

## **Multidimensional Poverty in T. S. Elliot's *Morning at the Window***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Poverty is a phenomenon of human suffering that is often brought up as the main theme in the works of literature. The study examines how poverty is manifested in the poem entitled *Morning at the Window* by T. S. Elliot. The analysis focuses on interpreting the poem's meaning and further analyses the portrayal of poverty. The theoretical framework used to analyze the poem's meaning is the semiotics of poetry by Michael Riffaterre. The dimensions of poverty by Robert Chambers are also used to analyze the elements of poverty that constructed the main issue of the poem. The analysis focuses on the unsustainability of meaning and interpretation from heuristic and hermeneutic reading. The overall meaning is drawn to reveal how the poem portrays the issue of poverty. Besides, the concept of poverty depicted in the poem is demystified based on the dimensions of poverty by Chambers. The analysis shows that the poem illustrates its main issue by strongly depending on the objective, representing poverty's dimensions. The identified dimensions of poverty that constructed the issue are powerlessness, isolation, vulnerability, and poverty. These dimensions are illustrated by depicting the maids' physical and mental state caused by living in poverty.

**Keywords:** poetry, semiotics, poverty, dimensions of poverty

### **ABSTRAK**

Kemiskinan adalah sebuah fenomena penderitaan manusia yang sering diangkat sebagai tema utama dalam karya sastra. Penelitian ini membahas mengenai bagaimana isu kemiskinan digambarkan dalam puisi yang berjudul *Morning at the Window* karya T. S. Elliot. Analisa pembahasan berfokus pada interpretasi makna puisi dan dilanjutkan dengan analisa tentang penggambaran dari isu kemiskinan. Teori yang digunakan untuk meneliti makna puisi adalah semiotika puisi oleh Michael Riffaterre. Konsep dimensi kemiskinan oleh Robert Chambers juga digunakan untuk menganalisis elemen kemiskinan yang hadir dalam membangun isu utama dari puisi. Interpretasi berfokus pada analisa ketidaklangsungan ekspresi puisi dan pembacaan heuristik dan hermeneutik. Makna keseluruhan dari puisi diungkap untuk memahami bagaimana isu kemiskinan digambarkan. Selanjutnya, konsep tentang kemiskinan dijelaskan berdasarkan dimensi kemiskinan oleh Chambers. Analisa menunjukkan bahwa puisi mengilustrasikan isu kemiskinan secara objektif dengan merepresentasikan dimensi-dimensi kemiskinan. Dimensi kemiskinan yang diidentifikasi antara lain adalah ketidakberdayaan, isolasi, kerentanan, dan kemiskinan. Dimensi-dimensi ini tergambarkan melalui kondisi mental dan fisik para pelayan yang disebabkan oleh kemiskinan.

**Kata kunci:** puisi, semiotika, kemiskinan, dimensi kemiskinan

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of human suffering, such as poverty, often inspires the works of literature. As one of the main social issues in the world, poverty is often brought up as one of the most common themes in modernist literature (Hutami & Adrian, 2021; Rohwerder, 2016). The manifestation of poverty is often found as the main theme in plays and novels (Hossain & Iseni, 2020). Throughout the history of English literature, the theme of poverty has been reflected in many forms of play and written literature such as drama, novels, songs, epics, poems, and other various literary works (Hossain & Iseni, 2020). These literary works formulated the theme of poverty in various forms, such as the reflection of poverty, depiction of poverty, symbolization of poverty, and personification of poverty (Abdallah, 2021; Hossain & Iseni, 2020). The poem *Morning at the Window* by T.S. Elliot is one of the poems that have a depressive illustration in depicting poverty. Poetry can emphasize, represent, and illustrate certain issues that have a major role in human life (Abdallah, 2021). As for *Morning at the Window*, the poem is able to depict the human emotional state, physical state, psychological state, and the state of surrounding situations in representing the despair and depression of its theme. Elliot is also known for his poems with dark themes that explore human suffering, despair, and depression (Hutami & Adrian, 2021).

