

THE AUTHOR'S DESIRE MANIFESTED IN BOB DYLAN'S SONG LYRIC "KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR"

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ABSTRAK

"Knocking On Heaven's Door" adalah lagu Bob Dylan yang ditulis pada tahun 1973. Lagu ini unik karena tercipta setelah kecelakaan misterius yang menimpa Dylan pada tahun 1966 dan kecelakaan itu membuatnya hiatus untuk beberapa waktu. Setelah kembali, ada perubahan pada karya-karyanya; jadi menurut peneliti ada hal-hal yang berhubungan dengan sisi psikologis Dylan. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori psikoanalitik yang dikemukakan oleh Jacques Lacan. Dalam menganalisis lirik lagu "Knocking On Heaven's Door", peneliti menemukan bahwa Bob Dylan sebagai penulis lirik adalah subyek kekurangan dan kekurangan itu membawa hasrat kepadanya. Dylan memiliki keinginan untuk keaslian diri. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa lirik lagu "Knocking On Heaven's Door" merupakan metafora dan metonim dari kehidupan Bob Dylan.

Kata kunci: lirik lagu, lacan, bob dylan, hasrat, 'Aku'.

ABSTRACT

"Knocking On Heaven's Door" is a song by Bob Dylan written in 1973. This song is unique because it was created after Dylan's mysterious accident in 1966 and that accident put him on hiatus for some time. After returning, there were changes in his works; so the researcher thought there were things related to Dylan's psychological side. This research used the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Jacques Lacan. In analyzing the lyrics of "Knocking On Heaven's Door", the researcher finds that Bob Dylan as the lyricist is a subject of lack and that lack brings the desire to him. Dylan has a desire for self-authenticity. Thus, it can be concluded that the lyrics of "Knocking On Heaven's Door" are metaphors and metonyms from Bob Dylan's life.

Keywords: song lyric, lacan, bob dylan, desire, 'I'.

INTRODUCTION

Since born, humans must have desires where that desire will lead them to fulfill their needs, even babies also have desires. Gradually, as the baby gets older, his desire also increases. Even humans have unlimited desires because if one desire is fulfilled then another desire will arise and it will continue until the human dies. Thus, it can be said that humans always feel a lack of desires.

A European philosopher, Thomas Aquinas divides human desires into two groups, namely physical and human intellectual desires. Furthermore, human intellectual desires can be channeled through writing activities that produce a work. It can be concluded that in a literary work there is the author's desire, which shows that by producing work, the author/writer feels that his/her lacks are complete.

The phenomenon described above seems to also happen to Bob Dylan. As a world musician, Dylan uses music as a medium to convey something that worries him. As has happened to several of his albums, which contain some of Dylan's identities artistically but still striking.

In this analysis, a song lyric entitled "Knocking On Heaven's Door" is assumed to be a metaphor for Dylan's

life in achieving his self-authenticity. Thus, the use of psychoanalytic theory proposed by Jacques Lacan is considered to be able to answer the problem of how the author's desire is manifested in the song lyric "Knocking On Heaven's Door".

METHOD

Basically, the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Jacques Lacan is based on the findings of anthropology and structural linguistics in which one of the underlying statements is that the unconscious is a hidden structure that resembles language structure. Knowledge about the world, other people, and the self are determined by language. Language is a precondition for the act of becoming aware of oneself as a different entity from others (Faruk, 2012: 186).

In Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, there are three concepts, namely needs, demands, and desires which have a relationship with the real, imaginary, and symbolic phases. A signifier signifies another signifier, no word is free from metaphoricality (the metaphor is a signifier that signifies another signifier). Lacan talks about glissement in the sign sequence, from one signifier to another. Because every signifier can receive meaning, there is

never a closed, satisfying meaning (Sarup, 2003: 10). The metaphor represents one of the ways used to structure various kinds of discourse.

Metaphor according to Lacan (Bracer, 2005: 72) is a point-de-capiton source that arises when a meaning that exists in the unconscious changes and regulates the use of signifiers, to a point where every type of pre-existing lexical relationship is united. Whereas metonymy is defined as a replacement. Lacan (Faruk, 2008: 27) understands metaphor as the condensation principle, which means that there is a juxtaposition of signifiers so that there is a meaning shift. While metonymy works with the diversion principle to distract the sensor.

As Nusselder (2009: 16) said that Lacanian theory incorporates this nation of metaphors by considering distortion as an aspect of human reality itself. Metaphors link the subject to the original event. This deviation of meaning uses metaphor and metonymy as a means of conveying messages in language. So, the way to understand literary works is by looking at the language of literary works through the metaphor and metonymy phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Bob Dylan's Life Background

The musician whose real name is Robert Allen Zimmerman was born into a Jewish family who immigrated to America to escape from Adolf Hitler's genocide in Germany. From an early age, Dylan learned to play guitar and harmonica; and we can say that his influence is undeniable. For example without Dylan's work, the Beatles' shift towards introspective songwriting in the mid-60s would not have happened.

