NATURALISM IN DEBORAH DIGGES'S POEMS



English Literature Department
FACULTY OF ADAB AND HUMANITIES
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SYARIEF HIDAYATULLAH
JAKARTA
2010

NATURALISM IN DEBORAH DIGGES'S POEMS

A Thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
In partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Strata One



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ABSTRACT

Ratu Prayuana, Naturalism in Deborah Digges's Poems, Thesis. Jakarta: English Letters Department, State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah, July 9th, 2010.

This research concerned about the discussion and analysis of Deborah Digges's poems entitled; *Trapeze*, *My Life's Calling*, and *The Leaves*.

The writer uses a descriptive method in which she describes the picture of theories of naturalism and other meaning to support and influence the theme. It is analyzed qualitatively based on the relevant theory of the study. The writer employs herself to collect the data; by reading the text, and marking them to make it easier to analyze.

The three of Digges's poems is rich of intrinsic elements. This research is limited on figure of speech and some of imagery elements. It includes the Social Darwinism that represents the naturalism.

In her conclusion, the writer found that the three of Deborah Digges's poems have the similarity of its picture, and it represents the naturalism through out the nature image in the poems.

APPROVEMENT

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Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Strata 1

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The thesis has been defended before the Faculty Letters and Humanities' Examination Committee on June 20, 2010. It has been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, July 9th, 2010

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.



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In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful

All praises be to Allah, the lord of the worlds and there is no equal, and peace be upon Mohammad SAW who bring human to a brighter life. The gratitude and thankfulness be to Allah for the help to the writer in order to finish the research.

This research is presented to the English Department, faculty of Adab and Humanities, Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as the partial of requirements for the degree of Strata 1.

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Finally, the writer hopes her research can be useful for her self and for all. Amen.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Research

Technically, anything spoken or written is literature. This includes everything from a grocery list to Shakespeare's sonnets. It seems clear, however, that a grocery list, though written, should be excluded from literature. That is, it does not interest, entertain, stimulate, broaden, or ennoble the readers. Even though the list may be structured according to the places in a supermarket (dairy areas, frozen food areas, produce areas, and so on), it is not designed to engage the reader imagination. A grocery list, in short, is simply useful. It is not literature. Rather, it is to works that invite emotional and intellectual engagement that we confine our definition of literature.

Our understanding of literary works results from our efforts to interpret them, to make sense of their implied meanings, our interpretation of literature provides an intellectual counterpart to our emotional experience. When we interpret literary works we concern ourselves less with how they affect us and more with what they mean. Interpretation, in short, aims at understanding.²

¹ Edgar V. Roberts. Writing Themes About Literature. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall inc., 1983), P. 3

² Robert DiYanni. Literature: *Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* 5th Edition. (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2002) P. 8

Literature must always be interesting; it must always have a structure and an aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect. It must, of course, stand in recognizable relation to life, but the relations are very various; the life can be heightened or burlesqued or antithesized; it is in any case a selection, of a specifically purposive sort, from life. We have to have knowledge independent of literature in order to know what the relation of a specific work to 'life' may be.³

When we read literary work, something happens to us. A poem, for example, may provoke our thinking, evoke a memory, and elicit a strong emotional response.⁴ Poetry is as universal as language and almost as ancient. The most primitive peoples have used it. And the most civilized have cultivated it. In all ages and all countries, poetry has been written, and eagerly read or listened to, by all kinds and conditions of people.⁵

We read poetry for the many pleasure it offers-pleasure of sound and meaning, of image and symbol, of speech and feeling and thought. Some of the pleasures of poetry are intellectual, as when we enjoy a poet's witty wordplay or understand a poem's central idea. Others are motional, as when a poem evokes sorrow or pity, fear or joy. Still others are physical, as when our skin tingles or we feel the impulse to tap our feet or nod in time to a poem's rhythmic beat.

³ Rene Wellek and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. (London, Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1976), P. 212

⁴ DiYanni: P. 7

⁵ Perrine Laurence, Thomas R. ARP. Sound and Sense: *an Introduction to Poetry*. (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1984) P. 1

Poetry sharpens our perception of the world around us since it draws its energy from the fresh observation of life. Poetry can reveal to us things we didn't know or knew only vaguely. It can excite our capacity for wonder, and it can enlarge our appreciation of beauty. It can make us feel more acutely and deeply, and also make us more receptive to imaginative experience. Reading poetry improves our ability to use and language since poems are made of words-at their best, the most carefully chosen words in the best order.⁶

Poems do not always have to be beautiful in touching people feelings, but at least poems and their meaning is important because poems is a language of the writer's soul of a reality in life. Poems also made by the strength of imagination. Poems can tell almost everything, as long as it is possible to be written, as long as it can be the expression of a life.

By the end of 19th century, in the United States, as well as in many other places in the world, the authors' style of writing changes over a period of time. Many styles such as romanticism, realism, and many others were used by different writers throughout the history of that particular country, and naturalism is one of those styles. It is growth as the continuity of realism.

It is also influenced by the Darwin Theory of Evolution. The naturalist, the man with the natural literary works, figured the condition of the society by its relation to nature. Stephen Crane is one of the naturalists at that time; he has produced literary works such as novels, and poems.

⁶ DiYanni: P. 4

Nowadays, many writers also fill in their poems by the case of nature and it relations to human. One of those writers is Deborah Digges, who is also as the subject of this thesis. Deborah Leah Sugarbaker was born on Feb. 6, 1950, in Jefferson City, Mo., the sixth in a family of 10 children. Her poems often rely on the relationship between humans and nature, the primitive urges of discovery and rediscovery, and the physical consequences of such momentary losses of the self. She lived in Massachusetts, where she was a professor of English at Tufts University. She died on April 10, 2009.

Ms. Digges apparently jumped from an upper level of the Warren P. McGuirk Alumni Stadium, on the campus of the <u>University of Massachusetts</u>, Amherst, a university spokesman said on Tuesday. She was found on the ground outside the stadium and taken to Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, Mass., where she was pronounced dead. Known for its penetrating observations and lyrical voice, Ms. Digges's work both poetry and prose was informed by her memories of Missouri girlhood in a family of 12; her experiences as a young wife and her later struggles with a troubled teenage son; the dissolution of two marriages; and the illness and death of her third husband. But though much of her work was rooted in loss, it was also shot through with sly, trenchant humor and a sustained, fervent passion for the natural world.⁹

⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/17/arts/17digges.html?_r=1 Accessed on July, 16th, 2009

http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/1155 Accessed on October 27th, 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/17/arts/17digges.html? r=1 Accessed on July 16 2009

Based on the theory of naturalism, the works of the naturalist reveal real life in logic way also fact, and also reveal real life scientifically. Then, the writer interested to analyze further based on the elements in the naturalism.

