

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Ella Wheeler Wilcox is considered one of prominent American poets. Her poems are widely accepted and loved by the public and also her poems are immortalized at San Fransisco's Jack Kerouac Alley, along with other famous poets' works such as Maya Angelou's, Lawrence Ferlinghetti's and Jack Kerouac's. Wilcox wrote many poems which mostly talked about love and death and were published as a book of poems entitled *Poems of Passion* in 1883. She also wrote her autobiography entitled *The Worlds and I*, which was published in 1918 shortly before her death.

Wilcox's style of writing is popular for its positive thought. Her positive thoughts are among others shown in three poems that I would like to analyze. She perceives death as something beautiful, which makes her writing style unique. That is why I would like to discuss three of Wilcox's poems, "The Summons," "The

Land of The Gone-Away-Souls,” and “Now I Lay Me”. These three poems are good examples of Wilcox’s point of view about death through romanticism and life after death. I found that the subject of these three poems is serious, yet the messages are easy to understand because the dictions are not difficult.

In this thesis, I want to analyze the theme of three of Ella W. Wilcox’s poems, “The Summons,” “The Land of The Gone-Away-Souls,” and “Now I Lay Me,” through dictions. The dictions help me reveal the theme of each poem. Based on *Literary Devices*, diction is defined as “style of speaking or writing determined by the choice of words by a speaker or a writer” (“Diction”). Later, the diction of her poems will help me in revealing the theme, “an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature” (“Theme”).

I choose formalism to analyze the three poems because I can find the information I need in the poems themselves. Based on *New World Encyclopedia*, formalism “refers to a style of inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively on features of the literary text itself, to the exclusion of biographical, historical, or intellectual contexts” (“Formalism”).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problems that are going to be discussed in this thesis are:

1. What is the theme of each selected poem of Ella W. Wilcox?
2. How do the dictions of the poems help to reveal each theme?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study are stated below:

1. To show the theme of each poem.

2. To show how the dictions help in revealing the theme of each poem.

### **Method of Research**

I conducted a library research in writing my thesis. I started reading three of Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poems. I also read some references and sources from the Internet to support my analysis. Then, I analyzed the dictions that revealed the theme of each poem. In the end, I drew some conclusions from my analysis.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is written in three chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction of the thesis. It includes the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theme Analysis of Three of Ella W. Wilcox's Poems. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of Ella W. Wilcox's poems and the biography of the poet.