

THE UNREQUITED LOVE AS REFLECTED IN WILLIAM BLAKE'S "LOVE'S SECRET"

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this final academic paper is to describe the love story which tells sadness in William Blake's "*Love's Secret*". The writer adopts Erich Fromm's theory of unrequited love from *The Art of Loving*. This final academic paper concerns intrinsic and extrinsic side of the poem. In the intrinsic side, the writer discusses about the existing diction and figurative language such as denotation and connotation and imagery to understand the true meaning of the poem. The extrinsic side, the writer discusses about unrequited love. The writer used library research, note-taking and internet browsing for collecting the data. The result is that love does not only bring happiness but also deep sadness for the speaker of the poem as unrequited love which is reflected in "*Love's Secret*". So, it succeeds in bringing the readers to feel what the speaker feels.

Keywords: Love, Diction, Figurative Language, Unrequited Love, Deep Sadness

1. Introduction

Poetry is universal because there are a lot of topics can be shown, for example: love, family, life, sadness, happiness, death, marriage and others. Those issues are the reflection of the ordinary life which the ordinary person is concerned. In all ages and in some countries, poetry has been regarded as one of important thing in human's existence.

Love is an incredibly powerful word. This word is so easy to say, but it has a great meaning and feeling to every human being. There are many kinds of love, such love of God, love for parents, love for family, erotic love, self-love, and many other types of love. Love does not always run and has happy ending, but it also tells about sadness, heartbreak, unrequited love, and others.

Love does not only give the readers happiness, but also tells the story of sadness. It perceived usually by the erotic love story. The sadness can derived from the end of a love relationship that makes us heartbreak, unrequited love, loving someone secretly, and other

sad love story. For example, if the readers love someone, but they got a rejection from him or her, it is the same as unrequited love. The readers feel sad and painful indeed, but that only they can do is love him or her in secret, no one knows except themselves. There are lots of love story that tells about happiness and sadness that happen around the readers.

The writer is interested in discussing love. Based on some considerations the writer has chosen the poem “*Love’s Secret*” by William Blake as the material object for this final academic paper. The issue about unrequited love is very strong in this poem. For further discussion, this final academic paper entitled ‘The Unrequited Love as reflected in William Blake’s “*Love’s Secret*”’ will explain those things above.

The writer will analyze the poem “*Love’s Secret*” by William Blake both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements that will discuss here are denotation and connotation and imagery. While, from the extrinsic element the writer analyzes about the unrequited love, the theory of *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm. In gathering the data needed for this final academic paper, the writer used library research methods and internet browsing for contents related to the unrequited love.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Intrinsic Elements

In this chapter, for intrinsic elements the writer focuses to discuss about diction (denotation and connotation) and imagery. Diction or the choice of word becomes the main element in poetry. It shows the poet’s emotions such as sadness, happiness, disappointment, expectation and others. It is the reason why diction becomes one of the discussions in this final academic paper. Furthermore diction is divided into two components, denotation and connotation. They are tools that one can use to understand the meaning of the poem. Laurence Perrine explains that denotation is the dictionary meaning or meanings of the word. Beyond its denotations, a word may also have connotations. The connotations are word it suggests beyond what it expresses: its overtones of meaning (Perrine, 1956: 38).

Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman and William Burto describe that whatever in a poem appeals to any of our sense (including sensations of heat and pressure as well as of sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound) is an image (1989: 458). By understanding imagery which is related to human senses, the readers will be easier to flow the same situation that happen to the poet or the speaker. Imagery can help the reader feels what the poet or the speaker feels

too. In this poem, the writer only discusses four kinds of imagery: auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and organic imagery.

2.2 Extrinsic Elements

In the extrinsic element, the writer will discuss on *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm. The Art of Loving Theory, Fromm mentions there are five objects of human's love are brotherly love, motherly love, erotic love, self-love and love of God. In the discussion of this extrinsic, the writer focuses on the theory about Unrequited Love the effects of Erotic Love of *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm.

Unrequited love is the effect of the Erotic Love from *The Art of Loving* that explains about love between two persons who falls in love. This type of love is craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person. Erotic love is very nature exclusive and not universal love, also it includes the sexual desire (1956:52).

