

Poe's Poetic Unconscious: Applying Charles Mauron's Psychocritical Method to The Raven, Ulalume, and Annabel Lee

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Abstract :

This study offers a critical analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry by applying Charles Mauron's psychoanalytic approach. Drawing on Mauron's method of tracing the associations among recurring images and metaphors in literary texts, the study seeks to uncover the underlying personal myth that structures Poe's poetic imagination. By examining the recurrence and interaction of these images and metaphors across selected poems, the study explores the psychological patterns underlying Poe's poetic expression and their role in shaping his distinctive literary vision.

I. Introduction :

Psychology and literature are intimately connected, and their relationship is rooted in the shared sphere of the humanities. This connection is further strengthened by the inherent psychological dimension of literature, which is shaped by the creator as the author of the literary text. The author is, after all, a human being with feelings, emotions, and a personality formed by life experiences that began in their childhood. Literary texts are replete with characters possessing distinct psychological traits. The reader, who plays a crucial role in the creative process through reading and interpretation, receives and interprets the text based on their psychological background. Given these factors, which highlight psychology's influence on the production and interpretation of literary texts, literary criticism has increasingly focused on the psychological dimension, leading to a proliferation of theories and approaches. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory profoundly shaped psychoanalytic studies, contributing to a critical approach that emphasizes the psyche's manifestations in literary texts. Subsequent studies have focused on both the text and the reader, moving away from excessive emphasis on the author. This has restored the literary text to its rightful place as a creative act of art. It is linguistic and not merely a reflection of the writer's neurosis, as Freud asserted. Among the most prominent critics who established a moderate psychoanalytic critical approach was Charles Mauron. This exceptional critic skillfully utilized psychoanalytic theories, directing them toward a primary focus on text. He analyzed the writer's inner world, explored hidden psychological impulses, and compared them with the writer's personal life. In this study, I will employ this approach to

analyze three poems by the American poet Edgar Allan Poe: "The Raven," "Ulalume," and "Annabel Lee."

II. Theoretical Framework:

1. Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis: The Writer and Literary Creation

Freud is considered the founder of modern psychology because of his revolutionary ideas and theories about the human psyche. His most important theory is the division of the psyche into three elements: ego, id, and superego. The ego is the visible aspect of personality, the realm of consciousness and sensation. The id, or unconscious, is the deep aspect of the psyche and the repository of repressed desires and memories. This element is Freud's most revolutionary contribution, representing the inner depth and profound influence of the unconscious on the individual's personality. The superego is the authority of the conscience, religion, and customs. According to Freud, the conflict between the unconscious and the superego causes mental illness and neurosis. Sexual desires seek an outlet, but the authority of the superego, which can be likened to a policeman, prevents their fulfillment. If reconciliation between desire and reality is not achieved, a clash occurs, which then manifests as neurotic disorders. It is important to note the duality of desire and reality in Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Desire always clashes with reality and seeks an outlet in dreams, but dreams were not the only outlet Freud considered; he also raised the issue of artistic creativity in general and literary creativity in particular, making literature a field for venting and transcending desire without clashing with reality and the superego.

The relationship between dreams and creativity is close, as both may involve the imaginative fulfillment of wishes (Freud, *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming*, 1959, p. 149). Freud's psychoanalytic account of creative writing further suggests that a present experience may revive an earlier memory, from which a wish emerges and finds fulfillment in the creative work (Freud, *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming*, 1959, p. 151). From this perspective, Freud devoted considerable attention to literature, believing in the close connection between literature and psychoanalysis. He personally acknowledged the ability of writers and poets to penetrate the depths of the human psyche. Therefore, he stated that "poets and novelists are among the most valuable and cherished allies of psychoanalysts because they know things between heaven and earth that we have not yet been able to dream about through our academic wisdom. They are our teachers in understanding the human psyche" (Freud, *Délire et rêve dans la Gradiva de Jensen*, 1973, p. 127). Critic Stanley Hyman confirms that Freud adopted two perspectives in dealing with literary texts: pathography and literary criticism connected to psychoanalysis (Hyman, 1955). Pathography is closely related to clinical psychoanalysis, where the writer is studied as a neurotic patient whose literary works reflect the features of this neurosis. Thus, his literary works are viewed through this lens. As documents that conceal behind their expressions and symbols a pathological condition, the psychoanalyst must resolve it. Analytical criticism, on the other hand, is methodological in nature, dealing with literary texts by employing the stages and mechanisms of clinical analysis to interpret and explain symbols. From this perspective, the literary text is akin to a waking dream, where the unconscious is present through artistic imagination in the