The theme of poverty in literary works deals with hardship, bitter experiences, and psychological problems; both represent the situation of the current age and the poets' personal experiences (Hossain & Iseni, 2020). As poverty is often chosen as the main theme of literary works, Abdallah (2021) studied Elliot's *Morning at the Window* and Auden's *Musee des Beaux* and showed that both poems depict human suffering related to poverty and how society regards it with lack of sympathy. The depiction of poverty in T. S. Elliot's *Morning at the Window* is also analyzed by Hutami and Adrian (2021) using the semiotic approach by Riffaterre. From semiotic interpretation, it is found that the poem objectively represents the main theme of poverty by using the expressions and subjects that constructed the issue of poverty by maintaining the atmosphere of sadness and despair. Using the semiotic approach by Riffaterre, the present study examines how poverty is manifested in the poem entitled *Morning at the Window* by T. S. Elliot. Furthermore, the dimensions of poverty by Robert Chambers (1995) is also used to emphasize the elements of poverty that constructed the issue of the poem.

## SEMIOTICS OF POETRY MICHAEL RIFFATERRE

The semiotic approach in literary studies is an effort to understand and demystify the meaning of literary works aesthetically delivered through signs and symbols (Segers, 1978). The use of signs is not only increases the aesthetic value of the literary works, but also bears communicative functions in delivering the text's message, implicitly or symbolically (Asriningsari & Umaya, 2018).

Poems have the same characteristic as other forms of literary or general texts in terms of communicative functions; they deliver the meaning that the text tries to express. However, the reading experience in reading poetry has significant differences compared to other forms of texts. It is due to the characteristic of the poem that focuses on expressing meaning and emotion (DiYanni, 2002). Furthermore, the language characteristic in the poem has the possibility to bear more than a meaning (Chatman, 1968). It is identified through the poems' characteristics in communicating meaning that tend to be different from other text forms (Faruk, 2005). According to Riffaterre (1978), the poetic language of the poem often lies in

the symbolism and connotative meaning rather than denotative meaning. In other words, in writing the poem, the language used is often determined by imaginative and conceptual illustration and rhyme appropriateness rather than based on its denotative meaning. Therefore, the poetic language is difficult to be understood without interpretation because poetry has hidden meaning as one of the aspects that cause difficulties for readers to understand and interpret the meaning of poetry (Matterson & Jones, 2000).

Michael Riffaterre (1978) explains that the language structure of the poem has a distinctive characteristic. He mentioned two factors that distinguish the poem language from other languages of literary or general text, namely: (1) poem often utilizes the word choice or lexical item that is rarely found in another context; (2) language of poetry has its own grammar that is not in accordance with the standardized conventional language structure. As explained by Riffaterre (1978) that reading poetry requires a major role in readers' interpretation because it is a dialectic process between the literary text and the reader (Teeuw, 1984). In other words, readers' interpretation in analyzing and comprehending the whole meaning of the poem is significant. The concept of Riffaterre's Semiotics of Poetry introduces four main aspects as the basis for grasping the whole meaning of poetry. These aspects are unsustainability expression of poetry, heuristic and hermeneutic reading, matrix, and hypogram (Riffaterre, 1978). The unsustainability of expression in poetry is ignited by displacing of meaning, distortion of meaning, and creation of meaning. The interpretation of poetry is done by the two stages of heuristic and hermeneutic reading. In heuristic reading, the poetic language is converted into more standardized and normative language. Meanwhile, hermeneutic reading is the next stage of interpretation of the result of heuristic reading. Matrix is the main point of the poem's meaning that is developed into a more complex meaning (Riffaterre, 1978). Lastly, another way to understand the meaning of poetry is through comparative analysis by examining the intertextual relation between the poem and other literary works that influence its creation.

