

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

Poetry is one of literary forms which uses beautiful words but rich of meaning. In this form, readers may find that the words used in the poems are the result of the poet's contemplation and therefore, the work may bring the poet's soul. Perrine said that "Poetry might be defined as kind of language that says more and more intensely than does ordinary language (3)". From that statement, it seems that in writing poem the poet may use words or language beyond what the poet writes. A poet may give a new experience and new description on the poet's work to the reader.

This study will discuss about the theme in the poems. Death also becomes the common theme in poetry. Death is the natural thing which can occur in real life. According to Youngner "A person could be declared dead if all brain functions were irretrievably lost (xiii)". From the explanation above, Youngner wants to give an image that someone who already died did not have the ability as when he or she was still alive. William Wordsworth and Christina Rossetti are the two poets who wrote about death in their poems. The Poems that will be analyzed in this study are William Wordsworth's poem entitled "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" written in 1798 and Christina Rossetti's entitled "When I'm Dead My Dearest" written in 1862.

William Wordsworth is the greatest poet during the Romantic age. He is the leader of the Romantic Movement. He is also the poet of nature, the poet of simpler and rustic life. According to Carter,

Wordsworth's poetry is concerned with the ordinary, everyday world and with the impact memory on the present". To Wordsworth, nature is beautiful to the eye, and is animated by living spirit, in which he found companionship throughout his long life. He believes that life can be properly understood with the loving and thoughtful observation of nature .(22)

As Wordsworth sees the beauty and the power of nature, his poems are commonly admiring the nature and its power. His talents in creating the words and phrases to represent his ideas and experiences cannot be denied. In some poems, he writes the poem about death. Wordsworth uses the words and phrases in creating the figurative language to make his poems beautiful.

The writer is interested in analyzing Wordsworth's poem in terms of the theme and the figurative language used by in his poem. Velasco stated that 'When addressing the theme of death in William Wordsworth's poem, one must first understand the prevalence of death in his personal life (1)'. Because since he was a kid, death is very closed to him. His mom died when he was still eight years old, and seven years after that his father died, too. These death experiences give the influences to Wordsworth's poem, especially in the poem with the death them.

"A Slumber did My Spirit Seal" is one series of five *Lucy's* poems which consists of two four-line stanzas. " A Slumber did My spirit Seal" was written in

1798 and in 1800 it was published as an edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. The poem describes about someone's condition that is like a dead body. It seems that she cannot feel and use her five senses anymore. When someone cannot use his five senses anymore, it can be said that the person is already dead. Lizza stated that "death occurs when all functions of the brain have ceased (16)". When the brain does not have the function anymore, it means that human cannot use their five senses as well as other parts of the body because brain, as the central part of the body holds the main role in every movement of the body.

Another poem that is going to be discussed in this thesis is written by Christina Rossetti. While Wordsworth came from Romantic Age, Christina Rossetti came from Victorian one. Similar to Wordsworth, Rossetti's death theme can not be separated from her personal life.

Christina Rossetti was an English woman poet a member of the Pre-Raphaelite art movement. Her brother was Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the leader of that movement, His work was a major precursor of the Aesthetic movement. Christina Rossetti was also considered as one of the greatest English women poets among the Pre-Raphaelites Brotherhoods. According to Bakker, "Christina Rossetti's themes are simple, religious and melancholy (66)". Most of her poems are influenced by her religious family life and also by her unpleasant experience in love. Her later works deal with the religious feeling. During her life, she faced too many depressing events. She rejected two marriage proposals because of her religious matters. Liukkonen stated that "Rossetti rejected two marriage proposals because she joined the Roman Catholic Church (1)". She also lost two of her

family members because of terrible disease. Rossetti's illness made her isolated from her social life but it never stopped her to continue writing sonnets and ballads.

"When I'm Dead, My Dearest" consists of two stanzas with eight lines in every stanza. This poem describes about someone who is already in an early death. The person wants to leave the world peacefully and he or she does not scare at all about facing her or his death. In this poem, Rossetti is using the imagery and the symbols to express her feeling and communicate to the reader rather than using the figurative language.