B. The Focus of the Research

In this research the writer focused on the Naturalism elements in the three of Deborah Digges's poems. The poems that will be analyzed are *Trapeze*, *Darwin's Finches*, and *The Leaves*.

C. The Research Questions

From the explanation above, the writer wants to propose the question below. How are the naturalism described on the three poems by Deborah Digges; *Trapeze*, *My Life's Calling, and The Leaves*?

D. The Significances of the Research

The writer hopes that the result of the research can be useful to the literary works readers, especially who are interested in analyzing naturalism that is described on the three poems.

E. The Research Methodology

1. The Method of the Research

The writer uses Qualitative method with a descriptive analysis in this research. First the writer read those Digges poems; *Trapeze*, *My Life's Calling*, *and The Leaves*. Analyzed the intrinsic elements on the poems, and analyzed the naturalism described in those three poems.

2. The Objective of the Research

This research is committed to understand how the naturalism described on the three poems by Deborah Digges; Trapeze, *My Life's Calling, and The Leaves*.

3. The Unit of Analysis

The three Digges's poems entitled; *Trapeze*, *My Life's Calling*, *and The Leaves* are the unit analysis for this research. The Leaves taken from the book "Vesper Sparrows" (1986), and the poem Trapeze and My Life's Calling are in the book "Trapeze" (2004) all by Deborah Digges.¹⁰

4. The Research Instrument

The instrument of this research is the writer herself and also the poems. The writer employs herself to collect the data; by reading the text, and marking them to make it easier to analyze.

¹⁰ http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/1155 Accessed on October 27th, 2009

5. The Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed through qualitative analysis and the intrinsic theory approach on Digges's poems which is supported by the theories of naturalism, the nature and its relation or indifferent to human.

F. Time and Place

The research conducted in 2010 and took place in Jakarta. The references are taken in the Library of Islamic State University and the Library of Humanity Department of University of Indonesia.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Poem

In reading poetry our experience involved more than considering the meaning of words. It includes our apprehension of a poem's form, our appreciation of its pattern of sound, and our understanding of it thought. The meaning of any poem involves our total experience of reading it, an experience that includes intellectual understanding but which is not restricted to it.¹¹

Poetry is a broad terms that include many subtypes, such as sonnet, lyric, pastoral, ballad, song, ode, drama (which may be in either prose or poetry), epic, mock epic, and dramatic monologue. Essentially, poetry is a compressed and often highly emotional form of expression. Each word counts for more than in prose, and the basic arrangement is separate lines rather than paragraphs, although stanzas correspond to paragraphs, and cantos sometimes correspond to chapters. Poetry relies more heavily than prose in imagery, that is, on a comparative, allusive, suggestive, form of expression that is applicable to a wide number of human situations. It is this compactness of expression, combined with the broadness of application that makes poetry unique. Because poetry is so compact, the rhythms of poetic speech become as vital as the emotion and ideas. Sometimes these rhythms are called the music of poetry. Some poetic forms are fairly free, particularly poetry written since the time of

¹¹ DiYanni, P. 4

the American poet Walt Whitman. Other forms are carefully arranged and measured into definite, countable units, and often employ rhymes to affect the minds of the readers and listeners.¹²

The elements of poetry is not spends by it self, but it is a structure. All the elements are the unity from one element to another. The differences of meaning that is given to the words of poetry is not limited to the writer only, more than that, it gives a different definitions to every body.

B. Some Intrinsic Elements of Poem

1. Figure of Speech

A figure of speech is a twisting of the normal meaning of a word. These twists are very common, even in ordinary conversation. If some one you work with makes a mistake at the job, and then says as a joke on himself, "I must have forgotten my brain today," you don't call his house to check it if he left it there. You assume that he is using a figure of speech. His words can't be taken literally because they don't make any sense. Almost automatically we would recognize that he means that he isn't alert or can't concentrated, that it is as if he had forgotten his brain. We would recognize it as a figure of speech. ¹³

There are kinds of figurative language; both metaphor and simile are the most common use in literature. More than 2.300 years ago Aristotle defined metaphor as

¹² V. Roberts: PP: 6-7

¹³ Thomas Mc Laughlin. Literature the Power of Language. (Orlando, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1989), P. 31

"an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar." And he suggested further that to be a "master of metaphor" is the greatest of a poet's achievements. In our century, Robert Frost has echoed Aristotle by suggesting that metaphor is central to poetry, and that, essentially, poetry is a way of "saying one thing and meaning another."

Although both figures involved comparisons between unlike things, simile establishes the comparison explicitly with the words like or as. Metaphor, in the other hand, employs no such explicit verbal clue. The comparison is implied in such a way that the figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal one. "My daughter dances like an angel" is a simile; "my daughter is an angel" is a metaphor. In this example the difference involves more than the word like: the simile is more restricted in its comparative suggestion than is a metaphor. That is, the daughter angelic attributes are more extensive in the unspecified and unrestricted metaphor. In the simile, she only dances like an angel. (There's no suggestion that she possesses other angelic qualities.)¹⁴

Metaphors and similes have similar functions, to apply one verbal category to another that resembles it, to say that "eyes" can be like "diamonds." There are some other figures of speech that are based on different manipulations of ordinary meaning. Personification, for example, is the used of human terms to describe nonhuman objects. When William Wordsworth says in "Lines Written in Early Spring", "And 'tis my faith that every flowers/Enjoy the air it breathes," he is given to the flower human characteristic-perhaps the joy he feels himself when he sees them. Like all

¹⁴ DiYanni: P. 709

tropes, personification involves a mixing of categories. Joy defines a category that, at least to the rational mind, doesn't properly speaking belong to flowers but only to human beings. 15

2. Symbol

A symbol is any object or action that represents something beyond itself. A rose, for example, can represent beauty, or love or transience. A tree may represent a family's roots and branches. A soaring bird might stand for freedom. Light might symbolize hope or knowledge or life. These or other familiar symbols may represent different, even opposite things, depending on how they are deployed in a particular poem. Natural symbols like light and darkness, fire and water can stand for contradictory things. Water, for example, which typically symbolizes life (rain, fertility, food, life) can also stand for death (tempests, hurricanes, floods). And fire, which often indicates destruction, can represent purgation or purification. The meaning of any symbol, whether an object, an action, or a gesture controlled by its contexts. 16

