

READER'S FACTORS IN INTERPRETING *ELDORADO* BY EDGAR ALLAN POE USING READER-RESPONSE THEORY: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Article aims to find variety of interpretations on Eldorado poem, following the readers' internal factors, such as societal norms, personal values and past experiences influence the interpretations. Data generated for this study are acquired through field research, in which questionnaires are used as data collecting instrument. The respondents are from third semester students of English Literature in Bina Nusantara University. The finding shows that interpretations of Eldorado include 44% ideas about failure, 24% ideas about perseverance, and 25.33% ideas about taking a journey. In comparison to Eldorado's more neutral interpretation, it could be said that more respondents prefer to discuss the poem as the journey of life. It can be concluded that different societal norms, personal values and past experiences cause different kinds of interpretations, in which past experience becomes the most influential factor.

Keywords: reader-response, Eldorado, reader factors, interpretation

ABSTRAK

Artikel bertujuan menemukan variasi interpretasi terhadap puisi Eldorado karya Edgar Allan Poe, menurut faktor internal pembaca, seperti norma sosial, nilai pribadi dan pengalaman masa lalu yang mempengaruhi interpretasi mereka. Salah satu dari ketiga faktor tersebut yang paling berpengaruh. Studi ini dilakukan dengan metode penelitian lapangan, yang menggunakan kuesioner sebagai alat untuk mengumpulkan data. Kuesioner terdiri dari pertanyaan tentang norma sosial, nilai pribadi dan pengalaman masa lalu pembaca, serta opini pembaca mengenai puisi Eldorado. Data yang terkumpul menunjukkan bahwa interpretasi terhadap puisi Eldorado terdiri dari 44 % gagasan tentang kegagalan, 24% gagasan tentang keuletan dan 25,33% gagasan tentang perjalanan semata. Dari hasil analisis data, dapat ditarik kesimpulan bahwa: sebuah karya sastra dapat diinterpretasikan dengan banyak cara, perbedaan pada norma sosial, nilai pribadi dan pengalaman masa lalu mengakibatkan interpretasi yang berbeda, dan pengalaman masa lalu merupakan faktor internal yang paling mempengaruhi interpretasi pembaca.

Kata Kunci: respon pembaca, interpretasi, Eldorado

INTRODUCTION

Background

Reader is a very important aspect in selecting appropriate reading material for a language class. Reader-response theory suggests that the reader's role is as important as the text's role in making the text meaningful (Iser, 1980). The text provides some fragments and it is up to the reader how to connect the fragments into a unified, whole event (Lodge & Wood, 2000). Reader-response theory suggests the reader's interpretation of an artwork is influenced by some internal factors, such as values, norms and experience (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005).

Poetry is a strong kind of language which says something very intensely. According to Arp (1997), poetry is created by poets from their own experiences as a 'significant new experience...in which readers can participate' (p. 3). Therefore, as its definition suggests, poetry gives more opportunity to the readers to constitute the meaning. The poem *Eldorado* was composed in 1848, but published 1849, shortly before the death of Edgar Allan Poe on October 7th (Kennedy, 2006). It was created in the middle of gold-rush period and the financial crisis around the decade. The poem describes a knight's journey to find Eldorado, a legendary city made of gold, in four six-line stanzas.

The poem is often interpreted to express that a quest for instant wealth can be a delusion (Kennedy, 2006), which means it may be impossible to find many riches in an instant way. Riches or wealth or money is the object which many people consider as the symbol of achievement and success. From the When the knight found no land looked like Eldorado, a shadow fell over his heart and he wondered where Eldorado actually was. He asked a pilgrim shadow and the shadow replied: "*Over the Mountains of the Moon, Down the Valley of the Shadow.*" Therefore, the writer concludes that the poem is related to success and failure to get the goal(s) in life.

Some researches using reader-response theory has been done by several scholars such as Brooks (2006) and Wood (2009). From her research, Brooks (2006) concluded that the students respond only to some of the cultural features existing in the novels, based on their own knowledge and experience. From his research, Wood (2009) found that responses from men and women differ; men sent letters because they were interested in making Pace a business partner and a wife while women sent letters because they were sympathetic and felt that Pace's experience was the same as theirs, as a woman. These researches show that the response of readers toward a literary work or event is influenced by the reader's experience, knowledge, and values. Through *Reader's Factors in Interpreting Eldorado by Edgar Allan Poe* using *Reader-response Theory*, the writer wants to find out what experience, values and norms that influence interpretations of the poem. Through the findings, the writer wishes to acknowledge the role of the readers' experience, values and norms in shaping the readers' responses and give more knowledge about human behavior.

Research Questions

This study is aimed to answer these following questions: (1) what are the responses generated from the poem; (2) how do societal norms, past experience, and personal values influence readers' responses to the poems; (3) which one between societal norms, past experience, and personal values that gives more influence to reader's response.

METHOD

The research is conducted following a careful study on the literature available on the issue of reader-response theory as well as the literatures and textbooks on the current development and related areas. Creswell (2006) noticed that many times studies of appropriate and comprehensive literature may be vital in directing research into the right destinations.

