

"The Sacramental Vision: Critical analysis"

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to analyse the poem " Sacramental Vision ". This poem is taken from the book *The Task of Adam* 1985. It is by John Leax who was a very famous writer in that time and concerned his poems with religion. New Criticism approach was assumed by the researcher to analyse the literary work. The critical analysis of this paper was based on some rules established by the New Criticism school.

Keywords: New Criticism, critical analysis, approach, literary work

INTRODUCTION

The General Belief

New Criticism is marked by concentration on the language imagery or intellectual tensions in literary work. New criticism is an approach in 20th century, from 1920 to 1950, in high school and the college of literature classes in British and American's scholarship. The term New Criticism came into a popular use with the 1941 publication of John Crowe Ransom " the New Criticism ". This approach has other names through its history. They are formalism, textual criticism, Russian criticism, practical criticism, modernism and ontological criticism. There are many famous critics in the new criticism like T.S. Eliot, John Crowe, Pene Wellek, I.A. Richard, Peen Warren and Cleanth Brook, who wrote " Understanding Poetry ". This approach to literary analysis provides the reader with a correct interpretation of a text using only the text itself. Also, they believed that a poem can be analyzed to discover its correct meaning independent of its author's intention or emotional state. In the organic unity, also, all the parts of power are related overall to the author work.

There are many kinds of critics during 20th c. First, at the beginning of the 20th c, historical and biographical research dominated literary scholarship. The criticism's function was to discover the historical context of a text and to ascertain how the author's life influenced their writing. Second, the impressionistic critics believed that how we feel and what we personally see in a work of art are what really matter. Third, the naturalism is concerned with importance of scientific thought in literary analysis. Also, they believed that human beings are simply animals. Fourth, the new humanists who valued the moral qualities of arts by declaring that human experience are basically ethical. Fifth, the romanticism, who believed that literary study concerns with the artist's feeling and attitudes in their work, is known as the expressive school. Finally, formalism asserts that only the poem itself can be objectively evaluated not the feeling and beliefs of the author " the text and the text alone ".

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the researcher introduced some terms established by the New Criticism school. Moreover, Two British critics and authors, T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richard, helped laying the foundation for the form of formalistic analysis.

Terms of New Criticism

During the New Criticism, there are many terms. The first term is a close reading which means the complex system for arriving at the poem meaning, including the minute scrutiny of the text. The second term is aesthetic experience which means the effects produced on an individual while pondering a work of art. The third term is ontological status which means that a poem becomes an artifact, an objective and self - contained. The fourth term is intentional fallacy which means a poem can be analyzed to discover its correct meaning independent of its author's intention or its author's emotional state. The fifth term is etymology of an individual word which means that critics often need to conduct historical research in which he discovers what individual words meant at the time the poem has written.

Critics and Authors

A. T.S. Eliot:

According to Eliot, criticism should be directed toward the poem not the poet. In addition, the poet does not infuse the poem with his or her personality and emotions. Thus, the impersonal feeling and emotion are common to all human kind. Moreover, poetry is not

freeing of the poet's emotion, but it is an escape from them because the poem is an impersonal formulation of common feeling.

B. I.A. Richard

I.A. Richard is a psychologist and literary critic. He is the first one who coined the practical criticism. Richard distributed to his students copies of a poem without such information as the author or the date of the poem and he asked them to record their response of some questions. Then, from his analysis, Richard created an intricate system for getting the poem's meaning. It is a scrutiny or a close reading of a text that has become synonymous with the New Criticism.

METHODOLOGY

According to the New Critics, the critical analysis of a poem should be as following, when a critic criticizes a poem, the critic must start with discussing all the element and aspects in the poem. First, he should start with the title of the poem and find the relationship between the title and the text. Then, he must examine the text's diction with the denotation, connotation and the origin of such words. Second, he must examine all the allusions inside the poem. Third, he should analyze all images, symbols, figures of speech and any other things within the text. Fourth, the critic must examine and analyze the various structural patterns that may appear within the text. Fifth, he must consider such elements as tone, theme and point of view. After that, the critic should explain the whole text considering the meaning of the poem and he should bear in mind that he discusses only the idea without referring to the poet.

As following the New Criticism way of analysis, the researcher adopted their rules to the poem " Sacramental Vision ". This poem is taken from the book *The Task of Adam* 1985. It is by John Leax who was a very famous writer in that time and concerned his poems with religion; however, by following the New Criticism analysis, no need for referring to the poet' life.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the researcher aimed to analyse the poem chosen from the book *The Task of Adam* 1985, by John Leax. Here, the poem is as shown below, then we have the critical analysis based on New Criticism.

