
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Poetic Interpretation of Death by Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe: A Systematic Literature Review and Content Analysis

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| ABSTRACT

In American literature, Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe stand out as two influential poets in interpreting death with their unique styles. To investigate how these two writers approach death, this study conducts a comprehensive analysis of the poetic interpretations of death in the works of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe through systematic literature review and content analysis. The findings reveal that there is a growing scholarly interest in the theme of death on the part of Emily Dickinson, while interest in Poe remains sparse and sporadic. It further revealed that Dickinson's approach to death is idiosyncratic. In contrast, Poe is recognized for his macabre and gothic exploration of death, often portraying it as a source of horror and fear. The study emphasizes the necessity for further research to delve deeper into the connections and disparities between the two writers' treatments of death.

| KEYWORDS

Death, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Allan Poe, immortality, poetry

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Death has been a recurrent and universal theme in literature that is discussed by writers across different groups, countries, and religions (Halim et al., 2022). As a complex and multifaceted theme in literature, the mystery of death has been explored with various perspectives and approaches. It often serves as a powerful lens through which writers explore the complexities of human existence and the mysteries of mortality by eliciting an emotional response in the reader in poetry, fiction, and drama (Giordano, 2021). Through this literary device of presenting death (Termizi, 2017), humans learn to respond and come to terms with this evanescent phenomenon (Classen, 2021). The concept of death varies across different historical stages (Kuhns, 1969) and different depictions by writers (Carroll, 2019). Through symbolic imagery, allegorical narratives, and poignant storytelling, writers capture the essence of death that transcends cultural boundaries and temporal constraints. As writers continue to grapple with the mysteries of death through their works, readers are offered a glimpse into the profound complexities of existence and ultimately find solace in the face of this universal truth.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), an American poet of "incontestable genius" in the 19th century (Cooney, 1998, p. 241), is known for her exploration of themes such as nature, love, religion, immortality, death, etc. (Halim, 2022). Contrasting to her contemporaries like Whitman, Emerson, and Hawthorne who have gained acclaimed popularity, Dickinson was virtually unknown in her lifetime (McDermott, 2001). However, the last fifty years have witnessed an outpouring of research studies explaining her poetry and her life (Roy et al., 2015), and established her central position in American literature alongside Walt Whitman (Ladin, 2004; Ward, 1932). Although Dickinson lives a reclusive life with a mystical presence, she displays "a range of feelings and perceptions that few poets can match" (Aldalabeeh, 2018, p.60) and a variety of themes with "strength, courage, and singleness of purpose" (Sewall, 1963, p.8). Of all the themes Dickinson has delved into, death holds a significant place in her poetry, mentioned

frequently with frustration, suffering, pains, and sorrows (Roy et al., 2015). With almost five hundred lyrics knit around death, she is said to be obsessed with thinking of it constantly and daily (Aiken, 1963).

Like Emily Dickinson's fascination with death, Edgar Allan Poe also frequently explores this dark subject in his prose and poetry, albeit in a different manner (Swarnakar, 2017). Born in 1809 in Boston to parents who were involved in the local theatre, Edgar Allan Poe leaves behind a legacy as "one of the most famous and notorious literary figures" of his time (Francis, 2009, p.165). Among the many poets who have delved into the subject of death in American literature, Dickinson and Poe stand out for a series of shared thematic tendencies such as death, religion, and myth, as well as the similar gloomy outlooks and profound and evocative incorporation of a series of similar themes (Wafa, 2013); nonetheless, the two writers presented and interpreted this theme with significant differences, with Poe's portrayal of death in a romantic, fantasy-horror style, while Dickinson's was more rational, contemplative, and idiosyncratic (Joshi, 2021; Manal, 2019; Swarnakar, 2017). Despite their differences in style and tone, both Dickinson and Poe's exploration of death in has left a lasting impact on readers and scholars alike. Their unique perspectives and interpretations of this universal theme continue to resonate with audiences, inviting contemplation on the complexities of life and the afterlife through their art.

By examining the thematic nuances, stylistic differences, and critical interpretations of death in the poems of these two iconic writers, this research seeks to shed light on the diverse ways in which they explore this psychological frontier that maintains the unity between the mind and world, and the continuity between life and death (Derrick, 2002). To reach the research objectives, this study conducted systematic research to obtain related research studies on how the two writers approach the theme of death and the scholarly trends and interest concerning the exploration of death by the two writers. By the dual approach, this study analyses the relevant studies from previous research to answer the following research questions:

1. How does scholarly research on the poetic interpretations of death in the works reflect the scholarly interest in the exploration of death in the poetry of Dickinson and Poe?
2. What are the key themes related to death in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe?
3. How do Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe uniquely interpret and portray the theme of death in their poetry?
4. What are the common stylistic elements used by Dickinson and Poe in their poetic explorations of death?

2. Methodology

This study aims to conduct a thorough examination of the poetic representations of death in the works of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe. The study is divided into two main processes: the first process involves identifying and analyzing existing publications that have contributed to our understanding of the theme of death in the poetry of Dickinson and Poe, while the second process utilizes content analysis of the data and insights gathered from the systematic literature review to present the similarities and differences between the two poets.

A systematic literature review is characterized by its rigorous methods, transparent reporting, and scientific approach (Linnenluecke et al., 2019). The review will adhere to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, which provide a framework for identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies (Page et al., 2021). The following section outlines the process for source identification, and search strategies, and includes a four-phase flow diagram to illustrate the review process.

2.1 Information Sources

To synthesize studies on the exploration of death in the poems of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe, this systematic review specifically targeted research focused on these two poets while excluding studies on other themes such as love, nature, and the success of the writers. The review conducted a comprehensive search across six key databases: Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions, Sage Journals, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR. Web of Science recognized as the world's oldest and most authoritative research publication and citation database, was chosen for its extensive coverage and reliability. Scopus, another essential database, boasts a vast collection of over 81 million documents from more than 7,000 publishers across various disciplines. Dimensions, known for being the largest linked research information dataset, is associated with over 133 million publications sourced from journals, servers, and books. Additionally, Sage Journals, comprising over 1,100 peer-reviewed journals spanning diverse disciplines, and ScienceDirect, a full-text database housing articles from more than 2,500 peer-reviewed journals and 11,000 books, were incorporated into the search. The search also included JSTOR, a digital library offering access to books, primary sources, and current journals in the humanities and social sciences, encompassing nearly 2,000 journals for full-text searches.

