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**American Romantic Poets' Attitudes Towards the Notion of
Death: A Thematic and Stylistic Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's
and Emily Dickinson's Selected Poems**

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Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to my dear mother and father for their patience, help, and support
during all the years of my study

To my dear sisters for their encouragement and love,

especially my lovely little sister Hanine.

To all my friends and colleagues.

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the attitudes of two American Romantic Poets during the nineteenth century: Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Elizabeth Dickinson, towards the notion of death. Although they share the same interest of discussing death, but each one of them has his/her own style in expressing his/her views and thoughts concerning this concept. As far as the problematic of this study is concerned, Dickinson gives a great number of her poems only to discuss about the topic of death. She writes about death notion to the extent that someone would consider her as a Dark Romantic poet just like Poe. However, she represents this phenomenon with optimistic view in contrast of Poe. To make the study more concise, one poem for each poet is selected to be analyzed. The choice is based on the relevance of the poems for the topic: Poe's *Annabel Lee* and Dickinson's *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*. Furthermore, the intended methods to follow in this study are descriptive and interpretive. Sources and citation follow the MLA seventh edition. Following Freudian psychoanalysis and New Criticism approaches, the poets' attitudes are revealed thematically and stylistically. Different views of death during the various Western intellectual stages and domains are concluded. Finally, this work answers the main question concerning how did the two poets Poe and Dickinson express their views on this phenomenon between their poems' lines.

Key Words: Annabel Lee; Because I Could Not Stop for Death; Death; Edgar Allan Poe; Emily Dickinson; Freudian Psychoanalysis (conscious and unconscious); New Criticism (fallacies)

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General Introduction

Death triggers human beings' fear. It appears suddenly without any permission, preparation, or expectation. Death is the ultimate truth which no one admires. It is the natural final stage of humans' life cycle. Despite the fact that this phenomenon is predetermined and inevitable, it is still seen as an evil power. This power takes the beloved ones from people's life. Death has been questioned in different aspects of life, such as: religion, philosophy, and literature. People differ in their attitudes concerning such a spiritual concept. Some of them can consider it as a savior or a helper which ends their miseries in life; whereas others, see it as the devil who takes away their relatives, friends, and family members.

1. Background of the Study

Death concept has been discussed in literature, not only in novels, short stories and dramas; but also in poetry. Nineteenth century American Dark Romanticism has its notable characteristics, and the major ones are the use of gloomy atmosphere, and the discussion of psychological themes; as love and death. Amongst the poets of the romantic and the dark romantic periods who explore this theme or concept, are Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. *Annabel Lee* by Poe, and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* by Dickinson are chosen as a case study in order to compare both poems and distinguish between the above mentioned poets' attitudes towards the concept of death. This latter has been expressed in various ways, using different styles.

2. Statement of the Problem

American nineteenth century romanticism period is a landmark in the American literature history. From the American romantic literary movement, emerged what is called "Dark

Romanticism". Americans wanted to have their own literature, which is different from the British one. As novels, short stories and dramas were affected by this movement, eventually poetry gained the same influence as well. There were different poets who went on the same path, by expressing gloomy and dark concepts, such as death. Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson, are among many poets who discussed the theme of death. However, they have shown their visions or attitudes towards this spiritual and controversial topic; each one of them has his/her own perspective and style, as his/her own life events, and surroundings. This study is an attempt to examine how the styles of both, Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson, reflected their views about the notion of death.

3. Main Research Question

In what ways, Edgar Allan Poe's and Emily Dickinson's attitudes towards death are embodied in the poems of *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*?

4. Subsidiary Questions

1. What is death as a notion in the Western field?
2. How are the attitudes of both poets towards death represented thematically?
3. How are the attitudes of both poets towards death represented stylistically?

5. Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

1. shedding light on the concept of death in Western literature.

2. finding out the exploration of death as theme in the selected poems by Poe and Dickinson.

3. examining how does style reflected Poe's and Dickinson's attitudes towards death.

6. Scope of the Study

Death has been a recurrent theme in literary genres. According to Swarnakar; "In his article, "Textual Analysis: Poe's Valdemar" Roland Barthes (1988, p. 153) rightly observes, "who could avoid being touched by a text whose declared 'subject' is death?" In the works of both Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson the constant presence of death and the popularity of both poets is a simple proof in favor of Barthes." (29)

Most articles and studies were conducted on both poets and their reflection of death in their poetry; however, Poe and Dickinson were studied separately. Apparently, there are no numerous studies relating previously mentioned poets together in one work. In his essay entitled *The Representation of Death in Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson*, Sudha Swarnakar tries to combine both poets' ways of representing death theme; but relying on both poets' lives and some symbolic patterns in *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*. In addition to that, this research tackles the stylistic and symbolic elements used by Poe and Dickinson, in order to express this controversial theme.

7. Methodology

This study follows descriptive, and interpretive procedures. It is based on the application of two approaches: The Freudian psychoanalysis and New Criticism literary approaches. First of all, the Freudian psychoanalytic approach is used to find out the influence of the two

selected poets mental states on their way of representing their thoughts about death according to Sigmund Freud theory of the sub conscious. Secondly, the New Criticism approach is used to see how stylistic elements and devices reflected Poe's and Dickinson's visions towards death notion; relying on close reading method to demonstrate the aesthetic use of words role in conveying certain messages, without the need of knowing both poets' biographies.

8. Structure of the Study

This dissertation contains three chapters in addition to the general introduction and conclusion. The general introduction contains: background of the study, statement of the problem, main research questions, subsidiary question, aims of the study, scope of the study, structure of the study, and the methodology followed in conducting this study. Then, the first chapter includes the key concepts, as death in different aspects. Besides, an overview about death notion in the different literary periods. Furthermore, the background of Freudian psychoanalysis and New Criticism approaches of literary criticism. Moreover, the second chapter is consisted of: the thematic analysis of death in both *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*, and both poets' attitudes towards the concept of death, with explanation of their discovered attitudes. Furthermore, the third chapter is directed to the stylistic elements in the mentioned poems, in order to see how both poets' visions of death are reflected through their use of the literary devices and symbols, and the stylistic differences of both poets concerning expressing death attitudes. At last, there is the general conclusion where the findings are stated and summarized.

Chapter One

A General Background and Review of the Literature

Introduction

The phenomenon of death existed since centuries, and from the first humans' existence on this earth. It is the last act in the play of life. This concept attracted different people in the various domains of life for its mysterious nature. It leads curiosity to its highest levels, which is why several books were written only to dig into its identity and characteristics. It is viewed differently by people; some may consider it a help to get rid of this life's difficulties. Others can see it as an evil power which takes their beloved ones far away from them.

Death attitude occurs in all the various religions in this world. Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Christianity are some of the world's religions that make death as their main concern, whether in their sacred books and traditions, or the other intellectual criteria. Religious men, philosophers, and literary men are parts of the societies who enrich people's knowledge about such philosophical and spiritual subjects. Indeed, this chapter is devoted for a general background and a literature review of death concept in the Western arena. This latter is divided into varied domains as: religion, philosophy, psychology, and literature.

1.1. Western Views on Death Concept

Louis Pojman states in his book *Life and Death: Grappling with the Moral Dilemmas of Our Time*, "Death comes to everyone. It [is] the dark kingdom which no visitors return." (30) This concept has different views according to the various cultures and religions all over the world. The Western view is one of these views. For Pojman, it is categorized into five views

or opinions. He calls them *'five classic views of death'*. They are varied from religious to philosophical. In addition to philosophy and religion, there are other disciplines which tackle the concept of death; such as psychology and literature as well.

1.1.1. Death Notion in Western Religions and Philosophies

The five views are summarized by Pojman as follows: "The Western tradition has five classic views of death: the old Testament-Hebrew view, the Platonic-Christian view, the Epicurean view, the stoic view, and the Existential view." (30). Each view represents a particular response of a specific group of philosophers and religious men. Thus, those views suggest how death is shaped in the Western person's mind from a young age. The Western ways of thinking did not start only during religions' existence, but also since Paganism. However; things and ideas started to change when religion and philosophy entered the field.

According to Mathew. J. Suriano, the Hebrew Bible view on death and the deceased is definitely varied from the contemporary Western ideas of life after death. It romanticizes the family grave and now, the destiny of the dead is elaborately related to the status of his physique (2). Therefore, moral values are given priority when it comes to the family as a social unit even after the death of its members. According to the situation of the deceased's body, his predestination will be decided.

Furthermore, Pojman believes that death is considered as a punishment for the sins. The starting sin was of Adam and Eve. Because of their disobedience, they were expelled from God's Garden of Eden (30). In other words, death was born after the fall of Adam and Eve. Being on earth means that the human beings' generation is going to face the truth of being mortal creatures. Moreover, this sin was the reason that the relationship between God and his

creation becomes only through death. This latter is the only possibility that humans would meet God after leaving this world.

Another interpretation of death is what is stated in the book of Genesis: “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Genesis 3:19). Since humans were created from dust they will eventually come back to it. In this view, there is a lack of the afterlife notion. The one which is mentioned in the Platonic-Christian view of death. According to Pojman, the Greek philosopher Plato’s ideas and the Christian doctrine are, in some degrees, related to the other religions such as Islam. This exists in terms of viewing death as a beginning rather than an end of this life (31). A life which can be called the afterlife in God’s Kingdom. In this view, the soul of the humans is seen as immortal. Furthermore, when the person dies; he will be reincarnated in another life existence, or in Jesus appearance as well.

The idea of the afterlife is discussed by Plato and some other philosophers. For him, the way that the person lives his life will tell what he would look like and live in the afterlife as well. Therefore, if someone who lives in a noble way, he will be the same. And if he lives his days aimlessly, he will gain another pointless existence in the afterlife. Hence, the way that the person lives his life plays an essential role in deciding his/her fate after his/her death. Then, this mortal world’s deeds lead humans to their eternal happiness or a miserable downfall.

This is what Louis Pojman claims, “At the end of the pilgrimage of existence the soul is merged with the GOOD, the essence of God.” (30). In other words, for Plato and the Christian doctrine, death paves the way to reach God. Hence, death is considered as a resurrection, and the soul is immortal. Death is, in some ways, a second life which depends on the person’s first life particularly and therefore, fear exists in this thought, a fear by

humans from dying without being certain about their destiny in the afterlife. This idea contradicts the next philosophical tendency towards death.

