

MYTH IN POEME MON FRERE BLANC BY LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

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ABSTRACT

French literary research, especially francophone literature research is very interesting to do. In its development, French poetry is not only found in parts of France, but also in non-French speaking areas (Francophone). French literature that developed outside of France occurred due to several factors, one of which was the colonization that occurred in the nineteenth century. This research would like to investigate myth in a poem, tittle Poème à mon frère blanc, written by Leopold Sedar Senghor. In this research, the researchers will not discuss the structure of the poem, but they are interested in the hidden meaning behind the poem. This research uses the theory of Roland Barthes to analyze the hidden meaning (myth) that the speaker wants to tell. The search for the hidden meaning (myth) is carried out, because the researchers understand, in a poem, what is written is not necessarily the true meaning. This research uses qualitative and descriptive methods with reading and understanding techniques.

Key Word: French literary, Francophone, Poem, Semiotic, Myth

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a literary work that has the most core literary statement. This is stated by Pradopo, (2005, 4), who argues, that the value of his art is very dependent on the strength of his expression. the reader. Then, Pradopo (2014, 5) explained that poetry unites elements of other literary arts. Therefore, poetry has never quickly changed as the most standard expression of literary

art. As a literary work, poetry has several similarities with other types of literary works. However, Grill, Stephen (2010) argues, that poetry also has differences, which characterize poetry itself. Poetry can be emotional, or sentimental. In addition, poetry can also be in the form of narrative or descriptive which contains satirical, humorous, political, or even informative meanings. However, it is language that

makes poetry different from others. All the elements that make up poetry, such as words and their arrangement, sounds and pauses, and illustrations and repetitions, are important. This is because each of these components can lead to new meanings, levels, dimensions, relationships, or resonances. For this reason, Wolosky (2001, 1) explains, that poetry is a language that always has more meaning. In other words, each word has an important role which as a whole creates a meaningful and beautiful form.

As a manifestation of human creativity, taste, and initiative, poetry is a statement that the poet wants to convey to his readers. Related to this, Sayuti (2001: 7) explains that the statement is in the form of a number or something that is obtained from the poet's psychological experience in his life and life, both imaginations, emotional, intellectual, empirical and other experiences. In conveying the message of a poem, each poet has a different way of delivery

according to the character and the experiences of the poet. Because of the different expressions, there is an aesthetic value in each poem, which can be seen from the choice of words, the arrangement of lines and stanzas, and other poetic equipment.

In literary works (like poetries) understanding does not have to correctly interpret. There needs to be a special study involving certain theories to bring this understanding. Literary studies in this study were conducted on one of the genres of literary works, namely romance. Romance, one of the literary genres, has interrelated elements. This linkage will form a whole meaning that is strung together in a story. Therefore, examining the interrelationships between the elements contained in the novel is necessary to understand its contents. The activity of analyzing a poem is an attempt to give meaning or meaning to the poem itself. Interpreting a poem requires a very deep and careful appreciation. It's because of poetry different from prose. Analyzing poetry can

be said to be quite difficult because in a poem it contains an implied meaning which requires the reader to be able to interpret the language in the poem, so that readers or listeners can enjoy the poem as a literary work.

In addition, poetry is the embodiment of the feelings of the creator, in poetry it contains expressions of the heart, all forms of pouring ideas, which are based on the feelings of the researcher by using words that are beautifully arranged, freely expressed and have meaning or meaning. This is based on the experience, appreciation, and perspective of the poet himself. Sayuti (2008, 4) says that poetry is a form of language pronunciation that takes into account the aspects of the sounds in it, which express imaginative experiences, emotional, intellectual poet who is overwritten from his individual and social life which is expressed by a certain technique of choice, so that the poem is able

to evoke certain experiences in the readers and listeners.

Talking about the history of French literature, poetry has existed since the time of Middle French Era, around 1100 AD. French literature was born in the Middle Ages (*moyen-âge*), namely between the years 1000-1500. Literary works born during that period used Latin or ancient French. Medieval French literature or *la littérature du Moyen-âge* is generally classified into 2 major genres: poetry or known as *la poésie* and novel which in French is called *le roman*. The first major texts of French literature date back to the middle of the Middle Ages (100-1500 AD), which coincided with a period of development of Agriculture and population expansion after a period of invasions, lawlessness and epidemics. Until now, French poetry has not eroded over time. One thing that makes poetry survive is its ability to adapt to changing conditions. This is because poetry is also a form of expression

of the universal and unchanging essence of human experience.