#### **CHAMBERS' DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY**

Poverty is one of the big problems in humanity that is often depicted as one of the main themes in poetry (Hossain & Iseni, 2020; Hutami & Adrian, 2021). According to World Bank, poverty means a deprivation in well-being that can be understood as the household's economic ability in relation to income and consumption (Haughton & Khandker, 2009). It is often indicated by deprivation of well-being in terms of hunger, lack of work opportunity, home, and power (Suryawati, 2005). Haughton and Khandker (2009) also added that well-being is related to the commodities concerning resources to fulfill their needs. Thus, in narrow and general concepts, poverty is typically associated with the lack of ability to earn resources and possession of certain necessity by households or individuals to meet their needs. In addition, poverty also defined by dependency, isolation, and marginalisation in term of internal, external, economic, socio-cultural, socio-political factor, education, and health system (Chambers, 2005; Suryawati, 2005). Chambers (1995) added that understanding poverty could be done by a multidimensional approach. He stated that poverty is a multi-face or multidimensional phenomenon seen as an integrated concept. This concept consists of multidimensional deprivation of various aspects, namely physical, social, cultural, economic, psychological, and spiritual (Chambers, 1995, 2007). Therefore, poverty can be defined as a condition that lacks the dimensions necessary to ensure well-being. The dimensions of poverty can be described as poverty itself, powerlessness, vulnerability, dependence, isolation, physical weakness, and social inferiority (Chambers, 1995).

## METHODS

The paper analyses the main issue of T.S. Elliot's *Morning at the Window*, which talks about poverty. The poem's meaning is analyzed by in-text interpretation, which means the depiction of the main issue is interpreted by identifying and analyzing the poem's textual structure and composition. Furthermore, the main issue of the poem, poverty, is analyzed further based on the dimensions of poverty. The theoretical framework used to analyze the issue is the semiotics of poetry by Michael Riffaterre (1978). For semiotic analysis, the paper focuses on the interpretation based on the unsustainability of meaning and interpretation from heuristic reading and hermeneutic reading. To demystify the concept of poverty depicted in the poem, the dimensions of poverty by Robert Chambers (1995) are used as the basis. The analysis is done by reading the poetry semiotically to grasp the meaning and the message of the main issue, poverty, which later the issue is identified by categorizing the dimensions of poverty. In analyzing the data, close reading is applied to grasp the text's whole meaning and message in detail. Furthermore, the interpretation is examined based on Chambers' concept about dimensions of poverty.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter discusses the result and interpretation of the study. The discussion covers the analysis of semiotic aspects based on Riffaterre's semiotic approach to interpreting the poem. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the interpretation of the poem's main issue by referring to the dimensions of poverty by Robert Chambers to examine further the issue of poverty depicted in the poem.

### UNSUSTAINABILITY EXPRESSION IN POETRY

The language of poetry is an indirect expression that is symbolically and implicitly expressed through the use of signs (Riffaterre, 1978). Riffaterre (1978) states that one of the main characteristics of the poem is its expression of conveying messages and ideas indirectly. This is indicated by the displacing of meaning, distortion of meaning, and creation of meaning.

#### DISPLACING OF MEANING

According to Keraf (2009, pp. 138–142 as cited in Sipahutar & Arianto, 2019), the displacing of meaning in poetry occurs at the moment when the certain meaning of a sign changes into another meaning. The factor that causes the meaning to become displaced is indicated by the use of figurative languages such as personification, metaphor, and metonymy.

The displaced meaning that occurred in T. S. Eliot's *Morning at the Window* is identified through the use of literary devices, namely metaphor and personification. At the beginning of the first stanza, the poem uses the figurative language of metaphor through the expression "*rattling breakfast*" which signifies the poetry's time setting and the status of '*They*' referred to in the poem. The rattling sound during breakfast signals their obligation as a lower social class as they must go to work very early. Thus, they ate their breakfast in a hurry and created the rattling sound on their plates. The next metaphor in the first line is also identified in the adverb of location "*in the basement kitchen*". The "*basement*" is associated with the impression of a place where poor people live. This metaphor emphasizes the status of the people who are having breakfast, living in poverty. The poet also uses metaphor in the third line by using the words "*damp souls of the housemaids*". The metaphor represents the

mental state (*damp souls*) of the people living in poverty who have to work all day to put food on their table (*housemaids*). In the last line of the stanza, the word “*sprouting*” is a metaphorical expression to signify the struggle of the housemaids’ souls to grow in such a depressive situation. The souls that are growing hopelessly in the “*area gates*”. The last line of the stanza contains the metaphorical expression (*area gates*) that denotes the city’s outskirts, which indicates the alienation of their lives from society.