In the same philosophical path, there are the Epicureans. The basic principle of their thoughts is the negligence of death fear. Epicurus¹, the founder of this idea, sees that humans and death will never meet each other. His idea is based on the fact that alive people are far from death: hence, when death takes place, the person is no more there to come across it. Therefore, Epicureans deny the idea of being afraid from death. They believe that there is no need to be afraid of something which does not exist. They claim that life should be lived in a good manner, so that they will gain a happy death. Pojman considers that death, in this view, is seen as a '*secular mortality*'. (33)

The Stoic view is another category. Stoicism that was firstly founded by Zeno² considers death as a common phenomenon. Stoics do not find the need to hurry and think about death; since it will eventually come. Humans cannot control their destiny, particularly, the day of their death. However, they can manage to control their attitudes towards it, even if it is undesirable for them. Pojman sees that for the Stoics, death is not worth being afraid of. In this philosophy, what matters is doing daily duties as if it were the last day in this life. For them, dying is a blessing after achieving success in the simplest activities, as taking a lunch. This view is taking death as a *creative resignation*. Humans should accept the inevitable realities

¹ Epicurus: (born 341 BC, Samos, Greece—died 270, Athens), Greek philosopher, author of an ethical philosophy of simple pleasure, friendship, and retirement. He founded schools of philosophy that survived directly from the 4th century BC until the 4th century AD

² Zeno: Zeno of Citium (The Stoic) (333 BC-264 BC) was a Hellenistic philosopher from Citium, Cyprus. Zeno was the son of a merchant and a student of Crates of Thebes, the most famous Cynic living at that time in Greece.

as death. It is an acceptance to the fact that one day, all of us are going to die. (Pojman 35, my italics)

On the other hand, Existentialists have different opinions concerning the phenomenon of death. First, there is the German philosopher Fredrick Nietzsche. He argues that the major importance is not given to death particularly; however, to the way humans die. They should die happily, or as he notes: “brightly, and joyfully” (qtd. in Ansell-Pearson 25). Hence, the way humans die plays an important part in receiving death with less interest. Humans would like to think about life instead of fearing their death. Thus, they would try to understand life.

According to Pojman, Nietzsche sees that the strong man will be conscious about his death. Consequently, he accepts it and believes that it is the final stage of life (35). In other words, if man achieves what he wants and loves during his life, then death is nothing to be afraid of, and it is better to avoid thinking about it, or as he writes, “It makes me happy to see that men do not want to think the thought of death! I should like very much to do something that would make the thought of life even a hundred times appealing to them.” (225). So, his ideas seem close to those of the Stoics beliefs in relation to death. For Nietzsche, avoiding mentioning death would be better. Since people are alive, it is preferable to speak about life only.

When it comes to the Existentialist philosophy, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger³ is taken as another example as well. Zohreh Shariatinia puts it in an article entitled *Heidegger's Ideas about Death*, “Heidegger thus considers that knowledge about death leads to understanding of Existence and that knowledge of existence will result in

³ Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was a German philosopher whose work is perhaps most readily associated with phenomenology and existentialism, although his thinking should be identified as part of such philosophical movements only with extreme care and qualification. His ideas have exerted a seminal influence on the development of contemporary European philosophy. His notable book is *Being and Time* in 1927.

knowing the universe.” (93). Therefore, Heidegger sees that having an idea about death helps people in understanding their existence. Henceforth, they would understand the whole world as a result of grasping the essence of death.

Regarding this concern, Heidegger considers that the end of life is a part of life stages; hence, death is only another part and form of existence itself (302). Eventually, understanding this concept is a step forward for comprehending the nature of existence. Most of Heidegger’s ideas about this controversial topic led him to gain criticism by various philosophers, and one of them is Jean-Paul Sartre.

Sartre criticizes Heidegger’s ideas, in particular, his thoughts concerning existence understanding through understanding death. He does not consider that death provides a meaning for life, in contrast he argues, “Thus death is never that which gives life its meanings; it is, on the contrary, that which on principle removes all meaning from life.” (539). It is possible that he means the change in people’s thinking while figuring out that they would die and leave this world at any moment. This means that life loses its value in the minds of human beings, since they might think of being immortal. Or at least, that there is no other stage after life.

Concerning this point, Pojman claims that “Humans strive for permanency, to be God or eternal, but death puts an end to such grandiose projects and proves them ridiculous. There is just Nothingness, endless Nothingness, and we are Nothings. (35). This thinking is close to the Absurdist way of taking the whole universe as a place full of meaninglessness; therefore, Sartre’s ideas concerning life and death belong to the umbrella of absurdity. He indicates that both life and death are absurd, in the sense that humans are trying to do their best in order to

achieve their dreams in this life. Death appears suddenly to destroy the efforts which people can make, as if they were for nothing; thus, even humans are nothings living in ‘Nothingness’.

As Sartre considers both life and death as absurd phenomena, he eventually puts suicide under that umbrella of absurdity as well. Some may believe that suicide is a way out of life miseries. It is an act which people perform while they are alive, in order to reach a quick death. However, Jean-Paul Sartre proclaims that “If I ‘misfire’, shall I not judge later that my suicide was cowardice? Will the outcome not show me that other solutions were possible? ... Suicide is an absurdity which causes my life to be submerged in the absurd.” (540). For him, suicide is not a way to get out from life miseries; but, it is only an irrational deed by people who would fall deeply in absurdity.

The French Algerian philosopher Albert Camus shares the idea of absurdity with Sartre. In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he starts it with this statement: “There is but one truly serious problem, and that is suicide.” (qtd. in Kaufmann 87). For him, suicide is a confession which proves that life is no more worth living it. He continues saying that, “Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest—whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories—comes afterwards. These are games; one must first answer.” (Camus 1)

Camus refers to the futility of life, which he portrays as an absurd. In the previous quote, he is dealing with how people would face their life. Although there are circumstances that may lead humans to end their suffering, it seems that Camus is giving a warning about falling in the trap of suicide. Mustapha Itani explains it his article *Camus, Suicide, and Imagining Sisyphus Happy*:

Camus is concerned here with whether the idea that life is meaningless necessarily implies that life is not worth living, meaning is suicide a solution to the absurd? Camus held that we should not be fooled to think that because there are only two possible outcomes (life or suicide, that there are only two possible answers to this question). (Itani, par. 10)

It appears as a caution by Camus for people to rethink about life and suicide, and particularly to question the validity of the second in solving life's problems. Apparently, Camus' solution is to revolt against life futility, and to live rebelliously in the center of meaninglessness (Louis 35). Furthermore, suicide and death can take different psychological attitudes by people. As Sigmund Freud describes it, "That attitude was far from straightforward." (289). For its mysterious nature, humans do not have the same attitudes towards this phenomenon.

1.1.2. Death in Western Psychology

Psychology is another domain that takes death as an important issue, for its several impacts on humans. Various psychological studies were taken on this crucial topic, for it evokes psychologists to carry out researches about it. It is a topic which exists even during the very beginning of human's existence in this earth. People tend to avoid dealing with topics as death. In his book *Thoughts on War and Death*, Sigmund Freud claims that people displayed a definite predisposition to place death aside, to reject it from life. (289). This elimination can occur because of various possible reasons; such as fear or anxiety.

Furthermore, Freud denotes in the same book that "It is indeed impossible to imagine our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present

as spectators.” (289). It seems that humans cannot think about their death, the unconscious is not convinced of being dead. Even when the person tries to do this, he would unconsciously imagine that he survives. Because as Freud states, “that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.” (289). It seems as if the unconscious has no time limits and order. (Drobot, par. 3). Simply, man cannot think about death, precisely, his own death. Since he is convinced about his immortality in the unconscious part of his mind.

Additionally, Freud sees that “Our habit is to lay stress on the fortuitous causation of the death-accident, disease, infection, advanced age; in this way we betray an effort to reduce death from a necessity to a chance event.” (Freud 290). In other words, the inevitable nature of death did not prevent people’s tendency to transform it from a determined fact, to a coincidence. From a sudden incident, to a reasonable phenomenon which happens as a result of some circumstances; such as: disease, or old age.

This is in relation to ‘*our own death*’. However, when it comes to strangers’ death; the unconscious accepts it without reluctance. In terms of others death, Freud comments stating that, “for strangers and for enemies we do acknowledge death, and consign them to it quite as readily and unhesitatingly.” (Freud 297). There is only in one situation in which the person is left in between as an attitude towards death, that is the death of the beloved ones. To make it simpler, the unconscious does not believe its own death, it accepts the death of outsiders or enemies. But, it is in between acceptance and rejection when a cherished person dies.

Following the same path concerning humans’ attitudes towards death, the French writer Philippe Aries is one to be mentioned. In his book *Western Attitudes Towards Death from The Middle Ages to the Present*; Aries has discussed four stages of the Western attitudes towards death and dying. The four stages are called respectively: Tamed death, one’s own

death, thy death, and forbidden death. Those phases in the Western culture differ in the ways of perceiving death concept in various periods of time. The first stage is much related to the early Middle Ages.

In the beginning of the Middle Ages, death was seen and dealt with as a vital part of the daily life of people at this period of time. Michael Hviid Jacobsen states that, “[...] for Aries embodied an undisguised familiarity with death and a physical and spiritual proximity between the living and the dead evident in the *danse macabre*⁴ in many medieval paintings and woodcuts.” (Jacobsen 4). Therefore, death is not being feared of. During this period, there was an obsession with death as a result of the black death plague and the damage of the hundred years’ war between France and England.

About the medieval people, Philippe Aries argues precisely the following: “They were as familiar with the dead as they were familiarized with the idea of their own death.” (25). Hence, the scene of the deathbed was common during that time. Here, death is taking a collective method of understanding; in which the person is conscious beforehand about his own death. Family members and friends are around the one who is about to die, and they accept this fact without any burst of emotions.

In his article entitled *Attitudes to Death: Some Historical Notes*, Kenneth Boyd comments stating that, “This kind of death takes place at home, in bed, surrounded by friends, family, even children; and the dying person prepares himself for it through ancient customs and rituals gestures. Death is experienced here as a part of the collective destiny, something that is essentially commonplace and taken calmly.” (126)

⁴ Danse Macabre: A medieval allegorical concept of the all-conquering and equalizing power of death, expressed in the drama, poetry, music, and visual arts of western Europe mainly in the late Middle Ages.

According to Aries, this ‘*collective destiny*’ started to vanish, and death takes an individual picture in the late Middle Ages. Now, moving to the stage of “one’s own death or “the death of the self” as critics call it. Thus, Aries argues that “Death became the occasion when man was [mostly] to reach an awareness of himself.” (46). Hence, the person who is going to die will grasp what is happening around him. In this phase, individuals start being alerted about their importance.

Jacobsen explains this idea as the following: “Death, in short, became much more personal and it was now the individual’s own responsibility to secure a positive outcome of the final balancing of the books determining whether celestial peace and reconciliation or the sulfurous flames of purgatory waited in the end.” (4). Thus, the duty here is for the individual. He/ she is the one who should find the way to confront the unknown, or particularly, the inevitable death. A strong link starts to exist between death and the day of judgement in which the persons are dealt with individually.

In short, a new sense of individualism is built, and a new awareness about the individual’s importance appears. One of the evidences that Aries depends on concerning this change, is that one about the ways of building tombs. The emergence of individual gravestones captions can be seen as direct sign of this revolution. Individual graves started to appear as an evidence of the importance of persons as separate individuals.

The next phase is related to the “death of the other”, or as Aries labels it: “*Thy death*”. An excessive sense of grief is not only required to be revealed, but also to be strongly sensed. This, according to Boyd, is abnormal and stressful. Since grief needs to be shaped in the form of a hysterical mourning. In this context, Jacobsen points out that meeting the European

romantic literary and artistic movement transformed now into experiencing the death of the beloved ones with bigoted attitude towards the separation (4-5).

Aries carries on explaining that, “This exaggeration of mourning in the nineteenth century is indeed significant. It means that survivors accepted the death of another person with greater difficulty than in the past. Henceforth, and this is a very important change, the death which is feared is no longer so much the death of the self as the death of another, *la mort de toi*, thy death.” (67-68). Hence, Aries considers that those who survive from what he calls ‘*hysterical mourning*’ as strong persons who finally arrive at the feeling of acceptance.