French poetry is widely known as *Chanson de gestes*, or when translated is writing in the form of a heroic song. The authors are often anonymous. The author is *a trouvre*. *Trouvère* was a medieval poet who wrote in d'oïl language. The language d'oïl is commonly spoken by the French, who live north of the Loire. Today, the region developed into modern France. The essence of poetry never changes even though the form of poetry as a means of expression develops. Poetry in this era is a representation of the poet's feelings and the emphasis on spontaneity. At first the poem was sung, then later recited by a medieval singer or musician, who sang the song and chanted lyrically or heroically to musical accompaniment for the nobility, which they called minstrel. More than a hundred *chansons de geste* have been found in three hundred manuscripts dating from the 11th to the 15th centuries. According to Sunahrowi

and Marita R (2017, 2) this type of poetry is written in old French and tells the legends of heroes, such as Charles Martel and Charlemange.

The nineteenth century is important for the number of masterpieces produced by French literature, this era, which is remarkable in the history of French literature, remains difficult to comprehend; and this, although the character is relatively new. For many literary historians, the nineteenth century French Literature remains from romanticism, first with Chateaubriand, then with Victor Hugo, from realism with Stendhal, Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert and naturalism with Emile Zola. Then in the 19th century talented poets were born, like: Arthur Rimbaud or Baudelaire. Then, twentieth century French poetry is represented by Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis Aragon and others, who are both heirs and innovations in the creation of literary works on the above themes, but in the form of preferences that seem to be

declining or at least moving. Unfortunately, many of these poems have lost their essence

By seeing literary, linguistic, racial and socio-cultural aspects, which are widely contained in francophone literary works. The researchers are very interested in the cases that happened to black people in the francophon country. Frankophone literature was born after the end of World War II, which raised the national consciousness and spirit of the newly independent countries. A number of North African writers, including those from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, express their feelings in French, to show their existence as a former colonized nation. In this research, the researcher intends to examine the poem entitled *Poème Mon Frère Blanc*, by Léopold Sédar Senghor. Léopold Sédar Senghor is one of Africa's leading politicians and one of the major poets of "negritude". Born October 9, 1906 in Joal, Senegal, he was a brilliant student, and it was with his baccalaureate and a scholarship in his pocket that he joined Paris in 1928.

Entered the preparatory class at Lycée Louis-le-Grand, he meets Georges Pompidou, with whom he befriends, but also Aimé Césaire, with whom he invents "Négritude", a literary movement of the interwar period which affirms a "black" identity against colonial domination. At the end of the war, two events marked the beginning of his dual career as a poet and a politician: the publication in 1945 of his first collection entitled "Chants d'ombre" and his election the same year as deputy for Senegal to the National Constituent Assembly. In 1948, the publication of "Hosties Noires" and his "Anthology of new black and Malagasy poetry in the French language, prefaced by a famous text by Jean-Paul Sartre, titled *Black Orpheus*. It made him a major voice of French literature.

(<https://memoiresclavage.org/biographies/leopoldsedarsenghor#:~:text=L%C3%A9opold%20S%C3%A9dar%20Senghor%20est,contre%20la%20domination%20coloniale>)

His text entitled *Poème Mon Frère Blanc* testifies to this character: the one who juxtaposes his sense of humor and his major

demands. Without being polemical, this poem is a peremptory claim, in the face of the qualifier men of color attributed to negroids, because not only in French, but racism occurs in many countries in the world. Many Europeans, especially French, British, Italians, and America, treats the Negroid race as second class citizens. Instead, immigrants migration had already occurred in Europe before the second world war occurred. Then at the end of the 19th century, Europe really needed immigrant workers, especially when the middle class Europeans didn't want to do labor work anymore so accepting immigrant workers was the government's choice at that time. The developed countries of Europe at that time who were looking to improve their state industry relied heavily on immigrants in the process. Initially, the flow of immigrants that occurred only within the scope of European countries such as: Spain, Italy, Portugal and so on chose France, England or Germany as destination countries in order to

get a better life. However, in the mid-1960s, immigrants also arrived from North Africa, the Middle East and Africa. In addition to providing benefits to immigrants, who want to find a better life. This is supported by Messina's statement (2007, 22), which reveals that immigrant-receiving countries also need immigrant workers with low wages. So that, they can improve the country's economy.

