Semiotic Analysis on The Concept of Love in Nizar Qobbani's *Risalah Min Taḥt Al-Mā'i*

Maulana Muhammad Fikri[1], Abdul Muntaqim Al Anshory[2], Mikail Muhammad Ramdhani[3]

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang[1,2], Oxindo Solution Mataram[3]
Email: 200301110048@student.uin-malang.ac.id

Abstract: The language of poetry often uses distinctive languages and contains many signs. This requires special studies, including semiotic studies. This study aims to analyze the Arabic poetry *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani based on Michael Riffaterre's semiotic perspective, which includes heuristics & hermeneutics, indirectness of expression, matrix, model, variant, and hypogram. This research is qualitative with the main data in the form of the arabic poetry *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani. Data collection techniques used are reading and note-taking techniques. The data analysis technique is in the form of qualitative data analysis techniques, which consist of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the arabic poetry *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani talks about love as a force that has a big influence on life, realized from various aspects of human emotions. This data is contained in heuristic and hermeneutic processes, indirect expressions that use language styles such as metaphors and personifications, divided into matrixes, models & variants, and motivated by a hypogram that is in accordance with the concept of love.

Keywords: Semiotics, Poetry, Riffaterre, Love, Nizar Qobbani

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the human imagination provides many opportunities to do things such as to express themselves, which gives rise to various kinds of literary arts as a place and result of that expression. Literature is a written work that expresses something in the form of language that tends to have a value of beauty. Integrated in concepts that are deepened, twisted, shortened and twisted or other aesthetic composition methods through the language tool itself (Terry, 2010). Philosophically, literary works creations cannot escape getting influences from the surrounding environment, authors or poets in creating literary works are very closely related to culture, personality, and all social aspects of society (Qiwarunnisa, 2018). Indeed, literary works have many

kinds of themes and types that have many existences, but it is still possible for the researchers to make this article with the aim of understanding and analyzing the literary works of a diplomat and writer from Syria, Nizar Qobbani. Nizar Qobbani's poems have attracted the attention of the researchers to be the object of research, which will further reveal the intricacies of Nizar Qobbani's literary art through the perspective of theory of Semiotics by Michael Rifaterre.

Michael Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics provides an idea and curiosity about how a study of arabic literary art can be studied and analyzed with theories from the western world, while helping us understand the scope of semiotics which is concerned with the science of signs, especially in literary works such as lyrics or poetry, the substance of which is indirect expression in poetry, heuristic and hermeneutic reading, matrix, model, variant, and hypogram (Yapi, 2007).

There are several studies that also use Michael Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics in analyzing meaning with different research objects. For example, research on verses from the Qur'an (Fajrin, 2019; Hizkil, 2021), a children's song entitled *Shabondama* (Fajria, 2020), and the Indonesian poem *Aku Melihatmu* by K. H. Mustofa Bisri (Shiddiq, 2020), a collection of Kepayang poems (Mudrikah, 2015). In addition, this theory has also been used in analyzing arabic poetry, such *as Ikbar 'Īsyrīna Man* by Nizar Qabbani (Haikal, 2021) and Faruq Juwaidah's *Fî 'Ainika Unwanî* poem (Zahro, 2022). Based on the studies above, there are similarities with this study, which uses Michael Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics. The main difference is in the object of the study. This study focuses on analyzing the meaning of the poem *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani based on Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics. The researchers tried to reveal in depth how the thought process from Nizar Qobbani's free style poems, focusing on the style of language used in the poem entitled *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* so that it will become a significant actualization from the understanding of literary arts, using the method of Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Poetry

Poetry is a language activity that is different from the use of language in general. Poetry always talks about something indirectly by hiding it in a sign (Riffaterre, 2021). Basically, poetry is a sign system that has meaning. In

addition, Kosasih (2012) also said that poetry is a literary work that uses figurative words and is rich in meaning. Poetry evokes human feelings and can cause a clear response to the meaning heard or read from the poem. Poets sometimes also use some words that are rarely used in everyday language in order to bring out the poetic nature of their poetry. Giving an emotional or philosophical impact on listeners and readers is the result of interpreting the contents of a poem. The process of giving meaning to poetry must go through the framework contained in semiotic studies. So basically, in order to be able to interpret poetry properly and correctly, a poem must be analyzed in semiotics. That way, the symbols and signs contained in poetry can be understood.

