

JOURNAL

PSYCHOANALYSIS ON EDGAR ALLAN POE'S

WILLIAM WILSON, THE BLACK CAT, AND TELL-TALE HEART

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abstrak

Penelitian ini berjudul Psychoanalysis on Edgar Allan Poe's William Wilson, The Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart. Cerita-cerita Edgar Allan Poe terkenal dengan kisah horror. Banyak yang mengaitkan karya-karyanya dengan cerita hidupnya yang tragis, sehingga sangat menarik untuk mempelajari karakter yang ada dalam karya-karyanya serta menemukan hubungan dengan kehidupan pribadinya.

Data diambil dari buku kompilasi The Norton Anthology of American Literature yang berisi tentang karya Edgar Allan Poe dan biografinya. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penelitian pustaka dan internet. Metode Kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisa data melalui membaca data secara intensif lalu menghubungkannya dengan teori.

Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu teori sastra oleh Robert Di Yanni (2001) dan teori psikoanalisis oleh Sigmund Freud dalam Hall (1954). Teori Sastra digunakan untuk menjelaskan element sastra seperti karakter dan karakterisasi, sudut pandang, ironi dan simbol. Sedangkan teori psikoanalisis untuk menemukan aspek psikologi dari karakter utama dari ketiga cerita di atas dan menghubungkannya dengan biografi penulis.

Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama dalam cerita pendek William Wilson, the Black Cat dan Tell-Tale Heart menunjukkan adanya pengalaman psikologis dan terefleksi dalam pengalaman hidupnya.

Keywords: Character, Psychoanalysis, Biography

1. Background of the Study

Literature and psychology are related to each other. Literature reflects human life such as feeling, thought, imagination and perception which can be viewed by personal judgment.

According to Wellek and Warren (1970:81) psychology of literature may mean the psychological study of the writer as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process or study of psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or finally the effect of literature upon its readers (audience psychology).

Psychoanalysis is a method of medical treatment for those who suffer from nervous disorder which was proposed by Sigmund Freud in 1896. Psychoanalysis is concerned with the concept of unconsciousness. The unconsciousness can be described as storehouse of painful experience, emotion, wound, fear, guilty desire and unresolved conflict we don't want to know about. In relation with literature, psychoanalysis introduces concept of unconsciousness with language. All creative works are product of the author's mind; either it is conscious or unconscious. If psychoanalysis enables people to understand behavior so does a literary text. This relation can be found in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories.

Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1809; he was developed as a writer, a poet and a literary critic. He is acknowledged as the father of modern detective story and science fiction genre. Poe is known for haunting narration. Some of his famous literary works are *the raven*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Black Cat*, etc. His dark literary works are often associated with his tragic life. He was left by his father when he was nine months, and unfortunately his mother died when he was three. He enrolled in University of Virginia but dropped out due to poverty. Even though he was a successful writer, he spent his life being alcoholic. He died mysteriously in October 1849 when he was only forty years old.

2. Problems of the Study

The problems highlighted in analyzing *William Wilson*, *the Black Cat* and *Tell-Tale Heart* in the book *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* as follows:

1. What is the character and characterization of Poe's main character in *William Wilson, the Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart*?
2. What Poe's psychological aspect is reflected in the main character in *William Wilson, the Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart*?

3. Aims of Study

The aims of study are to answer the questions concerning matters mentioned above. There are two aims of the study based on the problems:

1. To find out the character and characterization of Poe's main character in *William Wilson, the Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart*.
2. To analyze Poe's psychological aspect reflected in the main character in *William Wilson, the Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart*.

4. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

Method and technique of collecting data is the way of procedure to collecting the data. Documentation was collected by doing library and internet research. The technique of collecting data consists of two steps. The first step was examining the data by reading the data source extensively and other documentation such as articles, letters, and journals. The second step was note-taking by relating the literary element of the story to the theory of psychoanalysis. Since the study is analyzing about human behavior, qualitative method was applied in this study. Qualitative method was used to explain the characteristic of the data and to find out the factor that stands behind it. The technique of analyzing data was divided in two steps. The first step was identifying the literary elements of the data by selecting and focusing on the important features linked with the study. The second step was analyzing the data and making conclusion. The analysis was presented descriptively.

5. The Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's William Wilson, The Black Cat and Tell-Tale Heart

The analysis is including the analysis of character and characterization and psychoanalysis of the main character.

5.1 William Wilson

William Wilson is presented with *first-person point of view* where he is fully involved in the story. However, the narrator's knowledge about other characters is limited (*limited omniscience*).

In *William Wilson*, the main character clearly stated his character that is imaginative and easily tempered. On his characterization, he was ignored by his parents, because his uncontrollable behavior. The imaginative here can be means day dreaming, or hallucinating. The main character created an alter-ego, who also named William Wilson. His alter ego always follows him around and whispers about bad things he done. Influenced by alcohol and anxiety, the main character injured him-self as he thought the other person was William Wilson. This is expressed in the paragraph below:

“I am the descendant of a race whose imaginative and easily excitable temperament has at all times rendered them remarkable; and, in my earliest infancy, I gave evidence of having fully inherited the family character. As I advanced in years it was more strongly developed; becoming, for many reasons, a cause of serious disquietude to my friends, and of positive injury to myself. I grew self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions. Weak-minded, and beset with constitutional infirmities akin to my own, my parents could do but little to check the evil propensities which distinguished me. Some feeble and ill-directed efforts resulted in complete failure on their part, and, of course, in total triumph on mine. Thenceforward my voice was a household law; and at an age when few children have abandoned their leading-strings, I was left to the guidance of my own will, and became, in all but name, the master of my own actions.” (Poe:1253).