After entering Europe, xenophobic sentiment spread even as far as France. However, this xenophobic thinking has been developing in France for a long time but not yet as xenophobic. In 1880 when France was carrying out a revolution after the economic depression and the crisis of nationalism, society at that time was divided into several groups of opinions regarding the category of French citizenship. The debate about the citizenship status of immigrants was also a problem for the country at that time. Not to mention the problem of assimilation, French society at that time was said to have a little

self-understanding nature, because most of them recognized that they were French citizens from a political and social point of view compared to ethnicity. So this shows the weak understanding of French ethnicity that exists in society. The assimilation step is used as a solution so that the differences that exist in every society can unite and help the country's recovery through revolution. This effort gave rise to a new understanding among the public about nationalism

Based on the background, the researchers intend to examine the poem *Poeme a Mon Frere Blanc*, using semiotic analysis from Roland Barthes. The problem that will be researched is how signifier and signified can find the myth in the poem? The purpose of this research is to find the hidden meaning in the poetry. This research would use semiotic from Roland Barthes. Roland Barthes is known as one of the structuralist thinkers who is keen to practice Saussurean linguistic and semiology models. Barthes put forward the concept of connotation and

denotation as the key to his analysis. Barthes uses a simplified version in discussing the sign model. In each of his essays, Barthes discusses everyday phenomena that go unnoticed. Regarding Barthes' thoughts, Sobur (2013, 67) points out that Barthes spends time to describe and show that the connotations contained in these mythologies are usually the result of careful construction. One of the important things in Barthes' analytical study is the role of the reader. In the framework of Barthes, Budiman in Sobur (2013, 70) explains that connotation is identical to the ideological operation, which is called myth, and serves to express and provide justification for dominant values that prevail in a certain period. If sorted in Roland Barthes's semiotic research theory, there are three things in it, namely, denotative, connotative and mythical.

In the other hand, myth Myths are formed and developed in people's minds because of people's interpretation of what is seen as denotation and the implied sign of

this is called connotation. Barthes (2004) mentions semiotics as semiology, suggesting that semiology basically wants to study how humanity interprets things (things) The myth is used to pin down the hidden meaning in the poem, by using signifier and signified. In semiotic research, these two aspects are always present in language and are interconnected. A signifier without a sign means nothing. On the other hand, a signifier will not be separated from the marker that is the reference for its meaning. According to Barthes in Zaimar (2014, 35) that these two aspects always exist in language and are interconnected. A signifier without a sign means nothing. On the other hand, a signifier will not be separated from the marker that is the reference for its meaning.

METHOD

Method is a way or step as a strategy in understanding a reality in order to solve a series of problems in research The research method that will be used in this research is

descriptive qualitative method. According to Moleong (2017, 7) qualitative research is used to understand the events experienced by the research subject, in this case the author. by means of description in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and utilizing various natural methods. In addition, according to Creswell (2010), research with qualitative methods puts forward the act of exploring and understanding social problems. Therefore, the qualitative method is an appropriate method to examine the themes in the poem *Poème Mon Frère Blanc*, by Léopold Sédar Sengho. The research technique is reading poetry and understanding to what the speaker thought. The primary data in this study are facts, information, stanzas, and images contained in the poem *Poème A Mon Frère Blanc*. The data is used to reveal the meaning of the answers to the questions in this study. Meanwhile, secondary data are books and related scientific articles.

RESULT

In this research, the researchers intend to examine the myth, which is in the poem *Poème mon frère blanc*. First, we would like to write down the full text of this poem:

Poème A mon Frère Blanc

Poem to My White Brother

Cher frère blanc,

Quand je suis né, j'étais noir;

Quand j'ai grandi, j'étais noir;

Quand je suis au soleil, je suis noir;

Quand je suis malade, je suis noir; Quand je mourrai, je serai noir...