3. Imagery

In traditional literary usage the term image refers to a poem's ability to evoke the experiences of the senses. An image is language that makes us imagine how an

¹⁵ Mc Laughlin: P. 34 ¹⁶ DiYanni: P. 715

object or scene looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels. Images in poem try to make readers feel as though they are in the scene that the poem describes. What the popular meanings of the word remind us, though, is that images cannot in fact put us in the scene. They can do so only in imagination. Images are always only fictions. They don't give us reality directly, but rather through the frameworks of language and through a particular person's mind. An imagistic poem gives us someone else's version of reality. That's what makes this kind of poem fascinating: we see the world as another sees it.¹⁷

Imagery is a topic which belongs both to psychology and to literary study. In psychology, the word 'image' means a mental reproduction, a memory, of a past sensational or perceptual experience, not necessarily visual. The pioneer investigations of Francis Galton, in 1889, sought to discover how far men could visually reproduce the past, and found that men greatly differed in their degree of visualization. But imagery is not visual only. The classifications of psychologist and aestheticians are numerous. There are not only 'gustatory' and 'olfactory' images, but there are thermal images and pressure images ('kinaesthetic', 'haptic', 'empathic'). There is the important distinction between static imagery and kinetic (or 'dynamic'). The use of colour imagery may or may not be traditionally or privately symbolic. Synaesthetic imagery (whether the result of the poet's abnormal psychological constitution or of literary convention) translates from one sense into another, e.g. sound into colour. Finally, there is the distinction, useful for the reader of poetry,

¹⁷ Mc LaughlinP.: 39

between 'tied' and 'free' imagery: the former, auditory and muscular imagery, necessarily aroused even though one reads to oneself and approximately the same for all adequate readers; the latter, visual and else, varying much from person to person or type to type. ¹⁸

Imagery may be defined as the representation through language of sense experience. Poetry appeals directly to our senses, of course, through its music and rhythms, which we actually hear when it is read aloud. But indirectly it appeals to our senses through imagery, the representation to the imagination of senses experience. The word image perhaps most often suggests a mental picture, something seen in the mind's eye-and visual imagery is the kind of imagery that occurs most frequently in poetry. But an image may also represent a sound (auditory imagery); a smell (olfactory imagery); a taste (gustatory imagery); touch, such as hardness, softness, wetness, or heat and cold (tactile imagery); an internal sensation, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, or nausea (organic imagery); or movement or tension in the muscle or joints (kinesthetic imagery). If we wish to be scientific, we could extend this list further, for psychologist no longer confine themselves to five or even six senses but for purposes of discussing poetry the preceding classification should ordinarily be sufficient.¹⁹

¹⁸ Wellek and Warren: PP: 186-187

¹⁹ Laurence, R. ARP.: PP: 49-50

4. Theme

In literature, the central or dominating idea, the "message," implicit in a work. The theme of a work is seldom stated directly. It is an abstract concept indirectly expressed through recurrent Images, actions, Characters, and Symbols, and must be inferred by the reader or spectator. Theme differs from Subject (the topic or thing described in a work) in that theme is a comment, observation, or insight about the subject. For example, the subject of a poem may be a flower; its theme, a comment on the fleeting nature of existence. Not all works have a theme, especially those, like Detective Stories, that are written primarily for entertainment. ²⁰

The poem's theme is an observation on some aspect of life or human experience. The theme embodies the poet's understanding of himself or of the world. Meaning may be communicated in many ways-through the form, images, tone and language of the poem-and it is this meaning with which the reader must ultimately come to grips. The theme of a good poem is never a glib generalization, an oversimplification, or slogan of some sort. New insights grow naturally out of a good poem's situation, its presentation and its subject.²¹

It needs to be emphasized again and again that writing demands tight organization and control. The first requirement of the finished theme-although it is not the first requirement in the writing process-is that it have a central idea. The word

²¹ Marjorie Wescott Barrows, et al. The American Experience: Poetry. (New York, the Macmillan Company, 1953), PP: 12-13

²⁰ Kathleen Morner, Ralph Rausch. NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms. (Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1991) P. 223

theme is defined by the present of this idea, for to be a theme; a piece of writing must have the central idea as its core. Everything in the theme should be directly related to this idea or should contribute to the reader's understanding of the idea.²²

B. Naturalism

1. The Naturalism Definition

Naturalism is the application of principles of scientific determinism to literature. It draws its name from the basic assumption that everything real exists in nature, conceived as the world of objects, actions, and forces that yield their secrets to objective scientific inquiry. The naturalistic view of human beings is that of animals in the natural world, responding to environmental forces and internal stresses and drives, none of which they can control or understand.²³

This theory is the basis of a late 19th- and early 20th- century aesthetic movement that, in literature, extended the tradition of realism, aiming an even more faithful, unselective representation of reality, presented without moral judgment. Naturalism differed from realism in its assumption of scientific determinism, which led naturalistic authors to emphasize the accidental, physiological nature of their characters rather than their moral or rational qualities. Individual characters were seen as helpless product of heredity and environment, motivated by strong instinctual drives from within, and harassed by social and economic pressures from without.

²² V Poborte: D S

http://faculty.mccfl.edu/jonesj/LIT2012/realism.htm Accessed on October 27th, 2009

Naturalism originated in France, where the leading exponent of the movement was Emile Zola, whose essay "Le Roman Experimental" (1880; "The Experimental Novel) became the literary manifesto of the school. With Zola's example the naturalistic style became widespread and affected to varying degrees most of the major factor of the period.²⁴

Definition of naturalism in the dictionary of "Longman"; the idea that art and literature should show the world and people scientifically and exactly as they are 25,

The "Oxford" tells; Action arising from, or based on, natural instincts, without spiritual guidance. ²⁶

Definition of naturalism also stated on "The Oxford Companion to American Literature"; Critical term applied to the method of literary composition that aims at a detached, scientific objectivity in the treatment of natural man. It is thus more inclusive and less selective than realism, and holds to philosophy of determinism. It conceives of man as conceives of man that controlled by his instincts or his passions, or by his social and economic environment and circumstances. Since in this view man has no free will, the naturalistic writer does not attempt to make moral judgments, and as a determinist he tends towards pessimism. The movement is an outgrowth of 19th-century scientific thought, following in the general the biological determinism of Darwin's Theory, or the economic determinism of Marx. It stamps from French

²⁵ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, International Student Edition, (Bath: Pitman Press, 1978), P. 726

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²⁴ Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, P. 800

²⁶ The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. VII, (London: Oxford University Press, Ely House, 1933) P. 38

literature, I which Zola emphasizes biological determinism, and Flaubert economic determinism. The Russian novelists also added their influence to the trend. American leaders of the naturalistic movement are considered to include Crane, Norris, Herrick, London, and Frederik, and later such significant figures as Dreiser, Dos Passos, and Farrell.²⁷

2. The Basic Concept of Naturalism

The term of naturalism has been known for a long time in Europe but, just used to sign a section of literary for about the last of 19th century. The naturalist is the people who learn about the nature. In another word, the naturalism is a serious study about nature.

