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Abstract: Humanity has always been in search for an identity: to discover who we really are or who we think we are. This uncertainty is rooted in the unconscious, a world difficult to explore. Firstly, this project proves that not only Edgar Allan Poe made use of his creative mind, but the author also delved into his own mental activities and traumatic experiences to design those stories and characters. To demonstrate this, Marie Bonaparte's *The Life And Works Of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho Analytic Interpretation* will be thoughtfully studied. It is essential to consider Otto Rank's notion of the double as the subject of study and going further by focusing on Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung's viewpoints, among others. Secondly, the aim of this paper is to unbury the unconscious by studying the myth of the doppelganger in Poe's tales: "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" by following different psychoanalytical theories. Finally, this article determines that Poe's real purpose was probably to demonstrate the fragmentation of the psyche of human nature as depicted in some of his heroes.

Keywords: Edgar Allan Poe, psychoanalysis, double, doppelganger, William Wilson, The Fall of the House of Usher

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The Nature of the Doppelganger in Edgar Allan Poe's "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher"

1. Introduction

Mankind has always been attempting to understand the human mind: the most troublesome question ever faced. Psychologists are always working on how we can understand better our deepest reactions, emotions, desires, obsessions, traumatic memories, fears or hidden thoughts. It is known that the subject is as more or less pathologically detached between the conscious and the unconscious.

All over the history, the notion of the unconscious mind has been the focus of study of many psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung or Otto Rank, among others. Freud's earlier model pointed out that the unconscious is the repressed side of the conscious thought or what the person rejects to know consciously. In other words, the conscious awareness (i.e. the self) sees the unconscious as an adversary, fighting with itself to bury the unconscious. Soon, the psychoanalyst strengthened his theory focusing on the Oedipus complex— the wish of killing one's father to sleep with one's mother— and then creating an analytic study of the repressed of human psyche in *The Ego and The Id* (1923).

On his behalf, in his work *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology* (1966) Carl Jung discussed the image of the unconscious considered as being a "collective unconscious" common to all mankind and coming from the inherited structure of the brain rather than an individual or personal unconscious that Freud initially referred to. Moreover, Jung confirmed that it includes different archetypes such as the *anima* or the *shadow*.

In this way, humanity always wonders about the real existence of the self: are we really ourselves? Or maybe there is a force in ourselves that desires to control us and prevent us from being ourselves? It is universally recognized that the human being is a dichotomy itself: the self and the other self, often distinguished between the good and the evil.

The early 18th and 19th Gothic fiction, devoted to the unknown, the irrational, the perverse, and the dark side of the soul of humans, aimed to unbury the unconsciousness and reveal the existence of the other self.

It was Otto Rank who focused his study on this baffling atmosphere, putting into practice "The Doppelgänger Theory" and developing it in his book *The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study* (1971) also known as *Der Doppelgänger*. According to Ralph Tymms, "Rank bases his interpretation of the whole theme of the double on the Freudian theory of Narcissism...the double represents elements of morbid self-love which prevent the formation of a happily balanced personality." (Tymms 40-41).

The myth of the *doppelgänger* has been used by many literary authors like Shakespeare in *The Comedy of Errors*; E.T.A Hoffmann in "The Sandman"; Guy Maupassant in "The Horla"; Fyodor Dostoyevsky in *The Double*; Robert Louis Stevenson in *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hide*; Oscar Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, or Edgar Allan Poe in some short stories such as "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher", among others.

Considering the previous information, the purpose of this paper is to study Rank's theory and to prove that the insight of the dualism approach plays a powerful role in Poe's own life as well as in his gothic tales. There are several steps to follow within this project.

Firstly, the project pays attention to the notion of the double. In order to frame the theory, it is necessary to study Rank's book and then go further by following the psychological critical technique on Freud and Jung viewpoints, among others. Hence, it is crucial to demonstrate that terms such as the *anima*, the struggle between *ego-id* or the *uncanny* are supported motifs of Rank's belief.

Secondly, the eye is on a psychological inquiry of Poe's life. Charmed by Poe's grotesque stories and identified with his inner world, Marie Bonaparte decided to compose a psychobiography, *The Life And Works Of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho Analytic Interpretation* which is used to show Poe's early traumatic life experiences.

