Symbolization of Political Poetry: An Analysis of Ahmad Shawqi's Work

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the use of political symbols in Ahmad Shawqi's poetry, the factors of social and political backgrounds that influence the use of those symbols; and the relevance of atsymbolization in contextual life. The data were collected through documentation, and the primary data source is the book of "Al-Shawqiyyat" written by Ahmad Shawqi, supported by several other relevant books. The analysis was carried out using semiotics and content analysis approaches. This research identified certain meanings in the political poetry's symbols, namely the meaning of the poetry theme and the meaning of animal symbols. Animal symbols were used in place of the nation's leader, nation, people, foreigners, government officials, and critics. The utilization of those symbols was driven by the community's unstable and tense social and political conditions. Those symbols are still relevant to this day and are used as softer means of criticism to the community and government.

Keywords: *Symbolization, Poetry, Politics.*

1. Introduction

Literary works contain not only artistic elements but also strong political messages. Besides being created during socio-political situations, they also contain messages and demands for change. On January 28th, 2010, a number of demonstrators brought a black buffalo inscribed with "Si Bu Ya" (Krisandi, 2016). Some political symbols also appeared during the presidential election and the likes, such as the term tadpole which is used to refer to the incumbent and bat for the opposition party (Koran Sulindo, 2018). Junaidi, quoting Coulson et al. (1978), emphasized that a symbol can illustrate an abstract matter, idea, quality, signs of object, and process. A symbol possesses a remarkable power to deliver meaning (Gawi: 2018).

The majority of literary works have been focusing on three aspects. First, from an aesthetics point of view, literary works possess an aesthetical dimension, both in their content and language expressions. According to Horace, literary works can bring contentment, beauty, and satisfaction to their readers. In other words, they can entertain and erase their readers' sadness with their aesthetic content (Rokhmansyah 2014; Bahar & Teng, 2017; Brahmana, 2005). Secondly, literature is seen as a parameter of the cultural and civilization development of a community and their origin, such as Javanese literature, Malay literature, and Islamic literature. The high and low quality of literature reflects the quality of the related community's cultures, and literature is a sociocultural reality

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(Kustyarini, Vol.16; Qoyyum, 2014; Semi,1993). Third, literature is used by their author as a medium of criticism towards social and political changes. An author can be influenced by his/her surroundings and vice versa (Wilhoit, 2014; Margainto, 2020; Suwantiningsih & Maftucah, 2016).

This paper aims to complement the shortcomings of previous studies by analyzing or testing "how the symbolization of political figures in Ahmad Shawqi's poetry "Al-Shawqiyyat" can communicate a message effectively". There are three research questions formulated here, namely (a) how is the use of political symbols in Ahmad Shawqi's poetry?; (b) how did socio-political situation influence the way those political symbols were used?; and (c) how is the relevance of those political symbols in the poetry?

Explicit conveyance of political messages may trigger problems related to attitude of acceptance, response, behavior or refusal, and even serious friction. On the other hand, a softer and more appropriate manner of sending political message can be more effective. Literature can be a medium to send educational, entertainment, aesthetic, historical, social criticism, and even political messages, which is able to touch people's emotions quicker. Using animal symbols to communicate a message or express an idea can exert a positive significance in political communication. Literature that uses such an approach is unique and interesting to be analyzed further.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Poetry

Poetry as a literary work does not only contain aesthetic traits but also can be used as a medium of criticism. Literary criticism possesses a number of functions, one of which is to be a conductive media between literature and literature enthusiasts by providing information, motivation, and becoming literature critics (Efendi, 2020; Suwondo, 2010; Wiyatmi, 2012; Suraiya, 2017;Anwar & Syam, 2018; Kholidah et al., 2020). In this case, literary works are able to open people's mindset regarding the shortcomings in their social lives, and prompt various interpretations (Nurhadi, n.d.). As suggested by the study of Athari Nikazm & Ahmadi (2019), Forough Farrokhzad interpreted poetry as a means to express freedom or an effort to find a breakthrough resolution. A study by Romînaşu & Ardelean (2020) also showed how literary works in 1848 presented various symbols referring to an ongoing crisis at that time. In other words, overall, the literary text is an index sign that holds relationship between what is being presented in three dimensions, namely history, the world of the author, and the world of the readers (Zoest, 1990).