On Encyclopedia Americana "...but it came to full flower in the United States in the 1930's and 1940's following the pioneering efforts of..." firstly at that time, the section of literary that is called Realism is growing, which is beginning from France. The basic of the realist is tried to reveal the everyday life of the common people. Through realism in the literature, then the term of naturalism is appeared. First proclaim by Emile Zola who filled in the elements of science in the 19th century to the literature.

Realism and naturalism, whether in the drama or the novel, are literary or literary-philosophical movements, conventions, styles, like romanticism or

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²⁷ James D. Hart. The Concise Oxford: Companion to American Literature. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1986) P. 461

²⁸ Encyclopedia Americana International Edition, Volume 19, P. 796

surrealism. The distinction is not between reality and illusion, but between differing conceptions of reality, between differing modes of illusion.²⁹

Only on philosophy that frees itself from the "realism" of the natural attitude and achieves a transcendental reflection upon the constituting ego, only a science that finds its ultimate and only starting point in the absolute purity of an 'I think," can really lay the ground for an anthropology that doesn't grant in advance the validity of naturalistic psychology, for which the conscious life is but an "annex" or "abstract stratum" of a corporeal "human" being existing within a natural and material world. ³⁰

At the first time there is a lot of perception about realism and naturalism. But the literary critic has been tried to defined and find the connection for both of the two sections. The general perception of naturalism is that the continuity of growth from realism, the section which is also appropriate with the condition at that time and the culture of the society.

The emphasizing of the term of naturalism is as a consequence of science growth in the era of last 19th century, which is the world, is influenced by the theory of Darwin. Darwin's book "The Origin of Species" launched in 1859. Instead, this book is sold well. The first print sold out in the launched day. This one of the facts differ the book to any other well-known theory in the history of science.

The book contained the theory of evolution of human biology, and suddenly become the opening of a new insight of all the mankind at the time. This is the

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²⁹ Wellek and Warren: P. 213

³⁰ Paisley Livingston. Literary Knowledge Humanistic Inquiry and the Philosophy of Science. (London, Cornell University Press, 1988), P. 122

addition to the human's believe that the thought and ability of the brain is more capable to reveal the nature secret better than the heart's feeling which is as the basic of romanticism and as the next growth from realism. Because of the impact of the growth of the science, it has go far from the realism, and to differ it to realism, then they called by the naturalist.

Darwin's major assumption was that all life is related, and that the Number of Species occupying the earth has increased through time as the result of continual branching and development from ancestral forms. Evidence for this assumption has been accumulated by paleontologists whose investigations of the fossil record have provided a considerable body of information on the historical development of life on earth.³¹

For as long as the nature in question is the same nature that is conceive of by those sciences that arise from within the natural attitude, any limits inscribed within it will be in some important sense inessential. The "human" defined in this manner certainly may not be fully reducible to nature, but it remained a reality positioned within such a nature and subject to many of its determinations.³²

If it is impossible to withdraw the "mystery of life" from the ambit of science as a matter of principle (or fact), and if it is granted that human being are also in some

³¹ Alexander Alland, Jr. *Evolution and Human Behavior*. (Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1967), P. 1

³² Livingston: P. 122

important sense living creatures, we are obliged to recognize the reality of a scientific knowledge, however partial pertaining to human beings.³³

Through this objective study of human beings, naturalistic writers believed that the laws behind the forces that govern human lives might be studied and understood. Naturalistic writers thus used a version of the scientific method to write their novels; they studied human beings governed by their instincts and passions as well as the ways in which the characters' lives were governed by forces of heredity and environment. Although they used the techniques of accumulating detail pioneered by the <u>realists</u>, the naturalists thus had a specific object in mind when they chose the segment of reality that they wished to convey.³⁴

Charles Darwin applied the scientific method to biology and detailed his laws of natural selection, survival of the fittest, slow speciation, the evolution of all biological life, and the essential unity of all living things through evolutionary descent. In his Origin of Species he stated that species change over time as a result of the action of natural selection (individual members of a species survive if they are better adapted to their environment; over time, species as a whole change as a result of the reproduction of "better adapted" individuals within the species). The public interpreted this idea of natural selection to suggest that human races and classes survive and prosper to the extent that they are "fit" to survive. Social Darwinism, the extreme version of the idea as applied to thought about mankind and society, suggests

³³ Livingston: P. 134

³⁴ http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/natural.htm. accessed on November 30th, 2009

that races and classes should prosper, live, or die according to how "fit" they were and that such was the "natural" law of societies and cultures. To a social Darwinist, it is useless to help people who cannot help themselves or who live outside mainstream society because "nature" has condemned them to die, like the dinosaurs, because they are not well adapted to their environment; they are not "fit" to live. ³⁵

When people think that naturalism is most talking or thinking about nature lovers or people who like nature, in fact that's not it all. As the naturalism is best defined as nature's indifference toward humanity but yes, it is also used to illustrate an individual's relationship with nature. It applies the scientific method to a life or death struggle, and to be naturalistic, it supposed to be influenced by the Darwinism theories.

The naturalism displayed by finding the intrinsic element and figured by the appearance of images of nature in the poems or texts. Those images are really helpful to identify any purpose deeply in the text for it is to conclude the theme or identifying the naturalism, those also allows to paint a picture that will linger in mind even long after reading the poem or text.

The naturalism's characteristics appear through the figure of how the surrounding and basic instinct or emotions sharpen the main character's personality. This Emotion creates human's own perspective to his society and the condition of the surrounding.

