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**BACHELOR THESIS**

**Metafory a symboly duševních stavů v Poeových básních,  
povídkách a esejích**

**Metaphors and Symbols of States of Mind in Poe's Poems,  
Short Stories and Essays**

Supervisor (vedoucí bakalářské práce):  
Prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc.

Author (zpracoval/a):  
Iva Martináková

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## Acknowledgements

Working on this project has been a valuable and enlightening experience, as I had the exciting opportunity to explore Edgar Allan Poe's work in greater detail and attempt to reveal its many intricacies. Connecting Poe's works with metaphors and symbols has made this project all the more interesting, for it has added another dimension to my research, and I hope that it will help others gain some insight, or perhaps deepen it, in the relevant subject area of Poe's work. I would like to thank, above all, my supervisor, Prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc., who has been very helpful and inspirational throughout the development of this project, and whose input I greatly appreciate. In conclusion, I would also like to thank my family and others who have been encouraging and supportive.

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# 1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe, like Charles Brockden Brown, is a primary representative of the American Gothic. The most well-known features of his works are horror-evoking scenarios, especially the horrors of the human mind, taking place in bizarre, isolated locations. Poe is also known for his formally precise poetry, especially seen in “The Raven,” where the rhyme scheme and the rhythm create an almost musical, or rather, incantatory, effect. Of course, the ominous raven cannot be forgotten – and, indeed, is connected to the central focus of this thesis, for its rich symbolic meaning.

The metaphor and symbol is a highly significant feature of Poe’s works and involves many other elements present therein. This thesis will attempt to explore this large topic and especially focus on its connection to the psychological sphere – the metaphors and symbols representing and/or evoking various states of mind, and subsequently analyze their specific functions in the text. The first chapter shall explore the topic of metaphors and symbols from a theoretical point of view using the classifications in Martin Procházka’s *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction*, as well as the literary theory proposed in René Wellek and Austin Warren’s *Theory of Literature*, in order to gain critical understanding of the central theme which shall be explored in further chapters.

The specific works analyzed in this thesis shall be “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “Ligeia,” “William Wilson” and “The Raven,” where metaphors and symbols will be traced and discussed. “The Fall of the House of Usher” will form the largest portion of the analysis, due to its significance as a short story, its complex structure and its rich metaphorical potential – for example, the allegorical reading of the house and its inhabitants, possibly functioning as parts of a split psyche. Possibilities of allegorical reading of images, with respect to psychological implications, shall also be explored in “Ligeia” and “William Wilson,” such as the element of revivification of the former, signifying the psychological phenomenon of obsession, or the function of the *alter ego* and his death, being conscience and the willful murder thereof, present in the latter. The important theme of doubling, as well as the split of the human psyche, will be discussed in the majority of the selected works, especially regarding its significance, meaning and

function in context of the works. The tension between symbol and metaphor will be elaborated upon especially in “The Raven,” where attention will also be paid to several dichotomies and contrasts, such as the use of light and dark, or the symbolism of reason and non-reason.

The last chapter will provide an extra dimension, for the primary texts and the use of metaphors and symbols will be compared to Poe’s theoretical essays, namely “The Philosophy of Composition” and “Eureka,” which focus on his literary theory – the theoretical and philosophical opinions according to which his works may have been written, especially regarding the specific processes of creating a literary work of art, or the workings of artistic imagination. The essays shall be explored individually in terms of the formal and thematic aspects of Poe’s work, followed by a detailed comparison with the selected short stories and poem, where specific connections will be made, focusing on the significance of formalism and the incorporation of non-formalistic aspects, such as the artist’s imagination or the understanding of reality. A final comparison of the two critical pieces will be attempted, with the aim of establishing Poe’s theoretical and critical development pertaining to his literary thought.

## 2. Metaphor and Symbol

As has been outlined, this thesis will discuss Poe's usage of metaphors and symbols as regards the evocation and/or portrayal of psychological states of mind. To be able to analyze this in a satisfactory manner, one should become acquainted with the general theories pertaining to metaphors and symbols. First of all, it should be established what is understood by these literary terms in order to recognize them in Poe's works, although such distinction and recognition may often be rather complicated. Such notions may be seen in the elucidation of literary theory by Martin Procházka, as well as René Wellek and Austin Warren's work *Literary Theory*, where various aspects of literature are elaborated upon. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "metaphor" means "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them."<sup>1</sup> This definition seems to be clear and concise, as it acknowledges replacement based on analogy – the most prominent feature – although it does not, understandably, include the different aspects and complications connected to the metaphor.

Procházka's approach is more in-depth; one of the initial ways to understand the metaphor, introduced in his text, is using Aristotle's description – as Procházka explains, his "definition of a metaphor emphasizes transference [...] of a 'name' [...] into another context resulting in the connection of the word with a different idea, image, object than usual."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the method of creating a metaphor is, in effect, changing the specific contexts of a single "name" in order to make a connection with something different – the "name," this metaphor, is the subsequent junction or bridge between these two ideas, images or objects. To this general understanding of the metaphor, the element of analogy and visual clarity is added by later rhetoricians.<sup>3</sup> Wellek's discussion contains the distinction of the "specifically poetic metaphor"<sup>4</sup> which leads to one of the main features of the metaphor – its effects. This, of course, seems to be one of the most important aspects of Poe's use of metaphors and symbols. As Wellek describes

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<sup>1</sup> "metaphor," Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2009, Merriam-Webster Online, 14 March 2009 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor>>.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Prague: Karolinum, 2008) 129.

<sup>3</sup> Procházka 129.

<sup>4</sup> René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963) 196.

George Campbell's view, "the rhetorician [judges words] by whether they have 'the effect of metaphor upon the hearer.'"<sup>5</sup> However, this is taken to a still higher level by Wilhelm Wundt, who makes "the true criterion of true metaphorism the calculated, willed intention of its user to create an emotive effect."<sup>6</sup> The intention of the author may be debatable, but the evocation of an emotive effect usually is not, since the "metaphor" either does or does not create a certain effect. This may be investigated in Poe, and the metaphors may also be considered in this light. It may also be interesting to apply H. Konrad's description of an "aesthetic metaphor," whose criterion is that it gives "a new impression of the object,"<sup>7</sup> as Wellek and Warren explain. The ways in which certain metaphors are the cause of a new impression of an object present in Poe's works and, especially, the ways in which this impression has been changed, may then be analyzed. This may have implications on the mood and tone of his works, and, consequently, on the study of the states of mind present therein.

As the metaphor is explored further, it is inevitable to come to the realization of the "tenor" and "vehicle," mentioned both in Procházka's and Wellek and Warren's texts. Procházka enlightens these concepts, observing that "vehicle" is "the word which accomplishes the transference particular to the metaphor," and "tenor" is "the idea underlying this transference."<sup>8</sup> This theory may aid the analysis of Poe's metaphors, for establishing the vehicle and tenor may clarify the ultimate effect of using such a metaphor and perhaps unravel some of Poe's intentions when composing his works. Wellek and Warren describe the suggested analysis of such literary aspects, namely the "character of the relationship between the 'tenor' and the 'vehicle,'"<sup>9</sup> and link it to the notion of psychological investigation of the mind of the author using "psychic correlatives," which may show more of the "creative psyche of the poet."<sup>10</sup> I think this may be true, although it is a rather problematic issue, for different authors may have different intentions when composing a literary text and psychological analysis of the author may often be far-fetched when based on, for example, the relationship between tenor and vehicle. However, it is plausible that certain psychological revelations may be discerned when faced with a repetitive connection

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<sup>5</sup> Wellek 196.

<sup>6</sup> Wellek 196.

<sup>7</sup> Wellek 196.

<sup>8</sup> Procházka 129.

<sup>9</sup> Wellek 207.

<sup>10</sup> Wellek 207.

in metaphors (although this applies to symbols and other literary figures as well) and therefore, this may be acknowledged regarding Poe later on in this analysis.

Of course, establishing such classifications may not always be as simple, as Procházka continues to explain the division between the “radical” metaphor and the “analogical” metaphor. It seems that the radical metaphor is more easily discernible, as it is, for the most part, the juxtaposition or the connection between two different ideas that are equated. This, of course, is a very direct and effective method of producing some of Poe’s most powerful images and emotive effects. On the other hand, recognizing an analogical metaphor may be more complicated, as it can be more indirect, and comprise several parts that serve the purpose of constructing a certain comparison. It can also be reconstructed as a simile containing the word “as” or “like” – which, as Procházka notes, would not classify it as a metaphor, but rather as a simile, according to Aristotle and Quintilian, “[p]roper metaphors should not use ‘like’ or ‘as’.”<sup>11</sup> Even though these analogical metaphors then can be reconstructed in such a way and they, in fact, are “elliptical, or condensed similes (Max Black),”<sup>12</sup> they are classified as metaphors when they occur without “as” or “like” and, therefore, may be included in this analysis of Poe’s metaphors. Procházka introduces Max Black’s separate views of metaphors – as a “condensed comparison,” and as a “(paradigmatic) substitution of a figurative word [...] for a literal expression.”<sup>13</sup> I would say that the latter definition is more legitimate as regards the metaphor, because it seems to take one step closer to the actual transference of an expression into another context, not simply compare – which, of course, may also denote a high level of imagination. Procházka suggests that this, however, may be ambiguous, because “sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish between literal and figurative meanings of words.”<sup>14</sup> This ambiguity in deciphering the intended meaning may be explored in Poe’s works. It may be followed that symbolism is not extremely far from the notion of the metaphor. In fact, as it is seen in these analytical texts of Procházka and Wellek and Warren, the metaphor and symbol may often be also somewhat difficult to distinguish. Symbolism is, nevertheless, one of the concepts discussed in this thesis and investigated in Poe’s selected works. Procházka states that “[f]usion theorists’ (some new critics, e.g., Cleanth

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<sup>11</sup> Procházka 131.

<sup>12</sup> Procházka 131.

<sup>13</sup> Procházka 131.

