

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into several matters that will be related to the research. First, the writer explains about research background. Second, statement of problems is a brief overview of the problems existing in the concerned area selected for this research. Third, research objective is to answer from statement of problems. Fourth, research significance is for the development of romantic studies especially with nature theory. Fifth, the writer mentions previous studies related to the topics in this research. The last, the research gives definition of the terms.

1.1 Research Background

Humans who are born with the power of creativity, taste, and intention by God will certainly never be separated from the life of literature. Thus, literature is the result of human creativity, taste, and intention which can be interpreted as a reflection of life. The discourse related to Alwasilah (in Nurrachman, 2017, p. 1) statements that literature is a kind of *belles letters* (fine writing), it is containing the people's values, thoughts, problems, and conflict, in short, the whole way of life. As Ralph Waldo Emerson (1844) postulated in *The Poet*, the man is only half himself, the other half is his expression (Nurrachman, 2017, p. 205). Then, in this case, Emerson (in Nurrachman, 2017, p. 205) suggests, "every man should be so much an artist that he could report in conversation what had befallen him". That means the literary work is a replacement of real life into the words. Therefore, the literary work is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth.

Literary work is an important subject to study because it reproduces or recreates life through words or language (Kennedy, 1993, p. 17). Studying it can help us understand better about the history of ourselves, the history of society, and the history of human life itself. Likewise, literary work can dialogue with our intellectual and emotional side. In the same way, learning literature makes us able to interpret the message of the author in his work, academically by decoding text

through a set of literary theories and approaches. This concept is suit with Gill's (1995, p. 27) argues, that the literary works is an author's creativity which is used to portray his ideas and experience about the reality of social phenomenon that can happen in a social life. By this reality, the author's imagination may describe the totality expression in the form of literary work which is interesting to be scrutinized.

Furthermore, a literary work not only entertains the reader, but also gives lessons to be learned. Agree with Horace (in Nurrachman, 2017, p. 75) it is not enough for poems to be beautiful; they must be affecting, and must lead the heart of the hearer as they will. The statement shows that literary work, in addition to entertaining also will enrich insight and increase the price of life. Because through literary work, people can take good values. Thus, in a literary work there must be something useful for life.

One of the most popular literary works is poetry. Poetry can be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language. A piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their sound and the images they suggest, not just for their obvious meanings. The words are arranged in separate lines. The composition of the words was chosen to make it beautifully, in order to create an effects and certain atmosphere. Words, or more broadly, language, actually has a power. These powers are explored by poet to express their ideas as a result of processing their feelings, thoughts, imagination and experience. Thus, poetry is the power of human's language, feelings, and intellectuals. It is the way of expression by which human being spill their artistic ideas, remember the past, reflect the philosophical truth, or expose sorrow as well as happiness. As following of John Keating (in Abidin, 2010, p.1) statements about poetry:

“We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of human race. And human race is filled with passion, medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for.”

As an expression of a poet, poetry always gets a place in the heart of the human soul, in every age. In the same way, poetry also serves purpose. According to Emerson's view as Hallengren believes, poetry is essentially an approach to truth, a decoding of the enigma of nature and man (in Schenk, 2008, p. 5). In addition, poetry has many streams. One of them is romantic. Romantic poetry is not merely poetry related to love or attraction between men and women as widely understood. Rather, it exerts the stress upon sense and feeling where individual freedom is highly esteemed. Meanwhile, romantic poetry developed rapidly in several countries, one of which was America.