The second stanza is started with the personification of “*The brown wave of the fog*”. In the first line, the fog is personified by having a humanlike ability to toss up something to the narrator, the image of a “*twisted face*” and “*tear*”. Fog represents the state of hopelessness in the area, and it is described in the form of a “*wave*”, which means it is moving and reaching the narrator’s place. Supported by the symbolic meaning of the color “*brown*” sign that the air is dirty or polluted and bears the atmosphere of emptiness as brown also signs dry situation (Kauppinen-Raisanen & Jauffret, 2018). The dirty air is bringing “*twisted faces*” and “*tear*” up to the window of the narrator’s room from the street. Both have a metaphorical representation of the sorrow and depression that those people are enduring. The next metaphorical expression used in stanza two is “*muddy skirts*”, which represents the squalor state of the housemaids. The last metaphors found in the stanza are “*aimless smile*”, which represents the failed effort to find happiness, and “*the level of roof*”, which metaphorically means emptiness or nothingness. These represent the maids’ helpless effort to seek joy but have to end up in failure, and the remains just disappear into the sky.

#### DISTORTION OF MEANING

According to Riffaterre (1978), the poem’s meaning experiences a distortion along with the presence of ambiguity, contradiction, and non-sense. Ambiguity is the circumstance when a word, phrase, or sentence can be interpreted in different kinds of contextual meanings. The presence of a contradiction is caused by paradox, irony, and antithesis. Meanwhile, non-sense is the thread of signs that determine the meaning of words depending on the poem’s context.

The distortion of meaning in the poem *Morning at the Window* starts with a contradiction created by the irony of the poem’s title. From a glance reading, the poem entitled “*Morning at the Window*” can show that the poem has an impression of joyfulness. However, as reading the poem, it can be inferred that instead of expressing joyfulness, the poem is ironically carrying a depressive tone of sorrow. In the first stanza, there is non-sense in the noun phrase “*the damp souls of the housemaids*”. The word “*damp*” is an adjective that represents a state of moisture, especially in unpleasant or uncomfortable ways (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*). It is because the soul is a spiritual or immaterial entity that is physically invisible. The use of the word “*damp*”, considering its denotative meaning, is uncommon to be used as an adjective to describe the noun “*soul*”. However, in the poem, the noun phrase “*damp soul*” is used to represent the state of housemaids’ souls that are said in the state of moisty dirt. The dictions are used in the context of poverty in the poetry to depict that the souls of housemaids are unclean from the feeling of depression, sorrow, and despair.

The second stanza consists of ambiguity and non-sense. The first line of the stanza consists of ambiguity in perceiving the meaning of the word “*brown*” from the line “*The brown waves of fog toss up to me*”. It can be interpreted either the fog is colored brown, which means it is dirty or the “*brown*” signaling the state of dryness that symbolizes a gloomy emptiness representing the depressive state of the poor people on the street (Kauppinen-Raisanen & Jauffret, 2018). In the third line of the stanza, the line “*An aimless smile that hovers in the air*” also creates a non-sense. The verb “*hovers*” refers to the state that the noun remains in one certain position in the air. Precisely, “*hover*” means staying in



the air at certain positions (*Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*). However, the noun “smile” is a kind of facial expression that is generally impossible to be hovering in the air as a single physical entity. Nevertheless, the poem uses the sentence to describe the housemaids' failed, hopeless effort to show happiness that is ended and disappeared in the air. It emphasizes the state of unhappiness, hopelessness, and depression in their life situation caused by poverty.