<sup>14</sup> Procházka 131.

Brooks) stress the transformative character of the metaphor and its symbolic potential,”<sup>15</sup> which already acknowledges the somewhat vague borderline between the metaphor and the symbol.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “symbol” means, among other less relevant definitions, “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; especially: a visible sign of something invisible.”<sup>16</sup> This may, again, seem like a very simple and brief definition, but already here, certain key features of the symbol are apparent. For example, the inherent representation of something else is an important aspect, for, even though a metaphor may also connote something else, it does not inherently represent it. As Procházka claims, “[s]ymbol is close to some rhetorical figures or tropes, as for instance metaphor or synecdoche. But it cannot be identified with tropes, because in symbol the subject and the analogy cannot be separated.”<sup>17</sup> This is an important observation and a very clear method of distinguishing between the metaphor and the symbol. However, there are nevertheless some complications, as is suggested, “some symbols, for instance a decayed house of the family of Usher, are only expanded metaphors: human face is compared to a façade of a dilapidated building.”<sup>18</sup> It may be seen that a symbol in this example is in fact an expanded metaphor, which may be a point of concern, for it seems to create a certain amount of ambiguity. However, after further thought, it is acknowledged that a symbol is not a true comparison, but rather, an idea or image evoking, usually naturally or inherently, another idea(s) or image(s). Procházka further explores that “[s]ymbols are created and read individually, but in spite of this they tell us about things universal and common to all people – archetypes.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, there is a sense of universality about the symbol, perhaps a connotation that would be agreed upon generally, whereas a metaphor may be further analyzed and investigated. It seems that it is metaphors, or especially allegories, that are fixed and specific, or even formalized (for example, the use of fixed and recurring attributes of characters to denote their allegorical meaning), whilst symbols may involve multiple references that are more free in association; as Procházka claims, “[i]t can also be said that symbol means something *more* or something *else*

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<sup>15</sup> Procházka 131.

<sup>16</sup> “symbol,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2009, Merriam-Webster Online, 15 March 2009  
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/symbol>>.

<sup>17</sup> Procházka 141.

<sup>18</sup> Procházka 141.

<sup>19</sup> Procházka 141.

than the image. The symbol *connects an image and one or more ideas*,<sup>20</sup> and further adds that “there is nothing like a fixed symbolic language.”<sup>21</sup> Also, a symbol may be present even without its explicit manifestation in language made by the author, but, again, it may be a symbol inherent to a certain object that is present in the text. Procházka’s mention of archetypes furthermore inevitably involves psychoanalysis and psychological implications of symbolism, which is an issue acknowledged later on in this thesis.

Another point brought to light by the brief definition from Merriam-Webster Dictionary is the notion that there is a “visible sign of something invisible.” This is often the case with symbols, and yet, not as common with other literary figures, such as metaphors. Those often involve the juxtaposition of concrete objects. However, symbols often are concrete representations for abstract notions, as Procházka describes, “[t]he relationship between the symbol and the thing represented is often in the direction from abstract to concrete or from material to immaterial.”<sup>22</sup> Of course, such a test could not be used to assure oneself that the literary device is, in fact, a symbol, for a metaphor may just as well involve a material object connoting another, abstract idea, and this may undermine such a potential test’s validity.

Wellek and Warren’s theories regarding the symbol are similar, in that they also seem to agree on the difficulty of distinction between metaphor and symbol (and other literary figures), as well as allude to the psychological dimension. To keep to defining the terms, Wellek and Warren suggest that “symbol” in most aspects always has “the element [...] of something standing for, representing, something else,” which has already been established, but furthermore claim that “the Greek verb, which means [...] to compare, suggests the idea of analogy between sign and signified was originally present.”<sup>23</sup> To some, this may evoke the idea of a metaphor, but nevertheless, Wellek and Warren continue to define the symbol in order to be able to distinguish it from the metaphor and other figures. They claim that the key feature of a symbol is “the recurrence and persistence of the ‘symbol.’ An image may be invoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs, both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol.”<sup>24</sup> This, of course, may be greatly applied to Poe’s works, where recurring metaphors may take place – if

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<sup>20</sup> Procházka 140.

<sup>21</sup> Procházka 141.

<sup>22</sup> Procházka 140.

<sup>23</sup> Wellek 188.

<sup>24</sup> Wellek 189.

Wellek and Warren's theories are to be followed, then such recurring metaphors should be considered symbols. This, on the other hand, further shows the close proximity of the metaphor and the symbol, since a metaphor used once may transform into a symbol due to its recurrence. Logically speaking, however, it is quite understandable that a metaphor, which involves features similar to a symbol, when used many times in an author's work, becomes a symbol due to its increase in universality, caused by its frequent use. It somehow becomes universalized within the context of the work. In a frequent metaphor, the subject and the analogy may also become more difficult to separate, as was discussed as a feature of the symbol.

Wellek and Warren further introduce the more complex analysis of the "mystical" and "magical" metaphor, which of course is more than should be encompassed in this thesis. However, an interesting feature of this discussion is the clear blending of the borderline between metaphors and symbols, as Wellek and Warren often allude to symbolism. As is stated, "Blake's 'Tyger' is a mystical metaphor [...]. The Tiger is no animal from the natural world of the zoo, a tiger that Blake might have seen at the Tower of London, but a visionary creature, symbol as well as thing."<sup>25</sup> As may be seen, Wellek and Warren's analysis of this particular literary element shows the close relationship between the metaphor and the symbol – the Tiger is a metaphor, and yet, it is a symbol.

As this thesis is directed towards the psychological effects within Poe's works by means of metaphors and symbols, there should be some amount of attention paid to this issue in this chapter. Wellek and Warren introduce this notion well, using Middleton Murry's words, "[t]he image 'may be visual, may be auditory,' or 'may be wholly psychological.'"<sup>26</sup> In other words, metaphors and symbols do not only evoke visual and auditory experiences in a reader, but these may also be of a mental or emotive nature. This is precisely the aim of this thesis, since every different literary figure creates different psychological effects. However, it is not solely about how a reader may react or how Poe intended to cause the readers to react – but more so, the text's general effects, as regards the states of mind. Wellek and Warren continue further and introduce the notion that "all images [are] revelatory of the unconscious."<sup>27</sup> This statement may be illuminating, although it seems somewhat unlikely that all images would have such implications.

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<sup>25</sup> Wellek 205.

<sup>26</sup> Wellek 188.

<sup>27</sup> Wellek 193.

However, “the unconscious” may not always mean the unconscious of the author or the readers specifically. There are certain interesting connections, in any case, that Wellek and Warren discuss. The poet’s psyche seems to be their focus, as they explain, “[o]ne type of study stresses the self-expression, the revelation of the poet’s psyche through his imagery. It assumes that the poet’s images are like images in a dream, i.e. uncensored by discretion or shame.” They argue in response to this theory that “it may be questioned whether a poet has ever been so uncritical of his images.”<sup>28</sup> This is a valid point, for the former theory seems to assume that a poet constructs a piece of work using telling images regarding his inner psyche and does not notice them, or simply does not review his own work, both equally unlikely. Wellek and Warren do, however, acknowledge the insight value of a poet’s use of imagery, claiming that “[a] poet’s imagery is revelatory of his self.”<sup>29</sup>

Procházka approaches the issue of psychology from another perspective, although these may not be too far apart – namely, psychoanalytic criticism. Procházka introduces Jacques Lacan’s view regarding language and its connection to reality, stating that “Lacan focuses his attention on the play of language which constitutes our notions of illusion and reality.”<sup>30</sup> This is inherently connected to the above discussion of metaphor and symbol, for these are often found in the abstract, unreal level of existence. What sets apart psychoanalytic criticism from ordinary metaphors and symbols is the focus on the mind – the conscious and the unconscious, and its application to literary works. Procházka mentions an important point, which is that “[t]he unconscious [...] is structured like a language.”<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Wright elaborately explains Lacan’s theories in her work, where she discusses the relevant links between the mind and the language, with the necessary connections to reality and imagination – namely, the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, slightly reminding one of Freudian divisions of the mind. Wright explains, “[t]he Real for Lacan is the given field of brute existence over which the Imaginary and Symbolic range in their rival attempts to control.”<sup>32</sup> She furthermore illuminates Lacan’s idea that in a certain place, “the Imaginary sees a signifier one way, the Symbolic another, splitting conscious from unconscious.”<sup>33</sup> Of course, these notions are linked to various psychological theories, mainly

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<sup>28</sup> Wellek 207.

<sup>29</sup> Wellek 208.

<sup>30</sup> Procházka 122.

<sup>31</sup> Procházka 123.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice* (London; New York: Methuen, 1984) 110.

<sup>33</sup> Wright 111.

Freudian, but the most important aspect of this theory is the link to language, especially metaphors, allowing a deeper level to be achieved in one's understanding of the notion of the metaphor and other tropes. Moreover, this linking of language and psychology enables a smooth transition between the analysis of language and its subsequent effects regarding the states of mind, as well as deepen the existential level to abstract reflection. Wright notes that "[f]or Lacan metaphor and metonymy are linguistic formulations of what Sigmund Freud discerned in condensation and displacement [...]. Unconscious desire can mistake one appearance for another *similar to it* and be led to substitute one signifier for another."<sup>34</sup> Lacan's theories shall not be further elaborated for their extent and complexity, but these views regarding metaphors should be more closely addressed in the analysis of Poe's texts.

Reflecting upon the discussion above, the definitions of the metaphor and the symbol have been established, as well as what complexities and ambiguities they may entail, and what features may serve the purpose of aiding the analysis and the clarifications of such ambiguities. These findings will be fully used during the textual analysis of Poe's works and, if need be, they will be elaborated as shall be relevant. Regardless of the attempted separation of the concepts of metaphor and symbol, it should be remembered that "imagery [...] is a part of the syntactical, or stylistic, stratum. It must be studied, finally, not in isolation from the other strata but as an element in the totality, the integrity, of the literary work."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, as is the aim of this investigation, the imagery used by Poe will be closely analyzed in relation to its effects and the psychological aspects of such effects, taking into account more than just the concepts of the metaphor and the symbol, but also the meaning and value of the entire pieces of work.

