

**PERCEIVING DEATH IN RUMI'S "WHEN I DIE"**

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The Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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## A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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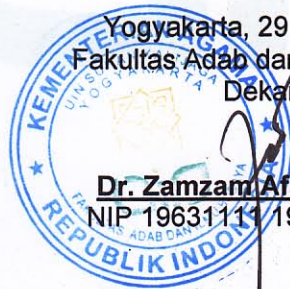
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## **Perceiving Death in Rumi's *When I Die***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Perceiving death is very important because perceiving death is about perceiving life. There are many poems which has theme about death. One of the poems is *When I die* created by Sufism poet Mwlana Djalaludin Rumi. This research intends to describe death in Rumi's *When I die* by its intrinsic elements, such as paradox, irony, tension and ambiguity. New Criticism theory is applied in analyzing this poem. Objective approach relates with this theory that only focus on the text. This research uses qualitative method which is done by library research. The result of this research is describing death as a bridge to connect two different live. Those are limited life and limitless life. Death does not make a separation but it makes an eternal togetherness. After someone died, he or she will arrive in eternal life. All of conditions will be going ever after in eternal life. Death is not a dreadful thing like what usually people think of it. Death is the only way to reach an eternal happiness.

**Keywords** : *Death, New Criticism, When I die, Rumi*

## **Memahami Kematian dalam Puisi *When I Die***

### **Karya Rumi**

Ummi Alifah Uswatun Khasanah

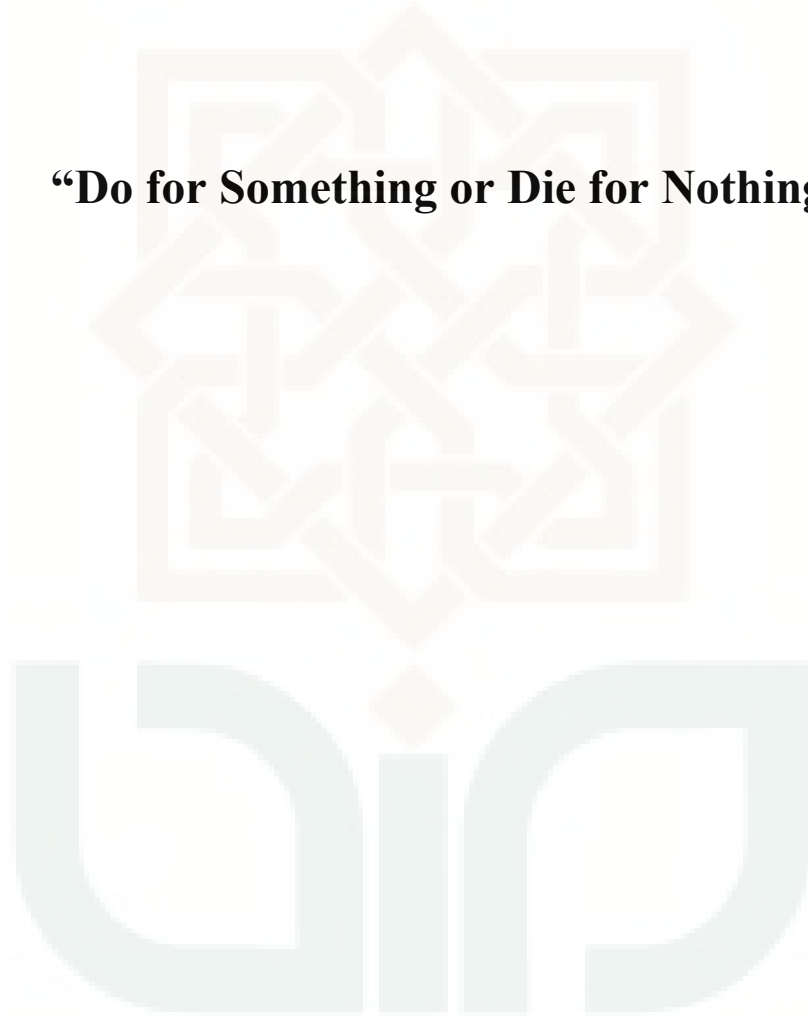
### **ABSTRAK**

Mengamati kematian adalah sangat penting karena mengamati kematian adalah tentang mengamati kehidupan. Ada banyak puisi yang memiliki tema tentang kematian. Salah satu puisi adalah *When I die* karya penyair sufi Mwlana Djalaludin Rumi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan kematian di Rumi Ketika aku mati oleh unsur-unsur intrinsiknya, seperti paradoks, ironi, ketegangan dan ambiguitas. New Criticism diterapkan dalam menganalisis puisi ini. Pendekatan obyektif berkaitan dengan teori ini yang hanya fokus pada teks. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang dilakukan dengan penelitian kepustakaan. Hasil penelitian ini menggambarkan kematian sebagai jembatan untuk menghubungkan dua hidup yang berbeda yaitu kehidupan yang terbatas dan kehidupan yang tak terbatas. Kematian tidak membuat perpisahan tapi itu membuat kebersamaan abadi. Setelah seseorang meninggal, ia akan tiba dalam hidup yang kekal. Semua kondisi akan pergi selamanya dalam hidup yang kekal. Kematian bukan hal yang mengerikan seperti apa yang biasanya orang berpikir itu. Kematian adalah satu-satunya cara untuk mencapai kebahagiaan kekal.

**Kata Kunci** : *Kematian, New Criticism, Ketika Aku Mati, Rumi*

**MOTTO**

**“Do for Something or Die for Nothing”**



## **DEDICATION**

This paper is honorably dedicated to my lovely Mom and Dad

Mr Drs Teguh Wiyono and Mrs Sumilah



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of Study

Death is the complex phenomenon that occurs every day in all over the world. Most of people seem to be dreadful, anxious, insecure of death. Even they avoid the topics whenever and wherever possible. As Shihab said, fearing of death relates to the anxiety reactions when gets something destroyed, danger and painful (2013: 9). Death may look in negative view generally. The reason is thinking of death will realize someone that he or she will be separated with their wealth, their lovely people, their authorities in this world. . In the other side, there are some people who want to face death. Such as the suicide case. People kill themselves to get the way out of their trouble. They think that after death they will get tranquility and keep far from all of life's problem. In fact, no one knows what happens after death. Therefore, discussion of death becomes a complex theme.