2.2 Searching Strategies

The search strategy for this systematic review consisted of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification stage, the researcher utilized a combination of main keywords, synonyms, and variations derived from the research question to locate relevant records. Techniques such as Boolean operators, phrase searching, and truncation were employed to construct comprehensive search queries that encompassed all terms related to the topic. Given that the study focused on the poetic works of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe, the search processes were carried out separately for each writer to capture all relevant literature pertaining to their exploration of death. The search process for the keywords from the five databases is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Keywords Used in Searching Strategies

Database	Keywords	
	Emily Dickinson	Edgar Allan Poe
Web of Science	(Emily Dickinson) AND (death OR death poe*)	(Edgar Allan Poe) AND (death OR death poe*)
Scopus	("Emily Dickinson") AND ("death" OR "death poe*")	("Edgar Allan Poe") AND ("death" OR "death poe*")
Dimensions	("Emily Dickinson") AND ("death" OR "death poe*")	("Edgar Allan Poe") AND ("death" OR "death poe*")
Sage Journals	("Emily Dickinson") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")	("Edgar Allan Poe") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")
ScienceDirect	("Emily Dickinson") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")	("Edgar Allan Poe") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")
JSTOR	("Emily Dickinson") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")	("Edgar Allan Poe") AND ("death" OR "death poem" OR "death poetry")

Due to the reason that both Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe were prominent figures in the 19th century, the study's time frame spans from the 19th century to the present day. A total of 1770 records related to Emily Dickinson and 1793 records related to Edgar Allan Poe were identified across six databases, encompassing various sources such as books, book chapters, journals, reviews, conference proceedings, theses, and editorials, and were exported into the Mendeley reference management software.

For Emily Dickinson, 1224 records were excluded due to reviews, book chapters, books, conference proceedings, theses, or not being in the English language. Additionally, 28 duplicate research articles were identified and removed. Given that this systematic review focuses on synthesizing research related to the theme of death as portrayed in the poems of both writers, studies pertaining to other literary genres and subjects were excluded based on the titles and abstracts. Ultimately, 31 studies were deemed suitable for synthesizing the theme of death in Emily Dickinson's poetry after the screening process. Similar procedures were applied to screen the data for Edgar Allan Poe. Upon refining the initial screening to research articles in the English language, 1231 records were eliminated from the total. Subsequently, 43 duplicate articles were removed. Following a review of the titles and abstracts, only 5 studies were considered eligible for inclusion in the literature review. As for the research study that focused on a comparative analysis of the two poets, there is only one article obtained, which is included in the final synthesized database for both writers to extract data. The search strategy process is depicted in the following flow diagram.

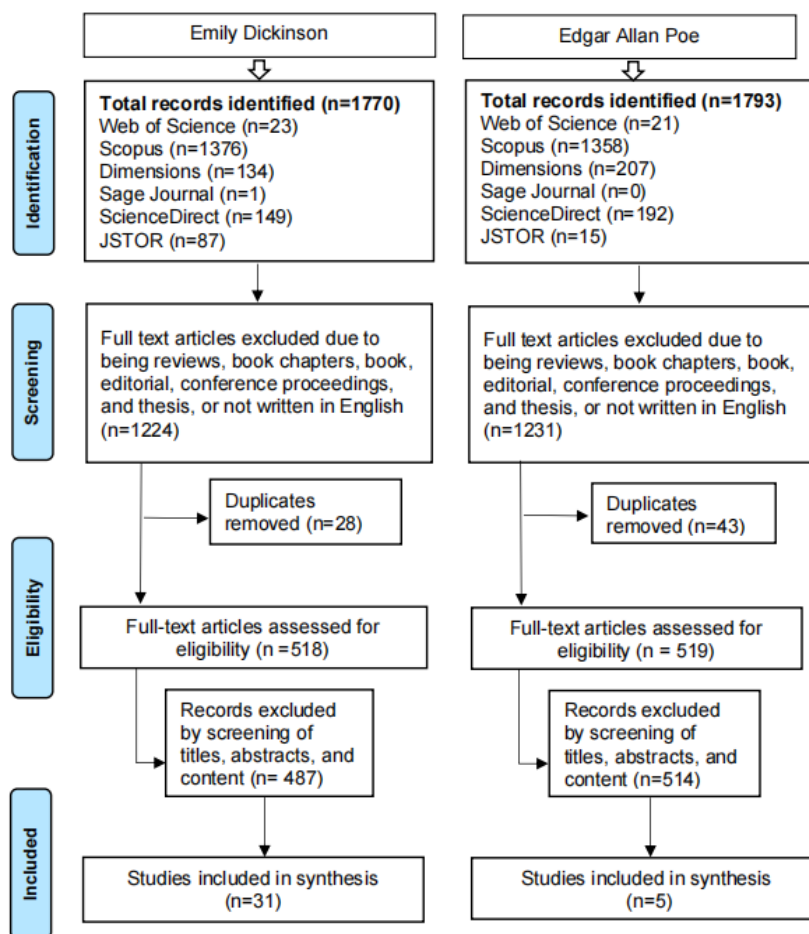


Figure 1. Flowchart of the Search Strategy

3. Results

The current study involved an examination of relevant studies obtained from various databases, followed by a detailed analysis of the data extracted from these studies using content analysis techniques. This section provided an overview of the literature review findings and then focused on the content analysis of the themes of death in the writings of Dickinson and Poe.

3.1 General Overview of Scholarly Interest in the Exploration of Death in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe

The table below provides an overview of the studies focused on the theme of death as represented by Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe, including details such as the researcher, year of publication, title, and source. It is evident from the table that there is a greater volume of research on Emily Dickinson compared to Edgar Allan Poe. This suggests a potential disparity in the scholarly attention given to each author's treatment of the theme of death. This disparity prompts a critical examination within the current study to explore the reasons behind this imbalance. Potential factors influencing this research asymmetry may include the authors' distinct writing styles, the various backgrounds in which they operated, or the thematic depth and complexity of their treatment of death. By further investigating these factors, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the unique approaches taken by Dickinson and Poe in portraying the theme of death, shedding light on the underlying reasons for the differing levels of scholarly interest in their works.