Sacramental Vision

Sometimes in my dream

He is still alive.

We stand at the fence

Talking about the garden.

“Plant kohlrabi,” he says,

and I remember the way

He’d slice white wafers

From the bulb, offering

Those to me balanced

On his knife blade.

I would eat again

That sharp sacrament

And join me
to that good world
He walks, but I wake
In time
And know my flesh is one
With frailty. The garden
I must tend is dark
With weeping, grown up
In window's weeds.

The title " Sacramental Vision " means a vision that reminds the speaker of joining paradise ; it has the relationship to the rest of the poem that talks about a dream in which the woman in this poem loves her vision more than her reality . The second point is finding the denotation and connotation of words, so sacramental something related to religion especially in Catholic. Sacramental is a kind of ceremony which is held in every activity or celebration like wedding or baptism. Also, Plant Kohlrabi as a denotative meaning Kohlrabi means cabbage, but as connotative meanings, it is related to a good deed which is done continuously like cabbage which has many layers. In addition, the denotative meaning of bulb is the round underground part of certain plants like lily and onion. However, the bulb here means a place

which has many bless and useful things. Frailty means weakness, so it means a weakness of human who always makes sins and can't do goodness. A weed as denotative meaning is a wild plant growing when it is not wanted, but in this context, it means something which always disturbs and attracts someone to bad deed.

Within the poem, the garden in the woman's dream is the same in her reality. Rather, the garden in her dream refers to the past when this wife was still one with her husband; this is considered as an allusion, so this word " garden" exists in the bible which means heaven. In addition, the word " sacramental" is a catholic allusion. Moreover, the word " slice white wafers " is an allusion from the bible which has semantic meaning as a symbol of unity with god. The most likely title is called " The Task of Adam " because Adam and his task was to plant kohlrabi when he was still alive , and he tells his wife to plant kohlrabi as to let his task still to be accomplished. As a symbol, the garden is a symbol of heaven. Also, a slice white wafer is a symbol of ritual Christian in every ceremony. Moreover, the word " sharpness" is a symbol of knife blade which used to feed the slice white wafer.

In this poem, there are many clear images. " He is still alive " is a metaphor of god, so in this poem, it means Jesus. " the fence " is a metaphor of a place in a church and it is as place to pray. Moreover, the word " knife blade" is a metaphor which means the hard world where the human live and they must survive in it and keep do the good things. " Eat that sharp sacrament" is a metaphor in which he compares the sacrament to an eatable thing which is sharp due to her sadness. With this word (in window's weeds), it is a metaphor of such not good condition, as we know that a widow usually seen as a not good woman, also the condition of a widow usually far more the good word.

" Sacramental Vision " is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza contains ten lines which talks about the vision. The second stanza contains six lines and the third one contains five lines; they talk about the reality. Thus, the form of the poem agrees to the content. The overall tone of this poem is depressed and sad in which the writer is sad seeing his condition and can't reach what he wants. Also, the tone is admiration in which the writer told about the sacrament which made him to do again. In addition, the tone is pessimistic; this is clear when the speaker said, " The garden I must tend is dark". Moreover, the point of view of the person is that she is serious about what happened in dream and after dream; joining herself and being strong. The theme of this poem is that people can escape from their reality within dreams.

The thesis statement of this poem tells the person about her dream or what goes into the dream, not all the time, but sometimes. Here, she said "He" which is her husband who is still alive in the dream. In addition, we can see that the speaker moves from the person "He" into the person " we" which means they are together in which she meets her husband in the garden during the dream. Then, the speaker talks about her two parts; the body and soul in which the body when she eats while the soul is the sharp sacrament because it is not real. As we can see, the speaker is depressed and miserable. The garden in the dream was a good one. However, in the reality, " weeping" is concerned with sadness and pains in which she weeps the garden by her tears. In fact, the plant in this garden is useless, wet and cannot be eaten.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as it is shown, the New Criticism has to apply such rules for analyzing any literary work without getting back to the poet's life: " the text and the text alone " (1988). As they follow the way of a close reading for any poem, they aim to discover its correct meaning

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ملخص الدراسة :

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحليل القصيدة , "the Sacramental Vision" و اختيرت تلك القصيدة من كتاب "مهمة ادم" عام 1985. كتب الشاعر المعروف جون ليكس هذه القصيدة في ذلك الوقت، وغالبا ما تحتوي قصائده على الطابع الديني. تبني الباحث منهجية مدرسو النقد الجديد، و تعتمد هذه الدراسة على التحليل النقدي باتباع قواعد وقوانين المدرسة النقدية الجديدة.

كلمات مفتاحية: النقد الجديد، التحليل النقدي، مذهب، العمل الادبي