Isabel Gutierrez has said in her essay entitled *Death and Culture* that dealing with death can be difficult process (2010). It relates with the medical research done by Elizabet Kubler Ross. She has identified five steps when patient face his or her death. It is begun when the patient have been aware of his or her fatal illness. The first is denying of the fact that he or she will death. Then, the patient will get anger of his or her destiny,

the third, he or she will do a bargaining to ask chance to live little more. After that, he or she gets depression and keep silent more. Finally, he or she just will accept that they will die (Sánchez, 2007: 3-5). It shows that humans actually want to live longer. They do not ready to be separated with the happiness of world. Therefore, humans are difficult to accept their mortality.

Death can be interpreted in some perspectives. In medical perspective, death is cessation of circulation and respiration function permanently (<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/death>). In the other side, Shihab interprets death in religious view. According to him, death is when the soul is separated with the body then the soul moves to the other place (2013: 8). Religion believes the existence of the soul although it cannot be seen. When death comes, it will replace to the life after death. It relates to Socrates view of death in Gellager's essay, he thinks two possible ways it might be, either death is nonexistent or something happens to the soul upon death and it is transformed or goes to another world. If death is nonexistent, it likes long sleep without dream. ([https://www.academia.edu/Socrates\\_View\\_of\\_Death](https://www.academia.edu/Socrates_View_of_Death)).

Death is something inevitable. Natural disaster, disease, accident, fire are some causes of death. Even there are somebody died without causes. If time for their lives is over, they surely will die. The coming of death has been realized by the most of people. It is because no immortal creature exists in this world. How strong human are, they cannot avoid

the death. Certainly, all the existence in this world has its edge. As like the broken machine has cannot been used again, likewise humans has limited age. It also has stated in holy Qur'an surah An-Nisa verse 78 :

أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ  
حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ  
عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ  
حَدِيثًا ۝ ٧٨

"Wherever ye are, death will find you out, even if ye are in towers built up strong and high!" If some good befalls them, they say, "This is from Allah"; but if evil, they say, "This is from thee" [O Prophet]. Say: "All things are from Allah." But what hath come to these people, that they fail to understand a single fact?" (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1987: 40)

This ayah explains that death cannot be avoided. People should be aware of it. Nobody can fight when death comes. Death is a destiny from God. All of creature has been created by Him then they will go back to Him. It relates with this research which also discuss about death. This research will discuss the meaning of death. It aims to give well comprehension to the reader about death.