Table 2. Overview of the Research on Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe

Author	Year	Title	Source
Emily Dickinson			
Abbott, C. M	2000	Dickinson's Because I Could Not Stop for Death	The Explicator, 58(3)
Aldalabeen, Y. A	2018	Ordinary themes presented with an extraordinary talent: An overview of Emily Dickinson's notable poems	International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 7(3)

Alqaryouti, M., & Sadeq, A. E	2017	Vision of death in Emily Dickinson's selected poems	Asian Social Science, 13(5)
Andō, M	1996	Emily Dickinson's vision of "circumference" and death from a Japanese perspective	The Emily Dickinson Journal, 5(2)
Bayley, S	2014	Pursuing the form of a ghost: Emily Dickinson thinks about death through Hamlet	The Emily Dickinson Journal, 23(2)
Cazé, A	2019	Emily Dickinson and the question of 'giving death'	Textual Practice, 33(10)
Cooney, W	1998	The death poetry of Emily Dickinson	Omega, 37(3)
Frank, B	2000	Dickinson's Because I could not stop for death—	The Explicator, 58(2)
Halim, T., Wahid, R., & Halim, S	2022	Death—an invincible fact of life: A comparative study between Emily Dickinson and Louise Gluck	Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 13(2)
Hiltner, K	2001	Because I, Persephone, could not stop for death: Emily Dickinson and the Goddess	The Emily Dickinson Journal, 10(2)
Jakhrani, M. H	2023	Unpacking the class struggle in Emily Dickinson's Because I Could Not Stop for death: A Marxist analysis	Studies in Social Science & Humanities, 2(12)
Jiang, Zhengyi	2023	The sound of death in Emily Dickinson's poems	BCP Social Sciences & Humanities, 21
Kallimani, M	2020	'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' by Robert Frost and 'Because I could not Stop for Death' by Emily Dickinson: A comparative study	Smart Moves Journal (IJELLH), 8(4)
Kang, Yanbin	2017	Emily Dickinson's non-diligence and death metaphor	The Explicator, 75(1)
Lambert, E. L	2013	Emily Dickinson's joke about death	Studies in American Humor, 27
Li, Na	2023	A stylistic analysis into the art of deviation as stylistic features of Dickinson's poem "I Heard a Fly Buzz -When I Died"	Journal of Education and Educational Research, 5(1)
Lindberg, B	1962	The theme of death in Emily Dickinson's poetry	Studia Neophilologica, 24(2)
Liu, Qigang	2016	Death and immortality—An everlasting puzzle: A comparative analysis of Emily Dickinson's two poems	English Language and Literature Studies, 6(2)
McDermott Jr, J. F., & Porter, D	1989	The efficacy of poetry therapy: A computerized content analysis of the death poetry of Emily Dickinson	Psychiatry, 52(4)
Mehnaz, Zeb, K., & Durrani, H	2022	Death as portrayed respectively by Abdul Ghani Khan and Emily Dickinson: A comparative thematic analysis	International Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Translation Studies, 2(1)
Nesmith, C	2011	Dickinson's I heard a fly buzz	The Explicator, 69(4)
Nesturuk, P	1997	The many deaths of Emily Dickinson	The Emily Dickinson Journal, 6(1)
Zahra, N., & Raza, A	2024	Exploring the metaphorical significance of death in Emily Dickinson's poem 'Because I Could Not Stop for Death' and its influence on 19th-century	Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Technology, 2(2)
Roy, A	2015	The theme of death and time in Emily Dickinson's Poetry	International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities, 21
Schnabel, M	2020	"Finished Knowing – Then –": The destruction of certainty in Dickinson's death poems	IU Journal of Undergraduate Research, 6(1)
Shaw, M. N	1991	Dickinson's because I could not stop for death	The Explicator, 50(1)
Sheki, R	2024	Journey beyond time: A comprehensive	International Journal of

		analysis of poetic devices and symbolism in Emily Dickinson's 'Because I could not stop for death'	Literature and Languages, 4(1)
Song, M., & Liping, J	2017	On characteristics of Emily Dickinson's death poems	International Journal of Secondary Education, 5(4)
Spencer, M	2007	Dickinson's because I could not stop for death	The <i>Explicator</i> , 65(2)
Swarnakar, S	2017	Representation of Death in Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson	A Cor das Letras, 8(1)
Yu, Wang	2023	Emily Dickinson's Ambivalence about Immortality: An Analysis of "Because I Could Not Stop for Death"	SHS Web of Conferences, 179
Edgar Allan Poe			
Cook, J. A	2023	"The Raven" and the Antebellum culture of bereavement	The Edgar Allan Poe Review, 24(2)
GÜNDOĞAN, U	2021	Edgar Allan Poe's "Hideous Drama of Revivification": Resurrecting his mother in female vampires	Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 11(21)
Swarnakar, S	2017	Representation of death in Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson	A Cor das Letras, 8(1)
Syafitri, D., & Marlinton, M	2018	An analysis of figurative language used in Edgar Allan Poe's poems	Linguistic, English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal, 2(1)
Tate, A	1968	The poetry of Edgar Allan Poe	The Sewanee Review, 76(2)

Figure 2 illustrates the evolving trend of scholarly interest in the interpretation of death in the poetry of Emily Dickinson over the years, as reflected by the publication year of relevant studies. The graph indicates a consistent and notable increase in research output on this topic over the past half-century. Particularly striking is the fact that more than two-thirds of the research publications emerged after the year 2000, signaling a significant surge in interest in Emily Dickinson's treatment of death. This trend suggests a growing recognition and appreciation for Dickinson's exploration of mortality and the afterlife in her poetry, highlighting the enduring relevance and impact of her work on contemporary scholarly discourse. The observed uptick in research activity underscores the enduring significance of Dickinson's poetic legacy and the enduring fascination with her nuanced portrayal of death as a thematic motif.

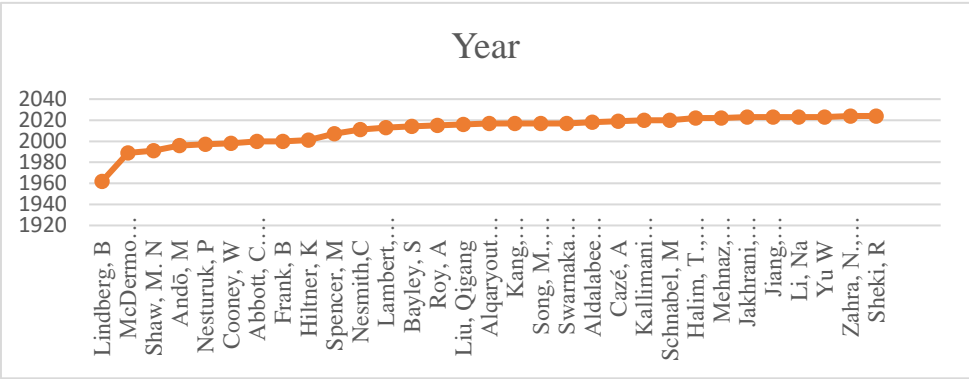


Figure 2 Research Interest in Emily Dickinson in Terms of Publication Year

Moreover, **Figure 3** provides a detailed breakdown of the distribution of publication sources related to research on Emily Dickinson. The data reveals that The *Explicator* and The *Emily Dickinson Journal* emerge as the primary sources for scholarly investigations into Dickinson's works, with six studies originating from The *Explicator* and four from The *Emily Dickinson Journal*. This concentration of research output in these two journals underscores their significance as key platforms for the dissemination of critical analyses and interpretations of Dickinson's poetry, particularly in relation to the theme of death. The prevalence of studies in these specific journals suggests a focused scholarly interest in exploring and elucidating the complexities of Dickinson's treatment of mortality and the afterlife.