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<sup>34</sup> Wright 111.

<sup>35</sup> Wellek 208.

### **3. The Psychological Implications of Metaphors and Symbols**

As the notions of metaphor and symbol have been discussed, it is now convenient to elaborate on this matter in Poe's specific texts and analyze the links that are found between the literary and the psychological. In Poe in general, but especially in the four chosen works, the most prominent psychological states of mind are madness (in varying degrees) and fear (or horror, which may be viewed as an intensification of fear). These states of mind are considered to be significant phenomena that require a further analysis. Other frequent states of mind present in Poe's work are gloominess, melancholy, sorrow, perversity, as well as longing and desire, and there may also be found the notion of memory or remembrance, especially significant in "The Raven" and "Ligeia." Special focus will be given to "The Fall of the House of Usher" due to its complexity regarding the relationship between allegory and symbol, as well as the abundance of structural metaphors which are significant not only in the context of the story and its meaning, but also as regards Poe's theories of artistic creation. The sub-chapter will commence with a detailed analysis of chosen metaphors which will be classified in terms of the theories on metaphors discussed in the previous chapter, and subsequently interpreted in a larger context of Poe's structural philosophy. The relationship between these metaphors and possible allegories will be discussed, and symbolism will also be mentioned with respect to the previous chapter. To a lesser extent, an analysis of "Ligeia" and "William Wilson" will follow due to a possible allegorical reading, connecting the stories to "The Fall of the House of Usher." Another significant connection is the theme of doubling, analyzed in each of these sub-chapters individually. "The Raven" will be discussed last due to its ambiguous symbolism and, consequently, the impossibility of an allegorical interpretation of the raven. "The Raven" is significant due to its focus on meaningful and symbolic contrasts, as well as its structural ties to Poe's critical essays. The underlying basis throughout this chapter, and the purpose of the abovementioned analyses, will be the psychological implications of the discussed metaphors and symbols – a topic almost inexhaustible in Poe.

### 3.1 “The Fall of the House of Usher”

“The Fall of the House of Usher” is perhaps one of Poe’s most expressive or emotive short stories, in the sense that it contains many literary techniques, ranging from tropes to simple imagery of chosen vocabulary, which are all evocative of the states of mind mentioned above. The most effective and elaborate, as well as the most apparent, is the analogy of houses and faces (or heads), doubled in the story by the inclusion of the previously published poem, “The Haunted Palace,” interpreted by numerous critics. This expanded metaphor’s purpose is to point out the story’s metaphorical meaning – the implication of the psyche and the ability to apply various aspects of the story to the psychological sphere.

Many critics seem to be in accord with this view. Richard Wilbur, for example, acknowledges that “the scenes and situations of Poe’s tales are always concrete representations of states of mind,”<sup>1</sup> and Fred Botting claims that “[t]he horror in Poe’s tales exhibits a morbid fascination with darkly exotic settings mirroring extreme states of disturbed consciousness and imaginative excess, presenting fatal beauties, bloody hauntings, premature entombment and ghastly metempsychosis.”<sup>2</sup> For example, the descriptions of the Ushers’ house have distinct connections to the appearance of Roderick Usher, such as the “minute *fungi* [which] overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled *web-work* from the eaves”<sup>3</sup> and Usher’s hair, which was “of a more than *web-like* softness and tenuity.” (209) It is interesting to notice that both examples involve a metaphor – each “object” is “like a web,” therefore, an analogy is established. It may be considered a structural and aesthetic metaphor; instead of the vaguely described building and its interiors, there is an alternative structure (the “web” structure of the “fungi”), which, later on in the story, is seen as an important cause of the house’s dilapidation – a structure reminding one of Poe’s philosophy of the contraction and expansion of the Universe elaborately described in “Eureka.” Similarly, the web-like formation connecting Roderick Usher and the house itself is simultaneously a complete, self-enclosed (but with structural possibilities of unlimited expansion) and inter-connected structure, as well as a predecessor to collapse.

The metaphor is also aesthetic, for the description certainly provides a new impression of the objects (however, to what extent the impression is truly new may be debatable) and moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Regan, *Poe, a Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Regan (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967) 103.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 120.

<sup>3</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems* (Ljubljana: Mladinska Knjiga, 1966) 209.

both these instances would be considered radical metaphors, for the two images (of hair or fungi and a web) are equated. In the latter instance, the word “like” is present, but only in the function of a suffix to denote an adjective, which is why I think it may be referred to as a metaphor rather than a simile. It may also be surmised that “web-work” and “web-like” are the “vehicles,” whilst the connection of the relevant objects with this imagery of a web is the “tenor,” although this may be more complicated. Poe’s intentions regarding this particular metaphor may have been complex, giving rise to various possible “tenors,” such as the connection of these objects and the “web-work” of meanings present in the whole story, all inter-connected. This suggestion may be plausible, as Maurice Beebe describes Poe’s idea of the perfect short story in connection to his “Eureka,” which shall be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, “[i]n the ideal short story, like the universe, everything is related and nothing is irrelevant. ‘The Fall of the House of Usher,’ many critics have found, is a nearly perfect illustration of Poe’s theory of totality,” and further on, “all such details [for example regarding the house] contribute to the single effect of the story and play a part in the final catastrophe.”<sup>4</sup> The metaphor, then, seems to be a connecting agent between the two elements (the house and its tenant), emphasizing its importance as a literary device in Poe’s work.

As for the phrase “the vacant eye-like windows” (207) which includes a metaphor of “eyes,” it is not as clear who these eyes belong to, even though, again, it is most often interpreted as representative of Roderick Usher. Richard Wilbur argues that:

[w]e are encouraged, therefore, to compare the palace of the poem with the house of the story; and it is no surprise to find that the Usher mansion has ‘vacant eye-like windows,’ and that there are mysterious physical sympathies between Roderick Usher and the house in which he dwells. The House of Usher *is*, in allegorical fact, the physical body of Roderick Usher, and its dim interior *is*, in fact, Roderick Usher’s visionary mind.<sup>5</sup>

More importantly, however, it rather depicts the already maddened state of Roderick, for at the beginning, his eyes are “large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison,” (210) whilst after the entombment of Madeline, “the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out,” (216) implying the eyes’ vacancy. On the other hand, there are several interpretations suggesting, to various degrees, that even though the house does correspond to Roderick Usher, the psyche within the story is in

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<sup>4</sup> Regan 123.

<sup>5</sup> Regan 107.

fact the narrator's. Benjamin Franklin Fisher's analysis is one of the more extreme, suggesting that "[t]he bleakness of the house, its 'vacant eye-like windows,' the rank weeds and pale trunks of decayed trees nearby, mirror his own [the narrator's] countenance and thus his own mindset."<sup>6</sup> In this way, the house would rather represent the narrator, with Roderick and Madeline inside as parts of his psyche, and the "vacant eye-like windows" would be an allusion to the *narrator's* loss of sanity due to the events within his own mind. As Fisher argues, "[t]he Usher twins represent the states of the narrator's own physical-emotional constitution."<sup>7</sup> It may be confusing to some readers, however, why the house so obviously corresponds to the description of *Roderick Usher*, should it be an expanded metaphor of the *narrator's* psyche. A possible explanation may be that if Roderick is, in fact, an element of the narrator's psyche, then his resemblance to the house could signify his residence in the narrator's mind.

Regardless, the house is doubtlessly a significant metaphor of a human head, emphasized by "The Haunted Palace," where a similar situation occurs. The descent into madness of an actual mind (in connection to the story) is obvious in "its head," denoting a human head, "Thought's dominion," suggestive of sanity and rationality, "yellow, glorious, golden, / On its roof," a metaphor for blonde hair, "two luminous windows," a metaphor of the eyes of a sane person, "pearl and ruby," a metaphor for lips and teeth (denoting beauty, health and positivity). Furthermore, the "troop of Echoes," a metaphor of sane utterances, juxtaposed with "evil things in robes of sorrow," (213) a metaphor of the state of mind of sorrow, or more precisely, such thoughts; "red-litten windows," a metaphor of the very same eyes, except now they are red, implying insanity (with a demoniac connotation), or, as Wilbur suggests, "they are like the bloodshot eyes of a madman or a drunkard."<sup>8</sup> Both "vast forms that move fantastically" and "discordant melody" are metaphors of the strange thoughts and the chaotic mind. The "pale door" and "rapid ghastly river" are metaphorical of the lips and speech, where one may see the change from red lips to pale, as well as the change of utterances that used to be a "voice of surpassing beauty" and is now "ghastly," implying horror, and "rapid river," (214) signifying the disorganized mad utterances that stream from the insane person's lips. In brief, this elaborate house-mind metaphor is, in effect, a metaphor of madness. Again, Wilbur's theory is in accord

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<sup>6</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 89.

<sup>7</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* 90.

<sup>8</sup> Regan 106.

with this notion, as he claims that “[t]he two states of the palace – before and after – are, as we can see, two states of mind.”<sup>9</sup> The inserted poem is, no doubt, an allegory of madness, showing the crisis of Reason. Wilbur, however, does not distinguish between the high allegorical meaning of “The Haunted Palace” and the more symbolical nature of the short story itself, regardless of their great similarity creating an effect of the poem being a miniature of the short story. It may be noted that the poem is allegorical, for several aspects therein metaphorically show the abstract notion of the crisis of Reason (not only the protagonist’s, but that of humankind, in general), or madness, and any reader may interpret the poem as such. The short story, then, even though it may be read as an allegory, seems to have a more symbolical quality, a level of vagueness, as one cannot interpret the textual elements as clear representations with purely metaphorical meaning; for example, it is not undoubtedly certain what the terms “web” or “fungi” are to denote.