Every person has different idea in understanding the death. Understanding death is about understanding the life (Fahrurrozi, 2010:

73). Being aware of death deeply is very important. It can give the great effects for going the life. This matter reminds people that death is really close. Thus, it can educate people to do introspection and use their lives for doing the kindness before death comes.

The discussion of death can be found in literary works such as poetry. Poetry originates from Greek language *poiein* that means to make. Poetry originally meant imaginative literature in general. (Mikics, 2007: 237-238). Poetry contains ideas, imaginations, and experiences which are conveyed in words. Making a poetry do not only use common words, but also considers some aspects when choosing words. According to Richard, the nature of poetry is unification of sense (the theme and meaning of the poem), feeling (the attitude of poet to the poem itself), tone (the attitude of poet to the readers) and intention (the purposes and message of the poet) (as cited in Tarigan, 1993: 9).

One of poetry genre is poem. The researcher chooses poem as the object of analysis. The reason is poem conceives the deep meaning and wide knowledge, although it only defines in some lines of words called *stanza*. As Emerson said, poem describes great theme by using only little words (as cited in Tarigan, 1993: 3).

Reading poem is almost likely same as reading fiction in some ways, such as observing detail in action and language, making relevancy and inference, submitting the conclusion. However, the difference in reading poem is more attentive with the connotations of words, observing the expressive quality of sound and rhythm, to be aware more in syntax and punctuation, pay



closed attentions in linguistic because it can give compression in characteristic of poem (Diyanni, 2004: 524).

Therefore, analyzing the poem is challenging. Eventhough, poem only contains some stanzas, there are many implied meanings contained in its words. So, it needs the deep concern to understand the meaning of every word. The purpose is get the real message which will be conveyed from the poem.

Mwlana Djalaudin Rumi is one of popular poet who wrote many of poems. One of his poet is about death. He is a Moslem Persian person and the original version of his works is in Persian language. His full name is *Hazrat-e Mwlana Djalaludin Rumi*, but becomes well-known with *Rumi* in western. Although he is not western people but his works is very popular in western. Many of his works have been translated into English version. It is becaused Rumi's works can be accept not only in islamic belief but also a kind of universal poems who is tolerant in all religions (Gammard, 2006).

Rumi's poem entitled *When I Die* is one of his poem which contains the meaning of death. This poem is interesting to be analyzed because it defines death positively. This poem states that died people do not miss this world actually, they do not leave but they have arrived in eternal love. It defines that death is not the end. However, it is the begining of freed soul. It is not like some other poems which define death negatively. Such as Emily Dickinson's poem *I Heard Fly Buzz-When I*

*Die* which describes death as a stillness among the storm, when death comes, there is an annoyed sound like fly buzz and eyes felt so painful then it cannot see what usually can see. Likewise, *Elegy Written in the Churchyard* poem by Thomas Gray. His poem describes death as a threat of pain and ruin to be despised. Death has separated him with his family and friends. Death only leaves loneliness. The positive view of death makes Rumi's *When I die* unique, because it has the descriptions which against the common opinion in people's mind that death is a bad things.

The translation version of this poem shows that many people like this poem. It may gives many advantages for everyone who read this poem. such as, open people's mind not to be scare of death, give peacefulness that death is not an end. Therefore, this poem is translated from Persian language into English.

This research will analyze this poem by using New Criticism theory. New criticism considers poem as the central concern and also as the object itself that is cut from the author and the world around (Carter, 2006: 26-27). Therefore, this theory is appropriate to be applied in this research. This research concern to analyze the poem *When I die* by only focus on the texts and neglect all of the aspects outside of the text. This research will critic in its intrinsic elements such as diction, figurative language, ambiguity, paradox, and irony of the poem. It aims to answer how death is described in Rumi's *When I die* intrinsically.

## **1.2. Research Question**

The research question from this study is: How is death described in Rumi's *When I die* intrinsically?

## **1.3. Objective of Study**

The objective of this research is: To analyze the descriptions of death in Rumi's poem *When I die* only from the text

## **1.4. Significances of Study**

Academically, the researcher hopes this research can be used as a reference for another researcher, especially students of English Literature who examine poem. This research can help another researcher to understand how New criticism theory is applied in the study of Rumi's poem *When I die*. Moreover, practically death is one of scary things for most of people. Many people are afraid for the coming of death. So, this study of Rumi's *When I die* can open the people's mind that death is not the scary thing, even death is the beginning of happiness if they have the well preparation before the death. Analyzing the poem of Rumi's *When I die* can motivate the readers to be a good person, encourage them to do the kindness as much as possible for the preparation before the coming of death.