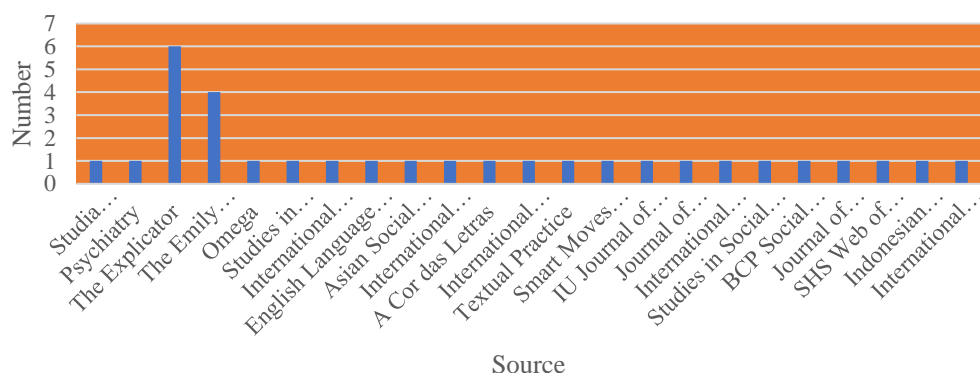


Figure 3 Research Interest in Emily Dickinson in Terms of Source

In stark contrast to the extensive body of research dedicated to Emily Dickinson's work, the available literature on the interpretation of death in the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe appears relatively sparse and scattered across the publication platforms as presented in **Figure 4**. While Dickinson's exploration of mortality has garnered significant scholarly attention and analysis, Poe's treatment of death in his poetry seems to have received less focused study and discussion. The limited number of research studies on this topic, along with their distribution across different publication sources, suggests that there is a gap in the scholarly exploration of how Poe's works address themes of mortality, the afterlife, and existential dread.

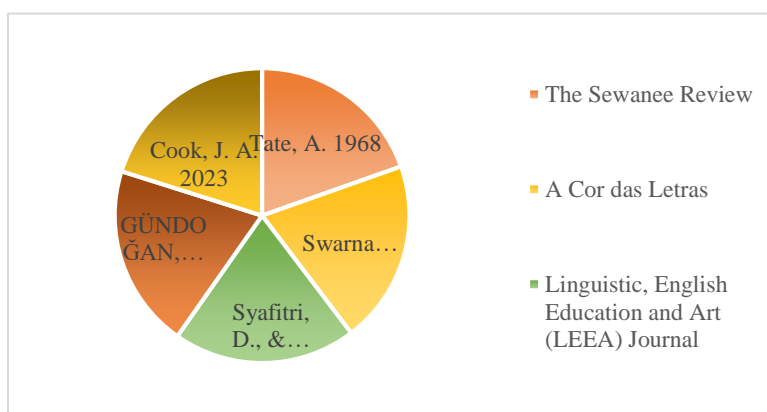


Figure 4. Research Interest in Edgar Allan Poe

In addition, the current study delved into the frequency with which specific poems are referenced, shedding light on the popularity and research focus within this domain. **Figure 5** illustrates that among the works of Emily Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death" emerges as the most frequently cited poem, appearing in 22 out of the 31 studies analyzed. Following closely behind is "I Heard a Fly buzz—when I died", referenced 11 times. Additionally, poems such as "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" and "I died for Beauty—but was scarce" are also recurrently utilized in the studies as exemplars. The statistical analysis of these references highlights that despite Emily Dickinson's extensive collection of over 500 death-themed poems, these four works stand out as the most favored among researchers.

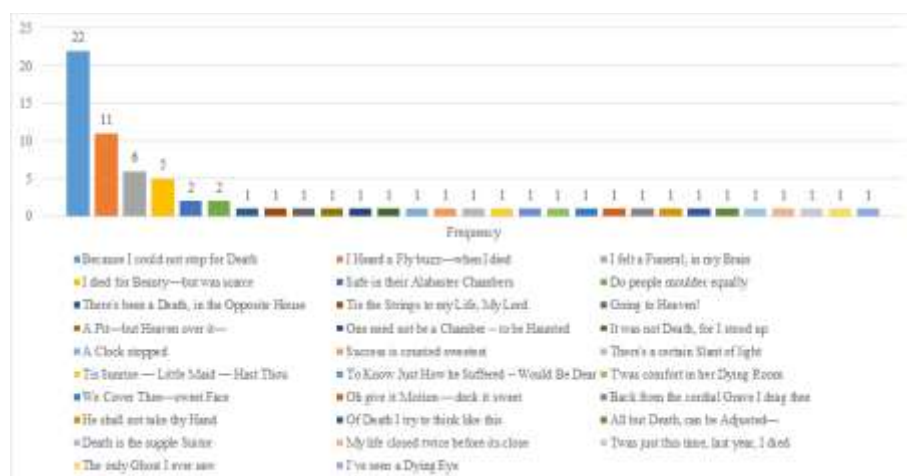


Figure 5. Frequency of Referenced Poems in the Synthesized Studies on Dickinson

Turning to Edgar Allan Poe's poetry, **Figure 6** showcases that "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee" take precedence as the most frequently referenced pieces in the synthesized study. This emphasis on certain poems within the broader oeuvre of these renowned poets underscores their enduring impact and resonance within the realm of death literature.