Many other critics have attempted to offer precise explanations of the inserted poem, for example Edward Davidson’s interpretation that “[t]he mind is a castle; the sovereign is Thought; the windows are the eyes; the attendant ideas are Echoes and graces, and the inimical world of reality outside, which for a time exists in complete subservience to the will of Thought, finally overwhelms and destroys the mind.”<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, despite the slight nuances and the differences of various detailed interpretations, a link to the deteriorating psyche is almost always made, and an analogy between the psyche or the head and the metaphorical house is acknowledged. As Poe himself reveals, it is “a mind haunted by phantoms – a disordered brain,”<sup>11</sup> as Davidson points out.<sup>12</sup> A question arises, which may perhaps alter the final effect or the meaning of this house-mind phenomenon. I have referred to it as an expanded metaphor, as Martin Procházka explains, “some symbols, for instance a decayed house of the family of Usher, are only expanded metaphors: human face is compared to a façade of a dilapidated building.”<sup>13</sup> It is undeniable that there is a likeness, or an analogy, established, the transference of contexts has been achieved, as well as a vastly new impression of the notion of the mind has been given – all key features of metaphors. The complexity of the imagery is also obvious, for it is a conglomeration of metaphors, all aiming towards the creation of the analogy between the mind or

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<sup>9</sup> Regan 106.

<sup>10</sup> Edward H. Davidson, *Poe, a Critical Study* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957) 80.

<sup>11</sup> *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John W. Ostrom (Harvard University Press, 1948) 161.

<sup>12</sup> Davidson 79.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Prague: Karolinum, 2008) 141.

the head and the house. This attribute, of course, steers the metaphor rather towards an allegory of Roderick's (or, as discussed above, perhaps the narrator's) mind – not only due to the description of the house itself, but also due to the insertion of “The Haunted Palace,” which is an overt allegory of the human head, physically and psychologically.

However, there is also a further symbolic quality – the description of the house undeniably evokes certain moods and emotions, for example by means of the surroundings, such as “the mere house,” “the simple landscape features,” “the bleak walls,” and of course the “vacant eye-like windows,” (207) which clearly synthesize the narrator's emotional reaction (for example, “a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit” [207]) and Roderick's state of mind (as seen in “a mental disorder which oppressed him” [208]). In this light, the metaphor of the windows, for example, may rather be considered a symbol, for it evokes, due to the description “vacant,” a mood of emotional emptiness and madness, and synthesizes the feelings of the narrator with Roderick's own dismal and increasingly mad state of mind. Synthesis is an important attribute of the symbol, as may be observed in Procházka's explanation of Romantic criticism, “[t]hey thought that symbol, on the other hand, was synthetic, that it abolished the distinction between the image and the thing represented.”<sup>14</sup>

The house of “The Fall of the House of Usher” is also a material object representing an abstract idea (the house is a materialization of the mind), a visible thing presented instead of an invisible notion. Furthermore, it is a rather persistent metaphor, which may cause it to be expanded within the context of the story and become a symbol (for example, the motif of family lineage, i.e., the House of Usher, becoming a symbol of degeneration). This, nevertheless, shows the ambiguity and complexity of Poe's imagery, as well as the indistinct borderline between metaphors, or allegories, and symbols. “[T]he subject and the analogy cannot be separated”<sup>15</sup> within the context of this short story, but in general terms, an image of a “house” does not inherently evoke an idea of the “mind,” which is why the term “expanded metaphor” should, perhaps, remain. It must be noted, however, that even this notion is ambiguous, for the image of the house, even separated from its context of the story, in the *way it is built and described*, does, in fact, inherently evoke an idea of the head, face and mind. On the other hand, it must be understood and analyzed in context of the short story, and this point of view may re-direct one's

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<sup>14</sup> Procházka 139.

<sup>15</sup> Procházka 141.

focus to the allegory, where the *dilapidation* of the house is significant (as is emphasized by the mysterious fissure, and even by the title, “The *Fall* of the House of Usher”). The house, then, may seem to be an allegory of the dissolution of order and structure. Firstly, the dissolution of order and structure may be understood in general terms, for a building inherently denotes structure, but secondly, it is also the loss of order and structure within the mind (as is evident in the inserted poem “The Haunted Palace”), and finally, the disintegration of order and structure in terms of the cultural system of chivalry, as portrayed by the inclusion of parts of the “Mad Trist,” a chivalric romance, at the end of the short story. As Botting asserts, “the disintegration of the normal and familiar in Southern Gothic signals the decay of family and culture.”<sup>16</sup> Coincidentally, the events in the romance occur simultaneously with Madeline’s resurrection from the tomb, the predecessor to the dilapidation of the house, which connects the various forms of disintegration of order and structure. Nevertheless, perhaps it may be acceptable to view the imagery as both symbolic and allegorical (based on extended metaphor), with neither interpretation wholly incorrect.

Continuing thus, it has been put forward by many critics that the interior of the house may be an allegory of the psyche, in very much the same way that the exterior is an allegory of the head – by all means, what is behind those “vacant eye-like windows” must be the “soul,” logically speaking. As Fisher states, “[m]any of the buildings or even individual rooms may symbolize the interiors of human heads, i.e., minds.”<sup>17</sup> This way, it may be discerned that whoever’s mind it is (most likely the narrator’s), it resembles “many dark and intricate passages,” and a “very large and lofty” room. The narrator’s familiarity with the interior of the house strongly suggests that he is, indeed, the owner of this metaphorical “mind,” as in “[the interior objects] were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy” or “while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this.” (209) It may also be noticed that the room he finds himself in is “altogether inaccessible from within,” (209) which creates a feeling of entrapment and isolation.

The feeling of isolation and entrapment is, of course, prominent in “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Poe uses a metaphor to portray another very important state of mind – the phenomenon of fear. The narrator’s words, “[t]o an anomalous species of terror I found him a

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<sup>16</sup> Botting 160.

<sup>17</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* 84.

bounden slave,” (211) depict many different notions. For example, it shows Roderick Usher’s entrapment (“bounden slave”), but at the same time, informs the reader of Roderick Usher’s weakness. The extent of this weakness is furthermore emphasized by another metaphor, “in some struggle with the *grim phantasm*, FEAR.” (211) This is an important element in the story, for it is due to precisely this that Roderick Usher “dies.” Of course, the effect of the “grim phantasm” is the empowerment of the notion of fear. Within the context of the story, however, it is not surprising that Roderick Usher should be likened to a “bounden slave” – he is entrapped in the house, if he is to be interpreted as a part of a psyche, and cannot exist outside of it.

A point of interest may arise in the further analysis of metaphors, as the readers’ own interpretations become important and influential regarding the meaning of certain metaphors and symbols. For example, “the *melancholy* House of Usher” (207) may be viewed either figuratively or literally, depending on how one views the term “*House* of Usher.” If understood as a building, the “melancholy” sentiment is figurative and connotes also the metaphorical mind that the house represents – in this way suggestive of the melancholy attitude of the psyche being represented, as well as of the melancholy emotion evoked when beholding the house. However, if the term is understood as the family of Usher, which may be possible only in the sense of a pun, for it is apparent from the circumstances that the narrator cannot see any people yet, then the description of “melancholy” is literal and suggests a melancholy attitude of the Ushers’ family. Conceding that the intended meaning was most likely figurative, it may be considered a radical metaphor, again suggesting an analogy between an inanimate building and an animate human being. This is, of course, connected to Roderick’s fancy that the house is animate, as well as to the greater meaning of the story, which is the house’s representation of a mind, implying a level of its personification. In this context, the term “melancholy,” according to its traditional meaning, is suggestive of a psychological problem and may be considered a structural metaphor, since it represents the forthcoming physical and literal dilapidation of the house (a perceptible and outward form of collapse), and therefore also the hidden and figurative dilapidation of the psyche.

Literal and figurative meanings furthermore cause ambiguities regarding the fissure in the building. Scott Brewster, for example, notes that the house “alludes to Roderick Usher’s disordered mental state” and subsequently, “[a]pocalyptically confirming physical and psychic

degeneration, the fissured house splits apart as Roderick's reason finally cracks."<sup>18</sup> As may be observed, this is a different interpretation from those of other critics, such as Fisher, but only in the sense that Brewster accepts Roderick Usher as a "human" (within limits) entity with his own psyche – in other words, more literally than figuratively. It then becomes a very subjective interpretation; the fissure may also be symbolic of the narrator's split consciousness, this reflected in Madeline and Roderick respectively, or perhaps directly symbolic of Roderick and Madeline – i.e., the split between them (whether or not they are regarded as parts of a psyche or real twins). This depends on the extent to which one assumes that Roderick and Madeline are *metaphorical*. Of course, they may even be considered allegories, if they play a significant role within the context of the house-mind allegory. Establishing their allegorical roles may also aid the understanding of the nature of the split of the narrator's psyche which the house-mind allegory may represent.

Roderick, associated with the eventual loss of reason, may be an allegory of the reasoning part of the mind, whilst Madeline, who seems to be associated with emotional aspects (although very much with respect to Roderick, as may be seen in "a tenderly beloved sister," "sole companion, [...] his last and only relative on earth," and after Madeline mysteriously passes barely seen, Roderick's subsequent outburst of tears, "far more than ordinary wanes had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears" [211]), may be an allegory of emotion or passion. It is, however, significant that the lady Madeline "passed through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed [the narrator's] presence, disappeared," (211) especially since the apartment may be understood as an interior of the mind. If, indeed, she is an allegory of emotion or passion, the remoteness of her presence may signify the buried nature of that emotion. Roderick's emotional outburst, as well as the narrator's astonishment after beholding her, seems to suggest this, for her fleeting presence has temporarily released the valve which has been suppressing this psychological element. Her mysterious isolation may, however, also denote rather the subconscious, whereas Roderick would represent the conscious, especially as it is Madeline who is almost always hidden and then entombed (*by* Roderick, therefore by the conscious which represses the subconscious), reappearing only to destroy Roderick by means of guilt and fear. Furthermore, it is Roderick who interacts with the narrator, which would suggest his more "public" nature. Poe may have intended for the split of

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<sup>18</sup> *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001) 285.

the psyche to be even more elaborate, and Madeline may be an allegory of the *id* due to her reclusiveness, Roderick of the *ego* due to his interaction with the narrator, his representation of the Ushers and his physical resemblance of the house itself, and the narrator perhaps of the *superego* because within the context of the story, he is an external interference. Nevertheless, the more literal they are, the less they become true manifestations of the narrator's psyche, if indeed it is his psyche that is portrayed. And conversely, the more figurative they are, the more they represent the elements or parts of the psyche.