This research also takes field study approach, in which data are generated by the responses in the field. The population of this research is the 3rd semester English Department students, while it took population sample of 75 students out of 119 students enrolled in that particular semester in the academic year of 2010-2011. They have been studying in English Department for at least a year and already have enough knowledge to understand English reading text. They also have gained some insights about reading poetry, which is needed in giving the responses required by the research. They are taught Introduction to Literature subject in the 2nd semester and Poetry Analysis subject in the third semester. Poetry Analysis subject involves reading poetries about various topics, identify the elements of poetry (i.e. imagery, connotation, figurative language), and finding the message(s) of poetry. The respondents are young adults who have graduated from Senior High School, who have their own idealisms and dreams about the future. They already experienced various events in life, good and bad, which shape their outlooks and characters.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main data gathering. The pilot study was conducted on three different occasions, due to short amount of time in delivering the questionnaire in between classes. The survey questions were designed to observe the various aspects and issues in the life of the students. In addition, following Dornyei's (2001) theory of motivation, questions are made to cover the five basic classes of needs (Maslow in Dornyei, 2001) which can be the motivational force in a person's life which would influence: achievement, self-efficacy theory, attribution and social motivation. The pilot study was conducted in several dates, which were on October 7th, 12th and 14th 2010. The pilot study covers four classes: PAG, PBG, PCG and PDG with the number of respondents 85. The distribution of the questionnaires was done in classes, before which agreement from the lecturers were acquired. Results from the pilot study were carefully taken, for the sole function of perfecting the set of questions for the main study. Choosing more appropriate expressions or words as well as the orders of the questions (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006; Harkness et al., 2010) become the central issues for revision, after studying the responses in the pilot study.

The main study was conducted by way of questionnaires, which was divided into two sections. The first section contains questions about the respondents' personal values, societal norms and past experiences while the second sections asked about the respondents' interpretation of the poetry and the feelings aroused from reading the poetry. The first section includes six open-ended questions and the second section includes the text of poetry *Eldorado* and two open-ended questions. In order to save time, the questions in the first section were read by the researcher. After a question was read, the respondents had to answer right away before the next question was read. In reading the questions, the researcher provided some prompts (examples of answers) to help the respondents answer. The poetry and the questions in the second section are printed along with some examples.

Once the first section was done, the respondents went on with the second section. The poetry, the questions and the prompts in the second section were printed, so the respondents were given some time to read the poetry and answer the questions. For the second section, the researcher also provided definitions for difficult words in the poetry to help respondents understand the poetry. The population for the main study covers four classes: PAG, PBG, PCG and PDG. The distribution of the questionnaires was done in classes. Therefore, the researchers first made appointments with the lecturers prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. Data from the first class, 03PBG, was taken on December 2nd 2010. The lecturer agreed that the questionnaires were distributed before the class. On the appointed day, before the lecture, the researcher entered the class. There were 20 students from this class. Second pool of data comes from the class of 03PAG on December 6th 2010. There were responses from 16 students. The third comes from 03PCG, which was taken on December 14th 2010, which resulted to 22 students' responses. Last pool of data comes from 03PDG class on the same day, December 14th 2010, except that the previous class was held in the morning (11.20-13.00 WIB or Western Indonesian Time), while the last was on 13.20-15.00 WIB or Western Indonesian Time. The total number of students who filled the questionnaires is 75 students.

In reading the data, some categories are made. They are categories, such as: M (money), R (relationship), A (achievement), and O (others), in the discussion of “societal norm”. Whereas in the discussion of personal values, new categories are added: with F for Freedom, and happiness/happy as well as missing (or do not mention anything) are being added also. The third factor in the Iser’s (1980) theory is past experiences and M, R, A, F, O, as well as missing being the categories for the responses. And lastly, when analyzing the readers’ factors with interpretations and feelings, 4 categories are made: NEG (negative), POS (positive), NEU (neutral) and MIX (for mixed feelings).

Literature Review

Reader-Response Theory and Meaning Production

Reader-response theory, or reader-response criticism, is defined as a term associated with the work of critics who use the word reader, the reading process, and response to mark out an area of investigation (Tompkins, 1980). Another term which is identified with reader-response is reader-oriented theory, which holds the view that readers must act upon textual material in order to produce meaning (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005) Reader-response theory suggests that the meaning of the text is not formulated by the text; it is rather the reader’s projection which was influenced by extraneous standards (Iser, 1980).

Rosenblatt (1994) defines text as the printed signs or symbols in a literary work (p.12). In this view, text is words and letters written on a piece of paper in form of any artwork which point to something else beyond them-selves. Meanwhile, Iser (1980) argues that text is only a potential meaning or effect which depends on the readers to become concrete and real. The text simply offers schematized aspects—the condition or the frame—but in order to make it a complete product, it needs an act of concretization, which is the reader’s act of forming a specific image about the text. Fish (as in Lodge & Wood, 2000) adds that although all kinds of text, such as poetry, are written by an author in particular forms for certain intentions, the form and intention do not produce interpretation; it is the interpretation that determines the realization of the form and the intention.

Interpretation comes as a result of intensive interaction between readers and the text. In addition to the notion of readers, Iser (1980) asserts that a reader can be divided into two kinds: hypothetical and real. He defines hypothetical reader as the reader to whom all possible actualizations of the text may be projected. S/he is the kind of reader whom the text suggests—a reader who has certain background and ability to encode the message of the author and to provide the intended response. On the other hand, he explains, real reader is the reader who creates images of the text in his mind based on his own background, which may not be the one the text intended. This kind of reader provides responses and reactions that is needed to know how public receive a certain text. Real reader is the person who actually reads the text and responds to it. Response from this type of reader is the point about which reader-response theory is concerned.