construction of the literary work (124-123 الصفحات، 2012، عيلان). The writer cannot escape the power of their subconscious mind. In his book **The Interpretation of Dreams**, Freud portrays the writer as a neurotic patient seeking an imaginary world where he can vent his desires and fulfill his hopes, given that the real world fails to provide him with harmony and satisfaction (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1913). Adopting these two perspectives, Freud critically analyzed numerous literary and artistic works, including his studies of Dostoevsky and the patricide, which Freud termed the Oedipus complex and the foundation upon which he built his theory of psychoanalysis. He also studied the story **Gradiva** by the Danish author Jensen and analyzed the works of the renowned painter Leonardo da Vinci in his article "A Psychosexual Study of Childhood Memories." (124 صفحة، 2012، عيلان). However, in his book **My Life and Psychoanalysis**, Freud emphasizes that dreams are intimate and individual in nature, while artistic creation is social and participatory. Psychoanalysis, he argues, examines the interrelationships between the artist's life experiences, incidental encounters, and artistic creations, extracting from them the artist's psyche and its underlying motivations—that part of their being shared by all people. (Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, James Strachey). To give examples of Freud's critical studies, in his analysis of Shakespeare's Hamlet, Freud explained Hamlet's hesitation to avenge his father by suggesting that he could do anything except take revenge on the man who usurped his father's place in his mother's heart. According to Freud, this man represents the fulfillment of the writer's childhood desires (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1913). One example is the analytical study of Jensen's *Gradiva*, which represents a clear development in Freud's methodology of literary criticism. In it, he treated the text as a world independent of the author. Freud based his work on the hypothesis that dreams and repressed desires intertwine with creativity to produce a syncretic solution that achieves psychological balance for the writer. *Gradiva* is a sculpture representing a graceful-walking girl who visits the protagonist, Norbert Hannold, an archaeologist, in a dream. He was greatly fascinated by her appearance and clothing. In his dreamlike state, he named her *Gradiva*, meaning "the one who advances," and began to imagine her family background, her place of residence, and the course of her life, until her life ended under the rubble of the Pompeii eruption (Freud, *Délire et rêve dant la Gradiva de Jensen*, 1973). It is clear from this study that Freud focused on studying and psychologically analyzing the fictional character without concentrating on the creator—a remarkable shift in his literary criticism. Freud was subjected to harsh criticism from many critics, most notably Charles Mauron, who took issue with his neglect of the artistic nature of literature and his excessive focus on the clinical perspective, considering creators to be neurotic patients. However, despite this, we must acknowledge the critical revolution that Freud achieved with the theory of psychoanalysis, which directed criticism towards the psychological dimension in artistic and literary productions. This opened the way for other critics to develop psychoanalytic criticism and establish a scientific methodology that takes into account the nature of literature as an artistic and linguistic creation and not merely a manifestation of the creator's pathological unconscious.

2 . Charles Mauron's Psychocriticism

Mauron drew upon a foundation of diverse knowledge, encompassing English literature, the humanities, experimental sciences, and psychology. This allowed him a balanced perspective on literary creation, leading him to establish what is known as psychoanalytic criticism by coining the term in 1948. His study of the French poet Mallarmé in 1941 marked the starting point for exploring the manifestations of the unconscious and its role in shaping and constructing literary works (حجازي, 1983). This was achieved by observing the network of meanings and metaphors through which the unconscious manifests. This new critical vision crystallized in his critical work on the unconscious in Racine's works in 1957 and his study entitled "From Metaphor to Personal Myth" in 1962. It is worth noting the distinction between psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic criticism. Psychoanalysis begins with information provided by the person being analyzed through the mechanism of free association, aiming to understand the patient's personality. In contrast, psychoanalytic criticism proceeds from the material to the material, passing through the human being. Here, "material" refers to the literary work that the psychoanalytic critic analyzes and interprets (Bronzon, 1970), the psychoanalytic criticism founded by Mauron always focuses on the literary text and does not start from the premise of the writer's mental illness. In this regard, Mauron clarifies his vision by stating that psychoanalytic criticism does not diagnose illness but rather works to establish a link between science and art. It will be doomed to failure if it loses contact with either, but its focus is always on art (Mauron, *Des métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel*, 1966). It is clear that Mauron establishes a balanced critical vision based on linking psychoanalysis and the literary work, taking into account the specificity of literature and art. Thus, the task of psychoanalytic criticism is to identify recurring meanings, their mechanisms, and their manifestations in the text. Mauron defines psychoanalytic criticism as the application of psychoanalysis to criticism by moving from the literary work to the creative individual. It is precisely at this point that we perceive this fundamental difference between Freud's approach, which dealt with the literary text in a clinical manner, centered on the writer as a neurotic individual, while Mauron's psychoanalytic criticism goes beyond a mere emotional dimension, seeking to establish a psychological structure (Bronzon, 1970). Ultimately, the literary text is a creation, not merely a reflection of the writer's pathological unconscious. It exists within a shared sphere between consciousness and unconsciousness, between conscious language and the language of the unconscious. According to Mauron, every work of art is the result of three variables: external sources, internal sources, and language. We cannot neglect any of them, though the last appears to be the most important. The balance between the internal and external worlds resonates in the artwork (Mauron, Mallarmé, 1977). To embody this unique critical vision, Mauron defined a methodology that, at its first level, focuses on uncovering the recurring images and metaphors found within the literary texts of a particular creator. These serve as our guide to revealing the author's unconscious structures. These methodological procedures can be detailed in the following sequence, as outlined by Marcel Marini in his book, **Introduction to Critical Methods**:

1. Uncovering relational networks, recurring images, and unintentional associations that recur in literary texts. This is achieved by comparing groups of texts. The writer's literary style.

