



THEMES IN SOME POEMS BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan tema dan alasan penulisan tema tersebut dalam puisi-puisi pilihan Edgar Allan Poe. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Dalam penelitian ini data diambil dari baris-baris bait puisi pilihan Edgar Allan Poe, Alone, A Valentine, dan A Dream Within A Dream. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan. Temuan penelitian ini adalah tema setiap puisi yang dipilih berbeda-beda. Tema puisi Sendirian adalah kesepian dan kesedihan, tema puisi Valentine adalah Cinta Terlarang, tema puisi Mimpi Dalam Mimpi adalah Kesedihan, Kehilangan dan Frustrasi. Selain itu, alasan penulisan tema yang terdapat dalam puisi-puisi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh pengalaman hidup Edgar Allan Poe.

Kata Kunci: Tema, Puisi

Abstract

The objective of this research are to describe the themes and the reasons the themes were written in selected poems of Edgar Allan Poe. This research was conducted using the qualitative descriptive research design. In this research, the data are taken from the lines in the stanzas of the selected poems of Edgar Allan Poe, Alone, A Valentine, and A Dream Within A Dream. The data were collected using library research method. The finding of this research are that the themes of each selected poems are different. The theme of Alone poem is loneliness and sadness, the theme of A Valentine poem is Forbidden Love, The theme of A Dream Within A Dream poem is Sadness, Loss and Frustration. Additionally, the reason of writing the themes found in those poems are influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's experiences in life.

Keywords : Theme, Poem

INTRODUCTION

Literature also is a form of human thought through environmental view, using beautiful language around him/her. Literature is an art form of people's thoughts and feelings, the beauty of language. Literary works are full of the author's feelings, confide in words and words arranged like this. Literary work is a unique discourse in which the expression uses language and takes advantage of all available possibilities (Barnet,2006: 9).

Literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression (Klarer,2004: 1). In literature, the author shows work to convey his/her ideas to the reader. Here, we can understand that in each work, there is a unique goal of the author's objective. Obviously,

the author's thoughts in the work have a great influence on the reader's mentality. In addition, the definition of literature cannot just stay in the opinion of one person. The researchers will come up with some definitions discussion from some literary experts.

In this research the researcher chooses three poems by Edgar Allan Poe, namely *Alone*, *A Valentine* and *A Dream Within A Dream*. The reason why the researcher chooses three poems by several poems by Edgar Allan Poe's poems because based on 2 reasons. First, because there is a story behind each poem written by Poe. Portraits in life, how about those of us who experience things like Poe's, those reflections of life, and anyone can experience it and learn from it. Second, after reading the biography and background of Edgar Allan Poe's life, the researcher has read the poems by Edgar Allan Poe, and the researcher is interested in discussing three of the poem further.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809 - 1849) was an American writer, poet, critic, an editor, and one of the leaders of the American Romantic Movement. Known for his Macabre works, Poe was one of the early practitioners of a short story in America and a pioneer of fiction detective and criminal fiction. His imaginative story telling and tales of mystery and horror gave birth to the modern detectivestory. He advocates for writers' rights to get higher salaries and the existence of International Copyright Law. Poe published his first book of poetry, "*Tamerlane and Other Poems*" in 1827. His second poetry anthology "*AlAaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems*", published in 1829. Some of Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem titles are *Alone* (1829), *Dream-Land* (1844), *The Raven* (1845), *A Valentine* (1846), *A Dream Within A Dream* (1849).

Based on the above explanation, the researcher is interested in this research entitled "*Themes in Some Poems by Edgar Allan Poe*".

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Hudson (2006: 31-62), there are three major forms of literature, they are :

a. Poetry

Poetry is the most convincing and concentrated form of literature (Siswantoro, 2010: 23). As a genre, the use of poetry and words can compete perfectly. Authors cannot be given free creative space because these poems are highly creative, competitive and highly concentrated. Compared to other literary words, there are fewer useless words in a poem, but a poem can explain more situations with fewer words. Poetry is the oldest forms of literature. The first Literary work of history appeared in the form of poetry (Waluyo, 1995 : 1).

Poetry is a means of expressing thoughts and emotions through imaginative rhythmic composition and beautiful words and sentences, and the effect is very good (Tomlinson, 1999: 38).

Poetry is like one of literary works that can be studied from various aspects. Poetry can be studied from the structure and elements of poetry, because poetry is a structure composed of allegory. Through out the era, poetry has been changing and developing. This is because the essence of works of art always runs through the tension between tradition and innovation. Poetry always changes according to the evolution of taste and the change of aesthetic concepts (Pradopo, 2000 : 3).

b. Drama

Drama is an impersonation of life. Drama is unique for its unique characteristics. It reads, but it is basically a performance, so the ultimate goal of dramatic creation is

presented on stage in front of the audience. It means communication, there is information to convey to the audience, and the actors must be used to convey the information.

