

ANALYSIS OF THE MEANING OF PRETENDER SONG LYRICS BY OFFICIAL HIGE DANdISM SEMIOTIC STUDY OF RIFFATERRE'S SEMIOTICS

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Abstract. The discussion in this study is about the meaning of the lyrics of the song *Pretender* by Official HIGE DANdism semiotic study of Riffaterre, which is a song by Japanese pop band Official HIGE DANdism and was released on May 15, 2019. This song describes unrequited love because it hides true feelings. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method describes an object in detail. The qualitative method describes and analyzes the object according to the data. The theory used is Michael Riffaterre's semiotic study, with stages in the form of expressionlessness, heuristic and hermeneutic readings, matrices, models, variants, and hypograms. Through the process of heuristic and hermeneutic readings, it can be concluded that the meaning contained in the song *Pretender* is the longing for a relationship that will never materialize.

Keywords: riffaterre semiotics, *pretender*, official hige dandism, song meaning

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Poetry is one of the categories of literary works that has the highest literary value through its dense and meaningful language in each word choice. Poetry is basically a means of expression for a person to express his thoughts and feelings. Hence, from the past till today poetry has always been created as well as read, to enjoy its artistic value as well as its great psychological value. Poetry is constantly changing, in accordance with the transformation of tastes and aesthetic concepts. (Riffaterre in Pradopo, 2012).

According to Pradopo (2012) song lyrics are a form of expressing poetry because of the similarity of its forming elements. In accordance with the previously explained interpretation of poetry, song lyrics also use a denser language, presented with a solid rhythm, and imaginative word sorting. Similar to poetry, song lyrics are also created to express what the author experiences, sees, and feels. Therefore, song lyrics can be studied using the same theories and procedures as poetry.

The song *Pretender* is a song by Japanese pop band Official HIGE DANdism and was released on May 15, 2019. This song is about the sad love of a man who considers himself unworthy to fall in love with the woman he likes, and says "goodbye" as an expression of giving up. The lyrics of the song *Pretender* contain the emotions of a young love story that pretends to be good on the surface but experiences heartache inside, this is what underlies the author's interest in analyzing more deeply the meaning of the lyrics of the song *Pretender*.

To find deep meaning in song lyrics, the author needs a thorough analysis. Therefore, the author analyzes the poem's heuristic and hermeneutic readings, the poem's lack of continuity of expression, as well as matrix, modal, variant and hypogram. In other words, this research uses Riffaterre's semiotic theory.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Semiotics is a scientific discipline and analysis procedure that can examine the signs that exist on an object in order to recognize the meaning contained in the object. According to (Ratih, 2017) semiotics is a theory used to analyze signs in song lyrics, where the meaning of these signs is not just formed, but is related to the context in which these signs appear. Song lyrics contain various kinds of signs that have meaning and reveal the essence of the song. To analyze these signs, a careful and continuous reading of the lyrics is required.

Quoted from Riffaterre (1978, p. 164- 166), states that the reader should interpret the signs in a work. The sign will have meaning after the reader reads and interprets a literary work. Actually, semiotic understanding has taken place in the reader's mind from sign to sign. There are four important things according to Riffaterre in order to obtain meaning in literary works semiotically, namely: heuristic and hermeneutic reading of the poem, Indirect poetic expression, as well as matrix, modal, variant and hypogram. Therefore, the researcher will use the five things mentioned to analyze the lyrics of the song Pretender by Official HIGE DANdism.

1. Heuristic Reading

Heuristic reading is a process of interpreting a work practically so that readers can understand the work in general. According to Pradopo (2010), heuristic reading is a reading method that uses prior knowledge and experience to understand the text. This approach does not only rely on literal understanding, but also involves personal interpretation influenced by the individual's cultural, social and historical context. Pradopo highlights the need to consider various contextual aspects in heuristic reading in order to achieve a deeper and critical understanding of the text being read.

2. Hermeneutic Reading

Hermeneutic reading is a process used to understand the text by digging deeply into the meaning of a work. Pradopo (2010) states that hermeneutic reading involves a complex interpretation process in which the reader not only understands the text literally but also tries to explore the cultural, historical, and social context behind it. He emphasizes the importance of understanding how the author composed the text as well as how the text can be understood in a broader context. According to Pradopo, the hermeneutic approach leads to creating a deeper understanding of the text and the world around it.