In the fourth stage: “Death, so omnipresent in the past that it was familiar, would be effaced, would disappear. It would become shameful and forbidden.” (Aries 85). This period is related to the twentieth century with its drastic changes, and seemingly the two world wars. Now, death becomes no more at home; and hospitals start to be a residence for the ones who are about to die. On this concern, Aries comments, “Between 1930 and 1950 the evolution accelerated markedly. This was due to an important physical phenomenon: the displacement of the site of death. One no longer died at home in the bosom of one's family, but in the hospital, alone.” (87). Death takes place at hospitals, where the person is surrounded by doctors and professionals. Apparently, the sick person seems to have no idea about what is happening around him.

In other words, strong emotions in the presence of death should be hidden, and they are forbidden in such places as hospitals. Families of the dying person avoid crying or showing any type of emotions. The reality of death is being covered, and people will reach an “adequate style of living while dying”. (Aries 89). This achievement is, according to Aries, not something to be proud of. Since Philippe Aries builds his thesis relying on literature and

art in general, those periods are almost the same when tackling death as a literary theme or as a recurrent motif in literary works.

1.1.3. Death Notion in Western Literature

Literature is a mirror of society with its issues and events. Death is one of these phenomena which gains writers' attention to produce literary works about. This concept seems a raw material for composing the various literary genres: prose, drama, and poetry. As a part of the community; writers, playwrights and poets, are affected by every detail that surrounds them. This influence is reflected inside their literary pieces. Each literary period has its own examples of embodying death; and here are some of them in relation to various literary movements. Therefore, as stated by Hakola and Kivistö:

Literature offers insights into death, dying and mortality in multiple ways. One could argue that death is very useful to literature. While providing fictional encounters with death to its readers, the stories also use death in their narrations to create emotional effects, plot twists, suspense and mysteries. But even more importantly, death and storytelling seem to have a fundamental and existential connection. (viii)

Therefore, death is a topic which inspired various literary writers. It leads readers to another world, which is full of adventures and imagination. Starting with the Greek myths till the romantic literary works; death was the concern of writers. The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh ⁵ can be the starting point of departure when it comes to tackling such crucial subjects as death in literature. In this Greek myth, Gilgamesh is faced with his close friend

⁵ The Epic of Gilgamesh: The oldest epic tale in the world, it was written 1500 years before Homer wrote the Iliad. "The Epic of Gilgamesh" tells of the Sumerian Gilgamesh, the hero king of Uruk, and his adventures. This epic story was discovered in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh by Hormuzd Rassam in 1853. Written in cuneiform on 12 clay tablets, this Akkadian version dates from around 1300 to 1000 B.C.

Enkidu's death once being close to each other. After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh is left alone with thinking about himself being mortal as well. Davies states that, "These terrifyingly descriptive experiences bear upon Gilgamesh, bringing to him a sense of his own mortality [...]" (Davies 3). Furthermore, this teaches Gilgamesh that even being a king will not prevent him from dying. Before his death, Enkidu expressed his anxiety about dying, but Gilgamesh ignored him not believing this possible suggestion. (Dave and Wang, par. 2)

After that, Gilgamesh is not convinced of this truth. As a result, he tries to look for the secret of the eternal life. He starts his journey to pursue his ambition. He succeeds in doing this by finding "the Plant of Heartbeat", whose name is 'Old Man Grown Young'." (qtd in Davies 3), but he loses it after taking a bath during his way home, as a mean to have a rest from his journey. He starts weeping because of his loss, since his efforts were in vain. Although this experience brought sorrow to Gilgamesh, he learns from it. He becomes wiser by complying truth as it exists. Davies mentions that this myth is a reflection of real situations in life, and one of them is accepting reality as it is (3). From fear to acceptance of death as a fact, Gilgamesh shows two different attitudes towards this phenomenon.

In the Middle Ages, there are several literary works which depicted death from other perspectives. Taking into consideration the context of this period, writers reflected the theme of death in their works; an example of such authors is Dante Alighieri and his work *The Divine Comedy*. In this three volumes piece of poetry, Dante provides its readers with descriptions of hell, purgatory, and heaven. It can be seen as the journey of Dante, the character, in the afterlife world. He becomes aware about how sinners are punished according to their sins.

This poem discusses the varied stages of torture inside the hell for those who died bringing their sins with them. Those who do not believe in God nor in Jesus the Christ are outside the gates of hell, whereas those who committed terrifying sins are eaten by the three heads frozen Satan. Therefore, it paves the way to the reader in order to make him/her aware of what is waiting his/her soul in the afterlife. This may create fear of death for those who commit sins, as they acknowledge what is prepared for them after leaving this world and traveling to the other world, that is the afterlife.

Regarding this poem, Davies comments declaring that “At the heart of this extensive account of the temptation and fall of Adam, with all the dark and shameful repercussions of the natural and heavenly realms, lies death.” (94). Later on in the Renaissance Era, other writers and poets were also embodying death between their literary works’ lines. John Milton wrote his notable poem *Paradise Lost*. It seems that his ideas are close to those in the Christian view of death in terms of viewing death as a punishment.

After the sin of Adam and Eve, Adam wishes that he dies sooner. As people may feel lost in moments as this one, they have such desperate ideas. Adam then says feeling ashamed: “‘Why comes not death . . . to end me . . . But death comes not at call’ (qtd. in Davies 94). As people have hard times in maintaining a stable thinking, they may fall in the trap of doubt and they start asking questions about their whole existence. This is what happened to Adam. He refuses his existence and questions what he was made for. Milton represents the mortal side of humans after the sin of Adam and Eve:

Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, (I. Lines 1-3)

His words can denote that death started to exist after eating the forbidden fruit and coming back to earth. In other words, the relationship between God and man becomes only for death. As a result, the only chance of being close to God is to die. In simple words, Tesdal explains that “after the fall of Man there is no relationship with God but through death [...]” (2). Thus, death is a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve after disobeying God’s orders. Therefore, it led to living on earth, and the first blood shedding was when Cain killed his brother Abel. Since that moment, death became no more as a result of natural causes as getting old; however, humans began creating systematic strategies which can make death quick yet bloody. This is planned whether in wars or for revenge sake.

Other examples exist concerning death notion in the literary field. William Shakespeare who is from the Renaissance era as well can be mentioned. In his plays and sonnets, death is a recurrent theme that exists within its lines. For instance, Shakespeare’s plays, particularly, tackle death through its characters. Usually, he tends to make a plot which is based on revenge for the death of a particular character’s beloved ones. *Othello*, is a play in which death is involved. The protagonist kills his wife as a result of suspecting her loyalty to him.

An illustration of death from Shakespeare’s plays is extracted from the play of *Macbeth*. In this play, for instance, lady Macbeth commits suicide after a psychological trauma which is a consequence of guilt. Specifically, in the fifth act and the fifth scene. Macbeth is told by his servant Seyton that his wife Lady Macbeth died. Shakespeare wrote the following concerning Macbeth’s reaction:

MACBETH. She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury

Signifying nothing. (5.5.16-27)

Throughout the lines of this scene, it can be concluded that Macbeth does not really care about the news of his wife's death. His words denote that death is a natural result which comes at any moment. It is possible that this reaction is a result of the powers he gained after the three witches' prophecy. In other words, his strength is paralleled with losing emotions. It is as if he was waiting this event to happen. Then, he suddenly started mentioning life worthlessness (Ben par 2).

Other literary periods also include death as a main theme in literary works. As an example, Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* is a Gothic novel in 1818. The obsession of the protagonist

Victor with science leads him to create a monster using parts of dead people's corpses. This deed affects the creature who is refused by society for its appearance. As a result, Frankenstein, the monster, starts to look for his maker in order to take his revenge. During this phase, he finds Victor's beloved ones and kill them one after the other. So, death appears as a central motif throughout the novel.

On the other hand, the American traditions of literature during this century differ, and it can be seen as a rebellion against imitating the same British traditions in most life aspects including literature. Death itself becomes a culture with its trends. Therefore, Americans feared from death at first. Much concentration was given to the physical aspect of dying; the decayed body of the human beings as one of its consequences. There was this culture of mourning during the nineteenth century America. Mourning over the death of the beloved ones or some of the family members.

In the same movement, things started to change. Taking into consideration the intellectual development within the American society during this period, Americans began taking the spiritual and religious perspectives of death. From fearing it and seeing it as an end, to viewing it as a longer state of sleeping. When it comes to discussing death in the romantic literary works during the nineteenth century, precisely the American Romantic works, death has no clear description. It is somehow vague:

Death, the inevitable end of any human being was most of time described by Romantic writers of the nineteenth century in a mysterious way that sometimes makes one meditates at it and asks many curious questions about the nature of death and nonphysical word. Other Romantics dealt with death in a sort of a way that is "dramatizing death and the grave" (qtd. in Nouari 17)

As mentioned in the quote, Romantic writers tackled death as a spiritual phenomenon which is given an importance, perhaps because of the puritan ideas inheritance. Or as Nouari states that “For them, death is the last resolution for life’s difficulties and the single response of the individual’s questions.” (17). Thus, they have romantic and idealized ideas when it comes to death. They consider it as a path for salvation.

It is not totally the same situation in American Dark Romanticism, where the picture of death seems much gloomier. The elements of macabre exist in the American Dark Romantic works. Wafa Nouari comments stating that “In most writings at that time, the major scene that was related to death often included the macabre, corpses, grave, and supernatural occurrences just like the coming of the dead people after spending long dark nights inside their graves.” (18). In other words, it is during American Dark Romanticism that the different categories of literary men started to take the Gothic side of death, more than the religious perspective. The latter focuses on the positive picture of death, and how it brings eternal happiness in the other world of the afterlife.

During this literary stage, death is nothing but a separation from every special person in the lives of numerous families, couples, and relatives in general. At last, it can be concluded that death exists in every place and time. It is an issue which brings curiosity to humans for its mysterious nature. Authors, dramatists, and poets are parts of the society. They are able to create plots in which the theme of death is involved with other themes. Literary criticism is interested in death and its theories. Among the different theories that tackled death in its analyses, one can cite Freudian psychoanalysis and New criticism.

1.2. Freudian Psychoanalytic Criticism

Freudian psychoanalysis or as it is also called by Tyson: 'Classical Psychoanalysis' (12), is a theory that was created by the Austrian Psychologist Sigmund Freud. This latter is the one who discovered the components of the unconscious: Id, Ego, and Superego. Each one of them represents a certain part in the human's psyche. Freud himself has benefited from literature, particularly, through analyzing some works as: *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles.

Mauld Ellmann puts it in his book *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* as "Moreover, Freud's most famous theory was inspired by a work of literature, Oedipus the King; and indeed, it could be argued that the whole tradition of psychoanalytic theory that extends from Freud to Jacques Lacan consists of variations on the theme of Oedipus." (5). Therefore, Freud's psychoanalysis of this work paves the way for other psychoanalysts to create analyses which are variant manifestations of the theme of Oedipus, from Sigmund Freud to Jacques Lacan.

Klarer comments "This has led to Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism, a movement which sometimes deals with the author, but primarily attempts to illuminate general psychological aspects in a text that do not necessarily relate to the author exclusively." (Klarer 89). In other words, even if psychoanalytic literary criticism is categorized under the text-oriented criticism methods, it can be used to go beyond the writers' biographies. This is done in order to know what is behind literary men's words; consequently, to see what could be meant by their selected expressions.