Like other literary forms, drama imitates life. It is the form of composition designed for performance in theaters, performed by actors role, perform the instructions, and then speak a written conversation. It is designed a representative of an actor playing part of a role on the stage story, in which narrative and dialogue are carried out. This is a form this expression depends to a large extent on the communication between the playwright and the actor. The audience is through the medium of actors (Shinde,2015: 2).

The examples are : Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, The School for Scandal by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, etc.

c. Prose

Gross (1998: 12) said : Prose is a common spoken or written language, it has innumerable functions that can be performed with many interpretations. Different highlights, clear scientific articles and a series of easy-to-understand technical explanations represent the triumph of prose in its own way. Inspired prose is as rare as great poetry. It is something you will find in a letter, in a newspaper, almost anywhere.

In general, prose means a free essay that expresses the author's internal experience of life's problems in harmony and content that creates aesthetic impressions. It means the tools that authors use to express thoughts and emotions, such as a language that produces aesthetic feelings. This form is also called literary technique. Content is everything the author wants to do, including thoughts, ideas, ambitions, and explanations of events.

The examples are : Beloved by Toni Morrison, Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank, etc.

Kinds of Poetry

According to DiYanni (2002: 682), poems are classified as Lyric Poetry and Narrative Poetry.

1) Lyric Poetry

Subcategories of the lyric poem are :

- a) Elegy
- b) Ode
- c) Sonnet
- d) Villanelle

2) Narrative Poetry

Subcategories of narrative poetry are :

- a) Epic
- b) Romance
- c) Ballad

Characteristics of Poetry

According to Ogunbor (2020 :1) characteristics of poetry consist of :

- a. Poetry is composition of which expresses ideas or feelings in lines.
- b. Poetry tends to have regular rhythmic pattern.
- c. Poem may contain ryme.
- d. Poetry usually makes uses of carefully chosen words and figure of speech.
- e. Poetry often divided into stanzas.

And according to Shiva (2010: 1), characteristics of poetry consist of :

- a. The paragraph in a poem is called a stanza or a verse.
- b. Poetry is evocative, it typically evokes in the reader an intense emotion, such as : joy, sorrow, anger, love and the like.
- c. Predominant use of imagery in poetry appeals to the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell.

Theme

Kennedy and Gioia defined (2005: 8), the theme it is the central idea of poetry. As a literary device, theme allows the author to present and reveal all aspects of human nature, the human condition and human experiences in life. Theme is the basic idea that is then developed by the writer/ the poet to become a poem. The theme in a poem there to convey something of the human experience. Often writers set a theme in their poetry to explain the picture and the essence of the message in the poem they write.

According to Atwood (2019: 1) there are six common themes in literature, they are :

- 1) Good vs. Evil
- 2) Love
Different flavors of love as a literary theme include :
 - a. Forbidden love.
 - b. Family love
 - c. Unrequited love.
- 3) Redemption
- 4) Courage and Perseverance
- 5) Coming of Age
- 6) Revenge

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspects of Poems

There are two types of analysis approaches in literary work that can be used : Intrinsic approach and extrinsic approach.

Intrinsic Elements

According to Gill (1995 :4), the intrinsic aspect is an important rule for analyzing poetry. Because the author will understand the true meaning and information of this poem. The internal element is the analysis of the document itself, without looking at the relationship with the external aspects (Stanton, 1965: 11). Intrinsic elements used It is up to the author to analyze a few words in this poem. There are several words in this poem which have deep meanings and may be related to the life of the author. Intrinsic elements in the poem can help readers easily understand the theme of the poem.

According to Kennedy and Gioia (2005: 21), there are several intrinsic elements in a poetry :

a. Diction

The overall word choice in a poem is referred to as diction. The literal meaning of a word, or its dictionary definition, is referred to as denotation. The poet carefully chooses each word so that its meaning and sound contribute to the tone and feeling of the poem. In poetry the poet uses denotation or connotation or even both of them. The literal meaning of a word, or its dictionary definition, is referred to as denotation. Denotation relates at the emotions, thoughts and ideas. The associations and emotional cues associated with a word are referred to as connotation (Perrine, 1994: 9).