Tandis que toi homme blanc, Quand tu es né, tu étais rose;

Quand tu as grandi, tu étais blanc; Quand tu es au soleil, tu es rouge;

Quand tu as froid, tu es bleu; Quand tu as peur, tu es vert;

Quand tu es malade, tu es jaune; Quand tu mourras tu seras gris...

Alors, de nous deux,

Qui est l'homme de couleur??

This analysis will begin by presenting the poem *Poème Mon Frère Blanc*, which is then followed by the actual analysis, namely the Semiotics analysis of Roland Barthes. This poem emphasizes that skin color is a very deep chasm. By seeing this poem, Leopold Sedar Senghor denounces the appellation of color man because, according to him, it is discriminatory. The reason is, because only white men are not called men of color and therefore all other men are discriminated against. In short, according to Leopold Sedar Senghor the appellation "man of color" must

apply to all men or to no man. This poem has single stanza, composed of 16 lines in total, no particular rhymes, no particular type of verse. Talking about expression, *Poème à mon frère blanc*, translated *dear white brother* in line 1 makes people think of the epistolary genre of a letter, which would constitute an appeal to fraternity. Anaphora spun "When", throughout the poem, which makes one think of a song or a nursery rhyme that. Then ini ditulis during the French Revolution, the expression "color man", is formed to serve as an understatement to the term "Black". Black people will end up being excluded from this term which will be used to designate all swarthy people.

In this poem, there is spatial temporal parameters point to space The illustrations reveal a symbolic space, like: the pram of early childhood, the sky of death, the sun and the snow, but also spaces that respond to each other like the two characters: the sun and the moon: 2nd and 3rd lines: *Quand je*

suis au soleil, je suis noir or if being translated is *when I grew u*. Moreover, it draws one time from the past to the future by the present. In order to reveal all the changes of the "white" man and the permanence of the black man from the past to the future via the present, in order to reveal all the changes of *the blanc*, translated the white man and the permanence of the black man. Roland Barthes' semiotics is actually a derivative of de Saussure's semiology. In his theory, Roland Barthes adapts de Saussure's signifier-signified theory, but uses the term expression (expression) for the signifier and content to signified.

Since the second line, the author has stated the skin comparison between him and his friend. From this, the researchers found a contradictory thing, namely black and white. From the second stanza, the signifier at the first level can be drawn from the sentences *Quand je suis né, j'étais noir*, and the signifier at the second level can be seen from the sentences: *Quand je suis au soleil, je suis*

noir and Quand je suis malade, je suis noir. This creates a signified, which is seen in the sentence: Quand je mourrai, je serai noir (When ill I am black) and in the second step: Quand je mourrai, je serai noir (When I die I'll be black). From these signifiers and signifieds, we can draw the hidden meaning that we want to convey is the author's pride as a black person. He didn't feel inferior at all. The hidden meaning can be outlined in the chart below:

<i>TT</i>	Cher frère blanc,	Quand je suis malade, je suis noir.	Denotative
	Quand je suis né, j'étais noir;	Quand j'ai grandi, j'étais noir;	Quand je mourrai, je serai noir.
	Speaker in poetry proud of him-self as a black person		

The repetition of the words Quand je suis (When I was) and j'étais noir (I was black) can be analyzed as an emphasis, that the writer or speaker wants to say, that black people are artistic. The speaker wants to say that he is not jealous of his white friends, and even if there is an opportunity he will not want to change skins or become white, even though white people

feel that their caste is higher than people of color. The sentence is a declarative sentence connected by a comma or a compound sentence or in French *juxtaposée*. The main clause is at the end of the word noir. This is useful for strengthening the emotions in the first stanza.

In fact, in the second stanza, the hidden meaning is the writer or speaker seems to be a bit teasing white people. The hidden meaning can be shown in the chart below:

Tandis que toi, homme blanc,	Quand tu es né, tu étais rose	Denotative
Quand tu es né, tu étais rose,	Quand tu as grandi, tu étais blanc,	Alors, de nous deux, Qui est l'homme de couleur ?
the writer or speaker aim to tease white people kin colour.		

