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An Analysis of Imagery in Mother Africa, May I Return? Poem by Janaya Cooper

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Abstract

This research analyzed about imageries in the Mother Africa, May I Return? poem. The poem of Black Live Matter (BLM) movement in America, United Kingdom and Australia. The purpose of this research is to describe the kinds of imageries found in the Mother Africa, May I Return? poem. In this research, the writer used the descriptive qualitative method and used theory of Imagery by Perrine (1992). Data are explained by find the meaning and described them based on the kinds of imagery through four procedure, they are: identifying, classifying, analyzing and making the conclusion from the data. The result of this research are the writer found about 13 data of imagery of the poem. Visual imagery is the most dominant imagery in the Mother Africa, May I Return? poem. There are 6 data of visual imagery from 13 total data that the writer found in the poem, because visual imagery is the appropriate imagery for BLM's proponents to describe their misery in their own country. Another imagery that the writer also found in this poem are auditory imagery, tactile imagery and kinaesthetic imagery. There are 5 data of auditory imagery, 2 data of tactile imagery and 1 data of kinaesthetic imagery found in the Mother Africa, May I Return? poem.

Keywords: Imagery, Mother Africa may I return poem

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I INTRODUCTION

Poetry is type of literature that written by a poet which has aesthetic and deepest meaning. The writer of a poetry called as a poet. A poet usually writes a poetry to expressing his or her various emotions and feeling. A poet uses to

expressed his or her modes in a poem by variety of technique. Barnet (1961:5) States that poetry can be thought of as a verbal, written art form that uses a heightened sense of language to convey experience, feeling, or modes of

consciousness. Every people has their own way to convey their experience and the poets use poetry for cover them.

Poetry written to be enjoyed because a poet usually uses supporting elements to enrich the meaning and bring the readers imagination to his or her minds in poetry. To get great poetry, a poet has to create a poem by putting some supporting elements that is called by intrinsic elements such as figure of speech, rhyme, rhythm, imagery and tone to enrich the meaning and make the every reader feels easy to understand what the poet want to say in his or her poem. Gill in Efendi (2010) also said that the poin about poetry and the other form of literature is that choice of words and elements inside used by the author. It means that a literary work can called as a poem if the author put some instrinsic elements such as figurative language, rhyme, rhythm, imagery and tone in it.

Imagery is the name given to the elements in a poem that spark off the senses. Perrine (1992: 24-25) define imagery as “the representation through the language of sense experience”. The word image perhaps often suggests a mental picture, something seen in the mind’s eye –and visual imagery is the kind of imagery that occurs most frequently in poetry. But an image may also represent a sound (auditory imagery); a smell (olfactory imagery); a taste (gustatory imagery); touch, such as hardness, softness, wetness, or heat and cold (tactile imagery); an internal sensation, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, or nausea (organic imagery); or movement or tension in the muscles or joints (kinesthetic imagery).

Furthermore, Abrams (1999:121) argues that imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the analogues used in its similes or metaphors. For example, Arjun put some visual imageries in his poem with title *Let’s Preserve Our Nature* to describe his awareness about nature. He hope that we should aware of preserve nature, because this is very important for our lives, especially for our children or next generation.

In this research, the writer is interested to find and analyze about the experiences and feeling of the author through her poem by

describe the imageries. The simple reason why the writer is interested to analyze the poems is because the poem created by Black Lives Matter movement proponents. Black Lives Matter is an organized movement in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia to advocating for nonviolent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality against African-American people.

In 2013, three radical Black organizers — Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was a response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman. The movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin in February 2012. In the last some years we also found some information in some countries especially in USA that there were some accidents about racism, white people kill the black people. Some black people convey their emotions by many ways, some of them are protest the insident about the death of some black people killed by white people through demonstration and another way was the BLM proponents creat some poems with deepest protest.

Based on blacklivesmatter.com there are more than 20 protest poems created by BLM proponents and the writer would like to anylize the *Mother Africa! May I Return?* poem. The poems was made around 2012 to 2019 after the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin in February 2012. In genarily the poems contain by alot of messages and protest against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions.

The main reason why the writer is interested in analyzing the poems is because there are many imageries with deepest meaning found in those poems and each meaning of the poem has some purpose for conveying the social values for the white people, especially for the goverment of United State of America, United Kingdom and Australia. For example, the first time the writer read one of the poem with title *Mother Africa, May I Return?* The writer read the unique line, it is the first line of the first stanza of the poem:

Mother Africa, can you hear my calls ?