American romantic poetry is the poetry of the Romantic era, a period in which artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement developed in America in 1810-1865. In America, it dominated the literary scene from around 1820 to the end of the Civil War. Intellectually, it marked a violent reaction against the Enlightenment. Emotionally, it emphasized the importance of the self and valued the experience of the individual along with the sense of the infinite and the transcendental. The stylistic keynote of Romanticism is intensity and its watchword is imagination. Long (2004, p.137) stated that imagination along with emotion and freedom are certainly the focal points of Romanticism. In fact about it, Romantic poets enjoyed the freedom to choose their subject matter. It arose as a reaction to the Neoclassicism of the preceding period. It is marked by a freedom from the authority, forms, and conventions typical in the Neoclassical literature. It replaced the Neoclassic emphasis on reason with its own emphasis on the imagination and emotions, and the Neoclassic emphasis on authority with an emphasis on spirit of individuality, which places the individual at the center of all life. In romantic period, one of the popular American poets was Walt Whitman.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd by Walt Whitman is a long poem in the form of an elegy written in 1865. The poem, written in free verse in 206 lines, 16 stanzas and uses many of the literary techniques associated with the pastoral elegy. The form of this poetry is pastoral, which is pastoral has a deep connection with romantic and nature. It was written in the summer of 1865 during a period of profound national mourning in the aftermath of the assassination of

President Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865. Despite the poem being an elegy to the fallen president, Whitman neither mentions Lincoln by name nor discusses the circumstances of his death. Instead, Whitman uses a series of rural and natural imagery, and employs the traditional progression of the pastoral elegy in moving from grief toward an acceptance and knowledge of death. In other hand, the poem also addresses the pity of war through imagery vaguely referencing the American Civil War (1861-1865) which ended only days before the assassination.

As one of the romantic poems, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* has several elements. Which is every romantic poem must contain these certain elements as its identity. Imagination, nature, myth, emotion, and individuality are the elements in a romantic poetry. These elements can be found in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. But to be more focused in this research, the writer will only take one of these elements to discuss, namely nature. Therefore, more precisely, natural objects used in this poem.

Walt Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* explores many themes, symbols, and ideas. But the common factor of this poems reflect is the natural world. Whether it is seasons, landscapes, animals, plants, and flowers. One of the reasons Whitman celebrates elements of the natural world is because he believed that human beings were already a part of nature and they would continue their journey with nature after death. *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* reflect this idea. Whitman still incorporates the cycle of life and death, hope and faith, and also rebirth. According to Walt Whitman's thought, "life has a meaning only when viewed as God's plan and in nature nothing is lost or is in vain, for all things move imperceptibly through infinite cycle of growth and decay to some ultimate goal" (Bora, 2015, p.35).

In other hand, nature also has many uses and represents many things. God created supporting components in nature with various functions and purposes such as plants that grow in nature then used as a food source, flowers that are created to make the earth more aesthetic, the sun created by God to support human survival and the sky created to make people aware of the greatness of God. Inevitably, that the uses of this nature make the presence of nature more meaningful. As has been

said before, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* has many elements of romantic as a pastoral elegy poem. One of them is with the use of diction related to natural objects. That can be seen from the selection of the diction, the ideas conveyed by Whitman, his imaginative power as a poet, and romantic elements that it uses. In this research, the writer will focus on the natural objects that appears in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* as a part of romantic elements. The reason, nature is one of the dominating features of romantic poetry.

Then, after giving some explanation and discussion above, the writer interested to expose about the uses of natural objects used by Whitman in his poetry. Where the uses of nature will present another meaning that can make people aware of the greatness of God, who has created in this universe. The object which has been chosen is *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* of the poem collection entitled *Leaves of Grass*, nature theory in romantic studies as analysis tools, and the writer decided to use the title *Natural Objects Representing The Cycle of Life and Death in Walt Whitman's When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* for this research.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Based on the background problem above, this research can be formulated into the research question as follows:

1. How are the natural objects in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* represent four uses of nature?
2. How are the cycle of life and death appear in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* through four uses of nature?

1.3 Research Objectives

In this research, identification of natural objects in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* directly has several objectives, namely:

1. To find out the four uses of nature represented by natural objects in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*.

2. To find out the cycle of life and death through four uses of nature in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom`d*.

1.4 Research Significance

The writer appreciate *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom`d* as one of the best poems ever created. Because through this poem, sorrow and sincerity are reflected. Walt Whitman dedicated this poem to people who are losing something they love, especially encouraging American people when their leader has fallen.