I had given myself up entirely to wine; and its maddening influence upon my hereditary temper rendered me more and more impatient of control.”(Poe:1267)

Although the narrator often makes fun of him, the boy never responds to him. Despite his antagonism the narrator is unable hate to the boy. In contrary, he secretly admires him.

“I secretly felt that I feared him, and could not help thinking the equality which he maintained so easily with myself, a proof of his true superiority, since not to be overcome cost me a perpetual struggle. (Poe:1257)

5.2. The Black Cat

In the *Black Cat*, the main character originally has a gentle character. He loves animal. However, he was abused by his friends. Due this, his pets become his only friends. He also married a woman that loves animal too. The main character shows his hatred to his community hypocrisy for example he criticizes lawmakers who breach their own creation. Somehow the main character still has one favorite pet, Pluto, the cat. Until one night, he maltreated the cat by hanging and pulling out it eyes. He did that because he was influenced by alcohol. Feeling guilty, he searches the cat, but Pluto was gone. Until there was a new cat, similar with Pluto, only the cat has round line on its neck, like a gallows. The main character actually scared, because he saw death. Once, he saw the cat and on his attempt to axe the cat, he actually killed his wife.

“ From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets. With these I spent most of my time, and never was so happy as when feeding and caressing them.” (Poe: 1277)

The impulsiveness of the narrator is shown in the stories. Although he is not very certain about it, he questions the reader as he seeks for agreement. Human mind is driven by impulsiveness, a primal deed that makes him human. He criticizes that people make rules or law but end up breaking them. That’s why he wants to show his ‘humanity’ by doing violence because he is a human.

“Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart -- one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?” (Poe:1278))

5.3 The Tell Tale Heart

Similar with *the Black Cat*, the main character on *Tell-Tale Heart* was a good man to his neighbor, the old man. The old man has eye that irritates him. He thought that old man's eye like vulture. Therefore, he must get rid of the eye. The main character repeatedly stated that he was no mad, he only nervous. He described how he slowly murdered the old man. As soon as the murder was finished, he became very sensitive. He could hear the old man's heart beat louder and louder. When the police came, he could not bear his anxiety, and then he finally confessed.

"TRUE! -- nervous -- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses -- not destroyed -- not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily -- how calmly I can tell you the whole story." (Poe:657)

The particular standpoint from which the "Tell-Tale Heart" is told provides the reader with insight into the major character's motivation in carrying out the murder and in telling us about it. Significantly, in the first sentence the narrator says that he "had been and am" nervous. This means that he was insane at the time the events that he describes took place and in the "present," the time of the story's narration. No object or passion stood behind the chief character's heinous deed. He allows that he even "loved" the old man. Later the narrator speaks of the "mortal "terror" that has "many a night, just at midnight...it has welled up from my own bosom." The reason for the crime lies exclusively in the narrator's disturbed mind.

"It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture --a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees -- very gradually --I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever." (Poe: 657)

5.4 The Reflection to the Author

Di Yanni (2001:1363) stated that psychological criticism approaches a work of literature as the revelation of its author's mind and personality. Psychological critics see literary works as intimately linked with their author's mental and emotional characteristics. Drinking, social aversion, love and hate relationship mostly occurred in Poe's works.

Poe was an orphan. A wealthy merchant adopted him until his adolescent, spent his education time in England. He was dropped out from University because of drinking. Back to America, he tried to stand on his feet by writing, one of few of great American writers that make living only from writing. Later after his wife, Virginia, died, his drinking habit got worse. He died mysteriously because of drinking.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed some important points that answered the problem of the study.

The character and the characterization of the main character of *William Wilson*, *The Black Cat* and *Tell-Tale Heart* are alike. The main character in these stories are impulsive, imaginative, anxious, uncontrollable, and a heavy drinker. These stories showed love and hate relationship which turned into tragedy. The main character in *William Wilson* built his alter ego whom he hesitantly hated but he secretly admired his alter ego. In *the Black Cat*, the main character seemed seeing death on his favorite pet, Pluto. Driven by alcohol, he maltreated the cat. As well as in *Tell-Tale Heart*, the main character thought that the eye of the old man he loved was an eye of a vulture, symbol of death itself, and then the main character decided to kill the old man to get rid of the eye.

Sometime author's experience effect the author as a person or as an author when working on his works. Many biographers have studied Poe's works and related them to his personal life. In *William Wilson*, *The Black Cat* and *Tell-Tale Heart* reflected Poe's personal life such as awful childhood, drinking habit, poverty and death.

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