The line above is contain with *auditory imagery* due to in this line the author would like to tell her misery. Perrine and thomas (in Damhuri:2011) state that Auditory Imagery is an imagery which relates to the auditory that represent sounds, like words “buzzling”, tinkling, chiming, and others related to the sound. So, in the line the author would like to give an auditory

imagination to the readers of the poem that she got many kind of violence, racism and unfairness when she and another black people live in those country. From the of reasons above, the writer interest to analyze this research with entitle: *An Analysis of Imageries in “Mother Africa, May I Return” Poem by Jayana Cooper.*

II RESEARCH METHODS

Method is a way or a strategy to understanding of realities, steps of systematic to analyzed of the problem. In this research the writer uses qualitative method for analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) state that qualitative research is achieved not by means of quantification or statistical technique. It can give complex detail about particular phenomena which are difficult to be expressed with quantitative method.

This adding opinion by Vanderstoep and Johnson (2009:167), this method focuses on cultural, social, personal identity and its goal is more descriptive than predictive. Moreover, Bodgan and Biklen (1982:28) who state that qualitative research is desriptive; the collected the data is in form of words as picture rather than numbers. Therefore, from some definition above, it can be concluded that qualitative research will

be in the form of sentence, rather than statistic and numbers to comprehend phenomenon.

In this research, the writer uses some ways to get information as the data in this research. So, the writer classifies the source of the data into two categories, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the source of data that it is most important sources in order to get information that the writer wants to be analyzed in this research. The primary data in this research are some words, phrases, lines or stanza of the poems from Black Lives Matter movement organization. While, the secondary data is the supporting information that can help the writer in analyzing this poems. The writer takes the secondary data from other sources to support this research, such as journal, etc.

It is clear that, descriptive qualitative method is a method that usually used by the other writers in doing this library research.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the data is presented in writing. The writer uses informal method to present the research because the data that analyze in the form of word and phrase based on the finding. The writer presents as an introduction outlining the background of the problem that relates with imageries in Black Live Matter (BLM) movement’s poems “Mother Africa, May I Return?”. Then, the writers has limit to discuss only about “What kind of imageries found in “*Mother Africa, May I Return?*” poem?

The writer will present the results of the data analysis that describe the kinds of Imageries found in Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement’s poem “*Mother Africa, May I return?*”. The display of the data was done formally by giving

the description of the imageries that has found in Black Lives Matter (BLM)) movement’s poem “*Mother Africa, May I return?*” poem.

Mother Africa, May I return? poem is one of the poem that created by Black Lives Matter proponent, the poem created by Dr. Saundra Collins on 2016. The purpose of the poem is the author wants to protest any kind of violences by white poeple to the balck people African-American in United State of America, United Kingdom and Australia. The poem is divided into 5 stanza, in stanza 1 to 4 diveded into four lines and only 3 lines for stanza 5. This poem is tells the readers about another hope of Black People in United State of Amarica, United Kingdom and Australia. they hope for another

way to refuse of any kind of racism, violence and unfairness from white poeple to black people in those country.

Mother Africa, May I return?

Mother Africa, can you hear my calls ?
I'm shouting out to you as my universe falls.
These chains on my neck and hands are hurting.
Left without any keys.
I see other people chained just like me.
Heading for boats on the forbidden sea.
Mother Africa, can you hear my call?
I am being stolen
Forced far away from home. I am
Lost. In the dark. I can not see.
Vomit, blood, and dead bodies cover me .
Mother Africa where are you ?
Please come save me from this misery.
For yet, I will be sold as a slave .
Over 500 years past, I still call for you.
Why have you stopped looking for me?
Mother Africa, Are you still waiting for
Me to return to your beloved homeland?!
Will you welcome me with open arms ?

4.1 Visual Imagery

Perrine and thomas (in Damhuri:2011) said that visual imagery is such an imagery which relates to the visual imagination and it is a kind of imagery that appears mostly in the poem because almost words represented in the poem are basically seeable For instances: "Continuous as the stars that shine", "And twinkle in the Milky Way". While Pradopo, (1990: 81) state that visual imagery appeals to the sense of sight by describing something the speaker of the poem sees.

