

Poe's Perspective of Beauty as Reflected In "Ligeia"

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Abstract

The research was an attempt to "describe" Poe's perspective of beauty reflected in "Ligeia", a short story. This study used American Studies theory that was the reconciliation of time (past, present, future), of space and of academic discipline that were philosophical, historical, and literary approaches. The literary approach used, in this case, was the expressive one. The method applied in this study was analytical descriptive that utilized library research and concentrated the attention on reference sources related to the topic discussed. The result of the study showed that romantic ideas influenced the American society. The most striking ones were the freedom, individualism and equality. Individualism and freedom made Poe's literary works that in a way can be categorized as classic and in another way, romantic. They were different from the others. This study proved that Poe's perspective of beauty was that the well designed poem or prose creates the pleasure of totality of beauty. Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. The beauty must be able to elevate soul. It can be found from the contemplation of the beautiful. The study also showed that "Ligeia" reflects the beauty of knowledge.

Keywords: Romanticism, Perspective, Beauty

1. Introduction

The writer likes the romantic ideas, Edgar Allan Poe and his works. The writer is interested in romantic ideas because they are connected with the inner aspects of human life and influence greatly in American's life.

In the first half of 19th century, the mainstream of the literature of the United States of America was influenced by romantic ideas. The American romanticism had sources both from inside and outside of the country. It originated from Europe. Romanticism appeared in England in the end of the 17th century. Romanticism is not an organized system but rather a particular attitude towards realities of human being, nature and society (Bradley, 1962: 334).

In the United States of America, the environment of the New World and the ideas coming from the European romantic tradition has formed the attitude of the authors. In every country, romanticism has produced abundant literary works with many variations among the authors. It also happened in the United States of America. Although the works of the romantic authors were various, the romantics had general characteristics. They were moral enthusiasm, belief in the value of individualism and intuitive perception and presumption that natural world is a source of goodness and society is a source of corruption (Michael, 1985: 263).

The romantic values appeared clearly in American politics, art and philosophy until the Civil war. The American Revolution collapsed because of the romantic ideas that worshipped individualism (Bradley: 334). In art, the romantics rebelled against the strict rules of the classical art. They preferred freedom to formalism. They also rejected rationalism. Because of these, the romantics rebelled against classicism.

In this era, a lot of American people had a propensity toward the New England Transcendentalism. It is the idea that appreciates the superiority of intuition, conscience and the ability of human being to see the truth and get the knowledge intuitively (Michael: 263).

In the romantic era, literature was not used as a means of education, religion and politics anymore. Imaginative literature had developed abundantly and fertile because the author was considered as a researcher instead of an artist who had to follow the strict classical rules (264). The author was free to express his/her respond to the society. Another characteristic of romanticism was the intention to retreat from the society and to go back to the nature that became a convention of American literature. It was reflected in Leatherstocking Tales written by James Fenimore Cooper, Walden by Henry David Thoreau and Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain. All of them were written in the 19th century. The characteristics mentioned above also appeared in the works of the 20th century authors like Hemingway and William Faulkner. The romantics liked mystery, remote places, horror and superstition. Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville reflected them in their works. They were also interested in primitivism (264-265).

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) is one of the giants of romantic authors. He is very genius. Generally, he is recalled as a figure who emerges himself in one of his stories or poems that are mysterious, wild, and abnormal. It is sure that there are elements of strangeness in his works. It is such a wonder whether his tales are the biographical exploitation of his strange way of living.

Poe is a very productive author. He writes poems, tales, short stories, sketches, and essays. Poe is a worshiper of beauty. Poe's literary skill is very extraordinary as shown in the poem. A beautiful woman as his subject and the rhythm and sound always appeared in his poems (Bayn et al., 1979: 1467-1463). In creating poems, Poe calculates the music appearing as a result of rhythm and rhyme although he is not a musician. George Bernard Shaw, an English playwright and critic paid attention to Poe's poems. He said, "But Poe for all his virtuosity is always a poet and never mere a virtuoso ...his poems always have the universe as their backgrounds" (Shaw in Carlson, 1970: 99).

From the quotation above, it can be understood that Poe is not a musician but a poet and his poems are musical due to he uses the universe as the background. The universe has its natural rhythm and rhyme is just like music.

Poe's imagination is very vivid so that he can create wonderful horror stories. He is the Father of detective story. His depressed feeling which was allegedly resulted from his losses to beloved women in his life including his mother, his friend, and his wife combined by unrestrained imagination, created highly appreciated literary works such as "The Raven", "Annabel Lee", "Ligeia", "Morella", "The Bells" and so on.

As a worshiper of beauty, many Poe's literary works talked about beauty which is a theme keen by the writer. . Based on the explanation, the writer wanted to do the research focused on "Ligeia" to see Edgar Allan Poe's perspective of beauty in its relation with the American romanticism.

2. Research Methods

This study used American Studies theory that is the reconciliation of time (past, present, future), of space and of academic discipline that are philosophical, historical, and literary approaches. The literary approach used, in this case, was the expressive one. The method applied in this study was analytical descriptive that utilized library research and concentrated the attention on reference sources related to the topic discussed.