To interpret a literary work, especially poetry, the semiotics method can be used. Charles Sanders Peirce is the first philosopher who introduced this method—especially modern semiotics. Charles stated that logics have to analyze logical people by reading signs (Koswara & Hermawan, 2021). Next, Koswara & Hermawan (2021) in their study also suggested that a sign, referred to as representation, must represent an object. Thus, the semiotics process can yield an interpretation that produces a new sign (Koswara & Hermawan, 2021). Semiotics has been used to analyze a variety of text meaning, one of which is conducted by Hidayat, (2014) who analyzed the lyrics of 'Laskar Pelangi' (Rainbow Troops) by employing semiotics from Ferdinand Saussure's idea and interpreted that the lyrics as a motivation to continue to struggle. Next, a study by Wahyuningtyas (2017) also analyzed several texts in Dagadu Djokdja products using Riffaterre's theory of semiotics and concluded that the text contained abundant of social criticism.

2.2. Political Symbol

Several experts have analyzed the theory of symbol, one of which is Turner, who defined the theory of symbol as "a thing regarding by general consent as naturally typing or

representing or recalling something by possession of analogous quality or by association in fact or thought" (Turner, 1977). In this theory, a symbol has three characteristics. The first is multivocalism, which means that symbols may contain various meanings that do not only depict a phenomenon but also refer to individuals personally. The second is polarization, which means that their meanings can contradict each other. The third is unification or meaning integration. Turner also stated that there are three dimensions in symbol interpretation, namely exegetical meaning (the scope provided by informant), operational meaning (verbal interpretation), and positional meaning (relations between symbols) (Turner, 1977). A symbol is often associated with political issues, such as the literary work of 'A Poetry of Resisting Corruption' ('Puisi Menolak Korupsi') which contains symbols depicting people's detestation against corruption committed by government officials (Inayati, T. Tatik, 2016).

Animal is one of many symbols frequently used to illustrate a meaning that the author wants to send regarding a phenomenon. The bird painting in Ghassulian's culture painted by Levant Selatan at the end of B.C era emerges abundant of interpretation, one of which is related to the god of fertility and a symbol of spiritual limitation that goes across physical and spiritual worlds (Greet, 2021). Next, animal symbol is also used to depict political situation, such as in the past 2018 presidential election in Indonesia. The terms tadpole, bat, and dessert lizard were used to symbolize the presidential candidates (Nalendra et al., 2020). Additionally, bear was also used as political symbol in Russia in 1905 to represent revolutionary event, both from the supporters and the opposition of autocracy sides (Riabov, 2020). Bear has two meanings: the negative one (to delegitimize authority) and the positive one (to discredit revolution) Riabov (2020). Another term, "jumping squirrel that wears a tie", in a poetry that resists corruption, is interpreted as a thief of country financial assets (Inayati, T. Tatik, 2016). The next is horse as used in Vyacheslav Ivanov's (the representation of Russian symbolism), post-symbolism poet Boris Pasternak's, and Osip Mandelstam's lyrics which convey differing meaning (Pavlova & Romanova, 2020). A winged horse is interpreted as a joy beyond limits, pale horse as death is a punishment, and seahorse as personal pleasure (Pavlova & Romanova, 2020).

2.3. Text-Context

Human attitude and communication are supported and influenced by two important elements, namely text and context. In this case, a text will not have a meaning if context does not appear to produce and provide understanding regarding the situation in which people, space, object, and time are limited. To explain social interaction, text should be interpreted to build a context (Mantzavinos, 2014). Accordingly, a context can be comprehended as a connection between text and socio-cultural attitude that is able to elaborate the functions (field, tenor, mode) and the background of each ideology and regulation (Lukin, 2017). According to Das (2014), a text can be misinterpreted and misused without any context, thus possibilities that affect action and decision may occur. Özkula (2020) gave an example that different contexts can drive institution to make a decision and regulations in a certain situation. This is in line with Lukin's stance (2017) that text can be interpreted in a specific way when influenced by context. Therefore, the relations between text and context are built from 1) linguistics interpretation; 2) cognitive ability related to psychological science, and 3) context based on sociocultural conditions (Lukin, 2017).