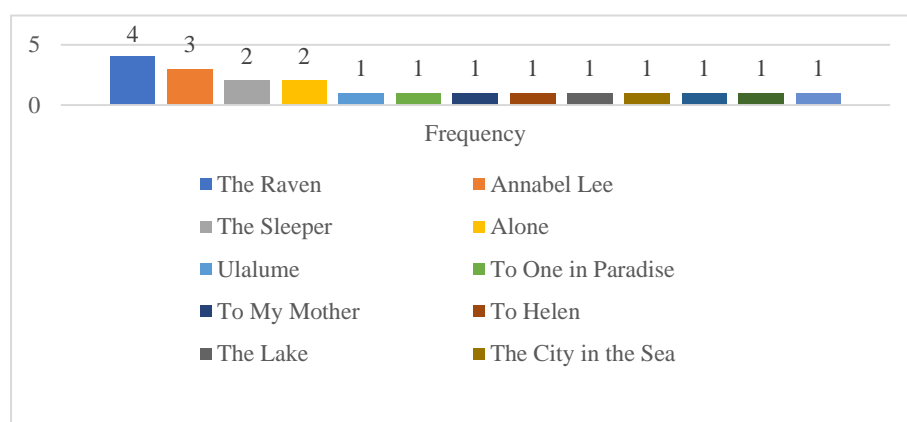


Figure 6. Frequency of Referenced Poems in the Synthesized Studies on Poe

In conclusion, this section investigates the scholarly interest surrounding the theme of death as depicted in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe. The disparity in research focus between Dickinson and Poe serves to underscore the differing levels of critical engagement with their respective poetic examinations of death. This discrepancy presents an intriguing opportunity for further investigation and interpretation of Poe's portrayal of death in his poetry.

3.2 Interpretation of Death by Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe

After establishing the broader research interest in the interpretation of death in the works of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe, the following section delves into the specific themes related to mortality that are prevalent in their poetry. It also examines the distinctive ways in which these two writers approach the theme of death, highlighting their unique interpretations and the stylistic elements they employ to convey their perspectives on mortality. Relevant information concerning the unique representation of death and literary devices was extracted from the studies in synthesis and was subjected to content analysis. Through this focused exploration, we gain a deeper understanding of the nuanced and complex ways in which Dickinson and Poe engage with the universal theme of death in their poetic works.

3.2.1 Key Themes Related to Death in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe

The analysis of key themes in the death poems of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe involved extracting keywords from relevant studies and synthesizing them to create a word cloud. This visual representation effectively demonstrates the prominence and interconnectedness of these themes within their respective works. In **Figure 7**, it is apparent that in Dickinson's work, the themes of immortality, time, seclusion, and pain suggest a deep introspection and philosophical exploration of



Figure 7. Word Cloud of Key Themes in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson



Figure 8. Word Cloud of Key Themes in the Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe

assess the inter-coder reliability of the coding process and enhance the validity of the findings, Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960) statistic was used to evaluate the agreement between two coders. Once the coding process was completed, the codes were then organized into distinct code categories (Weber, 1990) to reveal overarching themes, trends, or patterns in the data.

Results of the content analysis show contrastingly the different characteristics of death as represented in the death poems of Emily Dickinson. Generally speaking, the representation of death in Emily Dickinson's poems is notably more multifaceted and diverse compared to Edgar Allan Poe's works, as illustrated in **Figures 9 and 10**.

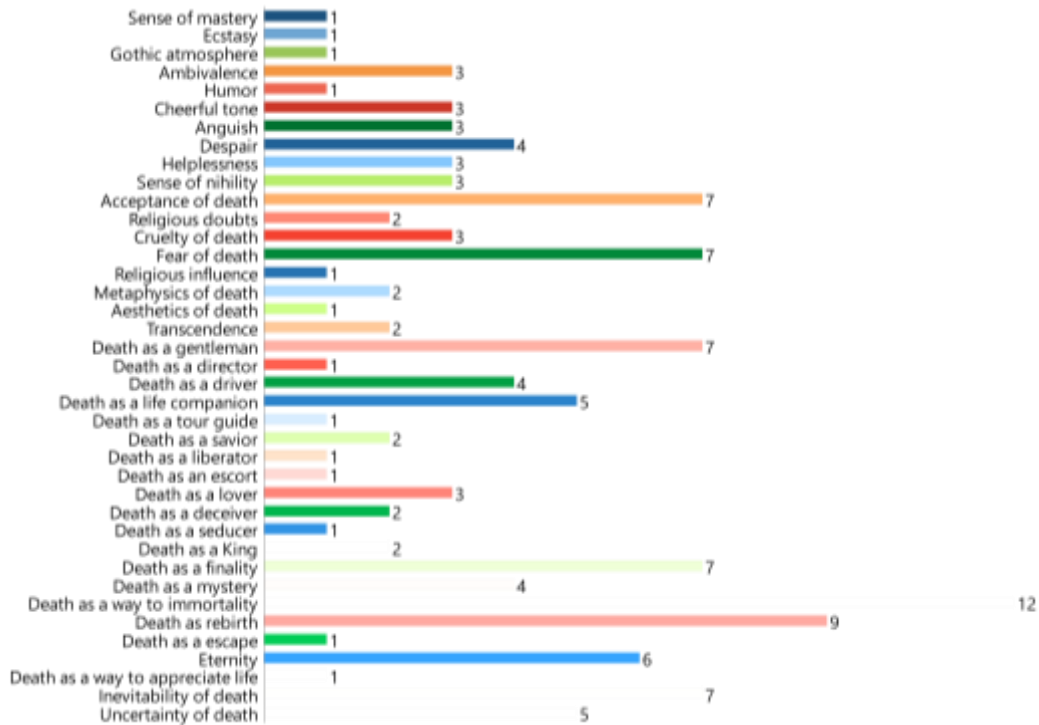


Figure 9 Codes Summary of the Characteristics of Death in the Poetry of Dickinson

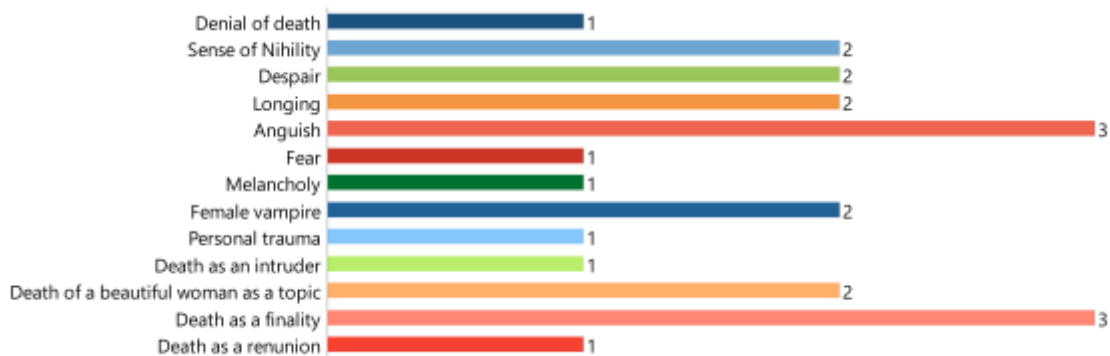


Figure 10 Codes Summary of the Characteristics of Death in the Poetry of Poe

Firstly, in Dickinson's poetry, death often serves as a pathway to immortality and renewal, with a prevailing tone of serene acceptance. She frequently portrays death as a natural part of life, with the potential to lead to a spiritual rebirth or an eternal existence. Dickinson's poems often convey a sense of calm and peaceful acceptance of death, emphasizing its role in the cycle of life. In contrast, Poe's treatment of death in his poetry leans towards a darker and more sombre perspective. His works emphasize the grim and distressing aspects of death, portraying it as an inevitable end and an unwelcome intrusion. Poe's exploration of death often evokes feelings of dread and despair, focusing on the finality and suffering associated with mortality.