However, literal and figurative meanings are not always clear; Roderick's insanity is well-represented by his painting (as well as his music and poetry), because that is his creation produced out of *his* imagination, *his* mind. It represents his insanity, thus it involves a metaphorical dimension. Nevertheless, the vagueness, as well as the horror, of this metaphor is that the scene in the painting does not resemble anything from real life or even from a healthy individual's imagination. It is chaos, unreason, the depiction of insanity; it cannot be recognized or understood. Hence, it evokes fear, horror and awe. As may be seen in the text, "there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, [...]. One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, [...] may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words." (212) There is a combination of fear (evoked by entrapment) and fantasy:

[I]mmensely long [...] vault or tunnel, with low walls [...]. [...] the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed [...] of its vast extent, and no torch or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor. (212)

It is debatable, however, whether such horror is evoked simply by the feeling of entrapment, or whether these images are horror-evoking themselves because of their unfathomable nature: the unimaginable length of the tunnel, depth of the location, its vast extent, or the lack of light and yet, the presence of unrealistic light. Perhaps the simple impossibility and incomprehensibility of the scene is what moves the narrator to horror and awe. As Procházka explains, "[t]he sublime, in the sense of awe felt before an unknown power as well as of the incommensurability of great

things [...] to human cognitive and affective abilities, is a standard feature of the romantic aesthetic.”<sup>19</sup>

The last section of this sub-chapter shall be devoted to the element of the split consciousness or doubling, neither of these notions easily distinguishable. This theme is also connected to mirroring and reflection, which are often the external or material manifestations of such a state. In “The Fall of the House of Usher,” the notion of the twins being a case of a split psyche seems to suggest itself precisely by the usage of “twins.” Of course, this is also a case of doubling, for a twin is as close to a double as one may get; however, their residence within the “mind-house” and the fissure in the building both seem to suggest that the split psyche is perhaps slightly more accurate. It is also connected to the notion of reflection, especially in this short story, because apart from the fissure, there is also the tarn which reflects the house (and may also serve the purpose of a mirror to the narrator). This may suggest that, if the house represents the narrator’s psyche, then it is split, and the narrator has an opportunity to reflect upon himself as he observes the house in the tarn and is overcome by a strange feeling. The story, however, has several depths which may be analyzed; Scott Peeples introduces another level of doubling regarding the house which “is ‘doubled’ or reflected in the tarn, but also reflected in the double-meaning of ‘house,’ referring to the family as well as their dwelling.”<sup>20</sup> This shows the structural complexity of the short story – the doubling or mirroring represented by the tarn, the split psyche represented by the fissure, and the structure of the family line of the Ushers, linear and unbranched, in direct opposition to the prominent structure of web-work, and yet doubled in its very essence; “from sire to son, [...] which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the [...] appellation of the ‘House of Usher’ – an appellation which seemed to include [...] both the family and the family mansion.” (208) In fact, it is the merge *and* the split of the family line or the psyche, and the physical house or the body, again reminiscent of the philosophy of “Eureka.” Poe connects these levels of meaning in “[t]he belief [...] was connected [...] with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. [...] in the order of [the stones’] arrangement, as well as in that of the many *fungi* which overspread them [...] and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn.” (214) A sense of structural inter-connection and ambiguity may be seen in “I paused to think – what was it that so unnerved me in the

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<sup>19</sup> Martin Procházka et al., *Lectures on American Literature* (Praha: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2007) 67.

<sup>20</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* 180.

contemplation of the House of Usher” (207), as it shows the double-meaning of the term, and therefore foreshadows the abovementioned complexity of the short story.

### 3.2 “Ligeia”

Similarly to “The Fall of the House of Usher” above, the level of existence of the heroine in “Ligeia” has often been interpreted, as well as misinterpreted. She is understood as a real character that many critics have tried to analyze, as well as nothing more than a figment of the narrator’s imagination, mainly connected to the narrator’s state of mind – obsession. This may, like Roderick and Madeline, render her more allegorical than literal. As Roy P. Basler explains, “[t]hese assumptions [that Ligeia is a real character of a strong-willed woman] ignore the obvious context with its emphasis on the hero’s obsession, madness, and hallucination.”<sup>21</sup> Evidence of this in the text is rather abundant, for example at the beginning, “I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more.” (590) The usage of “in fancy” is a clue, but also the concession that “she is no more,” despite the narrator’s belief that she has really appeared before him instead of Rowena at the end. Of course, the narrator writes the story many years later, but it is implied that “she is no more” due to the illness of which she died. Furthermore, the narrator’s own suggestion that it may have been “a caprice of [his] own – a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion” (590) – or, an obsession – serves as a clue to the hallucinatory, and psychological, nature of this short story.

Karen Weekes argues that “Poe’s poetic and fictional females lack individual development,” and “the dying woman passes silently from this life, rarely expressing her feelings on the matter.”<sup>22</sup> I think this comment suggests that they are not, indeed, to be understood as individual characters, but only serve the purpose of a metaphor (of a subdivision of a psyche). Furthermore, this psyche would most likely be the narrator’s, as Weekes acknowledges that Ligeia’s “dying thoughts focus not on [her] own plight but on that of the narrator.”<sup>23</sup> Hence, it seems plausible that several of such individual characters are simply material manifestations of an abstract notion of a state of mind, such as Ligeia, who represents the narrator’s obsession

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<sup>21</sup> Regan 52.

<sup>22</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* 150.

<sup>23</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* 150.

about perfection. Basler discusses his interpretation of the ending, where the narrator is “the actual agent of Rowena’s death and his perceptions mere hallucinations produced by obsessional desire.”<sup>24</sup> The act of killing, however, may have been less material and more psychological as well, where the narrator’s will and the power of suggestion propelled by the narrator’s extreme longing were the murderers of Rowena (who, just as well, may have been a metaphorical subdivision of the narrator’s psyche). Indeed, the phrase “each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse,” (599) seems to imply that the murder occurs within the narrator’s mind. However, the interpretation of such a text is somewhat ambiguous, for the “invisible foe” may have been the “spirit” of Ligeia, if one accepts her as a real character, but it may have also represented a state of mind, an abstract idea. The gradual changes of appearance are most likely denotative of the narrator’s power of suggestion, effected by his will. An interesting point is that this explanation still allows for the possibility of Ligeia being a real character, whereas only the scenes of revivification and metempsychosis at the end would be understood figuratively, representing the narrator’s obsession. However, if Ligeia is to be understood figuratively throughout the *whole* story (i.e., she never truly exists in flesh), she may be an allegory of not only the narrator’s infatuation, but also of the irrational desire for perfection. As is apparent in the story, Ligeia is the narrator’s image of absolute flawlessness – his ideal of true beauty: “the lofty and pale forehead – it was faultless,” or “and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection.” (591) Ligeia’s surreal existence is also further suggested by the phrase, “[s]he came and departed as a shadow.” (590) Nevertheless, there is an intriguing and bizarre observation regarding this perfection of Ligeia: the “strangeness” with which the narrator associates beauty and perfection.

The story of “Ligeia” also contains the Poesque phenomenon of doubling – the Lady Ligeia and the Lady Rowena. In spite of the traditional contrast of dark and blonde heroines used frequently already in the English Gothic novel, the notion of doubling is not as traditional, for rather than bearing resemblance, they are exactly opposite of one another, at least according to the information that Poe provides. Harry Levin points out that “the arithmetical formula is the coalescence of two into singleness; but Poe enlarges it by making the heroine’s double her polar opposite and by dramatizing, with his eeriest stage-effects, the substitution of the one for the

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<sup>24</sup> Regan 58.

other.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, just as Madeline and Roderick cannot die alone, but must necessarily involve the death of both, so it is with Ligeia and Rowena – except, in an absolutely inverted manner, just as their own connection is. Ligeia and Rowena cannot *live* simultaneously, which has been shown by the repeated “hideous drama of revivification” (599) at the end of the story, and the subsequent usage of metempsychosis. The nature of doubling is furthermore different from “The Fall of the House of Usher” in the sense of the figurative qualities of the short story; in “Ligeia,” the metaphorical contrasts involve strictly the state of the protagonist’s consciousness, and may, therefore, be considered almost allegorical, whereas in “The Fall of the House of Usher,” there is a more complicated, and not wholly unified, field of symbolical meanings (reason and passion, the split of consciousness, the Freudian *id*, *ego* and *superego*, the dilapidation of structure and order, etc.), generated by the process of doubling. Thus, it may be surmised that “Ligeia” is the short story with the more explicit and lucid allegorical quality, provided that the heroine is recognized as figurative.

### 3.3 “William Wilson”

The theme of the split psyche, as well as doubling, is extremely well-portrayed in “William Wilson,” as Levin notes that “among the many and varied appearances of the *alter ego* in our literature, this is the most explicit.”<sup>26</sup> The state of mind demonstrated this way is the narrator’s conscience, as is hinted at in, “what say CONSCIENCE grim.” (564) The bizarre revelation of information, such as the narrator’s and his *alter ego*’s names, birthdays, or heights, is extremely telling as regards the identity of the characters and the meaning of the story. The involvement of the psyche is undeniable. However, regardless of their seeming equality and their doubled nature, there is still a large difference between them. The narrator seems to be a real character – his double, the alter ego and the manifestation of his split psyche, however, is abstract. He is a metaphorical depiction of conscience, and the seemingly physical body of the *alter ego* William Wilson is used only to give a material appearance to a psychological notion. As Botting claims, “William Wilson finally locks his double in a duel, to find [...] that he is

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<sup>25</sup> Harry Levin, *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1989) 158.