Fish, along with Iser (as in Lodge & Wood, 2000), describe reading process as the crucial interaction between text and reader, through which the reader and concretize or realize the text. Furthermore, this process involves the act of interpreting, in which a reader selects an item from his in-store memory to make sense of the text in his own way, using his own preconceptions to find connection between fragmentary elements in the text (Lodge & Wood, 2000; Iser, 1980). Iser (1972) also describes the reading process as the reader’s experience of the text, because by reading the reader forms a virtual dimension of a text and, as Fish (in Lodge & Wood, 2000) puts it, experience the event in the text. Reading process, as Iser (1980) claims, should include not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text—which was done by the reader.

When a reader reads, Iser (1980) explains further, he will be guided by the schematized aspects in the text but that does not mean that the reader’s own disposition plays no role. He further

elaborates that reading process is a form of communication, in which messages are transferred, and the transfer from text to reader will not be successful if the text cannot activate the reader's abilities of perceiving and processing. It is stated that this 'activation' is done when the text establish a relation with the reader's consciousness. Iser (1980) believes, the reader's disposition and experiences are the elements which form the frame and background for the process of grasping and comprehending the text.

There are several factors influencing a reader's perspective in making sense of a text; they include norms, attitudes, stock experiences, memory, interest, attention, and mental capacity (Iser, 1980). These factors are simply, by Selden, Widdowson & Brooker (2005), called: societal norms, personal values and past experiences. Responses, according to Rosenblatt (1994) are notes of thoughts and ideas coming to the readers after reading. Instead, Iser (1980) mentions mental images, individual realizations, virtual dimension and sense, as the result of the collaboration between the text and the reader's imagination. Fish (as in Lodge & Wood, 2000) used the term experience, sense, and interpretation to describe what readers produce. Therefore, understanding what the readers have in stored prior to reading a text would explain how the readers would interpret such text eventually.

Previous Research

Some research experiences in this area of study are provided by Brooks (2006) and Wood (2009). In 2006, Brooks published her study on urban African American's interpretation on cultural feature in the novel. Meanwhile, Wood's study in 2009 was centralized in connecting mass culture history with the media narratives. Brooks (2006)'s study, entitled *Reading Representations of Themselves: Urban Youth Use Culture and African American Textual Features to Develop Literary Understandings*, was driven by her passion to deepen the understanding of how readers of similar ethnicity use culture to interpret literature that represents their lives. She chose African American eight-graders in a school in Pennsylvania as her respondents. The data gathered were written responses and recorded oral discussion. The analysis included textual analysis on the novels used to find the cultural features and response analysis to find how students respond to the cultural features in the novels. Brooks found that the students use culture to interpret the novels and their responses to the cultural feature in the novels differ based on their cultural knowledge and experiences.

Wood (2009) did his research, entitled *Those Who Have Had Trouble Can Sympathize with You: Press Writing, Reader Responses and a Murder Trial in Interwar Britain*, because he wanted to examine the history of mass culture depicted by public reactions towards media narratives, especially crime report. Most importantly, it is because the aspect had long been ignored. The study was conducted in Britain by qualitatively examining and analyzing the data and drawing conclusion. The source of data is the collection of letters and postcards sent to Pace. The analysis was done by grouping the letters based on the gender of the senders, the response (negative or positive), and the intention behind the letter. Woods found that both the journalist way of narrating and the individual conditions of the senders influence the responses.

Eldorado by Edgar Allan Poe and the Concept of Success

Poetry is defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language (Arp, 1997). He believed that poetry expresses a significant experience of the poets—concentrated and organized—which allows readers to participate in it. He further asserted that poetry makes a fuller use of words—not only denotation, but also connotation. Arp (1997) asserted that the connotation meaning is what poets use to concentrate and intensifies the written words in order to get their ideas across to the readers.

Eldorado was written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1848 (Kennedy, 2006), in the year when California Gold Rush started. During the Gold Rush period, many people came from Australia, Latin

America, Europe and China to pursue the gold. Some prospered through the gold business, but some only got a small amount of profit. In relation to the phenomenon, Kennedy (2006, p.620) suggested that the poem *Eldorado* expresses a skeptical view that instant riches were just a delusion or an unreal hallucination. However, Kennedy also mentioned parts of the poem which suggest that *Eldorado* is present “Beyond the Mountains of the Moon” and “down the Valley of the Shadow”, which implies that it can be attained in the afterlife. Interpretations of this poem range from the critique to the gold-rush, the ignorant of mankind towards the over-exploitation of goods or wealth to the idea of pursuit of success and happiness. The later becomes more relevant issue nowadays.

Dornyei (2001) speaks about success and argues that people are driven to do something by their expectancy of success, the incentive value of the task fulfillment and the need for achievement. He explained that self-efficacy theory believes people are driven to do something by their perceived self ability to perform a task. He described attribution theory as suggesting that people are driven to do something by their view about their past experiences. This means, if a person views the failure in their past as a result of his incapability, he will less likely to be successful. Social motivation theory, he asserted, holds that people are driven to do something by their socio-cultural context—the society they are in.

DISCUSSION

Pilot Study

The pilot study is done by distributing questionnaires to the population which is used also in the main study. The questionnaire consists of eight questions about definition of perfect, priority, control over life and achieving a perfect life. The questions consist of four types: multiple choice question, scale question, rating question and open-ended question. The data collected in pilot study include the responses to questions asking about priority, responses to questions asking about definition of perfect and responses to questions asking about achieving a perfect life. In accordance to the concept of data analysis (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006), the responses are coded into symbolizing letters and responses to open-ended questions are coded according to the answers that occur.

