CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Literature, says Hoep finger, is a reflection of history and culture, a contemplation of the universal themes of the human experience, and a window which allows readers to see life through other people’s eyes, giving readers a more thorough understanding of the world (22). That definition may conclude that some literary works is not always contains about the author’s imagination, but it sometimes contains something beyond imagination, in this case, fact or reality that really happens in life. The fact or the reality can be in the form of experiences that the author experience and also phenomena that happens in the author’s life. Therefore, it can be said that the historical evidence influence the author to create some literary work.

As far as statements above, literature is regarded as offering a unique access to history (Bennett 44). Since literature can be said as the author experience or something happens in real life, some history will be understood by the author of literary work to give his experience to create some of it.

One of the kinds of literary work that the thesis writer is interested in is poetry. Poetry is a dramatic experiment with language. More than in any other form of writing, the poem is where the writer tries to create a transformative experience, one that changes the reader or the reader’s perspective on the world (Brewer 111). The thesis writer is interested in poetry; because the language
poetry is simple but it need too many detail interpretations in analysis. Another reason, the author has been reflected the historical story through his works.

One of the poems that the thesis writer analyzes is entitled *The Coliseum* by Edgar Allan Poe. This poem is a lyric poem of forty-seven lines. It first appeared in *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter* (*Visitor*) in 1833. After he revised it, it appeared in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in August 1835 and *The Saturday Evening Post* on June 12, 1841. *The Coliseum* is a poem that the author will explore the history of the building in the Rome named Coliseum (http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides7/Coliseum.html).

Coliseum is a construction that it has become a symbol of Rome wealth. Coliseum is also of the amphitheater constructed in Rome between AD 70 and 82 near the Roman Forum. It could accommodate fifty thousand spectators for gladiatorial contests, executions, fights between men and animals, and other "entertainments." Most of the events ever be held in that coliseum is can be felt by the visitors until now (Schiffer 133).

Edgar Allan Poe, he is an American poet, he was born on January 19, 1809, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. He is an author from *The Coliseum* poem who tells some experiences as the coliseum visitor. Which is the experience is described particularly by the author to convoy the speaker felt what he looks. However, the place is an evidence of glory Rome at the last centuries and the author give some evidences of glory Rome by his words that he uses in every stanza. The words has a meaning to show the reader some history, such as “rich
reliquary” its means some rich inheritance. And still many evidence of the event at last century that the author tells in his poem.

The Coliseum poem by Edgar Allan Poe is not the first time analyzes. Kent Ljungquist is a student of Worcester Polytechnic Institute that ever doing analysis of this poem. He analyzes The Coliseum poem through the dialogues approach. However, the writer analyze this poem is not use the dialogues approach but through the historical approach.

The writer is interested to analyze The Coliseum poem by Edgar Allan Poe using historical approach because the writer finds so many historical evidences at this poem that the author written at the time. Another reason, the writer is also interested to use this poem as the object because the author is an American people but he tells some histories of ancient Rome.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the problems will be formulated as follows:

1. What is the theme of The Coliseum?

2. How does The Coliseum reflect the historical events?

1.3 Objective of Study

Dealing with the statement of problems above, this study has an objective of finding out:
1. To know the theme of *The Coliseum*.

2. To know the way *The Coliseum* reflects the historical events.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the specific events of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Coliseum* that used to appear within this poem. The thesis writer also limits the analysis on the word that events have related to the history in this poem. Furthermore, to complete the analysis, history of the ancient Rome is also discussed.

1.5 Significance of Study

The result of this research is expected to give the benefit to the reader and the researcher. The reader of *The Coliseum* poem can get the result as new information from this research. The reader will know about everything that has relation with history from this poem. Especially, what happened by the author’s life when he created this poem has the relationship with the historical event at the ancient Rome. Then the result of this research is expected can give inspiration and also advantage the other researcher that will do the same study for other poetry.

The research is also expected to give the benefit to the students at the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, especially for student of English Literature. They may use the result of the research as a material to the next research.
1.6 Method of the Study

The research method

To conduct this research, the thesis writer uses descriptive qualitative method. The writer tries to describe the historical events of the Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Coliseum* poem.

The unit of research

The unit analysis of this thesis is the poem by Edgar Allan Poe entitled “The Coliseum” published in 1835. This poem is accessed from Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe’s book.

The research approach

In this research the thesis writer uses the Historical approach. Historical approach accounts for events in the poem. The thesis writer also uses library research to obtain data sources and answer the problem. As for the main sources of the data in the study is the subject of where the data was obtained (Arikunto 107).

Procedure of the Data Collection

There are some steps which must be done by the thesis writer to collect the data. The thesis writer collects the data through library technique to make description of the data collection process is clear. So, the thesis writer uses some steps to do that. Firstly, reading and finding Edgar Allan Poe *The Coliseum* poem.
Secondly, making some notes of the poem to know what the meaning in it.

Thirdly, the writer reading some books through the history of ancient Rome and biography of Edgar Allan Poe.

**Procedure of the Data Analysis**

After collecting the data, the thesis writer represents analysis of the data. It is divided into some steps. Firstly, the writer classifies some words, phrases, lines and stanzas which show some history in *The Coliseum* poem and the historical event when the author written. Then, the writer will connect the theory with the data. The last the writer tries to interpret and make thesis statements from the analysis of data.
1.7 Definition of Key Term

Historical criticism: Historical criticism or Historicism is critical movement insisting on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of text of all kinds (Hamilton 01).

Coliseum: Colosseum or Colosseum is represents, as no other monument, the amphitheatre. The powerful associations and images conjure up by the words “The Colosseum” convey both the majesty and might of the surrounding streets and buildings. It is at once both symbol and a metaphor for the imperial might of the Roman Empire that dominated the ancient Mediterranean world (Bomgardner 01).