The data was primarily taken from “Ligeia” as the mental evidence. Other supporting data would be collected from books related to the topic and journals.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1. Romanticism

To understand romanticism, it was necessary for the writer to talk about the Renaissance because its literary trend (classic) is opposed to romanticism. It generally appeared in Europe in the 15th century, but in Italy, it emerged in the 14th century. In this era, the European people began pursuing the sciences of Old Greek brought by the Arabians. Rationalism developed. Rene Descartes with his “Cogito ergo sum“ meaning “I think so I exist” became very famous. The rationalism influenced physical and social sciences in addition to literature (Hadimaja, 1972: 39).

The favourite literary movement was classic that imitated the classical Rome and Greek literature. This literary trend only stimulated reason whereas it neglected feeling. It ended and the romanticism appeared. There were many opinions to explain or define romanticism but they agreed that the Father of Romantic Movement is Jean Jaques Rousseau, a Swiss-born French philosopher (40).

Rousseau advocates to go back to nature “Retournous a la nature”. According to him, man by nature is good but corrupted by civilization. It is stated in The Emergence of Liberal Humanism: An Intellectual History of Western Europe (Coates, 1966:285). He had opinion that institution had to be founded based on human heart that was good by nature.

In his work translated in English, The Natural Man, the characteristics of natural man whom Rousseau wanted are “...a passionate love of nature, rebellion against the established social and political order, the glorification of feeling over ideas, imagination and intense introspection, an idealization of sensual love, prolific expression, and natural thinking” (Bennet, 1948:252).

From the quotation above, it can be understood that man who appreciates the psychological aspects of human like feeling, love, imagination is categorized natural. The natural man usually dislikes strict social political rules and norms that make him hypostatical and restricts his feeling as well as thinks intuitively.

The characteristics above can be found in primitive people that became Rousseau’s ideal that is “...the highly idealized, over sentimentalized primitive man for his supposedly simpler, purer and less inhibited emotional responses and superior intellect” (252). The primitive man is well known as “Noble Savage”, a term that was used for the first time by John Dryden (Dryden in Michael, 1985, 172).

The primitive man is called noble because they live close to the nature. It is true that they depended on the nature to fulfil their needs but they took something from the nature only in limited quantity. They did not explore the natural sources to be stored. They also acted purely because they had not learned intricate norms that often made human being hypocritical.

From the explanation above, it is clear that Rousseau is peculiar and unique in his era because he appreciated the feeling, intuition, simplicity, *etc* when people worshipped reasons used as the basis for solution of any problem. At that time, there was a competition whether the progress in sciences and art made human better. Rousseau answered that the progress only made human feel alienated and human had to be natural. His answer was very different from the

others who worshipped such progress. Rousseau's ideas echo freedom, intuition, feeling, and emotion which influence the writers and philosophers. He pioneered the romanticism.

According to Runes, Romanticism as philosophical stream, in Dictionary of Philosophy is best understood in the era of German idealism developing during 1775-1805 (1978: 272). One of the idealists, Friedrich Wilhem Joseph Von Schelling, is one of striking outstanding figures and becomes the culmination. It is seen below:

“The essence of philosophical romanticism as expressed by Schelling, that which differentiates it from other types of idealism, resides in its conception of spirit; upon this depend its metaphysical account of nature and man, and its epistemological doctrine of proper method for investigating and understanding reality” (272).

From the quotation above, it is obvious that romanticism as a philosophical stream can be understood from Schelling ideas.

According to Schelling, the fundamental doctrine of romanticism is that all reality is ultimately spiritual, derivative from a living spirit and so knowable by the human spirit” (272). Romanticism perceives the reality from the spirit instead from the material.

The Spirit or the Absolute is creative “...Romanticism hold that Spirit, or the Absolute, is essentially creative ...” (272). The Spirit or the Absolute is the Spirit of God. The creativity of God creates nature but the nature is incomplete. Man with his creativity continues to complete the nature (272).

It is different from Aristotle's idea. God created the nature perfectly and anything in the nature has an aim, goodness (272). If man creates something it is only an imitation of nature instead of man's creativity. For example, music is only an imitation of the voice of nature. Nature is complete and it does not require any man's involvement.

According to the romantics, the Spirit or the Absolute controls artists in this world (272). The reality in this world exists because of the artist's creativity namely art. So the reality imitates the art.

The understanding of the Spirit of God is fundamental view. From this outlook, the understanding of universe develops. It is seen below:

...From this basic view there springs a metaphysic that interprets the universe in term of the concepts of evolution, process, life and consciousness. The world of nature is one of manifestation of Spirit; man is another and a higher such manifestation, for in man spirit seeks to become conscious of its own work (272).

The universe has a conceptual meaning. The universe is the concept of evolution, process, life and consciousness. The concept is defined as a notion or an idea. The universe has been changing since it was created. The reality in the universe always changes. It is caused by man's creativity especially the artists. The changes mean the concept of process. The universe is the concept of life. According to Kattsoff, it is like an organism that has elements in supporting each other. The elements make a unity and they do not separate from the unity itself (Kattsoff *in* Soemargono, 1968: 163). The universe is an alive unity not a mechanistic one. It is the concept of consciousness based on the deep understanding. The universe is the manifestation of the Absolute. The Absolute cannot be seen. Man is His higher manifestation from universe because the spirit of man is the conscious of his actions.