Results from the pilot study show the various factors following the readers’ responses to the issue of success and failure in life, that the respondents have various ideas about what is the most important in life. However, there is a difference between responses to multiple choice question and responses to rating question. According to responses to multiple choice question, *relationship* category has the highest frequency (43,53 %). However, according to responses to rating question, *health* category has the highest frequency (38,82 %). Furthermore, only 23 out of 85 respondents (27,06 %) give rating 1 to the category they choose in the multiple choice question. This proves that most respondents distinguish between things they enjoy and things which are important. Another point to note is that the rating question is misunderstood by 11 respondents (12,94 %). Even after the researcher gave a brief explanation about how to answer this form of question, some respondents still did not understand. This shows that the form of question is not effective to elicit responses from the respondents. Additionally, it is found that responses to the open-ended questions asking about the definition of ‘perfect life’ contain those which are categorized as priority, such as money, relationship and health. Some of these responses contain the categories which are not chosen in multiple choice questions and/or not rated as number 1 in the rating question. For example, a respondent chooses the category *relationship* in multiple choice questions, rates *health* as number 1 in rating question and mentions *relationship* in open-ended question. In this case, it can be concluded that the respondent’s priority is actually *relationship* because the category is mentioned more than once.

The responses about definition of *perfect* and *perfect life* show that the respondents have also various ideas about what is perfect. There is similarity between responses to two forms of question;

the category *exactly what I want it to be* has the highest frequency both in responses to multiple choice question (50,59 %) and open-ended question (29,41 %). Even so, there is considerable difference in the variety of responses in both forms of question. The variety in responses to multiple choice questions include *in harmony, without conflict or trouble, on highest level available, exactly what I want it to be*, and *other*. Meanwhile, the variety in responses to open-ended question include *in harmony, without conflict or trouble, on highest level available, exactly what I want it to be, be content, happy, money, relationship, tranquility, achievement, health*, and *other*. In fact, only 37 respondents (49,33 %) give the same answer in multiple choice question and open-ended question. This proves that some respondents distinguish between *perfect* and *perfect life*; in open-ended question, the definition of *perfect life* tends to get more complex and to be combined with life priorities.

Some responses do correspond to responses about priority (31,76 %), but some do not correspond to either responses about priority or the definition of 'perfect' in the multiple choice question (21,18 %). This shows that, beside different definitions, the respondents also have different views about the connection between life priority and the definitions of *perfect* and *perfect life*. The responses about *achieving a perfect life* show that the respondents have various ideas as well about whether a *perfect life* can be achieved. The responses to the multiple question asking about the degree of control a person has over their life show that most respondents believe they have *partial control* over their lives (78,82 %), which means they can do something to determine their course of life. This corresponds to the responses to open-ended question asking whether they can or cannot achieve a perfect life, in which the answer *yes* have the highest frequency (77,65 %).

However, the responses to the scale question show that 61 respondents misunderstand the question; it can be either the instruction or the statements. The scale question asks respondents to decide the degree of their agreement (1-5) to three statements: *I can make my life perfect by working hard to achieve my dreams*, *There is no need to strain myself to be perfect, because there is nothing perfect*, and *Life is perfect as it is; that depends on how we look at it*. Most respondents agree to all of the statements, by giving 5 all for all statements or 3 for the first statement, 4 for the second and 5 for the third or other ways of scoring which indicate agreement. Very few respondents (2,36 %) take a definite stand in this matter—agreeing to one and disagreeing to others—and only some agree to both the first and the third statement (25,88 %). Two respondents give interesting responses: one believes he/she has 'partial control' over his/her life while one believes he or she has ultimate control, both agree to the first and the third statement in the scale question, but they think that they cannot achieve a perfect life. This clarifies that the two respondents are either not consistent or misled by the questions. Therefore, the responses to the scale question are considered invalid and are ignored. The responses from multiple choice question and open-ended question correspond in proving that, generally, the respondents believe that a perfect life can be achieved and that they can do something in order to do it. Another open-ended question requires the respondents who think they can or may achieve a perfect life to specify the way of achieving it. Nearly all of the responses (77,65 %) contain the element of hard work, even the respondents who think they cannot achieve a perfect life believe that they have to work hard.

In conclusion, the pilot study shows that questions in form of rating and scale are not interpretable for the respondents and, therefore, cannot elicit the required response, while open-ended questions and multiple choice questions are effective enough to elicit required responses from the respondents. Furthermore, it shows that responses to open-ended questions clarify the responses to multiple choice and rating questions. Responses to open-ended questions describe the respondents more accurately because they can write exactly what they have in mind. The pilot study also shows that although the respondents have various priorities and views about perfect life, most of them believe that they have not achieved what they want and that hard work is needed to achieve something. This proves that the respondents are familiar with the issue of 'success' or 'achieving dreams' which relates them to the poetry *Eldorado*, the reading text used in the main study.