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³⁵ http://vc.ws.edu/engl2420/2001/unit3/intro.htm accessed on August 31st, 2009

By this, in naturalism, the human studied on their own characteristics. For the individual is no longer free by it self but the part of the universe; society and environment, and then their life is affected by the condition of the society. They also conditioned and controlled by the environment, heredity, instinct, or chance. The human has the basic forces that strengthen the thought and willing in living, and also the attitudes inherited from their each ancestor.

The human lives in the world that they cannot control, and then it seems that the life has been determined. The fate is the determination, then they have no free will in life, although the human is superior from others, they still have to realize that they are the part of the universe. The survival of the fittest is also as the key for human in the world life for Darwin, how the human with the best quality will win from those worse, it is can be seen from the up or lower classes in society to take the control over.

3. The Naturalism in American Literature

Naturalism reveals the social critic. This social critic is revealed because of the culture of the society and the condition of American people at that time is wildly change by the outgrowth and revolution in every aspect that is happened in that century.

Between 1880 and 1900, cities in the United States grew at a dramatic rate. Owing most of their population growth to the expansion of industry, U.S. cities grew by about 15 million people in the two decades before 1900. Many of those who

helped account for the population growth of cities were immigrants arriving from around the world. A steady stream of people from rural America also migrated to the cities during this period. Between 1880 and 1890, almost 40 percent of the townships in the United States lost population because of migration.

Industrial expansion and population growth radically changed the face of the nation's cities. Noise, traffic jams, slums, air pollution, and sanitation and health problems became commonplace. Mass transit, in the form of trolleys, cable cars, and subways, was built, and skyscrapers began to dominate city skylines. New communities, known as suburbs, began to be built just beyond the city. Commuters, those who lived in the suburbs and traveled in and out of the city for work, began to increase in number.³⁶

By the growth and revolution in almost of every aspect; including the revolution in economic, technology, industry, and science, then the laborers and workers are just depend on their boss on salary, or how every employee just depend on other employee in the factory because of the specialize on work and the minimum salary. The condition is confusing by the huge revolution, but the prosperity of the society is just neglected.

Then, the works of naturalism reveal the real life but not as it is. It reveals the real life scientifically, it shows the social critic because of the condition and culture of the American is changed by the revolution in almost of every aspects at the time and

^{36 &}lt;u>http://memory.loc.gov/learn//features/timeline/riseind/city/city.html.</u> accessed on November 30th, 2009

because the naturalists also try to use their knowledge of science as affected of the theory of Darwin that growth in that century to the literary works.

The well-known naturalists in this period are Stephen Crane (1871-1900), Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) and Jack London (1876-1917). Naturalistic works, such as London's "To Build a Fire" and Dreiser's Sister Carrie, portray humans as helpless or nearly helpless victims of natural and social forces. Because these forces usually affect the characters negatively--freezing them to death, for example or leading them into poor jobs and destructive relationships--naturalistic fiction and poetry tend to be dreary in tone.

Crane is perhaps the greatest of the naturalists, however, precisely because his works transcend their genre. While works such as The Red Badge of Courage and "The Open Boat" depict men struggling against a natural world that is both destructive and indifferent, they also explore subjects such as fraternity, an individual's role in community, psychology, art, and initiation into manhood. What is more, unlike Dreiser and London, Crane treated his subjects in a highly lyrical style. Indeed, in addition to writing some of America's most famous stories, he produced a substantial body of poetry. A particularly noteworthy aspect of this style is Crane's use of imagery, which has earned him the title of a literary impressionist. 37

Sister Carrie (1900), the story of a country girl's rise to material success first as the mistress of a wealthy man and then as an actress, horrified its publisher, who

³⁷ http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/18661913/lit/crane.htm Accessed on February 7th, 2010

gave it only limited circulation. Dreiser distributed it himself, but it was consistently attacked as immoral; it was reissued in 1982 with many passages from his revised typescript restored. When Jack London wrote "To Build a Fire" he embraced the idea of naturalism because it mirrored the events of daily life. Naturalism showed how humans had to be wary at every corner because at anytime death could be there, waiting for them to make a mistake and forfeit their lives. He used naturalism, the most realistic literary movement; to show how violent and uncaring nature really is and how no matter what you do nature will always be there. London also presented the basic idea of Darwinism and the survival of the fittest, basically if you are dumb you will die. Collectively, London used naturalism to show how in life, humans can depend on nothing but themselves to survive.

³⁸ http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0816090.html Accessed on February 8th, 2010

CHAPTER III

THE ANALYSIS OF NATURALISM IN THE THREE OF DEBORAH DIGGES'S POEMS

To analyze the three of Digges's poems, the writer analyzed the poems intrinsically, and then she describes the naturalism in the poems.

A. Trapeze

a. The Poem

See how the first dark takes the city in its arms and carries it into what yesterday we called the future.

- O, the dying are such acrobats.

 Here you must take a boat from one day to the next,
 - or clutch the girders of the bridge, hand over hand.
- But they are sailing like a pendulum between eternity and evening,
 - diving, recovering, balancing the air.
 Who can tell at this hour seabirds from starlings,
- 9 wind from revolving doors or currents off the river.Some are as children on swings pumping higher and higher.
 - Don't call them back, don't call them in for supper.
- 12 See, they leave scuff marks like jet trails on the sky.

Digges gives the reader images of nature in this poem. The reader brought to imagine the situation when the world became dark. She makes an imagination when

the first time it is appeared in the end of the day, when the human change position from the past to what they called tomorrow.

She talked about the dying that she compared to the acrobat. The title of this poem is trapeze. Trapeze is a kind of a tool that used by the acrobats to do their action in the air, it is consisting of a short horizontal bar suspended by two parallel ropes. She makes an interpretation to the changing of the day, the dying also have the similarity in common thus; that they have to switch their position from the life to another world.

The acrobats have to balanced and jumped or make a great gesture in the air. It figures that they can do anything impossible; for it is to meet the seabirds up in the sky, talking with the wind in the air, or to have the river a greeting. It also reminds the simple figure; to the children are playing on their swings.

In the end, the speaker chooses to supper and to let the memories down. The imagery gives an imagination when the acrobats leave the trails or marks in the air while they are doing their gorgeous works. It can be interpreted to the dying that will always in the heart of their beloved even long after their gone.

b. The Naturalism Analysis

At the first line of the poem, visual imagery given the image about the darkness, and Digges's use of metaphor give the reader a picture of changing of the day to the night "See how the first dark takes the city in its arms", 'arms' figured a symbol of the power, here as the relation to the word 'the first dark' the dark that

would darken the city like an interpretation of the city would be hidden by the power of the dark.

