abrams, theme is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader (2009: 205). One of

theme is love. Love is a gift from God to His creature and it relates to affection. To define love is quite difficult because it cannot be reached by the sentence or expressed by words simply. Seems like wind, love can be felt but cannot be seen and touched.

Based on Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, love is strong feeling of deep affection for somebody or something (2008: 262). John Donne, in his poems "Love's Alchemy," defines that "love can be an experience of the body, the soul, or both; it can be a religious experience, or merely a sensual one, and it can give rise to emotions ranging from ecstasy to despair" (<http://www.lsj.org/web/literature/donne.php>).

When someone falls in love, they will express their feeling in various behaviors. According to Nawawi al-Bantani, there are three people's behaviors of true love. First, someone will choose their lover's utterance than others. Second, they will join with their lover than others. The last, they choose lover's *ridha* than others. He also says that whoever loves something, they become its slave (2014: 55)

Talking about love, Jalaluddin Rumi is one of the worldwide poets from the East that write the poem about love. Jalaluddin Muhammad who has the epithet Mawlana (our master) was born on 30 of September, 1207 in Balkh, northern Afghanistan. He is also known as Rumi which means "from Roman Anatolia" where Anatolia is used to be called the "land of Rum (Romans)." He had three sons and daughter. Besides, his father, Bahaaddin Muhammad, renowned as

Sultanu'l Ulama (the Sultan of Scholars), was from a family in which prominent in producing eminent scholars and gnostic alike (Fatih and Bingul, 2007: 45-47).

During these years, Rumi, with erudite and sufi character, spent his worth times with students and friends alike and became one of the most important figures of Konya, as his prominence establishment (Fatih and Bingul, 2007: 48). Through his works, Rumi mentioned many of prior Sufis' names. Some that encompassed and articulated Rumi's works particularly in love and ecstasy were Ahmad-i Gazzali (d. 1123 or 124) and the illustrious poets, Sena'i (d. 1131) and Sheikh Attar (d. 1220).

His depth of knowledge is able to elaborate his works of Arabic and Persian poetry and prose by embellishing thousands of Qur'anic verse and hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH) within. It is obvious that the love of poetry, predominant throughout society during his lifetime, was also deeply rooted in Rumi, as this explains his recitals of many Arabic and Persian *divans*. Doubtless, he is the greatest representative of the road paved by sufi poets Senai and Sheikh Attar, whom Rumi emulated in articulating his inherent feelings of love and ecstasy (Fatih and Bingul, 2007: 50).

One of Rumi's love poems is "The alchemy of love". The writer chooses this poem because the title is very interesting. The word "Alchemy" is so familiar and famous when it is related to chemistry, but it may be unfamiliar when it describes and talks about love. Secondly, this poem does not use difficult words. All of sentences in this poem use common words and easy to be understood, but it still needs the deep interpretation to get proper meaning.

The Alchemy of Love is a poem that describes about God's affection for His creatures. With love, God can change evils into goodness (19). Presence of God also can dissolve problems and sorrows (9). Allah mentions in Qur'an surah Al-A'raf: 156

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“but My mercy extendeth to all things. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our Signs.” (Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

This verse explains that God's affection encompasses all things. God will give His affection for people who are *Taqwa*, who practice regular charity, and for those who believe in His verses. *Taqwa* comes from waqa-yaqi-wiqayah that means take care of. Take care of self in through the life as guidance from God.

God's affection becomes important to be analyzed. It is in relation with God's commands to all humans, both of Muslim and non-Muslim, to love not to hurt one another. However, its condition is different from current life. There are a lot of people who are labeled as infidel to others and blamed one another. As the result, these conditions make disunity among them, even among people in same religion. Lately, almost all social media is enlivened by reporting on the case of disputes among religious communities, even among people in the same religion. These gaps encourage the researcher to decide of discussing God's affection in which to remain how God is compassionate and merciful. He is supreme and forgiver of the sins of God's creatures.

