

Representability of Death in John Donne's "Death, Be Not Proud", Emily Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death", *Appointment in Samarra* as Retold by William Somerset Maugham

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Abstract - Intertextuality competence is needed to improve since intertextuality awareness is important in revealing meaning and message from particular works being read. In doing intertextuality there is the process which is called transpositional practice which asserted by Kristeva then underlined by Allen as three steps; exchanging, permuting, repositioning. From the steps it can be revealed what and how is being represented within the works. Using those three steps, the analysis of representability of death in Donne's "Death, Be Not Proud", Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" and *Appointment in Samarra* retold by Maugham can be revealed which is as the aim of doing this paper. The first representability of death is as the challenge for people who are ready to die since they believe that they will live eternally in the after-life. They are people who have good deeds in their life so death is only bridging them to eternity. Second representability of death is kind of quietness for kind people facing the death. While third representability of death is kind of refusal of belief in the destiny since they feel hard leaving the world as fanatic secular men. The purpose of representability revealed is for reminding people to be ready for death, all people with any particular belief will die.

Keywords: death, intertextuality, representability, transpositional practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

No text is original. The statement probably sounds peculiar for them who do not obtain a deep understanding about literature. Because the statement can lead them to assumption that all kinds of work, even written by the famous incredible writer is plagiarizing, since it is not original. But for them who obtain that, they will straightly refer to the concept of intertextuality. The statement about the originality is asserted by Kristeva in Allen (2000:73) and Kristeva in Leckron (2005:56) who claims that a text is constructed from a mosaic of quotation. When quoting means that there is always the previous text being cited. This concept is in line with the view of Barthes in Allen (2000:73) who uses the term the 'already-read' and the 'already-written' to support his statement that the readers would not find the original thought of the author

since there is always a 'before' thought which underlying the new work as an 'after' thought. It can be made simpler that 'no text is original' means that the authors must have references of particular thoughts that influence their works.

In his book, Allen (2000) has explored many different views of intertextuality from many experts. Two of them are mentioned above, Kristeva and Barthes. The term intertextuality itself is recognized by people as being invented by Kristeva since neither previous experts, Saussure nor Bakhtin clearly employs the term (11). Intertextuality by Kristeva is renamed as transposition which concerns about how one 'sign system' is integrated into another 'sign system' which causes the changes of semiotic in it (53). As known that the concept of 'sign system' is well known as Saussure's view which stated that sign is made from the combination of signified (concept) and signifier (sound-image) (8), which both of them can refer to any field of human communication. For instance, the way people clothing can signify the culture where the user be in. So, transposition is intertextuality which concerns how the concept and the sound image of a certain text or many texts are integrated into another concept and sound image which are made by changing the semiotic and presented as the new text. Kristeva mentioned the transpositional practice such as three steps; passing, exchanging, permuting, and representing. The practice is Donne to get what is called representability. Representability is the quality of what being represented as the result of the transpositional practice.

"We shall call transposition the signifying process' ability to pass from one sign system to another, to exchange and permute them, and representability the specific articulation of the semiotic and the thetic for a sign system. Transposition plays an essential role here inasmuch as it implies the abandonment of a former sign system, the passage to a

second via instinctual intermediary common to the two systems, and the articulation of new system with its new represent ability.” (Kristeva in Allen540)

But then Allen mentioned trans-position with three steps; exchanging, permuting, repositioning. The steps can be Donne differently based on each representational objective. The difference can be seen in arrangement, appropriation, and structure in the new text. (55)

Exchanging

When you give something to someone and they give you something else is the description of the definition of exchange. (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary-3rd edition). In the transposition, exchange can be seen as the process of integrating one sign system to another sign system, taken from one author by another author and later his also taken by another author. For example, the concept of *Aku* by Chairil Anwar is taken by Sindunatha in his *KutukanAsu*, and then the concept of Sindunata’s *KutukanAsu* is probably taken by Joko Pramono in his *Asu* (<http://alivarosdiana.blogspot.co.id/2013/08/analisis-puisi-kutukan-asu-oleh.html>). Here, exchange means ‘taking and taken’ from one author by another author.

Permuting

In mathematics, the notion permutation relates to the act of arranging all the members of a set into some sequence or order, or if the set is already ordered, rearranging its elements, the process called permuting. (<http://en.m.wikipedia.org>). The definition can be applied in transpositional practice. Permuting can be the process of arranging the concept and sound image which resulted in the process of exchange. For example, Sindunata arranged the concept of Chairil Anwar’s *Asu* and used its sound image to be integrated with his own thought or his thought or other intertextuality.