Datum1. *I'm shouting out to you as my universe falls.*

The first visual imagery that the writer found in the "Mother Africa, May I Return?" poem is can be seen in the second line of the first stanza of the poem, it is *I'm shouting out to you as my universe falls*. In this line the author would like to give an imagination about her suffering, it is visual imagination or visual imagery. As Perrine and thomas (in Damhuri:2011) said that visual imagery is such an imagery which relates to the visual imagination and it is a kind of imagery that appears mostly in the poem because almost words represented in the poem are basically

seeable For instances: "Continuous as the stars that shine", "And twinkle in the Milky Way". In the poem the author wants all of the readers feel that how dangerous her condition when the universe falls because her fearness makes her want to move to her anciently country (Africa). The author is also wants to tell to all of the readers and especially the government of United State, United kingdom and Australia that the black people really feel suffering when live in those country. They have no more idea where they can go for run away or escape from unfairness and racism that they got.

Datum 2. *I see other people chained just like me.*

The second visual imagery that the writer found in the "Mother Africa, May I Return?" poem is can be seen in the first line of the second stanza, it is *I see other people chained just like me*. In this line the author also give an imagination to the poem readers about her and another black people fearness when she or another black people live in United State, United kingdom or Australia. The author got the handcuffs without knowing what their fault. The author also can see another handcuff on another black people hand just like her. The black people got many kind of suffering just because of their color skin. So, based on the explanation above the writer categorize the datum 2 as the imagery of visual.

Datum 3. *Lost. In the dark. I can not see.*

The third visual imagery that the writer found in the "Mother Africa, May I Return?" poem is can be seen in the second line of the third stanza, it is *Lost. In the dark. I can not see*. In this line the author still using the visual imagery to show how suffer she is. When she or another black skin people live in those three country (United State, United kingdom and Australia) they feel like lost in the dark, they can't see any kindness from white skin people to the black skin people. The author makes an analogy that they live in a dark place, they look like lost because of their black skin. The readers are invited to imagine that they see how dark the black skin live is.

Datum 4. *Vomit, blood, and dead bodies cover me.*

The fourth visual imagery that we can see in this poem is in line three of the third stanza, it is *Vomit, blood, and dead bodies cover me*. In this line, the author put an imagination (visual imagery) that when they live in United State, United kingdom or Australia, they can find by easy black people dead bodies or blood or vomit from the black people because eventhough they have no fault but white people always blame them for any kind of problem in those country. So, based on the reason above the writer also put this line into visual imagery of the poem.

Datum 5. *Mother Africa, Are you still waiting for me to return to your beloved homeland?*

Another visual imagery which also writer found in the poem of the “Mother Africa, May I Return?” is in the first and the second line of the last stanza, it is *Mother Africa, Are you still waiting for me to return to your beloved homeland?*. The author very hope that she and another black people still missed to return to their ancestor country Africa because it look like be saved when they go back to their ancestor country than they live in those scary country like United State, United kingdom or Australia. So that, the explanation above also made the writer put this line into visual imagery.

Datum 6. *Will you welcome me with open arms?*

The last visual imagery in this poem is can be seen in the last line of the last stanza of the poem “Mother Africa, May I Return?”, it is *Will you welcome me with open arms?*. This line also contain with visual imagery doe to in this line the author also try to explain by giving an imagination to the readers of the poem seem like seeing of their ancestor country is open arms to welcome them back.

4.2 Auditory Imagery

Perrine and Thomas (in Damhuri:2011) state that auditory imagery is like an imagery which relates to the auditory that represent sounds, like words “buzzling”, tinkling, chiming, and others related to the sound. For instances: “Hear the sledges with the bells”, “How they are tinkle, tinkle, tinkle”. Perrine and Thomas statement was supported by Pradopo (1990:81) Poets can also describe sounds that are heard, which is called auditory imagery. Poets

might also use sound devices like onomatopoeia, or words that imitate sounds, as a means of describing sounds.

Datum 7. *Mother Africa, can you hear my calls ?*

The first auditory imagery which the writer found in the poem “Mother Africa, May I Return?” is can be seen in the first line of the first stanza of the poem, it is *Mother Africa, can you hear my calls?*. This line is contain by auditory imagey because as Perrine and Thomas (in Damhuri:2011) said that auditory imagery is like an imagery which relates to the auditory that represent sounds, like words “buzzling”, tinkling, chiming, and others related to the sound. In this line the author would like to give an auditory imagery through some calls to her ancestor country (African Government). The author and another black skin people got any kind of misery in their last country (America, United Kingdom or Australia) and they put some hope that they can go back to Africa and they call for help from African government and give them a chance.