Therefore, this research is expected to give a new contribution, the most important in romantic studies. Romantic studies is an academic discipline that covers the study of the languages, literatures, and cultures of areas that speak a Romance language. Therefore, this research will analyze the romantic elements through a theory from a Romantic thinker in Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom`d*.

Theoretically, the writer expects this research has far-reaching to help the other researcher to analyze literary works. And also to help analyze romantic elements in a poem. This research wants to give more information and knowledge about the romantic elements in Walt Whitman`s poem. More precisely through the nature theory proposed by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The readers will find the conduction of theories of romanticism, transcendentalism, and nature, as a part of romantic studies. This theories are applied to analyze the natural objects as part of romantic elements in a poem entitled *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom`d* by Walt Whitman. Therefore, the readers will find the combination of the theories which are mentioned to analyze a poetry, particularly natural objects in the poetry itself.

Practically, this research will add more reference about literature to student of English Literature, Faculty of Adab and Humaniora, Islamic State University Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Then, for the writer, this research can enrich the knowledge dealing with literary analysis and romantic studies. And for the reader anywhere, this research can increase their interest in appreciating the literary works.

1.5 Previous Studies

Previous studies are identified as all previous researches that have discussed the topic in which the writer is wrestling with these topics in this research. There are some previous researches which are related with this research such as the topic, problem, methodology and theory.

The first research is titled *Natural Element and Romantic Reflection in Maleficent Movie and Novel* by Annisa, English Department, Adab and Humanity Faculty, State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung 2017. The aim of this research is to identify natural element and romantic reflection in Maleficent movie and novel. This research focused on two points. First, to find out the potrayals of natural element which reflected Maleficent characters in movie and novel. Second, to find out natural element reflect the romantic ideas in movie and novel. To analyze the data, this research used Romanticism theory of Wordsworth and comparative literature. This thesis is related with the research because have same topic and theme.

The second research, *Nature in American Transcendentalism* by Alireza Manzari, English Department, Islamic Azad University 2012. This research tries to delve more deeply into the nature from the view point of American transcendentalism. Which, two American transcendentalist figures became central in this research. They are Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. This research discusses about nature in the perspective of two the transcendentalist figures. Nature is part of a romantic study. Romanticism America itself is affected by transcendentalism. This research was also strengthened by the theory that had been put forward by the two figures of American trancendetalist in romantic period on their essays. Through this research, the use of theory about nature that came from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau will be something similiar to the research

The third research is titled *The Concept of Nature in Gothic and Romantic Literature* by Ignacio Gonzales Almodovar, Facultad De Filologia, Universidad De Salamaca 2014. This research discuss and explore about how the concept of nature appears in 19th Century English literature by comparing the different uses

that both Romantic poets and Gothic novelists made of it. Due to the fact that nature is a recurrent thematic element in several literary movements, this work focus on the notion that the 19th Century English authors had of it and, thus, how they depicted this vision of nature in literary works in an unprecedented way. Two main parts of analysis are proposed, the first one focuses on the concept of nature in the English Romantic poetry, whilst the second one refers to its use in the Gothic novel. Both parts consist of brief analyses of different literary excerpts that are compared between them in order to appreciate the similarities and differences in the ways in which nature was conceived by different poets and novelists of this period. The differences between this research and the research that will be conducted by the selection of poets and their literary works. While the similarity is in the concept of nature, also with several theories and in this research, still discuss about romantic poetry.

The fourth, *Common People in the Poetry of William Blake and William Wordsworth in the Romantic Period* by Tahmina Akter Choudhury, Department of English, East West University 2011. This research discusses about the role of common people in the poetry of William Blake and William Wordsworth. Which is this research will also discuss about Romanticism, and provide an explanation of the history and background of the Romantic era. This research starts from the understanding of Romanticism in general. Then, discussing romantic elements in the poetry, using Chen's theory which includes; subjectivity, love of supernatural world, imagination, love of nature, simplicity in language and presentation of common people. Thus, in the conclusion, poetry in the Romantic era became more inclusive with its new focus on common people which was introduced by poets like Wordsworth and Blake. They could shape poetry as a mirror which used to reflect a holistic society projecting both the upper (elites) and the lower (ordinary) class people and their lives and poets in the later periods followed the footprints of Wordsworth and Blake. The differences between this research and the research can be seen from the subjects and problems of the research. The similarity of research is in the theory of Romanticism.