In the previous quote, it seems that Klarer is trying to clarify the relationship between psychoanalysis and literary criticism in terms of the literary text alone with neglecting any

other external factors. By stating that it is an attempt of detecting any psychological elements inside the literary texts without necessarily referring them to the authors' biographies, he means the key textual aspects; as: metaphors, selection of words, symbols, and characters.

As stated by Maurice Charney and Joseph Reppen: "The area of authorship as a compensatory gratification, without insisting on autobiographical equivalences, one can assert that a literary text expresses the preoccupying themes of the author [...]" (qtd. in Beco 18). In other words, the relationship between a literary text and psychoanalytic criticism is not necessarily narrowed into the scope of having details about authors' lives. Freud's ideas can be applied through analyzing themes in literary texts, and the symbols used in describing particular feelings and situations. For instance, the death of a character in a novel or expressing grief in a poem about the death of a persona and its consequences on the narrator's psyche. The effect of death, for example, could be analyzed through detecting the meanings behind the use of certain words or expressions. This goal is reached through New Criticism.

1.3. New Criticism and Poetry

Another literary theory which is devoted for analyzing literary works in terms of language without relying on the authors is the so called New Criticism. Mario Klarer defines this theory as "Largely independent of European Formalism and Structuralism, the New Criticism established itself as the dominant school of literary criticism in the English speaking academic community during the 1930s and 1940s." (83). Hence, even if this literary approach shares some characteristics with the other text-oriented approaches; it has its own identity with certain rules to follow while applying it on literary texts.

Klarer points out that “New Criticism objects to evaluative critique, source studies, investigations of socio-historic background, and the history of motifs; it also counters author-centered biographical or psychological approaches as well as the history of reception.” (83). Hence, this literary theory suggests from its name that it differs from what preceded it. Furthermore, New Criticism appears as a reaction to the author-oriented criticism theories. It is concerned with literary works forgetting who wrote them; thus, it frees the literary text from any external circumstances.

Regarding this idea, Raman Selden comments on this literary critical theory mentioning that “it is not concerned with context – historical, biographical, intellectual and so on; it is not interested in the ‘fallacies’ of ‘intention’ or ‘affect’; it is concerned solely with the ‘text in itself’, with its language and organization; it does not seek a text’s ‘meaning’, but how it ‘speaks itself.’” (19). Then, what is expressed by the terms affective fallacy and intentional fallacy are attacked by New Critics. Moreover, subjectivity and emotions while analyzing are avoided.

New critics as Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley write essays concerning both fallacies. These two writers support giving major importance to the literary texts only. David Carter states that “In practice, New Criticism concentrated on paradoxes and ambivalence which could be established in the text.” (27). Thus, New Criticism gives priority to feelings within texts rather than those which are felt by the analysts. The process of using this type of literary criticism can be achieved through a technique which is known as close reading.

This term is often used interchangeably with the term New Criticism itself. (Klarer 84). Close reading can be defined as the analysis of the intrinsic elements in a text as irony, metaphors, and rhetoric figures. The hidden meanings and messages between the lines are the

target of New Criticism and in particular; close reading. David Carter defines the latter stating that, “It denotes the meticulous analysis of these elementary features, which mirror larger structures of a text. New Criticism thus also objects to the common practice of paraphrase in literary studies since this technique does not do justice to such central elements of a work as multiple meaning, paradox, or irony.” (27) . In other words, this technique provides a deep understanding of the simple words which are taken only for their literal meanings.

People who like reading would interpret texts in their own ways, even without having access to this literary analysis technique. However, close reading can be selected from the various procedures of analysis, so that the intrinsic elements within literary texts have more explanations concerning their hidden meanings and the conveyed messages by the authors. Discovering these unspoken implications will create several interpretations which could be accepted by critics and readers as well.

Furthermore, Klarer claims that “Poetry in particular lends itself to this kind of interpretation since a number of genre- specific features like rhyme, meter, and rhetorical figures call attention to the closed or unified character of this genre. This is why New Criticism focuses predominantly on poems.” (84). In different words, New Criticism appears to be more interested in the analysis of poetry. This exists due to the presence of the figurative side in poems. Since poems are rich with the use of such language which is full of metaphorical expressions, personifications, and hidden messages. Therefore; close reading technique appears to be suitable for the process of literary analysis of poems in particular.

In addition to Klarer, David Carter also clarifies regarding this point in his book *Literary Theory* declaring that “For the New Critics, poetry was also central to their concerns and seen

as a quasi-religious [defense] against sterile scientific modes of thought. An alienated world could be reanimated.” (26-27). Through following this literary approach, Poetry is treated alone as a different world which is brought to life again, from written words that have their direct implications, to new meanings filled with various interpretations and denotations after analyzing them. These explanations are provided after detecting any signs of the literary devices, which are a part of the figurative language.

1.4. Figurative Language

Language is the tool to convey different types of messages. It is the mean of production when it comes to literary works in the various literary genres. Through using this tool, literary men transmit their views concerning certain concepts relying on figurative language and symbols. Figurative language is a strategy of expressing ideas using particular descriptions or comparisons. Literary devices are a part of the figurative language, and they exist to give a strong meaning or emphasis on certain ideas. Some types of the literary devices are metaphors, similes, and personifications. These devices and others are used in the two selected poems. *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* contain mostly the previously mentioned devices.

Abrams considers that the figurative language is a noticeable departure from what speakers of a language understand as the common significance or impression. Figures are sometimes represented as mainly non-literal, but they are intrinsic to the performance of language and essential to all types of speech (96). Thus, figurative language is the term which is used for describing a distinguished use of words, in order to give a stronger meaning to the ideas. This process gives the literary texts aesthetic values, and it adds special flavor to them.

Figurative language is often accompanied with the label non-literal meaning, for that the expressions are not literally meant. Through using the figurative language, various images are created with numerous interpretations. These interpretations open the door for varied conclusions according to the provided meanings. This type of language has variant types, and some of them are: metaphors, similes, and personification.

1.4.1. Metaphors

The word metaphor means that two things are not directly alike; however, there is a strong relationship while comparing them. Although that the meaning might not be perceived quickly, but the deep analysis of metaphors can affect readers' emotions after realizing the conveyed messages behind the written sentences. The term 'metaphor' is defined by Abrams as "[...] Metaphor is a departure from the *literal* (that is, the standard) use of language which serves as a condensed or elliptical *simile*, in that it involves an implicit comparison between two disparate things." (155). In other words, a metaphor can be understood as an indirect simile, since there is the common aim of comparing two elements. However, the difference in using metaphors is the total absence of words such as: as or like.

Regarding this, Gillian Lazar defines a metaphor stating that it is "A comparison which identifies one thing with another, dissimilar thing. Some of the qualities of the second are transferred to the first." (3). Therefore, the two dissimilar things are similar when it comes to some characteristics that the second element has. This is what can give metaphors a comprehensive location within a sentence in a certain novel, play, or a poem. In addition, Shaw defines metaphors as the following: "A metaphor is an implied analogy which imaginatively identifies one thing [with] another. A metaphor is one of the tropes, a device by which an author turns, or twists, the meaning of a word" (qtd. In Hussain 1). So metaphors

are the means to strengthen and provide innovative meanings to the compared elements.

Metaphors express deep thoughts and descriptions of particular things or persons as well.

An example that can be taken to clarify the identity of metaphors is from Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. Particularly, when Romeo states that "It is the east, and Juliet is the sun" (2.1.44-64). Despite the fact of being at night, Romeo is fascinated by Juliet's shining beauty. It can be noticed that there is no word to connect Juliet with the sun, but the use of this comparison shows the amount of love which Romeo has for Juliet. He considers her beauty as a competitor to the sun in terms of light.

1.4.2. Similes

According to J. A Cuddon, a simile is "A figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, in such a way as to clarify and enhance an image. It is an explicit comparison [...] recognizable by the use of the words 'like' or 'as'. It is equally common in prose and verse and is a figurative device of great antiquity." (657). In other words, a simile is a direct comparison which states that two elements share a particular characteristic. The words "as" and "like" connect them, so that the picture becomes closer to the minds of its readers.

One of the characteristics that similes has, is making the comparison specific and precise. Unlike the implicit nature of metaphors, the explicit nature of similes makes it easy to figure out the shared features between the two compared elements. An example of similes can be taken from Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, particularly, the first line of the poem: "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (Line 1). The loneliness is the mutual characteristic between the speaker and the isolated cloud in the vast sky. In short, similes are close to reality, unlike the next literary device.

1.4.3. Personification

Another type of the figurative language is personification. It is giving life to abstract concepts which are talked about as if they have human characteristics and emotions (Abrams 99). Indeed, personification allows readers of the various literary genres to have vivid images of non-living elements which are suddenly full of life and movement. This gives the figurative images in a particular literary text another dimension. Therefore, topics which may not attract readers; such as death, can transform into interesting subjects to deal with after using such a literary device.

An example of personification is taken from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Precisely, the following lines:

So saying, her hand in evil hour

Forth reaching to the Fruit, she plucked she eat!

Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,

Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,

That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk (Milton IX, Lines 780-784)

Richard J. DuRocher says that, "At the critical moment in *Paradise Lost*, Milton introduces a puzzling personification. The personification appears immediately after Eve eats the forbidden fruit..." (93). Through reading the stated lines from the poem, earth and nature are portrayed with humans' feelings. This is done by John Milton to show the seriousness of the tragic situation. Hence, it is possible to conclude that Milton wants to express the painful

feeling of earth after the fall of Adam and Eve. Parallel to the earth, nature is no exception from the emotional state of sadness. It is a cue that what will come after this sin is worse.

1.5. Symbolism

According to Abrams, a symbol can be defined as the following "In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term "symbol" is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself." (331). Therefore, symbols in literary texts are necessary to detect the significance of certain set of ideas, views, and feelings towards some specific topics and issues.

Kant defines a symbol in terms of the 'attributes' of an element "which serve the rational idea as a substitute for logical presentation, but with the proper function of animating the mind by opening out for it a prospect into a field of kindred representations stretching beyond its ken" (qtd in. Childs and Fowler 232). In other words, symbols give the opportunity to imagination. This latter gives the readers' minds an opportunity to create innovative images about simple objects; rather than taking the used words for their literal meaning.

An illustration of symbolism is extracted from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Rahal Hadjira comments stating that "The most prominent and the noticeable symbol in the Hawthorne's novel is the scarlet letter "A" that is embroidered on the bodice of Hester's dress when she committed adultery and brought Pearl as her illegitimate child." (32). In other words, the scarlet letter 'A' which the protagonist Hester wore is a punishment for the adultery sin. Being in a Puritan society full of moral values, adultery is prohibited.

Consequently, having the necklace plays the role of a reminder to Hester and her society that she is a sinner. This symbol changes during the rest of the novel, from expressing sin and shame of the adultery to positive meanings; such as: ability, admirable, and angel. (Rahal 33)

Conclusion

To sum it up, death had been the interest of people in all life domains since centuries ago till nowadays. It is a topic which touches various areas: religion, philosophy, psychology, and literature. In the latter, death is portrayed according to each literary period circumstances. The Western ideas on death are varied from pessimistic to optimistic. These differences are a manifestation of the several life's contexts during every single literary movement. Hence, each view on death reflects the set of values and beliefs which form the essence of every Western society.