The personification used to get an image of how the darkness appeared. In line one and line two "See how the first dark takes the city in its arms/and carries it into what yesterday we called the future." Digges treated 'the first dark' using human attributes by the word 'takes' and the word 'carries'. Next, in the line four "Here you must take a boat from one day to the next," the metaphor figured what the human been through from what they call today to tomorrow.

In line six "But they are sailing like a pendulum between eternity and evening," the sign of the word 'like' tells simile. In line seven "diving, recovering, balancing the air." the word 'they are' in line six refers to the acrobats that is figured the dying. The sign of personification appeared by the dying sailing, diving, recovering, balancing, it gives the human attribute to the dying.

Then, in the next line eight "Who can tell at this hour seabirds from starlings," and line nine "wind from revolving doors or currents off the river." personification appeared by the word 'tell', telling the seabirds, telling the wind, telling the currents river.

In line ten, the word 'as' sign simile "Some are as children on swings pumping higher and higher" figure the children are playing on a swings which is compare to the wind that revolved the door. In the last line, "See, they leave scuff marks like jet trails on the sky." visual imagery appeared, makes an imagination about the scuff marks on the sky, and the word 'like' sign simile.

The images figured the darkness and the loss. From then, the writer concludes the theme for this poem is that; the loss that impact some body. The death of somebody means it's gone and never comeback because of the soul is passed from the real world to another world, and the people who leave behind would just have the memories, continue to straight struggling for life.

When reading this poem, especially by the appearance of figure of speech and the imagery, may makes a feeling about confuses, fear, a dark images. Saying about 'the first dark' is going in to great deal about nature, the use of this nature image as the opposite of the human willing to live in a good sense. The darkness of the nature influenced the speaker's emotion.

The naturalism discovered from the influence of emotion and environment to the human. When the darkness appeared in the evening, it influenced the emotion of the speaker. The writer assumed that it related to Digges's personal life about the death of her husband. Digges figured her feeling about loss by the use of image of 'acrobats' doing everything they like without having any connection to the real world anymore. Then, the writer also traces it from about the importance of the environment to the human's life. In this case, the environment could be the nature of where the human used to live, or it could be the society with who the human live.

In this poem, Digges put 'the dying' and 'the first dark' as the environment that influenced her. Because of the dark is appeared as the condition of the nature, it influenced the emotion of the speaker. The first reading this poem gives the feeling of dark and loss, brought to the situation of the nature that figured by Digges. But then,

in the end, it creates a different feeling than the rest of the poem. In line eleven, "Don't call them back, don't call them back for supper." by the word 'supper', the speaker seems go back from her own thought to the real world to continuo to live. In line twelve "See, they leave scuff marks like jet trails on the sky" By the word 'scuff marks' and 'trails' the speaker's sudden consciousness agreed to let the memories down. The speaker chooses to straight to have supper and make the memories is a memories that could not just erased by it is carved in the heart; this is identified the basic instinct to survive in unsupported environment.

The word 'the sky' in the last line can be the assumption on something great and really huge which is, if it compared to the dying will be stay in. it can also be the assumption to the heart and the mind of the people that leaved by the dead. This word also identified the imagination of the first dark appeared in the sky, sees from the sky and happened in the sky. So, this is the situation that the human have no any control and fate to remember what is gone. The human, as the most perfect creature still have the limit on earth, they have determination on their life.

B. My Life's Calling

a. The Poem

My life's calling, setting fires. Here in a hearth so huge I can stand inside and shove the wood around with my 5 bare hands while church bells deal the hours down through the chimney. No more woodcutter, creel for the fire or architect, the five staves 10 pitched like rifles over stone. But to be *mistro-elemental*. The flute of clay playing my breath that riles the flames, the fire risen to such dreaming 15 sung once from landlords' attics. Sung once the broken lyres, seasoned and green. Even the few things I might save, my mother's letters, 20 locks of my children's hair here handed over like the keys to a foreclosure, my robes remanded, and furniture dragged out into the yard, 25 my bedsheets hoisted up the pine, whereby the house sets sail. And I am standing on a cliff above the sea, a paper light, a lantern. No longer mine 30 to count the wrecks. Who rode the ships in ringing, marrying rock the waters storm to break the door,

looked through the fire, beheld

a clearing there. This is what you are. What you've come to.

35

This beautiful poem firstly bring the reader into the hearth, by it is impossible in fact; playing in the hearth, shoving the wood around with bare hands. Then, it talks about the woodcutter that the wood used in the hearth, asked for no more woodcutters even if it is used to create the fire or for the architect to do their job for the new building.

While the staves pitched and the flames raised and rose make the imagination about the life in the last time. Bring the reader to the situation of a foreclosure where every kind of the precious things just took over; the robes, the furniture, the bed sheets and even the house.

Digges finally made a correlation to a beautiful ending about the speaker of the poem standing on a cliff above the sea. Attractively, the speaker finds a lantern that lightens him. It became a clearing for the inside of him although the waters and the rock create the great storm around the cliff.

b. The Naturalism Analysis

The word 'fire' appeared five times in the poem; strengthen by the words 'staves', 'flames', 'hearth', and 'the chimney' as the pressure to it. The word fire figured a symbolization of the purification. As the natural symbol may represent different, even opposite things, which is just depended on how they are deployed in the poem, controlled by its context. By many of the images that figured the information to the reader, it helps the use of imagination from what the poet served.

In line four to line seven "The wood around with my /bare hands while church bells /deal the hours down through /the chimney. No more" the auditory imagery appeared given the image of sound of a church bell. In line ten, "pitched like rifles over stone.", and also in line twenty one 'here handed over like the keys' is a simile by the sign of the word 'like' added the attention of the reader a deeper mind. It gives the picture about the things that the speaker might save from the damage while he is in desperate situation.

Again, auditory imagery in line twelve "the flute of clay playing", in line fifteen to line sixteen "sung once from landlords' attics. /sung once the broken lyres," and also in line thirty one "who rode the ships in ringing," Given the images about the sound of the flute, the voice of some one singing, and the voice of the ringing of the ships to the reader.

Visual imagery in the line seventeen "seasoned and green." also in the line twenty seven to line twenty nine "And I'm standing on a cliff /above the sea, a paper light, /a lantern. No longer mine" Give the information of the situation, the image give a picture where the speaker standing on a cliff in the place between life and dead but, there is a lantern given the light to the desperate mind. We can also find visual imagery in line thirty four "looked through the fire, beheld".