The last, *Nature and Death in the Poetry of Al-Mala'ika, Al-Shabbi and Shukri, and Certain English Romantic Poets: A Comparative Study* by Ronak Hassan Hussein, Department of Arabic Studies, University of Saint Andrews 1989. The first part of this thesis, divided into two chapters, deals with the early background of European Romanticism; the reasons behind its appearance and problems of definition. And there follows a discussion on the question of the originality of Arabic Romanticism, with a brief review of roots and main literary groups of this movement in Arabic poetry. Part two examines the influence of English poetry and thought on three Arab Romantic poets. There are Nazik Sadiq al-Mala'ika, Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi and Abd al-Rahman Sukri. This is discussed parallel with the channels of his influence. The main focus of this research is however, to show the ways in which al-Mala'ika, al-Shabbi, and Shukri perceived and reflected nature and death in their poetry. Their attitudes towards certain phenomena in nature such as the countryside, night, the sea, and social lessons of nature are compared with certain attitudes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley. Themes such as life and death, fear of death, fatalism, and immortality as a experience are also the concern of this thesis, with a comparison of these themes in the poetry of the Arab and English Romantic poets. However, owing to the popularity of Keats and Shelley with the three Arab Romantic poets, this thesis concentrates on their poetry. This research has selected only certain phenomena and themes from nature--and death because of the dominance of these subjects in the poetry of al-Mala'ika, al-Shabbi and Shukri. The translations of Arabic poetry in this thesis are intended to convey the general sense of the source texts, rather than to give a precise rendering of these texts into English. The difference with this research is the study taken. While the similarity is the theme of romance, and the cycle of life and death.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms that should be understood related to the research in order to avoid and misunderstanding to the readers.

- Romanticims** : Romanticism asserted the power of the individuality in human. Romanticism marked an era characterized by an idealization of the individual. Politically, the movement influenced democratic ideals and the revolutionary principles of social equality. Philosophically, it meant that the objective idea reality would give way to subjective experience; thus, all truth became a matter of human perception. In the art world, romanticism marked a fascination with the individual genius, and elevated the artist, philosopher, and poet above all others (Phillips, Ladd, 2006, p.5).
- Trancendentalism** : Transcendentalism is a thought—or a religious philosophy that spread out; important to live with nature and live in simplicity, direct relation to God rather than through formal religion, human beings are divine, also having of *Self-Image* and *Self-Reliance*, and rebel the oppression or slavery (Holman in Sardjana, 1988, p.98).
- Nature** : In general, nature is the phenomena of physical world collectively, including plants, animals, landscape, other features and products of the earth, as opposed to humans or human creations. Philosophically, nature appeared to people as a material reality; however, because it evoked such strong feelings in humankind, it revealed itself as containing a higher, spiritual truth (Phillips, Ladd, 2006, p.5)
- Four Uses of Nature** : These distinctions define the ways by which humans use nature for their basic needs, their desire for delight or pleasure, their communication with one another and their understanding of the world. And a way to see universe as an all encompassing whole, embracing man, nature, and spirit, as interrelated expressions of God. And these are

Commodity, Beauty, Language, and also Discipline—Emerson discusses the ways in which man employs nature ultimately to achieve insight into the workings of the universe (Wilson, 2000, p.83).

Cycle of Life & Death : The cycle of life and death is a natural condition that will be experienced by living things in the universe. This process generally occurs after humans are born and grow up, then death will pick them up in old age. Birth and Death are words that human chose to describe the doorways in and out of a cycle. This cycle is connected to a larger cycle which awaits our return. It is all just like breathing. Frank and Judith McMahon (1986, p.8) says that, “We may have seen death, read about death, or even come close to death, but we have never death. Thus, we face the ultimate unknown, and the fact that our society refuses to admit that death is natural process”.