Semiotics

Semiotics is a scientific study of studying signs. Semiotics studies the systems, rules, and conventions that allow these signs to have meaning. The study of semiotics assumes that social phenomena in society are signs. Etymologically, semiotics comes from the Greek word simeon which means "sign". Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects, events throughout culture as signs. Van Zoest (Sobur, 2001) defines semiotics as the science of the sign (sign) and everything related to it, namely the way it functions, its relationship with other words, its delivery, and its acceptance by those who use it.

In life, human cannot be separated from the sign. Everything present in life is seen from the sign, which is something that we must give meaning (Lantowa, 2017). The concept of this sign is to see that meaning arises when there is a relationship between the signified and the signifier. Sign is the unity of a form of signifier (signifier) with an idea or marker (signified). In other words, the marker is "meaning of sound" or "graffiti meaning" (Lantowa, 2017).

Thus, semiotics perceives a sign as an act of communication and then refined it into a literary model that is responsible for all essential factors and aspects, for understanding literary phenomena as a unique communication tool in any society. Therefore, Teeuw defines semiotics as a literary science that tries to discover conventions that provide meaning (Lantowa, 2017).

Semiotics of Michael Riffaterre

The semiotic theory of Michael Riffaterre provides a system to understand the scope of the meaning of poems through signs. The process of extracting meaning through signs found in the poems, of course, will be closely related to semiotics which has a focus on the sign system (Ambarini , 2012).

Poetry in essence sometimes contains a hidden meaning, in order to give a beautiful impression and can attract the attention of the reader in the art of literature. Poetry is always changing by aesthetic concepts and experiencing the evolution of tastes according to the development of civilization. However, one thing that has not changed is that poetry conveys messages indirectly. Poetry says one thing and means another. The process of reading poetry with true appreciation and meaning can give us a deep understanding of poetry so that we can feel every pressure from what is written and be able to absorb the values contained in the poem (Rais Ahmad, 2019). For this reason, the sign system in poetry must be analyzed to determine its meaning. Riffaterre revealed that there are several things that need to be considered to find out the meaning of poetry as a whole, namely heuristic reading, hermeneutic reading, indirect expression, looking for matrixes, models and variants and hypograms.

Heuristic & Hermeneutic Reading

Heuristic reading is the first level of reading in a text or poem to get the basic understanding of the meaning contained in the poem. Basically, it is the first stage of the interpretation, which moves from the beginning to the end of the literary text, from top to bottom following a syntagmatic sequence (Ratih, 2016). At this stage, the meaning of the poem will be found textually.

Hermeneutic reading, which can also be called retroactive reading, is applying the structural decoding process to the text. The decoding process is actually a variation of a structure and the relations of its variants then form a unity of meaning. At this stage, the reader must review and compare the things he has read at the heuristic reading stage (second reading level). In this way, the reader can modify his understanding with the understanding that occurs in hermeneutic reading. The maximum effect of hermeneutic reading as a generator of meaning systems is present at the end of the text. That is, the text must be seen as a complete whole, not part by part (Lantowa, 2017). In this perspective, poetry must be understood as a structural unit or building composed of various linguistic elements. Therefore, hermeneutic reading is also carried out structurally or in buildings composed of various linguistic elements.

Indirectness of Expression in Poetry

The indirectness of expression in poetry occurs in 3 ways, namely "displacing, distorting, or creating meaning" (Riffaterre, 2021). Firstly, the displacing of meaning perceives the change of meaning is caused by the use of metaphors and metonymy in literary works. This metaphor and metonymy in

its broadest sense refers to figurative language in general. So, it is not limited to metaphorical figurative language and metonymy. Secondly, the distorting of meaning perceives that the destruction or deviation of meaning occurs because of ambiguity, contradiction, and non-sense. Ambiguity can occur in words, phrases, sentences, or discourses caused by the emergence of different interpretations according to the context. Lastly, the creation of meaning is created through enjambement, homologue, and typography. The creation of this meaning is a poetic convention in the form of visual forms which linguistically have no meaning but provide meaning in poetry.