Connotative

The dominance of these sentences can be described as the loss of French dominance in Africa. Not only when France officially lifted its feet from African soil, but also the efforts of the African nation to eliminate the French domination that had long shackled the African nation, in order to

regain their identity and protect the indigenous African culture. The second stanza is the beginning of the emergence of conflict in this poem, where the speaker expresses satire to his white brother. The word brother here, it does not mean the literal meaning, but it points to French people, who have colonized them. All the paraphrases in this second stanza seem to be an answer to the previous paraphrase, especially answering the reason why the main character says *Quand je suis malade, je suis noir* and *Quand je mourrai, je serai noir*. By looking at the position of the straight array can represent the aligned feeling of the speaker. The tenth and eleventh lyrics represent the pure pride of the speakers. He felt that the French were on the same level as people in other parts of the world. So far, we have seen a lot of racial discrimination, especially by Europeans against Africans.

Discussion

From the poem above, it can be seen that the presence of writer or speaker dignity. The speaker is not French, but he is a person, who lives in a country, which use French or colonized by France. Indeed, many countries, which are colonized by France have increasingly colored the world of French literature. This francophone literature has different backgrounds, but has one thing in common, namely using French. The themes in francophone literature have differences, comparing with French literary works. There are special characteristics, namely the post-colonial theme, the theme of slavery, the theme of culture and the search for the identity of a colonized nation. In this poem, there is no writing style that is characteristic of this poem. But broadly speaking, this poem is the pride of African ethnicity, through literature, art, and music it is used to oppose racism and stereotyping and promote socio-political integration.

From the research of this poem, it can be explained that the myths contained in

this poem are a form of pattern the author's thoughts obtained from the surrounding environment and written in the form of literary works in the form of poetry. In determining the myths of mass culture, there is a semiotic system of three-dimensional patterns consisting of signs, markers, and signifieds. The data analysis that will be carried out by the researcher uses an interpretation of the pride and confidence of the speaker. The chart describes two semiological systems, one of which is arranged according to its relationship to the other. The myths of mass culture in poetry are myths as speech that shows that black people do not deserve to be humiliated. The signifier of the relative subordonné clause or clause in the sentence in the first stanza is the word *quand*, which indicates the difference between whites and blacks.

The existence of this poem is one that the speaker uses to break down the social identity building built by white people. Social identity is an individual's self-concept

related to socialization, where the individual gets the rules, standards, group values, and culture. This can be proven in Billig's statement in Sarwono (2005, 22). Social identity is a process that binds individuals to their groups and causes individuals to realize their social identity. Departing from the myth of the social identity of black people who have always been second class citizens, it can be explained that every individual is motivated to have a positive social identity. Social identity here is limited as part of the individual's self-concept obtained from his knowledge of his membership in a group. This of course will relate to the points and emotional meanings associated with the membership. The emotional meaning in this poem is the speaker's high self-confidence as a black person and the feeling of being equal.

The findings from the analysis are messages that are raised by dialogue texts, emphasizing equality between whites and blacks. The researchers analyzed that this poem is a myth from anti-racism. In terms of

connotation through marking, according to the researchers, it is a reality that is constructed based on the ideology or interests of the poet himself. The anti-racism myth in the poem also illustrates that to fight repression from white people, who incidentally are colonizers; the thing that must be done is to have confidence and knowledge about their social identity. This is clearly illustrated in the last sentence, ie: *Alors, de nous deux, Qui est l'homme de couleur?*

Conclusion

After analyzing this poem using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, the results and a clearer picture of the self-confidence of a black person are obtained. The language he uses is not poetic, and has the impression of being outspoken. This illustrates that the speaker considers that poetry is the art of expressing emotions and feelings, dreams, thoughts and everything that inspires man in general and the poet in particular. This poem shows the speaker's feelings that the speaker

feels as a marginal and rebellious being, who refuses the social order. The reason is indeed, although many countries on the African continent are European colonies, and they are always placed as second class, the speaker in this poem shows that he is proud to be born as a black person. He did not feel inferior at all, when juxtaposed with white people. The myth that appears in this poem is the awareness to maintain national identity and equality between humans.

Then another conclusion can be drawn, that by looking at the word *Quand* which is said many times is the key word from the speaker that he intends to suggest that black people do not easily change their nature and attitude. By looking at the last two sentences and by seeing that the speaker juxtaposes the words *Quand* and *Noir*, the speaker seems give a little teasing, that white people are volatile. This can be interpreted, that white people are difficult to trust and change easily, depending on the situation and conditions.

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