<sup>26</sup> Levin 143.

alone and bleeding before a great mirror: his mortal foe has been his inverted image, an *alter ego* that, unlike the *doppelganger*, is a better self, an external image of good conscience.”<sup>27</sup>

In a way, the *alter ego* William Wilson is always located inside the real William Wilson, and this is only revealed to him at the end. As mentioned above, the device of mirroring is used to bring this to light. Levin explains the issue of this final confrontation:

When Poe brings the two William Wilsons together for the last time, during a Roman carnival, they are masquerading in identical costumes; and when the narrator stabs his black-masked double, his bloody apparition in a mirror informs him that he has committed moral suicide. Thus William Wilson is at once the accuser and the accused, with the better of the two selves tracking down the crimes that the worsen [*sic*] perpetrates.<sup>28</sup>

This manifests itself in, for example, the fact that the *alter ego* William Wilson seems to always know where the real William Wilson is, no matter how far he travels (of course he must know, being a part of his mind), mainly depicted by the repetitive “*I fled in vain.*” (576) The last interaction between William Wilson and his conscience is when he kills it, metaphorically speaking, as stated by William Wilson himself, “henceforward art thou also dead – dead to the World, to Heaven, and to Hope!” (578) The question, of course, is the extent to which he has killed himself and the nature of this murder. It is likely that by killing his *alter ego*, he literally cannot survive – as is the case in “The Fall of the House of Usher,” where one twin’s death necessarily means the simultaneous death of the other twin. However, it is also possible that by killing his *alter ego*, he simply killed his conscience, in which case, he has morally fallen, but may continue to live physically. In a way, the *id* has triumphed over the *ego*, as Richard M. Fletcher explains that “[i]n ‘William Wilson’ the bi-part soul becomes manifest in two aspects of the same personality, which may be fairly said to stand for the *ego* and the *id*.”<sup>29</sup> This is furthermore supported by Fletcher’s view already stated above, that what the scene entails is, primarily, a “moral suicide.” It is clear, however, that even in this short story, it is plausible that the characters are allegories – emphasized by the explicit usage of the doubling theme. Based on what has been shown above, the *alter ego* may be an allegory of the *ego* (and, perhaps even the *superego*), or more specifically, the conscience, while the narrating William Wilson may be an allegory of the *id*. Nevertheless, the nature of this allegory (the two William Wilsons being

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<sup>27</sup> Botting 121.

<sup>28</sup> Levin 143.

<sup>29</sup> Richard M. Fletcher, *The Stylistic Development of Edgar Allan Poe* (Hague: Mouton, 1973) 129.

essentially the same person) becomes more complicated as one imagines William Wilson “killing *himself*” – emphasized by the mirror scene at the story’s close. The usage of the reflexive pronoun, and the imagery pertaining to the allegory connected with it, rather shifts focus to a more symbolical interpretation. This may be the portrayal of the secret and mysterious nature of one’s individuality – a structure impossible to depict rationally. Even though the two “doubles” represent two parts of the psyche, as in, for example, “The Fall of the House of Usher,” the dynamic of the relationship between them is not the same; while Roderick and Madeline seem to be, regardless of the level of ambiguity, more definite allegories of certain aspects of the psyche, for example due to the circumstances in which they appear, the two William Wilsons are, more than twins or doubles, one individuality. Their simultaneous existence, and the eventual murder (or suicide), symbolize the complexity and depth of the unexplored, multilayered Soul.

### 3.4 “The Raven”

As is apparent in “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Raven” also contains several symbols which help to convey the relevant states of mind. For example, “a bust of Pallas” (847) is a symbol of reason. It is most definitely *inherently* evoked – the notion of reason cannot be separated from such an image. This inherence is most likely accomplished due to the ancient Greek tradition of Pallas Athena’s birth, “[a]t her birth she sprang forth fully armed from the head of her father, Zeus,”<sup>30</sup> thus becoming a symbol of reason, in addition to being the goddess of wisdom. Despite the fact that some of her features could be understood or interpreted allegorically, for example, her helmet and shield, she cannot be recognized as an allegory of Reason due to the inherence of the connotation. Furthermore, the image is a material object used to represent an abstract notion of reason. For this reason, it is most certainly characterized as a symbol rather than a metaphor. This image is juxtaposed with the black raven, which is a natural symbol of something negative – most often evil, shown by Poe in “bird or beast” (847) or “and his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming.” (848) However, here the raven is also a symbol of non-reason due to its mindless repetition of “Nevermore,” but also due to its placement specifically on the bust of Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom (among other things).

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<sup>30</sup> “Athena,” *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*, Random House, Inc, 12 Aug. 2009  
<<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Athena>>.

This notion is well-emphasized by the contrast of black and white, where black, the raven, signifies non-reason, also reminding one of the darkness of the deep subconscious and “blind” non-reason, and white, the bust of Pallas, signifying reason, reminiscent of the clarity of thought, or the conscious. The raven is also quite obviously a trigger for the narrator’s anxious states of mind of mournful remembrance, which is in accord with its connotation to the deep subconscious, where such an emotion may be buried. As is not surprising with Poe, the entire episode may have been the narrator’s fancy, and the raven never really appears in form. This way, its purpose would be purely symbolic. As Botting explains, “[h]uman desires and neuroses are dressed in the lurid hues of the supernatural to the extent that nightmare and reality become entwined.”<sup>31</sup>

However, such symbolism, as has been shown above, is deeply ambivalent; the potential symbols of the image of the raven vary from utter negativity and darkness (such as non-reason, the dark subconscious, or hell) to other wholly differing areas (such as the symbol of a prophet, or the myth of Prometheus reminiscent in “[t]ake thy beak from out my heart” [848]). The prophetic nature of the raven is a complicating factor; due to its function in the context of the poem, it is debatable as to whether the image of the prophet is intended as a positive or a negative image. The apostrophe, “prophet,” symbolizes the narrator’s belief that the raven’s presence and responses are prophetic – or, perhaps, his desire for it to be so: “tell me truly, I implore.” (848) This, of course, may also signify the narrator’s desire for truth, regardless of his knowledge of the raven’s predictable answer. However, the appellation is also undoubtedly connected with evil, whether or not inherently, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil!” (848) This ambivalence renders it impossible for the poem to be considered allegorical as the short stories analyzed above may have been, for such a relationship is much more clear-cut and definite – images portrayed as others based on analogies, and applicable to the whole poem. Hence, in the case of “The Raven,” there are too many potential ways of understanding the symbol of the raven for it to be considered a true allegorical poem. Instead, the readers’ attention is diverted to the dark world of the subconscious and to the revelation of its hidden or buried contents. This notion may be linked to Sigmund Freud’s description of “the uncanny,” or “*unheimlich*,” as is introduced in his work, *The Uncanny*, “on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight... everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret

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<sup>31</sup> Botting 120.

and hidden but has come to light.”<sup>32</sup> The theme of these disturbing revelations of the subconscious are prominent in Gothic literature, and as Botting suggests, it has become notably influential, “the play of internal and external narrations, of uncertain psychological states and uncanny events [...] have become staples of the Gothic.”<sup>33</sup>

“The Raven” also contains an interesting motif of “fire,” which inherently seems to symbolize passion, or perhaps it functions as an igniter of passions. In “The Raven,” this may be the narrator’s longing for, and remembrance of, Lenore. According to Allan Tate, “Poe’s strange fire is his leading visual symbol,”<sup>34</sup> and examples of this notion include, “all my soul within me burning” (846) or “fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core,” (847) which, of course, are powerful images. The former example shows precisely the passion that the narrator feels surge inside him after he has succumbed to the fancy that Lenore is present, implying his longing and desire for her. The latter example shows the passion empowered by the raven, and especially when connected to the narrator’s bosom’s core, used to torture the narrator with mournful remembrance. There may be a correlation between “The Raven” and “Ligeia” regarding this state of mind, as Fletcher mentions “the bridal chamber that Poe so lovingly describes symbolizing ‘not only a dreaming mind, but a mind obsessed with a mournful longing for Ligeia.’”<sup>35</sup> The difference is the outcome, for, as is known, the result in the poem is the narrator sinking deeper into a depressive state of mind, whereas in the short story, the recurring notion of will-power ensures that the narrator suffers a hallucination due to the power of suggestion.

Furthermore, there is also the notion of hopelessness present in the poem (although, such a state of mind is evoked in much of Poe’s work). As Levin notes, “the specialized ability to utter no more than one word [...] is the echo of the poet’s hopelessness.”<sup>36</sup> This hopelessness is clearly seen in the narrator, however, for he deliberately evokes these answers from the raven knowing what they will be, suggesting a level of self-torment over the lost Lenore. The introduction of the narrator’s appellation of the raven, “Prophet,” signifies this deliberate self-torment, which may remind one of a depression. Levin adds that “the bird – or devil – who, like the vulture preying

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<sup>32</sup> Sigmund Freud, quoted in Botting 113.

<sup>33</sup> Botting 123.

<sup>34</sup> Regan 42.

<sup>35</sup> Fletcher 103.

<sup>36</sup> Levin 162.

on the liver of Prometheus, finally sinks its beak in the poet's heart"<sup>37</sup> (metaphorically speaking, of course). As has been suggested, the extent to which the raven is an active party in this matter is debatable; and it is more than possible that the symbolic nature of the raven, in effect, means that because it is simply a "dark" part of the narrator's psyche, the action of sinking the metaphorical beak into the heart is only carried out by the narrator himself. The complicated nature of the symbolism of the raven, apart from diverting the readers' attention to the subconscious, also encourages one to focus on the form of the poem rather than any allegory; this has been suggested by Poe himself in his "Philosophy of Composition" which shall be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, where he reveals the amount of importance of formalism, even as regards the choice of the raven and its legendary "Nevermore."