The relations between text and context, as emphasized by Bailin & Grafstein (2016), connect and explain facts of a text with different context to create a more meaningful text. In line with this, Akou's study (2010) suggests that the relations between text and context can be seen in the form of interpretation of Qur'anic verses. This interpretation process takes into account not only limitation but also objective contextualization of Muslim's life reality (Ren et al., 2013). Bauer (2012) found that interpretation of the Quran is not seen merely as a form of symbolic representation, but is directed to explicate and adjust the

meaning of text and context. Therefore, the process of text interpretation is influenced by a number of factors, such as readers' characteristics, readers' intention, and the characteristics of the text itself (context and language mechanism) (Duderija, 2011). In line with this explanation, text and context are two crucial aspects in interpreting the Quran because a text provides historical background to resolve problems in certain context in their interaction with religious belief. However, a misinterpreted text might rise contradiction, confusion, and misunderstanding in elaborating Islamic practices and education (Lahmar, 2011).

3. Research Method

This research studied the symbol of political poetry, the work of Ahmad Shawqi, an amir al syu'ara (The Prince of Poets) of Egypt at that period. The reason for taking this object was based on the consideration that the work was a monumental at that time. No other researcher has been found studying this theme. Moreover, this literature was created in the form of poetry that employs animal symbols in a short storyline. Those symbols still have relevance to current conditions. This topic is essential to discuss to identify the meaning of the symbols.

The research was a qualitative study based on a literature review (text) of poetry. The text was quoted from a primary source, Al-Shawqiyyat book, and secondary sources were from books, journals, documents, and other sources. According to M. Atar Semi, the qualitative method is more appropriate to be used in literary research. This method examines in-depth, discovering the nature of the hidden meaning behind the sign (Semi, 1993). The author used the documentation method to collect data. The steps taken were: 1) finding and selecting documents related to the topic; 2) reading the study material rigorously; 3) coding the appropriate and inappropriate materials; 4) classifying and sorting materials. Techniques applied to maintain data validity were increasing persistence in observing documents (Satori and Komariah, 2011) and ensuring the adequacy of references from various sources.

In the analysis, the researcher used Roland Barthes's (1991) symbol interpretation (semiotics) research to uncover the meaning of Ahmad Shawqi's political symbols in poetry and analysis (content analysis) to comprehend its content. The researcher interpreted the symbols of political poetry as signs to be identified, understood, and interpreted. The steps for interpreting symbols with semiotics are 1) identifying the symbols used in poetry one by one; 2) interpreting the symbols that have been identified; 3) assigning meaning to the symbols as a means of literary expression to send a message to society. The symbols in the poetry are meaningful only if they are given meaning by the readers based on the conventions associated with them. To complete this analysis, the researcher used content analysis to give the meaning of political poetry as a whole. In this study, the researcher analyzed and interpreted animal symbols used by the poet in his poetry.

4. Results

4.1. The Use Of Symbol Type

Ahmad Shawqi used several symbols in conveying his views on politics. Among the symbols used are the names of animals. Animals are chosen to replace the reality of human life. Expressions are made in the form of poetry and dialogue. The names of these animals are as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Animal Symbols in Political Poetry

No	Symbol Type							Meaning of Symbols in Poetry
	Tiger	Elephant	Weasel	Rabbit	Donkey	Sheep	Frog	
1	King, Deceiver Liar							
2		Destroyer, Arrogant						
3			Kind, Offering help, Caring for neighbors					
4				Clever, united, deliberation, Trusting no other countries				
5					Thoughtless, Incompetent, Low/ Despicable			
6						Loving, Protecting		
7							Annoying, Hurting, Making noise	

The use of animal symbols in the table above can be seen in detail in the following poetries:

1)   Tiger

Tiger is a powerful beast. Ahmad Shawqi used this animal to give the meaning of "liar, deceiver, and king." The use of the meaning of the symbol can be viewed in the following poetry text:

Yuqalu inna al-laitsa fi dzi al-syiddah, ra'a min al-dzi'bi shafa al-mawaddah

Faqala ya man shana li mahalli fi halatay wilayati wa 'azli

U'thika 'ijlain wa alfa syat, tsumma takunu waliy al-wulat.