Therefore, to analyze Rumi's "The Alchemy of love" becomes important. It is not only to reveal the hidden meaning within the poem, but it is also to describe the essence of love – God's love in particular--that holds the essential part of creatures' life. By taking advantage of Islamic perspective, this research gives the contribution in the field of understanding Islamic value on Muslim's behaviors in advanced.

1.2. Research Question

The research question of this research is "How love is described in Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love"?"

1.3. Objective of study

Generally, the objective of study is available to get the general description about the problem researched. From this research question, this research explains how love is described in this poem.

1.4. Significance of Study

Academically, the researcher hopes that this research contributes to knowledge development for English Department students. Perhaps, they can use this research as their references when they study how the New Criticism is applied in a poem and when the study Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" in particular. Practically, criticizing "The Alchemy of Love" aims at giving the view for people about God's affection to His creatures.

1.5. Literature Review

This research analyzes love in Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love". It uses New Criticism theory. Here are the related literature reviews that use the same theory.

The First is a journal entitled “Estrangement in Alfred Tennyson’s “Ulysses”: A New Criticism Analysis” by Segaf and Christinawati. They described a poem written by Alfred Tennyson and explained the process of Ulysses’s estrangement in the poem. They analyzed intrinsic elements in it by using New criticism theory. The conclusion of this research is Ulysses’s arrogance creates the gap between he and the other people.

The second is a journal entitled “The Portrayal of Woman’s Spirit in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s Poem “The Mother’s Charge”: A New Criticism Analysis” written by Rafmil Fiqih Ramadhan and Christinawati. It was about woman who struggle in her duties as a mother. The writers described about how the portrayal woman’s spirit in this poem. The woman should take care of her children in all conditions. She also should keep her spirit to make her home comfortable. In their analysis, the writers used New criticism theory and explored the figurative language and imagery to analyze this poem. The conclusion of this analysis is that there are some words showing the woman’s spirit in this poem.

The third literature review is a graduating paper entitled “Reading Death in D.H. Lawrence’s The Ship of Death” written by Fahrurrazi, English literature student of State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga (2013). The research question of this research is “How death is intrinsically described in DH Lawrence’s ‘The Ship of Death?’” The writer used qualitative method. The method of collecting data was documentation. The Theory in this research was New criticism theory. From the research the writer concluded that death based on DH Lawrence’s “The

Ship of the Death” has three phases-- beginning of journey to death, the oblivion, and new life.

The fourth literature review is a graduating paper entitled “Homosexuality as Portrayed in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 2 and 4” written by Rohadi Apri Widi Wiyanto, an English literature student of State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga (2015). The research question of this research was “How do the Shakespeare’s sonnet 2 and 4 intrinsically portray the homosexual agent?” The writer used qualitative method. The method of collecting data was close reading technique. The writer used New criticism theory by John Crowe Ransom. From the research the writer concluded that all parts of sonnets build a chronologically event uttering by the speaker to show the existence of homosexuality through a story.

All of these literature reviews have same object as the object in this research, about poem. They use New Criticism as their theory in their research. Besides, this research has different poem with all poems was researched. This research analyzes “The Alchemy of Love” poem by Jalaluddin Rumi and also use Ransom’s New Criticism theory.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

The term New Criticism was known after the publication of John Crowe Ransom’s *The New Criticism* in 1941 (Abrams 2009: 216). In New criticism, a poem focused on object itself. New criticism meant by “the text itself” because their definition of the literary work is directly related to their beliefs concerning the proper way to interpret it (Tyson, 2006: 137). New criticism is not concerned with the context, as historical, biography, etc. It means that this theory just

analyzes the content of the poem without relating it with the background of poet. All explanations about the poem are only about poem itself.

For New criticism, the complexity of a text is created by the multiple and often conflicting meanings. These meanings are product primarily of four kinds of linguistics devices: paradox, irony, ambiguity, and tension (Tyson, 2006: 138).

