

Bruno's *Sunday Bloody Sunday* as an Expressive Criticism

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Abstract

The research focuses on Sunday Bloody Sunday as an Expressive Criticism. The researchers apply a qualitative research using the lyrics of the song Sunday Bloody Sunday as source of data. The finding shows that the lyrics of the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* is an expressive poem that conveys the message of the spirit of the Irish nationalism and patriotism that is rooted on the speaker's world view and *weltanschauung*. The world of view of the speaker of the poem is that he sides with the people of Ireland who want to make the island become united in the name of the republic Ireland that comprises the whole island and wants to spread the idea through this song. This song is also an expression of the anger of the speaker of the poem that sees the presence of the British authority cannot be tolerated because they kill the unarmed civilians on and on and every Irish people can be target for the killings..

A. INTRODUCTION

It has been long time as an axiom that artists, musicians, and writers get involved actively in promoting their political preference in creating their works. Charles Dickens , for example, was very famous in criticizing the harsh condition of the people during the Industrial Revolution era, as Wallbank (1979,204) shows that *Hard Time* was created as a protest against the bad condition at the time. Related to this situation, the literary works are constructed as the utterance of feelings of the authors (Abrams, 1999:51). As it is proved that Dickens' work like *Hard Time* is the utterance of feelings of the author in form of a novel, the utterance of feelings in literary works not only take place in poems, but also in poems, as Abrams states that in a criticism

that is called as expressive criticism that poetry gets involved as parts of the works that are made up as the utterance of the feelings of the author. Some poets that show their expression of feelings or utterance of feelings in their works are Robert Burns and Percy Bysshe Shelley. In expressing their own feeling on love Burns explores the emotion of his own subjective experience in poems a it is done as well by Percy Bysshe Shelley who has experiences travelling in many countries and expressed his experience and opinion in his poems.

The relation between a literary work and the utterance of feelings of a n author is called as the expressive criticism (Abrams, 1999:50). This type of criticism in on analysing a literary work is based on idea that a work is closely related to the subjectivity of

an author in process of producing a work of literary because a human being cannot be separated from his own subjectivity in interpreting and experiencing his life.

This paper studies the role of expressive author which explores the world view that is held by the author of the poem through the lyrics of song so that the study can reveal how the song is the expression of the author.

Abrams (1992:51) defines that there are four types of criticism such as mimetic, pragmatic, expressive and objective. While mimetic criticism focuses on the environmental issue becomes significant factor for an author, pragmatic focuses on the independence of a reader in interpreting a literary work, objective criticism focuses on the extrinsic factor of a work, the expressive criticism focuses on the idea that literary work is primarily in relation to its author. The work is an expression, overflow, or utterance of feelings as it is the imagination of his perception, thoughts, and feelings. If Abrams uses the term expressive criticism, Guerin (2003:50-51) uses the historical and biographical approaches to understand the relationship between the life of the author and his work. Guerin also investigates the influence of the spirit that the author has on

his mind through his experience where he also lives in a certain period of time in which it is termed as mimetic by Abrams.

Through the works, the author, whether he is aware or not, he reveals himself in the work of literature. Because of that, the involvement of the subjectivity of the author in creating the work is highly understood. From the expressive criticism, it can be studied that an author has certain point of view like world view and what he believes to fight for or it is named as *weltanschauung*. The *weltanschauung* is actually the same literal translation of world view, but as a literary term, it bounds the spirit of fighting or ideology that an author believes to fight for, while world view is perceived as only in how to understand this world.

Related to this issue, when a critic studies an author's worldview and his *weltanschauung*, the critic must know the life of the author dealing with his political affiliation, time line, religion, and places he lives, or even many things that can help him to understand better about the author. As it is stated that if a critic wants to study about Dickens' works, he should know better about the times and where Dickens lived, what he thought about the big event that surrounded him, that was the Industrial Revolution.

Related to this issue, to understand the background of U2 and especially the lyricist of the song, Bono is very important. As it has been stated that U2 are a rock band from Ireland and as other catholic Irish, they want to see the north part of the island will be united someday in the name of the Republic of Ireland in which this dream is absolutely different from what the Protestants who want to make the area become part of the United Kingdom under the queen of England's rule.

The poem that is investigated is *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1983) that is sung by U2, the band from Ireland that criticize the massacre of Belfast that happened in 1972. By analyzing this song through the lyrics of the song and using it as a poem, this paper can reveal the message of this poem that is uttered as a means of the expression of political agenda of the author of the song, U2, themselves.