The romanticism stresses on emotion and intuition based on total experience and deep feeling to understand the reality, "... the epistemology of romanticism is exclusively emotional and intuitive, stressing the necessity for fullness experience and depth of feeling if the reality is to be understood (Runnes 273). For example, if an author wants to describe the life of a respective country, he/she must experience it so he/she can write precisely and appropriately. From this view, it can be understood that romanticism is suitable for the art instead of the scientific matters.

Besides emotion and intuition, there is reason used as the base of knowledge. The romantics have opinion, "...Reason being artificial and analytical, is inadequate to the task of comprehending the Absolute; knowing is living and the philosopher must approach nature through inspiration, longing and sympathy (273).

Reason being artificial and analytical means that reason is only able to compose and analyze the provided materials and it is limited. If there are two or more men using reasons to observe something, their results of the analysis will be different. The difference appears because every man has limited reason. Because of this, the romantic considers that reason is incapable to understand the Absolute.

God in this world controls artist meaning that the closest man to God is artist, so Schelling idealism is well known as "aesthetic idealism". It is called "aesthetic idealism" because he stressed on art. In understanding work of art, Schelling analogized it with organism. It is written in Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, "... Schelling believed that organism and work of art are alike in that they can be properly understood only teleologically: that is the entities in which the parts serve the whole and the whole itself is purposive (Edward, 1967: 307)

It is stated in The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language that the teleological understanding is the understanding based on the aim (Morris, 1981: 1323). The organism is a living thing as a model to understand work of art. In the organism, there are elements that cannot be analyzed. The elements form the unity that is the organism itself. The organism as the result of all elements has a goal, which is to form life. It is just the same with the work of art consisting of many elements. The artist creates it. It functions as a means of education, propaganda, entertainment etc.

The difference between art and organism, according to Schelling, is the result. He said that:

"...The main difference between art and organism, according to Schelling, is that in organism the activity of organizing intelligence lies hidden or unconscious, manifest only in the product-the organism itself; but in the work of art the productive activity is conscious whereas the product, the true art work, is unconscious and infinite. The artist never fully understands his art" (Schelling in Edwards: 306).

In organism, the brain works automatically and the product is the product, the organism itself. In art, artist works on purpose but the product is unlimited. It means that the understanding of work of art develops freely based on the audience's imagination. It is often different from its creator or the artist.

In literature, Rousseau's ideas echoing freedom stimulated the Romantic Movement. Henry A Beers in A History of English Romanticism said that to understand romanticism, it was necessary to study good literary documents and to think deeply. The word "romantic" is a referential word that contains the antonym, "classic". Romanticism is in fact, a concept which appeared in the eighteenth century yet the elements had appeared long time ago. Romanticism

is all of the reproduction of life and thoughts of the Middle Age in work of art or modern literature (Beers, 1952: 2). It was asserted that the work of medieval poet and artists was marked by an expressive sentiment, by over lavish decoration, a strong sense of colour and a feeble sense of form, an attention to detail, at the cost of the main impression, and a consequent tendency to run into the exaggerated, the fantastic, and the grotesque (4).

The basic elements of romantic work of art are the curiosity and love of beauty. Bacon said, “there is no excellent beauty that hath not strangeness in the proportion” (8). Such beauty is only can be gained or created by unrestrained imagination or remote places (Walter in Beers 9). F.H. Hedge called mystery is the main aspect of romanticism besides of aspiration. The mystery and the aspiration mean that there is no certainty and completeness in romantic works of art (Hedge in Beers: 13).

Stendhal, a French author, said, “...romanticism stands for progress, liberty originality and spirit of future” (Stendhal *in* Beers 11). It can be understood that the strict rules are not found in romantic works. The authors are free to express their ideas. Freedom makes progress.

In America, romanticism emerged in the early of the 19th century. The Romantic Movement in America is not principally different from the one developing in Europe. The American brand of romanticism developed its own characters especially as the American authors tried self-consciously to be new and original. In Symbolism and American Literature, it is mentioned that the basic problem of romanticism: the vindication of imaginative thought in a world ground abstract in material (Feidelson, 1976: 4).

In The New Columbia Encyclopaedia, the characteristics of the 19th century romanticism are the avoidance of classical forms and rules, the emphasis of emotional and spiritual, the representation of unattainable ideals, the nostalgia for the grace of the past ages, and the predilection for exotic themes (Harris and Levey, 1975: 2349-50).

It is stated in American Poetry and Prose that the romantic quest were individualism in feeling and imagination, the American past, nature, common man (Forester and Falk, 1962: 180-188). The romantic individualism is different from the rational one. Although man is almost similar one to the others, but every man has a unique characteristic. By feeling and imagining, man is able to understand the spiritual things. The romantics liked the remote and strange, thus, imagination could be stimulated.