Translation:

Once a lion saw in difficulty a genuine friendship from a wolf

And he says 'who guard my ground in time of power and exile,

I bestow to him two calves, a thousand goat, and the power to lead them all' (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p.115)

Qala tajarra'ta wa sa'a za'muka, fa man takunu ya fata wa ma ismuka?

Translation:

The tiger says, 'you who are brazen and a fool in postulation, who are you, boy, and whose name you carry?' (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p.115)

Al-laitsu malik al-qifari, wa ma tadhumm al-shahara.

Translation:

The tiger rules the desert and the Sahara (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p.105)

2)   Elephant

The elephant in this text refers to the meaning of "destroyer, intriguing by force." The use of this meaning can be seen in the following text:

Wabtahajat bi al-wathan al-karim, wa mauil al'iyali wa al-harim

Fakhtarah al-filu lahu thariqan, mumazziqan ashhabana tamziqan

Translation:

The rabbit folks were content with their good homeland, where their children and kins joyfully reside

'Till the elephants rule where their course runs; vanquishing our friends on their path (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 102).

3)   Weasel

In this poetry, the weasel refers to a person who has the experience, skills, and knowledge. The use of the meaning of the weasel symbol is a figure who is "kind, caring for neighbours, by offering help," as seen in the following poetry text:

Ja'at 'ajuz min banat 'irs, taqulu afdi jarati binafsi,

Ana al-lati urja li hadzi al-ghayah li'anni kuntu qadiman dayah.

Translation:

The old weasel came and said 'Only I will help save my neighbor,

for the expectation to work befalls only me; as I too was a midwife' (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 116).

4)   Rabbit

The rabbit term refers to the meaning of "united, deliberation, intelligent, and trusting no other countries," as seen in the following text:

Nada bihim ya ma'syar al-aranib, min 'alim wa sya'ir wa katib

Ittahidu dhidd al-'aduww al-jafi, fal ittihad quwwat al-dhi'afi

Fa aqbalu mustashwibina rayah, wa 'aqadu lil ijtima'i rayah

Translation:

To his friends the rabbit hollers, 'O clever rabbits, you who conjure poetry and words,

unite--for facing the ruthless adversary, unity is nothing but strength'

Thus they gather and concur; bespeak of their mind in a circle (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 102).

Wantakhabu min bainihim tsalatsah, la haraman ra'u wa la hadatsah

Bal nazharu ila kamal al-'aql, wa'tabaru fi dzaka sinn al-fadhl

Translation:

Not for age the three rabbits were chosen among them--

for the soundness of mind is where age truly belongs (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 102).

Faqalat al-aranib la ya jarah, fa inna ba'd al-ulfat al-ziyarah

Mali wutsuq bi banat 'irs, inni uridu dayah min jinsi

Translation:

The rabbit replied 'nay, neighbor, as one will come near after they become dear,

and no trust I spare for the weasels; I truly wish of a midwife from my own (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 116).

5)   Donkey

Donkey is used to describe the meaning of "thoughtless, incompetent, and low/despicable." The use of this meaning can be seen in the following poetry text:

Qala al-himar, waziriy qadha bi hadza ikhtiyari

Fastadhhakat tsumma qalat, madza ra'a fi al-himari

Wa khallafathu wa tharat, bi mudhhiki al-akhbari

Translation:

And he said 'the donkey is my minister--that is my pronouncement,

Thus laughter erupts and the people holler, 'what does he know of those donkeys'

the snigger trails the dispersing crowd (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 105).

Ya 'aliyyal jahi fina, kun 'aliyyal anzhar

Translation:

O our leader, be those whose sight reach the heavens (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 105).

6)   Sheep

The "sheep" word in this poetry refers to the meaning of "protecting and loving children." The use of this meaning is found in the following poetry.

Qad nama 'anha, fa namat ghair wahidat, lam yad'uha fi al-diyaji al kura da'iy

Bada laha al-dzi'bu yas'a fi al-zhulami 'ala, ba'da fashahat ala qumu ilas sa'y

Idz al-ru'atu 'ala aghnamiha sahirat, sahirtu min hub athfali 'ala al-ra'iy

Translation:

The Shepherd slept so do his herd--but in the dark one was alert,

From afar a wolf is seen and the sheep bellow 'be awake!'

Thus for his sheep the Shepherd had sworn of sleep, and so do I for loving my child (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 108).