2. Accessing the author's personal myth through the generation of symbols and dramatic situations linked to imaginative production. The personal myth is the most frequent perception and fantasy of a writer, originating in adolescence or successive incarnations latent in the unconscious.

3. Interpreting personal myth as an expression of the unconscious personality, its development, and its history.

4. The results obtained with biographical information and autobiographical translations based on interpretation are compared, the meaning of which is valid only through the texts (Marini, 1990). This implies that the psychoanalyst should not limit themselves to a single text by the writer but rather a group of texts, analyzing them within a framework that traces recurring meanings by extracting the structure governing the various literary productions, which recurs and persists continuously in the writer's works. This structure and its formation reflect the psychological formation of the writer's personality. This means paying attention to the artistic language of the text, which contains the secrets of the creator's unconscious. This is emphasized in his book, *From Urgent Metaphors to Personal Myth*, where he considers the language of the text, a medium that leads us towards the psychological structure, and psychological criticism based on this basis is part of literary study and does not replace total (Mauron, *Des métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel*, 1966).

III. Application of Mauron's Method to the Three Poems

1. Superposition of Texts:

Before delving into an analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's three poems, it is worthwhile to review their main features and chronological order. The first poem, "The Raven," was published in 1845, the second, "Ulalume," in 1847, and the third, "Annabel Lee," in 1849. After reading the three poems, their most recurrent themes can be identified as death, loss, grief, remembrance, and sorrow. All three poems are characterized by a gloomy and somber atmosphere. If their overall atmosphere could be translated into a visual representation, black and gray would dominate the picture, reflecting the darkness, grief, and melancholy that permeate these poems. "The Raven" is pervaded by a mysterious atmosphere that evokes a strong sense of melancholy. Poe opens the poem with a bleak description of the setting, as the events take place during a desolate December night. The speaker describes the month as a "bleak December" (Poe, 2013), immediately establishing an atmosphere of isolation and sorrow.

The poet employs the first-person pronoun, identifying the speaker with a young man who, on that desolate night, is weak and exhausted. This description provides an important entry point into the psychological dimension of the poem. The speaker is presented as a solitary figure, engrossed in the contemplation of books that Poe describes as "quaint and curious" (Poe, 2013), apparently searching for forgotten knowledge. He describes himself as "pondered, weak and weary" (Poe, 2013), a state that suggests a wavering between wakefulness and dream. This psychological condition provides an indication of an oscillation between conscious awareness and unconscious impulses, as the speaker attempts in vain to maintain contact with reality while seeking relief from the anguish caused by the loss of Lenore.

This passage constitutes a significant entry point into the speaker's inner world because it establishes the psychological foundation upon which much of the poem develops. Lenore is represented as a beloved woman who possesses idealized qualities, yet who is irretrievably lost through death. Her absence continues to dominate the speaker's consciousness, and her memory remains psychologically present. This explains his intense longing for "morrow" and his desire for relief from his sorrow. In this context, morning can be interpreted not merely as a literal indication of the passage of time but also, at the psychological level, as a possible metaphor for liberation from grief.

Suddenly, the speaker is awakened by a strange knocking sound, which he initially interprets as a visitor at his door. He attempts to reassure himself and to rationalize the mysterious sound in order to overcome the terror that has seized him. Upon opening the door, however, he finds only darkness. This darkness, which is repeatedly associated with the mysterious events of the poem, can be interpreted psychologically as an external representation of the speaker's inner uncertainty, anguish, and inability to confront the reality of loss.

The speaker subsequently expresses his uncertainty by referring to

"dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before" (Poe, 2013). The reference to dreams opens a significant psychological dimension in the poem. From a Freudian perspective, dreams provide a privileged space in which repressed wishes and desires may emerge in disguised forms. The speaker's movement between reality, imagination, and dream therefore contributes to the poem's representation of a divided psychological state.

The mysterious visitor eventually reveals itself to be a raven, which enters the room and perches upon the bust of Pallas. The presence of Pallas, the Greek goddess associated with wisdom, introduces a symbolic opposition between reason and irrationality. Pallas may be interpreted as representing reason and conscious intellectual control, whereas the raven, associated with darkness, sorrow, and death, appears to dominate this symbolic space. The raven's position above the speaker therefore suggests a movement from rational control toward emotional and psychological disturbance.

This opposition between reason and unreason resonates throughout the poem. The raven's position on the head of Pallas can thus be interpreted as a visual representation of the speaker's movement from rational consciousness toward an increasingly disturbed psychological state. The descriptions associated with the raven also reinforce the Gothic atmosphere of the poem. The bird is described as coming from the "Night's Plutonian shore" (Poe, 2013)

allusion to Pluto and the underworld that further connects the raven with death and the world of the dead. Finally, the raven utters the word "Never more" (Poe, 2013), breaking the oppressive silence of the room and initiating a decisive transformation in the speaker's psychological state. The repetition of this word throughout the poem creates a disturbing rhythmic effect and gradually transforms the raven into a symbolic embodiment of irreversible loss. The contrast between "nothing more" and "Nevermore" is particularly significant. While "nothing more" initially expresses the absence of something desired, "Nevermore" transforms that absence into a final and irreversible condition.