Although the American writers found inspiration from foreign land, Europe, especially England, they looked back to their own countries as the source for their writings. Old Puritan and Indian became the objects of writings. Reciprocally, European romantic writers found inspiration in America, which had it for its charms of the exotic, the primitive, and the democratic. The influence was summed up by Merle Curti. He said,

“had gone enthusiasm for the noble savage, the mysteries of the American wilderness, the primitive in general, the cult of simplicity and the state of equality which the Americans, particularly frontiersmen and Quakers, presumably exemplified were other quarries from which the imagination and sentiment could secure foundation stones for Romantic structure. Thus, the picturesque, strange and fantastic phenomenon of terrestrial paradise beyond the Atlantic gave the romanticists the very stuff of dreams. Herder, Goethe, Chateaubriand, Byron, Wordsworth, Blake, and Coleridge, among many others, were deeply in depth to America.” (Curti in Foerster and Falk: 186).

Nature is typically America, but Rosseau influenced the attitude toward it. Nature is both standard of simplicity and virtue and a refuge of harsh actuality (187). The American romantics is interested in external nature like American forest, prairie, mountain, and river.

Common man became an object of romantic enthusiasm. The common man means an ordinary man. He is the natural earthy man. Everything, says Whitman, “comes out of the dirt—everything: everything comes out of the people, the people as you find them and leave them: not university people, not F.F.V. people “ (Whitman in Foerster and Falk: 188). Then, as Emerson noted, such poets as Goldsmith (*The Deserted Village*), Burns (“*The Cotter’s Saturday Night*”), and Cowper (*The Task*) had began to celebrate plain folk and wholesome rustic living). Formerly, it was Wordsworth who most memorably celebrated not only the natural world but also the common man who lived in it, beginning with the “underprivileged” people of the *Lyrical Ballads* and rising to the a climax in the shepherd poem “*Michael*” (188)

In America, where the equalitarian spirit of the frontier was added to the democratic ideology inherited from the eighteenth century, the writers like Bryant, Cooper and Hawthorne who sympathetic toward the Jacksonian revolution and Emerson formed a view of life basically democratic despise patrician origin and training (188). No one had placed higher valuation than Emerson in the latent powers of everyman: “each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state (Emerson in Foerster and Falk: 188).

It was Whittier who gave the dignity of verse to farmers, lumbermen, and shoemakers as reflected in “*Snow-Bound*”. It was Whittier also who espoused the cause of the common man made slave, though Emerson, Thoreau, and Lowell also took part, each in his own way (188).

3.2. The Poetic Principle And The Philosophy Of Composition

Edgar Allan Poe is an important figure in American romantic Era. He is a very talented author. Besides a writer of poetry, tales, short story, he is also a critic. In his critical writing, he commented on his contemporary writers in his age. Poe talked about art especially poetry and created theories. Among his critical writings, The Poetic Principle and The Philosophy of Composition are very famous because he discussed much about poetry based on his opinion.

In The Poetic Principle and The Philosophy of Composition, there are principles of art or poetry. The discussion consists of the length, province and tone of poem.

Instead of considering his long poem like *Paradise Lost* as a poem, Poe called it a half prose. If a poem is long and it needs long time to read, the important effect coming from the unity of impression will be gone. If it takes longer time to read the world affairs will interfere. So the totality in the poems is destroyed (Poe in Auden, 1950: 421)

According to Poe, the term of “a long poem” is only a succession of brief poetical effect. The poem intensely excites by elevating soul. All intense excitements are brief through psychal necessity, brief (421). Based on explanation above, *Paradise Lost* is judged by Poe as a prose. The whole elements of poetry are destroyed through the extreme of its length, of the vastly important artistic elements, totality, or unity of effect. The brevity of the poem and the poetical effect that can excite the soul must be calculated or designed.

The aim of a poem or prose is pleasure created from the unity or totality of elements or poetical devices. The well designed poem or prose creates the pleasure of totality of beauty. The beauty itself is the sole legitimate province of the poem. The pleasure that is the most intense, the most elevating, and the purest is found in the contemplation of the beautiful (422)

In Poe's opinion, beauty elevates the soul instead of feeling. Tone is the highest manifestation of beauty. Tone is literary speakers' or poets attitudes to their listeners or readers. Beauty excites the soul to tears. So melancholy is the most legitimate of all poetical form (423).

It can be concluded that it is more suitable to consider a very long poem as a prose. The aim of poetry is pleasure. Beauty is the core of literary works of art. The beauty is created from the totality of the effect of the elements and the contemplation of the beautiful. Beauty must elevate the soul. Melancholy is the suitable tone that can elevate the soul.

3.3.The Beauty Of Knowledge

In this subchapter, the writer will analyze the heroin, Ligeia, from her beauty of knowledge. "Ligeia" is one of Poe's tales. It can be categorized as horror story because the heroin is a vampire. DH Lawrence considers it as a ghastly story of human soul in its disruptive throes and a love story (Lawrence, 1952:1: 74). "Ligeia" tells the transformation of soul from the first wife into the second one. The tale goes on from the point of view of the first person or the narrator (the I). There are two heroines, namely, Ligeia and Rowena. They are the narrator's wives. After Ligeia's death, the narrator married Rowena. Two months after marriage, Rowena also died.

Poe's tales is generally can be called as Gothic story but they are rather different because the source of terror emerges from Poe's soul. According to Charlest L Sanford, Poe strained against mortal flesh and blood to achieve, as he said, "an absoluteness of novelty" and considered that he derived the terror of his Gothic tales not from Germany, but from the lonely depths of his own soul (Sanford in Carlson, 1970: 299).