3. Indirect Expression

The incoherence of expression is the incongruity between the elements in a text that is difficult for the reader to understand. It is caused by the use of metaphorical words that are confusing and ambiguous. Pradopo (in Zahronah, 2023) explains that the indirectness of expression can be interpreted as conveying ideas or thoughts indirectly through other techniques. Indirectness of expression can arise due to three factors, namely changing meaning, deviating from original meaning, and creating new meaning. Riffaterre (in Pradopo, 2010, p. 342), says that the change of meaning occurs because of the use of metaphor and metonymy as well as majas that use other comparative words such as personification and irony, while the deviation of meaning comes from contradiction, ambiguity, and nonsense.

According to Gunawan (2019) in general, majas is the creative use of language styles by writers to convey messages in an imaginative and ornamental way. Majas can be found in both writing and conversation, often used in literary works to express the feelings and thoughts of the author. Aminuddin (in Gunawan, 2019, p. 7) states that majas is a way used by authors to convey their ideas in accordance with the objectives to be achieved. According to Gunawan (2019, p. 11), explains that personification refers to a language style that makes inanimate objects like humans, so they are described as if they have human-like traits and behaviors. Meanwhile, according to Wijaya (2012, p. 136), irony is the use of satire conveyed by hiding the truth or actual facts, then revealing something that is contrary to these facts.

4. Matrices, models and variants

Matrix is a tool for analyzing the musical structure, lyrics, and themes in a song. A model is a theme or motif that appears most often in the lyrics or music of a song. While variants are differences that exist in the lyrics, melody, and vocal style of a song or song interpretation. (Pradopo, 2010)

5. Hypogram

Hypograms are words or concepts that are implied in song lyrics but are not shown directly and usually use explicit words. According to Riffaterre (in Ratna, 2015, p. 173) hypograms, as sources of inspiration in literary works, have been classified into two types, namely potential hypograms and actual hypograms. Potential hypograms refer to inspiration that can be found in various models and variations of literary works. Meanwhile, actual hypograms are inspirations that come from previous texts and become the basis for the formation of new texts. In addition to being related to the written text, hypograms can also include the influence of the personal background and socio-cultural conditions of the author at the time the literary work was created.

RESEARCH METHOD

The author uses a qualitative descriptive method in this research. According to Moleong (2014, p. 11), descriptive qualitative is a research approach that uses data in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers. The data source used by the author is the song Pretender by Official HIGE DANDISM which can be accessed on its official YouTube channel and analyzed by the author using Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the meaning of the lyrics of the song Pretender by Official Hige Dandism semiotic study of Riffaterre show that the meaning of the lyrics of the song Pretender is about giving up the inevitable love relationship which can be described through the following analysis:

Heuristic Reading

Verse 1

君とのラブストーリー//それは予想通り//いざ生まれればひとり芝居だ//ずっとそばにいたって//結局ただの観客だ

Kimi to no love story//Sore wa yosou doori//Iza hajimareba hitorishibai da//Zutto soba ni itatte//Kekkyoku tada no kankyaku da

My love story with you went as expected// A one-man play from the very beginning// Although all this time I was beside you// In the end I was just a spectator

Verse 2

感情のないアイムソーリー//それはいつも通り//慣れてしまえば悪くはないけど//君とのロマンスは人生柄//続きはしないことを知った

Kanjou no nai I'm sorry//Sore wa itsumo doori//Narete shimaeba waruku wa nai kedo//Kimi to no romansu wa jinsei gara//Tsuzuki wa shinai koto wo shitta

The usual expression of apology that has no emotion// It doesn't feel so painful if you're used to it// However, the romance between the two of us is like my way of life// And I know that our relationship will not last.

Verse 3

もっと違う設定でもっと違う関係で//出会える世界線選べたらよかった//もっと違う性格で もっと違う価値観で//愛を伝えられたいな//そう願っても無駄だから

Motto chigau settei de/Motto chigau kankei de/Deaeru sekaisen erabetara yokatta/Motto chigau seikaku de/Motto chigau kachikan de/Ai wo tsutaeraretara ii na/Sou negattemo muda dakara

If only I had a different setting/ If only I had a different form of relationship/ I could have chosen a different way to meet you/ If only I had a different personality/ If only I had different values/ I could have expressed my love for you/ However, it seems futile to hope for that.

Verse 4

グッバイ//君の運命のヒトは僕じゃない//辛いけど否めないでも離れ難いのさ//その髪に触れたけただで 痛いや いやでも//
甘いな いやいや//グッバイ//それじゃ僕にとって君は何?//答えは分からない 分かりたくもないのさ//ったひとつ確かな
ことがあるとするのならば//「君は綺麗だ」.

