

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Gothic, in M. H. Abrams's *Glossary of Literary Terms* (2004: 111), is "a type of fiction or story which was inaugurated by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764)—written in professed imitation of medieval romances—and which flourished in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries." Medieval setting, often in a gloomy castle, with ghosts, supernatural and mysterious occurrences, was usually used.

Now, the definition of Gothic is wider. Not all of the stories with Gothic theme are in the medieval setting. Every story with the atmosphere of gloom or terror represents events which are uncanny, or macabre, or melodramatically violent is Gothic. People nowadays also not only think of Gothic as a style of writing that deals with terror and horror, but also define them as a sense of style or fashion and it can relate to architecture and personality (Gerhart, 2011).

In the United States of America, Gothic stories were very popular in the late eighteenth century until the early nineteenth century. It was the beginning of this kind of literary work where death, suicide and grave influence the authors in their writing at that time. Forbidden themes such as incest, murder, atheism, and the torments of sexual desire were allowed (<https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/18century/review/summ>

[ary7ed.htm](#)). American Gothic Literature adapting the European Gothic Literature into American Romanticism or the darker dimension of Romanticism Literature in America. Romanticism is the movement of art and literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries against the neoclassicism or the enlightenment era from the previous century (Hanssen & Benjamin, 2002).

Literary work is a part of human experiences and civilizations. By reading or better analysing a masterpiece, one widens his scope and knowledge about people in terms of their thoughts, their way of looking at different issues, their experiences, and their beliefs in general (https://www.angelfire.com/mb2/abdessalami/literary_work.html). This is why literature is related to the society because it is created by an author—as a part of society, to express something through the written text. What is written by an author also cannot be separated from the influence of society or the life of the author itself.

In this research, writer analysed the works of one of the American classic well-known author, Edgar Allan Poe. Edgar Allan Poe is famous for his tales and poems of horror and mystery. Edgar Allan Poe's works can be the most suitable one to be analysed in this research because his works—in about the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—were mostly in the horror or mystery genre that represents the Gothic. Some sources said that some of his stories related to Edgar Allan Poe's real life that he might get the inspirations from his own experiences. For example is his family background: his father abandoned him

when he was one year old and his mom died a year later, after that he was separated with his brother and sister because he was adopted by the other family. The hard life that he experienced as an author and the death of his wife, Virginia, also really affect his writings. Some of his famous works are *The Raven*, *The Black Cat*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Premature Burial*, *The Purloined Letter*, and many more. Writer will select the works of Edgar Allan Poe into which has the Romanticism-Gothic style, or the combination between Gothic and love theme. The three selected works are entitled *Berenice*, *Ligeia*, and *Eleonora*.

Based on the researches, beside Poe, authors at that time such as Ann Radcliffe, Lee Fanu, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Francis Burney, and even Jane Austen have Gothic theme in their writing, but they do have their own writing style. Writer choose to analyse the works of Poe because he is an American author, and the works are so appropriate to be analyzed since it is an American literature masterpiece that influenced or affected by the Ameriran society, as the object of this study, because America is the place where firstly related Romanticism and Gothic (Hanssen & Benjamin, 2002).

There are some similar researches that writer use as the previous study for this research. Those researches also analyse the relationship between the Gothic literature with the social condition or the Gothic elements analysed in the literary work itself. First is *Gothicising London in Detective Fictions of Arthur Conan Doyle* by Ravi Kant published in Research Journal of English Language and

Literature, Volume 2 (2014). Kant explore Gothic and its relation to London, both in terms of city's cultural as well as geographical landscape by contextualizing Arthur Conan Doyle's popular detective fiction, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Second is *Gothicism in The Fall of the House of Usher* by Wenfang Pang, Diqui Wang, and Shansan Yu published in Scientific Research Publishing on 2015. The second journal discuss the Gothicism in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* novel to detect its aesthetic feature with a critical perspective of Gothic tradition and theory of the sublime. Third is *Death and Love in Poe's and Schwob's Readings of the Classic* by Ana Gonzales-Rivas Fernandes and Fransisco Garcia Jurado that was published on 2008, in Comparative Literature and Culture of Purdue University, Volume 10. The writers analyse the relationship between ancient and modern texts that transcends mere imitation or inspiration especially in Poe and Schwob's writings. Then A "Beastly Blood Sucking Woman": *Innovations of A Gothic Monster in Dorothy L. Sayers's Unnatural Death* by Katherine published in The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies, Volume 12 (2013), which discuss Dorothy L. Sayers's *Unnatural Death* (a novel) and her use of Gothic horror and Sensation-fiction devices from a perspective informed by Foucault's conception of the "abnormal individual". Finally, *Comparison of Gothic Genre in both English and Chinese Fiction* (2012) by Jing CAO and Linda Dryden published in International Journal of Social Science and Humanities, Volume 1, which is about the comparison between the Gothic literature in England and China.

The differences of those researches with this research are, this research take the setting of Romanticism era in the United States and use short stories of Edgar Allan Poe in the Gothic-love genre only to find the values of it to the American society at that time. Eventhough Ana Gonzales-Rivas Fernandes and Fransisco Garcia Jurado also have the same corpus which is Edgar Allan Poe's short stories in the Gothic-love theme, but they did not relate it with the social condition, they just analyse how modern authors of Gothic narratives read certain ancient texts regarding love and death and use them in their own narratives. This research want to see the characteristics of the American society in the Romanticism era reflected in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories in the Gothic-love theme.

1.2. Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the following research question is proposed as follows:

- 1). What is theGothic values in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories?
- 2). How do the Gothic values in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories reflect the characteristics of American society in Romanticism era?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the Gothic values and how do Gothic values in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories reflect the characteristics of the American society in Romanticism era.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This research focuses on three of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories entitled *Berenice*, *Ligeia*, and *Eleonora*. The chosen stories selected because those are the stories of Poe which have the most similarities among all of his stories: in the Gothic and love theme, the title used the name of a woman whom the main character loved, and all of them ended up dead in the story.

1.5. Significances of the Study

The significances of this study are give contribution and help those who are interested to analyse a gothic literary work especially to the students of English Department of State University of Jakarta. Beside that, writer also hoping that the finding of the relation between the author's works and the author's experiences in the society will make readers can realize that literature such as short story is more than just a fiction, it can widens the knowledge about people in terms of their thoughts, their way of looking at different issues, their experiences, and their beliefs in general.

