

# **A MOTHER'S STRUGGLE TO RAISE HER CHILDREN AFTER THE FATHER'S DEATH IN THE POEM OF *LAMENT* WRITTEN BY EDNA St. VINCENT MILLAY**

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## **ABSTRAK**

*Setiap orang pasti mempunyai keinginan untuk memiliki keluarga yang bahagia, utuh dan sempurna yaitu ada ayah, ibu, serta anak. Tetapi ketika ada salah satu anggota keluarga yang pergi untuk selamanya, hidup kita harus tetap berjalan dan kita harus tetap bahagia dalam menjalani kehidupan kita ini. Dalam kesempatan ini, penulis mengkaji puisi “Lament” yang ditulis oleh Edna St. Vincent Millay dengan tujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana perjuangan seorang ibu membesarkan dan memberikan kehidupan yang layak untuk anak-anaknya ketika ayahnya sudah tidak berada lagi di samping mereka. Penulis mengkaji puisi ini melalui metode penelitian perpustakaan, dimana penulis menggunakan buku-buku yang dapat dipercaya sebagai sumbernya. Penulis juga menggunakan pendekatan intrinsik yaitu mengkaji tema, pencitraan, dan penggunaan majas. Puisi ini menceritakan tentang kehidupan seorang keluarga yang telah ditinggal pergi oleh sang ayah dan beliau tidak meninggalkan apapun untuk istri dan anak-anaknya tetapi sang ibu terus berjuang untuk menghidupi anak-anaknya dan pada akhirnya sang ibu bisa melanjutkan hidupnya dan menafkahi anak-anaknya meskipun harus bekerja keras.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of The study**

Poetry is a type of prose which is one of literature's genres besides novel and drama. Unlike novel or drama, poetry is able to build a life which might be very close to the reader's life through the story presented in it. The readers can imagine the story in their minds. The readers give response to the imaginary experience in the poem as a pleasing experience. This response makes the writer more interested in the prose, especially the poetry, than the other genres. One of the functions of poem is to give information to the readers. Although the primary function of poem is probably to entertain the readers, it also teaches us about the value of life.

As a work of literature, poetry represents life. It often represents social, economical, or political condition in the time when it is written. According to Wellek and Warren in *Theory of Literature* state that, “*literature represents life and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation*” (1949: 94). An author is a member of society who has a specific social status and a novel often expresses some experiences that the author has in her/his life.

Basically before analyzing a poem; we have to know the definition of poetry and elements of it. According to Kennedy in his book *Literature an Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, poetry is the kind of thing poets write. Poetry is a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude designed to surprise and delight, and to arouse an emotional response (1933: 393). After that, we can analyze the poem by translating and explaining the elements of it.

The topic of this paper is about the mother's struggle to raise the children. The story begins when the family lost their father because their father died. After that, the mother told the two children that they have to forget about their father's death because they have to move on and continue their lives without looking in the past. The mother also told the two children that their father gave some heritage to them but the heritage was very simple that is keys and pennies because the father didn't have anything precious to give for the children.

### **1.2 Purpose of The Study**

In general, the purpose of the study is to know the contents of the poem, to analyze the poem with elements of poetry. In specific purpose of the study is to inform how important family for our lives when we live in sad moments because family is everything in the world.

### **1.3 Scope of The Study**

This study is a library research and employs intrinsic approach towards literature. Library research is a research that is done by the writer in the working room or in the library and a place where the writer gets data and information about the object of the research through the books or the other audio visual's equipment. The writer has studied some books, internet, and other writing as references that help to study the object of analysis.

According to Wellek and Warren, intrinsic approaches are those that focus their attention on text itself. It includes the analysis of the text's artistic method such as the narrative technique.

In recent years a healthy reaction has taken place which recognizes that the study of literature should, first and foremost, concentrate on the actual works of arts themselves... Similarly, many studies of the novel are not content to consider it merely in term of its relations to the social structure but try to analyze its artistic methods- its point of view, its narrative technique (Wellek and Warren 1949: 139-140).

This study analyzes *Lament* by Edna St. Vincent Millay by using intrinsic approach. It analyzes some of the intrinsic elements of the poem especially imagery and figurative language.