Critics like Carroll D. Lavery have considered that Poe's stories helped him to adapt to his early distressing losses (1951). Therefore, the author shares certain features with his own characters. In this way, the last part of this essay is devoted to explore the psychological side of Poe's "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" to corroborate that their characters are depicted with mental disorders and notable doubleness.

2. The Notion of the Double

Stemmed from German Romanticism, the literary term of the *doppelgänger* was first coined by Jean Paul Richter in his novel *Siebenkäs* in 1796. The writer focused on the problem of the division and duplication of the self and the appearance of the double as a real human being.

It has been recognized that this figure has held the attention of mankind since ancient times. In Greek mythology, it was Narcissus who incarnated the risk of seeing one's double as well as the God Janus in Roman mythology.

In primitive societies it was perceived as a "shadow, representing both the living person and the dead, and it insures immortality, functioning as a kind of guardian angel." (Fonseca 190). James Frazer, in his book, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Death* (1913), also focused on the past: "the Fijians imagined that every man has two souls, a dark soul, consisting of his shadow, and a light soul, consisting of his reflection in water or a looking-glass: the dark soul departs at death to Hades, while the light soul stays near the place where he died or was killed." (Frazer 411).

It was in the 20th century when Otto Rank, defined the double as an omen of death itself to the self-conscious individual (Rank 74). He firstly explored that 'other' whilst devoted part of his life to study neurosis and revised his own unconscious in *Trauma of Birth* (1924). Eric S. Stein explained that Rank defined the person's fear in terms of a basic duality: fear of life and fear of death; a dread of individualization or dread of mislaying one's individuality. Otto Rank started to be curious about this dualism and wrote for the first time about the doppelgänger in his famous book *The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study* also known as *Der Doppelgänger*.

Gry Faurholt, in his article "Self as Other: The Doppelgänger", agreed with Rank by distinguishing some types of double personality found in different narratives. It is seen that Rank based on multiple stories in which he described the complex psychology of this individual.

First and foremost, "the *alter ego* is an identical double"; it is a case of 'duplication' of the protagonist whose identity has been stolen (by his own double). An example of this first type could be Guy Maupassant's work "The Horla." It is noticeable that the doppelganger's role is to take possession of the protagonist's entire life up to the point that he shows a powerful consciousness of guilt and cannot be responsible of the actions of his own ego. The hero is trying to resist this process of identification in the same way that he wants to convince himself of the fact that that entity does not exist in real life. Thus, this replacement of the original brings about the character's own madness and uncertainty about what is real and what is not.

On the other hand, another kind of double is "detached from the ego and becomes an individual being" (Rank 20). This being personifies a split personality, a creature that represents the dark side of the protagonist which is physically materialized and even it is the result of his instinctual thrusts. Faurholt insisted that this type of doppelganger "is about what happens when one does not accept the basic restrictions and limitations of the social order and the human condition". Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or, more explicitly, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll's & Mr. Hyde* could be clear examples to this premise.

But, obviously, there existed different interpretations of this famous motif. Recalling primitive beliefs, Joanne Blum in *Transcending Gender: The Male/Female Double in Women's Fiction* (1988) declared that the double does not necessarily embody a physical shape, it can be a phantasm, a delusion or a hallucination. Indeed, Rank believed this kind of double to be a soul that returns from death, a reincarnated or immortal self.

To finish this introductory chapter, it is mandatory to give a psychoanalytical approach to the concept of the double. Besides Rank's analyses, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung also determined the figure of the double as a fundamental aspect of the human psyche.

It is true that both Rank and Freud created a real bond since they were closest colleagues for twenty years and even Freud supported Rank's ideas on the birth trauma. Afterwards, Freud decided to develop Rank's theories further in his essay *The Uncanny* known also as "Das Unheimliche") in which he discusses the notion of the double, integrating it in his concept of the uncanny. For him, the uncanny "is undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror." (Freud 219). It is something frightening for us because it was common and familiar: throughout time, the ordinary becomes strange and hidden and when our past memories, traumas or dreams come back to our mind, they terrify us. In other words, Freud emphasized this awkward feeling as 'the return of the repress.'

