

# BERTOLT BRECHT'S POEM “ DEUTSCHLAND”: THE INHUMANITIES OF THE HITTLER ERA'S LEADERSHIP

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## Abstract

Poetry (Gedich) is a literary work that belongs to the category of lyrics. Compared to other types of literary works such as epics and dramas, poetry has a more dense and beautiful language and the meaning in poetry is multi-interpreted. Each individual can have their own interpretation. The language used in poetry is also not everyday language. Told about the struggle of the German people during the Nazi occupation, and the sadness of the German people who live with great difficulties, this study the researcher used a qualitative approach, Research results In Deutschland's poetry, only ambiguity is found as a form of deviation of meaning. While contradictions and nonsense not found. The creation of meaning in Deutschland poetry is caused by rhyme and enjambement. The rhyme in the poem is irregular, this illustrates that what is characteristic of beauty is not prioritized, but emphasizes the integrity of meaning. Apart from rhyme, Enjambement is also found in poetry. Germany is also hated by other countries due to Hitler's actions. Initially Hitler's decision to annex Austria (15 March 1938) and Czechoslovakia was still tolerated by other nations, but then the dispossession of Poland had precipitated the outbreak of World War II.

**Keywords:** Inhumanities, Poem, Hitler, World War

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Poetry (Gedich) is a literary work that belongs to the category of lyrics. Compared to other types of literary

works such as epics and dramas, poetry has a denser and beautiful language and the meaning in poetry is multi-

interpreted. Each individual can have their own interpretation. The language used in poetry is also not everyday language. The choice of words in poetry is very selective and pays attention to norms and beauty. This is concluded from Perrine's definition of poetry, namely: Poetry can be defined as a kind of language that says more and more intensively than what is said in everyday language (Perrine, 1974: 553).

In connection with the features of poetry that have been mentioned above, the meaning of poetry cannot be done arbitrarily. Because often the language in the poem is a sign that deviates from the true meaning or semantics, has multiple meanings, and figurative language. Therefore, a study of poetry is needed to obtain the complete unity of meaning from a poem. Poetry can be studied with various approaches, both structurally and semiotically.

From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that the language of poetry is different from everyday language and requires more attention to define. Because often the language in the poem is a sign and deviates from the true meaning or semantics, has multiple meanings, and figurative language. However, there is one characteristic that remains, that poetry expresses something with another meaning, or it can be called an indirect expression.

Language and literature systems are two important aspects of semiotics. Literary work is a meaningful sign system that uses language as the medium. Preminger (1974: 981) says that language is a first level semiotic system that already has meaning. In literary works, the meaning of language is enhanced into meaning (significance) so that the literary work is a second-level semiotic system. Riffaterre (1978: 166) says that it is the reader's duty to give meaning to the signs contained in

literary works. These signs will have meaning after reading and interpreting them. In fact, it is in the reader's mind that semiotic transfers from sign to sign occur.

As a dense and concentrated literary work, poetry also has a beauty that is not found in other literary works. This beauty lies in the meaning that can be done by singing the poem. Poetry has the privilege of being able to sing it. This statement is strengthened by Altenberg via Pradopo's definition (2010: 5) that poetry is a dramatization of experience that is interpretive in rhythmic language (*bermetrum*) (as the interpretive dramatization of experience in metrical language). In addition, poetry is an expression of thoughts that can evoke feelings, stimulate the imagination of the five senses in a rhythmic arrangement.

All of that is something important, which is recorded and expressed, expressed in an interesting and impressive way (Pradopo, 2007: 7). In this way, poetry is a recording and interpretation of important human experiences packaged in the most memorable form. Pradopo (2007: 13) adds that poetry is a poetic work of art. The poetic word itself contains a special beauty for poetry. A literary work is said to be poetic if it evokes feelings, attracts attention, and generates a clear response.

The poetry that will be studied in this research is the Deutschland poem by Bertolt Brecht which was composed in 1933. This poem was composed during the early days of Adolf Hitler's reign. Where at that time the ruling Nazi regime. Brecht's poem entitled Deutschland seems to be a prediction of the downturn of the German nation. Through the choice of words or diction in his poem, Bertolt describes the

situation that will occur after the Nazis come to power.