In the case of this dissertation, the two selected poems of both Poe and Dickinson are dealing with a psychological topic which is death. Since the two literary pieces belong to the poetry genre, it is preferable to use New Criticism with close reading technique. Poe's and Dickinson's attitudes towards such a phenomenon are taking place within the indicated poets' use of words. Furthermore, there are Freudian ideas concerning man's attitude towards death of the person himself/herself, the death of the beloved, and strangers' death. In the next chapter, there will be an analysis for these ideas and to what extent they reliable when it comes to the selected poems.

Chapter Two

A Thematic Analysis of Death in *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*

Introduction

This second chapter is devoted for the analysis of death as a literary theme in the two selected poems of Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. The chapter has two parts. In the first one, there is an analysis of the theme of death. Then, the two poets' attitudes towards death will be discovered in terms of Freud's ideas on both, the subconscious and man's attitude towards the death of the beloved ones or the death of one's own self.

2.1. Death Theme in The Selected Poems

Annabel lee and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* discuss death concept. The analysis of this theme will provide the two poets Poe's and Dickinson's ideas and views concerning this psychological theme. In addition, the poets' attitudes regarding death will follow Freud's components of the personality. His ideas on death attitude as well can be extracted from the two selected poems.

2.1.1. Death Theme in Poe's *Annabel Lee*

Edgar Allan Poe is known for his recurrent dealing with dark and philosophical themes. Most of his literary productions contain the Gothic and psychological elements between its lines. Furthermore, Poe's works, poems and tales, seem to encompass a bias. However, as Benjamin Franklin Fisher comments on this perspective "[...] that subjectivity emanates from

the speaker within the poem rather than serving as a barometer to Poe's personal feelings." (32-33). In other words, Poe does not intend to be subjective. Yet, the way he lets the personas in his poems, for instance, speak to the readers make people assume such kind of ideas.

In addition, Fisher comments about Poe mentioning that "He was very much caught up in the contemporary culture Romanticism. The principal mode of written expression in Romanticism was the lyric poem." (33). Thus, it is a habit which can be traced back to his influence by the Romantic tradition of his time. Therefore, the subjectivity which appears between the lines of his poems' stanzas is due to being more interested in attracting readers of his works as literary men practiced this method during his time.

When it comes to plot, Poe seems fascinated with the same circumstances. In his book *The Cambridge Guide to Edgar Allan Poe*, Fisher again indicates that "Poe's poems display repeated themes and situations. First, his protagonist-speakers are males, who are usually disturbed, chiefly from the loss of a beloved woman." (33). In other words, reading Poe's poems reveals that there are recurrent themes and tones. For there is always a speaker who is facing melancholic feelings after losing his beloved ones, specifically, a beautiful woman. And usually his personas are men.

Regarding topics and themes, Edgar Allan Poe himself admits in his essay *The Philosophy of Composition* that the best topic for literature is the death of a beautiful woman. In his article entitled *Representation of Death in Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson*, Sudha Swarnakar states that "Of all melancholy topics, Poe wanted to use the one that was universally understood and therefore he chooses death as his topic. Poe (along with other writers) believed that the death of a beautiful woman was the poetical use of death, because it

closely allies itself with beauty.” (34). Therefore, Poe believes that death and sadness are the best reflections of beauty.

In most of his literary works, short stories and poems, Poe involves dark and gloomy visions of both life and death. Three poems which discuss the topic of death in relation to love can be taken as examples: *Lenore*, *The Raven*, and *Annabel Lee*. The latter tackles particularly the favorite subject for Edgar Allan Poe; the death of a beautiful woman, whose name is Annabel Lee.

The poem events are described by Hesti Nagrahanti who states that “The story in this poem reveals many aspects connected to love, such as life and death.” (par 3). Then, this poem is about the death of a beloved one. From its lines, one could tell that the death of Annabel Lee leaves an empty space in the speaker’s mind and heart. This situation leaves the speaker in a state of disbelief, for it happened suddenly during his happy moments with his beloved woman.

The whole poem is summarized in few lines by George Stains-bury declaring that “It begins quite quietly but with a motion of gathering speed and a sort of flicker of light and glow of heat: and these things quicken and brighten and grow till they finish in the last stanza, that incomparable explosion of rapturous regret that towers to the stars and sinks to the sea.” (qtd. in Milne 20-21). Thus, it has all the characteristics of a linear plot. The poem starts with the representation of Annabel Lee by the persona, then things keeps being in a normal pace until Annabel Lee’s death is mentioned. Here, the sad emotions escalate directly to anger and depression.

In this poem, death is a noticeable theme. It is the main event which shapes the whole lines of the poem and gives its existence. When it comes to this psychological theme, Freud’s

concepts in relation to the personality components and death attitude can be applied. Freud's division for the personality is categorized into three parts related to consciousness and unconsciousness: The Id, the ego, and the superego. Some of these parts can be reflected within the speaker's behaviors concerning his beloved woman's death. Furthermore, Freud's ideas concerning humans' attitudes towards death do exist within this particular poem's lines as well.

In this poem, the persona seems sad, and he is mourning because his beloved Annabel Lee died. The speaker is longing for this woman, and he describes his feelings of grief and nostalgia after losing her. Both Annabel Lee and the persona loved each other like no one did before them as mentioned in the second stanza: "But we loved with a love that was more than love-/ I and my Annabel Lee;" (Lines 9-10). Hence, the results of her death will increase as the love he has for her.

Throughout reading the poem's lines, readers can detect the despair which is felt between its lines. Love, which is supposed to be a happy feeling, ends with loss and grief. Things begin changing dramatically when Annabel Lee's death occurred. Unconsciously, the speaker is blaming his beloved woman's relatives who are trying to take her away from him. In the third stanza, the tone starts to express more sadness and pain. The speaker states that his Annabel Lee is dead now; and her relatives come to take her away from him.

The persona seems more depressed as Annabel Lee's death occurred all of a sudden during their mere happiness. This sentiment can be considered as a natural one, since the speaker is having difficulty in believing her death. This feeling is clear in the third stanza, particularly when the persona says:

So that her Highborn kinsman came

And bore her away from me

To shut her up in a sepluchre

In this kingdom by the sea (Lines 17-18-19)

A part of the unconscious mind of the speaker comes to surface. The persona's ego starts to work as a defense strategy. This is why he tries to reason her sudden death. Moreover, the death of Annabel Lee leads the narrator to think in irrational manner as a tool to protect his real desire that this specific woman is there with him. Hence, she is still alive. This continues in the next stanza too. The speaker keeps giving his own predictions in regards to this sudden visitor. It is demonstrated through the following lines:

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,

Went envying her and me—

Yes! — that was the reason (as all men know,

In this kingdom by the sea)

That the wind came out of the cloud by night

Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee. (Lines 21-26)

Accordingly, the persona is showing his disappointment. Through blaming angels, he is trying to give excuses and his own beliefs for losing his dear Annabel Lee. Unconsciously, this happens to him in order to be relieved and to avoid placing the blame upon himself. This also may occur because of the deep love he has for this specific woman. Therefore, it seems that the speaker is accusing everyone for the loss of his woman, except himself. As stated in

the analysis and summary of this poem by Wang and Chazelle: “He blames everyone but himself for her death, pointing the conspiracy of angels with nature [...]” (par. 4). It can be felt that he is trying to give any cause to her death, so that he will feel relaxed. He avoids believing this situation without backing it up with solid reasons, which is possible since he is in a state of shock.

In addition, it seems that the persona is trying to make the readers aware about his anger from both: angels and death as well. The persona’s unconsciousness’ beliefs in this stanza appear strong and affirmative about the speaker’s idea concerning the angels’ jealousy. When he says this in these lines: “Yes! – that was the reason (as all men now, In this kingdom by the sea)” (Lines 23-24). It may seem illogical, but the speaker’s feelings of love and nostalgia dominates him. His unconscious mind becomes less aware about how to think in a stable state.

In the last stanza of the poem; the depression of the persona reaches its highest manifestations. He expresses his longing for Annabel Lee by stating that:

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,
 In her tomb by the sounding sea (Lines 38-41)

As much as it may sound absurd from a psychological point of view, but it embodies the amount of love and fear as well. A fear from losing her even after her death, so as if lying by her side will stop anyone or anything that would steal her away from him again; even if it were the sea itself. Concerning this idea, Maha Sulaiman comments:

But because of his loyalty; and to preserve the source of his inspiration, the poet keeps Annabel Lee's memory and she becomes a living dead. After her death, he spends the nights lying beside her tomb by the roaring sea. He glimpses his beloved in the silvery moon light, and visualizes her glittering eyes in the rising stars [...] (19)

This romantic, yet painful feeling makes the readers affectionate with the speaker. As Milne comments that "Even though the speaker claims to possess an everlasting love that transcends all physical boundaries, he feels compelled to visit Annabel's grave again and again." (23). Thus, lying beside her will serve as a prevention of the feelings of loss to visit his broken heart another time. His defense, the ego, is protecting his need for staying with Annabel Lee.

The theme of death goes hand in hand with the themes of love and reminiscence. The speaker is remembering his Annabel Lee with his love towards her. In her book entitled *Critical Companion to Edgar Allan Poe: A reference to his Life and Works*, Sova says that "The poem is also very concerned with the effect that death has upon the person or people left behind and explores the problems they have in continuing to live." (25). This is expressed throughout the poem when death affects the speaker's mind and heart.

Like most of his poems and short stories, Poe's *Annabel Lee* deals with the theme of death. The persona in this six stanzas poem is facing the reality of his dear love's sudden death. Although the reasons behind her death are not clearly stated, Annabel Lee's death is directly mentioned. Then, the speaker is left in a situation of disbelief of the unexpected event. Or it is a trick by his unconsciousness to prevent his grief from growing more than its current situation.

In order to make her death more reasonable, the speaker blames angels for taking her away from him; because for him, they got jealous of their strong relationship. It can be interpreted this way as well, as mentioned by Sova, “The explanation offered by the speaker indicates more of an inability to accept the death, a psychological weakness, than an all-enduring love that survives beyond the grave.” (25). Thus, the persona is trying to deny the actual reality that his Annabel Lee is no more with him. He seems confident that his love will not be affected by her death; thus, she is with him for the entire time.

Following Freud’s ideas regarding one’s attitude towards the death of a beloved person, the speaker’s situation becomes understandable and more accurate. He is in a state of ambivalence, for he can neither deny the fact of her death, nor can he believe it easily. Hence, it is a confusion. It can be noticed that Freud’s ideas of attitudes are implemented in this poem. Therefore, it is possible that the persona’s view of death reflects Poe’s own ideas and perspectives concerning this concept.

2.1.2. Death Theme in Dickinson’s *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*

When it comes to death, Dickinson has her own use of expressions referring to this notion. Emily Elizabeth Dickinson is an American poet during the nineteenth century, who writes poems about different topics which are related to life and death. In her article *Emily Dickinson’s Concept of Death: A Note of Paradox*, Sonam comments mentioning that “Death, the theme of about six hundred poems is so dominant in the poetry of Dickinson that she seems to be preoccupied with it.” (77) . Thus, death is the main topic in most of her works. In short, Dickinson seems absorbed in it.