Table 1 The Distribution of Answers to Questions in Pilot Study Questionnaire

CATEGORY	ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS (in %)							
	MC1	MC2	MC3	Scale	Rating	open-ended 1	open-ended 2	open-ended 3
TRANQUILITY	12.94				20	8.24		
ACHIEVEMENT	10.59				2.35	1.18		
MONEY	8.24				5.88	3.53		
RELATIONSHIP	43.53				20	14.12		
HEALTH	18.82				38.82	3.53		
OTHER	5.88		3.53			18.82		25.94
ULTIMATE		18.82						
NO CONTROL		2.36						
PARTIAL CONTROL		78.82						
CAN ACHIEVE							77.64	
MAYBE ABLE TO ACHIEVE							8.24	
CANNOT ACHIEVE							14.12	
DEPENDING ON PARADIGM				1.18				
HAVE TO BE PURSUED				1.18				
DEPENDING ON PARADIGM & HAVE TO BE PURSUED				25.88				
THE HIGHEST LEVEL			10.59			1.18		
AS I WANTED			50.59			29.41		
IN HARMONY			35.29			10.59		
CONTENT						3.53		
HAPPINESS								
WORK AND TRY								
TRUST GOD								
BE BETTER								23.5
BUILD RELATIONSHIP								23.5
MISSING/MISUNDERSTAND				71.76	12.95	5.87		27.06
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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Main Study

The main study is done by distributing questionnaires to 75 3rd semester-students of English Literature in Bina Nusantara University. The questionnaires consist of one section containing questions about the respondents’ societal norms, personal values and past experiences and another section containing the text of *Eldorado* and questions about the respondents’ interpretations of the poem and feelings aroused by the poem. As the concept of data analysis suggests, responses to the questions are coded into symbolizing letters or words to simplify the presentation and make it easier to read and understand (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006).

Analysis on Reader’s Factors

The first factor is societal norms. Information about this factor is elicited using the first question, which is about *the aspects which are important for people around the respondents*, and the

second question, which is about *the reason which makes the aspects important*. It is found that the themes of the answer for the questions include money, relationship, and achievement. The dominant theme of answers for both the first (54.67 %) and the second question (56 %) is about money. Most respondents (94.67 %) recognize the norms applied in their societies and can also find the reasons behind the norms.

Table 2 The Distribution of Responses to Questions Asking About Societal Norms

Category	Question 1	Percentage (%)	Question 2	Percentage (%)
M	41	54,67	42	56,00
R	18	24,00	18	24,00
A	7	9,33	6	8,00
O	5	6,67	5	6,67
missing	4	5,33	4	5,33
TOTAL	75	100	75	100

The second factor is personal value. Information about this factor is elicited using the third question, which is about *the respondent's life desire*, and the fourth question, which is about *the strategy to get that desire*. It is found that the themes of the answers for the third question include money, relationship, freedom, achievement, happiness, and other. The dominant theme of answers to the first question is about relationship (29.33 %). The answers to the third question are also categorized into: concrete or abstract. It is found that the dominant form is concrete (62.67 %). It is also found that the themes of the answers for the fourth question include money, relationship, freedom, achievement, happiness, and hard work. Respondent mostly answers hard work (37.33 %) as the most important aspect to success, which was presented in the first question. Meanwhile, when the fourth question is further studied, based on the extent: broad or specific, it is found that the dominant strategy is rather broad (48 %). In summary, nearly all respondents (94.67 %) know what they want in life and most respondents (92 %) have strategies to achieve their desires. Some of them think of concrete goals, while some think of abstract desires. Even though some cannot specify what they will do, nearly all of the respondents have a strategy to get what they desire.

Table 3 The Distribution of Responses to Question 3 and 4, Based on the Form and the Extent

CATEGORY		FORM		
		ABS	CON	total
STRATEGY	BRO	19	17	36
	SPE	5	28	33
	IDK		2	2
	total	24	47	71

The third factor is past experiences. Information about this factor is elicited using the fifth question, which is about *the most memorable success experience*, and the sixth question, which is about *the most memorable failure experience*. It is found that the themes of the answers for these questions include money, relationship, freedom, and achievement. Eight percent of the answers to the fifth question and 9,33% of the answers to the sixth question are considered invalid and therefore are classified and missing and left out of the analysis. The dominant theme of the answers for both the fifth (72%) and the sixth question (61.33%) is achievement. Answers to the study of this factor are also classified based on the competition level: competitive or non-competitive. It is found that the dominant competition level of both success (57.33%) and failure experiences (68%) is non-competitive. Furthermore, when classifying the responses based on the view: *personal* or *public*, it is found that the dominant view of success experiences is *public* (50.67%) while the dominant view of failure experiences is *personal* (56%).

In summary, most of successful experiences (72%) and most of failure experiences (61.33 %) of the respondents are related to achieving or failing to achieve something, such as a good score or a victory. However, most of the successful experiences (57.33 %) are gained in non-competitive events, such as graduation from High School. Similarly, most of the failures are non-competitive events (68 %), such as getting bad score for exams or failing to get high GPA. These results show that most respondents have not experienced a tight competition in gaining success. The successes they know are achievements which are communal, such as graduating from High School, and fulfilling personal desires, such as making parents proud.

Table 4 The Distribution of Responses to Question 5, Based on View of Achievement and Level of Competition

CATEGORY		VIEW				%
		personal	public	missing	total	
COMPETITION	high	-	1	-	1	1,33
	medium	-	12	-	12	16,00
	low	2	10	-	12	16,00
	no comp.	28	15	-	43	57,33
	other	1	-	-	1	1,33
	missing	-	-	6	6	8,00
	total	31	38	6	75	100,00
%		41,33	50,67	8,00	100,00	

Table 5 The Distribution of Responses to Question 6, Based on View of Achievement and Level of Competition

CATEGORY		VIEW				%
		personal	public	missing	total	
COMPETITION	high	-	-	-	0	0,00
	medium	-	11	-	11	14,67
	low	-	6	-	6	8,00
	no comp.	42	9	-	51	68,00
	other	-	-	-	0	0,00
	missing	-	-	7	7	9,33
	total	42	26	7	75	100,00
%		56,00	34,67	9,33	100,00	

Analysis on the Relation of Reader's Factors with Interpretation and Feeling

The second section of the questionnaire contains questions asking about the respondents' opinion about the poetry *Eldorado* by Edgar Allan Poe. The first question (Message Question) is *what you think the poem tells you about*. To help respondents answer, examples such as "a journey" and definitions of vocabularies in the poetry were provided.