Deutschland or Germany in this poem is described as a mother who has a son, but the meaning of mother and son is not a denotative meaning. This choice of words is likened by the author as a sign that must be revealed. Because interpreting it cannot be done without seeing the signs in the poem. Deutschland's poetry is used as study material for the reasons, first, the situation depicted in the poem is relevant to the current situation.

Where the sense of love for the motherland recedes and there is chaos both socially, economically, politically and culturally. What is right is getting covered up and what is wrong is being publicized. Which this situation also occurs in Indonesia. Second, the Deutschland poet Bertolt Brecht is a well-known German writer who has been prolific in various literary works in the form of drama, epic and poetry. Brecht was born in Ausburg on February 10, 1898 and died on August 14, 1956. Some examples of works produced by Brecht besides Deutschland poetry include *Drei Grossenoper*, *Verschuhe*, *Linderbergh Flug*, *Frucht und Elend des Dritten Reichs*, and *Deutschland*.

After power was taken over by the NAZI in 1933, Brecht, who was a Socialist-Marxist, felt the impact firsthand. The performance of his drama entitled *Maßnahme* was banned by the police. Then on May 10, 1933 there was a massive book burning by the Nazis, where Brecht's works were also burned in an official ceremony. February 28 Brecht and family are forced to leave Germany. Brecht's fled to Prague then Vienna and Zurich, and finally arrived in *akovsbostrand*, Denmark, where he remained for five years. Those five years were difficult, especially in terms

of the economy. However, while in Denmark, Brecht was very productive at work and became editor of the exile magazine, which was managed by another German emigrant. In this magazine published in Moscow many of Brecht's works are published. In addition, Brecht's plays are also regularly performed in London, Paris and New York. Brecht became an internationally known writer. But at the same time, Brecht's citizenship was revoked by the Nazis. Although not having German citizenship, but Austrian since 1950, Brecht is still considered a great writer from East Germany.

In this case, it can be seen that the love for the homeland receded and chaos occurred both socially, economically, politically and culturally. What is right is getting covered up and what is wrong is being publicized. Which this situation also occurs in Indonesia. Second, the Deutschland poet Bertolt Brecht is a well-known German writer who has been prolific in various literary works in the form of drama, epic and poetry. Brecht was born in Ausburg on February 10, 1898 and died on August 14, 1956. Some examples of works produced by Brecht besides Deutschland poetry include *Drei Grossenoper*, *Verschuhe*, *Linderbergh Flug*, *Frucht und Elend des Dritten Reichs*, and *Deutschland*. One of the characteristics of this generation's literary works is the language spoken using harsh and cynical language, this is because writers during the *Neue Sachlichkeit* period felt the cruelty of World War I, so they wanted literary works that could describe reality. free. Third, this poem has never been studied before. Fourth, the language used in the poem.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Poetry is one type of literary work, every literary work is usually conveyed in writing or orally. defines literary works as beautiful writings that record something in the form of deep language, elongated in abbreviations, and deepened by changing it through language tools (Eagleton, 2010, p.4). and states that literature is an expression of the human person in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, beliefs in a form of concrete images that evoke fascination with language tools.

Some poems are written based on a person's life story, both real and unreal. Every poem or literary work can be examined from various points of view, including the aspects contained in this poem where this poem belongs to the period of the Neue Sachlichkeit case. Currently the works that appear are synonymous with scathing and sharp criticism of the government Examining things such as the conditions of war in Germany during World War 2.

Tells about the struggle of the German people during the Nazi occupation, and the sadness of the German people who live with difficulty. This this poem explains the condition of Hitler's leadership which did not prioritize humanity, so that many died in the end and it was the nation's best sons who were sacrificed for war on condition that all access was restricted. Humanity is an important trait in creating a harmonious life among human beings, as Notonagoro mentioned in Pamono and Kartini (1984: 74), that human nature is a single compound (monopluralism), so in this literary work will describe reality freely.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study the researcher used a qualitative approach, the research was

carried out in depth and detail in order to obtain a clear picture of the poem. This study intends to find research subjects and then the researcher begins to build building relationships for each meaning in the poetry contained in the poem to be studied.