b. Figure of Speech

The figure of speech is a language that uses words or expressions that have a different meaning from the literal interpretation. A few figures of speech used in our daily

conversations. The figure of speech often appears in literary works, such as : newspaper articles, advertisements, novels, poems, etc. The figure of speech is the use of words that exceed their usual meaning. It requires you to use your imagination to figure out what the author means. When an author uses literal language, they are merely stating the facts. Figure of speech in comparing, use exaggeration or change to express a specific linguistic point of view. The figure of speech is often used in literary works, such as poetry, prose and non-fiction works (Kennedy, 2004: 479).

c. Theme

The theme is an idea that the poem expresses about the subject or uses the subject to explore. The theme is the central idea of a literary work. It is thought that is embodied in the whole poem (Kennedy and Gioia,2005: 8), the theme It is the central idea of poetry. The theme is different from the main theme, regardless of the "about" of the poem. The theme can have different expressions, depending on what you think is the most important thing in the poem. It can be a story, an idea or a description of something or someone, the entire content of any poem. The theme is also the statement made by the poet about its theme. The theme of poetry is slightly different from the theme of novel works. When determining the theme of a poem, we should be careful not to over simplify the poem or distort its meaning. The theme is the basic idea developed by the writer/poet into a poem.

d. Tone

Tone, in literature, can be defined as the attitude of the author or speaker face the object, the audience, or face her/himself. In poetry, tone is equally important. Readers don't actually to understand a poem, unless they accurately sense whether the attitude it expresses is playful or serious, mocking or respectful, calm or excited. Correctly determining the tone in literature is much more subtle than spoken language, because readers don't let the speaker's voice guide them. Readers must learn recognize tones in other ways (Perrine,1994: 49).

Extrinsic Elements

The extrinsic elements of poems are the supporting elements of external poems created. The extrinsic elements of poetry help to analyze poetry. Without using the extrinsic elements of poetry, the analysis will have a problem. It is difficult to determine the cause and purpose of a poem. Even understanding the meaning of a poem can be transferred from the author's intention if the poem is analyzed only in extrinsic elements. Some elements of extrinsic poetry come from the author's biography, such as the author's social background, religion and education, and the social environment in which this poem was written.

In essence, the extrinsic factors of poetry are no different from the extrinsic factors contained in other literary works such as prose and drama. (Wellek & Warren, 1993 : 75).

Biography of Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts, United States, on January 19, 1809. Edgar Poe was an American author, poet, editor and literary critic and he is considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre. Edgar Poe is the second child of actor David Poe, Jr. and actress Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins Poe.

David Poe, Jr. was born in Baltimore on July 18, 1784. Elizabeth Arnold Poe came to the U.S. from England in 1796 and married David Poe,Jr after her first husband died in 1805. Edgar Poe had an elder brother, William Henry Leonard Poe, and a younger sister, Rosalie Poe (Giordano, 2005 : 1).

Edgar Poe father's abandoned their family in 1810, and his mother died a year later (1811) from pulmonary tuberculosis. Henry (Edgar Poes's elder brother) went to live with his grandparents while Edgar Poe was adopted by the wealthy Scottish tobacco merchant, John Allan and his wife, Frances Valentine Allan in Richmond, Virginia (United Stated) and Rosalie was taken in by another family. John Allan and his wife served as a foster family and gave him the name " Edgar Allan Poe ", though they never formally adopted him (Hunter, 2012: 1).

On September 30, 1849, Poe was found by Joseph W.Walker at Gunner's Hall, a public house at 44 East Lombard Street and was taken to the Washington College Hospital, where he died on Sunday, October 7, 1849, at 5: 00 in the morning (Hunter, 2012: 1).

The mystery surrounding Poe's death has led to many myths and urban legends. The reality is that no one knows for sure what happened during the last few days of his life. Did Poe die from alcoholism? Was he mugged? (Giodarno, 2005: 1).

Reasons For Choosing the Themes

The reasons for choosing the themes is to find out the reasons why Edgar Allan Poe writes the themes found by researcher. Here the researcher uses the theory of extrinsic element, this element of poem is supporting element of external poem created. So, the analysis be based on the biography of Edgar Allan Poe.

Edgar Allan Poe has already been dead years ago, so it is impossible to interview him. In this case, the researcher can also say that she uses library research in which uses some sources and book as references from library and internet, etc related to the study, and that is why the biograph of the author used to know the reasons why the author has such above themes on 4.2. (Chapter 4).