U2 are a rock band from Dublin, Ireland that is very famous in the world wide including the Great Britain. The songs and the lyrics of the songs are mainly composed and written by Bono, the vocalist of the band. U2 have released 14 studio albums and are one of the world's best-selling music artists in history, having sold an estimated 150–170 million records worldwide, They also win 22

Grammy Awards that show then popularity of the band. U2 influence the youth people in many parts of this planet and are very active in many issues that happen in this world, from the advocacy of the environmental, industrial, war issues. The war that still happens in the north area of the Irish island becomes an issue of the band through their lyrics of the songs, like in *Sunday Bloody Sunday*.

Sunday Bloody Sunday was composed in 1983 which is written as a memory of the massacre that was perpetrated by the elite squad of the British troops in 1972. The massacre took place when the catholic Irish demonstrated in Derry, North Ireland peacefully and then the marching demonstrators were shot by the elite parachutists and cost 14 civilians death. The massacre triggered a wider response for the catholic Irish to be more aggressive in demanding an independence. In response to this situation, the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* was written by U2 to show their pro independence staunch in the conflict between the pro British protestants and the republicans that are mostly Catholics.

The research question and objective

Related to the issue that is presented in the introduction, this paper tries to reveal

that the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* is highly motivated political song that is based on the utterance of feelings of the author of the song, U2 by using the expressive criticism.

B. RESERACH METHOD

The researchers apply a qualitative research in which the research does not give priority to number and tables. The Source of data is the lyrics of the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* written by Bruno.

C Analysis

These are the lyrics of Sunday Bloody Sunday that portrays the factual event of the massacre of 14 civilians in North Ireland that happened in 1972.:

I can't believe the news today
Oh, I can't close my eyes
And make it go away
How long?
How long must we sing this song?
How long, how long?
'Cause tonight, we can be as one
Tonight

Broken bottles under children's feet
Bodies strewn across the dead end street
But I won't heed the battle call
It puts my back up
Puts my back up against the wall

Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Sunday, Bloody Sunday, Sunday, Bloody
Sunday (alright)

And the battle's just begun
There's many lost, but tell me who has won
The trench is dug within our hearts
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn
apart

Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

How long?
How long must we sing this song?
How long, how long?
'Cause tonight, we can be as one
Tonight, tonight

The first stanza expresses the feelings that the author has on his heart when he hears the news about massacre of his own people by the strong British troops. As in an expressive criticism the speaker is the author of the poem, the paper shows that poem, the speaker of the poem expresses his anger by stating that "I can't believe the news today". This is an expression of shock and anger because the event that comes to him. He does not believe that the mighty British soldiers kill many unarmed people. The massacre makes him feel angry in which it is expressed

on the line “Oh, I can't close my eyes”. This line means that the speaker of the poem cannot accept the fact of the brutality, he cannot tolerate any longer the brutality that is done by the British people against his own people. He cannot close “my eyes” because the event hangs over his head, and he feels very frustrated with the condition. He wants to see the atrocities end soon, but with the butchery, he feels discouraged as it is stated in the line “ And make it go away.... How long.... How long must we sing this song?” These lines refer to the condition that the massacre is a setback for the effort both to end the sectarian conflicts and also the unification between north Ireland and the rest of the free Ireland. “And make it go away” means that the speaker wants to see the conflicts end soon, so that the event that haunts him to fade away and there will be no more massacre, but in fact , on the contrary the incident will make a tit tat killings that will never end and he asks “how long, how long must we sing the song?”. These lines mean that the song means the suffering and brutality that happen to the occupied catholic Irish people will last longer and will not know when it ends, or in other words, the speaker of the song says that the massacre will happen in the following years because the speaker will still sing the song *Sunday*

Bloody Sunday. The title of the song symbolizes the massacre will always happen because the bloody Sunday refers to the possible massacre that will never end in the future. The anger of the speaker as the utterance of the feelings he feels is also reflected when he says that “cause we can be as one tonight “. This line is an expression that he feels because he can internalize as if he can smell the blood that is shed by the British troopers, how the people fall and scream when they are shot, and these all things can be felt by the speaker of the poem, and therefore, he, as an Irish can feel that he someday will get the bullet from the British troops as well or whoever who has blood of Irish people are possible to be killed by the British troops.