## **2. LITERARY REVIEWS**

There are two elements of the poetry that will be analyzed in this essay. They are imagery and figurative language. According to Kennedy, *imagery means a word or sequence of words that refers to any sensory experience* (1933: 465). In the poetry, there are many kinds of imagery: auditory imagery (an image that represent a sound), olfactory imagery (an image that represent a smell), gustatory imagery (an image that represent a taste), tactile imagery (an image that represent a tactile), organic imagery (an image that represent an internal sensation), kinesthetic imagery

(an image that represent a movement), visual imagery (an image that represent a visual).

This essay will also analyze about the figurative language. According to Kennedy, *figurative language is a way of using description to create a special image and bring out one's emotion, it is also closely linked to the senses. There are several types of figurative language. Figurative language is an important part of writing and it's also widely used in speech* (1933: 480). This essay will analyze symbol and repetition. *Symbol is elements of poetry that can be defined as an element has so much means or ambiguities or as something that means more than what it is* (X, J Kennedy, 1933: 485). For example: "The Sick Rose" and "The Road Not Taken". The Sick Rose as a symbol of the couple who falling in love each other that it is not a truly love but it is only desire love and finally their lives destroy with their love. The Road Not Taken is about a person that walking in the woods and there are two roads between him and he has to decide which road that he chooses. Meanwhile *Repetition is figurative language that uses a repeated sound language and sentence to show an artistic of the literature* (X, J Kennedy, 1933: 489-490).

### **3. ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 The Poem**

##### Lament

	Line	
Listen, children:	1	
Your father is dead.	2	
From his old coats	3	
I'll make you little jackets;	4	
I'll make you little trousers	5	
From his old pants.	6	
There'll be in his pockets	7	
Things he used to put there,	8	
Keys and pennies	9	
Covered with tobacco;	10	
Dan shall have the pennies	11	
To save in his bank;	12	
Anne shall have the keys	13	
To make a pretty noise with.	14	
Life must go on,	15	
And the dead be forgotten;	16	
Life must go on,	17	
Though good men die;	18	
Anne, eat your breakfast;	19	
Dan, take your medicine;	20	
Life must go on;	21	
I forget just why.	22	

#### **3.2 The Analysis**

##### **3.2.1 Imagery**

In this poetry, the writer will discuss four kinds of imagery. They are auditory imagery, visual imagery, organic imagery, and kinesthetic imagery.

**a. Auditory imagery**

First line to the last line in this poem is belong to an auditory imagery because from the words “Listen, children:” in the first line, it is clear that this poem uses the telling stories technique. In this poem explains that this Edna’s poem is the advice of Mom to her children to face their lives after their father had died. So, from the words that were said by Mom to her children have an element of auditory imagery.

**b. Visual imagery**

- *Your father is dead* (line 2): The mother and her children have to see and accept that their father was died.
- *From his old coats* (line 3): The mother shows her children inheritance from their father that is his old coats, because from the simple thing likes old coats they can make something special.
- *From his old pants* (line6): The mother also shows the father’s pants to her children.
- *There’ll be in his pockets*  
*Things he used to put there* (line 7-8): The mother shows the children that their father keeps the things in his pockets, the things that always the father puts inside the pockets.
- *Keys and pennies*  
*Covered with tobacco* (line 9-10): The mother shows things that always save in father’s pocket that is keys and pennies covered with tobacco. From this sentence, we can use our visual imagery to know what are keys and pennies.
- *Though good men die* (line 18): From the sentence, the mother and her children can see that the father is a good man.

**c. Organic imagery**

- *Your father is dead* (line 2): This sentence shows the internal sensation because when their father died, they will feel sad in their heart and it touches their feelings.
- *Anne shall have the keys*  
*To make a pretty noise with* (line 13-14): The mother told Anne if she has the keys, she will get a better life. The keys in this sentence refer to the advice and the experience of the father, so it has internal sense.
- *And the dead be forgotten* (line 16): This is the sentence that explains about an internal sensation of the family which was said by the mother to her children.

**d. Kinesthetic imagery**

- *Anne, eat your breakfast* (line 19): The mother tell Anne to eat her breakfast and the word eat represents a movement sense that Anne has to eat something.
- *Dan, take your medicine* (line 20): The mother also tell Dan to take his medicine. Those two sentences express a movement because they have to do what their mother said and the word take also expresses a movement.

**3.2.2 Figurative Language**

**a. Symbol**

- *From his old coats*

*I'll make you little jackets*

*I'll make you little trousers* (line 3-5): This is a symbol of their father's life when he was still alive. From this sentence, we know that their father lived for a long time. This is also a symbol to make a precious life for his children from his experience and his advice that he was given for his children during he was still alive.