The repeated refrain intensifies the psychological struggle of the grieving speaker. He initially attempts to assign different meanings to the raven's response, but each repetition progressively confirms the impossibility of recovering what has been lost. The raven's refrain therefore becomes an external voice through which the speaker's own grief and inability to accept the finality of Lenore's death are articulated. Its repetition reveals a consciousness trapped within mourning and unable to move beyond the loss.

The raven's presence consequently becomes associated with the return of painful memories. In Freudian terms, it can be interpreted as a symbolic manifestation of the return of repressed grief: sorrow that the speaker attempts to escape repeatedly returns to consciousness through the raven and its unchanging response, "Nevermore." The raven therefore does not provide consolation; instead, it intensifies the speaker's confrontation with his loss.

The reference to the "balm in Gilead," which the speaker asks about, introduces another possibility of healing and consolation (Poe, 2013). Yet this possibility also remains unfulfilled. The speaker subsequently directs his question toward another and more profound form of hope: the possibility of reunion with Lenore in the afterlife. His desire moves beyond psychological consolation toward the possibility of transcending death and recovering the beloved. Yet this hope is again denied by the raven's "Nevermore."

At this point, the raven becomes a persistent symbolic presence that prevents the speaker from escaping his grief. In solitude, he attempts to reject the bird and commands it to leave him, but the raven remains perched upon the bust of Pallas. Its persistence can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the persistence of grief itself. The speaker cannot simply dismiss the memory of Lenore because the psychological attachment to the lost beloved remains active within him. Thus, the ending reinforces one of the poem's central psychological patterns: the inability to overcome the loss of the beloved and achieve psychological separation from her.

We come now to the poem "Ulalume," which has received considerable critical attention. Like "The Raven," the poem is characterized by a somber and mysterious atmosphere. The setting is described through images such as "ashen and sober," "the leaves they were withered and sere," and "lonesome October" (Poe, 2013). The setting is also associated with the "dim Lake Auber" and the "misty mid region of Weir" (Poe, 2013). These images create an atmosphere of isolation and psychological uncertainty.

The poet describes a journey through a mysterious natural landscape accompanied by his own soul, which appears to participate in the speaker's psychological struggle. The journey is undertaken under the weight of grief and is closely connected with the memory of the beloved. Significantly, the speaker discovers that he has previously visited this place, although he does not consciously remember the event. This element introduces a particularly important psychological dimension: the distinction between what consciousness remembers and what remains accessible to another, unconscious level of the psyche.

This feature recalls "The Raven," where the speaker is similarly situated between consciousness and unconsciousness, reality and dream. In "Ulalume," the movement through the landscape can

therefore be interpreted as a psychological journey in which the unconscious gradually leads the speaker back toward a traumatic memory that consciousness has attempted to avoid.

The transition from night toward morning is also significant. Night may be interpreted as a symbolic representation of prolonged grief, obscurity, and unconscious suffering, whereas the approaching morning may suggest the possibility of liberation, forgetting, or psychological recovery. However, this movement toward light does not ultimately free the speaker from his grief. Instead, the journey leads him back to the grave of Ulalume.

The psychological complexity of “Ulalume” is further reinforced through its use of mythology. Poe introduces the figure of Astarte, associated with beauty, love, and fertility, and contrasts her with Diana, associated with chastity and spiritual purity. Astarte is symbolically associated with Venus and appears to offer the possibility of deliverance from the speaker’s painful journey. She is connected with the possibility of reaching the River of Oblivion, which may be understood as a symbolic space of forgetting and release from suffering.

However, the speaker’s soul expresses distrust toward Astarte. This introduces another dimension of the internal conflict: the opposition between the desire for oblivion and liberation and the persistent power of memory and grief. The speaker appears to desire an escape from suffering, yet the unconscious movement of the poem prevents such an escape.

Kriegisch interprets the contrast between Astarte and Diana in terms of two dimensions of love: the sensual and physical dimension represented by Astarte and the spiritual, idealized, and chaste dimension represented by Diana (Kriegisch, 1978). From a psychological perspective, this contrast may be related to the speaker’s struggle between different forms of attachment and his attempt to compensate for the loss of the beloved. The possibility of another form of love appears to offer salvation, yet the speaker remains psychologically attached to the lost object.

Consequently, the journey through nature gradually becomes a psychological journey toward the traumatic memory of Ulalume. What initially appears to be a journey toward peace and oblivion ultimately leads the speaker to Ulalume’s grave. The journey therefore takes the form of a circular movement: the desire for love, oblivion, and liberation ultimately returns the speaker to death, loss, and memory.

This return is particularly significant from a Freudian perspective because it resembles the return of what has been repressed. The speaker believes that he is moving forward, yet his unconscious leads him back to the place associated with the traumatic loss. The grave becomes the point at which the unconscious memory becomes impossible to avoid.