Responses to Message Question are classified into negative message, positive message, mixed message and neutral message. Negative messages include interpretations about *failure*, *desperation* or *difficulty*. Positive messages include interpretations about *hard work*, *not giving up* or *spirit*. Mixed messages include both positive and negative theme. Neutral messages include interpretations about neutral events, such as *a search* or *a journey* without indication of failure or success. The responses consist of 33 *negative messages*, 18 *positive messages*, 1 *mixed message*, 19 *neutral messages* and 4 responses regarded as *missing* and left out of the analysis.

The second question (Feeling Question) in the second section is *how you feel when you read the poem*. The question is followed by an example such as *sad*, *happy*, *pity* and *motivated*. The responses are classified into *negative feeling*, *positive feeling*, *mixed feeling* and *other feeling*.

Negative feelings include feelings such as *sadness* and *pity*. Positive feelings include feelings such as *happy* and *motivated*. Mixed feelings include both positive and negative feelings. Other feelings include feelings which are neither negative nor positive such as *curious* and *confused*. These responses consist 26 *negative feelings*, 34 *positive feelings*, 4 *mixed feelings*, 5 *other feelings* and 6 responses regarded as *missing or not answering*, and therefore will not be included in the analysis. As questions about Feeling and Message both elicit responses from readers, they are related in some way. Table 6 shows the relationship between Message and Feeling.

Table 6 The Relation between Message Interpretations and Feelings Aroused

CATEGORY		FEELINGS					TOTAL	%
		NEG	POS	MIX	O	missing		
MESSAGES	NEG	18	11	2	2	-	33	44,00
	POS	-	17	1	-	-	18	24,00
	MIX	1	-	-	-	-	1	1,33
	NEU	7	6	1	3	2	19	25,33
	missing	-	-	-	-	4	4	5,33
	TOTAL	26	34	4	5	6	75	100,00
%		34,67	45,33	5,33	6,67	8,00	100,00	

As questions about Feeling and Message both elicit responses from readers, they are related in some way. There is relationship between Message and Feeling. 93.33 % of interpreted messages consist of positive, negative and neutral interpretations while the remaining 6.67 % consist of 'missing' interpretations and mixed interpretation. The discussion will compare the readers' factors of three groups of respondents: the first group, consisting of respondents generating positive messages, the second group, consisting of respondents generating negative messages, and the third group, consisting of respondents generating neutral messages.

The dominant *societal norm* in three groups is *money is important*. There is only slight difference between three groups as the "money" norm comprises 50% of the norms of the first group, 60.61 % in the second group, and 63.16 % in the third group. However, the first and third group contains no norm of *Other* category while the second group contains 4 norms of *Other* category. The 4 norms included to *Other* category consist of answers about *culture, traditional events, good transportation, good traffic, city cleanliness* and *amusement centre*. These responses may be caused by the respondents' inability to recognize the norm of the society or the fact that the norm is different from the common view. These findings indicate that people who are not certain about the norm in their society may be also uncertain and tend to be negative about the pursuit of success.

Meanwhile, the dominant *personal value* in the first (44.44 %) and second group (36.36 %) is *relationship* while the dominant personal value in the third group (47.37 %) is *money*. Therefore, this indicates that a person whose goals are related to *wealth and riches* tend to treat a text as it is, without any idea about failure or spirit in the journey. Abstract values comprise more percentage in the second group (42.42 %) than in the first group (27.78 %) or third group (21.05 %). Broad strategy in gaining valuable objects comprises more percentage in the second group (57.58 %) than in the first group (44.44 %) or the third group (47.37 %). These findings indicate that a person who knows little about his or her goal tends to be negative about the pursuit of success. *Public* experiences are dominant in the first group (61,11 %) and the second group (57,58 %), while *personal* experiences are dominant in the third group (63,16 %). This indicates that a person whose success experiences are unrecognized by other people tends to have less ability to relate a text about pursuing something to a success or a failure. Competitive events (including high, medium and low) comprise 50 % in the first group while they comprise only 30,30 % in the second group and 26,31 % in the third group. This finding indicates that when a person can do better than others in a competitive event, he or she gets more positive.

Moreover, there are more success experiences which are personally valued in the first group and the third group than there are in the second group. In the first group, there are answers such as *I can get a job I've been wanting, I've done one of my projects and I can give advice that is worthy*, and in the third group there are answers such as *can pay cell phone with my own money, I get what I want, and get the job that I want*. These answers show how the respondents value their experiences as personal achievement. In the second group there is only *I'm beginning to reach my idea*" which expresses personal desire.

Two respondents in the second group do not give any answer about success experience and another respondent, also in the second group, answers *I have (a success experience)* but does not specify what the event is. This may be caused by the respondents' inability to remember the events or differentiate between success and failure, or the respondents' unwillingness to share the events. These findings show that people who get a victory or a job or any goal which has been a personal desire tend to be more optimistic than people who achieve without having a personal desire. In addition, *personal experiences* are dominant in the first (55,56 %), the second (60,61 %) and the third group of respondents (63,16 %). *Non-competitive events* are dominant also in the first (77,78 %), the second (72,73 %) and the third group of respondents (68,42 %).