Regarding this point, Amitabh Roy also argues in his article entitled *The Theme of Death and Time in Emily Dickinson's Poetry*, that “Critics have pointed out that nearly one third of her poetry is concerned with the theme of death. This preoccupation with death made Dickinson a poet of darkness.” (167). Therefore, Dickinson deals with death in a special and excessive manner. She gives it a great number of her poems. As Rashed Ahmed Daghamin says in his article titled *Reflection of Death in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson*, “Despite her relatively short span of life, Dickinson is widely considered as one of the best known poets who shed a great deal of light on the theme of death.” (148). Hence, even with the reality of living a short life; she managed to produce a large number of poems on the notion of death.

Being interested in death, Emily Dickinson dealt with it from different angles and perspectives. She gives it an importance like no poet of her time did. Roy thinks that “Death is portrayed by her from every possible aspect – as the courtly lover, the dreadful assassin, the physical corruptor and also as a free agent in nature. She was obsessed with the problem of death and subsequent life after death.” (167). It appears that Dickinson makes a specific categorization of her poems on death. The latter can be seen as a passion for Dickinson.

There are numerous poets who tackled the theme of death in their poems; however, Dickinson tries to understand its nature. Her preoccupation with death is declared as uncommon, and rare; or as Thomas H. Johnson states, “Emily Dickinson did so in hers to an unusual degree.” (qtd. in Daghamin 149). When it comes to the theme of death; Dickinson’s poems can be categorized into three groups. Johnson argues in his interpretative biography:

The poems based on death fall into three groups. There are those which are concerned with the physical demise of the body, some describing the act of dying with clinical detachment; with emotional vehemence. Others muse upon

death or depict the face and form of the body on which gazer's attention is riveted. There are poems in which death, the suitor, is personified- in which the theme deals less with life here and now, or life to come, than with precise moment of transition from one state to the other. (203)

In other words, there are three types of Dickinson's poems on death. Those that deal with death in relation to the physical aspect; there are those which think deeply about death and contemplate about it. Lastly, there are some poems in which death takes the status of a person with all the characteristics of humans. Concerning this point, Flavia Medianeira de Oliveira comments declaring that "One of her constant themes is death and life after death. It did not matter whether death appeared in the form of a lovely being that she had lost or in the form of unexpected assurance of its inevitability. This theme can be noticed in the poem J.712" (26)

One of Dickinson's poems that takes the form of the last category according to the quote above by Johnson is the poem 'J.712'; or as it is entitled: *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*. This poem was written during 1863. This what Johnson states as follows: "[...] Death came into full stature as a person. "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" is a superlative achievement wherein Death becomes one of the great characters of literature." (222). This poem has six stanzas, and each one of them discusses the journey of the speaker with the accompany of death. This latter is identified with human features.

In the first stanza of this poem, and particularly the first two lines: "Because I could not Stop for Death/ He kindly stopped for me" (Lines 1-2). There is a suggestion that the persona is a busy woman since she "could not stop for death". The latter is portrayed as a gentleman who "kindly" stops to take her with him. Furthermore, in the other two lines of the same stanza, there is a hint that the speaker and death are not the only ones in this carriage; but

“Immortality” is with them as well. This addition can be done due to the traditions of the poet Dickinson’s puritan origins. Since it is a traditional society which has specific and strict moral rules; it can be understood that it is forbidden for a woman to be alone with a man. Whether in a carriage, or in any other place. Being a character, death is seen as a gentleman. Furthermore, adding immortality denotes that it is the gained prize after dying. immortality is the result which is brought by death.

In the following stanza, the persona seems influenced by the kind acting of death; to the degree that she forgets everything which might interfere them during this journey towards the afterlife world. Death appears to be tolerant and ‘he’ drives them ‘slowly’: “We slowly drove – He knew no haste” (Line 5). ‘He’ allows the speaker to think about her life, then she goes with him without arguing. Within this perspective, Wafa Nouari comments saying that, “The very gentle behavior that this nobleman deals with makes the speaker forget everything in her life and accepts to go with him to the other world as if she is certain too that the afterlife is a better place than life itself.” (29). The persona forgets that the carriage’s driver is death. If Freud’s concepts of the personality are applied, it is possible to consider the persona’s superego domination over her unconscious mind.

Though the persona is with death, she keeps idealizing it with confidence and romantic reflection. One can say that her pride does not allow her to feel afraid or ashamed. Her moral barometer is in a fixed state: acceptance and willingness to go with death. Moreover, the speaker’s journey with the accompany of death carries on, and it does not seem fearful or bad. From the speaker’s descriptions, surroundings and events appear joyful and happy. The three ‘persons’ on this carriage pass by a school. The persona then, notices how children are playing games at the recess time at school.

Everything in this school is in movement, which can be interpreted as life events and evidences. The life that the speaker is no more involved with. Or The third line of this stanza: “the Fields of Gazing Grain” in the eleventh line, can play the role of a reminder to the persona; a cue which alerts her that she is no more alive. Even with this strange feeling, the speaker seems convinced that death is taking her from this mortal world to a better place. She considers death as an escape towards immortality. This represents her unconscious part, for it keeps pushing her to think of her desire: being immortal.

In her analysis of the poem, de Oliveira comments that “In all of the following lines, the persona describes what she feels physically. After her death, she is cold, and reduced to a frozen body.” (27). In the fourth stanza, things start to change. The joyful and cozy feelings shift to chilling ones. This expression can refer to the process of dying. In other words, the physical dimension of death. Therefore, this fourth stanza stands for the physical descriptions of dying and how the persona feels during this time. Tackling the same stanza, Piyakun also comments stating that “This portrays the feelings and reflections of a dying person when she experiences the process of dying.” (37-38). Despite these chilling feeling, the speaker still showing no evidences of fear or surrender to death.

In the next stanza, the speaker and death stop before a house, her new house which is described as “A Swelling of the Ground” (Line 18). This house may be a reference to the grave, her own grave. It can be predicted that this is the end of the journey, since there is no mentioning of any other place. After her death, the persona now has a new sense of time, which becomes shorter in the afterlife world. As stated in the last stanza: “Since then – ‘tis centuries – and yet/ Feels shorter than the Day/ I first surmised the Horses’ heads / Were

toward Eternity --" (Lines 21-24). It is as if there is a created relationship between mortality and eternity. The persona is dead and she feels like she is eternal.

For de Oliveira, it seems that "[...] she died a long time ago, but, because she is immortal, she feels that it had happened yesterday, the idea of her death is recent, she remembers the day she became eternal. (27). Hence, her death and mortality lead her to become immortal there, in the afterlife. Her immortality makes her feel as if she died just one day before. It also implies that, for the speaker, the life after death is happier than the life which she used to live in the human mortal world. In addition, it can be her unconsciousness which provides her with such relief and satisfaction.

Although the central theme of this poem is death, the persona's tone appears as a delighted one each time she mentions it. Because of this 'gentleman', she is now eternal. Despite the usual negative descriptions of death by people or literary men, the speaker in this particular poem can be considered as an exception; for that she describes herself as a bride with 'Gown' and a 'Tulle'. If Freud's concept of attitude of one's own self death to be implemented, it will not succeed. This is due to the persona's happiness with her acknowledgement of her own death. It is possible to consider it as the poet's views as well.

When it comes to Poe's and Dickinson's opinions about the phenomenon of death. Both selected poets are indirectly stating their views towards this crucial topic. The expressions used in the two selected poems declare how Poe and Dickinson consider the concept of dying. The attitudes of the said poets are taking two diverged paths. It can be considered as opposite ones, for that the descriptions and tones in the two poems reflect different beliefs.

2.2. Poe's and Dickinson's Attitudes Towards Death

Poe's vision about death is shaped in most of his poems and tales, and not only in *Annabel Lee*. After reading and analyzing the latter, it seems that Poe has a pessimistic view concerning death. Throughout the stanzas of this poem, the persona keeps remembering his beloved Annabel Lee and their incomparable love to each other. Yet, this nostalgic sentiment is interrupted by the fact of her unexpected death. Therefore, linking Poe's attitude to his personal life can be avoided. It is possible to take the persona's tone every time there is the notion of death with its consequences on the lover is tackled. Thus, the speaker's feelings of anger and sorrow can be considered as enough to declare what is Poe's view on this concept in relation to this particular poem.

It is as if through the speaker in *Annabel Lee*, readers can detect the poet's personal attitude towards this concept. In his article entitled *Poe and Dickinson*, Douglas Carey states that "Poe also insinuates that death is like a thief in *Annabel Lee* [...]" (par. 4). In different words, death steals Annabel Lee from the persona, and it leaves him with the effects of pain and sorrow after this loss. Thus, death is seen by Poe as separation from the beloved ones. From the persona's depression, it can be assumed that Edgar Allan Poe is trying to transmit his personal view on death as a mischievous power which takes away every single beloved person from his life. In *Annabel Lee*, the speaker's attitude seems close to anger and mourning.

His attitude can be optimistic when it comes to believing that death will not separate him from his beloved woman. The same optimism is felt while describing Annabel Lee herself in a state of nostalgia. However, readers can sense the pessimistic tone each time Poe is mentioning the word 'death' and what is related to it. As the analysis above reflects the

amount of wrath which felt by the persona. It can be taken as Poe's own view on death. this phenomenon is mirrored by Edgar Allan Poe as a negative concept; therefore, the chilling wind steals the beloved one from persona. Poe's words are not conveying happiness when it comes to death, on the contrary, each time Poe speaks on the behalf of his poem's speaker, he has a specific manner of delivering one particular message. Death can be anything but a cheerful ending of life.

For Dickinson, it is mentioned before that most of her poems deal with the theme of death. furthermore, she seems absorbed in this particular subject. For Sonam, "She perceives death from different angles and different moods and tries to capture the abstract feelings and emotions." (77). In other words, Emily Dickinson has varied views of death inside her numerous pieces of poetry; and one of her poems in which she embraces death and takes it as a gentleman is *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*. So, "Death is perceived as a suitor lover or bridegroom driving away with his beloved or bride." (Sonam 77). In short, in this poem death is seen as a friend or a lover rather than an enemy or a stranger.

Regarding this idea, James Reeves points out that "This is one of the best of those poems in which Emily triumphs over death by accepting calmly, civilly, as befits a gentlewoman receiving the attentions of a gentleman. It is an essay in death-life." (qtd. in Antony and Dewan 9). Therefore, Dickinson defends the idea that death is natural and inevitable. For her, death should be accepted and it can be considered as a natural phenomenon. Jane Crosswaite explains that "the poem is not a projection of the poet's death but a record of her encounter with the fact or inevitability of death and the consequences of that discovery on the life remaining. (qtd. in Aied 87). Then death, in the eyes of Dickinson, is a friend; which is not worth fearing it. Instead of bringing misfortune, it expresses luck and a chance to be immortal.

The negative picture of death as the inevitable end of life is not supported by Dickinson in this poem. In *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*, the latter is received with a positive meaning. It is not perceived as an obstacle; however, it is the one which paves the way for eternity. On this ground, Margarita Ardanaz comments declaring that “[...] death is a path in itself, a path to be discovered. It is a controversial point if we consider this poem suggesting death as a path toward salvation. This poem makes difficult to regard E. Dickinson as an agnostic person.” (qtd. in Aied 87). Thus, the idea of death as a lover itself is a direct expression by Dickinson to show her view in relation to this concept.