The discovery that the grave belongs to Ulalume constitutes the decisive psychological moment of the poem. The speaker does not consciously recognize the place, whereas his soul appears to know what his conscious mind does not. This contrast between conscious ignorance and unconscious knowledge is central to the psychological interpretation of the poem. Consciousness encounters a shock when it is confronted with something that has already been registered at an unconscious level.

Thus, “Ulalume” presents a psychological conflict between the desire to forget and the persistence of traumatic memory. The speaker’s journey does not lead away from the lost

beloved; instead, it unconsciously returns him to her grave. The dominant psychological pattern in the poem can therefore be understood as the unconscious return to the traumatic experience of loss.

In his poem “Annabel Lee,” Poe returns once again to the theme of loss and grief following the death of the beloved. The speaker recalls a love that began in childhood and presents the relationship as exceptionally deep and enduring. As in “Ulalume,” the poem combines emotional memory with mythical and metaphysical elements.

The speaker attempts to explain Annabel Lee’s death through a mythical narrative in which the angels envy the love shared by the speaker and Annabel Lee and therefore take her away from him (Poe, 2013). This symbolic explanation can be interpreted psychologically as an attempt to transform an unbearable reality into a narrative that the psyche can emotionally accommodate. Rather than simply accepting death as an irreversible fact, the speaker constructs a mythical explanation that attributes responsibility to supernatural forces.

This mythical representation suggests the self’s difficulty in accepting the trauma of loss. The speaker continues to preserve the relationship through memory and imagination, refusing to allow death to establish an absolute separation between himself and Annabel Lee. In this sense, the poem presents a conflict between desire and reality: desire insists upon the continuation of the relationship, while reality has imposed death and separation.

The speaker’s repeated remembrance of Annabel Lee also demonstrates the persistence of psychological attachment after physical separation. The dead beloved remains psychologically present through memory, imagination, and the speaker’s repeated reconstruction of their shared past. Death therefore ends the physical relationship but does not eliminate the speaker’s emotional attachment.

The poem also contains an intense desire for reunion. The speaker imagines himself lying beside Annabel Lee and maintaining an intimate connection with her despite her death (Poe, 2013). This desire may be read as an attempt to overcome the finality of separation. Rather than accepting death as the definitive end of the relationship, the speaker constructs a psychological space in which the relationship continues.

After examining the three poems, several dominant and recurring themes become apparent: death, loss, grief, remembrance, separation, and the persistent attachment to the lost beloved. These themes do not merely occur independently; rather, they form a recurrent psychological pattern across the three poems. The following section will therefore attempt to map the network of dominant images and recurring associations according to Charles Mauron’s psychocritical methodology.

2. Recurrent Networks and Obsessive Metaphors

After we performed the process of matching the three poems, where we identified a series of urgent and dominant images and themes, despite the apparent differences between the poems,

there is a single, shared psychological structure that governs them at the deep structure level. In the following tables, we explain the network of urgent metaphors and images.

➤ **Network of Obsessive Images and Metaphors in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven***

Obsessive Image Metaphor	/ Textual Examples	Symbolic Psychological Function	/ Relation to the Obsessive Network
Darkness and Night	"midnight dreary"; "darkness"; "Night's Plutonian shore"	Evokes death, uncertainty, the unknown, and the narrator's inner despair.	Connects the external night to the narrator's psychological darkness and to the raven as a figure associated with death.
The Raven	"a stately Raven"; "this ebony bird"	Embodies mystery, death, irrationality, and the return of painful memories.	Becomes the central symbolic figure through which the narrator's grief and unconscious fears are externalized.
Pallas Wisdom	/ "bust of Pallas"	Represents reason, wisdom, knowledge, and rational control.	The raven's position above Pallas suggests the progressive domination of irrational grief over reason.
Lenore / The Lost Beloved	"rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore"; "lost Lenore"	Represents the lost beloved and the object of mourning.	Constitutes the central object of the narrator's obsession and gives meaning to the other recurring images.
Memory and Mourning	"memories of Lenore"; "sorrow"; "lost Lenore"	Reveals the narrator's inability to detach himself from the past.	Links Lenore to repetition, psychological suffering, and the compulsive return of the past.
The Chamber Door / Curtains	"my chamber door"; "silken, sad, uncertain rustling"; "purple curtain"	Creates a closed and isolated psychological space.	Physical confinement mirrors the narrator's mental isolation and inability to escape his grief.
Nepenthe Forgetfulness	/ "respite—respite and nepenthe"; "forget this lost Lenore"	Represents the conscious desire to obtain relief from grief and erase painful memories.	Establishes a direct conflict between the desire to forget and the psychological impossibility of forgetting.
"Nevermore"	"Quoth the Raven,	Becomes a verbal	Functions as the central

Obsessive Image Metaphor	/ Textual Examples	Symbolic Psychological Function	/ Relation to the Obsessive Network
	‘Nevermore.’”	symbol of finality, loss, refusal, hopelessness.	repetitive element around which the other images converge; each repetition intensifies the narrator’s obsession.
Questions and Repetition	“Is there balm in Gilead?”; “shall clasp a sainted maiden?”; repeated questions to the raven	Reveals the narrator’s increasing anxiety and compulsive search for certainty.	Repetition transforms the dialogue with the raven into a form of psychological self-torment.
Time and Eternity	“evermore”; “still”; “never flitting”	Suggests that the narrator’s suffering has become permanent and that time can no longer provide relief.	Connects the loss of Lenore with an endless psychological present in which the trauma continually returns.