Repositioning

In economic study, reposition is the activity of changing a brand’s status in comparison to that of the competing brands. Repositioning is effected usually through changing the marketing mix in response to changes in the market place, or due to failure to reach the brand’s marketing objectives. (www.bussinessdictionary.com) Repositioning refers to the major change in position for the brand/product. (www.segmentationstudyguide.com). Borrowing both definitions, reposition in transpositional practice can be changing the sound image of the concept taken from the previous sign system in order to produce new works differently. As Sindunata changed the concept of *binatangjalang* in Chairil Anwar’s *Aku* to be the sound image of *Asu* in *KutukanAsu*.

(<http://alivarosdiana.blogspot.co.id/2013/08/analisis-puisi-kutukan-asu-oleh.html>)

The three steps are Donne in doing transpositional practice / intertextualizing based on the purpose its representability.

Recently, many researches discussing intertextuality are a lot. Some of them is done by Bodemer (2012) who observed that activity of searching is important as intertextual practice for undergraduate research. Searching can discover the history of work and its link by finding the before thought and after thought, what already read and what already-written, the changes of concept and its sound image among the works. So intertextuality competence is helpful for scholars in their study. Beside that, Moyise (2002) had Donne a research which discusses the different types used today in the aim at knowing which types of intertextuality most used by the scholars in order to be guidance for the reader to know what is being claimed. While, Ahmadian and Yazdani (2013) in their research found that the result reveals the strong effects of intertextuality awareness on reading the texts, in other words the competence of intertextuality awareness.

The three examples of research Donne about intertextuality show how important to improve competence in intertextuality. One of the efforts to improve it is by doing intertextuality analysis of three literary works; John Donne’s “Death, Be Not Proud”, Emily Dickinson’s “Because I Could Not Stop for Death”, *Appointment in Samarra* as retold by William Somerset Maugham. The analysis aims at finding the representability of Death in the three works and the way it is represented shows by the three steps in transpositional practice.

II. TRANSPOSITIONAL PRACTICE TOWARDS THE WORKS

“Death, Be Not Proud”

It is a poem written by English Metaphysical Poet, John Donne in around 1610 but just about published in 1633 in Donne’s “Holy Sonnets”. In this poem, John viewed the ultimate reality that is death. The speaker of the poem addresses to death which is personified as a man whom to talk with, saying that there is no need for him to be proud even though most people consider him very powerful and harmful, whereas he is neither powerful nor harmful. Donne pictured death is nothing but sleep and rest as such kind of pleasure. The concept of live after life becomes the reason why the speaker says that death is actually who will really die, because human will wake up and live eternally. That concept is strongly considered as the transposition did by Donne from the Bible since there are most of words is as similar as what in the Bible which is believed by the Christians. There are many concepts of ‘Death’ which is told in Bible.

The concept of 'Death' in Donne's poem is like what Bible says;

1. Death

It is what has already determined by God that all human being will come to death.

2. Live after life

Line 1 – line 4 carries similar voices which are similar with Revelation 20:6, Ecclesiastes 9:5, Corinthias 15:15-52, and Matthew 10:28 stating the live after life and that the soul will stay eternally. (<http://www.openbible.info/topic/afterlife>)

3. Death Angle

The death is personified as powerful and harmful who can take someone's life. It can be viewed as addressed to the Death Angle. In Christian, it is believed that there are two death angles who have contrary characteristics. Michael (archangel) is good angle of death and Samael is evil angle of death. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). In Donne's poem the death refers to evil angle for death since it looks itself as mighty and dreadful.

Beside that, Donne is religious man, he is a catholic, and raised in a Catholic family so it can be said that "Death be not Proud" is intertextualized by Bible.

Exchanging

Donne took the concept of death, live after life, and death angle from the bible. Then later his version taken by Dickinson.

Permuting

Donne used those concepts to be arranged by his thought which may derive from the reality of life which sees that every human being will die. He links what is in the Bible and the reality of human life. It describes human's feeling towards the death.

Repositioning

Donne repositions the arrangement to be nice new works, a poem with the brave speaker who straight against the death. The concept in Bible is repositioned in with the speaker as if he talks to his enemy.

"Because I Could Not Stop for Death"

The poem was published posthumously in 1890 in Poems: Series 1, a collection of Dickinson's poems assembled and edited by her friends Mabel Loomis Tood and Thomas Wentworth poem was published under the title "The Chariot". The poem is to the point of telling that the speakers talking about death. Dickinson describes death as

a gentleman who is kind even lover who takes someone's life gently. The poem seems to tell a beautiful journey to death. Dickinson took some thought as follows;

1. Death

The death in Dickinson is the romantic gentleman which lead her to eternity.

2. Live after life

The last stanza shows that the speaker is ready to die since she knows that she dies only for coming to eternity as she believed.

3. Death angle

The death angle in Dickinson's poem is describes as a man while the speaker is a woman. The journey told by the speaker which sounds so romantic with a gentle death shows that the concept of good angle of death in Christian which is contrary to what in Donne's work. The good angle of death in this poem is Michael. Beside that, it can be referred to Greek mythology, which Thanatos is also believed as a good angle for death who has brother named Keres, an evil angle of death. (www.theoi.com)

Exchanging

Dickinson took the concept of death, after life and death angle as similar as the concept of those in Donne's poem. Dickinson took the thought from Donne and later her version is transpositioned by Maughm.