However, there are more failure experiences which are personally valued in the second group than there are in the first and third group. In the second group, there are nine answers such as *got bad score on Math on my birthday, failed to win singing competition because I forgot the lyrics, can't get a good score like what I want, break up with ex-boyfriend after 1 year and 4 months relationship, failed to get scholarship to Australia because my IELTS is not good enough, I couldn't take care of my elder brother and he died, failed to apologize to my ex-boyfriend, he already died, and I lied to my parents about my relationship with my boyfriend in senior high*. These answers show how the respondents take those events (personal inability or mistake or loss of loved ones) personally. There is also an example of major failure, such as this answer: *failed to complete study and had to change university (and start over)*".

On the other hand, in the first group, there are only two answers which show how the respondents take the failure events personally: *failed in UAS in senior high. I felt embarrassed, angry and disappointed and made my mom cry* and in the third group there are only four such answers: *can't defend my opinion to do what I want, crash my motorbike, came late a couple of times that I couldn't join exam, when I couldn't get a way out for my friend's problem*. In addition, two respondents in the second group do not give any answer about failure experience. This may be caused by the respondents' inability to remember the events or differentiate between success and failure or by the respondents' unwillingness to share the events. These findings indicate that when the failure is related to *unreached* personal desires, uncorrectable mistakes or inadequate ability, people tend to be more negative. 94,44 % of respondents in the first group, group with positive interpretations, generate also positive feelings while 5,56 % generate mixed feelings. However, it is not so for the second and the third group.

In the second group, which consist of respondents generating negative interpretations, 54,55 % generate negative feelings, 33,33 % generate positive feelings, 6,06 % generate missed feelings and 6,06 % generate mixed feelings. The next discussion compares only two sub-groups of the second group of respondents: respondents generating negative feelings and respondents generating positive feelings. Table 26 and 27 show the distributions of societal norms and personal values in both sub-groups. The dominant societal norm in the first sub-group (50 %) and the second sub-group (72,73 %) is *money is important*. *Money* is the most dominant value in the first sub-group (38,89 %), while *relationship* and *happiness* are the most dominant values in the second group (27 %). This shows that having personal values about *money* may make people to be more negative.

The distribution of societal norms and personal values in the sub-group generating positive feelings in the group generating negative interpretation. The distribution of personal values based on the form of the desires and the extent of strategy show that *concrete* desires are dominant in both the first sub-group (61,11 %) and the second sub-group (54,55 %). They also show that *broad* strategies are dominant in both the first sub-group (61,11 %) and the second sub-group (54,55%). *Public* events are dominant both in the first sub-group (61,11 %) and the second sub-group (72,73 %). They also show that in the first sub-group, competitive events comprise 27,88 % while on the second sub-group, they comprise 36,36 %. This indicates that succeeding in a competition may cause people to be more positive. *Competitive* events comprise more in the first sub-group (33,33 %) than in the second sub-group (9,09 %). Furthermore, there are seven *personally valued* events in the first sub-group while there are only two in the second sub-group. These findings indicate that failures which are publicly known and *personally valued* give more discouraging effect which may make respondents be more negative.

In the third group, which consist of respondents generating neutral interpretations, 36,82% generate negative feelings, 31, 58 % generate positive feelings, 5,56 % generate mixed feelings, 15,79 % generate *other* feelings and 10,53 % do no generate any feelings. The next discussion compares only two sub-groups of the third group of respondents: respondents generating negative feelings and respondents generating positive feelings. *Money* is the dominant societal norms in the first sub-group (57,14 %) and in the second sub-group (66,67 %). The tables also show that *money* is also the dominant personal values in the first sub-group (42,86 %) and in the second sub-group (50 %). *Concrete* desires are dominant in both the first (85,71 %) and the second sub-group (66,67 %). However, *specific* strategies comprise 71,43 % in the first sub-group while they comprise only 50 % in the second sub-group and *concrete* desires comprise 85,71 % in the first sub-group while they comprise only 66,67 % in the second sub-group. This shows that knowing exactly what to do to achieve goals may cause people to be negative. *Personal* success experiences comprise more in the sub-group with negative feelings (71,43 %) than in the sub-group with positive feelings (50 %). This shows that when a person's success experience is not known to many people, the person tends to be more negative. *Personal* failure experiences are dominant in the first sub-group (85,71 %) while *public* failure experiences are dominant in the second sub-group (66,67 %). The tables also show that *competitive* events comprise only 14,29 % in the first sub-group while they comprise 50 % in the second sub-group. These findings show that people who fail in competitions which are publicly known may be more positive. In addition, it is also found that, in the first sub-group, there is no failure experience which is personally valued while in the second sub-group there are two failure experiences which are personally valued.

In summary, the reader's factors affect readers' interpretations differently. Societal norms affect readers' interpretation in terms that interpretations from respondents with clear-defined norms tend to be more positive than interpretations from respondents who don't have clear-defined norms or who have uncommon norms. Personal values affect readers' interpretation in terms that interpretations from respondents with concrete desires and specific strategies tend to be more positive than interpretations from respondents with abstract wants and broad strategies. Past experiences affect readers' interpretations in terms that interpretations from respondents with personally valued and competitive success experiences tend to be more positive than interpretations from respondents whose success experiences are non-competitive and not personally meaningful. In addition, interpretations from respondents with personally valued and competitive failure experiences tend to be more negative than interpretations from respondents whose failure experiences are non-competitive and not personally meaningful.