The first basic element of the new criticism is Paradox. Paradox is a statement which seems to be logically contradictory or absurd, but to be interpretable in a way that makes sense (Abrams 2009: 239). According to Tyson, paradox is a statement that seems self-contradictory but represents the actual way things are (2006: 138). Altenberd and Lewis in *A Handbook for the Study of Poetry* said a paradox is a statement which is either apparently self-contradictory or at odds with ordinary experience, and yet reveals a truth normally hidden (1966: 27). In a simple way, paradox is a statement that contains contradiction, but it may be true.

The second basic element of the new criticism is irony. The term “irony,” related to hiding what is actually the case; not in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects (Abrams 2009: 165). In a general way, irony is interpreted as the quality that arises from a discrepancy between expectations and actualities (Alterbernd and Lewis, 1966: 24). According to Abrams, Irony can be divided into verbal irony, structural irony, stable irony, unstable irony, Socratic irony, dramatic irony, tragic irony, cosmic irony, and romantic irony (2009: 165).

The third new criticism’s basic element is ambiguity. Ambiguity is the use of an ambiguous expression when what is wanted is precision and particularity of

reference (Abrams 2009: 12). According to Tyson, ambiguity occurs when a word, image, or event generates two or more different meanings (2006: 140). Ambiguity means that the interpretation of sentence could be more than one or multiple meaning.

William Empson in his *Seven Types of Ambiguity* divided ambiguity into seven types. Below seven types of ambiguity:

1. The first types of ambiguity occurs when a word or grammatical structure is effective in several ways
2. The second type occurs when two or more meanings are resolved into one
3. The third type occurs when two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously.
4. The fourth occurs when two or more meanings of a statement do not agree among themselves, but combine to make clear or more complicated state of mind in the author.
5. The fifth occurs when the author is discovering his idea in the act of writing, or not holding it all in his mind at once, so that, for instance, there is a simile which applies to nothing exactly, but lies half-way between two things when the author is moving from one to the other.
6. The sixth type occurs when a statement says nothing, by tautology, by contradiction, or by irrelevant statements; so that the reader is forced to invent statements of his own and they are liable to conflict with one another

7. The last type is the most ambiguous. The two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind.

The last basic element of the new criticism is tension. Tension became a common descriptive and evaluative word in the criticism of the 1930s and later. Other critics use "tension" to characterize poetry that manifests an equilibrium of the serious and the ironic, or "a pattern of resolved stresses," or a harmony of opponent tendencies, or any other mode of that stability-in-opposition which was the favorite way in the *New Criticism* for conceiving the organization of a good poem (Abrams 2009: 363).

According to Tyson, tension is created by the integration of the abstract and the concrete, of general ideas embodied in specific images. It is also created by the dynamic interplay among the text's opposing tendencies, that is, among its paradoxes, ironies, and ambiguities (2006: 140).

In this research, the writer analyzes Rumi's "The Alchemy of love" by using New Criticism theory. The writer tries to explain what the essence of love in this poem based on poem itself. According to Abrams in Glossary literary terms (2009: 216) The New Critics differed from another in many ways:

- a. A poem should be treated and should be regarded as an independent and self-sufficient verbal object.
- b. Verbal is the principles of the New Criticism

- c. The specific procedure for a New Critic is explication, or close reading: the detailed analysis of the complex interrelationships and ambiguities of the verbal figurative components within a work.
- d. The difference between literary genres, although acknowledged, does not play an essential role in the New Criticism.

Ransom was an American. He was a teacher, poet, founder of the *Kenyon Review*, and a father of the New Criticism. He has different method that is called an ontological critic. A poem is different from a prose discourse because it is very quickly and convincingly. It is not moralism. It is also not emotionalism, sensibility, or expression (Ransom, 1941: 279). Besides, there is also differentiation between texture and structure. According to Ransom, the texture seems to be of any real content that may be come upon, provided it's so free, unrestricted, and large that it can't properly get into the structure. Meanwhile, the structure is the proper prose of the poem, and deals with any content suited to a logical discourse (1941: 280).