#### CREATION OF MEANING

The poem's meaning is created by interpreting meaningless language structures such as enjambment, typography, and homolog (Riffaterre 1978). Through the interpretation of these structures, the meaning of the text as a whole is created. Enjambment is the continuation from line to next line without any punctuation or sign of sentence ending. In enjambment, the text runs out without ending in the line breaks; it continues to the next line instead (Pradani & Rizal, 2020). Typography is a style in visualizing and structuring the visual of the poem that not only presents an aesthetic impression, but also emphasizes the poem's meaning (Pradani and Rizal 2020). In *Morning at the Window*, the poem's typography is structured in a conventional form. Therefore, the poet did not utilize certain structural visualization to emphasize the meaning. Likewise, there is no presence of homolog. Thus, the only identified is enjambment. There are three enjambments found in the poem.

In the first stanza, enjambment is found in the last three lines that describe the visual observation by the narrator.

*And along the trampled edges of the street  
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids  
Sprouting despondently at area gates.*

The last three lines of the stanza contain enjambment that the poem uses to emphasize the portrayal of poverty. The sentence form of the line is “*And all along the trampled edges of the street, I am aware of the housemaids 'that' are sprouting despondently at area gates*”. From the sentence, it can be inferred that the poet is trying to deliver the message about the narrator's thoughts regarding the emotional and mental state of the housemaids living in poverty by using the sequential structure.

In the second stanza, enjambment is found in the first to a second line and the last three lines of the stanza.

*The brown waves of fog toss up to me  
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,*

The message expressed by the poet is “*The brown waves of fog toss up on me; the twisted faces from the bottom of the street*”. By using the enjambment, the poet is trying to dramatize the moment about how the image of twisted faces that represents the emotional state of the people on the street are reaching into the narrator's perspective.

*And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts  
An aimless smile that hovers in the air  
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.*

The last three lines of the stanza form a sentence “*And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts, an aimless smile that hovers in the air, and 'it' vanishes along the level of the*

roofs". The enjambment is used to sequentially describing the condition of the housemaids one by one to give the dramatical impression by highlighting on each situation.

#### HEURISTIC AND HERMENEUTIC READING

Riffaterre (1978) states that the first stage in the interpretation of poetry is through heuristic reading. In heuristic reading, the poem is interpreted by examining its meaning in general. By heuristic reading, the readers are translating the poetic language of the poem into more understandable language that depends on the readers' language knowledge. It covers the poetic grammatical form and lexical choice transformed into a common structural form and lexical choice. The second stage is hermeneutic reading, in which the readers interpret the result of heuristic reading. In this stage, the readers convey the implied meaning of the poem that bears certain issues and interpret both heuristic and hermeneutic reading to understand the meaning of the poem as a whole. By interpreting the poetry through these two stages of heuristic and hermeneutic reading, the readers will be able to comprehend the semiotic meaning of poetry (Riffaterre 1978).

##### HEURISTIC READING

*They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,*  
(They are loudly eating breakfast in the basement kitchens)  
*And along the trampled edges of the street*  
(And along the stomped sidewalk)  
*I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids*  
(I am aware about the mental states of these housemaids)  
*Sprouting despondently at area gates.*  
(That is growing hopelessly in the area around the gates)

*The brown waves of fog toss up to me*  
(The bad air that brings sorrow is howling and reaching on me)  
*Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,*  
(The image of depressed faces from the street below)  
*And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts*  
(And tears from the pedestrians who are wearing dirty skirts)  
*An aimless smile that hovers in the air*  
(A hopeless smile of that is meaninglessly hanging)  
*And vanishes along the level of the roofs.*  
(And it is disappeared into the skies)