Matrix, model, and variant

Key words or the gist of a series of texts, is called a matrix. The matrix is an abstract concept that is never actualized and does not appear in the text. Signification (sign) is like a donut, where the empty space in the middle is the matrix, so that thoughts about something that have not yet been actualized become part of the "donut" which is the center of meaning (Riffaterre, 2021). The matrix can be a simple word, phrase, clause, or sentence. The model is the first actualization of the matrix which can be a particular word or sentence. This model is then expanded into variants so that it reduces the text as a whole. The model is then described in the variants contained in each line or stanza. Matrix and model are variants of the same structure. In other words, poetry is the development of a matrix into a model and then transformed into variants.

Hypogram

A hypogram is a meaning system that has a predicate that can even be as big as a text. The hypogram may be a potential that is observable in language, or an actual that is observable in the preceding text. For poetry to be activated in the text, the sign referring to the hypogram must also be a variant of the matrix of the text (Riffaterre, 2021).

According to Riffaterre, (Ratih, 2016) the hypogram is divided into two, namely, the potential hypogram and the actual hypogram. The potential hypogram is a matrix that is the core of the text or keywords, it can be a single word, phrase, or simple sentence. The first change of the potential matrix or hypogram is the model, then it is converted into variants. The actual hypogram can be real text, words, proverbs, or whole texts. The actual hypogram becomes the background for the creation of new texts (Ratih, 2016).

METHOD

Type of Research

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory. Qualitative descriptive method is a method used to describe and portray existing phenomena, both natural and human engineered, which pays more attention to the characteristics, quality, interrelationships between activities (Sukmadinata, 2017). The method enfolds Riffaterre's theory of semiotics that describes heuristic and hermeneutic reading. which is described by matrixes, models, variant and hypogram.

This study uses qualitative data because it adjusts the object of research, namely poetry by Nizar Qobbani, by analyzing the poem based on heuristic and hermeneutic readings: the first reading is for meaning, while the second reading is to understand the meaning. What is meant by qualitative data is data in the form of words, schemes, and pictures. The qualitative data of this study are in the form of names and addresses of research objects (Sugiyono, 2015). The primary data in this study is the poem *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani. While secondary data are documents, books, and other research journals that are in accordance with the topic and research theory.

Data collection

Data collection techniques used are reading and note-taking techniques. Reading technique is used to obtain data by reading, namely reading with observation. The next technique is a note-taking technique, namely capturing data by recording the results of reading and observing data. So, the data will be recorded properly.

Data analysis

The data analysis technique that the researchers used is a qualitative data analysis technique, which consists of three steps, namely: (1) data reduction; (2) data presentation, in the form of poetry re-reading based on Michael Riffaterre's semiotic scheme, namely: heuristic hermeneutic, indirect expression, matrix, model, variant, hypogram; and (3) drawing conclusions.

FINDINGS

Heuristic & hermeneutic reading

The heuristic reading of *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem can be seen from the lines of stanza below**:**
1. If you are my friend, help me leave you

2. Or if you're my love, help me heal from you

3. If I knew that love is so dangerous, I wouldn't love

4. If I knew the sea is so deep, I wouldn't have sailed

5. If I knew my ending, I wouldn't have started

6. I miss you, teach me not to miss

7. Teach me how to cut the roots of your love from the depths

8. Teach me how tears die in the eyes

9. Teach me how the heart dies and the longings to commit suicide

10. If you are a prophet, save me from this magic

11. From this disbelief

12. Your love is like infidelity. Purify me from this disbelief

13. If you're strong, get me out of this ocean

14. I do not know the art of floating

15. The blue wave in your eyes, dragging me deeper

16. And I have no experience in love

17. I don't have a boat

18. If I am dearest to you, take my hand

19. I'm in love from my head to my feet

20. I'm breathing under water

21. I'm drowning

Heuristically, this poem gives an understanding of someone who experiences regret in love affairs but is still willing to give a second chance to the person he loves. Turning to hermeneutic reading, the researchers find the use of imaginary words and the use of various language styles that add to the impression of hope. On the other hand, the poet's expression of helplessness appears focusing on the feeling that radiates and is integrated in poetic and beautiful sentences, which becomes the hallmark of this *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem.