*Goodbye//Kimi no unmei no hito wa boku janai//Tsurai kedo inamenai//Demo hanaregatai no sa//Sono kami ni fureta dake de itai ya
iya demo//Ami na iya iya//Goodbye//Sore ja boku ni totte kimi wa nani? //Cite wa wakaranai wakaritaku mo nai no sa//Tatta hitotsu
tashika na koto ga aru to suru no naraba//"Kimi wa kirei da"*

Goodbye//I'm not the one destined for you//I can't deny that it hurts//Even so, it's still hard to part from you//Just touching your hair is suffocating//A sweet but painful experience//Not really//Goodbye//What am I to you then?//I've never known the answer//But I'm also not willing to find out//So, the only thing that is certain for me is//"You are beautiful"

Verse 5

誰かが偉そうに語る恋愛の論理//何ひとつとしてピンとこなくて//飛行機の窓から見下ろした//知らない街の夜景みたいだ

*Dareka ga erasou ni kataru renai no ronri//Nani hitotsu toshite pin to konakute//Hikouki no mado kara miroshita//Shiranai machi no
yakei mitai da*

Someone who pretends to be smart// Has talked about the logic of love// But it makes no sense to me// It's like the night city I don't know// That I see from the window of an airplane.

Verse 6

もっと違う設定でもっと違う関係で//出会える世界線選べたらよかった//いたって純な心で叶った恋を抱きしめて//「好きだ」とか無責任に言えたらいな//そう願っても虚しいのさ

*Motto chigau settei de motto chigau kankei de//Deaeru sekaisen erabetara yokatta//Itatte jun na kokoro de kanatta koi wo
dakishimete//Suki da to ka musekinin ni ietara ii na//Sou negattemo munashii no sa*

If only in a different setting// If only in a much different form of relationship// I could have chosen a different path to meet you// If only with an innocent heart to embrace a fulfilled love// I could have said "like" to you gamblingly// However, it feels hollow to wish for that.

Verse 7

グッバイ//繋いだ手の向こうにエンドライン//引き伸ばすたびに 疼きだす未来には//君はいない その事実Cry...//そりゃ苦しいよな

*Goodbye//Tsunaida te no mukou ni endorain//Hikinobasu tabi ni uzukidasu mirai ni wa//Kimi wa inai, sono jijitsu ni cry//Sorya kurushii
yo na*

Goodbye//There is a final limit behind the line of both of our hands//Each time you deny it//The future will be even more piercing//The truth that you will no longer be here makes me cry//The feeling is really suffocating.

Verse 8

グッバイ//君の運命のヒトは僕じゃない//辛いけど否認めなくても離れ難いのさ//その髪に触れただけで 痛いやでも甘いな
やいや//グッバイ//それじゃ僕にとって君は何?//答えは分からない 分かりたくもないのさ//たったひとつ確かなことがあ
るとするのなら//「君は綺麗だ」.

*Goodbye//Kimi no unmei no hito wa boku janai tsurai kedo inamenai demo hanaregatai no sa//Sono kami ni fureta dake de itai ya iya
demo amai na iya iya//Goodbye//Sore ja boku ni totte kimi wa nani? //Chee wa wakaranai wakaritaku mo nai no sa//Tatta
hitotsu//Tashika na koto ga aru to suru no naraba//"Kimi wa kirei da"*

Goodbye// I'm not the one destined for you// I can't deny that it's painful// Even so, it's still hard to part from
you// Just touching your hair is suffocating// Painful but sweet, not really// Goodbye// What am I to you then?//
I've never known the answer, but I'm not willing to find out either// So, the only thing I'm sure of is/// "You're
beautiful."

Verse 9

それもこれもロマンスの定めなら//悪くないよな//永遠も約束もないけれど//「とても綺麗だ」

Sore mo kore mo romansu no sadame nara//Waruku nai yo na//Eien mo yakusoku mo nai keredo//"Totemo kirei da"

If everything is destined for our romance, it doesn't seem so bad// Although there is no eternity or promise for
this, but "You are so beautiful"

Hermeneutic Reading

Verse 1

君とのラブストーリー//それは予想通り//いざ始まればひとり芝居だ//ずっとそばにいたって//結局ただの観客だ

*Kimi to no love story//Sore wa yosou doori//Iza hajimareba hitorishibai da//Zutto soba ni itatte//Kekkyoku tada no kankyaku
da*

My love story with you went as expected// A one-man show from the very beginning// Even though all
this time I was beside you// In the end, I was just a spectator.