Datum 8. *I’m shouting out to you as my universe falls.*

The second auditory imagery that we can see in this poem is in line two of the first stanza, it is *I’m shouting out to you as my universe falls*. In this line the author shouting out to everyone for looking some help of her and another black skin people misery, especially to the government of Africa. In this line, the readers also asked for listen to their shout out. The author consider that this problem is too risk for them, they need for help soon because any kind of misery were struck down to them.

Datum 9. *Over 500 years past, I still call for you.*

The last auditory imagery that we can see in this poem is in line three of the fourth stanza, it is *Over 500 years past, I still call for you*. In this line the author would like to say that she already looking for help for long time and there were some balck people died killed by white people in America, especially by policeman. The author would like to explain that their anxiety eventhough she and another balck people has no fault. In this line of the poem the author would like to protest that this bad treatment from their government was happened

since long time ago and now it still happen to them.

4.3 Kinesthetics Imagery

Perrine and Thomas (in Damhuri:2011) Kinesthetic imagery is called as an imagery which conveys a sense of movement, or tension in the muscles or joints. Like in the haunted house, can be studied how the poet describes the kinesthetic imagery. (i.e. the black bats tumble and dart) which impresses us about it sense of movement or tension in the muscles or joint of ours. For instances: "Hanging on the ceiling waiting for preys", "The black bats tumble and dart".

Datum 10. *Heading for boats on the forbidden sea.*

The author of the poem "Mother Africa, May I Return also put two kinestithics imagery in her poem. The first kinesthetic imagery can be seen in the second line of the second stanza, it is *Heading for boats on the forbidden sea*. As Perrine and Thomas said that Kinesthetic imagery is called as an imagery which conveys a sense of movement, or tension in the muscles or joints. So, in this line the writer also categorize the line into kinesthetics imagery doe to the author makes a kinesthetics imagination in this line, the movement for better live for black skin people in America, United Kingdom or Australia.

Datum 11. *Please come save me from this misery.*

Another kinesthetics imagery that the writer found in this poem is appear in the first line of the fourth stanza, it is *Please come save me from this misery*. In this line the author tells

to the readers that she and another black skin people hope that their ancestor country (African government) come to save them from any kind of misery that they got from the country that they lived for now. So, the author makes a kinesthetics imagination to describe that their misery still happen to them till today.

4.4 Tactile Imagery

Perrine and Thomas (in Damhuri:2011) Tactile imagery is viewed as an imagery which relates to tactile sense, like cold and warm. It has something to do with temperature like heat and cold or our touch sense. For instances: "A dungeon horrible on all side round", "As one great furnace flamed". While Pradopo (1990:81) Describing the way something feels is called tactile imagery.

Datum 12. *These chains on my neck and hands are hurting.*

The author of "Mother Africa, May I Return? poem also put tactile imagery in her poem, it is appear in the third line of the first stanza of the poem "*These chains on my neck and hands are hurting*". In this line the author try to explain her condition by giving the illustration. She illustrate a conditon that she and another black people in United State of America, United Kingdom and Australia got some chains in their neck and hands. The author would like to say to whole world especially their ancestor country of Africa that how suffer they are in this country that they lived now. The author put an imagination, tactile imagination to describe that she and another black people are suffer.

IV CONCLUSION

After Analyzing the data, the writer explains the summary or the result of this research. It contain the kinds of imageries that found in the poem of Black Live Matter (BLM) movement "Mother Africa, May I Return?. Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a movement organization for black people community in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia. BLM is an organization advocating for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality against African-American people. In BLM activities, they (BLM

proponents) use some ways to convey their protest for any kinds of unfairly, racism and bad treatment that they got, one of them is they create some poems and put some figurative languages in the poems.

The result of this research are the writer found about 13 data of imagery of the poem. Visual imagery is the most dominant imagery in the *Mother Africa, May I Return?* poem. There are 6 data of visual imagery from 13 total data that the writer found in the poem, because visual imagery is the appropriate imagery for BLM's

proponents to describe their misery in their own country. Another imagery that the writer also found in this poem are auditory imagery, tactile imagery and kinaesthetic imagery. There are 5

data of auditory imagery, 2 data of tactile imagery and 1 data of kinaesthetic imagery found in the *Mother Africa, May I Return?* poem.

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