In his Essay, *Criticism, Inc.* Ransom explain that criticism must become more scientific and systematic. It means that it must be explored by the collective and sustained effort of learned persons. Based on his view criticism is the attempt to define and enjoy the aesthetic or characteristic values of literature.

1.7. Method of Research

Here will explain the type of research, data resources, method of collecting data, and method of data analysis.

1.7.1. Type of Research

This research uses the qualitative method. According to Creswell, one of the characteristic qualitative method is a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory. The kind of this qualitative research is library research where the writer gets some information by observing several books.

1.7.2. Data Sources

The writer divides the data into two parts, the main data and the secondary data. The main sources of data in this research are words, phrases, or even clause within Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" itself. The writer uses the other references or data like journals, article, and thesis as the secondary data to support the main data. The other references help the writer to explore this research.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

This research uses documentation technique. The process of documentation is by reading the text of poem comprehend and repeatedly. After that, the writer makes some notes based on the data. The writer also uses relevant references like book, journal, and dictionary to understand the poem.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

After the data are collected, the writer analyzes them by using descriptive analysis. According to Creswell in his "Research Design," descriptive analysis of data for variables in a study includes describing the result through means, standard deviations, and range of scores. It describes and explains in order to get the comprehensive meaning. Here, some steps of analyzing data.

First, the writer identifies the data based on research problem. Then, classifies the data based on the phases of love in the poem. After classifying the data, the writer analyzes data by interpreting the text. The last step is finding a conclusion as a result of this research.

1.8. Paper Organization

This paper is presented in three chapters. The first chapter explains the background of study, the object of research, method and theory that used in this research. In the second chapter, the writer explains the findings of this research. Here, the second chapter will elaborates intrinsic elements of this poem. Then, the writer will analysis love based on Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love". The last chapter is about the conclusion that the writer gets from the research and investigation in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

3.1 Conclusion

“The Alchemy of Love” is a poem explaining about God’s affection to His creatures. This poem is divided into seven stanzas. In the first and second stanza, this poem talks about God’s poetic; the attribute of God, and also God’s dwell. The third till seventh stanzas, there is description of God’s Affection and God’s Power to His creatures. He has full authorization. Whatever happens in this world is based on His authority and His permission. All problems, that everyone gets, come from God and will return to God.

God’s affection to His creatures is not love that goes in a way, but in two ways. Whatever happens in human is a result from what they did. When someone has problems, but they do not do something to solve their problems and just rely on God, their problems will not end sooner. In this position, people must often do introspection about what they did and also do *taubat*. Their problems may be caused by their sins and mistakes. Whoever is patient and always do their best to face their problems, God will give them happiness for their effort and patient.

Thematically, in this poem, there are four intrinsic elements including ambiguity, irony, paradox and tension. Ambiguity in this poem is indicated by the phrase “the alchemy of love”. This phrase contains concrete and abstract meaning. In concrete meaning, alchemy of love means that love interpreted such chemical something that can be re-arranged. Meanwhile, alchemy of love also becomes an

abstract that love cannot be described for sure. Then, thematic irony in this poem is found in clause "You are the master alchemist." The word "Master Alchemist" in this poem does not mean people who are experts in the chemistry. This word is used to show that God is able to do whatever He wants.

The tension of Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" poem is the contrasting between world life and the hereafter life. The sentences in this poem show that there is a striking difference between this world and the hereafter. Extrinsicly, this poem illustrates that the hereafter is a life that full of peace, there is no problem at all in it. This is contrast to the world life, where there are various problems, strife, discord, and other problems.

Paradox found in this poem is that love is two things between imagination and reality. Love is something existence and not-existence. Sometimes, love is existence and can be felt, but sometimes, it is abstract even can be felt.

3.2 Suggestion

This research has analyzed Love in Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" based on new criticism by John Crowe Ransom. The writer suggests for the next researcher in the same subject by using the others theories. It will be more interesting when this poem is analyzed by using socio literature. It is because by using its theory the next researchers will be easier to analyze where they can relate the poem to the poet.

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