His musical career began as a singer of folk songs. The Nobel Prize in Literature 2016 that was awarded to Dylan sparked controversy because some people thought that music was not part of literature; it should be written instead. On the other hand, the music or song has a lyric element. According to the Indonesian Encyclopedia, a song consists of several elements, namely: melody, lyrics, arrangement, and notation. Specifically, the lyric is defined as verses or words that are voiced to accompany the melody.

Not only music, but Dylan also produced a work of prose poetry entitled *Tarantula*; the first part of his memoirs *Chronicles: Volume One*; some books consist of the lyrics of his songs, and eight books related to his art. Dylan's works that raise humanitarian issues are based on his concern regarding the injustice of human rights caused by discrimination by several parties who monopolized at that time. This is also in line with what Lacan stated that Freud denies social dimensions by prioritizing individual desires and their fulfillment, while Lacan for the first time

recognizes intersubjectivity as something necessary and natural in forming ego (Faruk, 2012: 191).

In addition, an event in 1966 made a significant difference in Dylan's career. As reported on www.americanheritage.com which states that there has been an accident that has actually become a turning point for Dylan's works.

"...the accident has been treated as a major event in Dylan's life; at least one biographer divides the founder of folk-rock's career into "pre-" and "post-accident."

Various rumors about Dylan's accident circulated because in that accident no one really knew in detail about the unfortunate event. Still according to American Heritage, the accident was allegedly Dylan's way to get out of his increasing routine activities because at that time his popularity was skyrocketing. Some of them mention that after Dylan had his accident, he committed to his ascetic process.

"The accident was Dylan's means of escape from an unendurably fast-paced, pressurized life. As he said in a 1984 interview, "When I had that motorcycle accident ... I woke up and caught my senses, I realized that I was just workin' for all these leeches. And I really didn't want to do that." At some point during his convalescence, he realized that he wanted a much more tranquil, family-centered life."

Losing privacy and having tight schedule have become consequences as an artist and that has Dylan dealt with. This condition causes him to experience an identity crisis. This identity crisis process is indicated as the loss of *object petit a*. This sense of loss makes Dylan in a position as the subject-of-lack. He tried to produce works to fulfill this lack. His experience of lack and any effort to cover up that feeling to be a whole are a series of ways to meet *object petit a*. As Lacan said, *object petit a* is the object of desire that makes the subject feel whole.

After an accident, Dylan finally stopped his entertainment activities for several months and did his ascetic period. He lived as a normal person with his wife and five children. When he decided to return to the entertainment industry, Dylan's music also changed. His music had a metamorphosis to be more mature, efficient, and direct. He also reduced the traditional rock and roll elements and instead showed his influence in the music industry with the genres of country, blues, and traditional folk music.

"His music changed, too, from the white-hot fury of Highway 61 Revisited and Blonde on Blonde to the sparer, quieter sound of 1968's John Wesley Harding and 1969's Nashville Skyline"
(www.americanheritage.com)

In 1974 Dylan returned to the entertainment industry and performed his concert. Then in 1978, he also declared himself to be Christian. Dylan even released a series of Christian albums entitled *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved*. He won a Grammy Award for Best Male Rock Vocal Performance for the song *Gotta Serve Somebody* from his religious album, *Slow Train Coming*. After his declaration to be Christian, Dylan instead traveled to Israel. In fact, Israel is a holy place for Judaism, his childhood religion, and that religion is Dylan's family. Thus, many assumed that Dylan's conversion to Christianity had a short period only. Some sources also state that Dylan finally choose to be an agnostic.

3.2. Bob Dylan's desire in "Knocking On Heaven's Door" lyric

His desire to live in this "freedom" becomes a channel through which the author's desire to create his works flows. Desire in this Lacanian definition is a framer of the author's subjectivity. Desire that originally comes from the unconscious, something that is authentic and pure; sometimes implicates itself in consciousness, desire is an explosion that comes out of the unconscious and externalizes itself to consciousness (Hartono, 2007:20).

Because literature is a place to express this desire, the language factor becomes very significant. Language, in this case, is related to words which in Lacan's technical terms are called "signifiers". He also emphasized that the signifiers used by the subject in speaking, writing, or dreaming represent that subject. Thus, the understanding of literary works is directed to what happens to the language used in literary works, and how far the literary language moves out of it, through the phenomena of metaphor and metonymy in it.