In this way, the uncanny nature of the double is the manifestation of all the ego's suppressed drives, feelings or desires so that Freud related it to the creation of the super-ego. At this point, where does all this anguish come from? Its origin comes from earlier psychic stages, the initial narcissism of the child and its self-love; as Freud established: "the idea of the "double" does not necessarily disappear with the passing of the primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of development of the ego." (Freud 235)

Bearing in mind the previous idea, the Freudian approach showed an ambiguous doppelganger since: on the one hand, it displays a narcissistic and erotic attitude in relation to his self-image, but it turns out to be increasingly antagonistic (*alter ego's* case). And, on

the other hand, it displays the dark part of his self that is not socially accepted (case of split personality).

But, can this uncanny apparition only be regarded as something threatening for human nature? In his essay, Freud also speculated about it. The psychoanalyst considered that the double is represented as a kind of guardian for the individual as confirmed: "the "double" was originally an insurance against destruction to the ego" (Freud 235) fruit of early narcissism and self-love. For this reason, he asserted that the creation of the double can be a process of self-discovery for the human being: the individual is able to get to know himself, analyze his own behavior and figure out his inner voice.

On his behalf, Carl Jung, just like Freud, devoted himself to discuss the human psyche in most of his works. In *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (volume 8) he stated the following: "the psyche appears as the source of life, the prime mover, a ghostlike presence which has objective reality...as something independent, and therefore capricious and dangerous... so mysterious and frightening." (Jung 447-448)

From a simple perspective, Jung distinguished two different categories when studying the unconscious: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious, being this last one the focus of interest. The collective unconscious is the hidden part of humanity: the instincts, the archetypes or signs, the reasoning, the experiences and the real behavior. Jung determined that the archetypes (rooted in the collective unconscious) that have a powerful impact on humankind are the *shadow* and the *anima*. Taking into account Rank's previous theories, it can be said that his explanation of the dark side is interpreted by Jung as a shadow or anima.

The *anima* embraced a feminine nature in men's psyche and the *animus* embraced a masculine nature in women's psyche. Frith Luton, a Jungian analyst, explained that the man's anima is seen as a type of feminine image functioning as his 'spiritual guide' or 'soul' reflecting his deep emotions, attitudes and feelings. And, on the other hand, the woman's animus works as an 'unconscious mind' which can be personified in dreams.

Concluding this section, the notion of the doppelganger has been focus of investigation of many personalities that led to many different interpretations as it was previously explained. Obviously, this topic arouses curiosity to readers and one tends to wonder the reason why this uncanny character has been created. There is a curious fact provided by James Lieberman and Robert Kramer that Rank experienced this duality in his own life since his behavior was meant as a bipolar disorder. Thus, the previous fact could be a reason for his development of the double theory which will be the pattern to analyze Poe's "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" in following chapters.

3. How Edgar Allan Poe's Works Uncover his Life

Edgar Allan Poe has been an iconic figure in literature and that is why both his own life and works have aroused the curiosity of many personalities in the literary field as well as in psychological studies. For instance, Scott Peeples did research about his biography *The*

Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe (2007) as well as Julie Robus in *A Psychoanalytic Monograph of Edgar Allan Poe*, among others.

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809 having a tortured childhood by experiencing the death of his parents, Elizabeth Arnold Poe and David Poe, when he was two-years-old. Soon, the child was adopted by the Allans: having a troubled relationship with John Allan, a wealthy tobacco merchant, but a very close one with his foster mother, Frances Valentine. Living in Richmond (Virginia), Poe started studying at the University of Virginia in 1826 which was not a good time for him. Considering that the disinterested John Allan did not pay the boy's university expenses, Poe was directly involved in gambling in order to get further money to pay his debts. The vice to struggle for getting money led the young Poe to definitely drop out university. Consequently, the hostility and antipathy took over the Allans home so that Poe left in a quest to become an admirable poet. In spite of his growing fame, Poe was still barely able to make a living.

Subsequently, feeling lonely, the author decided to stay in Baltimore with some of his natural relatives; his aunt Maria Clemm and cousin Virginia whom he married at the age of twenty-seven in Richmond. However, his period of stability soon faded due to John Allan's death and the subsequent loss by tuberculosis of his beloved Virginia which was the cause of the poet's block and his inability to write for months.