The writer is interested in analyzing poems which have theme about death, because death is the natural thing for human's life. Every human and God's creatures will die. People may think that death is still something mysterious and but it is actually very natural. People may have different points of view about the death.

In this thesis, the writer wants to dig William Wordsworth's and Christina Rossetti's points of view about death through their poems. The writer also wants to analyze how the poets develop the idea of death in their poems.

## **B. Statement of the Problems**

Based on the background of the study above, the writer presents the problem of the study as follows:

1. How do the poets develop the idea of death in their poems?

2. What is the significance of death according to Wordsworth's and Rossetti's poems?

### **C. Objective of the Study**

By doing this analysis the writer's wants to find out:

1. How the poets develop the idea of death in their poems.
2. How significance meaning of death according to Wordsworth's and Rossetti's poems.

### **D. Significance of the Study**

Death is a common theme in literary work and death has been treated as significant and meaningful as the human's experience. By studying the poems by William Wordsworth and Christina Rossetti containing the expression of death, the writer will have more realized about life and death in the world. By doing the analysis, the thesis writer hopes that it will be useful for the students in English Department or readers in general, to find out the meaning of death that is expressed in the poems.

This study is also expected to give an experience to the people interested in analyzing the poems through their figurative language, imagery and symbols. By having such experience, the writer may have benefits from it especially to study other poems.

### **E. Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study covers the analysis of themes of the selected poems written by Wordsworth and Rossetti. In analyzing the theme, the writer will also discuss the use of language either denotatively or connotatively as well as imagery and symbol. The limitation of this study is that the writer will only do the analysis of the two poems written by William Wordsworth "A slumber did My Spirit Seal" and by Christina Rossetti "When I'm Death, My Dearest" which talk about death.

### **F. Theoretical Background**

Pratt stated "Poetry expresses the poet's own mind, feeling and experience. In accordance with this view, romantic poems to the extraordinary extent take as their subject matter, the personal experiences, thought, and feelings of the poets (7)". From Pratt's explanation, poetry may concern with all kinds of experience in beautiful or bad, strange or common, actual or inactive and some poets use different words in expressing all kinds of experience.

Poets usually use the figurative language to convey the meaning of the poems. This can make the poems beautiful as the words or phrases in the poems are arranged and crafted in figurative language. By using it, the meaning can be expressed indirectly and can be interpreted in many ways. In analyzing these poems, the writer will apply the new criticism to analyze the intrinsic elements of the poem, and especially the Theme. According to Diana Lyn Lopez "Theme is the controlling idea of a poem, the idea continuously developed throughout the poem by sets of key words that identify the poet's subject and his attitude or

feeling about it (1)". From that explanation, the writer is interested in analyzing the poems theme.

### **G. Method of the Study**

The corpus of this study are the poems entitled 'A slumber did My Spirit Seal' written by William Wordsworth and 'When I'm Dead, My Dearest' by Christina Rossetti. The qualitative method that the writer uses in doing this study consist of data collecting in which all the data will be taken from the poem. The data collecting will be done by having a close reading of the text, making its classification and selecting its part that is related with Wordsworth's and Rossetti's meaning of death.

In doing the analysis, the writer uses the descriptive analysis. It is because in order to get the interpretation and the complete meaning of the poems, the writer should describe the intrinsic aspect such as theme, language, imagery and symbol.

In conducting the data analysis, the writer applies some steps as reading the poems thoroughly to understand the meaning of the poems, taking the words or phrases that have figurative language, symbol and imagery, analyzing the words or phrases to describe the language used and explain the meanings, finding the differences and similarities of both poets and making conclusion of the analysis.

## H. Definition of Key Terms

- Death : The permanent end of all functions of life in an organism or some of its components
- Symbol : Something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represent something invisible.
- Theme : A theme is the central idea or ideas explored by a literary work
- Figurative Language : language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation
- Imagery : Imagery is the use of vivid description, usually rich in sensory words, to create pictures, or images, in the reader's mind.