

THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS REFLECTED IN WASHINGTON IRVING'S TALES OF A TRAVELER

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Abstract

Washington Irving describes the Supernaturalism in Tales of a Traveler. He is one of the earliest American writer of Imaginative literature in the age of Romanticism and it happened of France Revolution that fulfilled by the enthusiasm and liberty. This research is going to find some words to indicate the supernatural element in romantic era. Based on the previous explanation, the writer formulates the problems as follow: 1) Why Washington Irving as the Romantic writer does write the supernatural elements in his essays and 2) What are the words to indicate of supernatural elements in his essays. The analysis finds out that the supernatural gothic and symbol that he described in Tales of a Traveler is one of satire or criticize of the condition in his era, that happened French revolution and there are many conflict in Europe that make people want move to the new place. Therefore, we can call by the transition era. The mysticism is one of characteristic of the romantic era, so the mysticism close meaning with the supernatural that the extra of natural. Irving made satire as criticize of the condition that filled any conflict in Europe after French revolution to make people individualistic.

Keywords: supernaturalism, mysticism, gothic

Abstrak

The Supernatural Elements Reflected in Washington Irving's Tales of A Traveler. Washington Irving menggambarkan hal-hal yang berhubungan dengan dunia supernatural di dalam karyanya yang berjudul Tales of Traveler. Dia termasuk penulis pertama Amerika yang sastranya imajinatif pada Era Romantis yang terjadi pada saat revolusi Perancis yang ditandai dengan antusiasme dan kebebasan. Berdasarkan penjelasan ini maka dapat dirumuskan dua pertanyaan yaitu: 1) mengapa Irving di dalam karyanya pada era romantis ini menulis tentang supernatural pada karyanya 2) Apa saja perkataan Irving yang menunjukkan hal-hal supernatural dalam karyanya. Maka analisis ini menemukan bahwa supernatural gothic dan symbol yang tergambar didalam Tale of Traveler adalah salah satu sindiran atau keritikan terhadap kondisi yang terjadi pada era revolusi Perancis. Terjadi banyak konflik di Eropa yang membuat orang ingin pindah tempat yang baru. Oleh karena itu disebut dengan era transisi. Karya yang berbau mistik merupakan salah satu karakteristik pada era romantis ini, mistik dekat maknanya dengan supernatural yang berhubungan dengan di luar hal alami. Irving menyindir dan mengkritik terhadap konflik yang terjadi di Eropa pasca revolusi perancis yang membuat orang lebih individualistik.

Kata Kunci: Supernatural, Mistik, Gotik.

INTRODUCTION

Background of Choosing the Subject

Literature is taken to include oral, dramatic, and broadcast compositions that may not have been published in written form but which have been preserved. The broader sense of literature as a totality of written or printed works has given way to

more exclusive definition based on criteria of imaginative, creative, or artistic value (Chris Baldick: 124). There are several kinds of literary works. They are poem, novel, fiction, drama, etc.

In this paper, I choose the fiction and more specific one is Washington Irving describes the Supernaturalism in *Tales of a Traveler*. I have reason, why I choose it. Because Washington Irving is one of the earliest American writer of Imaginative literature in the age of Romanticism and it happened of France Revolution that fulfilled by the enthusiasm and liberty. In 1860, the United States had begun its Transformation into an Industrial and Urban society. American had invented the sewing machine, the telegraph, and the gasoline engine, and the principle of mass production had been established, yet Irving had written the essays in supernatural and ghostly. The effect industrialism made differentiate of the social status in society, the supernatural gothic is one of the express conditions that were experienced by Irving and then he had written in his essays, especially in *Tales of a Traveler*.

Biographical Sketch of the Author

McMichael in *Anthology of American Literature* said: Washington Irving was the earliest American writer of imaginative literature to gain international fame. He was born at New York, April 3, 1783. When he was sixteen he began the study of the law, for which he had little relish. He preferred instead to pass his time in desultory reading and in the society of the literary wits of New York. When he was twenty-one Irving went on a grand tour of Europe, where he was eventually to live during most of his creative years, in 1806 he returned to New York to be admitted to the bar and to begin a leisurely life as a gentleman lawyer. Irving went to England in 1815 to run the Liverpool branch of the family hardware business, but could not save it when the whole firm failed. At the end of the war of 1812, Irving was sent to England supervise the Liverpool branch of the family firm, but in 1818 as result of the war and the effects of mismanagement, the firm went bankrupt. *History of New York* one of his works, after that he wrote and began preparation of the sketches, essays, and tales that soon appeared as *The sketch book of Geoffrey Crayon*. It the first literary work by an American to receive wide international acclaim, and it made Irving a celebrity, praised alike in America and England. In it were the two tales that brought his most enduring fame, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". In 1824, he published *Tales of a Traveler*, his first volume of fiction, filled with yarns of the supernatural and clanking with the ghostly machinery of Romantic Gothicism. Irving then returned to England, where he accepted an appointment as an American diplomat in London, and three years later about fifty years old, he returned to the United States. (1974: 227).