### 3.5 Conclusion

As has been shown by means of the analyses in the previous sub-chapters, doubling and the split psyche seem to be important themes in Poe's stories and poems – as Fletcher summarizes, "[i]n 'Ligeia' [Poe] works ostensibly with two distinct women who in reality are facets of the self-same person; Roderick and Madeline, identical twins, serve a similar function in 'The Fall of the House of Usher.' William Wilson and his double are, in an equivalent sense, identical 'twins.'"<sup>38</sup> It seems to be directly linked to metaphors and symbols, for the nature of the characters' existence and the level of their figurativeness determines how they should be treated in terms of possible functionality within the scheme of the psyche, therefore, doubling and the split psyche also are coalescing themes. More importantly, however, the device of doubling and the manner in which it is used in the plot help to determine the metaphorical function of the character (or object), even regarding the notion of mirroring and reflection. It has been observed that the metaphorical function often may be complicated and unclear, for the notions of symbol and allegory intertwine the analysis and sometimes render it difficult to establish the most prominent aspect of a particular figure. Nevertheless, it has been found that in the chosen short stories, allegory seems to be an extremely important aspect and is often paramount with respect to the stories' meanings, while in the poem, obviously different from the short stories due to its

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<sup>37</sup> Levin 162.

<sup>38</sup> Fletcher 121.

versed form, symbolism is much more prominent, and the vague notion of the subconscious, as well as formalism, are brought to the foreground.

The tension between symbolism and metaphors, or allegories, has been explored, revealing a somewhat different nature of these phenomena in the individual works. Following the analyses, it may be concluded that “The Fall of the House of Usher,” although united by means of several metaphorical and possibly allegorical representations of various aspects of the psyche, such as its division and the descent into madness, and aided by an explicitly allegorical poem, there is an outer layer of symbolism that permeates throughout the story – especially due to the many possible ways of understanding the notion of “House of Usher,” or the many symbols regarding degeneration. It shows the complex structure of this uniquely designed short story. On the other hand, as has been discussed, “Ligeia” is, despite its few ambiguities of understanding the figurative, antithetical nature of the heroines, a more explicit allegory, produced by means of doubling: the presence of both ladies in one body, and the gradual empowerment of the “physical” body by Ligeia, form a direct link to the psychological phenomenon of the narrator’s obsession. “William Wilson,” explicitly allegorical on the surface as representing parts of the psyche, especially the conscience, involves another layer of symbolism as regards the doubling phenomenon and its subsequent meaning – for example, the mystery of individuality, or perhaps the disintegration of order, symbolized by the murder of the *superego*. Finally, “The Raven,” containing only a small number of metaphors and mainly focusing on symbolism, harmonizes the two phenomena, and with its precise rhyme scheme and meter, creates a unified, multilayered, meaningful whole. The significant element of the poem, however, is its ambiguous symbolism regarding the raven, resulting in the impossibility of its allegorical interpretation, thus shifting focus on the formalistic aspects and the darkness of the subconscious – a theme almost always touched upon in the majority of Poe’s works.

## 4. Poe's Literary Theories

The two critical essays, "The Philosophy of Composition" and "Eureka," shall be explored in this chapter in the context of Poe's prose and poetic works analyzed above. They both contain some of his literary thought, and this may be contrasted with the actual texts and subsequently, correlations may be made. Furthermore, these correlations may be used in connection with the issue of metaphors and symbols, as well as the portrayed states of mind.

"The Philosophy of Composition," as compared to "Eureka," is more precise; "Eureka" is metaphysical, dealing with theories merging literary theory and physics, and while it does refer to several texts, it is not an analysis of any of his own works, which "The Philosophy of Composition" does claim to be. It is then somewhat convenient to juxtapose "The Philosophy of Composition" with his works, especially "The Raven" at which it is directed, and it may be established that the asserted theory may be divided into formal and thematic content. "Eureka," of course, may also be observed in terms of its application to the form and themes of the analyzed works, but it cannot be as specific, because Poe himself does not explicitly make any connections between his theories proposed therein and his literary works.

The literary principle emphasized throughout "The Philosophy of Composition," is form. In fact, to various critics, the resulting effect of the high emphasis on form is a decreased credibility of this theoretical piece, even though Poe's sincerity or insincerity in this respect may never be proven. Nevertheless, Poe's formalism is, without doubt, evident in the statement, "[i]t is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referrible [*sic*] either to accident or intuition – that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem."<sup>1</sup> Of course, this may be obvious in "The Raven," where especially the metre and rhyme are extremely meticulous, reminding one of a chant. It is also clearly stated that Poe's choice of the word "Nevermore" in "The Raven," supremely important due to its frequent repetition, was executed simply for its sound, in connection to its melancholy tone (which is connected to the meaning only slightly, inasmuch as that it creates a certain effect). Poe makes no mention of choosing the word for what it essentially

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<sup>1</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leonard Cassuto (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999) 102.

*means*, which slightly undermines the numerous critical interpretations of the poem, where the word is given an all-important role of the meaning.

This is similar to the problem of the bust of the goddess Pallas, where, as Poe claims in the essay, the reason why he had chosen her name was, again, because of its sonorousness, as well as for the purpose of showing “the scholarship of the lover.” (108) This may be a somewhat satisfactory explanation, for it does make a connection between the word and the plot, but it is interesting that Poe does not mention the contrast between the raven’s obvious unreason (Poe himself acknowledges this in, “immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech” [105]) and the goddess of *wisdom*, thus obviously juxtaposed. Perhaps it is suggestive of the necessity for the reader’s active use of imagination while reading the poem and interpreting the symbols found there.

Robert Regan introduces W. H. Auden’s comment that “[t]he trouble with ‘The Raven,’ is that the thematic interest and the prosodic interest, both of which are considerable, do not combine and are even often at odds,” and further explains that “‘The Raven’ remains at best a curiosity because *form and meaning* do not cooperate to raise it to a peak of emotional intensity.”<sup>2</sup> Of course, this is to say that the poem’s value lies in its effect on the readers, or the “elevating excitement.”<sup>3</sup> Here, Regan acknowledges Poe’s theory described in “The Philosophy of Composition,” where form is said to be intended for the ultimate *effect*, and seems to be completely separate from the plot or the actual meaning of the word (such as his choice of “Nevermore” or “Pallas”). Allen Tate is thus convinced of Poe’s claim, explaining that “[h]is purpose in laying on the thick décor was to stimulate sensation,”<sup>4</sup> which of course is supported further by Poe himself in “The Philosophy of Composition,” “[t]he room is represented as richly furnished – this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.” (107) The readers’ experience of Beauty (or true poetry), then, in other words, the ultimate effect, is the purpose of the choices regarding the poem’s content.

However, it may be perplexing to some to be acquainted with various plausible interpretations of Poe’s works where “The Raven” is said to contain metaphors and symbols, and in turn to be faced with such discrepancy present in “The Philosophy of Composition,” which,

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Regan, *Poe, a Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Regan (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967) 5.

<sup>3</sup> Regan 5.

<sup>4</sup> Regan 48.

apart from the raven being a symbolic figure, seems, at first, to deny interpretation. Poe's reasoning in the essay, however, seems to explain this problem; he claims the poem *does* contain meaning – an “under current.” (109) This way, he does not necessarily *refuse* underlying meaning, but still obviously insists on its subtlety, “[t]wo things are invariably required – first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness – some under current, however indefinite of meaning.” (109) Again, this seems to be aimed at the readers' imaginative activity and shows the essay's emphasis on form. It is evident that, primarily, the poem heavily relies on sound, for the rhyme scheme is precise and unwavering, which may be a manifestation of Poe's theory of repetition causing pleasure; “[t]he pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity – of repetition.” (104) Hence, to an extent, the form is the poet's means of conveying the content – it is by the *effects* of formalistic aspects, be it repetition, sonorousness, or rhythm, that the content's purpose is fully achieved, and sometimes even determined. Such a theoretical doctrine seems to be in accord with the emphasis on structure regarding metaphors and symbols, as has been discussed in the previous chapter. It is finally established that the primary focus of the ideology behind “The Philosophy of Composition” is mathematics – as evidenced by the repetition, permutations, well-timed rhythm and a pattern-like structure of the stanzas. Procházka describes this in connection with the psychological aspect, “Poe carried his psychologism and his powerful style subjugating the reader's emotions and mind to perfection in his ‘mathematics of horror’.”<sup>5</sup>

As regards the thematic content, Poe emphasizes the realism of the poem in the essay, as may be clearly seen in “[s]o far, everything is within the limits of the accountable – of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word ‘Nevermore,’ and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm [...]” (108, 109) Even though it rather seems to be Poe's justification of the plausibility of the plot and, at first, a denial of a figurative potential of the content of the poem, it brings forth another dimension to the understanding of reality. Due to the undeniable heavy symbolic qualities of the raven and other elements in the poem, it may also be read as a hallucination of the narrator which only *seems* to be real or follows plausible patterns of reality or the development of reality – and may also serve the purpose of engaging the reader more actively. When speaking strictly logically, based on the text, ties can be made between his claim and the events of the poem – the raven does seem to be

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Procházka et al., *Lectures on American Literature* (Praha: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2007) 67.

hiding from the storm, or at least, it is plausible that it would. Hence, the levels of reality explored by Poe may be the empirical reality (that reality supposedly perceived by the narrator, and so an element of subjectivity is introduced), or the level of plausibility when empirical reality is merged with reason and the ideology of mathematics present in the essay. Further, however, absolute fiction or hallucination is possible, for the ultimate under-current of meaning is the psychological sphere, also reminiscent of short stories like “Ligeia.” The symbolic understanding of reality, then, is brought forth, serving the purpose of unifying these possible realities, as well as the artist and the reader.