➤ **Obsessive Metaphorical Networks**

Having identified the dominant imagery in the poem "The Raven," we can extract the network of metaphors.

Network 1:

Death → Loss → Grief → Memory → Renewed Grief

Network 2:

Pallas → Reason ↔ Raven → Irrationality

Network 3:

Nepenthe → Desire to Forget → Nevermore → Failure to Forget

From these three networks, we can deduce a series of urgent implications:

Lenore → Loss → Memory → Inability to Forget

➤ **Dominant Obsession :**

The obsessive psychological structure is characterized by an inability to overcome the loss of a loved one.

➤ **Network of Obsessive Images and Metaphors in Edgar Allan Poe’s *Ulalume***

Obsessive Image Metaphor	/ Textual Examples	Symbolic / Psychological Function	Relation to the Obsessive Network
Death / Tomb	“the sepulchre there by the wood”; “the vault death and	Represents irreversible death and the physical	Forms the central pole of the poem’s obsession with

Obsessive Image Metaphor	/ Textual Examples	Symbolic / Psychological Function	Relation to the Obsessive Network
	of thy lost Ulalume”	reality of the lost beloved.	loss and mortality.
Memory Forgetting	“the skies were ashen and sober”; “we remember not”	Reveals the tension between conscious forgetting and unconscious remembrance.	The apparent forgetting of Ulalume is contradicted by the speaker’s return to her tomb.
Return Wandering	“we passed to the end of the valley”; “we came to the door”	Suggests an involuntary psychological return to the site of trauma.	Connects physical wandering with the unconscious repetition of the past.
Ulalume / Lost Beloved	“my lost Ulalume”; “thy lost Ulalume”	Represents the absent beloved and the original source of psychological suffering.	Functions as the central object around which the other images are organized.
Darkness Night	“October”; “the skies were ashen and sober”; “the woodland was drear”	Creates an atmosphere of death, melancholy, and psychological desolation.	Externalizes the speaker’s inner emotional state and reinforces the death network.
Psyche	“Here once, through an alley Titanic, / Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul”	Personifies the speaker’s psyche or inner self and makes the psychological dimension explicit.	Connects the physical journey with an inward psychological journey.
Desire Astarte	/ “Astarte’s bediamonded crescent”	Represents beauty, erotic desire, and the attraction toward an idealized object.	Creates a tension between desire and death, linking erotic longing with the lost beloved.
Landscape Nature	/ “woodlands”; “valley”; “lake”; “mist”	Transforms the natural environment into a psychological projection of the speaker’s condition.	The external landscape mirrors the internal landscape of grief and unconscious disturbance.
Repetition Circularity	/ The return to the same place and the revelation of Ulalume’s tomb	Suggests that the speaker is trapped in a recurring psychological pattern.	Establishes the poem’s obsessive structure: the past continually returns despite apparent forgetting.
Recognition Revelation	/ “the door of a tomb”; discovery of Ulalume’s	Forces the speaker to confront a loss that he has	Converts unconscious memory into conscious

Obsessive Image Metaphor	/ Textual Examples	Symbolic / Psychological Function	Relation to the Obsessive Network
	burial place	apparently forgotten.	recognition and renews the original grief.

➤ **Obsessive Metaphorical Networks**

Network 1: Loss → Memory → Wandering → Return → Renewed Grief

Network 2: Desire → Love → Death

Network 3: Landscape → Darkness → Psychological Disturbance

➤ **Dominant Obsession**

The dominant psychological obsession in the poem "Ulalum" is the unconscious return to the tragic loss of the beloved.

➤ **Network of Obsessive Images and Metaphors in Edgar Allan Poe's *Annabel Lee***

Obsessive Image / Metaphor	Textual Examples	Symbolic / Psychological Function	Relation to the Obsessive Network
Death / Burial	"the wind came out of the cloud by night"; "the sepulchre there by the sea"	Represents the physical separation between the speaker and Annabel Lee.	Initiates the central conflict between death and the speaker's refusal to accept separation.
Love	"We loved with a love that was more than love"	Presents love as absolute, exceptional, and stronger than ordinary human attachment.	Becomes the force that the speaker believes can overcome death.
Loss Separation	"That the wind came out of the cloud by night, / Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee"	Transforms death into an act of violent separation.	Generates the speaker's obsessive attachment and refusal to accept the loss.
Memory Remembrance	"In this kingdom by the sea"; repeated recollection of Annabel Lee	Keeps the dead beloved of psychologically present.	Memory prevents emotional separation and sustains the speaker's bond with Annabel Lee.
The Sea	"kingdom by the sea"; "sepulchre there by the sea"	Represents both the romantic world shared by the lovers and the space containing Annabel Lee's grave.	Connects love, memory, death, and burial within one recurring spatial image.
Angels	"the angels, not half"	Personifies supernatural	Allows the speaker to