7)   Frog

The frog in this poetry describes the meaning of "hurting, annoying, making noise" to the king. The use of this meaning can be seen in the following poetry:

Qalu istawal laitsu 'ala arsyihi, fujia fil majlisi bidh dhifda'i

Wa qila lis sulthan hadzil lati, bil amsi adzat 'aliyal misma'i

Tunaqniqu ad dahra bila 'illat, wa tadda'i fil ma'i ma tadda'i

Translation:

They said, the tiger has graced his throne, thus to him they brought the frog along,

and they lament 'it is him who assaulted our ears,

the croak was without break nor a reason; only that he was one with the water' (Al-Shawqiyyat, 4, p. 118).

4.a. 2. Symbol Theme

The theme that became Ahmad Shawqi's criticism issue was related to the conditions and life of humankind. It is related to the need for improvement of the ummah. The themes related to the conversation in the poetry are in table 2 below.

Table 2: Themes of Poetry Messages

No	Theme
1	Deliberation to exchange the best opinion
2	Prioritizing Internal or National
3	The sweet talk of the government
4	Appointing incompetent people
5	Forgiving the common people
6	Uniting and caring for their fellow nation

4.2.   Factors Affecting the Use Of Symbols

Cultural Environment

Egypt in the late 19th and early 20th centuries experienced ups and downs. The rapid development of Egyptian civilization began in the reign of Khedive Ismail Pasha, with the establishment of several schools, the construction of transportation, agriculture, railroads, art halls, and the formulation of education laws. In 1871, a natural laboratory (al Ayyubi, 2012; Urmusy, p.412) and a women's school were established, and an invitation to equalize the rights of women and men in education was issued (wikipedia.org). The British conquered Egypt in 1882 under the authority of Khedive Taufiq bin Ismail (everyculture.com). The artistic aspect was also developed with the establishment of an art school in 1908 M. Art as a discourse provides aspirations for national reformation (metmuseum.org). Community literacy was improved by sending students to Europe, both male and female. In the table below, public literacy in Egypt can be seen from the number of students and schools at that time.

People, especially those who are educated, were familiar with the issue of nationalism as an effort to escape from foreign intervention and power (Wikipedia). There were three nationalist movements in Egypt: a) the Urabi revolution in 1882 AD, b) nationalism led by Mustafa Kamil in the early 20th century, and c) nationalism led by Muhammad Farid. The sense of nationalism under the leadership of Sa'd Zaghlul (d.1927 AD) was getting stronger with the demands for independence in the 20th century (sis.gov.eg). The change was also due to the position of Islam not being accepted as a social system as before, and the Egyptians could not apply their laws (Salma, 2018).

4.3.   Social Background

The position of Egyptian society was under British hegemony. Colonies required more labor or farmers by disregarding human rights (Salma, 2018). Society was distinguished by strata. In 1892M, the organization of "al Taqaddum al Mishriy" was formed, which aimed for social and national interests under the language because politics was prohibited by law. Ahmad Shawqi (d.1932 AD) joined this organization by using language as a suggestion to convey ideas. His poetry was inspired by the gap between social life and the palace, such as poverty, ignorance, and disease. The means of information developed with the publication of several newspapers and produced a new class of journalists and writers with various political and social interests (Yousef, 2016, p.48). Additionally, writers in the early 20th century in Egypt were not only a reflection of society but also social reformers (Salma, 2018, p.85).

4.4.   Political Regime

The political situation at that period was less stable. During the reign of Khedive Ismail (d.1895 AD), many countries borrowed from Europe. Development was proceeding with a high debt burden. Hence, he had to step down from the royal throne because of British and French pressure. During the reign of Khedive Taufiq (d.1892 AD), British power grew stronger, so did the reign of the Abbas II period (d. 1944 AD). Not long after Khedive Abbas II reigned, the National Party was born (1895 AD) and asked the British to leave (hindawi.org). This desire was reinforced in 1905 when the party published a newspaper, and in 1908, the National Party and The High Schools Club (Nadi al-Madaris al-'Ulya) established a network of Night Schools to reach the community at lower levels (Yousef, 2016). However, Britain did not accept the request with the motive of protecting Egypt and Europe.