### 1.5. Literature Review

The researcher finds some critical works which have the same theme with this study. It aims to support that this study is important to be analyzed. The first is a graduating paper written by Erryna Gemala Putri (2010), a student of Gadjah Mada University, entitled “Death as Portrayed in Shelley’s *Death and Death* and Donne’s *A Hymne to God the Father* and *Hymne to God My God in My Sickness*.” This qualitative research uses the descriptive method and expressive criticism theory to describe the death based on the researchers’ point of view on those poems and how their life experiences influence their poem. This study compares those poems. The content of each poem was influenced by the religion background of the poet. Both of the authors have different religion experiences. Shelley is an atheist. He grew in the family that oppressed him. He also found the institution like the church abused the power that it had. Shelley said that death is a dreadful thing because death will take the happiness away. However, Donne has a different perception. He has a good religion background. Donne is one of the best preachers in his era. He saw the death in a positive view. He said that death is a stage that people had to pass through to meet God.

The second is an graduating paper written by Ratna Herawati (2004), an English Department’s student of Gadjah Mada University, entitled “Death and Immortality: a Study on Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *Adonais* .” In *Adonais* Shelley expressed his responses to the sad incident

of Keat's death. This paper describes how to get what the poet wants to convey in regard to the subject of death and immortality and the means by which he communicates this. This qualitative research uses the expressive approach and expressive criticism. The author gets the data from some book references and electrical sources. In Herawati's research the magnificent aspect of *Adonais* and especially the profound handling of the theme of death and immortality are interesting to study. This research describe that there are many verbal echoes of century-old poetic ritual of pastoral elegies such as the expression of grief, the mournful invocation to a muse, the sympathetic participation of nature in Keat's death and finally about the strengthened belief in immortality. As for Shelley as seen in *Adonais*, the notion of death is at first perceived as the end of life, but eventually seen as the revealer and the deliverer of immortality.

The third is a graduating paper proposed by Fakhrur Rozi (2013), entitled "Reading Death in D.H. Lawrence's *The Ship of Death*." This research attempts to explain how the death described in D.H Lawrence *The Ship of Death* intrinsically. It uses some poetic devices to analyze the poem. This qualitative research uses the objective approach and New criticism theory. Rozi's research found that D.H. Lawrence "The Ship of Death" had its own version of death. Mainly it portrays in the three phases, they are the beginning of journey, oblivion and new life. According to the poem, everyone will experience those phases.

The forth is a graduating paper written by Gunawan (2013), entitled “War as Represented in Michael Heart’s *We will not Go Down*”. This research attempts to describe how war is portrayed in Michael Heart’s *We will not Go Down* intrinsically. In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research and analyzes with New criticism theory. Gunawan gets the data by documentation method. The documentation is done by library research and web surfing. He found that there are some poetic devices used in this song. Each of the poetic devices has their function such as the use of paradox in the song as the sign of the changing situation, and the use of irony to describe the horrible situation and hopeless situation.

The research above have same theme about death although some of them use different theory. This study attempts to describe the death based on the text only or uses the objective approach. However, the first and the second prior research use the expressive approach which involves the poet’s background to analyze. The fourth research has the same theory but it has a different theme of the object of study.

This study closes with the third prior research, by using some poetic device such as rhyme, paradox, irony, and intention to describe about the death. While both of those research has the same theme about death but this study has different object of study, if the third prior research focuses on the phases of death, it only focus on the meaning of death in Rumi’s *When I die* by New Criticism theory.

## 1.6. Theoretical Approach

This study focuses on analyzing poem. Since the researcher analyzes the poem intrinsically, the theory applied is New criticism. New criticism took from most of the ideas of American poets, T.S. Elliot and Matthew Arnold. Elliot said that the poetry becomes the main of his theory and he only focuses on the poem as a text particularly. The researcher chooses New criticism because it considers poem as the central concern and also as the object itself that is cut from the author and the world around (carter, 2006: 26-27). The main concern of this theory is analyzing the poem as the text itself. Therefore, it relates with this research which the object is Rumi's poem *When I die* and it will be analyzed intrinsically.