However, when related to feelings, the patterns differ between the group with negative interpretations and the group with neutral interpretations. In the group with negative interpretations, positive feelings are generated by the sub-group with societal norms about *relationship* and *happiness* and more successes in competitive events while negative feelings are generated by the sub-group with

societal norms about *money*, more failures in competitive events and more failures which are *personally valued*. On the other hand, in the group with neutral interpretations, negative feelings are generated by the sub-group with more specific strategies, more concrete desires, more *personal* successes and *more personal* failures while positive feelings are generated by the sub-group with more *public* failure experiences and more *personally valued* failures.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the writer concludes three points from the analysis about the variety of interpretations generated by the respondents, how readers' factors influence readers' interpretations, and which one of the factors which have the greatest influence to the interpretations. Firstly, it is found that interpretations of the poetry *Eldorado* consist of various ideas about perseverance, spirit, losing direction and vain attempt. One poem can be appreciated in many ways, depending on the reader, so that it expresses different things for different people. When a work of art is read by some readers, its value is enriched as each reader contributes his own viewpoints of norms, values and experiences to produce various meanings and ideas about the work of art. Therefore, the value of a work of art depends on the reader. Secondly, it is found that each of readers' factors have influence to readers' interpretation. Different societal norms only sometimes cause different types of interpretations, but uncommon or unclear societal norms mostly cause negative interpretation. Personal values which are in the form of concrete things, as well as specific personal strategies to attain them, mostly cause positive interpretations but may also cause negative feelings. Past failures which are personally valued cause negative interpretations and may cause positive feelings, while past successes which are personally valued cause positive interpretations. Thirdly, it is found that past experience is the most influential factor in forming an interpretation. Two groups of respondents with two different types of feelings have almost similar distribution of societal norms and personal values but different distributions of past experiences. One sub-group, which generates negative feelings, has more "personally valued" failures and failures in competitive events than the other sub-group, which generates positive feelings, has. A single work of art cannot be interpreted as a single meaning when many readers read it. The readers' societal norms, personal values, and past experiences influence the forming of interpretation and cause differences. Therefore, these factors should be considered by a teacher or any person who wants to present a work of art to a selection of readers. In the case of the research, the poem *Eldorado* was written in the mid-19th century, very far from the culture and the language use of present era. This might be the cause of the respondents' misunderstandings and inability to relate the poem to their own lives, which result in unclear interpretations and missing values in the research.

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APPENDIXES

Questionnaire for Pilot Study

This questionnaire is distributed for research purpose only. Data gathered from this questionnaire will be kept confidential. Please follow the instructions given and answer thoughtfully. Thank you for your participation.

I. Multiple Choice

Choose ONLY ONE of the options provided in each number. Read the question carefully before answering.

1. Which of these things that you enjoy the most?
 - a. buying fancy goods
 - b. hanging out with friends or family
 - c. being fit and healthy
 - d. getting an A for a test
 - e. relaxing alone far away from the hustle bustle of life
 - f. other :

2. Which one of these statements that best fit your opinion?
 - a. I have complete control over my life
 - b. My life has been determined
 - c. My actions influence my life, but I don't have complete control

3. Which one of these that best fit your definition of "perfect"?
 - a. on highest level available
 - b. exactly what I want it to be
 - c. in harmony; without conflict or trouble
 - d. other :

Scale and Rating

1. Scale

Circle one of the numbers to show how much you agree to each statement. 1 indicates the lowest level of agreement, and 5 indicates the highest level of agreement. Read the statements carefully before answering.

Statement	Scale				
I can make my life perfect by working hard to achieve my dreams.	1	2	3	4	5
There is no need to strain myself to be perfect, because there is nothing perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
Life is perfect as it is; that depends on how we look at it.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Rating

Rate the things on the list from 1-5, with number 1 as the most important, and number 5 as the least important.

Note : if you fill the 'other' option, rate from 1-6.

- tranquillity / peacefulness
- physical condition / health
- relationship with others
- luxury / money
- achievement / accomplishment
- other :

Open-Ended Questions

Answer each of the questions with your own words. Read the question carefully before answering.

1. In your opinion, what does a "perfect life" mean?

2. Do you think you can achieve a perfect life?

3. If you say you can, what should you do to achieve it?

Questionnaire for Main Study

Readers Factors Questions (read to the respondents)

1. What is important for the people in your hometown? (is it money, or relationship with neighbors and family, or anything?)
2. In your opinion, WHY is it important for them?
3. What do you want the most in life? You want a lot of things, but which one is the **most desirable of all**? (example: I want to be happy! I want to be a person who has good relationship with everybody; or I want to be a healthy person, never get sick.)
4. How will you get what you want most in life? (example: I will always treat other people well; or I will eat healthy food and exercise)
5. Do you have an experience of success that you always remember? Or the most **meaningful** to you? Please describe the experience. Just one.(Example: winning a writing competition; or success in losing weight; or get a huge amount of money)
6. Do you have an experience of failure that you always remember? Please describe the experience. Just one. (Example: failing a class; or break up with somebody; or losing in writing competition)

NAME : _____ HOMETOWN: _____

READERS FACTORS

Write your answers below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

RESPONSES TOWARDS POEM

Please read the following poem carefully.

Eldorado

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old-
This knight so bold-
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow-
"Shadow," said he,
"Where can it be-
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,"
The shade replied-
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

Based on the poem, answer the following questions:

1. What do you think the poem tells you about?

2. How do you feel when you read the poem? (sad, happy, pity, motivated, etc.)