The various interpretations based on Poe's biography also appeared. According to Princess Marie Bonaparte, a disciple of Freud, the characters were the real persons in which: (1) Husband = Poe, (2) Lady Ligeia= Elizabeth Arnold (Poe's mother), (3) Lady Rowena = Virginia Clemm (Poe's wife) and Frances Allen (Poe's foster mother) (Bonaparte in Barbour and Quirk, 1986: 175).

Another opinion came from Edmund Wilson, an essayist, who considered Poe as a "bridge" between Romanticism of the early 19th century and symbolism of the latter 19th century. According to Wilson, Ligeia is Virginia Clemm while Rowena is Poe's lovers (Wilson in Carelson: 148). In reality Poe fell in love with many women. He fell in love with Mrs. Frances S Osgood, Sarah Helen Whitman, Mrs Annie Richmond, and Elmira Royster Shelton (Peithman, 1986: xi-xii).

Tracing back to the biography of Poe, he was an orphan and "Ligeia" was published in 1836. However, the writer had different opinion. Lady Ligeia is Poe's own mother and Rowena is Virginia Clemm. When he was a child, Poe did not know her mother but he heard that her mother had a talent as an actress. Ligeia was the ideal mother and woman he missed.

The story began when the narrator told the reader that he did not remember the first time he kept in touch with Lady Ligeia, his wife, but he was sure about the place. It was in some large decaying city near the Rhine. Rhine is a river of Europe, rising in eastern Switzerland and flowing about 820 miles generally north through West Germany and Netherland to the North Sea via the Ijseel, Lek and Waal rivers (Morris, 1981: 1114). After Ligeia died, the narrator moved to an abbey in some remote part of England.

As an American and a romantic Poe chose the remote places, Rhine, and an abbey in England as the settings. The purpose for this is so that none of Poe's readers would be diverted by references to contemporary ideas: Poe created new worlds so that the readers would concentrate wholly on the themes or atmosphere with which he infused his stories. Poe believed

that the highest art existed in a realm that was different from this world and in order to create the realm, vagueness and indefiniteness were necessary to alienate the reader from the everyday world and to thrust him toward the ideal and the beautiful (<http://www..cliffnotes.com/wileycda/lit note/id>).

Ligeia and the narrator loved each other but his wife's love was greater. The narrator did not dare to ask her family's name because he was so impressed by her language that was very musical. It can be seen from,

“Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impression of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone—by Ligeia—that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have never known the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom.” (Poe in Auden, 1950: 22).

In fact, it is culturally abnormal for a man or woman who does not know his or her spouse's family name. Ligeia must not be a common woman because her husband devotes her. Poe often did not name his characters or narrators. For a romantic, like Poe, the emphasizes of literature ought to be the final effect and the images produced thereby (<http://www..cliffnotes.com/wileycda/lit note/id>).

In the next story, the narrator talked more about Ligeia. She was very elegant. She was described as a vampire walking without voice or as a very light thing. It can be seen from the quotation below,

“I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease of her demeanour or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study save by the dear music of her low sweet voice as she place her marble hand upon my shoulder” (23).

In talking about beauty, Poe reflected the characteristic of romantic authors who worship beauty. Poe was consistent with his theory that there must be strangeness in the beauty. Poe did not make any difference between mystery and strangeness. He considered them as similar thing. Poe followed Francis Bacon or Lord Verulam who said, “... there is no excellent beauty that hath not strangeness in the proportion”. Ligeia was described in detail both physically and psychologically in flowery language by the narrator. To express Ligeia's beauty, the narrator mentioned many things from Hebrew, Greek, India, *etc.* It was Poe's habit to entail non-English words in his works. It was on purpose which were to rise the readers' imagination and to create beauty because of the strangeness. Ligeia was tall, had ivory skin, and curled black hair. The narrator told,

“In beauty of face, no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of the opium-dream-an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the phantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughter of Delos. Yet her features were not of regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in classical labours of heathen” (23).

In describing Ligeia, Lawrence said,

“Poe is rather a scientist than an artist. He is reducing, as his own self as a scientist reduces a salt in a crucible. It is an almost chemical analysis of the soul and consciousness.

Whereas in true art there is always the double rhythm of creating and destroying” (Lawrence: 74).

From DH Lawrence criticism, it could be inferred that Poe as a romantic is relatively rational. He worked as a scientist in a laboratory. He calculated precisely when he wrote. He did not write spontaneously. He was influenced by the classic rules. The writer perceived that it was his uniqueness as a romantic. Although he thought deeply and calculated anything in writing, his works were the result of his sentimentalism. It was his expression of his feeling. The writer considered that Poe is the valuable treasure owned by the United States of America. His unique way of writing is suitable with his era that was growing, changing, experimenting, and expanding.

Ligeia’s face was very perfect. Her nose, lips and chin were beautiful. They were in well-shaped forms. The narrator compared Ligeia’s face with Cleomenes, the son of Athena given by Apollo. Apollo is the god of sun, prophecy, music, medicine, art and poetry (Morris, 1981: 61). Apollo’s words are clear as light and true. It means that Ligeia’s beauty was not common but was very high because she was compared with gods. Ligeia was both beautiful and powerful, like, Greek gods. She was highly appreciated by her husband.