As Carter said, "every element in a poem was in balanced integration with every other element, leading to a coherence of the whole. A poem was considered as an object in itself, cut off from both author and the world around it"(2006: 27). It appropriates with this theory, New criticism do not think about the author background of life and world around him/her, it only focuses on the text when analyzing the poem. Therefore, as Elliot said in *Traditional and the Individual Talent* (1919),

"poetry should be impersonal. he asserts that a poet does not has 'a personality' to express but a particular medium. The poet's personal and social circumstances were secondary to the poetry itself, and he/she should not indulge in expressions of profound emotion. Emotion should be conveyed indirectly. Through the awareness of an ironic perception of the world and of

paradoxes, the reader should be challenged and made to think” (as cited in Carter, 2006: 23).

According to Arnold, “More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us” (as cited in Hans, 2001: 2).

There are some prominent figures of New Criticism who have different view from one another in many ways but the following points of view and procedures were shared by many of them. New Critics warn the reader against critical practices which divert attention from the poem itself. John Crowe Ransom has said that such criticism should be objective cites the nature of objects and recognize the autonomy of the work itself as a form for itself (Abrams, 2009: 216). New criticism emphasizes on the *organic unity*, in a successful literary work, of its overall structure with its verbal meanings, it reminds about what Cleanth Brooks called *the heresy of paraphrase* (Abrams, 2009: 217). The distinctive procedure for a William Empson is explication or close reading. The detailed analysis of the complex interrelationships and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the verbal and figurative components are inside a work.

“The distinction between literary genres, although acknowledged, does not play an essential role in the New Criticism. The essential components of any work of literature, whether lyric, narrative, or dramatic, are conceived to be words, images, and symbols rather than character, thought, and plot. These linguistic elements, whatever the genre, are often said to be



organized around a central and humanly significant *theme*, and to manifest high literary value to the degree that they manifest “tension,” “irony,” and “paradox” in achieving a “reconciliation of diverse impulses” or an “equilibrium of opposed forces.” (Abrams, 2009: 217).

Furthermore the different views not only exist in comprehending the procedure and critical practice of this theory among New critics but also about the most essential aspect which has to exist in a poem. As Empson said the word “ambiguity” continues to play an important role in the work of the New Criticism (Fry, 2012: 78). Whereas Brooks said in his work *The Well Wrought urn*, language of poetry is language of paradox (1960: 3). He said that paradoxes spring from poet’s language naturally and it is inevitable thing in poetry(1960: 8-11). Paradox relates to irony because paradoxes insist on the irony (1960: 7). In another side proposed by the poet and critic Allen Tate, one of the founding figures of the New Criticism, is “tension”— that is, the way the literary text resolves oppositions as a tension, holding in suspension a conflict experienced as tension (Fry, 2012: 79).

From the definition above, it can be concluded that New criticism has four basic elements which establish the structure of meaning. Paul H Fry in his book *Theory of Literature* has said that all these words— irony, paradox, ambiguity, tension— concern effects that one locates within a text or “poem” as part of its meaning (2012: 79). Therefore, the unity of

meaning is formed by the correlation of them to build great theme within a poem.

Paradox is the language expression of shopistry, hard, witty; it is may barely language of the soul. Paradox also means an apparently self contradictory statement, though one which is essentially true (Childs, 2006: 166). Brooks said that paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry. As it seems the truth that the poet utters can be approached only in term of paradox (Brooks, 1960: 3). Paradox springs from poet's language naturally (Brooks, 1960: 8).

Whereas irony means hiding the actual case, it aims not to delude but to increase the special rethorical and aesthetic effect (Abrams, 1999: 195). According to Childs, irony provides a means for unifying the apparent contradictions of experience, but is also uniquely able to assert the world's diversity. All irony, however, depends for its effectiveness on the belief in and exploitation of the difference and distance between words or events and their contexts (2006: 123-124). The basis of irony as applied to language is the human disposition to adopt a pose or to put on a mask. Metaphor is one kind of irony. It hides the actual case by any connotation words. The notion of a mask is particularly relevant, the element of concealment in irony and the fact that what is concealed is meant to be found (Leech, 1969: 171).