Secondly, death in Dickinson's poetry is often personified as a gentleman, a lover, and even a companion, reflecting a more nuanced and positive outlook. She portrays death as a gentle and comforting presence, at times even as a welcome companion. This personification reflects a more complex and accepting attitude towards mortality. On the other hand, in Poe's poetry, death

is more often connected with female vampires, and he is fascinated by the depiction of the death of the beautiful woman. Poe's portrayal of death often takes on a more sinister and haunting quality, often intertwined with themes of loss, longing, and the macabre. His fascination with the death of beautiful women underscores his exploration of death as a haunting and tragic force.

Thirdly, while Dickinson did convey moments of ambivalence, despair, fear, and uncertainty regarding death and the afterlife, the overall attitude towards death in her poetry is one of cheerfulness and tranquillity. Despite these moments of doubt and fear, Dickinson's poetry often conveys a sense of acceptance and even celebration of the natural cycle of life and death. Conversely, Poe's focus on the painful emotions surrounding mortality and the looming presence of death contributes to a more macabre and foreboding portrayal of the subject. His works often delve into the darker and more haunting aspects of death, evoking feelings of fear, despair, and unease. Poe's exploration of mortality reflects a more ominous and unsettling perspective, emphasizing the haunting and agonizing aspects of death.

Furthermore, **Figures 11 and 12** provide a clear categorization of codes related to the interpretation of death in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe, focusing on the portrayal of death and the emotions expressed. The analysis reveals a greater diversity of codes in Dickinson's poems, leading to a further grouping of the portrayal of death into two main categories: attitude towards death and image of death. Additionally, Dickinson's poems explore various other themes related to death, including transcendence, religious influences, the aesthetics of death, and the metaphysics of death. In terms of the emotions accompanying death, Dickinson's poetry reflects a range of feelings, from fear, helplessness, and anguish to moments of cheerfulness and acceptance. This inconsistency in emotional expression adds depth and complexity to her portrayal of death.

Conversely, the codes related to Poe's death poems are categorized into two main groups. The emotions surrounding death in Poe's works paint a more agonizing picture, characterized by despair, fear, and anguish, often conveyed in a melancholic and nihilistic tone. Meanwhile, Poe's portrayal of death is darker and more monotonous, viewing death as the definitive end of life and a reunion with the beloved, often intertwined with themes of personal trauma and loss. This stark and bleak depiction of death in Poe's poetry contributes to a sense of foreboding and despair that permeates his works.

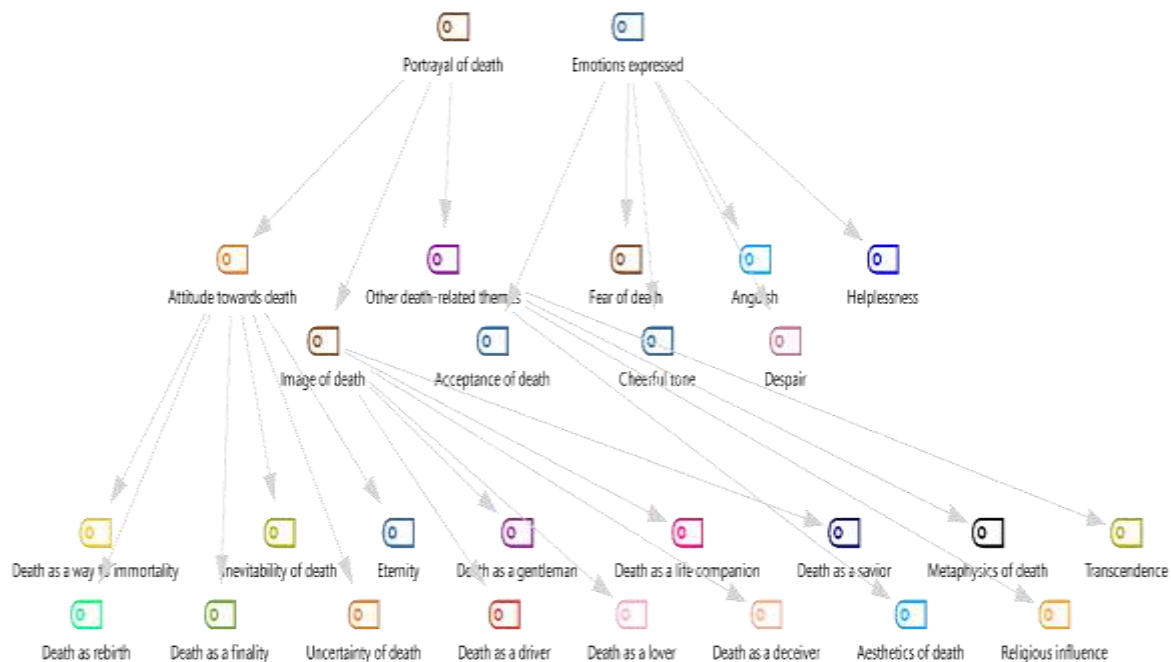


Figure 11 Codes Categorizations of the Characteristics of Death in the Poetry of Dickinson

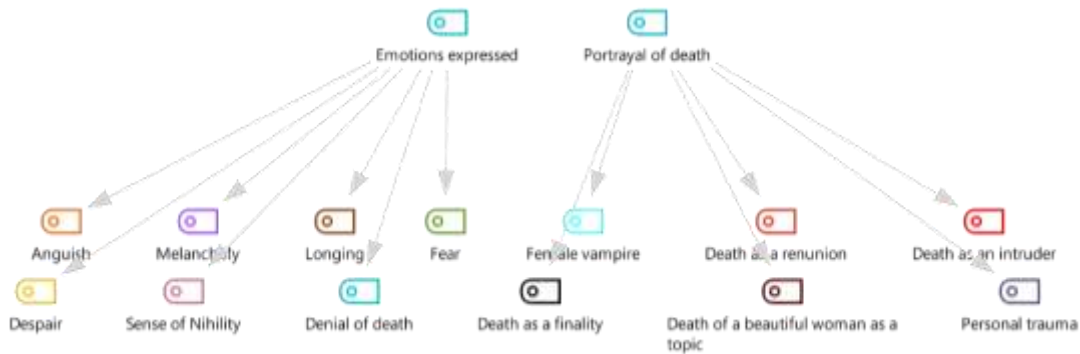


Figure 12 Codes Categorizations of the Characteristics of Death in the Poetry of Poe