Ligeia’s strangeness lied in his eyes. Poe used the word “orb”. It was odd word to describe eyes. It was usually used to describe a planet or things in a solar system. The narrator was curious to know the secret behind them. They were very different from any other’s eyes. They were big and full and bigger than ordinary European or American ones. The narrator explained, “...the fullest eyes belong to a bride in a valley of Noorjahat but Ligeia’s eyes were still fuller” (Poe in Auden: 24). Ligeia’s eyes contained strangeness. The narrator found the meaning of the strangeness from the only eyes. They revealed something certain that was expression but the expression itself was a mystery. It can be seen below,

“The strangeness”, however, which I found in the eyes, was a nature of distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and, must, after all, be referred to the expression. Ah, word of no meaning! Behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much the spiritual (24).

The narrator was very curious to know Ligeia’s expression. Ligeia’s expression was deeper than the well of Democritus. Democritus is a Greek philosopher of the late fifth century BC; proposed a primitive atomic theory (Morris: 361). It means that Ligeia’s eyes were connected with knowledge. The narrator also compared them with Greek gods. He only concluded that Ligeia’s eyes appeared as if they had been Leda’s ones. They were divine. Leda is a queen of Sparta, Zeus’s wife and the mother of Helen (Hamilton, 1954: 41). Thus the beauty of Ligeia contained strangeness. The strangeness was the expression equal to a mystery. The curiosity of the narrator to know Ligeia’s expression still went on. It can be seen below,

“ The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, thought the whole of midsummer night, struggled to fathom it. What was it –that something more profound than the well of Democritus which lay far within the pupil of my beloved? What was it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! Those large, those shining, those divine orbs! They became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers” (Poe in Auden : 25).

Talking about Ligeia's eyes representing expression, Poe expressed that in life there was something that could not be understood by reason. It could only be understood by feeling. The husband could not reveal the meaning of the expression of Ligeia's eyes but he got knowledge from analyzing them but soon it passed on. But when Ligeia's beauty entered his soul, the beauty stayed forever because soul was its holy place.

“And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching, the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart! “ And (strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused, within me, by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, analyze, or even steadily view it “ (25).

The husband could understand Ligeia's beauty after paying attention to material objects. He made analogy between them. Even the narrator still could not understand the sentiment felt whenever he looked at Ligeia's eyes. The sentiment named expression was still a mystery. In analyzing it, the narrator was able to only connect to the universe from small thing to the biggest one.

“I recognized it, let me repeat, sometime in the survey of a rapidly growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven—(one especially a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star of Lyra) in a telescope scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling” (25).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Poe showed the organic philosophy in his way of thinking. The romantic author or artist considered the works of art, like an organism. It consisted of many elements and they supported each other to create the totality. It was stated in The Basis of Criticism that,

“Organism, traditionally known as objective idealism, is the world hypothesis that stresses the internal relatedness or coherence of things. It is impressed with the manner in which observation at first apparently unconnected turn out to be closely related and with the fact that as knowledge progresses it becomes more systematized. It conceives the value of our knowledge as proportional to the degree of integration it has attained, and comes to identify value with integration in all sphere. Value in the sphere of knowledge is integration of judgments; in the sphere of ethics, it is integration of acts; in the sphere of art, it is integration of feelings. Finally, it conceives all of this these as contained in a total integration of existence or reality” (Pepper, 1945: 74).

Lyra is a constellation in Northern Hemisphere near Cygnus and Hercules, and containing a star, Vega (Morris: 778). Vega is the brightest star in the constellation Lyra (1419). The writer perceived that Poe was consistent with his theory that the words were chosen to create the effect of the totality. The words “moth, butterfly, chrysalis, a stream of running water, ocean, meteor,

star and Lyra” seemed to have no relation to both among them and to Ligeia’s eyes. They were chosen by Poe on purpose to create the totality or unity in the form of the universe. It was like an organism. The universe consists of many elements. Each element has its system. It comes from the lowest individual plant and animal (vine, moth, butterfly, chrysalis), the life-giving water until the biggest ones, the outer spaces of meteor and star. All of them relate each other. The universe is a huge constellation. It is the manifestation of God. So Ligeia’s beauty was supernal, heavenly, celestial and paradisiacal.

To understand Ligeia, the narrator had to combine the physical and psychological appearances. The harmony was shown by certain sound from books and stringed instruments.

After the narrator analyzed Ligeia’s eyes, he connected it with his own sentiment. He studied the inner aspect of her wife. It was connected to his sentiment. Will is very close to passion that the romantic authors appreciate highly. The narrator mentioned Joseph Glanvil statement about will,

“And the will therein lieth which dieth not. Who knoweth the mystery of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will” (Poe in Auden: 26).