The verse expresses loneliness and feelings of alienation despite being around someone. It is evidenced by "
ひとり芝居" (solo performance) and "ただの観客" (just an audience). The verse expresses the feelings of
dissatisfaction and disappointment of 'I' in his love relationship, who feels that his love relationship with the
woman he loves does not live up to expectations. There is a feeling of loneliness and alienation that arises even
though the woman he loves is around 'I'. This reflects the confusing feelings in the relationship, as well as the
frustration of feeling like a mere spectator in his own love story.

Verse 3

もっと違う設定でもっと違う関係で//出会う世界線 選べたらよかった//もっと違う性格で もっと違う価値観で//
愛を伝えられたらいい//そう願っても無駄だから

*Motto chigau settei de/Motto chigau kankei de/Deaeru sekaisen erabetara yokatta/Motto chigau seikaku de/Motto chigau
kachikan de/Ai wo tsutaeraretara ii na/Sou negattemo muda dakara*

If only I had a different setting// If only I had a much different form of relationship// I could have chosen
a different way to meet you// If only I had a different personality// If only I had much different values//
I could have expressed my love for you// However, it seems futile to hope for that.

The verse contains the unfulfilled feelings of the 'I' who wishes to have a different relationship with his lover.
This verse also describes the longing and desire to have a different experience in life, whether in terms of

situations, relationships, or characters. There is a feeling of regret or a desire to change something that has happened. The use of the word "世界線" (sekaisen), a combination of the words (世界) meaning world and (線) meaning line, suggests the idea of an alternate reality or parallel world where the different possibilities hoped for by 'I' can occur. Overall, the lyrics in this verse reflect reflections on life and the desire to experience different things.

Verse 4

グッバイ//君の運命のヒトは僕じゃない//辛いけど否認ないでも離れ難いのさ//その髪に触れただけで 痛いや いやでも//甘い いやいや//グッバイ//それじゃ僕にとって君は何?//答えは分からない 分かりたくもないのさ//ったひとつ確かなことがあるとするのならば//「君は綺麗だ」.

Goodbye//Kimi no unmei no hito wa boku janai//Tsurai kedo inamenai//Demo hanaregatai no sa//Sono kami ni fureta dake de itai ya iya demo//Amai na iya iya//Goodbye//Sore ja boku ni totte kimi wa nani? //Cite wa wakaranai wakaritaku mo nai no sa//Tatta hitotsu tashika na koto ga aru to suru no naraba//"Kimi wa kirei da"

Goodbye//I'm not the one destined for you//I can't deny that it hurts//Even so, it's still hard to part from you//Just touching your hair is suffocating//A sweet but painful experience//Not really//Goodbye//What am I to you then?//I've never known the answer//But I'm also not willing to find out//So, the only thing that is certain for me is//"You are beautiful"

The verse, expressing the subject 'I's feelings of fear of losing someone despite realizing that they are not destiny, expresses a number of conflicting feelings, creating a picture of a complicated relationship between two individuals. Firstly, we see a deep sense of separation, reflected in the words "グッバイ" (goodbye) which indicate departure or separation. However, in this context, the separation is not entirely negative, as it is expressed that "離れ難い" (it is hard to part). Furthermore, there is a sense of disappointment and rejection due to the realization that "君の運命のヒトは僕じゃない" (the person destined for you is not me). This shows an acknowledgment of the incompatibility or imperfection in the relationship, which is often painful to face. However, although painful, this truth cannot be avoided. However, amidst the conflict that 'I' experiences, there are sweet memories that are hard to forget. The physical touch or emotional intimacy of "その髪に触れただけで" still triggers strong feelings, even though both parties are aware that their relationship will not continue. This illustrates the power of memories and emotional connections that are hard to break completely, even if they end up going their separate ways.

Verse 9

それもこれもロマンスの定めなら//悪くないよな//永遠も約束もないけれど//「とても綺麗だ」

Sore mo kore mo romansu no sadame nara//Waruku nai yo na//Eien mo yakusoku mo nai keredo//"Totemo kirei da"

If everything is destined for our romance, it's not so bad// Even though there's no permanence or promise for this, but "You're so beautiful"

The line describes the 'I's feeling of acceptance of loss that the relationship has ended and that one's beauty remains even if they are not together. This verse implies that in life, love has its own beauty even though it is not always certain or eternal. Hermeneutics helps the writer understand that through this kind of interpretation, one can explore the meaning behind the words, here, the beauty of love is expressed through uncertainty. It also highlights how humans often find beauty in things that are imperfect or uncertain. So, hermeneutically, we recognize that the lyrics not only celebrate romance, but also highlight the uniqueness and complexity of human relationships.