Permuting

The concepts taken then are arranged into different sound images. The concepts are still the same but the sound images are different. Death and live after life is made as the same response that death is just bridging for after life, but the death angle. It is different with Donne's work. The permutation is influenced by many sources, not only the Christian belief but the Greek mythology.

Repositioning

After arranging the concepts of the three than Dickinson repositioning the images into the new form which is in contrast voice of the speaker with Donne's poem. Death is viewed as kind man and who has romantic moment with the speaker. If Donne showed brave man who against the death, Dickinson showed the woman who are in love with the death. Two different sound images.

Appointment in Samarra

It is a short story published in 1933 by William Sommerset Maughm, telling about a merchant's servant who tries to avoid his appointment with Death. The servant

has met with the death in Baghdad but then he lends a horse to escape to Samarra in belief that the death will not find him. But the real is they are already tied by the appointment. The story tells about how a man behave towards the death that comes closer to take his life and he choose to run away as possible as he can. The concept of this story;

1. Death

The death in this story is frightening for the man. It seems that death will take his life forever, so he tries to escape to live forever.

2. Death Angle

When the man sees the death which is in the form of a woman and makes him afraid, it shows that the woman is harmful and dangerous. It can be referred to the female evil angle for death, Keres. It is female violent death angle in contrast with the angle of death in Dickinson's. (www.theoi.com)

Exchanging

Maughm took the concept of death and death angle from Dickinson's poem which is Dickinson took it from Donne. But he does not take the thought about the live after life as Donne and Dickinson did.

Permutating

The concept of death and death angle are arranged completed by the other sign as the sign of the name of Samarra. It can indicate that the story is based on Moslem since the story is in Baghdad and Samarra is known as one of important area for Moslem in Baghdad. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samarra>)

Repositioning

The arrangement of the two concepts then produced in the form of short story mostly different thought and plot from what being intertextualized. The sound of death and death angle is different with those previous works. If Donne and Dickinson took the concept from the Bible of Christian, Maughm showed the story of a Moslem man since the setting of place is in Baghdad. It seems to be the comparison to the previous works above. Moslem is also belief in the life after death but only there are two places to be referred, heaven and hell. (www.islam-guide.com)

III. REPRESENTABILITY OF DEATH IN THE WORKS

From the transpositional practice above, it can be found the representability of Death in those three works and its possible purpose of the author in his works.

Firstly, the concept of image is already stated in the Bible which means it is said by God. And the concept of that is then transpositioned into the poem by Donne. In the

Bible, it is believed there is eternal life after death. The concept is permuted with the believe that death is as harmful and powerful, whereas in the Bible death is what God has determined. But in Donne's poem, death is repositioned as a man because it is whom the speaker to talk with. So the death here is as a single second person as hearer. The representability of death is made as challenge which becomes the destiny always be faced by people and there is any worry about it. Because death is just the bridge to come to eternity. The purpose of the representability is reminding people or himself to be ready for death by doing kindness.

Secondly, representability of death is nearly same with Donne's sound. But the permutation point is different in the plot which is in the contrast view towards the death. If death in the Donne as harmful and powerful, Dickinson described him as gentleman who will come and pick her up and accompany her to the nice sleeping and then when the time is coming, she will get up and be in eternal life. The representability of death here is such kind of quietness. The purpose of the representability is the same with Donne that people should prepare for death by doing kindness so that death will take life softly.

Thirdly, the representability of death by Maughm is different from those are above. Eventhough the concept is the same about the death but the character in the story shows unbelieve in the live after life. The death here is viewed as the final of everything. It represents the real condition of a secular man who being hard to leave the world. They may recognize that the place to stay then in the live after life is divided into two based on the deeds; heaven and hell. The purpose of the representability is that reminding people that death is determined by God, no one can escape from it, just be ready for that to leave the world.

IV. CONCLUSION

Intertextuality makes clear understanding that all works are influenced by particular things. It is can be Donne by transpositional practice through three steps; exchanging, permuting, and repositioning. The steps can reveal what concept and sound image to be represented and the reason and meaning on it. Representability of death in "Death, not be proud" is as the challenge for people who are ready to die since he believes that he will live eternally in the after-life. They are people who have good deeds in their life so death is only bridging them to eternity. While, representability of death in "Because I could stop for death is kind of quietness. It seems that for kind people will have good way to die. While representability of death in the *Appointment to Samarra* is kind of refusal of belief in the destiny since they are hard leaving the world. It is what secular man probably behaves. The main point is that the

purpose of the representability is for reminding people to be ready for death.

V. REFERENCES

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