Wellek & Warren (1993: 67) stated that the external factors such as the author's biography, the author's social background, religion, education, and the social environment play a role in determining the choice of different theme. The researcher's uses the extrinsic elements to analyze the three poems of Edgar Allan Poe to explain the reason for the themes that are found. From Edgar Alan Poe's biography, there are several phenomenon in his life which the reason behind the choice of themes in the selected poems that analysed in this study. Those phenomenon are :

- a. On February 28, 1829 Poe's foster mother, Frances Allan died
- b. Edgar Poe father's abandoned their family in 1810
- c. Poe's mother died a year later (1811) from pulmonary tuberculosis.
- d. Poe wrote a poem for his partner work, Frances Sargent Os good, at the Broadway Journal.
- e. 10 days after Edgar's birthday, Virginia Eliza Clemm (Edgar Allan Poe's wife) died there on January 30, 1847 because of tuberculosis. Her death devastated Poe and left him unable to write for months, Poe collapsed from stress but gradually returned to health later that year.

Previous Study

The previous study that the researcher uses for her study is by Thea Valery from Department of English Literature Asia International Friendship College of Foreign Language of Medan, with title " Themes In Robert Frost's Poems ". Her study applies the theory of biography and background from the author to analyse theme from five poem of Robert Frost's Poems.

The result of analysis shows that the past experiences life of Robert Frost plays a role in five themes that contained in her Poems, there are *Wind and Window Flower*, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, *Acceptance*, *The Master Speed*.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Regarding data analysis, the writer used a qualitative description method. According to Hancock (2002:2), qualitative methods are concerned with developing interpretations of social phenomena. Qualitative research is related to personal opinions, experiences and feelings are subjective based on the data of the research object. Ary (2003: 47-48) explains that research design is a plan to collect and analyze data to answer questions. The research method refers to the overall strategy to collect and analyze data. This research uses this method to analyze the data by identifying themes in the poem.

Qualitative research describes the phenomena that occur in the social environment social activity, perception, belief, individual and thought. This is a case study and one of the methods of social science research (Yin, 2003:1).

In this study, the researcher analyzes several poems, taken from Edgar Allan Poe's poems. Then, determine the theme of each poem and describes why Edgar Allan Poe wrote such a theme in his poems by looking at Edgar Allan Poe's biography.

The Data and Source of Data

According to Hornby (2010: 295) data is any information or facts that is used in deciding and discussing something. The data can be found by observation, interview, documentation, etc. And, Arikunto defined (2010: 129) source of data is subjects from which the data can be obtained. The source of data can be found by collecting books, documents, and other printed materials.

In this research, the data are taken from the lines or stanzas of the poems *Alone*, *A Valentine*, and *A Dream Within A Dream* and the sources of data are taken from Edgar Allan Poe's poems from the book " *The Complete Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe (2008)* ".

Technique of Collecting Data

Data collection activities are a very important part of any form of research. In this study the researcher use library research to collecting the data. According to Ary (2010: 424) library research is a research used library resources to collect and analyse the data. The data of library research is not limited by time and space. In this study, the researcher used several books from library and internet related to the things in this study.

In the process of accumulating data, the researchers involved the following steps

:

1. Search Edgar Allan Poe's Poems from The Complete Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe book.
2. Select three different poems to be analysed.
3. Reads the poems several times to understand what the author (Edgar Allan Poe) mean.
4. Determine the theme of the poem.
5. Check Edgar Allan Poe's biography to determine why Edgar Allan Poe uses the themes in his poems.

Technique of Analyzing Data

Ary (2003: 481) stated that data analysis is the systematic search and organization of their data to increase their understanding of the data and enable them to show others

what they have learned. Data analysis is an important stage of qualitative research. This is the stage of answering research questions.

Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014: 12-13) stated that, analysis of the data in qualitative study uses some technique as follows :

1. Data Condensation This step involves the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, reducing and organizing the collected data.
2. Data Display Viewing the display helps us understand what is happening and do something based on this understanding either analyze it further or take action.
3. Drawing and Verification Conclusions At this stage, the researcher is drawing conclusions. The conclusion is that the answer to the question raised by the researcher has been formed.

THE DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Data

The researcher uses the lines from the stanzas of three Edgar Allan Poe's poem as the object of the research. The poems are collected from the e-book *The Complete Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe* (2008). The researcher will firstly do a close reading to read all the lines in the poems

thoroughly and then select a number of lines to be analysed further to find the theme. The lines are organized into 13 data, as the following :

1. From the poem *Alone*, the lines are organized into 5 data : line 1-4, line 5-8, line 9-12, line 13-16, line 17-22. The content of the lines of this poem can be viewed in the appendix on page 47 of this research.
2. From the poem *A Valentine*, the lines are organized into 4 data : line 1-2, line 3-4, line 5-10, line 11-20. The content of the lines of this poem can be viewed in the appendix on page 48 of this research.
3. From the poem *A Dream Within A Dream*, the lines are organized into 4 data : line 1-5 (stanza 1), line 6-11 (stanza 1), line 12-18 (stanza 2), line 19-24 (stanza 2). The content of the lines of this poem can be viewed in the appendix on page 48 of this research.