Indirect Expression

The Indirect expression found in the song lyrics are as follows:

1. Comparison

Personification:

a) 飛行機の窓から見下ろした//知らない街の夜景みたいだ

Hikouki no mado kara mioroshita//Shiranai machi no yakei mitai da

Similar to the night city I don't know// that I see from an airplane window

In the lyrics, the night city seen from an airplane window is compared to an unknown night scene. In reality, the city night does not have the ability to feel or be recognized like humans. However, by using personification, the lyricist describes the city night as something that can be felt and recognized.

b) その髪に触れただけで痛いや

Sono kami ni fureta dake de itai ya

Just touching your hair is suffocating.

Hair touched is equated with something that can cause pain. In this context, hair is actually an inanimate object and does not have the ability to cause pain like humans. However, by using personification, the lyricist conveys a strong emotional experience, where touching someone's hair can cause feelings of pain or discomfort.

c) 引き伸ばすたびに疼きだす未来には//君はいない

Hikinobasu tabi ni uzukidasu mirai ni wa//Kimi wa inai

The future will be more and more piercing, the truth that you will no longer be here

In the lyrics, the future is felt as if it hurts because the presence of someone who is expected is not in it. Literally, the future does not have the ability to feel pain or have emotions like humans. However, by using personification, the lyricist conveys a strong emotional feeling, where the absence of someone in the future is compared to pain or emptiness.

2. Satire

Irony:

d) "それは予想通り//いざ始まばひとり芝居だ"

Sore wa yosō dōri, iza hajimareba hitori shibai da

"As expected, once it started, it was just a one-man monologue."

The lyrics are ironic because it was expected to be a beautiful love story, but ended up as a feeling of loneliness and disappointment. In the lyrics, the singer conveys the 'I's disappointment and sadness about the relationship not going as expected, even though it initially looked like a beautiful love story.

e) "たったひとつ確かなことがあるとするのなら//「君は綺麗だ」

Tatta hitotsu tashika na koto ga aru to suru no naraba, 'kimi wa kirei da'

"If there is one thing that is certain, it is that 'you are beautiful'."

The lyrics can be said to be ironic as it states that the only thing that is certain is the beauty of the woman 'I' love, while all other aspects of their relationship are unclear or uncertain. In these lyrics there is a contrast between the expectations of how love should be, such as loyalty and happiness, and the bitter reality of loss and sadness.

Matrices, Models, Variants

The models in Pretender's song lyrics are the words "goodbye", "destined person" and "beautiful", which are repeatedly mentioned, as well as the depiction of emotions from disappointment to acceptance and beauty in memories. The variants are unsatisfactory romantic relationships, the search for self-identity in relationships, sadness and acceptance of the inevitable. Thus, the Matrix in Pretender's song lyrics is failure in a romantic relationship.

Hypograms

The hypograms contained in the lyrics of Pretender songs are potential hypograms and actual hypograms. Potential hypograms are the main sources of meaning contained in the poetry/song text that have equivalence with the matrix. Therefore, the hypogram of this song is the same as the matrix, namely "failure in a romantic relationship". The actual hypogram is related to the written text, the hypogram can also include the influence of the background and conditions of the author at the time the literary work was created, namely being the theme song of a Japanese television series inspired by the movie Confidence man JP.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the lyrics of the song Pretender from the band Official Hige Dandism contain unsustainability in the form of substitution of meaning, which includes the language styles of personification and irony. In the lyrics of the song Pretender there is no continuity of meaning deviation and meaning creation at all. The matrix contained in this song is the failure of a romantic relationship and the models in the song Pretender are "goodbye", "destined person", and "beautiful". This model is transformed into the following variants, unsatisfactory romantic relationships, search for self-identity in relationships, sadness and acceptance of inevitable reality. The hypogram in the song Pretender is a potential hypogram that can be aligned with the matrix, which includes failure in a romantic relationship. The actual hypogram is that the song Pretender became one of the OSTs of a Japanese movie called Confidence Man JP as its inspiration.

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