##### HERMENEUTIC READING

The first stanza starts with the observation of the narrator, who begins his observation of the event that is happening in the morning day by hearing the sound created by the people who are having breakfast. It can be inferred that the event is situated in the morning time near from where the poet stays. On that morning, he begins narrating his observation through the first line in which he tells the reader about the activities from the people living in the basement. The phrase "*rattling breakfast plates*" indicates that they have to do their breakfast in a hurry as they are required to begin their work very early. The use of the adverb of place in the "*basement kitchens*" emphasizes that "*They*" is referred to the poor people. As poor people are associated with living or staying in the basement. It can be interpreted that the line is talking about the narrator's observation about how the poor people must start their day immediately and be cut off from society. In the second line, the narrator turns his attention to

the stomped street, the condition that tells him if the street is old, unkempt, and many pedestrians have walked over it. By looking at this miserable street condition, he is also concerned about the psychological condition or the mental state of the housemaids who walk down the street. As they are coming from their places entering the city through its gates to start their day that is full of work. Their damped soul refers to their soul, which is filled with desperate and depressive feelings caused by their miserable life. The rest of the stanza can be interpreted as the narrator turning his attention to see how the other people start their day. Moreover, in the street, he discovers that the housemaids come to enter the city gates from various areas who are unwilling but have to start their work because of their condition. The narrator is concerned about the housemaids' emotional and psychological state, yet he does not explicitly show his emotional feeling in the poem.

The second stanza begins with the personification of waving brown fog that comes up to the narrator and brings him the picture from the street below; depression and despair. From reading the second stanza, it can be interpreted that the narrator is observing the area from his location, at least through the window of the second floor of a building or higher. By staying in this location and seeing through the window, the narrator observes the morning hustle and the condition of the hopeless housemaids who are starting their day miserably in a depressed and despairing mood. In the first line of the stanza, it can be inferred that the brown fog is the metaphorical representation of dirty air that symbolizes the somber atmosphere of emptiness that the people on the street experience. The brown fog brings the image of depression and sadness that each of them is represented by the use of the words "*Twisted face*" and "*tear*". It means that their faces express their emotional feelings, which are in a state of being depressed. This portrays their sadness because they have to go through such a difficult life caused by poverty. The adverb "*from the bottom of the street*" reveals that their sadness and sorrow have been buried and hidden, yet it is still trying to emerge. It shows that they are enduring unbearable conditions, yet they still have enough strength to survive. Their state of living in poverty is supported by the expression "*with muddy skirts*", which signifies their lack of belonging and theirs only left are miserably unwell. This conveys their state of living, the housemaids who are living with financial problems who cannot maintain their appearance because of their lack of material treasures. It can also be interpreted that they have something far more important to do than just dressing well to survive in the difficult situation of deprivation. The last two lines of the stanza describe that they find it difficult to find joy and happiness in their state of living. Their failure efforts in finding happiness are metaphorically represented by the vanishing aimless smile to the sky. This can be interpreted as no matter how hard they try to amuse themselves, all they have to do is just survive this difficult situation.

The interpretation of the first and second stanzas led to an understanding of how the poet is portraying the main issue of the poem; poverty. Through the observation done by the narrator, the poet is empirically depicting the situation of poor people in an objective form of illustration with slightly dramatic expression (Smith Jr, 1960). The portrayal of the poverty in the poem is expressed by the tangible images of the subjects and situation rather than the emotional feeling of the narrator. The narrator did not involve his emotional feeling in describing the poverty in his poem.

#### **DIMENSION OF POVERTY IN *MORNING AT THE WINDOW***

According to Chambers (1995), poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that can be identified through integrated dimensions of deprivation. These dimensions can be described



as poverty, powerlessness, vulnerability, dependence, isolation, physical weakness, and social inferiority (Chambers, 1995). In the poem *Morning at the Window*, the study identified that the theme of poverty is manifested through the dimensions of powerlessness, isolation, vulnerability, and poverty. The poem's expressions that depict certain dimensions of poverty are listed in the following table.