Obsessive Image / Metaphor	Textual Examples	Symbolic / Psychological Function	Relation to the Obsessive Network
	so happy in Heaven”	forces that allegedly envy the lovers’ relationship.	transform death into an external conflict between earthly love and supernatural power.
Heaven Supernatural World	/ “the angels”; “her highborn kinsmen”	Creates a cosmic dimension for the lovers’ separation.	Elevates the speaker’s personal grief into a larger mythic struggle against death.
The Sepulchre	“her sepulchre there by the sea”	Represents physical death while paradoxically becoming a place of continued emotional attachment.	Instead of ending the relationship, the tomb becomes the center of the speaker’s continuing obsession.
Physical Union Closeness	“neither the angels in Heaven above / Nor the demons down under the sea”	Expresses the speaker’s refusal to recognize death as capable of permanently separating the lovers.	Converts love into an obsessive denial of separation.
Night / Moon Stars	/ “the moon never beams”; “the stars never rise”	Nature becomes a participant in the speaker’s mourning and remembrance.	Links the cosmic environment with the speaker’s emotional state and perpetual grief.
Repetition Incantation	/ Repeated “Annabel Lee,” “kingdom by the sea,” and “never”	Creates a circular, obsessive rhythm of remembrance.	Repetition functions as a verbal mechanism through which the speaker continually reconstructs the lost relationship.

➤ Obsessive Metaphorical Networks

Network 1: Love → Death → Loss → Separation

Network 2: Memory → Recollection → Psychological Presence → Refusal of Separation

Network 3: Heaven / Angels → Envy → Death → Resistance to Separation

➤ Dominant Obsession:

The dominant psychological obsession in Annabel Lee's poem is the refusal to accept the loss of the beloved and defiance of reality.

The above analysis is summarized in the following table:

Poem	Central Obsessive Network	Dominant Obsession
<i>The Raven</i>	Death → Loss → Grief → Memory → Grief	Renewed Inability to overcome the loss of the beloved
<i>Ulalume</i>	Loss → Forgetting → Wandering → Return → Recognition → Renewed Grief	Unconscious return to traumatic loss
<i>Annabel Lee</i>	Love → Loss → Death → Separation → Memory → Refusal of Separation	Refusal to accept the finality of the beloved's death

We can construct a network that connects the three poems as follows:

Love → Death → Loss → Separation → Memory → Return / Repetition → Continued Attachment → Grief

The networks of these three poems converge on a single psychological obsession: the inability to accept the loss of the beloved and the inability to achieve psychological separation from her.

3. The Personal Myth :

The dominant networks and the dominant psychological structure point to a personal mythology whose title is psychological pain due to the loss of the beloved. It is a tragic loss that is met with constant remembrance and a strong psychological attachment that prevents disengagement and breaks any psychological acceptance of the reality of eternal loss, which suggests an unconscious obsession with mourning and compulsive remembrance that dominates the poet's psyche.

4. Biographical Verification

We come to the final stage in Maureen's critical methodology, which is the correspondence between the results obtained and the poet's biography:

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809. Both of his parents were actors. His mother, the much admired Elizabeth Arnold Poe was a talented actress. His father, David Poe was considered less talented. The Poes performed at theaters throughout the Eastern seaboard, from Boston to Virginia. In 1811, Elizabeth Poe died of tuberculosis in Richmond, Virginia, leaving orphaned Edgar, his infant sister Rosalie, and his older brother Henry. David Poe, apparently had abandoned his wife and children earlier and was not present when she died.

The three children were separated and raised by different families. Edgar was taken in by the successful Richmond merchant John Allan, and his frail wife Frances. The Allans had no children of their own. They raised Edgar as part of the family and gave him their middle name, but never legally adopted him.

In 1815, Edgar traveled with the Allans to England and Scotland, where John Allan planned to expand his tobacco business. Edgar attended boarding schools throughout the five years the family lived overseas. After John Allan's business venture failed, he moved the family back to Richmond, Virginia in 1820.

➤ From University of Virginia to West Point:

Edgar continued his studies in Richmond. He entered the University of Virginia in 1826 at the age of 17. During the year he attended the university, Edgar excelled in his studies of Latin and

French. He was unable to complete his studies at the university because Allan refused to pay debts Edgar had incurred during the school year. Allan and Edgar quarreled over the debts, of which a large portion was incurred from gambling.

Shortly after his quarrel with his foster father, Edgar Allan Poe left Richmond for Boston where he hoped to pursue a literary career. His first book of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* was published there. Unable to support himself, and receiving little assistance from his foster father, Poe enlisted as a private in the US Army on May 26, 1827 for a five year term. He entered under an assumed name and lied about his age, claiming to be 22 years old when he was only 18. Poe was assigned to Battery H of the First Artillery at Fort Independence in Boston Harbor. On October 31, 1827 Battery H was ordered to Fort Moultrie to protect Charleston Harbor. He sailed on the Brigantine *Waltham*, arriving for duty in Charleston on November 18.