Social and Historical Background

The attitudes of America's writers were shaped by their New World environment and an array of ideas inherited from the romantic traditions of Europe. A new romanticism had appeared in England in the last of eighteenth century. It spread to continental Europe and then came to America early in the nineteenth century. It

was pluralistic, its manifestation was as varied, individualistic. Yet romantics frequently shared in the value of individualism and intuitive perception and a presumption that the natural world was a source of goodness and man's societies. (McMichael, George: 1974: 224). The mysticism is one of characteristic in this era, and then the supernatural is closer to mysticism. There are many of the works in this era consisted of supernatural element and gothic. The term of supernatural or supernatural: super or supra "above" and nature "nature" is pertain to existence beyond the scientifically visible universe, it is close the meaning with the mystification or spiritualization. Super naturalization can also mean the process by which stories and historical accounts are altered to describe supernatural elements. In fiction, the supernatural is a topic in various fictional genres, especially horror fiction and fantasy fiction. (http://the_balloman.wordpress.com/2008/08/20/the-natural-vs-supernatural). From a Glossary of Literary terms the word "gothic" originally referred to the Goths, a Germanic tribe, then came to signify "Germanic," characterized by the use of the pointed arch and vault, which spread through western Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries which flourished through the early nineteenth century, the author set their stories in the medieval period often in gloomy castle replete with dungeons, made bountiful of ghosts, mysterious disappearances and other sensational and supernatural occurrences. (M. H. Abram: 74).

The Puritan still has Influence in Romantic era especially in America, it is encouraged Irving to write his essays with filled the supernatural element namely gothic as reflected through the words: ghost, die, and grave, like in the quotation above. The Puritan who has the pure doctrine was reflected in Irving's Tales of a Traveler. Though, Irving as an American Writer but in his work reflected the transition from Europe to America, because he became the diplomat in London. There are Many characteristics that reflect Europe a life in Tales of a Traveler that influence in his writing.

Based on the background above, the researcher inents to conduct a study on the reduplication which was not been noticed by some researchers. This study aimed to find out:

1. How Irving writes supernatural elements in romantic Era.
2. Some words to indicate the supernatural element in romantic era.

The writer would like to the discussion so that the readers can understand the analyses easily. Washington Irving's works are filled with supernatural elements in Age of romanticism. The writer analyses and shows some words to indicate the supernatural elements in Tales of a Traveler.

Theoretical Approach

This paper uses two theoretical approaches, the historical-biographical and Mythology approach. John R. Willingham in his book *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* said: The Historical-Biographical Approach Is an Approach that sees a literary work chiefly, as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life

and times of the characters in the work. Irving was acutely aware of America's cultural roots in Europe and much of his work reflects both nostalgia for Europe over 20 years living in Europe, he lives in transitional status is also evident in his powerful interest in American beginning. (<http://the.ballonmen.wordpress.com/html>). Mythology approach is concerned to seek out those mysterious elements that inform certain literary works and that elicit, with almost uncanny force, dramatic, and universal human reaction. The method of this research is library research utilizing several documents dealing with the topic. The primary source is the actual book of Washington Irving Selected Prose by Stanley T. Williams, Anthology of American Literature by George McMichael and sources are data from Internet that support and have relevance with the topic.

DISCUSSION

The Supernatural gothic aspect in Irving's *Tales of a Traveler*

McMichael in Anthology of American literature said: *Tales of Traveler* is one of the Washington Irving 'work, he published in 1824 and it is the first volume of fiction, this filled with yarns of the supernatural and clanking with the ghostly machinery of romantic Gothicism. (1974:224). Washington Irving is one of the writer in Romantic era, before 1860 the United States are more fulfilled by many inventions in steel and machinery, mass production, and France revolution that frightful uprising which proclaimed the natural right of man and the abolition of class distinction. Its effect on the whole civilized world is beyond computation. Patriotic clubs and societies multiplied in England, all asserting the doctrine of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity the watchword of the Revolution. (William J. Long: 1950: 370).