- *Keys and pennies* (line 9): Keys and pennies are the symbol of inheritance that was given to their children by the father. Actually, from those words we can see how simple that father was given to make his children get better life. Keys and pennies are symbol of the simple and the small thing that having ability to make better life.
- *Anne, eat your breakfast* (line 19): This sentence is a symbol to continue her life by doing a little thing likes breakfast without seeing the past when her father was gone.
- *Dan, take your medicine* (line 20): Medicine is a symbol to cure the pain in our life. In this sentence, it is also the symbol to cure the pain in the children's life because of the death of their father.

#### **b. Repetition**

- *I'll make you little jackets*

*I'll make you little trousers* (line 4-5)

- *Life must go on* (line 15)

*Life must go on* (line 17)

*Life must go on* (line 21): They belong to repetition figurative language because from those repetitions of the words give a pressure of how to survive in life when the father gives nothing to his wife and children. Those repetitions words give a meaning that the mother and her children must move on with their lives without looking back to the past and continue their lives although it is very hard because there is no father anymore.

In this poem, the mother tells the children that their father had died. They have to see and accept that their father had gone forever. The mother tells her children that the father gives nothing to them. Their father just leaves his old coats and old pants. The mother tells that from the father's inheritance, she will make something special to her children because from the old coats and pants the mother will make a little jacket and trousers. The mother also shows and tells to her children that their father always keeps the things in his pockets that are keys and pennies covered with tobacco. The mother tells to Dan that he has to save the pennies in his bank and Anne has the keys to make a better life for her. The mother tells her children that they have to forget the dead and continue their lives.

From the poem, the mother tells the children that actually their father is a good man but they have to forget the death and continue their lives without looking back to the past because the father also want his family to continue their lives. In the poem, the mother tells Anne to continue her life by doing a little thing like breakfast because by eating something it shows that we have a will to continue our lives. The mother tells Dan to take the medicine for the first step to continue his life because medicine is something to cure the pain. The mother gives a pressure to her children that life must go on although it is very hard for them.

**The mother's struggle to raise her children after the father's death:**

1. The mother must work hard to earn money, so she can give a better life for her children. From here we know that the mother has a great responsibility to raise her children alone. By this situation, the mother must struggle hard to earn money for her children because there is nothing left from the father. The mother must struggle by working hard because she has to give a good education and a good life for her children. The father was died, so the mother must replace the father's position by working hard for the children.  
(*Keys and pennies*- line 9)
2. The mother is a zealous woman. She has to collect pennies little by little to raise her children properly. From here we can see that the mother has a big role in the family after the father's death and he left nothing to mother and her children. The mother wants to tell the children that without their father, they also can be survive by collecting money although she must work hard.  
(*Keys and pennies*- line 9)
3. The mother has to start a new life without her husband. The mother always looking for many ways to face a problem. Because the father was died, the mother becomes the head of the family and she has to solve the problems in their family's lives. The mother is taking over the father's position as the head of the family. From here we also know that she must give the protection to her children with all of the power she has.  
(*Keys and pennies*- line 9)  
(*I'll make you little jackets*- line 4)
4. The mother is a strong woman. She teaches and gives spirits to her children to move on with their lives without looking back to the past. She tells her children to continue their lives although there is no father in their family. She reminds the children to continue their lives by doing something simple like they have to eat their breakfast and find some medicines to cure the pain from losing their father. The mother gives pressure to her children that their lives must go on without the father.  
(*Life must go on*- line 15, 17, 21)

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

After discussing the poem, we know how important of the family in every conditions. Family can give us a power when we need them. They can give us advice by their experience when we lose someone or something important in our lives. When father died, mother can take over the father's task. It means that mother can be the head of the family, protect the family and the children. This poem advices us that life must go on and tell us that a mother is a strong person because she can accept the father's death wisely and she is enable to bring up her children by herself. Finally we can know the meaning of a family especially a mother. Mother is the most important part in our lives. Mother who can reinforce each other while others feel weak. Mother can take over all of the responsibilities when father is died. Mother will not leave us without giving something. Mother who made clothes from the father's old coats. Giving keys and pennies as a symbol to provide and make a better life. The important thing is that life must go on even when we lose something or someone in our lives.

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