The narrator related to his wife character after reading the volume of Glanvil. She was very calm but her will was very strong. Poe showed rebelling attitude against Puritanism. According to Puritan, teaching about predestination, man has no free will. He is predestinated to be good or bad. He cannot change his fate. It is only selected people who can enter Paradise. She consisted of intensity of thought, action and speech. The calmness of Ligeia seemed as if she had been a prey to the noisy culture of stern passion. Daniel Hoffman, a literary critic, in Romanticism: Essays in American Literature, stated,

“Vultures (condors) whenever met in Poe, signify, as in “Sonnet—To Science”, our enslavement to Time in this real world where flesh is carrion. Passion as we know from “Al-A’raaf” and “The Colloquy of Monos and Una” is the affliction of an impure nature, one not sufficiently devoted to transcendence of its own fallen state to be worthy of inhabiting the paradisaic star where purer spirit dwell” (Hoffman in Barbour and Quirk: 169).

The husband analyzed her wife from her brain. She was very intelligent. She knew new and old language. She was superior to any other women he had ever known. Her wife’s intelligent related with any fields of sciences. She could speak in moral, physical, and mathematical fields. Ligeia was cleverer than her husband. The narrator felt as a child whenever he was in front of her wife. So Ligeia was like a mother and was admired by her child, her husband. During his marriage he studied wisdom from her wife since Ligeia’s knowledge was wider. About the husband’s feeling, Hoffman commented,

“Ligeia is herself a condensation of several relationships familiar in Romantic literature as also in literature of “Romance ... that spirit which ... presided as they tell over marriages ill-omened. Ligeia is both her husband’s Muse and Secret Mother. Now it is clear why Husband has never dared to ask her or remind himself of “ her paternal name”; for if he did he would have to face up to its being the same as his mother’s. nor would her

married name be any better—hence we never learn his paternal name—since married him, she bears the name of his father” (Hoffman in Barbour and Quirk: 169).

Muse is any of nine daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus: each of whom presided over different art or sciences (Morris: 864). Ligeia was connected with arts and sciences. The characterization of Ligeia and her beauty was like the process of incarnation. It means that Ligeia is the embodiment of the beauty of Intellect. Hoffman confirmed,

“Her beauty is incarnate in on intellectual principle which unifies sensation and thought, matter and spirit and life and death. There are the gift comprising her knowledge both secret and forbidden and intrinsic with her love at once all going and all demanding” (Hoffman in Barbour and Quirk: 169).

Hoffman interpretation could be accepted. Ligeia was the representation of the combination between two contradictory sides of life that must be on balance. Although a romantic adores feeling and supernal things, it does not mean that life can be based only on one of the two. They are pairs and appear one after another in life. Reason and material things are needed too besides feeling and spiritual ones. Based on the life span of Poe, America at that period was growing, especially physically. It was marked by the expansion and industrialization in any field of life. The nation needed the balancing attention between matter and spiritual things. Poe responded by presenting his ideal through “Ligeia”.

Talking about Ligeia’s gender and position as a woman and mother, the writer had an opinion. The first was that the death of beautiful woman as a subject matter could create melancholy elevating the soul as Poe’s opinion about beauty. The second was that in Poe’s era there were a lot of reform movements. One of them was the women movement. As a romantic who adored individualism, Poe supported the movement. Women were individuals living in society. They played important roles in developing the country or nation. If they were spiritually good and intelligent, the national progress would be significant. In 1820-1830, women demanded for the equal rights with men. In 1849, woman delegates adopted a “Declaration of Sentiment” which said, “All men and women are created equal”. The women demanded for political, social, and economic equality with men.

Ligeia was ill and her husband was depressed because he knew she would die. He felt pity and strived for her recovery; but her effort to live, in fact, was greater than his. Her desire to live was high. It means that Ligeia’s will was very strong. In her dying, Ligeia asked her husband to read her poem which consisted of five stanzas. The poem told that life is a disaster, a battle between Mankind and Death. It was acted for the amusement of angels who not move on man’s sake although the terrible things of the play make the angel pale. Her poem showed that she was a talented woman because she wrote it. It was the proof of her beauty of Intellect.

From the content of the poem, Ligeia was facing death. Again, she quoted Glanvill’s volume. Death conquered her. She did not want to die because her will was very strong and great. The life span given by God was not enough but she had to die. She could not rest in peace because she was not willing to die or died improperly. Poe regarded death as a way to release someone from hard life and a way to living eternally with God in peace. Some critics said that Poe’s works had no relation with Puritan. The writer disagreed with the critics. As an American and as a Christian, Poe must have been influenced by Puritan teachings attached in American life since the first Pilgrim came. Poe’s view on death was in line with the Puritan one. According to the Puritan dogma, death is viewed as God’s punishment for human sinfulness, and at the

same time it is a blessing that releases from the trials of the world but only “the selected” may be blessed and enjoy the blessings

Poe wanted to purify the beauty of knowledge from material nature so that it became spiritual beauty through reincarnation. The flesh of Ligeia was decayed by death. The rest was the spirit of Ligeia representing the inner Intellect or inner Knowledge. Thus Ligeia was heavenly beauty that Poe idealizes.

Connected with the American experience, the American people tended to be materialistic and focused only to physical progress. The inner intellect was significantly required in the growing nation when Poe lived.

Ligeia came back and reincarnates in her successor, Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine. She was her husband’s second wife. It happened in her husband’s mind which was influenced by opium. The narrator’s mind was not healthy. He died. Rowena died after two month marriage when the spirit of Ligeia came back. Ligeia’s spirit in Javanese society influenced by Hinduism is called “floating spirit”.