This condition had not changed Khedive's closeness to the European side. He even appointed them to occupy essential posts (Urmusy, p.412). Ahmad Shawqi (d. 1932 AD) had experienced an exile in Spain in 1915 AD when Abbas II was demoted by the British from the government while visiting abroad. He expressed his intention in a more refined language. This pattern was inseparable from the intense political pressure on society internally and externally (the UK) and the society's condition that was still far from ideal, such as murder and forced labor.

4.5.   The Relevance Of The Symbolization Of Ahmad Shawqi's Political Poetry

Intertextual Relevance

The text of Ahmad Shawqi's political criticism (d.1932 AD) did not stand alone. The situation inspired intellectuals and poets. Expressions of criticism varied in the form of poetry, prose, or stories. The discourse of nationalism and politics was the theme of the criticism. Egypt was the most crucial part of the Ottoman Empire's modernization, especially in the era of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (d.1918 AD). Intellectuals were involved in numerous state issues, including education (Gündüz, 2010). One of the ulemas of al-Azhar, Taufiq Muhammad Khalifah (d.1939 AD), had criticized the government when Khedive Ismail (d.1895 AD) visited al-Azhar for the defeat of Egypt against Ethiopia (1874-1876M). According to him, the reasons were because the state had allowed adultery and drinking alcohol. Khedive argued and admitted that the rules were taken from Western customs (Urmusy, p.420).

Abbas Mahmud al 'Aqqad (1889-1964 AD) also conveyed ideas related to political conditions, such as that the empire tended to be dictatorial and did not understand the society's condition, in his book "la syuyu'iyyata wa la isti'mara" (not communism and not colonization) (al' Aqqad, 2017). Ismail Shabri Pasha (d.1923 AD) in the poetry "harb Tharablus" (the war of Tripoli) encouraged the Egyptians to take over their glory: Abna Mishr a'idu al-yaum majdakum, al Nilu yasyhad wa al-ahram wa al-atsar (Diwan Shabri, p.106). Oh Egyptians! On this day restore your glory; for the Nile, the Pyramids and the relics had testified. Mahmud Sami al Barudi (d. 1904 AD) as a soldier, close to the government, advised Khedive Taufiq to form a majlis niyabi li al-ummah (House of Representatives), such as the following poetry: Sanna al-masyurah wa hiya akram khuththah, yajri 'alaiha kullu ra'I mursyidi (Diwan al Barudi, p.120). Nothing beats the noblest of deed, one done by every leader of great disposition, but appointing among you those that represent. Similar theme was also conveyed by political party leaders.

Historical And Contextual Relevance

Ahmad Shawqi lived in the middle of the kingdom (lahaonline.com). He was allowed to study in Europe and become a poet laureate. However, he was not fond of the attitude of England and France who did not want to give up their role in Egypt (Haikal, p.9). Similarly, he sided with the Khedive when the king conflicted with England (Kaba, p.7). Social inequality, ignorance, poverty, and suffering afflicted society. It helped elevate the

idea of nationalism, political awareness, and the desire to let go of foreign roles that had a negative impact on the Ummah since the second half of the 19th century (Krãmer, 2015). He praised the palace through poetry and used animal symbols in a saga to illustrate his political ideas.

In modern politics, the use of symbols also occurs. Symbols have cultural relevance (Rose, 2007). The relationship between symbols and culture provides meaning for the reader of symbols. For example, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) has become a symbol of the Common People's Party, and the image of a rat with a tie is a symbol of corruption. Development must not leave society basic power. Communication between parties can foster trust. It is in line with the mission of political poetry, namely "to hold a meeting." The politics of this symbol can be used in the millennial era and is an aesthetic and meaningful way. Thus, the political symbols in this poetry are still relevant in ummah's lives today.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1.   Symbolization Of Political Poetry

The study of symbols in this poetry has a unique value. The uniqueness lies in the use of animals. Animal symbols can have multiple meanings (Turner, 1977). Among the diversity, animals can symbolize politics and luck. Related to that statement, what is the meaning of the animal symbol in this poetry? According to Efendi (2020), it is interesting that poetry is used aesthetically and critically. The main element of studying symbols is their meaning for a person (Rose, 2007). Understanding the symbolization of this poetry can be seen in two stages: the meaning of the theme and symbol. However, before discussing the meaning of symbols, it is also essential to understand the setting.