3.2.3 Stylistic Elements Used by Dickinson and Poe to Interpret Death

In addition to delving into the portrayal of death in the poems of the two writers, the ongoing study also places emphasis on the utilization of literary devices by these authors. Through the strategic use of literary devices, writers have the power to elicit emotional reactions from their readers, enrich the aesthetic appeal of their creations, and imbue their works with deeper layers of significance (Arcilla, 2024). By employing these devices, writers can effectively and engagingly convey their messages, ensuring that their works resonate more profoundly with their audience (Padmaja & Rajmohan, 2023). By weaving elements such as metaphor, symbolism, imagery, and irony into their writing, authors can create a multi-dimensional tapestry of words that captivates the imagination and stirs the soul of the reader.

The analysis of the literary devices utilized in the referenced poems focusing on the theme of death reveals intriguing insights into the creative strategies employed by Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe. **Figures 13** and **14** present a summary of the literary devices found in these synthesized poems, showcasing a diverse array of techniques used by both poets to convey their exploration of mortality. Symbolism emerges as a predominant literary device in the poems of Dickinson and Poe, serving as a powerful tool for imbuing objects, actions, and imagery with deeper layers of meaning. Through symbolic representations, both poets skillfully evoke complex emotions and ideas related to death, inviting readers to engage with the text on a symbolic level.

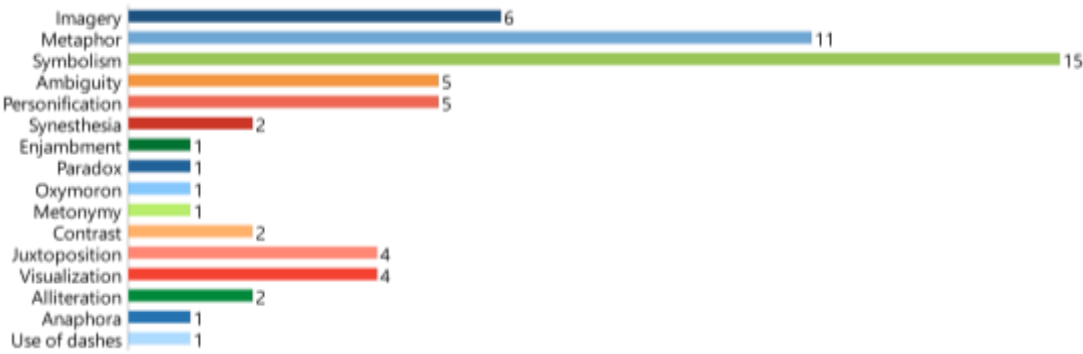


Figure 13 Literary Devices in the Poetry of Dickinson



Figure 14 Literary Devices in the Poetry of Poe

In addition to symbolism, both Dickinson and Poe make extensive use of other literary devices such as simile, metaphor, and personification to enrich their poetic compositions. These devices serve to create vivid and evocative imagery, drawing parallels, and making connections that deepen the thematic exploration of death in their works. However, a notable contrast in the variety and frequency of literary devices employed by Dickinson and Poe is evident in the synthesized analysis. This disparity may be attributed to the distinct stylistic preferences and thematic approaches of the two poets, as well as the different sources and studies synthesized for each writer.

Overall, the nuanced utilization of literary devices by Dickinson and Poe underscores their mastery of poetic craft and their ability to convey profound themes and emotions through the artful manipulation of language. These devices not only enhance the beauty and complexity of the text but also serve as vehicles for conveying themes, emotions, and ideas in a nuanced and impactful manner (Paramalingam, 2023). By examining the interplay of symbolism, metaphor, and other devices in their poems, readers can gain a deeper appreciation of the rich and complex tapestries of meaning woven by these celebrated poets in their exploration of the theme of death.

4. Discussion

A comprehensive examination of scholarly attention towards the death poems of these two writers revealed a notable disparity in research focus, with Emily Dickinson garnering greater interest compared to the limited and sporadic studies on Edgar Allan Poe. As two ardent explorers of the theme of death, both Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe are fascinated by this "thematic preoccupation of poetry through the ages" (Martin & Meder, 2022, p.53) and personalize death in their poetry. They imbue their works with various symbolic meanings and contemplate the enigmatic nature of existence and the mysteries surrounding the afterlife (Swarnakar, 2017). Emily Dickinson, celebrated for her diverse writing styles and exceptional talent, is particularly renowned for her distinctive portrayal of death in American literature (Strubel, 2014). Through over five hundred poignant lyrics, she explores themes of mortality, immortality, the physical manifestations of death, personification of death, and elegiac poetry (Halim et al., 2022). Despite their differences in linguistic, historical, and cultural constitution, and writing patterns (Swarnakar, 2017), Edgar Allan Poe also shares a profound fascination with death, capturing its essence in intricate detail and symbolic representation (Pruette, 1920). However, Emily Dickinson's treatment of death is characterized by her introspective and contemplative approach, often delving into the metaphysical and existential aspects of mortality. In contrast, Edgar Allan Poe's exploration of death is marked by a darker and more macabre tone, with themes of horror, decay, and the supernatural pervading his work.

4.1 Death Represented in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson

Previous studies on Dickinson's treatment of death have provided valuable insights into the nuanced ways in which she approaches this universal mystery of human existence. But unlike the general view of death as a predetermined path leading to a destination (Stannard, 1977), Dickinson accepts this inevitability of life with courage and appreciates this gift as a companion to life (Martin & Meder, 2022). Cooney (1998) delves into the philosophical implications of Dickinson's preoccupation with death, underscoring the poetess's affirmation of death as a means to examine and understand life. Tiwari and Khanday (2017) also stressed Dickinson's portrayal of death as a comforter, an escape from pain, and a doorway to immortality. By analysing Dickinson's poem 'Because I Could Not Stop for Death', Raza and Zahra (2024) elaborate on how Dickinson's portrayal of death diverges or aligns with the works of her peers, with a focus on Dickinson's depiction of death as a perpetual existence embedded in time and life as a momentary point detached from the temporality of eternity. According to Gilbert and Gubar (2020), Dickinson's portrayal of death as a gentle and peaceful transition challenges societal norms and offers a new perspective on mortality.