Then the researcher will explain the research method which is carried out using an analysis of each word contained in the poem to be analyzed in order to make it easier for the researcher to find meaning in each unit of meaning obtained when doing research on poetry.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Findings

The analysis technique in this study uses three stages, namely;

- a. Identification, carrying out activities to identify each word contained in the poem and the linkage of each meaning of the word contained in the poem,
- b. Presentation of data, presenting data in a simpler form so that the explanation is in accordance with the concepts related to the results of the analysis,
- c. Drawing conclusions, carrying out data inference activities that have been identified and categorized according to the results of the data being analyzed

### 4.2. Discussion

Deutschland Poetry is a poem by one of the famous German writers named Bertold Brecht. This poem consists of nine stanzas with a total of 40 lines. Each stanza consists of four to 6 lines. This poem was composed in 1933. Therefore this poem belongs to the period of the Neue Sachlichkeit case. At this time the works that appeared were synonymous with scathing and sharp criticism of the

government. Writers at this time wanted honest literary works, because they directly experienced the cruelty and severity of World War I and the difficult times after that. However, in

reality there are many literary works that actually hurt the hearts of most German people because they are expressed in language that is too harsh and even tends to be cynical.

### **Bertolt Brecht, >Deutschland< (1933)**

<b>Jerman</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Mögen andere von ihrer Schande sprechen ich spreche von der meinen O Deutschland, bleiche Mutter! Wie sitzt du besudelt Unter den Völkern. Unter den Befleckten Fällst du auf</b>	Let other people talk bad I talk about my bad O Deutschland, pale mother How stained you are Among your people Among the downtrodden You're worse off
<b>Von deinen Söhnen der ärmste Liegt erschlagen Als sein Hunger groß war Haben deine anderen Söhne Die Hand gegen ihn erhoben. Das ist ruchbar geworden.</b>	Your son is the weakest Oppressed When his hunger is burning Your other sons Hands up against it It has spread
<b>mit ihren so erhobenen Händen</b>	With his hands raised Rebelled against his brother They are now being impolite in front of you
<b>Erhoben gegen ihren Bruder Gehen sie jetzt frech vor dir herum Und lachen in dein Gesicht. Das weiß man.</b>	And laughing in your face Everyone knows that
<b>O Deutschland, bleiche Mutter! Wie haben deine Söhne dich zugerichtet Daß du unter den Völkern sitzt Ein Gespött oder eine Furcht!</b>	O Deutschland, pale mother! How your sons tormented you In front of your people Being the object of ridicule or a fear

**O Deutschland, pale mother!  
Your weakest son Oppressed  
When his hunger is burning  
Your other sons Raised their hands against him  
It has spread**

It is common knowledge or it is widely known that in Germany the weak are oppressed and killed by the (strong) rulers. The strong get stronger and the weak get weaker. Rulers only think about ambition. When this poem

was written, Germany was in such a chaotic situation. Brecht used the word Schande which means disgrace, used to describe the chaos that occurred in all fields, especially in the field of literature. Where books that are felt to



be in conflict with the government will be destroyed by burning. All the chaos that exists in his homeland is what Brecht reveals.

Therefore, the word Schande, which has a meaning in this poem, means all the disgraceful acts committed by the authorities to strengthen authority and power by minimizing all obstacles. Brecht also uses the word meine Deutschland, because even if it is bad, Germany is his homeland and everything he expresses in Deutschland's poetry is reality. Because this poem is a real picture of what happened at that time.

Die Unterdrücker and die Ausgebeuteten in this poem mean the oppressors, if correlated at that time then this word is used to replace NAZI. Meanwhile, the opposite words die Unterdrückten and die Ausbeuter are used to refer to people who are accused of not belonging to the Aryan racial classification, and it was this group that was massacred by the Nazis in concentration camps, and allowed to die slowly. In this stanza Brecht reiterates how ironic it is that happened in Germany at that time. The German state was blasphemed and blamed not only by its own people but also by other countries that were targeted by the Nazis at that time. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the Nazis who ruled on behalf of Germany for all their actions.

**With his hands raised  
Rebelled against his brother  
They are now being impolite in front  
of you  
And laughing in your face**

Everyone knows that. Those in power are now acting arbitrarily, oppressing and torturing their own people and being disrespectful to the detriment of Germany's dignity. Everyone already

knows that. In this stanza Brecht uses the words besudelt which means stained and Befleckten which means polluted. This word shows that Germany is really experiencing a downturn due to the chaos that occurred in various fields. The time of Der dritte Reich was a very difficult time. The rulers oppress their people, they don't even hesitate to kill anyone whose principles are against the government. Apart from that, terror was also experienced by certain groups, such as those of Jewish descent and anyone with disabilities or old age. It could be said that at this time there was a 'poverty of conscience'.