Language, including symbols as a means of communication, requires a background or context (Lukin, 2017). There are two settings in this poetry: the social background and the internal context of the poetry. The social background is the condition of Egypt at that time. Egypt was under British rule. Community life was not free, and the economic condition was not good. Khedive Taufiq was lack of courage, hesitated, and was weak (Urmusy, p.425), so was Khedive Abbas II. Khedive Abbas was close to the national party (al hizb al wathaniy) and tried to break away from the British by firing Mustafa Fahmi (d.1914 AD) in 1893 because he was considered loyal to the British (Urmusy). The British always took action to seek profit and overlooked the welfare of Egyptian society. Hence, the society was in darkness, poverty, and ignorance.

5.2.   Theme Meaning

The theme of poetry conveys the overall meaning. It is an important element in literary work (Vindriana, 2018). The theme in surface text comprises of discussion, nationalism, unfulfilled promise, leadership appointment, forgiveness, unity, and care. Discussion is the primary pillar of democracy, and back in the past, it was hardly carried out due to limitations and the monarchy system. The symbol of discussion "ijtima/meeting" means "unity, power, and success" in resolving problems. This meaning is based on rabbit's character when encountering the elephant's power, and the rabbit is eventually successful. The second interpretation related to discussion is the habit of small character that cannot live in solitary.

The symbol of nationalism is seen in the sentence "no trust I spare for the weasels; I truly wish of a midwife from my own". From social perspective, the rabbit needs a help. The party who is ready to help is the more powerful and stable one. However, it understands that different people might have different objectives as well. The meaning of "nationalism" is advancement, security, and peace. From psychological perspective, similarity of fate may bring comfortability.

The authorities often offer good promises to the public. However, they also often break it. Public deception is common. People have the habits of demanding their leaders, and the leaders easily give promises. These promises can be interpreted as "sweet dreams" that do not match the reality. This answer can be seen in the following text "The tiger says, 'you who are brazen and a fool in postulation". It specifically occurs in the era of democracy, when leader candidates offer numerous promises during their campaign. In reality, many of those promises are not fulfilled. Empty seats should be filled with competent people. This competence is a requirement to bring about development and success. People with inadequate competence taking the seats will bring terrible impacts for institutions and the country. This means that "the level of position should match the level of person holding it".

Mistakes in social and patriotic interaction are inevitable. However, this does not always have consequence of punishment. The level of the mistake should be considered. The meaning of this theme is that a leader should be "wise and high-minded". This is depicted in the text "Then he decides safety for frogs". People tend to focus on themselves. Caring becomes the pillar of communication and social interaction. Caring to each other means "communal security". By nurturing care, crimes and shortcomings can be handled. In the case of current situation, people need such an attitude and set aside individualism. This can be seen in the following text: "Thus for his sheep the Shepherd had sworn of sleep, and so do I for loving my child."

5.3. The Meaning Of Character Symbolization

a. Tiger

In folklore, tiger is often used to refer to authorities. It has the authority to regulate the public, but it lives in a difficult situation. This symbol refers to the "Egyptian kings" at that time, both Khedive Taufiq and Khedive Abbas II. Their authority did not exert positive impacts. Their public welfare program did not succeed, and the people had to suffer due to forced labor under the colonialization of England. Khedive Abbas II was even dethroned on his way to visit Astana.

b. Elephant

Elephant in the poetry is seen as a huge and newcomer creature who chose to happily settle on a land having been inhabited by smaller creatures. Seeing the background of setting at that time, this elephant symbol is not denotative. It is an illustration of a huge nation whose purpose is not to rule but to damage their land of destination in order to gain profits. In this context, elephant can be interpreted as "the European (England) nation" because they exploited both nature and human, and they disturbed Egyptian people residing in their own area.

c. Weasel

Weasel is depicted as a character that offers kindness to its neighbors who face difficulties. Joyfully, it does everything by itself by ensuring that it has the capability to carry out those activities. Considering the background of the poetry, people who were willing to help and had the capabilities to do so were not numerous. Moreover, in the story, the weasel is depicted to have encountered rabbits. It means that weasel is in different side, both in terms of the ethnicity and nation. However, their power is not as immense as the elephant. It is possible that weasel as a "symbol of powerful nation" refers to France. This symbol is an innuendo that the Egyptians should appreciate their internal capabilities instead of relying to others. External aids could add the burden of their internal affair. At that time, Khedive Ismail and Khedive Abbas II were dethroned due to pressure from external parties.