From the statement above, we can analyze that this Era is the transition from Europe to America, this situation had encouraged Irving in creating his works. The attitudes of America's writers were shaped by their New World environment and array of idea inherited from the romantic tradition of Europe, A new romanticism had appeared in England in the last of the eighteenth century. It spread to continental Europe and then came to America early in the nineteenth century. Washington Irving as the American writer portrays of the supernaturalism gothic style in *Tales of a Traveler*, which is different from the mindset of Americans who fulfilled by the rational thought.

The essence of romanticism that literature reflects all is spontaneous and unaffected in nature and in man, and free to follow its own fancy in its own way. (J. Long William: 1950: 372). It is related with Irving's work who had wrote spontaneously describing his experience.

Many proofs can be seen in the gothic elements reflected as supernatural phenomena in *Tales of a Traveler*. The following is an excerpt Irving had written that reflects the supernatural element

..... "by my soul," said an Irish captain of dragoons, one of the merriest and boisterous of the party, "by my soul, but I should not be

surprised if some of those good-looking gentle folks that hang along the walls should walk about the rooms of this stormy night: or if I should find the ghosts of one of those long-waisted ladies turning into my bed in mistake for her grave in the church-yard." "Do you believe in ghost, then?" said a thin, hatched-faced gentleman, with projecting eyes like a lobster.

"Do you believe in ghosts then?" said the inquisitive gentleman. "faith, but I do," replied the jovial Irishman. "I was brought up in the fear and belief of them. We had a Benshee in our own family, honey."

"A Benshee, and what's that?" cried the questioner, "Why, an old lady ghost that tends upon your real Milesian families, and waits at their window to let them know when some of them are to die," (Page: 225-226)

From the text above that, Washington Irving reflected the ghost as the supernatural gothic in his essays; it is one of the gothic stories. As mention above the supernatural in fiction is a topic fictional genre, especially horror fiction and fantasy fiction and gothic describe the story in the medieval period often in gloomy and made plentiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances. Irving describes an old Baronet, who kept bachelor's hall in Jovial style in an ancient rook-haunted family mansion, in one of the middle counties. He has devoted himself to unhealthy studies, and they have made him into a kind of monster, a "literary ghoul," as Irving bluntly puts it, feeding on dead and putrid thoughts just as an actual ghoul would feed on dead bodies. Thus, the student is shown from the beginning to be of unsound mind, bordering precariously on the edge of madness. In *Tales of a Traveler* Irving uses ghost as a mysterious man when an old gentleman told to his friend that he said that I once heard my uncle tell as having happening to him self about ghost, beside the words the ghost as gothic, we met the words die and grave as related or close meaning with the ghost to complete his works.

The gothic symbol that Irving reflects in *Tales of a Traveler*

"Adventure of the German Student, on a stormy night, in the tempestuous times of the French revolution, a young German was returning to his lodgings, at a late hour, across the old part of Paris. The Lightning gleamed, and the loud claps of thunder rattled through the lofty narrow streets, but I should first tell you something about this young German" ... (Page: 236)

"The Adventure of the German Student," has received attention for their unique handling of the supernatural Gothic because The French revolution is filled by enthusiasm and liberty thought. At the time, Irving began working on his earliest and best-known tales. (www.enotes.com/gothic-literature/irving-washington.html).

From the previous quotation above we can analyze that Washington Irving told about the young German was adventured while French Revolution and the situation which stormy and claps of thunder and lofty narrow streets was reflected as supernatural symbol and related with the atmosphere of natural because the

supernatural from external of natural as mention above. The characteristic of the romanticism is spontaneous and unaffected in nature. The clanking of his essays fulfilled by the name of the Europe. It is indicating the hegemony of Europe is very significant in American culture. Automatically, influenced Irving describe in literary that reflected and to influence in tales of Traveler as the proofs that mention above. The Washington Irving ever traveled to the German and France, so in this case influence the author in his work as suitable of his experience.

Irving had been considered as a transitional figure whose works reflected the shift from the ideals of the eighteenth century to the sentimental Romanticism that become popular after 1800. His writing was English as much as it was American, revealing a sense of the contrast between continental Europe and America. We can see in the quotation above:

.....She pointed to the guillotine with the gesture of dreadful significant.

“I have no friend on earth,” said she

“But you have a home,” said Wolfgang.

“Yes, in the grave.” (page: 239)

From the previous quotation Irving describes between two countries between of nature between earth and grave, it has supernatural meaning that describe between Europe and America. When Gottfried Wolfgang asks the woman at the guillotine if she has a home, she responds, yes in the grave! There is an indication even that he may have been seen dragging or carrying the woman’s dead body around while at the hotel this does not seem to be a clue until one reaches the conclusion of the story, but it serves as one nonetheless, when it is said that, the old portress who admitted them stared with surprise at the unusual sight of the melancholy Wolfgang, with a female companion.