Hitler's mission to turn Germany back into the Aryan race really hurt a lot of people. So that the people began to hate their own country. Many writers and artists fled abroad in order to gain freedom to work again. The feeling of love for the motherland slowly began to recede and disappear. The people hate and regret what happened in their homeland. Those who can go even choose to leave in various ways. There is also the word bleiche Mutter which means pale-faced, the meaning of the word pale in this poem is to describe a country that has fallen, laughed at by other countries and also many parties who want to attack. Pale can also mean shame, because the shame of the German people due to the atrocities of the Nazis did not only stop at that time, but until now if Germany were identified with the NAZI the German people would be ashamed.

**Wherever everyone looks at you  
Hiding both of them under your  
bloody coat  
With the blood that comes from your  
best Son**

Then everyone knew that the blood spilled in Germany or those who were victims came from the blood of

Germany's best sons. The word *Der Ärmste* in this poem means anyone who does not belong to the criteria of the Aryan race, for example, people who are disabled, weak, stupid, and elderly. There is also the word *Hunger* which means hungry, to describe the ruler's endless ambition. When Hitler came to power, massacres not only occurred to the Jews but also to the German people themselves. Anyone who is weak, stupid, disabled, even old is considered unfit for life and is considered to only pollute the race.

This is ironic and terrible. For the sake of realizing one's ambition thousands and even tens of thousands of other people become victims. Even those who were sacrificed were their own brothers. When Hitler came to power the German people were weak and considered to have no contribution. They were denied a chance to live and brutally slaughtered by their own brothers, who were supposed to protect and help them. Even this is openly known by other countries. But no one is able to do anything about it. All of that is an open secret.

The word *Gesicht* in this poem has the meaning of an act that was carried out openly, and arranged in such a neat way so as not to get suspicious. Meanwhile, the word *Händen* means tools or media used by the authorities to show their power. The word *lachen* is used to express the effects of the Nazis' actions which have tarnished Germany's good name. What Hitler and his NAZI did had polluted the dignity of the German state, brought down the German state. Not only in front of its people but also in front of other countries.

Even today, Germany is always identified with the Nazis. Hitler's motto became a symbol of German cruelty and chaos. Germany had truly fallen. Even

though there have been massive developments in the field of technology, but the destruction of conscience has also occurred.

The ambition to be strong and to be feared has become a terror for anyone who is weak and is considered to have no superiority. And after slaughtering his own people, there was absolutely no respect. Those who died were simply left to die in the cruel and horrific torture chambers.

The word *Lüge*, which means lies, has the meaning of reporting and propaganda carried out by the authorities, many of which are not in accordance with reality and are only engineering or a strategy to realize ambitions.

Whereas the sentence *Aber die Wahrheit muß schweigen* indicates that when the Nazis were in power everything was strictly controlled and there was no freedom of speech. When the NAZI government everything that is not in line with NAZI principles will be opposed and prohibited from developing.

For example, books containing contradictory writings, these books must be destroyed. The government turns a blind eye to anything that is not in line with their wishes. The slightest action that seems to oppose the government, then the perpetrators will be severely punished. The government also publishes only what they like. Public deception ensued.

**O Deutschland,  
pale mother!**

**How your sons tormented you  
In front of your people**

**Being the object of ridicule or a fear**

Germany is like a mother who is pale, sad and pathetic. In front of its people who belonged to the ruling class, Germany actually became the object of ridicule for the attitude of the rulers, on

the other hand it was also a source of fear for the oppressed people. In this stanza Brecht uses the word Reden to represent all the events, incidents, policies and conflicts that took place in Germany. While the word man is used as a symbol of other countries. Messer's words indicated that many other countries wanted to attack Germany, because the crimes of the Nazis did not only affect their country but also other countries, such as Poland.

Germany's actions under Hitler's leadership in violation of the Treaty of Versailles by invading Poland sparked the wrath of other countries. More than the impact described by Brecht in the seventh stanza, the eighth stanza describes how the image of Germany has fallen in the eyes of other countries. Germany became the object of ridicule and ridicule. Because Germany under NAZI leadership has spawned so much chaos not only at that time but also in the future. What other nations will remember about Germany is the NAZI.