d.   Rabbit

The nation of rabbit had settled in an area with their families happily. They know that there is a bigger nation coming and that it is difficult to fight against them. They unite and gather, and they actually have numerous great competences since there are many scientists, writers, and poets among them. This poetry illustrates the reality at that time. On this basis, the rabbit nation seems to refer to "the Egypt". The words "Till the elephants rule where their course runs; vanquishing our friends on their path" is similar to colonialization. At that time, Egypt was under England's colonialization.

e.   Donkey

When a minister (wazir) position was empty, the king randomly appoints a donkey as the new minister. In fact, the public has understood the capacity and capability of a donkey. These position and capability do not seem to balance. This causes people to disrespect, mock, and laugh at the donkey. Slowly, the country is at the edge of downfall. The donkey in this poetry does not possess a literal meaning, but it is a symbol referring to "incompetent figure" who sits in an important position.

f.   Sheep

The word sheep (na'jah) in this poetry is put side by side with the word shepherd (ra'i). The responsibility of a shepherd is to protect his/her sheep from wild animal attack. In this context, the word "sheep" is a symbol for "people". People are guarded and protected. However, sheep are not allowed to sleep altogether when their shepherd is sleeping as some should be on guard. Similarly, a shepherd is not sleeping in order to watch his/her sheep and mother sheep do not sleep when their colony sleep due to their love for their offsprings. This also means that "people should be awake when the government is sleeping" so that they can wake up the government when a danger is approaching in order to ensure security for everyone.

g.   Frog

Overall, frog, in Ahmad Shawqi's poetry, depicts a small powerless creature that makes noises all the time. In the end of the story, it is captured and brought to the king to put on a trial for having disturbed the king's ears. Frog is a personification of human who can only voice what they desire. In this context, frog is interpreted as "a political critic". Throughout the history, criticism causes the king to feel uncomfortable. The capture happens not only in colonialization era, but also in the present era. There are many critics who are captured and jailed. In the end of the poetry, it is said that capturing the frogs is an improper act of a king. Forgiving and providing facilities for them to speak are more virtuous.

This study is a part of poetry literary studies focusing on the use of symbol to deliver a message. Undoubtedly, this study is not the end of aspects in Ahmad Shawqi's works. The discussion can further scrutinize other aspects and symbols. The finding of this study shows relevant interpretation for the nation and the country to perform their rights and responsibilities. The symbols are meaningfully interpreted and they are directed to related figures in order to build the nation.

The meaning of political poetry symbols can be an inspiration for sociopolitical changes. The factors that can drive changes include knowledge and social environment. Knowledge provides understanding for human to act and adapt to their environment. Knowledge through linguistics symbol interpretation can yield impression, awareness, and understanding. Understanding the essence of meaning from those symbols requires a medium. Acquiring and absorbing the meaning behind a language and symbol are the keys to realize changes, both personally and communally in society.

The use of symbols in the field of politics has become a softer model and it can avoid any side effects. The readers can interpret the symbols they find based on their level of

knowledge and understanding. Animal symbols presented in these poetries are connotations that refer to other objects. The animal symbols are related to nation elements, namely the leader of nation, officials and their appointments, the public, the foreigners with their varied motives, the nation, the common people, and the critics. The sociopolitical life nowadays is still relevant to the theme of this study. Several political events still use symbols, and in terms of content, they are still needed, such as: nationalism, competence, and public engagement in building the country, and their vigilance towards foreign partners.

This study contributes an insight that a literary work can be used as a media of communication not only in the scope of arts, but also in delivering social message. Literary works have undergone extension of function in life. Literature can be a medium to control and criticize the government and the people. Criticism is conveyed by strongly holding virtuous and aesthetic values. This indirect message delivery by using symbols can attract the readers' attention.

This study on Ahmad Shawqi's poetries has a large scope. These poetries can be analyzed in several aspects, such as: literary criticism, stylistics, semantics, and other aspects. This research, however, is limited to several aspects only. Therefore, further research on other aspects that have not been discussed previously need to be carried out in the future.

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