The second stanza describes what the speaker of the song feels about what happens through the observation of the occurrence as if he is present at the event. “Broken bottles under children's feet” means that when the shooting begins and happens, as well as the event after the shooting ends, he sees the bottles are found under the children's feet that the speaker wants to emphasize that the marching is actually peaceful because it is done by the kids as well and there is nothing among the crowd except the bottles that are brought by the innocent kids. By explaining

this, it can be seen that this work is an expression of the speaker of poem, as it can be proved from how he shows his eagerness to side with the Irish people because this is part of his world view of supporting the unity of the all part of Ireland into one country. As an Irish patriot, he supports the unity of the Irish people in the whole island and as a lyricist, he means to take part in the struggle to advocate this goal. To express his hatred toward the British troops as the brutal army, he also describes about the mess that is left after the massacre takes place in the form of silence in death as it is state in " Bodies strewn across the dead and street". This line means that the speaker describes the brutal action that is committed by the British army. He expresses the form of the brutality in how the dead people are scattered in streets, and it cannot be tolerated because the British are the aliens who steal their land and kill the natives of Ireland brutally. The British troops dare to kill them who are unarmed because what they want is just the land not the people. The presence of the British people and army that are seen as the aliens and irritate the Irish people to whom the speaker of the song feels sympathy can be seen in the following lines of the stanza:, " It puts me back up... Puts my back up against the wall" These two lines describe how, the speaker of the poem

expresses his political position as his world view that he does not like the presence of the British army that irritate him, even though he does not live in Derry or Belfast.

The third stanza is a repetition about the tragedy of the Bloody Sunday in January 1972. The speaker of the poem repeats the words "Sunday Bloody Sunday" three times as a means to emphasize the grievance that is felt by the Irish people. As an expression of the speaker's feeling, that poem shows how he hates the British authority that is present in Northern Ireland and the massacre that happens as should be remembered because the song is produced a decade after the tragedy happens as a means to remember the event so that it can grow the spirit of the Irish patriotism and admire the victims that fall, so that their death is not useless but very worthy for the spirit of Irish patriotism.

The fourth stanza is about the expression of giving the spirit for the listeners of the poem that means especially the young generation for the Irish people who do not know the event that last a decade before. The statement is proved form the following line, "And the battle's just begun " The line means that the massacre is so cruel and brutal that cannot be tolerated and the speaker thinks that by doing this massacre, the British

government declares war to the Irish people, and it gets along with the spirit of the Irish nationalism or patriotism that is held by the speaker of the poem as his world view and *weltanschauung*. The speaker has a world of view of the Irish nationalism and patriotism, and the world view is materialized in his *weltanschauung* that is formed in the lyrics as the expression of his feelings. As an expression of his world view of the Irish patriotism and nationalism, the speaker of the poem stresses that massacre does not discourage the spirit, even it grows the spirit bigger as it is stated in, "There's many lost but tell me who has won....The trench is dug within our hearts .". The line means that the speaker wants to grow the spirit of the Irish nationalism and patriotism that cannot be destroyed even though the British authority tries to annihilate the spirit of the Irish patriotism and nationalism by killing the Irish people by stressing the idea that even though the many Irish people die, but in the end, the Irish people will win because the spirit of patriotism is so strong that is built inside their hearts. In this line, the speaker uses a metaphor the trench as the spirit that cannot be erased from the consciousness of the Irish people, the whole Irish people like mothers, children, brothers and sisters that are

scattered and separated because of the cruel treatment of the British authority. They can be jailed, beaten, and killed as the British authority wishes.

The following stanza is the expression of repetition of the massacre by mentioning the words "Sunday Bloody Sunday" three times again. The purpose of this repetition is to emphasize that the brutal massacre really happens and may happen in the future to other Irish people, regardless, they are males or females, adults or children and even all civilians.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the lyrics of the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* is an expressive poem that conveys the message of the spirit of the Irish nationalism and patriotism that is rooted on the speaker's world view and *weltanschauung*. The world of view of the speaker of the poem is that he sides with the people of Ireland who want to make the island become united in the name of the republic Ireland that comprises the whole island and wants to spread the idea through this song. This song is also an expression of the anger of the speaker of the poem that sees the presence of the British authority cannot be tolerated because they kill the unarmed

civilians on and on and every Irish people can be target for the killings. Therefore, this song is published a decade after the event as a remembrance and the awareness of the spirit that never ends.

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