In line thirty two "marrying rock the waters" and in line thirty three "storm to break the door," Digges used personification, she chooses the word 'rock' human attributes 'marrying', figured a hard storm happened when the rock and water become together in destroying something.

The word 'the waters' in this poem symbolized the tempest as the opposite of the 'fire' which is symbolized purification to the speaker. The rock and the water create the storm which figured the great phenomenon in the world of nature. The tempest here seems at ease seen through purification; fill in the speaker by positive mind until he can see the things better than just buried him self in despair.

The self's consciousness from despair assumed by the writer as the theme of this poem. The words 'woodcutter' in line seven "woodcutter, creel for the fire" or the statement in line thirty "to count the wrecks." gives the picture of the speaker' willing to not doing the things useless, the things that just would make suffer and lose out.

The naturalism identified from the influence of the environment to human's life in this poem. Digges write a picture of such depression, using natural elements that defined the images and the speaker. The switching of the symbol of specifies words, and the images of how the information figured expressed the frustration from the condition.

In the first part, the speaker portrayed a depression. In the end, the statement 'no longer mine to count the wrecks'; him self's confession of consciousness. The word 'a paper light' in line twenty eight "above the sea, a paper light," Have a relation to a consciousness to the word 'a lantern' in line twenty nine "a lantern. no longer mine" and the word 'a clearing' in line thirty five "a clearing there. This is what." The statement 'to break the door' in line thirty three is the breakthrough of the self indicating that the speaker finally finds an enlightenment.

The basic instinct of a human can also be identified to naturalism as Digges figured the speaker standing on a cliff as surrounded by the images of storm could not been challenged and that human cannot control. However, the speaker made a decision to be alive.

C. The Leaves

a. The Poem

I can bless a death this human, this leaf the size of my hand. From the life-line spreads

a sapped, distended jaundice toward the edges, still green.

5 I've seen the sick starve out beyond the grip of their disease.

They sleep for days, their stomachs gone, the bones in their hands

seeming to rise to the hour that will receive them.

Sometimes on their last evening, they sit up and ask for food.

their faces bloodless, almost golden, they inquire about the future.

*

One August I drove the back roads, the dust wheeling behind me.

I wandered through the ruins of sharecrop farms and saw the weeds in the sun frames

opening the floorboards.

20 Once behind what must have been an outhouse

the way wild yellow roses bunched and climbed the sweaty walls, I found a pile of letters,

fire-scarred, urinous.
All afternoon the sun brought the field to me.

The insects hushed as I approached.

I read how the world had failed who ever lived behind

the page, behind the misquoted Bible verses, that awkward backhand trying to explain deliverance.

*

The morning Keats left Guys Hospital's cadaver rooms for the last time, he said he was afraid.

This was the future, this corning down a stairway under the elms' summer green,

passing the barber shops along the avenue that still performed the surgeries, still dumped

35 blood caught in sand from porcelain washtubs into the road-side sewer. From those windows,

from a distance, he could have been anyone taking in the trees, mistaking the muse for this new

warmth around his heart—the first symptom 40 of his illness—that so swelled the look of things,

> it made leaves into poems, though he'd write later he had not grieved, not loved enough to claim them.

This beloved poem firstly talked about the leaf that is still sapped and green but it is dying. It compare the sick starve that grip on their disease. There is nothing they can do because of the limits of the disease and poverty; they eat nothing, thin body. It also tells the reader that sometimes on the very evening they've been a beggar in some place with all questions about what will happen on their future.

The second part, the speaker wandered on August with the sun frames accompanied. He saw the farms with the kinds of wild yellow roses crowded the walls and a lot of insects around this ruins of a sharecrop farms. It is unproductive farm; by it is still burn down by the sun. Fill in the speaker a failure of life in the past that explained an awkward way in a page of Bible.

The third part talked the other location under the Elms' summer green, remembering when the speaker's friend left the cadaver room talking about his feeling, the blood in the washtub, and the warmth around his heart becoming the first symptom of his illness. The leaves in the first part compare to this, seems still alive, green, but it's dying.

b. The Naturalism Analysis

In the first part of this poem, 'the leaf' specified metaphor, figured a suggestion that it possesses the qualities of a human. The visual imagery creates an image of how the leaf truly seen by the reader "I can bless the death of this human, this leaf/ the size of my hand. From the life line spreads". It also has a correlation to the next line that we find personification given the human attribute to the leaf that spreads which is the leaf is represent by the 'life-line' compare to the hand of the

speaker of the poem. On the palm of the hand, there are lines that are the leaves also have lines on it.

In line three "a sapped, distended jaundice" and line four "toward the edges, still green" visual imagery makes the reader thinks about the shape of the leaf that is really figured in the poem, the line on the leaf spreads with a sapped in it, but the edges of it, still green, it is dead although the leaf still might be strong enough to live.

Organic imagery and visual imagery are found in line five "I've seen the sick starve out beyond" and personification in line six "the grip of their disease". This is the imagination of the speaker about seeing some people in some place starving and ill. The disease cannot grip, so it given the human attribute to the disease.

Personification in line seven "They sleep for days, their stomachs gone," gives the stomach human attribute 'gone'. Through the next line eight to fourteen, "the bones in their hands/seeming to rise to the hour /that will receive them. /Sometimes on their last evening, they sit up /and ask for food,/their faces bloodless, almost golden, /inquire about the future." visual imagery followed to make the reader imagine the situation when those people who are starving and ill begging up in the street on evening.

In the second part, Digges also use personification, given the human attribute to some words of non human. In line sixteen "the dust wheeling behind me." given to 'the dust' human attribute 'wheeling'. 'The sun' in line eighteen "and saw the weeds in the sun frames" which is added by the word 'frames' indicates personification. In the line twenty one "the way wild yellow roses bunched and climbed" the word

'bunched', 'climbed' that is refers to the wild yellow roses. 'The sweaty walls' in line twenty two "the sweaty walls, I found a pile of letters," also treated the walls human attribute sweaty. 'The sun' in the line twenty four "All afternoon the sun brought the field to me." given the attribute of human 'brought', and 'the world had failed' in line twenty six "I read how the world had failed who ever lived behind" that is also identified personification.