Indirect expression

Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i Poem uses indirect expression in the form of displacing of meaning. The indirect expression uses language styles such as metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. An example is found in lines 7-8.

Matrix, model, variants

The matrix in *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem is an abstract concept that focuses on describing emotional situations about love, sacrifice, hope, self-actualization. The model used is the actualization of the matrix, namely the

general love model. On the other hand, the variant contained in the poem shows the poet's emotional condition, which is turbulent with high expectations, although in the end the poet realizes his position in reality.

Hypogram

The hypogram in *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem is included in the potential hypogram, which the meaning/matrix is found in several words and sentences in the poem. The most prominent signs in *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem as hypograms are the expression of sincere feelings of love and affection from a man to a woman, and the manifestation of the weakness and the hopelessness of human beings.

DISCUSSION

Nizar Qobbani's poem uses a variety of language styles that are presented with a series of meaningful words. The application of Michael Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics can help in the process of understanding and analyzing the meaning of the *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem.

Heuristic & hermeneutic reading

Heuristic reading occupies the first stage in the level of reading whose function is to clarify the meaning in terms of language. On the other hand, hermeneutic reading is the second stage in the reading stage which analyzes the meaning of the *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem. It attempts to review and compare the meanings of the expressions as already in the Heuristic reading stage.

In line 1 & 2, there is already the use of imaginative words, which the poet hopes that the lover will become someone he wants but has the opposite intention. It is natural as a friend or lover, for there is an essence of closeness and even gives a sense of belonging and comfort but implies that he is in such deep pain according to the lines.

Lines 3-5 use hyperbole, giving the meaning that the poet prefers not to know anything about love, the sea, and the end. Which is where it all is an expression that by knowing the consequences of these three things, regret will come, no matter how big the sacrifices will be.

Lines 6-9 provide the theme of "teach me", where the poet asks to be taught some things which of course are in accordance with this concept of love. The realization of the expression of longing and the magnitude of desire but

feeling powerless at the same time can be felt from these two stanzas. The style of language used here is metonymy and personification, where he replaces or describes the source of strength in his heart with the words "roots pulled from the recesses of the heart" and "turns off tears in the eyelids", while giving a synergy that the poet feels very powerless to make requests like this.

Lines 10-12 give the impression of the great desire of the poet who even goes so far as to say that the person addressed is a Prophet, which we already know that the Prophet has "miracles" or is generally seen as someone who has power or a place/figure of power. So, he asked to be freed from this magic or disbelief.

Lastly, lines 13-21, according to the researchers, are the most important part, poets like to tell the deepest and sincere emotions that can be described through language styles such as hyperbole and metaphor. Realization of his position that can only position himself as a lover from underwater, a low place that is difficult to express strength, so he can only create letters from underwater.

Indirectness of expression in poetry

Based on what has been explained at the stage of reading Heuristics and Hermeneutics, several examples can be taken regarding the indirectness of expression in the stanzas of poetry by Nizar Qobbani. Displacing of meaning: In the poem, examples of the use of metaphors can be seen as follows:

7. Teach me how to cut the roots of your love from the depths.
8. Teach me how tears die in the eyes.

These requests use the style of metaphor and personification, replacing the source of the power of love and compassion into roots, which are also influential and continue to the next stanza. After love is removed, the tears will stop.

Matrix, Model, and Variant

Poetry is the result of the development of the matrix, a vacuum that has not been realized, then becomes variants. It is from this matrix that the development process will occur, not limited to poetry only, the matrix can be realized into a mantra as well. The matrix or keyword in the mantra lies in *tekobi bae bae wong kang sejo olo mreng ingson*, which is the equivalent code so that the next mantra appears that supports the word (Al Fikry M. Fawaid, 2019). In this discussion, the matrix is the key in interpreting the meaning of Nizar Qobbani's poem, which generally describe emotional situations about

love, sacrifice, hope, and realization of the actualization of an individual's weaknesses, all of which are described in the *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem.