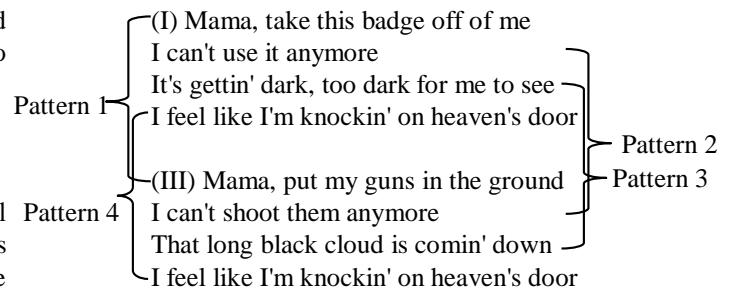
"Knocking On Heaven's Door" is written and sung by Dylan in 1973, and it is one of the most popular compositions in the post-1960s. As mentioned above, there was a shift in Dylan's music to become more mature after his hiatus. According to Lacan, this change is an attempt by the subject to fulfill the desire for *objet petit a*. Thus, through the language used by Dylan in his literary works, we can find out a series of signifiers regarding the author's desires.

The identification of desire by using this method of metaphor and metonymy cannot be separated from the intrinsic analysis of the literary works. In addition, according to Todorov, events in literary works have a tendency not to be presented as 'originally', but through a certain point of view. This point of view is metaphorical. This point of view in literary works exists and is important for understanding the work. Therefore, point of view is also a method that the author will use in identifying the author's desire.

"Knocking On Heaven's Door" tells the story of the character 'I'. The condition implicitly stated in the lyrics of this song has an emotional closeness with Dylan as the

author. Thus, the first person point of view is more likely to be used, it means Dylan in this case is the actor in telling himself, his actions, and the events around him.

In addition to the point of view, there is an intrinsic element that must also be the focus of this analysis where there is a pattern that appears in the lyrics. The first stanza has something similar to the third stanza. In the meantime, since the second and fourth stanzas are exactly the same, these need to be omitted to clarify the patterns:



The appearance of patterns in the first and third stanzas provides a unified pattern that will later affect the meaning. In the first pattern, we can identify something that is needed by 'I'.

Mama, take this badge off of me
Mama, put my guns in the ground

Badges and weapons are metaphorically related to signifiers which mean that 'I' no longer want to wear a badge and 'I' no longer want to use a gun. Thus metonymically, the signifiers can be a substitute for an attribute.

Moving on to the second pattern where there is a similarity regarding the use of two objects described in the first pattern.

I can't use it anymore
I can't shoot them anymore

In this second pattern, badges and weapons for 'I' become useless metaphorically related to the signifier which means that both of that things have no longer meaning to 'I'. Whereas, metonymically the signifier replaces useless possession.

The third pattern emphasizes the circumstances around 'I'.

It's gettin' dark, too dark for me to see
That long black cloud is comin' down

These two sentences are metaphorically related to darkness. The signifiers can metonymically replace directionless.

The last pattern in this stanza shows how 'I' feel.

I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door

The last pattern featured a related repetition that I felt. Metaphorically, the signifiers relate to the feeling of 'I' being in front of the gates of heaven. Meanwhile, metonymically, the signifier can replace authenticity.

After completing the analysis of the patterns that appear, the next focus is on the second and fourth stanzas which are exactly the same.

(II) *Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door*
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door

(IV) *Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door*
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door

The second stanza contains the repetition of the sentence *Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door*. It has same analysis as the previous one. What makes it different is the repetition itself. It can be identified that the repetition means 'I' want to emphasize that authenticity (the signifier) is really important for him/her.

In the imaginary phase, there is the concept of demand. According to Lacan, demand is something that cannot or is impossible to be fulfilled. In "Knocking On Heaven's Door", authenticity is something that 'I' character wants to get. By performing attribute release, 'I' character hopes to get the authenticity he desires. The signifier *I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door* is a metaphor for authenticity. That signifier indicates the *object petit a* on subject. *Object petit a* in this case is the authenticity that is not even known to the subject itself. This unknown condition makes the subject keeps trying to find and leads to the subject's unfulfilled demand for self-authenticity.

Based on the analysis, it also can be identified that authenticity as a demand that 'I' character wants finally cannot be fulfilled. Despite releasing the attributes that would later/may burden 'I' character in fulfilling authenticity, 'I' never reach that point.

All desire is a desire for value. Desiring the desires of others is actually a desire for "recognition" (Sarup, 2003: 24). This means that what 'I' character desires are values that reflect authenticity. Thus, metonymically, the desire of 'I' can replace the author's desire, namely authenticity. If we identified the reality that Dylan still has not decided which religion to believe in, then "Knocking On Heaven's Door" can be considered a metaphor for Dylan's life, who has yet to find his self-authenticity even though he has performed ascetic period after his accident.

CONCLUSION

In analyzing the lyrics of "Knocking On Heaven's Door", the researcher finds that Bob Dylan as the lyricist is a subject of lack and that lack brings the desire to him. Dylan has a desire for self-authenticity and this is known through the use of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory through the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. Thus, it can be concluded that the lyrics of "Knocking On Heaven's Door" are metaphors and metonyms from Bob Dylan's life. Especially, when he experienced an identity crisis due to his skyrocketing popularity. Starting from the case of an accident that happened to him, Dylan decided to stop for a moment from the entertainment industry, and after a while, he decided to change religions. But unfortunately, all that he did cannot bring Dylan to authenticity.

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