Reasons For Choosing The Themes

As mentioned in chapter 2, external factors such as the author's biography, the author's social background, religion, education, and the social environment play a role in determining the choice of different theme (Wellek & Warren, 1993: 75). Therefore, the researcher looks into the biography of Edgar Allan Poe to see which periods of his life that the most likely like are the reasons for the different themes in his poems.

1. *Alone* (1829)

Poe wrote that since childhood, he had been different from other children. He didn't have as much fun as a normal child. The researcher believes that Poe's choice of writing this theme is influenced by the moment of his life. He felt lonely, because as a child he had been abandoned by his father and also experienced the death of his mother. And the sadness that Poe felt when he had to lose his biological mother and also his foster mother for the second time.

2. *A Valentine* (1846)

The author gives a hint regarding how the reader and his girl can find "her" name in the poem. It is between the lines, words, or syllables. The author wants readers

and “his girl” to be able to find the name of the woman that Poe wrote in his poem. This is Poe's acrotic poem, where there is a woman's name that Poe likes tucked into the poem that Poe wrote.

The researcher believe that Poe’s choice of writing this theme is influenced by his crush on one of his coworkers (Frances Sargent Osgood) in the *Broadway Journal*. Because Poe was so afraid of directly telling Frances that he was already married and to express his affection for her, Poe wrote a poem, "*A Valentine*", for her as a Valentine's Day present.

3. *A Dream Within A Dream* (1849)

The researcher believed that Poe’s choose of writing this theme is influenced by his life moments. Poe wrote this poem in memory of his wife's death due to tuberculosis. Because of his wife's death, Poe felt very sad and lost. Poe also felt frustrated because of it.

Finding and Discussion

From the analysis above, the researcher finds that Edgar Allan Poe’s experienced in his life affects the choice of themes in his poems. From the three poems, each of them has a different theme.

In the poem *Alone* (1829), the theme found is loneliness and sadness. This theme is reflected by Edgar Allan Poe in 1810, 1811 and 1829. In 1810 Edgar Allan Poe’s father abandoned their family and his mother died a year later from pulmonary tuberculosis. And, in 1829, for the second time Poe’s foster mother died.

In the poem *A Valentine* (1846), the theme is forbidden love. This theme is reflected by Edgar Allan Poe in 1846. In 1846 when Poe works at *The Broadway Journal*, Poe fell in love with one of his co-workers, Frances Sargent Osgood. Because Poe was so afraid of directly telling Frances he was already married and to express his affection for her, Poe wrote a poem, "*A Valentine*", for her as a Valentine's Day present. The woman's name can be found in the poem *A Valentine* that Poe wrote for her.

In the poem *A Dream Within A Dream* (1849), the theme are sadness, loss and frustration. This theme is reflected by Edgar Allan Poe in 1849, after the death of his wife because of tuberculosis, Poe wrote this poem for her memory.

From the analysis above, the researcher found that the life experiences of Edgar Allan Poe plays a role in what he wrote about. This is similar to the previous study by Thea Valerie that the researcher use in this research. In Thea’s research, it is also found that the past experience of Robert Frost influence her poem.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the researcher comes to the following conclusions :
Each poem has a different theme :

1. The theme of *Alone* is Loneliness and Sadness.
2. The theme of *A Valentine* is Forbidden Love.
3. The theme of *A Dream Within A Dream* are Sadness, Loss and Frustration.

The reasons for choosing the themes :

1. The theme of Loneliness and Sadness in the poem *Alone* is influenced by Poe’s father abandoned their family and his mother died a year later from pulmonary tuberculosis and for the second time Poe’s foster mother died.

2. The theme of Forbidden Love in the poem *A Valentine* is influenced by hidden feelings Poe for one of his co-workers, but he was so afraid to telling her because at that time, Poe was already married.
3. The theme of Sadness, Loss and Frustration in the poem *A Dream Within A Dream* is influenced by the death of Poe's wife because of tuberculosis and because of that Poe felt sad and lost his wife.

Suggestions

Based on the research finding, suggestions were made as the following :

1. For students, this study can make the students understand the phenomenon of life through poems.
2. For teacher, the results of this study are hopefully able to be used as references in teaching of literary work, especially poems.
3. For future researchers and other readers, are expected to enrich their knowledge about how to analyze literary works especially poems.

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