Gottfried is found to be returning home late one stormy night and walking past the guillotine here, Irving again wastes no time to insert another subtle criticism of the French Revolution, as the guillotine is described as continually running with the blood of the virtuous and the brave. Here he finds a woman dressed in black seated on the scaffold of the guillotine, her head in her lap. It turns out to be the woman that had been haunting him in his dreams and fancies. ([www.lit.vrg./usa/Early America/html](http://www.lit.vrg./usa/EarlyAmerica/html)).

Grave describe of Europe because The traits of enthusiasm, lack of reason, and lack of balance also were the traits of the French Revolution, which had occurred a couple of decades before the story was written, and whose effects were still being felt at the time across Europe, and even all the way in America. The French revolutionary governments can be clearly seen to have possessed the aforementioned negative traits. As one historian noted as to the state of the French revolutionaries, it was all carried by acclamations ([www.wiziq.com/tutorial/235-early- America](http://www.wiziq.com/tutorial/235-early-America)) Conflict Terror was the order of the day and the revolutionaries were killing all even suspected of not supporting the revolution enthusiastically, these problems encourage people to move to the new place that save for their condition.

Earth describes America as the new world of transition from Europe to America because the effect of French revolution it was a period of political and social upheaval in the history of France, during which the French governmental structure, previously an absolute monarchy with feudal privileges for the aristocracy and Catholic clergy, underwent radical change to forms based on Enlightenment principles of nationalism, citizenship, and inalienable rights. It happened some conflict that Irving wrote in his essays.

...At supper, my grandfather took command of the table-d'hote as though he had been at home; helped everybody, not forgetting himself; talked with everyone. Whether he understood their language or not and made his way into intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any one during his life. In fact, He revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse. That very house reeled with it.... (page: 231)

From the text above that Irving describes the rich burger of Antwerp as the people cannot sociable with the any people and his life. Materialistic became parameter of the people life to make them didn't care of their environment. The poor became marginalized by the product or industry. it is like satire that Irving critsize the materialism, because in Romantic Era as the beginning of France Revolution and mass production to encourage people materialistic, in Kesusasteran Amerika Washington Irving living in hard-materialistic of the people. He in his style of literary work in satire of life of society in his era, because the transition romantic in England to America that had influenced by the France Revolution and make people individualism because in this Era many invented of machine, so make people materialistic. The effect of many inventions in romantic era to encourage people any differencing among them, among the poor and the rich. The European always made differences of the status between high class and low scale. It is encouraging them to settle to new place. It is like metaphysic satiric that he wants critic of the condition that happened and we can see the continuing of the quotation above as below:

....so they sat drinking and smoking and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hickuping, and trolling the burden of a low Dutch love-song.

The quotation above that Irving satire singing did not understand of other people, especially at Europe as mention of some country in Europe such: Europe such as Dutch, Irish, and Holland. He wants to say that Europe is one of the destinations for life implicitly. It has related that Irving returned to England, where he accepted an appointment as American Diplomat in London and three years later, he returned to the United States.

CONCLUSION

Washington Irving is one of American writer had wrote many of the supernatural gothic and symbol in his works. The supernatural gothic and symbol that he described in *Tales of a Traveler* is one of satire or criticize of the condition in his era, that happened French revolution and there are many conflict in Europe that make people want move to the new place. Therefore, we can call by the transition era. Romanticism beginning from German then spread to England, France, and achieved in America at 1820, the spirit of romanticism appeared with democracy in America that emphasized individualism, this condition influenced to author in his literary works, because the condition influences author when he express something in literary works. The mysticism is one of characteristic of the romantic era, so the mysticism close meaning with the supernatural that the extra of natural. There are many words to indicate of the supernatural gothic and symbol in Irving's *Tales of Traveler*, such as ghost that the words close meaning with the haunt and mysticism. Irving made satire as criticize of the condition that filled any conflict in Europe after French revolution to make people individualistic. Beside that, the gothic symbol is one of proof to indicate between Europe and America, such earth and grave that happened conversation between the Gotffied wolfgang makes conversation with the woman, the woman said: her home in the grave, this is happened because of the conflict because in this situation Irving describe of European emigrants left their homelands to escape political oppression, to seek the freedom to practice their religion, or for adventure and opportunities denied them at home. Between 1620 and 1635, economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work and Colonial expansion became an outlet for this displaced peasant population.

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