In the summer of 1849, Poe became engaged with his first fiancée without getting to marry since the poet disappeared in Baltimore for five days. It is said that he was found in the bar room of a public house used as a polling place for an election known as the cooping theory. Nevertheless, the real cause of Poe's death has been a great enigma.

Apart from the famous cooping theory, it is believed that the author sought refuge in alcohol for years due to all he went through and that could be the motive he died for. About his drinking habits, Charles Baudelaire said: "he did not drink like an ordinary toper, but like a savage, with an altogether American energy and fear of wasting a minute, as though he was accomplishing an act of murder, as though there was something inside him he had to kill." (Meyers 25). Then, according to J. P. Kennedy's note in his diary "The consequence was fever, delirium, and madness, and in a few days a termination of his sad career in the hospital. Poor Poe! ...A bright but unsteady light has been awfully quenched." (Bonner 194) As said so, it is also understood that after the vice of alcohol, mental problems appeared; the latter as being another possible theory of his mysterious death.

While some critics such as Rufus Griswold defamed Poe's personal life as he revealed in *Memoir of the Author* (1850), others devoted to glorify it. More specifically, it is Marie Bonaparte who really fits in this category. She felt emotionally attached to the author since their childhoods were damaged by the absence of the mother. Thus, encouraged by Freud, Bonaparte decided to compose her masterpiece: *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytical Interpretation*.

Poe's talent upon writing his stories, by making use of his creative imagination, is an unquestionable fact. Nonetheless, it has been discussed that the settings, characters or events of his narratives seem to correlate to his life as the Edgar Allan Poe Society confirms: "he is regarded as the archetype of the dysfunctional artist, the genius who mines his own troubled life and pours his inner self into his works, creating as he himself is consumed."

(The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, "Edgar Allan Poe's Works as Autobiography"). Certainly, all this is what this chapter will hypothesize about by following Bonaparte's steps.

But, what does lead Poe to tell his horror stories and create those characters? According to D.H. Lawrence, the writer is "absolutely concerned with the disintegration-process of his own psyche" (Pounds 425) what leads us to localize that autobiographical tendency in his writings. In her work, Bonaparte analyzed Poe's life and works by carrying out a psychoanalytical study: she divided Poe's stories into "tales of the mother" and "tales of the father." This chapter will comment on "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "William Wilson", respectively, detecting parallelisms with the author's own life since both stories will be object of study in following chapters.

Focusing on "the tales of the mother", it is seen that Poe had an obsession with beautiful dying women as a result of his past experiences with his mother, his foster mother and his wife. In this way, Bonaparte observes that most of his female heroines own a spectral nature and almost all of them are represented as women who return from death. It is noticeable that both Bonaparte and Poe "re-actualized the past trauma, bringing back to "life" the repressed figure of their dead mother," as Lorelei Caraman explains. Taking a look at Bonaparte's analysis of "The Fall of the House of Usher", it is revealed that Virginia Clemm, Poe's wife, can perfectly play the role of Lady Madeline since "describing Lady Madeline's disease, Poe...attributes to Madeleine the increasing apathy and debility he daily observed in Virginia." (Bonaparte 242). But it is also considered that the posterior apparition of Lady Madeline as a ghost after being buried by her twin brother, Roderick Usher, recalls the returning from death of Poe's mother. Moreover, some critics such as Philip Young theorized about a possible incestuous relationship between the twins which directly reflects Poe's relationship with his own cousin. For all this, the "Life-in-Death" process turns out to be a nightmare for Roderick as well as for Poe himself: both are chased by the ghostly figure who acts as an emissary of justice; a consequence of their inner guilt. Bonaparte explains how they both were punished for as follows:

Poe is *punished* for having betrayed his mother in loving Madeline-Virginia. Usher-Poe is *punished* for not having dared to seek and rewind his babyhood mother when...men bore her away, and also for his silence and acceptance, in his childish incomprehension of death. Usher-Poe is *punished* for his sadism, as shown in the way Usher treated his sister. Finally, Usher-Poe is punished for his infantile incestuous wishes towards his mother. (Bonaparte 249)