Gespött, which means material for ridicule, is a parable used by Brecht to conclude the consequences of the Nazis' actions which made Germany ostracized at that time and until now. Meanwhile, the word Furcht, which means source of fear, likens the result of many people being oppressed, a feeling of trauma arises to live in their own country. Writers and other people who fled to other countries also have a sense of trauma to return.

The word bleiche Mutter is repeated in this last stanza to sum up what Brecht said in the previous stanza. That Germany is like a mother who has lost her charisma and her affection has faded. So that in the eyes of his children became a source of fear. Even though this was actually created by the authorities to realize their ambitions. At the same time, this treatment by the

authorities had polluted Germany's dignity and became a smudge that seemed to ridicule the pride of the German nation.

Deutschland's poetry lacks rhyme. This shows that Brecht emphasizes the unity of meaning rather than the beauty of rhyme. The word bleich in the first line is an enjambement word. The word bleich is an adverb of the word mutter which means pale mother. Pale here has no meaning yet. However, if we look at the next line, namely Wie sitzest du besudelt unter den Völkern and unter den Befleckten fällst du auf which means how tainted you are among your people and among those who are polluted, you are the most polluted. So the stanza has a unified whole and the word bleich has an elaboration that makes the word bleich also a link in the third stanza.

When Hitler had just held power, initially the people hoped that under Hitler's command with the NAZI would bring fresh air to the German State, which at that time was devastated by defeat in World War I. However, what happened was the opposite. What the NAZI did was fulfill their ambition to rule over Europe and make Germany an Aryan race.

Various steps were taken by Hitler, including by 'eradicating' anyone who was considered to be a hindrance. Because of that, in the end, Germany's image was not only bad in the eyes of its oppressed people, but also in the eyes of other nations. In this poem Brecht describes the destruction of Germany under Hitler's rule. Destruction on many fronts that will stick to Germany's image forever. The black stains and notes inscribed by Hitler with his NAZI became a nightmare that overshadowed the German people.



Hitler's ambition to dominate Europe has also made Germany hated by other countries. This also ultimately triggers the occurrence of world war 2. In the first stanza Brecht also describes Germany as a pale-faced mother. The pale-faced mother is a symbol of disappointment, and in the following stanzas it is explained in detail the causes of the disappointment of the mother who was devastated. Such is the picture of Germany's disappointment and destruction as outlined by Brecht in Deutschland's poem. Apart from matrices, there are also models and variants. The model is a word or sentence that can represent each stanza in the poem. The model in this poem is Deutschland. In each stanza of this poem tells about all the events that happened in Deutschland or Germany. Deutschland is described as a mother who suffers and is tormented by the actions of her sons. Until in the end the image of the mother really fell and slumped. Germany is also hated by other countries due to Hitler's actions. Initially Hitler's decision to annex Austria (15 March 1938) and Czechoslovakia was still tolerated by other nations, but then the dispossession of Poland had precipitated the outbreak of World War II.

In other words, at that time Germany became the originator of the outbreak of the World War which in the end brought Germany to even more destruction. From the description above, it appears that there is continuity between Deutschland's poetry and the social background that occurred when the poem was composed. Deutschland's poem is a reflection of the situation that occurred in Germany at that time, as well as being a historical record covering events that occurred in Germany during Hitler's reign.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In Deutschland's poetry, only ambiguity is found as a form of meaning deviation. While contradictions and nonsense were not found. The creation of meaning in Deutschland poetry is caused by rhyme and enjambement. The rhyme in the poem is irregular, this illustrates that what is characteristic of beauty is not prioritized, but emphasizes the integrity of meaning. Apart from rhyme, Enjambement is also found in poetry. Through hermeneutic reading, the writer finds that the meaning contained in Deutschland's poetry is about a picture of the destruction of Germany. Each stanza describes all the actions taken by the authorities to realize their ambitions, which ultimately destroyed Germany's good name.

The superiority and authority of a nation is not only judged by the superiority of the nation's sons physically but through their real contribution to the nation's development. An absolute and arbitrary leader will make the condition of his people worse and also create a bad image for his own people. Limitations in work will kill the creativity and development of literary works.

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