Table 1. Expressions of the dimensions of poverty

| Expression                                | Dimension of Poverty |
|---|----------------------|
| <i>They are rattling breakfast plates</i> | Powerlessness        |
| <i>in basement kitchens,</i>              | Isolation            |
| <i>the damp souls of housemaids</i>       | Vulnerability        |
| <i>Sprouting despondently</i>             | Vulnerability        |
| <i>at area gates.</i>                     | Isolation            |
| <i>Twisted faces</i>                      | Vulnerability        |
| <i>And tear</i>                           | Vulnerability        |
| <i>a passer-by with muddy skirts</i>      | Poverty              |
| <i>An aimless smile</i>                   | Vulnerability        |

The table shows that the poem manifests the theme of poverty by heavily relying on depicting the dimensions of vulnerability, followed by powerlessness, isolation, and poverty. According to Chambers (1995), poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon seen as an integrated concept consisting of multidimension of deprivation. These are identified from various aspects, namely aspect of physical, social, cultural, economic, psychological, and spiritual (Chambers, 1995, 2007). Therefore, poverty can be defined as a condition that lacks the dimensions necessary to ensure well-being. In the poem *Morning at the Window*, the narrator observes and concerns more about the maids' psychological and emotional condition down the street. The narrator observes the maids' mental condition that describes them as possessing the damp souls and sprouting despondently. The mental condition is also observed through physical proofs such as twisted faces, tears, and aimless smiles. These conditions are caused by poverty which is specifically the dimension of vulnerability. As according to Chambers (1995), vulnerability manifested in poverty by exposure and defencelessness has two sides: external and internal side of defencelessness. He stated that the poor lack the means to cope with damaging loss, covering the psychological aspect. In *Morning at the Window*, the maids are depicted as lacking the ability to cope with their emotional and psychological conditions caused by deprivation.

The following dimensions of deprivation, namely powerlessness and isolation, are depicted in the first stanza, which narrates the subjects as rattling their breakfast plate, having breakfast in the basement, and coming from the area gates. Their state of powerlessness is shown in the expression that narrates them as rattling their breakfast plate. The expression shows that they have to start their day in a rush because they have to do their job as it is their livelihood. The maids are identified as poor since they are powerless to earn their income; they are in the position of being controlled by their masters since they start their day. The poor people are often powerless and lack influence in organizing their economic and social life, making them the subject of others more powerful (Chambers, 1995, 2005). This condition of powerlessness is also in line with the isolation condition. It is stated that poor people are often isolated or cut off, which includes geographical isolation, interaction and information isolation, social and economic isolation, and educational isolation (Chambers,

1995, 2007). In the poem, the maids are described as living in isolated conditions by having breakfast in the basement, coming from the are gates which often associated with where the poor lives and their geographical cut off from society. Their life condition also being represented by their lack of physical assets such as clothes. In the poem, the maids are wearing their muddy skirts that represent a lack of necessary belongings and their lack of opportunity and ability to dress well. This condition manifests their poverty, which is signed by the lack of physical necessity and income (Chambers, 2005; Haughton & Khandker, 2009).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the main issue of the poem *Morning at the Window* is firmly and consistently portrayed based on the narrator's empirical observation without involving emotional feelings. The meaning results from the interpretation based on Riffaterre's semiotic approach that focuses on the unsustainability of meaning and heuristic and hermeneutic reading. The interpretation is drawn from the analysis of the unsustainability of meaning and the interpretation through heuristic and hermeneutic reading about how the poem depicts the situation of poverty. The language expressions and structures are also used in describing the objective images that create the representation and the tone of depression, unhappiness, and despair in constructing the whole situational image of poverty within the poem. From the analysis, the poem depicts the issue of poverty through expressions that represent some dimensions of poverty. The dimensions of poverty depicted in *Morning at the Window* cover the dimension of poverty itself, isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness. These dimensions of poverty are illustrated with the depiction of the maids' physical and mental states caused by living in poverty. Thus, it can be inferred that the poem illustrates its main issue, poverty and the situation of poverty, by strongly depending on the descriptive portrayal of tangible illustration in which the poverty is represented multidimensionally.

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