At Fort Moultrie, Poe was promoted to artificer, the rank of a noncommissioned officer or enlisted man who had a mechanical specialty. On December 11, 1828, Poe's battery sailed for duty at Fortress Monroe, Virginia where he attained the rank of Sergeant-Major, the highest possible rank for a non-commissioned officer. His quick progress up the ranks can be attributed to his education, high social standing, and competence. Despite his accomplishments, Poe left military service in April 1829 and hired a substitute to complete his obligation.

A brief reconciliation between Poe and Allan occurred upon the death of Frances Allan in 1829. Allan assisted Poe in obtaining a discharge from the regular Army and an appointment as a cadet at the US Military Academy in West Point. Entering West Point in July 1830, Poe was again plagued by restlessness. One of his roommates described him as having "the appearance of being much older. He had a worn, weary, discontented look, not easily forgotten by those who were intimate with him." The financial hardship along with the realization that literature was his true vocation, led to Poe's decision to resign from the Academy. Allan, as Poe's guardian, refused to give him permission to resign. Unable to obtain permission to resign, Poe chose to neglect his duties and was court-martialed for "gross neglect of duty" and "disobedience of orders."

➤ Editor and Author:

After leaving West Point, Poe eventually moved to Baltimore where he lived with his impoverished Aunt Maria Poe Clemm and her young daughter, Virginia. Poe continued to write poetry and prose. In 1833, he won a \$50 prize and attention for his short story "Ms. Found in a Bottle." The attention he gained led to a job offer as an editor for the Southern Literary Messenger in Richmond. Poe accepted the position and moved to Richmond in 1835. His aunt and cousin joined him the following year. Poe married his thirteen year old cousin, Virginia, shortly afterwards.

The Poes and Mrs. Clemm moved to New York City in 1837 with the hope of Edgar finding work in the literary field. The city, as well as the rest of the country was in the midst of a depression caused by the financial "Panic of '37." Unable to find work, Poe moved to Philadelphia in 1838. The six years he spent in Philadelphia proved to be his most productive, and perhaps the happiest years of his life. He worked as an editor and critic for one of the nation's largest magazines, Graham's Magazine. Some of his most famous stories were written in

Philadelphia, including the “Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Mask of the Red Death,” and “Ligeia.” Poe referred to South Carolina settings in several short stories, including “The Balloon-Hoax” and “The Oblong Box.” By far his most popular story inspired by Sullivan’s Island was “The Gold Bug,” originally published in 1843. In 1842, his beloved wife became ill with tuberculosis. Her illness and the constant strain of financial problems, caused Poe to sink into deep bouts of depression.

➤ Professional and Personal Loss:

The Poes and Mrs. Clemm moved to New York City in 1844. Poe continued to work as an editor and critic. He gained his greatest fame as a poet after his poem “The Raven” was published in 1845. In the same year, he achieved his lifelong dream of owning a literary journal. Unfortunately, the journal failed within a few months. The Poes and Mrs. Clemm moved outside of New York City to a small cottage in 1846. Virginia died of tuberculosis the following year.

➤ Death:

For the next two years Poe continued to write poetry, short stories, criticism and plan for his own literary journal. After a successful lecture tour in the South and an extended visit in Richmond, Poe seemed to be finally recovering from the loss of Virginia, and making plans for the future. On his way back to New York City, Poe stopped in Baltimore where he died of “acute congestion of the brain.” The day was October 7, 1849; Edgar Allan Poe was 40 years old.

It is abundantly clear from Edgar Allan Poe's autobiography that he lived a tragic life, beginning in his childhood with the loss of his mother, the most important source of emotional support for a child. Before that, his father had abandoned him and his family, leaving a profound void and trauma in the poet's psyche. This gave rise to a deep-seated fear of loneliness and the loss of loved ones. His persistent insomnia was one of the manifestations that underscores the poet's troubled psychological state. Then came the tragedy of his wife Virginia's death from tuberculosis in 1847, plunging him into a deep depression. He died in 1849, and there are several accounts of the cause of his death, the most widely accepted being suicide.

This tragic life trajectory cast a long shadow over the poet's psyche, shaping within him a troubled, unstable, and pessimistic psychological structure, dominated by overwhelming grief and an inability to overcome the loss of his loved ones. This is clearly reflected in the poems studied. (Edgar Allan Poe, s.d.)

IV Conclusion

In conclusion, our critical study finds that the three poems observed are based on dominant images and urgent metaphorical networks. Despite the apparent differences in the surface structure of each, we were able, through the application of Charles-Moron's methodology, to extract a dominant network that governs the three leaders at the level of deep structure. Then there is an obsessive psychological structure that constantly persists in the poems of the poet Edgar Allan Poe, which is the structure of loss that leaves a deep wound and a bloody mark on the poet's psyche, followed by compulsive remembrance that makes him live the memory continuously, which keeps the ember of sadness burning and a refusal to accept the loss of his beloved.

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