In the same mentioned poem and some of her other writings, Dickinson portrays death as journey to God’s kingdom or the afterlife with eternal happiness. This optimistic view is reflected within Dickinson’s words inside her poems’ stanzas. She is being relieved each time death is there. It even used as a character rather than a concept or a theme only. This is indicated by Sonam as well, “Emily Dickinson in much similar way describes the last journey of life as one leading her soul to the heavenly altar where it will be merged with God in eternal marriage. In such poems [,] death assumes the role of a surrogate bridegroom who escorts her to heaven.” (79). Unlike Poe, Dickinson’s attitude takes a romantic dimension with acceptance and relief. She welcomes it and portrays it as a gentleman.

Conclusion

After analyzing the two selected poems in terms of psychological criteria related to death attitude, it is clear that Poe holds a negative attitude towards this phenomenon. Freud’s thoughts in relation to death views are embodied in Poe’s unconscious mind. He does not accept the death of the beloved ones, for he reflects his ideas in his persona’s emotions of

sorrow and grief. As the speaker tries to reason his beloved woman's death as a defense to prevent extreme sadness from dominating his thinking, it is applied on Poe's ideas as well.

On the other hand, Dickinson seems more relieved each time she includes death. Her persona's pride convinces her that in exchange of dying, an eternal life full of happiness is guaranteed. It can be understood as Dickinson's view on death notion as well. She considers death as a resurrection in the afterlife, where she will reside with God with full satisfaction. Making death appear as a gentleman rather than an evil power, says everything about the poet's ideas and internal thoughts. Dickinson's idealization of death concept reveals her acceptance and readiness to welcome this guest.

As the analysis of death as a theme in the two selected poems, the analysis of the figurative language can reflect these attitudes of both Poe and Dickinson. The use of words may convey several messages about the inner thoughts of the mentioned poets. Stylistic elements such as: metaphors, denotations, and symbols can express various ideas about the notion of death. This is what is going to be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

A Stylistic Analysis of Death in *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to analyzing the literary devices and symbolism in the two selected poems by Poe and Dickinson, in relation to death notion. By doing so, the hidden meanings behind the poets' selection of words can give more explanation of both poets' attitudes towards the notion of death.

3.1. Figurative Language in the Selected Poems

Figurative language is a noticeable departure from what speakers of a language understand as the common significance or impression. Figures are sometimes represented as mainly non-literal, but they are intrinsic to the performance of language and essential to all types of speech (Abrams 96). Thus, figurative language is the term which is used for describing a distinguished use of words, in order to give a stronger meaning to the ideas. This process gives the literary texts aesthetic values, and it adds special flavor to them.

3.1.1. Metaphors

When it comes to *Annabel Lee*, Poe did not include much metaphors. There is one which exists in the first line of the second stanza when the persona describes Annabel Lee and himself as children: "I was a child and she was a child" (Line 7). This may express how extensively is pure the love between these two. The persona depicts himself as a kid. Azeb

Chich considers that this word denotes the lover's pure and innocent love to his cherished Annabel Lee, who loves him as well. (43). So, it shows the persona's love since an innocent age, and his beloved woman's death will eventually lead to even deeper depression.

Another metaphor lies in the fifth line of the third stanza. The speaker mentions that "So that highborn kinsmen came" (Line 17). Here, the persona refers to the angels who took Annabel Lee away from him as "highborn kinsmen". Hence, it denotes the anger which is felt by the persona. He is offensive about the fact that both, angels and Annabel Lee's relatives came to take her away from him. Therefore, he is not willing to believe other probabilities. He is sure about the reason behind this action by the "highborn kinsmen"; they want to separate them.

In *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*, Dickinson provides some metaphors. The first stanza itself contains one metaphor. When the word 'Carriage' is mentioned to be precise. This is a metaphor in the sense that it does not express a real carriage; however, Dickinson used this expression to deliver a message about the journey of the persona with death. In other words, the carriage is an indirect reference to the speaker's journey to the eternal world of the afterlife. This is according to Tamara K.H, is equal to the old myths, when the carriage embodies a means of being driven to the other world, just as the Ancient Greek god Charon was taking deceased souls to Hades in a ship on the river Styx (par 1).

Additionally, another metaphor appears in the first line of the fifth stanza. Particularly, when the persona mentions a 'House': "We paused before a House that seemed/ A Swelling of the Ground --" (Lines 17-18). It is not the real house; however, it means that she is going to the afterlife world. Since the speaker is dead, she is no more concerned with the real world

of life. It is there, in the afterlife, where she is heading to. Her new residence is the other world, somewhere in which she is going to have an everlasting life.

Another possible interpretation for the same metaphor of the 'House', is the meaning of the grave. In the poem, there is no mentioning of any other place; therefore, the speaker is taken by death to her tombstone. The persona is led by death with her own will, to her last house. The journey of both, the speaker and death, is ending there in that 'House'. A place where she is leaving this actual world. Thus, the tombstone is her free ticket to God's kingdom in which life is eternal and happy. Consequently, the persona in this poem describes her grave as a house. By stating this, the speaker's attitude towards death is somewhat clear; for that she considers her tomb as her new house or refuge until she is taken to God's kingdom.

3.1.2. Similes

In *Annabel Lee*, Poe does not really include similes. There are no signs of similes in this poem. This is supported by Azeb Chich as well, when she declares that "[...] and Annabel Lee, there are no implications of the similes." (44). Therefore, there is no need to go further with this aspect. On the other hand, Dickinson uses a simile in her poem *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* in order to give her ideas about death a better understanding by its readers.

This simile can be seen in the first two lines of the fifth stanza: "We paused before a House that seemed/ A Swelling of the Ground--". The verb 'seemed' denotes a comparison, and it is a compensation for the words as or like. Here, the house is compared to a swelling. Thus, the ground is characterized by being mounded. This can refer to the burying ground where the location of her grave is.

3.1.3. Personification

In *Annabel Lee*, Edgar Allan Poe uses personification in relation to Annabel Lee's death. He selects a picture that affects readers' emotions concerning the persona who is left alone after losing the love of his life. This literary device exists particularly in the fourth stanza: "That the wind came out of the cloud by night/ Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee" (Lines 25-26). In these lines, the wind is portrayed with human attributes. Because the "killing" reflects a human deed; however, it is attributed to the 'wind' which is an object.

In few words, the 'killing' is linked with the humans, but it is acted by the wind. The latter is an object (Fathonah 10). It is possible that the frustration which is felt by the persona from his Annabel Lee's death, makes him think in this way. The death of his beloved woman leads him to believe that the wind is her sole murderer, since he thinks that there is no other reason than the jealousy of the angels. Hence, they send the wind to commit such a crime.

Emily Dickinson provides her readers with personifications as well. In *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*, personification plays a major role in detecting Dickinson's own attitude towards the notion of death. The first trace of personification is the use of death itself as a character, a human to be exact. In the second line of the poem, death is referred to by the personal pronoun 'He': "Because I could not stop for Death-/ He kindly stopped for me" (Lines 1-2). Death is portrayed as a gentleman who is kind and considerate. 'He' gives the persona space and chance to go with him deliberately; therefore, she forgets about everything else and follow him to the carriage in her last journey.

This idea is expressed by Ayesha Ashraf who comments in this concern stating that " We find personification of death in *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* as it is shown as a person

depicting humanly characteristics." (56). This personification continues each time death is mentioned, the persona states the personal pronoun 'We' referring to her and death. This act can show that the persona accepts death as a common phenomenon, which can be applied on the poet herself.

Dickinson seems aware of the result by personifying death. In other words, providing death with human features will unconsciously reduce the fear of the speaker from this unexpected visitor and company later on in the carriage (Hadi Alsaed 107). The same literary image is provided with 'the Setting Sun' in the twelfth line of the poem. Next in the thirteenth line, the setting sun is substituted by 'He'; thus, it expresses the feelings of the persona during her last stages of the journey with the accompany of death. Despite the disappearance of warmth at this stage, she takes her death positively. It is as if she believes that she is going to be immortal with the assistance of the carriage's driver, Death. Consequently, there is no need to feel uncomfortable or afraid from such a kind helper.

3.2. Symbolism

In *Annabel Lee* and *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*, there are some symbols in relation to both, life and death. Poe and Dickinson used this figurative device in order to reflect their own views on the concept of death, even if it might be done unconsciously for both of them. In the general sense, symbolism is the creation of particular images in order to express indirectly a common idea. As in metaphors, symbols are not meant to be taken literally.

When it comes to *Annabel Lee*, Edgar Allan Poe provides readers with symbolism. It is the repeated line over the poem: "In this kingdom by the sea" (Lines 8-14-20-24). This line

symbolizes the place where the speaker and Annabel Lee used to live together with extreme happiness. He gives it the name of a kingdom, because it was their own land and property. This kingdom witnessed every moment of the two lovers, during Annabel Lee's life. Moreover, the bitter memory of her death occurred there as well. The repetition of this line appears from the grief of the persona, for he considers this place as a special one with nostalgic memories of his beloved woman. Yet, her sudden death breaks the chain of the joyful times.

In his dissertation *Significance of Symbolism in Poe's Selected Works*, Shegufla Rahman considers that the 'sea' can be interpreted as the loneliness and despair which are felt by the speaker in this poem (36). Generally, the sea is huge and empty, and the same goes for the persona's heart after this loss. The created feeling keeps repeating over the poem, and it leaves readers affected by the persona's situation. Like the speaker, they will feel angry from this unexpected visitor which destroys all the sweet memories of this lover.

Another symbol appears when the persona mentions "So that her highborn kinsman came/ And bore her away from me" (Lines 17-18). The 'kinsman' can be interpreted as a symbol of cruelty. For the speaker, it is hard to accept the fact of his beloved woman's death. However, there are other powers that seek taking Annabel Lee even after passing away already. This adds another problem for the persona who is receiving the death of his dear woman with a different guest beside it, the kinsman. It is the role of these two lines to reflect the amount of anger which is felt by this lonely man. The kinsman came when the speaker is more devastated and muddled.

Symbols exist in the last stanza as well. Poe uses the symbols of darkness and light within this stanza's lines. In the first line of this stanza, the persona states: "For the moon never

beams without bringing me dreams/ Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (Lines 34-35). The moon and dreams stand for the consequences of death on the speaker. Nights appear darker after Annabel Lee’s loss, and the nostalgic dreams express sorrow and grief. His nostalgia haunts him every night, for that Annabel Lee visits his dreams to make him both, happy and sad. Happy about her staying with him in his dreams, yet sad. Since she is not real anymore.

In the third line of the same stanza, the persona expresses more his love towards this specific woman: “And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes/ Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (Lines 36-37). Despite the darkness that the absence of stars causes, he still sees light in his beloved woman’s eyes. It can be a reference to his hopes, that Annabel Lee is there with him. She did not leave him yet. Poe uses this type of symbols to show the amount of loss for the speaker. It affects readers when they understand how much this person loves that particular lady; however, death is the unwelcomed guest who takes her far away from his reach.