In addition, Bonaparte found another evidence for the existence of the "living-in-death mother" in the tale focusing on the mansion itself: "the Mother is unconsciously symbolized by a manor house... the dead mother who still survived in the unconscious memory of her son." (Bonaparte 243)

Another crucial point of this article is what makes Poe use the myth of the doppelganger in his stories? Is it a projection of his own mind? Trusting Rank, stated that authors who incorporate character doubles in their works are victims of psychic, neurological

or mental illnesses or even alcohol or narcotic addicts. Indeed, Rank goes further suggesting that the writer's desire to use the theme of the double could be a cause of his egocentric nature as the psychologist analyzes: "The pathological disposition toward psychological disturbances is conditioned to a large degree by the splitting of the personality, with special emphasis upon the ego-complex, to which corresponds an abnormally strong interest in one's own person, his psychic states, and his destinies." (Rank 48). Definitely, his whole mind revolves only around his ego. For this reason, Rank confirmed that "William Wilson" is a "personal confession."

Going back to Bonaparte's studies and regarding her "tales of the father", she framed the story of "William Wilson" in an old Manor House School of Stoke Newington in which the young Poe spent two or three years of his infancy. It is in this tale where the author directly faces echoes of the past. In the first place, Poe's school headmaster, the real Mr. Bransby, appears in the story; an authoritarian man who acts as a father-figure: "The ever-recurrent figure of John Allan who, though eliminated from the hero's family in the tale, reappears fused with that of the headmaster." (Bonaparte 540-541)

As the plot unfolds, there is a moment in which the protagonist, Wilson, encounters his own double at school, an individual who was born on the same day and carries his own name. Looking into Poe's personal life, Bonaparte commented that it was known about the existence of John Allan's natural son, Edwin Collier, and according to Hervey Allen "In all probability young Collier attended the school in 1815 at the same time as Edgar Poe." (Allen 58) Hence, it can be considered that this double is personified by the brother-figure or Edwin Collier himself. As commented in the previous chapter, the apparition of the double is a sign of the individual's conscience and his super-ego and, in this case, the protagonist is battling against part of himself (an internal struggle). It is appreciated that the hero hates the evil twin and wants to eliminate him. Readers can wonder why. All this evokes past times: it is known about the bad relationship between Poe and John Allan and all he went through. Therefore, Bonaparte dared to say that the double-brother incarnates John Allan: "though partly John Allan disguised as the inhibiting "brother" is, nevertheless, a John Allan introjected... integral to Poe as private conscience and super-ego" and the double represents "the introjections of the moral bans imposed by the father, elements of mingled cruelty, persecution and affection." (Bonaparte 543) Definitely, all this trauma and internal conflict experienced by Poe and also by Wilson comes from childhood.

As has been observed throughout the chapter, Poe's stories give certain clues to know him well and uncover his inner demons and psychological struggles. Obviously, it will be never known for sure the reason why he wrote those stories, but readers can suspect that the author desired to escape reality as well as healing some wounds.

4. Battling Against the Conscience in "William Wilson"

As commented in the previous chapter, "William Wilson" from Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* is an autobiographical story in which the protagonist dialogues with his own conscience. The protagonist named William Wilson spends his childhood at a

boarding school in England. He is the typical student who believes himself superior to his classmates, but problems start when a second William Wilson, his double, appears. From their very first encounter, the double proves to be an improved copy of Wilson and always attempts to stop him when he is set out to do evil. After trying to escape in vain from his double, Wilson finally murders him to end his torment.

The key, however, lies in when the double appears: certainly, it was a time in which Wilson was experiencing an unusual mental conflict; his early evil nature from infancy was aggravated until it seized himself. As the protagonist confesses that 'he detests his own race', the apparition of the double could be about the attempt to develop another identity for himself.