Apart from matrixes, there are also models and variants. The model is a word or sentence as a representative of the stanza of the poem. The model in this poem is a model of love in general, accompanied by other forms of models such as hope, sadness, and are on the spectrum. The reality is that when you love someone, the slightest thing will have a huge impact on a person, everything will be done to achieve the heart's goal. The model in *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem derives only three variants. Through the matrix and its models, these variants describe various things that describe the poet's feelings in each part of the stanzas of the *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i*, the researchers group them as follows: (1) Variant 1: Lines 1-6 describe the hope that rages from the heart; (2) Variant 2: Lines 7-9 describe the desire to be taught how to be free from his feelings; (3) Variant 3: Lines 10-21 describe the poet's position in reality in powerlessness.

Hypogram

Hypogram is the process of reading poetry that makes poetry become meaningful and complete. The creation of a literary work does not escape the influence of other literary works, and in this case, the work of Nizar Qobbani has been widely studied by several writers and researchers. Not only limited to poetry, but can also study songs, such as the meaning of poetry or the lyrics of Sakura's song which tells about the separation of a friend to achieve his dream (Mandala A.K.U.D.A, 2021). Some research studies by Nizar Qobbani that have intertextual relations are such as the poem entitled Uchibukki and the anthology *Asyhadu an lā imraata illa anti* written by Nizar Qobbani in 1979. *Asyhadu's an lā imraata illa anti* study describes the poet who greatly admires the woman's figure, extraordinary woman. Has a nature that is able to protect, painstaking, patient in all things, affectionate, able to provide comfort to the lover, gentle, and patient (Hayati, 2022).

Based on Riffaterre's theory of semiotics of *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem, the found that this poem contains the concept of love. The poet's love intentions are too big but not in line with expectations, and finally accept the reality of his position in life. Love is the embodiment of a strong affection for someone so that it creates a desire to be together and prosper. Hazam in (Jamal, 2007) states that love is an expression of the feelings of the soul, the expression of the heart and the turmoil of instincts that clings to one's heart towards his

lover. Love is born with passion, affection and joy. True love cannot be understood except with a sacrifice.

Love as described by Sabrina (Maharani, 2016) must have three main elements, the first is intimacy, the second is the desire to pay attention, and the third is trust. Love is the attachment of another individual's soul which is supported by a feeling of mutual respect so that both of them trust each other. This classification leads to the understanding that love can reside through intermediaries to certain objects. This object can then be understood as love. The concept of love for humans can be said to be the most general and universal feeling, because love does not only have to be for one individual, but can also be for parents, siblings, oneself, and the opposite sex. Understanding love is not an easy act, because of how big its influence is on an aspect of human life. For example, the concept of love is described in the story of Adam and Eve as an icon and symbol of human love for humans (Ika, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Poetry is a medium for expressing one's feelings about his/her view of the world, which can then be studied through Semiotic theories, one of which is Michael Riffaterre's theory of Semiotics. Riffaterre describes several stages in his theory, with indirect expression in poetry, heuristic & hermeneutic reading, matrixes, models & variants, and hypogram. After going through all these stages, it will be revealed and known what you want to study from the object of the research, which in this study, has studied 1 piece of poetry by Nizar Qobbani entitled *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* and the concept of love contained in the poem.

In the meaning of the poem, there are conclusions about the concept of love, which is a force that has a big influence on life. Love can make life happy and can make life miserable. Love can turn someone on, and love can also turn someone off. *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* poem describes the feeling of overlap coupled with the helplessness that is lost to the great love of the poet. The love that radiates is very strong, starting from the heuristic and hermeneutic reading process, contained in the indirect process of expression using language styles such as metaphors and personification figure of speech, divided into matrices, models & variants, and motivated by a hypogram that is in accordance with the concept of love.

SUGGESTION

This research is an analysis of Arabic poem *Risalah Min Taht Al-Ma'i* by Nizar Qobbani based on Michael Riffaterre's theory of semiotics, which includes heuristics & hermeneutics, indirectness of expression, matrix, model, variant, and hypogram. For the next researchers, this research can be developed through analysis of other literary works or researching the same poem but using other semiotic theories.

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