Another symbol in the last stanza as well appears in the last stanza as well. The speaker feels lonely when he says that “And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by her side/ In the sepulchre there by the sea” (Lines 38-39). The persona wants to stay beside Annabel Lee’s grave, and it is possible that this symbolizes his desire to stay with her with complete realization of her death. The latter took all the favorite moments after stealing his dear love, which is why he tries to challenge it by staying there. Hence, he is showing to death that nothing can ever separate him from the love of his life.

A possible second interpretation for this symbol is, that lying beside the tomb denotes the amount of affection which is felt by the speaker after his beloved woman’s death. The unwelcomed guest left a gap in both, his heart and life as well. He is thinking is only about

staying there, since her body still exists. She will not disappear from his life, and she will keep providing him with love and warmth. This symbol has a deep meaning, which reflects the desperation of the persona.

On the other hand, Emily Dickinson has involved some symbols in her poem. Concerning the first embodiment of symbols, it is in the last line of the second stanza. The persona states that she forgot about everything "For his Civility--" (Line 8). The word 'civility' symbolizes indirectly the smooth way of dying, without hurting the humans. Regarding this concern, Ayesha Ashref comments stating that " "Civility" of death is symbolizing the towards the liberation of a soul from this hard stricken mortal world towards one's final immortal destiny." (56). Unlike the cruelty of this finite world, death is kind and gentle while taking speaker to the other world of the afterlife. Therefore, the persona feels free from the bitterness of this world.

In the third stanza, there are four symbols. The first one is: "We passed the school, where Children strove" (Line 9). The children and school are not mentioned randomly, or they are meant to be taken for their literal meaning. Those words signify the first phase of humans' life, childhood. The first stage in the life cycle is childhood; therefore, Dickinson shows the readers how the persona is witnessing her life stages again. Those parts she herself had lived before. Memories of her as a child are reflected through those children who are full of energy. The children are active, and they have fresh minds which help them to have a fresh life with hopes and expectations.

The next symbol is in the next line: "At Recess – in the Ring" (Line 10). The 'Ring' is a symbol for life cycle; therefore, it represents the repetition of events in this life. People start their lives with hopes and innocence of children. Later on, they strive for authority through

ambition and greed or they really work hard to achieve success. Eventually, death comes to take them without caring about their achievements. This occurs all times, and with every person in this world. It is simply a continuous circle that keeps repeating itself.

Another symbol is revealed in next line: “We passed the Fields of Grazing Grain--” (Line 11). The grazing grain fields are symbolizing the speaker’s new passage of life, adulthood or maturity. According to Ayesha Ashraf, it “[...] symbolizes the peak of life means youth, [...]” (56). Thus, another new stage of the speaker’s life is passing. This can be interpreted as the proximity of death from her, getting older means reducing the chance of living. This is expressed directly in the next symbol within the next line.

The twelfth line contains another embodiment of symbolism: “We passed the Setting Sun--” (Line 12). In his article entitled *Summary and Analysis of the Poem “Because I Could Not Stop for Stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson*, Andrew Spacey states that, “The imagery is particularly strong at this point, the speaker a growing ethereal figure, almost spirit-like.” (par. 3). The sunset is an acknowledged symbolism of death in the Western culture. Moreover, the end of the day is a projection of the end of the persona’s life as well. Death is the last part of human’s life, and it is the same role of the sunset as a signal to the end of the day.

Therefore, the persona’s existence is in its last moments. The idea is a conclusion after reading the next fourth stanza, particularly, when the speaker mentions that “The Dews drew quivering and Chill--” (Line 14). The speaker’s body starts to get colder since they are close to her grave or as stated in the poem, ‘House’. The physical aspect of death is near to its end, and the shivering feeling is one of its clues; hence, the persona is close to her immortal life after death.

3.3. Stylistic Differences in Poe's and Dickinson's Attitudes Towards

Death

It seems that a comparison of the two poets would reveal the difference between both of them in relation of style. When it is about death, Poe is not concerned with defining it. He tries to understand it, and make plausible conclusions about it. In *Annabel Lee*, Poe reflects himself through his persona. The latter does not really grasp why he is the one who should suffer from the consequences of his beloved woman's death. Therefore, he provides his own excuses to understand Annabel Lee's death. On the other hand, Dickinson tries to talk about death without digging in it too much. In other words, she tries to describe this concept with providing her own stands towards this psychological theme.

Furthermore, it is possible that Poe seeks answers for his varied questions and confusions in relation to death. Since he makes his speaker in a state of ambivalence, while attempting to believe his own answers and predictions about the reasons behind taking Annabel Lee away from him. *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* is more related to death in terms of the latter's benefits and stages. Moreover, Dickinson shows respect to this kind driver. She has romantic ideas and perception concerning this phenomenon; thus, it clarifies her persona's use of words each time death is mentioned.

Another difference is the use of literary devices and symbols as well. Poe's use of these stylistic elements takes a gothic dimension; as mentioning the 'kingdom by the sea'. Thus, the place turns into the location of the sad memory; Annabel Lee's death. Differently, Dickinson only uses the ones which denotes acceptance and somehow neutrality towards the notion of death. She mentions the stages of life from childhood to death without stating that the persona is afraid or sad. In contrast, the latter accepts going with death from the beginning

of the poem. In addition to that, she sees her own grave having no particular feelings of extreme fear, joy, and not even in between.

In few words, Poe and Dickinson appear as counterparts in terms of the selected poems precisely. Although both of them share the same interests of tackling death in their poetry, they have two diverged paths while mentioning their thoughts about it. through seeing death as a separation from all the relatives and the beloved ones, Poe has the dark picture of the subject. He shows only hatred and blame for death within his persona's words, and from the poem lines. Unlike him, Dickinson praises death, and she even personifies it as a kind man. Thus, she expresses the bright side of leaving this world with the benefit of heading towards eternity.

Conclusion

To conclude it, Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson tried to clarify their views towards death through language. Their use of the literary figures and symbols reflects how are these two poets feeling each time death enters the scene in the two selected poems. The attitudes of the two poets are separated, for that Poe shows a pessimistic picture of death through this poem's speaker. The latter considers death as a destructive power which separates lovers from each other. On the contrary, Dickinson demonstrates her readiness to receive death with acceptance. She believes that death is the solution to the life's complicated situations. For her, death is seen as a step towards eternity and God's heaven.

General Conclusion

Death is not a new interest for people; however, it existed since centuries ago. From the findings of the first chapter, it seems that death is not viewed in the same way through time. There are those who believe that this phenomenon is a way to redemption, a way to get rid of problems and sins. Some consider it an enemy who keeps destroying their achievements as a result of envy. Another category of people has the idea that death itself is a part of the life cycle. Simply, death is another shape of existence. Death nature is still a mystery which needs solutions and answers, and humans will keep giving speculations to relieve their curious minds. Furthermore, the acceptance of death a reality is still not fully achieved. Even people from the same religions and communities do not agree on one particular opinion concerning this phenomenon.

On the basis of the Freudian psychoanalytic approach, the analysis of death as a theme in Edgar Allan Poe's *Annabel Lee* and Emily Dickinson's *Because I Could Not Stop for death* provides an explanation about how the unconscious interferes in deciding the person's own ideas and views on particular concepts. Freudian notion of the unconscious keep repeating themselves in the two selected poems. Poe's uses a persona who suffers from his beloved woman's death. Hence, he is left in a state of a denial which is a normal reaction according to Freud. This disbelief is defense strategy by the speaker's ego, so that he will be protected from feeling betrayed. In addition, death is portrayed as a separation and destruction.

On the other hand, Dickinson's persona seems glad that death is with her. In terms of psychology, her sense of pride leads her to deny the sense of fear from her mind. Thus, the analysis of death in this poem demonstrates the satisfaction which is felt by this speaker. Reflecting death as a path to salvation and eternity, the persona is convinced that there is no

need to give it a dark connotation. The speaker's superego is the one that provides her with these high hopes and values. Unlike Freud's conclusion in relation to one's own death, she accepts this without any rebellion.

Based on New criticism approach and the analysis of the stylistic elements in the selected poems, the selected poets' attitudes in relation to death notion are revealed. The use of literary devices and symbols reflect the two diverged views of the poets on this concept. Poe's attitude belongs to the pessimistic picture. He tries to convey a particular message through his poem's speaker, that death is a mere sadness and grief. However, Dickinson has an optimistic and idealistic thoughts concerning such a concept that was treated with hatred before and now. Dickinson's view is romantic, yet realistic on different scales. It can be taken as a religious thinking, a Christian way of dealing with death as the inevitable and the natural destiny of all humans.

Finally, the thematic and stylistic analysis of the two selected poems proves that Poe and Dickinson are embodying their ideas and views through their poems' speakers. The way in which Poe's persona keeps blaming death is in contrast to the way Dickinson's speaker keeps glorifying this concept or 'driver'. Hence, the aim of this study was to detect both Romantic poets' attitudes towards this phenomenon. As a conclusion, these two poets have diverged opinions in relation to death. Taking into consideration that Poe is an American Dark Romantic writer and a poet, he holds a pessimistic attitude; whereas, Dickinson embodies the romantic and optimistic view.

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المخلص

تسلط هاته الدراسة الضوء على مواقف شاعرين أمريكيين رومانسيين خلال القرن التاسع عشر اتجاه موضوع الموت: إدغار ألان بو وإيميلي ديكنسون. يبدو أن موضوع الموت هو الاهتمام المشترك بين هاذين الشاعرين، لكن لكل منهما أسلوبه الخاص في خلق أعمال تناقش هذا المفهوم. حسب الإشكالية الرئيسية لهاته الدراسة، فإن ديكنسون قد منحت عددا كبيرا من قصائدها لمناقشة هذا الموضوع. هي قد كتبت عن هذه الظاهرة لدرجة قد يظن القراء بأنها تنتمي لمذهب الرومنسية المظلمة مثل بو تماما، غير أنها قدمت هاته الظاهرة بنظرة متفائلة على عكسه. لجعل هاته الدراسة أدق، تم اختيار قصيدة لكل شاعر. تم الاختيار اعتمادا على مدى ارتباط القصائد مع موضوع الموت: "أنابيل لي" لإدغار ألان بو، و"لأنني لم أستطع التوقف للموت" لإيميلي ديكنسون. إضافة إلى ذلك، فإن المناهج المتبعة في هذه الدراسة هي الوصفي والتفسيري. المصادر والاقتباسات تم ترتيبها وكتابتها حسب الطبعة السابعة لجمعية اللغة الحديثة. باتباع التحليل النفسي الفرويدي ونظرية النقد الحديث، سيتم استنتاج مواقف الشاعرين نحو ظاهرة الموت من خلال تحليل نقاشهما للفكرة وأسلوبيهما الأدبي في فعل ذلك. من بين النتائج المتحصل عليها، المواقف المختلفة اتجاه موضوع الموت خلال مراحل زمنية متعددة في الفكر والأدب الغربي. في النهاية، هاته الدراسة تجيب على السؤال الرئيسي المتعلق بكيفية تعبير الشاعرين بو وديكنسون عن موقفيهما اتجاه ظاهرة الموت بين أسطر قصائدهما.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النفسي الفرويدي (الوعي واللاوعي)؛ الموت؛ النقد الحديث (المغالطات)؛ أنابيل لي؛ إدغار ألان بو؛ إيميلي ديكنسون؛ لأنني لم أستطع التوقف للموت.