Another element which built the unity of meaning in a poem is tension. Tension is a conflict or friction between complementaries, converses, opposites. Generally, tension has been located wherever opposing forces, impulses or meanings could be distinguished and related to one another (Childs, 2006: 236). W. K. Wimsatt implied a tension between the concrete and the universal or the particular and the general, and Allen Tate attempted a theory in which tension means the simultaneity of literal and metaphoric or figurative meaning (exTension and inTension) (Childs, 2006: 236).

While another one is ambiguity. Ambiguity is an unclear expressions that is used to describe particular thing or it has a multiple meaning (Abrams, 1999: 12). *William Empson* in his book *Seven Type of Ambiguities* has been categorized ambiguities into some conditions. First-type ambiguities arise when a detail is effective in several ways at once, e.g. by comparisons with several points of likeness, antitheses with several points of difference (1949: 22). Second-type ambiguities two or more alternative meanings are fully resolved into one. Double grammar in Shakespeare Sonnets (1949: 58). The condition for third-type ambiguity is that two apparently unconnected meanings are given simultaneously (1949: 111). In the fourth type the alternative meanings combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author (1949: 145). The fifth type is a fortunate confusion, as when the author is discovering his idea in the act of writing (examples from Shelley) or not holding it all in mind at once

(1949: 163). In the sixth type what is said is contradictory or irrelevant and the reader is forced to invent interpretations (1949: 183). The last the conditions under which ambiguity is valuable and the means of apprehending it (1949: 242).

Therefore, based on the descriptions above, New criticism theory appropriates to be applied in this study. This study will analyze the poem of Rumi *When I die* to get the description of death by only focus on the intrinsic elements of the poem as the reference of the data. It will analyze its paradox, irony, tension and ambiguity.

## **1.7. Method of Research**

This section will explain the method of this study which consists of type of research, data sources, data collecting technique and data analysis technique. It will be explained more as follow:

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

This study uses qualitative research. According to Creswell, “in qualitative research, the author will describe a research problem that can best be understood by exploring a concept or phenomenon.” (2009: 102) This research attempts to explain the concept of death which is described in Rumi’s poem *When I die*. The problem in qualitative research is about the human or social problem. Then, the researcher will interpret the meanings of the poem.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

This research has the primary data. The main data of this research are the words, phrases, lines, stanzas, and the whole poem in this Rumi's *When I die* which relate to the discussions of death.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

This research uses close reading method when collecting the data. The researcher selects the data through some steps. Firstly, the researcher has to do close reading to get well comprehension of the poem. Secondly, the researcher divides the data into category of paradox, irony, ambiguity, tension. After that the data is ready to be analyzed.

### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the data. The researcher analyzes the data based on New criticism concept and narrates them in this research. The researcher analyzes each element by only looks the text and does not included the extrinsic element. Finally, the researcher concludes the analysis and explains the unity meaning of this research in conclusion.

## **1.8. Paper Organization**

This section will describe the contents of this paper. This paper consists of three chapters. The first is introduction. It explain some points, they are background of study, research question, objective of study, significances of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research (type of research, data sources, data collection technique, data analysis technique) and paper organization of this study.

The second chapter contains the poem When I die and the analysis. The analysis discusses the descriptions of the intrinsic elements of poetry such as irony, paradox, tension and ambiguity. This research applies New criticism theory in analyzing. The last chapter is conclusion of this research.

### Chapter III

#### Conclusion

This chapter presents the result of analysis in previous chapter. From the data which have analyzed by some intrinsic elements of New criticism, those are paradox, irony, tension and ambiguity. Each element sets up a dispositional relation with unifying the meaning of this poem. The researcher concludes some meanings of death in Rumi's *When I die*.

Death is a bridge to connect two different live. The first is a limited life. Limited life is life in this world. A creature was born as body and soul in this life. The body has an age. When its age is over, the first life has finished. While the second is limitless live. Limitless live will exist ever after. Likewise, everything exists inside. In this life a creature was born as only a soul. The soul will go through the life without a certain age. It will not be over.

Death does not make a separation but it is an eternal togetherness. Usually people feel afraid of death because it will separate someone with his or her closed people. However, actually if they arrived in pleasant place, they will encourage again in that place. Then, they will not be together ever after.

Death is not a dreadful thing like what usually people think of it. Death is the way to reach an eternal happiness. Eternal happiness is the answer of what people have done during their life. That is the reason of kindness and evil exist in this life. An eternal happiness is a dream for everyone. Thus, people should try everything to reach that dream by doing much of kindness in this life.

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