It is an undeniable fact that the first encounter of Wilson with "the other Wilson" provokes certain distress in the character since, as Otto Rank narrated in his work, "the double not only has Wilson's own name and birthday, but also resembles him so much in physique, speech, behaviour, and gait that both of them are considered to be brothers—indeed, even twins." (Rank 25). Initially, readers can see several occasions in which Wilson avoids him because "his cue, which was to perfect an imitation of myself, lay both in words and in actions; and most admirably did he play his part." (Poe 278). "The other" terrorizes him by recalling his aversion to his own family name. Another curious fact is what the protagonist realizes in a certain moment in the tale: "I could with difficulty shake off the belief of my having been acquainted with the being who stood before me, at some epoch very long ago—some point of the past even infinitely remote." (Poe 279). Thus, an affective bond is created between them both. Nevertheless, that special bond is damaged afterwards when his double starts to oversee all he tries to do and especially when he is doing wrong. Therefore, Wilson begins to loathe him unconditionally.

Considering the previous information, it can be hypothesized that the doppelgänger plays the role of Wilson's guardian soul, "as a beneficent admonitor" (Rank 76) reflecting his moral demeanour. As Patrick Labriola points out "in producing a double that embodies the positive side of his being, Wilson subconsciously prevents himself from taking part in drunkenness, cheating, and adultery, and thereby protects himself from harm." (Labriola, "Edgar Allan Poe and E.T.A. Hoffmann: the Double in "William Wilson" and The Devil's Elixir") However, Wilson perceives his double as a threatening figure that persecutes and controls him up to the point of not allowing him to enjoy his free will. In Faurholt words, he "believes that the doppelgänger is involved in a conspiracy against him." (Faurholt, "Self as Other: The Doppelgänger").

Another step to follow in this chapter is to analyze the type of doppelgänger identified in Poe's tale, taking as reference the analyses proposed in chapter two. Addressing Rank's and Freud's assertions about the uncanny and unconscious nature of the double, "William Wilson" mirrors the reunion between the ego and the super-ego or alter-ego considering that there is a fusion in a single individual of two originally different: two Wilsons who are really one, two sides facing each other.

But, does he exist at all, or is he a product of Wilson's deceived imagination? Poe introduces a highly complex doppelgänger to his readers: the case of the split personality as well as the alter-ego or super-ego case. According to the hero's first descriptions, the double

was perceived by other students as been his twin; hence, it is suspected that the double seems to be a divided self. Nonetheless, the most conclusive evidence is that all could be a delusion or figment of Wilson's madness. On the other hand, inquiring into the story, it is shown that the double clearly depicts what Freud defined in *The Ego and the Id*: the super-ego is in charge of dominating the ego "in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt." (Freud 30-34). Definitely, many critics previously mentioned such as Faurholt, Bonaparte or Rank confirmed that the doppelganger acts as the grim or repressed conscience of Wilson in the tale. In fact, the protagonist himself reveals the following: "my rival had a weakness in the faucal or guttural organs, which precluded him from raising his voice at any time above a very low whisper." (Poe 277). Paying attention to the previous quote, it is identified the thin line separating them both: the double can only communicate by whispering what symbolizes the inner voice that always haunts humans.

In another point of the story, the narrator, believing that the double exists and that it is truly a copy of himself, decides to flee from school. Soon, he goes to study at Eton and, then, to Oxford where he again meets his enemy who exposes his bad tricks at a game. Finally, the last encounter with the strange being occurs in a masked ball in Rome, the exact moment when Wilson resolves to defy the double once and for all. The masquerade is a common symbol in Poe's fiction just like in "The Masque of the Red Death" or "The Cask of Amontillado". According to Endre Xantus, it is at this time when the motif of the doppelganger is highlighted as well as the problem of identity: "their identities become the same, even if the narrator wears a mask, he cannot escape his conscience, his double will always find him no matter the disguise." (Xantus 31).

The dénouement of the tale is the most critical moment of the story as it unmasks the real truth of both characters. Under the influence of alcohol and determined not to accept further submission, Wilson flies into a rage and drags his double into a private room: "Scoundrel!" I said, in a voice husky with rage, while every syllable I uttered seemed as new fuel to my fury, "scoundrel! impostor! accursed villain! you shall not—you shall not dog me unto death! Follow me, or I stab you where you stand!" (Poe 284). After a short duel, Wilson decisively stabs his rival, but at any moment Wilson realizes his enemy has disappeared. Eerily and suddenly, a mirror appears in the room where he can see his bloody alter-ego reflected. Nevertheless, as he kills his double, Wilson has actually committed a suicidal act and ended his life since both are inseparable and are linked to each other. In this way, the double, who no longer whispers and in the protagonist's voice, proceeds to tell him so: "You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead—dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist—and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself." (Poe 284)