The inability of the unrequited love is to express and fulfill emotional needs may lead to feelings such as depression, low self-esteem, anxiety and rapid mood swings. The object of unrequited love is often a friend or acquaintance, someone regularly encountered in the workplace, during course of work or other activities involving large groups of people. This creates an awkward situation in which the admirer has difficulty in expressing his or her true feelings, a fear that revelation of feelings might invite rejection. Unrequited love has long been depicted as noble, an unselfish and stoic willingness to accept suffering.

3. Discussion

3.1 Intrinsic Elements

3.1.1 Diction

“Love’s Secret” by William Blake uses ordinary language as its diction. It will be easy for the reader to understand the poem. In this poem, there are several words which have denotation and connotation meaning to create the poetical value. Those words maybe have purpose or meaning that the poet wants to tell to the readers.

Stanza 1:

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;

For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

In this first stanza and the third line, the use of the word "*gentle wind*" is the connotation. These two lines the speaker is describing his love, comparing it with the "*wind*". The "*wind*" is part of nature like love is part of a human being's life. Sometimes the wind is strong and can be noticeable. In this case the wind is quiet, gentle and invisible. In this poem, the speaker has not expressed his love that is been kept in secret which makes it like the gentle, invisible and silent wind.

Stanza 2:

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! She did depart!

In this second stanza and the fifth line, the use of the word "*told*" has the denotation meaning. According to the writer, the uses of word "*told*" to show that he has revealed his love. It is because indicate a kind of movement or act show that the "*I*" character confessed his love to his beloved. He is showing how strong his love. He shows it by repeating the phrase twice.

While in the eighth line, the use of the word "*depart*" is also the denotation. "*Depart*" means that a somewhat literary word for going away from a place. In this poem, the writer thinks that the word "*depart*" prefers to use, because it is the right word to express the departure of the woman that the speaker loves to the other place. The speaker felt miserable, lost and very sad.

Stanza 3:

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

In this third stanza and the ninth line, the use of the word "*gone*" is the connotation meaning. The uses of word "*gone*" to show that she was really gone far away maybe into another place where is better, or it can mean that she dies. The word "*gone*" was chosen because it is the most appropriate word to use in the poem.

In the tenth line, "*traveller*" suggests that someone with no attachments or responsibilities formed a short term relationship with the woman. But, it could also mean that

the "*traveller*" is God, as many of William Blake's poems did in fact have a religious underlining to them. In the case that the "*traveller*" is God it is likely that the woman died. He brought the woman with a sigh gone to heaven, with the intention that this woman uprooted her life or another meaning that she had died.

Meanwhile in the twelfth line, the use of the word "*took*" is the connotation meaning. The chosen of the word "*took*" to mean that "*he*" or "*the traveller*" brings the woman went away into somewhere. The phrase "*he took her with a sigh*" reveals that the woman's death has left with God or gone to heaven. It seems like they had started a relationship but soon it had an end. The writer's opinion is maybe this is the reason why the poet used "*Silently, invisibly:*" and "*he took her with a sigh.*", because it refers to the end of life. When we die, we cannot breathe anymore. We just have the last sigh. The lover's death is something that the speaker does not hope.

3.1.2 Imagery

3.1.2.1 Auditory Imagery

The following stanza contains an auditory imagery

Stanza 1:

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

The word "*silently*" in fourth line is more directed to the sound of the wind that blows in accordance with the preceding sentence "*for the gentle wind doth move*". It indicates the implicit love in the poem. The wind that blows in the first stanza of this poem leads to the speaker's love that cannot be seen and heard, but he could only feel alone. As we know, that the wind is not visible to the naked eye, it can be heard through the ears, although is it quiet, silent, and deserted. We can only feel and hear soft sounds of the wind as well as the love that is felt by the speaker in the first stanza.

3.1.1.2 Tactile Imagery

Stanza 1:

Never seek to tell thy love,
 Love that never told can be;
 For the gentle wind doth move
 Silently, invisibly.

The word “*gentle wind*” in the first stanza and third line indicates that the speaker can be feels how strong blows wind, through a bodily sensation. The wind is only perceived by the sense of touch is through our skin. Therefore, the “*gentle wind*” is indicated as tactile imagery. in this poem, “*gentle wind*” can be described as well as the love of the speaker like a gentle wind blowing gently invisible but can be felt how pure love of the speaker.

Stanza 2:

I told my love, I told my love,
 I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
 Ah! She did depart!