Then, Digges uses imagery to let the reader imagine the experience in the poem when the speaker wandered through the farms. The words 'Wild yellow roses' in line twenty one "the way wild yellow roses bunched and climbed" until she find letters in a pile in line twenty three "the sweaty walls, I founds a pile of letters," identified visual imagery to help the reader use their imagination of the farms, the word "the ruins of sharecrop farms" in line seventeen "I wandered through the ruins of sharecrop farms" figured the unproductive farms with a lot of insect and weeds grow wildly in it. All the images represent as the journey of a life which is might be fail or success just depend on the effort of each individual.

The nature images gave the reader an earthy feeling when reading it, the comfort feeling to the nature in the surface hidden the feeling of a confuse ness and doubt in life. The poem talked about the starving people in the first part of the poem. The nature images about the ruin farms in the second poem, and in the third part, the imagery used to provoke the reader's mind and imagination.

In the last part, the reader will imagine as they were under the green elm in summer that identified by the uses of visual imagery in line thirty two "under the

elms' summer green," Visual imagery also appeared in line thirty three to line thirty six "passing the barber shops along the avenue that still/ performed the surgeries, still dumped/ blood caught in sand from porcelain washtubs/ into the road-side sewer. From those windows," to give the image of what that speaker passed over while he walked trough. It gives the information of what the speaker see; the barber shops, the surgeries, and the blood that flows down to the road-side sewer.

Digges also uses the tactile imagery in line thirty nine "warmth around his heart-the first symptom". The third part of the poem more clearly invites the reader to feel the feeling of the speaker about loss, which is related to Digges's life who has been through a lot of difficulties.

The theme of this poem is; the survival in the real world life. It is talking about the loss and the willing for survival of the people who had been leaving behind by the death.

There are connection from the whole parts of the poem is that; in the first part, it talk about the leaves that is compared to the starving people who are struggling to survive, the second part talked about the wandered through the unproductive farms which is full of the line of a life's struggling. And to the last part which is talks about the loss of some one, the failure in struggling. Figured the surgeries and then also about the first symptom of his illness before then, that some one left the cadaver room.

In this poem, we can trace the naturalism from what we feel extrinsically given from the poem about the destiny. The factor of destiny determines the human's

life. The poem talks about the dead leaf, the beggar, the unproductive farms, and also about the dead one, the muse of the speaker's self. The beggar, as the part of society become so depend on their self to other people because of their poverty and illness, this is a condition of the society which is as the social critic. It has been ordered and organized as the important role that is the unsure of destiny.

The nature is the environment where the human live. Then, naturally, the human have to be appropriate to their environment, and the nature will choose who is fittest to survive. The leaf and the dead are chosen to die, the farm chosen to be damage and broken, and in the compare ness for this, is the beggar and the speaker of the poem is strong and fit enough to survive? Those depend on their ability to adjust the environment. The dead has a destiny to dead, the live has a destiny to live, just depend on who are stronger who will live. This is the indication of the appearance of the idea of the Social Darwinism about the survival of the fittest.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The three of Deborah Digges's poems entitled *Trapeze*, *My life's Calling, and The Leaves*, generally figured the darkness, the loss, and the depression of being alone in the natural world which the human cannot control. In the first poem, the poet experienced about the loss that is impact the everyday life. In the second poem, figured how hard the man can repair it self from despair as the nature just go along on their power which is uncontrolled. In the third poem, the poet has given the images of loss which is added by a willing for survival.

Naturalism talks about nature to human's life, whether it is the relationships with nature or the indifferent that the man is not significant to the universe, the fate which is put in the man in such of situation and the basic instinct and emotion expresses the frustration of the men toward the situation. The naturalist also put in their knowledge of the science from Darwin to their works.

The naturalism is still can be traced in the works of literature today. Naturalism defined the situation of the world today; where there is a lot of destruction in the natural world caused by the human itself which is still they even has no any power to authorize.

B. Suggestion

The writer finds interesting research about naturalism in those three poems. She analyzed them carefully to make the research well done. The naturalism as it is influenced by the Darwinism Theory revealed the real life also as a social critic found in the poems. So that, the reader who wants to know and learn further about naturalism, looked for any information about it in the library, essays or even search it on the website that believed could be the profitable sources for the references.



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APPENDICES

THE BIOGRAPHY OF DEBORAH DIGGES

Deborah Leah Sugarbaker was born on Feb. 6, 1950, in Jefferson City, Mo., the sixth in a family of 10 children. Her father was a doctor specializing in cancer treatment, her mother a nurse. Dr. and Mrs. Sugarbaker, the children of Dutch immigrants, were upright, civic-minded people and staunch Southern Baptists — it was the nearest they could come in Missouri, Ms. Digges wrote, to the Dutch Reformed Church.

An accomplished painter, Ms. Digges studied art at the <u>University of Missouri</u>. At 19 she married Charles Digges, eventually settling with him in California. An Air Force pilot in the Vietnam War, he was often away on missions, leaving Ms. Digges at home with their young son, Charles. It was around this time that she began to write poetry.

She also returned to college, receiving a bachelor's in English from the University of California, Riverside, in 1975. Ms. Digges went on to earn a master's in English from the University of Missouri in 1982 and a master of fine arts in poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1984.

Ms. Digges's first marriage ended in divorce, as did her second, to the poet Stanley Plumly. In 2000 Ms. Digges married Franklin Loew. Dr. Loew, a former dean of the veterinary schools at Tufts and Cornell Universities, who was later

president of Becker College in Worcester, Mass. He met Ms. Digges when he wrote to her after reading a newspaper review of "Fugitive Spring."

Dr. Loew died of cancer in 2003. "Trapeze," Ms. Digges's most recent volume of poems and widely considered her masterwork, pulsates with anguish in the wake of his illness and death.³⁹

She is the author of four books of poetry including Rough Music (1995), winner of the Kingsley Tufts Prize, and most recently *Trapeze* (Knopf, 2005). Her first book, Vesper Sparrows (1986), won the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Prize from New York University. Digges has also written two memoirs, Fugitive Spring (1991) and The Stardust Lounge (2001).

Digges has received grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Ingram Merrill Foundation and has taught in the graduate writing divisions of New York, Boston, and Columbia Universities. She died on April 10, 2009. 40 The author of four well-received poetry collections and two equally well-received memoirs, Ms. Digges was at her death a professor of English at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., outside Boston, where she had taught since 1986. Her poems were widely anthologized and appeared regularly in The New Yorker and other publications.

 $[\]frac{^{39}}{^{40}} \frac{\text{http://www.nytimes.com/}2009/04/17/\text{arts/}17\text{digges.html?}\underline{r=1}}{\text{http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/}1155}$ accessed on October 27th, 2009