The previous study leads to conclude the section by wondering ourselves: is the double a hallucination, a symptom of insanity of the protagonist or an actual paranormal presence? The figure of the doppelganger implies that it is an uncanny being that belongs to the hero's inner world, but the protagonist understands that the creature is real and chases him. The result is the destruction of both as explained before. In conclusion, Poe's "William Wilson" does not really go beyond the paranormal, but it is a portrayal of the world of the

psyche of humanity. It is a dialogue between the conscience and the individual that informs about the good and the evil.

5. Double Visions in "The Fall of the House of Usher"

Another story that belongs to *The Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* is "The Fall of the House of Usher" first published in 1839 in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. Following his autobiographical technique, Poe creates a narrative that compiles once again the traditional Gothic subjects of death, madness and fear embodied by the last members of the Usher family. The story revolves around the events that take place at the gloomy mansion of the Usher twins, Roderick and Madeline, a family cursed to die. Being invited to the House of Usher, the narrator reunites with his boyhood friend, Roderick, who is strangely mentally ill and whose sister, Madeline, is near death due to a mysterious malady. When Madeline dies, Roderick, together with the narrator, decides to entomb her body temporarily in a coffin. Days later, the bloody figure of Madeline appears facing both companions, causing her twin's death, the narrator's flight and the final collapse of the house.

Little is known about who Roderick Usher really is: the details the narrator reveals about his condition are the only evidences readers can trust. Roderick was a rational and intellectual man: a man passionate about music and reading. However, loneliness, sorrow, fear and madness have tormented his spirit due to the illness that is consuming her sister. To begin with, the narrator confesses having been requested to the House of Usher to help his friend to overcome his mental abnormality: "he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil...a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off." (Poe 196-197). The narrator continues explaining: "It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations... He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light;" (Poe 197). Then, the narrator considers Roderick as being a hypochondriac at specific passages of the story. Admittedly, Darius Langhoff dared to say that Roderick's ailment was a mere "fissure of mind": "In other words, "split mind" or "split personality". And this is the most concise definition of schizophrenia...The disease is characterized by a specific type of alteration of thinking, feeling, and relation to the external world." (Langhoff 120). Thus, Langhoff corroborated the narrator's previous assumption by explaining that hypochondriac symptoms are commonly related to schizophrenia among other neuroses. Aside from the previous premises, Roderick is a man subjected to madness by his own inner FEAR as he himself comments. The protagonist is terrified since the family lineage is condemned to end considering the imminent death of both twins and, obviously, he fears the hellish house in which they are trapped.

If Roderick's case denotes uncertainty, Madeline's is more mysterious. Even her actual existence could be one of the many questionable facts presented in the story, but that fact will be shown later. In another passage of the story, Roderick informs the narrator about Madeline's state as follows: "A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual

diagnosis." (Poe 197). Yet Langhoff goes further by suggesting that both twins could be victims of the same disease given that schizophrenia is also manifested by catalepsy. Apart from being physically and psychically attached to each other, it has been highly commented by critics as D. H. Lawrence the conceivable incestuous relationship between the twins. The main purpose to do so could be the creation of offspring lest the Usher lineage will not end. However, that seems to be impossible, as everyone in the decaying house is condemned to die.

At this point, the brother-sister bond can be depicted as a doppelganger-like relationship. Far away from making use of a single type, Poe explores different representations of the doppelganger motif. After a closer reading of the story, the union symbolized by the twins insinuates that they are two halves of the same person: they are composed of the same mind and body, showing the split-personality case.

Doubtlessly, Lady Madeline's death is the incident which attracts the most attention of both readers and literary critics. Did Roderick bury her really alive or was all a figment of his imagination? A possible interpretation is that the lady could be dead during the burial and, considering her cataleptic state, she could be able to wake up in the tomb. Nevertheless, it is practically impossible that Madeline could survive when Roderick decides to keep her body for a fortnight in that coffin due to the lack of oxygen and light, the reinforced iron and obviously the lack of nutrients. For this reason, as John S. Hill maintains, Roderick's belief that he hears her escaping from the tomb is only an illusion of his own disabled mind.