As well as in the second stanza and the seventh line the word “*trembling*” and “*cold*” that can only be felt by touch on the skin. In this poem, the speaker felt himself trembling and cold when he said that all of his feelings to his beloved. When we are feeling nervous, usually automatically we will also feel the trembling and cold too. So it was felt by the speaker on the second stanza.

3.1.1.3 Kinesthetic Imagery

There is a lot of kinesthetic imagery in this poem. Almost every stanza has kinesthetic imagery.

Stanza 1:

Never seek to tell thy love,
 Love that never told can be;
 For the gentle wind doth move
 Silently, invisibly.

Due to “*tell*” and “*told*” is an activity undertaken by our lips. To talk or say anything, of course we use our lips as a communication tool. The words “*tell*” and “*told*” is used in this poem so that the readers know that the speaker was initially still did not want to reveal his love. While in the second stanza the readers know that the speaker had the courage to express his feelings.

While in the first stanza of the third line the word "move" is an act from one place to another. In this sentence, a gentle wind likened to something like other living things that can move from one place to another. The selection of the word "move" in this phrase meant that the poem looks more alive.

Stanza 2:

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! She did depart!

In the second stanza and the eighth line, the word "depart" elaborates on movement of the lover's that goes from the speaker's life.

Stanza 3:

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

The word "gone" means a person that moves away leaving her or his place. In the phrase "soon after she was gone from me" tells that woman who loved by the speaker go away. The use of the word "gone" indicates that the woman actually had longtime left the speaker. The selection of the word "gone" is most appropriate according to the writer.

While for "came by" means a person that comes from somewhere else, and came to where we are flown. The sentences in the third stanza and the tenth line, someone who in the poem called "a traveller" approached the woman who loved by the speaker.

The word "took" also includes the category of kinesthetic imagery. If it is seen from the phrase "he took her with a sigh" meant that "he" or "the traveller" embrace or carrying the woman's away into somewhere. The use of the word "took" intended to the readers can easily understand what the speaker meant in the poem.

Meanwhile in the third stanza and the twelfth line, the word "sigh" indicates the kind of the activity that includes the body part. A single exhalation of air out of the mouth or nose that humans use to communicates emotion. The word "sigh" reveals as the woman's death. It is because this word refers to the end of life, when we die, we cannot breathe anymore, we just have the last sigh. The lover's death is something that the speaker does not hope.

3.1.1.4 Organic Imagery

Stanza 2:

I told my love, I told my love,
 I told her all my heart,
 Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
 Ah! She did depart!

In the second stanza and seventh line the words “*ghastly fears*” is the word that indicates kind of internal sensation that we feel through our body as an organic imagery. The word “*ghastly fear*” intended in the poem is a feeling that is felt when the speaker encourages to express his feelings to the woman he loves. It can be seen in the second stanza, when the speaker expressed his whole feelings to the woman, his body trembling, cold, and he felt in ghastly fear. He really felt frightened when he expressed his feelings, the woman will go away. He felt scared and not ready to get a rejection from her. The fear he felt happened. The woman walked away left him alone.

3.2 Extrinsic Element

3.2.1 The Unrequited Love

The theme of this poem is deeper than a simple explanation. It expresses the mysteries of love. *Love's Secret* is a sad love story.

Stanza 1:

Never seek to tell thy love,
 Love that never told can be;
 For the gentle wind doth move
 Silently, invisibly.

When we read the poem word by word, we can feel that the speaker's love is so great to her. In this first stanza, especially in the two lines at the beginning, “*Never seek to tell thy love,*” and “*Love that never told can be;*”, it shows that the speaker did not want to declare his love. Besides he has not the courage to reveal it, he also realizes that she does not seem to have the same feeling like him. His love is not only invisible but also can be felt like a gentle wind that blows, as reflected in the first stanza. The speaker thinks that when the unspoken love it more likely to have a successful relationship and well as true love will arrive on time. The speaker's depression appears because he only can hide his feeling and he cannot say it aloud to the woman. By keeping a very deep feeling it can indeed give rise to a sense of depression. Although the speaker feels depressed, he does not let his depression let him down. This is because at that time, it is more convenient to keep a sense of love for the loved one, rather than express his feeling. The speaker knows that the woman will reject him

because she does not love him. The elements of low self-esteem in the first stanza of the poem can be seen when the speaker still does not have the courage to express his great love to the woman. He felt that his love is very deep, but he did not have the courage and feels embarrassed to declare. Though it made him in pain, but he felt that if he loved the woman silently and secretly, his relationship with the woman will be run better. He feels that it is better if she does not know how the speaker's true feeling. He thinks that it is a real true love, at that time.