Although it was only in narrator’s imagination, it had a meaning. The very strong will or passion could not make the owner peaceful. The writer had assumption that it was based on Poe’s habit. Poe was influenced by Hinduism because Poe liked presenting strange things. It was supported by the fact that many of American romantic authors were influenced by oriental teachings coming from India or China. Hinduism believes that after death, spirit can reincarnate into a better or worse based on the behaviour during lifetime.

After Ligeia died, her husband inherited wealth that did not make him feel lucky. He was so depressed that he bought an abbey in remote place in London. He decorated it and lived in there. The impression of the abbey was gloomy, dark, and sad reflecting the narrator’s mood. Though he had the wealth, he was sorrowful, depressed, lonely due to his beloved wife had gone. The abbey reflected romantic setting that was Gothic. Here, Poe for the second time and for the second house used remote places to create strangeness or mystery. Poe’s furnishings were selective in the extreme way. The furnishing richness reflected the richness of all period and various cultures. The furniture came from other countries: Egypt, Italy, French, and India. The bridal chamber was fantastic representing Poe’s state of mind. He was very imaginative and creative. It was depicted as: Egyptian carvings and sarcophagi, Venetian glass, fretwork of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical character, a Saracenic chandelier, Oriental ottomans and candelabra, an Italian couch, and figured draperies with Norman motifs. Richard Wilbur, a poet suggested,

“Now, we must be careful to take all this richness in an allegorical sense. As we contemplate the splendor of any Poe’s rooms, we must remember that the room is a state of mind, and that everything in it is therefore a thought, a mental image. The allegorical meaning of the costliness of Poe’s décor is simply this: that his heroes are richly imaginative. And since imagination is a gift rather than an acquisition, it is appropriate that riches in Poe should be inherited or found but never earned” “(Wilbur in Carleton: 271).

In reality, Poe’s economical condition was contradictory with his description of the abbey. He was very poor. He was even almost taken into jail because of the debt. He earned money by writing. After Virginia was dead, he had several love affairs with women although they deserted him because of his poverty. Materialistic women also tempted Poe’s passion. They reflected flesh beauty as represented by Rowena.

After buying an abbey, the narrator got married again with Lady Rowena Trevansion of Tremaine. She had different profile from Ligeia's. She had fair hair and blue eyes. She was slight. She loved her husband but little. Rowena related with matter and flesh was materialistic. Her husband said,

“Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment so bedecked a maiden and a daughter so beloved? (Poe in Auden: 31).

“ In hall such as these-in a bridal chamber such as this-I passed, with the Lady Rowena of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of first month of our marriage-passed them with but little disquietude. That, my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper-that she shunned me and loved me but little-I could not help perceiving; but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man” (32).

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After the marriage, the narrator became an opium addict. He could release his sorrow of losing her first wife. He could imagine and enjoy Ligeia without feeling guilty because Rowena did not love him. He said, “My memory flew back, (oh what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollection of her purity, of wisdom of her lofty, her ethereal, of her passionate, her idolatrous love” (33).

Two months after marriage, Rowena was ill. His husband waited for her. She fainted. The narrator influenced by opium saw a shadow. He helped Rowena by pouring the medicine to her lips. She could take some ruby coloured fluid and drank. In reality, Poe who lived in poverty was also involved with opium and tried to commit suicide to release his burden. The superiority of Poe was that he could write what he experienced when he was drunk. There were two interpretations of this action. First, the narrator killed his wife on purpose by giving her poison so that he could be free from her and could imagine Ligeia again. Second, the shadow was Ligeia who dropped poison to her successor because she was very jealous and still wanted to be loved by her husband.

After drinking the red fluid Rowena got worse and three days after that, she died. After the four subsequent days, the husband sat alone and again imagined Ligeia. He was deep in the memory of her first beloved wife. At midnight, he heard a sob. It was low gentle but clear. There was nobody but a corpse of Rowena that did not move at all. Many minutes later, the husband saw that something moves in Rowena face. She was warm and changed to be Ligeia gradually. They disappeared together and it was only Ligeia who stayed.

The changes of Rowena into Ligeia could be called as a reincarnation. It happened only in a dream, the narrator's imagination that was influenced by opium. However, it reflected Poe's state of mind. Poe wanted to win supernal beauty by making Ligeia who had been purified by death to re-live. The supernatural beauty of Ligeia represented the spiritual knowledge to live forever.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the beauty of Ligeia was the embodiment of the beauty of knowledge. The knowledge was not mundane but also heavenly.

4. Conclusion And Suggestion

Based on the previous analysis, the writer of this thesis concluded that Poe's personal experience influenced his perspective of beauty. Poe's relationship with many beautiful women inspired his works. He adored beautiful women and made them as his subjects in his literary works.

As an American, Poe's individualism is very deep. He is fearless to be different from other writers. On one hand, he created literary works based on his imagination and emotion that became the characteristics of romantic authors. On the other hand, he was like a classic poet as he wrote by counting elements to support a literary work carefully. Poe's work entitled "Ligeia" symbolized the beauty of Knowledge.

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