Another key moment is when the bloodstained Madeline emerges into the room and the consequent death of Roderick. Following Hill's view, "the facts in the tale prove that Madeline is dead and, consequently, that the Madeline who hurls herself upon Roderick can be only a hallucination...Madeline's final appearance is made as a ghost." (Hill 396), which corroborates Roderick's schizophrenia and his deep descent into madness. Bearing in mind the previous hypotheses, it is identified that Madeline here plays the role of a supernatural ghostly doppelganger of Roderick which is the expression of his worst fears and a product of his insanity; or even a spiritual presence that does not fully exist from the beginning. Therefore, another interpretation is to consider the figure of Madeline as a 'spiritual guide' or 'soul', "influencing his ideas, attitudes and emotions" as Frith Luton explains (Luton, "The Anima"). In other words, she is Roderick's Jungian *anima*. It is also remarkable the fact that the apparition of Madeline leads Roderick to immediately die. Hence, Madeline's phantom could also be interpreted as an omen to Roderick's death, as an emissary who indicates that both siblings must die together.

Finally, another double vision portrayed in the story is the House of Usher which mirrors both twins' peculiarities. At first glance, the house is a place that emanates horror and directly acts as an animate object. Poe provides a precise description of the mansion as being a picture of the Ushers: "I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eyelike windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul." (Poe 194). Not only the house resembles the twins physically, but also temperamentally. For instance, the fissure in the wall alludes to the

psyche of its inhabitants: it symbolizes Roderick's disturbed state of mind as well as the fragile body of Madeline. Furthermore, the uncanny residence has a double meaning: according to Stephan P. Pajović, "it serves little purpose at the onset of the story, merely foreshadowing the tragic events that will ensue." (Pajović 191); but, at the same time, it recalls the past and the glory of the Ushers' ancestry.

It is noticed that the manor is an evil force that has the supremacy to create and destroy. As the title reveals "The Fall of the House of Usher", the house guides the downfall and subsequent death of the twins ending with its final collapse. To conclude, the author attempts to create a psychological story, arousing mystery among his readers. There is uncertainty about what is the proper or the mistaken interpretation; but, clearly, both reality and imagination have no boundaries.

6. Conclusion

Firstly, this paper examines the way Edgar Allan Poe composed his gothic stories making use not only of his own creative imagination, but following also an autobiographical technique. Secondly, it has been demonstrated that the motif of the double is identified in two of his stories "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher."

As showed in the first section, the literary figure of the double was a belief first incarnated in primitive societies: as a soul, a shadow or a guardian angel. Therefore, the notion was observed by Otto Rank who studied the motif of the doppelganger in different literary works by concentrating on the complex psychology of some characters that lead them to suicide. However, the theory aroused different interpretations among literary critics and psychoanalysts throughout time.

In the second place, following Bonaparte's psychoanalytical study of Poe, it has been revealed how those eerie stories were created by an author tied to his past and governed by his distressing experiences focused on infancy and his loved ones. Thus, it is confirmed that the selected works in this paper are highly autobiographical and even the protagonists resemble the author himself. Far away from wounding the author, his stories have served to overcome his traumas.

Lastly and being one of the main aims of this project, it is analyzed the important role of the double in "William Wilson" and "The Fall of the House of Usher." In both stories Poe explores the psyche of his heroes and it is detected that all of them are victims of their own insanity, obsessions and profound dualism. Regarding the first story, it has been proved that Wilson is a man tormented by the good and the evil, denoting that the doppelganger symbolizes his own conscience. On the other hand, the second story uncovers a complex and multiple type of double. Poe shows the intense bond of the Usher twins who are imprisoned by a cursed house that condemn them to die as well as a series of gothic elements, creating a real uncertainty of the facts.

It is verified that Poe's tales are not simple uncanny stories, but they acquire a great psychological tone. As has been studied, by making use of the doppelganger in his narratives, it is recognized that Poe demonstrates readers his real nature and inner truths,

causing an effect of curiosity and mystery on them that leads them to draw their own conclusions.

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