Stanza 2:

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! She did depart!

In the second stanza, it is very powerful and the climax of the poem. It is clearly visible in this stanza how the speaker has difficulty in expressing his love and feeling for the woman. This stanza tells when the speaker decided to express his feeling, as he tried to declare all of his heart to his beloved. With great difficulty he collected all the courage in him to declare his love to her. The speaker thinks that it was the right time to declare his love. He feels curious about the woman's reactions and responses when the speaker tries to express his love. He hopes that the woman changes her mind and wants to reply the same feeling with the speaker. He puts aside any negative feelings in his heart and tries to declare his love. The speaker is afraid that he would make a mistake when he speaks because of his nervousness. He is also very afraid if he gets rejection from her. He is afraid that the rejection can make him lost the woman he loves later. It is too much fear and anxiety that the speaker felt at this stanza. He hopes that the woman unexpectedly has the same feeling as him. He has high hopes to have the woman completely, but in reality she does not love him. Unfortunately, the speaker's hope crumbles. The woman goes away leaving the speaker and his deep love in her. It likes in the phrase in the eighth line written by William Blake, "*Ah! She did depart!*". The speaker's mood swings quickly. He felt a deep sadness. The speaker, however, also must be willing to accept the fact that he does not receive the love of the woman. He feels that he better keeps his love to himself and let no one knows as mentioned in the first stanza. The speaker does not want to confess to the woman for the second time because he is afraid and does not want to makes the same mistake as before and gets a rejection again.

Stanza 3:

Soon after she was gone from me,
 A traveller came by,
 Silently, invisibly:
 He took her with a sigh.

In the third stanza which is also the end of the poem *Love's Secret*, the speaker's deep sadness increases. Another man came in the woman's life. In the third stanza written by William Blake, that is another man is referred to as "the traveller". A stranger who is really not known by the speaker, and suddenly came close to the woman's life. This situation is never expected by the speaker about the presence of the traveller. He (the speaker) is quite sad to have been rejected and abandoned by the woman. Now, there comes another man who mentioned as the traveller, comes over to the woman he loves and tries to take her away further and further away from the speaker. The speaker still has a great love to her. He keeps and maintains his love for the woman well. If the writer assumes, the speaker felt that love for the woman he saved is a noble love. In this last stanza, it shows how the actual submission and sincerity of the speaker to let his beloved gone away. The speaker is really stoic his willingness and to accept suffering and the fact that his great love for the woman really will not get a reply forever. Though it is unrequited love, he inevitably has to accept the real situation and should to be unselfish and overbearing that she would accept his love. However, one's feelings cannot be enforced. When the relationship is endured, usually, it will not run properly. It is because of a feeling that is imposed is an action that makes one of them does not lead from the heart, there is no sincerity. It is just a feeling that is shown to make our partner feels happy, it is only makes us as if a happy couple. The relationship lived with pretense will just lead to falsehood, which could be later, a new problem in their relationship. He better lets the woman go and be happy with the traveller, than he imposes his will to establish a relationship with her. If the relationship is still enforced, it will make the woman do not get the same happiness when she was with the speaker.

4. Conclusion

Love's Secret by William Blake tells about the speaker who seems to be frustrated and powerless. The writer perceives in this poem a melancholic tone, which reflects that deep sadness is the feeling that invades the speaker's heart. The readers can see in this poem that Blake is the poet who gives more importance to the feelings and sensations than to reason, because they can be manipulated and the sensations are pure.

The writer concludes that this poem is a sad lament to an unrequited love. The poem tells about the greatness of the love he had someone express, but the woman walked away to

show that it is a subtle rejection. This makes the speaker think that it is better that he loved her silently and secretly. There is a huge desire to possess, but he decides to keep his feeling than when expressing his love again, he got the same rejection. Unusually, the text advocates keeping a hidden love secret, on the basis that a love never revealed can be kept alive, rather than risk being dashed by the object of one's affections. This is in stark contrast to much conventional love poetry, which implores the readers to act impulsively on love before the ravages of time drain them of youth and life.

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