The exploration of death in Emily Dickinson's poetry has captivated scholars for decades, shedding light on the profound ways in which she grapples with the inevitable aspect of human existence. Cooney (1998) posits that Dickinson's work beckons readers to not only contemplate death but to delve deeper into the essence of life itself, challenging us to confront our mortality with a sense of introspection and contemplation. Building upon this notion, Smith (1992) delves into Dickinson's nuanced portrayal of grief, loss, and acceptance, emphasizing how her poetry serves as a poignant invitation for readers to confront their own mortality and the emotional and psychological impact it carries. McDermott and Porter (1989) take a unique approach by utilizing computer content analysis to dissect nine of Dickinson's renowned death poems, revealing how her verses blur the stark boundaries between life and death, offering readers an experience that transcends mere cognitive and emotional associations with mortality.

Moreover, the symbolism and imagery employed by Dickinson in her portrayal of death have been a focal point of scholarly inquiry. Miller (1987) discusses how Dickinson's vivid and evocative imagery intricately conveys the complexities of death, while also using metaphor and symbolism to infuse her exploration of mortality with depth and richness. Sheki (2023) further delves

into the literary devices employed by Dickinson in specific poems, such as 'Because I could not stop for Death', unravelling their deeper thematic significance through the lens of imagery, metaphor, personification, rhyme scheme, and symbolism.

The multifaceted nature of Dickinson's preoccupation with death is also attributed to various factors by scholars. Alqaryouti and Sadeq (2017) connect Dickinson's fascination with death to her isolation, personal losses, and curiosity about the afterlife, influenced by her Christian upbringing. Roy et al. (2015) and Liu (2016) highlight Dickinson's ambivalent attitude towards death, tracing it back to her Puritan surroundings. Martin and Meder (2022) further underscore how Dickinson's poems reflect her agonized questioning of death and her internal struggle with the religious beliefs ingrained in her family and community. In essence, Dickinson's exploration of death transcends mere morbidity, offering readers a profound journey into the complexities of mortality, life, and the human experience itself.

4.2 Death Represented in the Poetry of Edgar Allen Poe

While Dickinson approached death with a sense of appreciation and transcendence (Martin & Meder, 2022), Poe's perspective on mortality is often characterized by a subversive and morbid tone, evoking feelings of "horror, fear, and gloom" (Bradford, 2011, p.57). Purette (1920) explores the reasons behind this focus, attributing it to Poe's unique environmental circumstances and natural inheritance, which has resulted in his "peculiar fascination for the secrets of the tomb, a desire to probe into the last hidden process of life's disintegration" (p.378). Compared with the large bulk of poetic creation on death by Dickinson, there are only a few poems focused on death out of the small volume of verse in the case of Poe to rest on his substantial claims to poetic genius. But for both Dickinson and Poe, their lives have a strong impact on their attitudes towards death (Swarnakar, 2017), with Poe's verse being much more songs of sorrow, love, madness, and melancholy (Purette, 1920).

Shulman (1996) also connects Poe's fascination with death with his painful experiences with the loss of loved ones, usually involving mourning the death of a beautiful young woman, and an illusion of reunion after the narrator's death. Qahtan (2011) further emphasizes the connection between Poe's relationship with women and his obsession with this predominant motif, as presented in both his aesthetic theory and poetry. By intertwining personal experiences with artistic expression, Poe creates a haunting and evocative narrative that transcends time and space, inviting readers to confront their own fears and desires in the face of death.

In addition, scholars have analyzed the artistic expressions that Poe uses to represent death in his poetic writing. Harits and Sari (2015) explore the function of imagery and symbolism used in "The Raven" to convey the themes. Budiargo et al. (2021) further clarified the eight types of figurative language used by Poe in "The Raven," namely, personification, imagery, metaphor, hyperbole, alliteration, allusion, simile, and onomatopoeia to enhance the meaning of death. Gido et al. (2022) analyze the artistic features of Poe's "Annabel Lee" from phonological, graphological, morphological, and syntactic levels, pointing out that Poe conveys the idea of death through personification with fairytale rhythm and a supernatural undertone.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Death Represented by Dickinson and Poe

Despite their shared thematic interest, Dickinson and Poe present starkly contrasting visions of death, reflecting their unique artistic sensibilities and personal experiences. Dickinson's introspective musings on death offer a glimpse into the complexities of human mortality and the mysteries of existence, while Poe's macabre and haunting depictions evoke a sense of dread and foreboding. As two of the most influential American writers of the 19th century, Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe both grappled with the profound and universal theme of death in their literary works. As Wafa (2013) pointed out both poets share a similarity in their gloomy outlooks and the use of metaphysical elements of death, myth, and religion.

As to the reasons behind their common interest, Derrick (2002) applied the idea of the frontier to the boundary between reason and irrationality, language and silence, and life and death to interpret the worlds of Dickinson and Poe, suggesting that religion and epistemology come together for the Romantic mind at the moment of death, as both Poe and Dickinson fall downward into the ultimate revelation. Rather than revealing morbid curiosity about the moment of death, Oddis (2015) ponders on how the prevalence of death testifies to belief and how we live in relation to death. Despite these insightful analyses, the comparative study of the two writers remains relatively sparse, as they are often perceived as "standing quite afar" (Swarnakar, 2017, p.30).

5. Conclusion

A systematic and comparative analysis of Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe's treatment of death reveals the fascinating interplay between their unique artistic sensibilities, personal experiences, and thematic explorations. Despite sharing a common interest in the profound and universal theme of death, Dickinson and Poe present starkly contrasting visions that reflect their individual perspectives and approaches to mortality. Dickinson's introspective musings offer a deep dive into the complexities of human existence and the mysteries surrounding mortality, while Poe's macabre and haunting depictions evoke a sense of dread

and foreboding, showcasing the diversity of poetic expressions on this universal theme. While scholars such as Wafa (2013) have highlighted the similarities in Dickinson and Poe's gloomy outlooks and their use of metaphysical elements in addressing death, Derrick (2002) and Oddis (2015) have provided insightful interpretations that delve into the religious, epistemological, and existential dimensions of the poets' works. However, it is important to note that the comparative study of Dickinson and Poe remains relatively sparse. This limitation underscores the need for further research that delves deeper into the connections and divergences between the two writers' treatments of death.

Moving forward, future research could benefit from a more extensive comparative analysis of Dickinson and Poe's works, exploring additional themes, stylistic elements, and contextual influences that shape their representations of death. Additionally, researchers could consider incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives from fields such as psychology, philosophy, and cultural studies to enrich our understanding of how Dickinson and Poe engage with mortality in their poetry.

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