Apart from this notion of reality, however, one may further focus on what seems to be Poe’s literary theory permeating through “The Philosophy of Composition,” namely, his ideology regarding the poetic tone and his understanding of Beauty. Poe’s judgment of the philosophy of Beauty and his consequent sensibility regarding the poetic tone do, undeniably, show a level of intuition, or at least do not, at all, profess any mathematical precision as suggested in “The Philosophy of Composition,” and supported above. As he states in the essay, “all experience has shown that this tone [of Beauty’s highest manifestation] is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.” (104) This seems to reflect a certain level of artistic sensitivity. In this regard, Poe’s doctrine may certainly be traced in his works, especially “The Raven” and “Ligeia.” Examples include “sorrow for the lost Lenore,”<sup>6</sup> “[l]eave my loneliness unbroken”<sup>7</sup> in “The Raven” and “[s]he died: and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow”<sup>8</sup> in “Ligeia.” The proposed notion of a poetic content or plot is that “the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world.” (103, 104) This may also be seen in the analyzed works. This is true especially for “Ligeia” and “The Fall of the House of Usher,” where a woman actually dies, and it may be said that such a notion is present in “The Raven” as well, even though there is no explicit death, only the looming knowledge of it. These examples would suggest that Poe’s theories are well-portrayed in his texts, as well as support the sincerity of such critical essays, at least to this extent.

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<sup>6</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems* (Ljubljana: Mladinska Knjiga, 1966) 846.

<sup>7</sup> Poe 848.

<sup>8</sup> Poe 595.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the effect which has been mentioned in the section on the formal aspect also brings to light another focus – the state of mind, in the sense that the effect the language has on the reader’s mind is important, therefore their evoked states of mind are important, and seem to be Poe’s priorities. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, Poe’s use of language evokes fear, mystification, surprise, melancholy and sadness (which may possibly be linked to the experience of true poetic feeling, according to Poe). Poe usually most often manifests this by using the environment and surroundings, such as nature or buildings, as well as the weather – and sometimes by the use of pathetic fallacy, as Maurice Beebe mentions, “[t]he storm outside the window reflects the storm within Roderick’s mind.”<sup>9</sup>

Finally, “The Philosophy of Composition” shows another true correlation with Poe’s works, which is the circumscription or enclosure of space. The true reasons for this technique may be different from his explanation in “The Philosophy of Composition,” but the link remains. Poe’s setting is almost always detached, which again supports the interpretation that it is somehow representative of the mind or the psychological world. An exception in the relevant selection of works may be “William Wilson,” where the setting is more accurately specified and is placed within the context of the real world (for example, “at Vienna, too – at Berlin – and at Moscow!” or “my admonisher at Eton – in the destroyer of my honor at Oxford, - in him who thwarted my ambition at Rome, my revenge at Paris, my passionate love at Naples, or what he falsely termed my avarice in Egypt [...]”<sup>10</sup>). However, this may be due to the autobiographical tendencies of this particular short story (suggested by Scott Peeples, “ ‘William Wilson’ contains more autobiographical references than any other tale by Poe, including the birthday shared by Poe and Wilson [...]”<sup>11</sup>), and Poe’s way of representing space by enclosure is seen at other points within the story, such as the interior of the school, as in “a high solid brick wall, topped with a bed of mortar and broken glass, encompassed the whole. This prison-like rampart formed the limit of our domain.”<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, “Eureka” is a complex piece of writing (which Poe wishes to be considered a poem, even though it is written in prose), dealing with metaphysics and the

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<sup>9</sup> Regan 124.

<sup>10</sup> Poe 576.

<sup>11</sup> *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 179.

<sup>12</sup> Poe 565.

philosophy of the creation of the Universe. More specifically, as opposed to “The Philosophy of Composition” where the primary structural pattern is mathematics, “Eureka” again seems to remind one of an exact science – physics. This is suggestive of Poe’s tendency to approach poetry as a scientific discipline, as Procházka explains, “[t]he final impression the work of art makes [...], but also its other aesthetic qualities [...] result from analytical and purposeful use of artistic procedures. [...] In this way, the poetic principle becomes an alternative to ‘science’ [...]”<sup>13</sup> The primary theory described throughout the essay is the contraction and the expansion of the Universe, in the pattern moving all particles towards absolute unity before the consequent disintegration, as Poe puts it, “with a thousand-fold electric velocity, commensurate only with their material grandeur and with the spiritual passion of their appetite for oneness, the majestic remnants of the tribe of Stars flash, at length, into a common embrace. The inevitable catastrophe is at hand.”<sup>14</sup> As with “The Philosophy of Composition,” one may find various connections to his writing – for example, his highly emphasized notion of Unity. Formally speaking, several of his stories, but mainly “The Fall of the House of Usher,” function as a unified whole, which may also be found in “The Raven,” a very formally unified piece of writing (already the stanzaic structure with the unifying repetitive “Nevermore” show this). Maurice Beebe explains the Unity present in “The Fall of the House of Usher,” stating that it “is a nearly perfect illustration of Poe’s theory of totality. That there are no collateral lines of the Usher family, [...] that there is a barely perceptible crack running from roof to base of the house [...] contribute to the single effect [...] and play a part in the final catastrophe.”<sup>15</sup> Unity is most probably the most prominent aspect of the essay and there are numerous examples of it. As it is claimed by Poe, “the stellar bodies would finally be merged into one,”<sup>16</sup> and “all matter is, as I suggest, now returning to its original Unity.”<sup>17</sup>

The theme of doubling discussed in the previous chapter may also be incorporated into this analysis; it is debatable as to what should be perceived as doubling in the sense of splitting, and what as unifying. For example, William Wilson and his *alter ego* are treated as separate entities, as “two” parts of one mind. However, the fact that they are essentially “one” William Wilson is a unifying element. It is difficult to establish whether in the act of killing his

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<sup>13</sup> Procházka et al. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Eureka*, ed. Stuart Levine and Susan F. Levine (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004) 100.

<sup>15</sup> Regan 123.

<sup>16</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 96.

<sup>17</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 93.

conscience, William Wilson unifies with any part of his mind. It seems that it is not a true example of unification, but rather, becoming “one,” proposed in the previous chapter as possibly symbolizing the mystery and ambiguity of one’s individuality. The disruptive element here is that in becoming “one,” William Wilson does not become “complete” – on the contrary, he becomes depraved and incomplete. This, perhaps, is Poe’s demonstration of the dissolution of the Universe – the opposite of what things should be like (or, of order), the opposite of his view of the Universe. In “The Fall of the House of Usher,” this theme is visible in the Roderick-and-Madeline dynamic, where two individual twins are so inseparable that they must die simultaneously. This act of simultaneous death is a unifying principle. As Allen Tate states, “[the twins’] very birth had violated their unity of being. They must achieve spiritual identity in mutual destruction. [...] central dramatic situation, which moves towards spiritual unity through disintegration.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the relationship between the narrator and the Usher twins may be considered unifying, for, if the twins are to be taken as parts of the narrator’s mind, then the act of the narrator visiting them is, in fact, a person’s mind reuniting itself with its other parts. Here, too, is a disruptive element; following the unification of Roderick and Madeline (the unification in death), the house collapses. The *fall* of the house is by no means a unifying element. However, it may serve the purpose of further demonstrating Poe’s principles. His theories regarding the Universe are not purely unity-oriented. The process of unification is alternated with the process of radiation of particles – in other words, a mass disintegration of atoms. Once Roderick and Madeline unify, the house itself must be disintegrated. Poe explains this in “Eureka,” “the ‘state of progressive collapse’ is precisely that state in which alone we are warranted in considering All Things; [...]” and “ ‘The tendency to collapse’ and ‘the attraction of gravitation’ are convertible phrases.”<sup>19</sup>

Another ideology which may be researched in the works is the gradual loss of individual identity and the tendency towards a collective consciousness. In “Eureka,” Poe explains this rather towards the end, “[t]hink that the sense of individual identity will be gradually merged in the general consciousness.”<sup>20</sup> This may mean that the stories are to be understood universally, rather than taken at face value for what they seem to be about on the surface, and supports the

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<sup>18</sup> Regan 45.

<sup>19</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 95.

<sup>20</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 106.

idea that the characters are, in fact, metaphorical – not real individuals, but representative of the states of mind occurring in all human minds.

Lastly, an issue Poe mentions in “Eureka” is that “the Body and the Soul walk hand in hand,”<sup>21</sup> further emphasized in “[h]ere, then, as everywhere, the Body and the Soul walk hand in hand.”<sup>22</sup> This, of course, may have several implications. For example, it supports the interpretation that the house is also a “body” for the “mind” or the “soul” dwelling inside – as explicitly suggested by the “Haunted Palace” poem integrated into “The Fall of the House of Usher.” In other words, it supports the allegorical or metaphorical reading of the text. Furthermore, it emphasizes the presence of the soul in the human being. As Davidson explains, “[Madeline] returns from the coffin and in one convulsive motion brings her brother to his death: the body and the mind thus die together.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Davidson also mentions William Wilson, stating that Wilson “must destroy an essential part of himself, his soul or spirit.”<sup>24</sup> This may be expanded in the sense that, because of Poe’s theory of the Body and the Soul being inherently inseparable, destroying one may necessarily denote destroying the other. In this case, the alter ego’s words, “[i]n me didst thou exist – and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself,”<sup>25</sup> are meaningful and coherent, but Davidson’s notion that the death is necessary for Wilson’s survival is less valid (the act of killing his alter ego is depicted as destructive rather than beneficial).

Both essays may be analyzed individually, in terms of Poe’s writing, as has been done here, and connections are found; evidence of Poe’s theoretical doctrine is seen applied to actual texts. Nevertheless, it is necessary, in order to understand the true dynamic of these two essays, to focus on the development of Poe’s literary thought by, generally speaking, juxtaposing and comparing them critically, whence “Eureka” has been written much later and at the very end of his life. The general development, then, may be said to be from the pattern of mathematics to physics, as the essays reveal. It is not only the form of his works that is molded into the structural framework of these sciences, but also the symbolic and expressive attributes. In “The Philosophy of Composition,” Poe is deconstructing the process of creating “The Raven,” and evidently

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<sup>21</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 54.

<sup>22</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 63.

<sup>23</sup> Edward H. Davidson, *Poe, a Critical Study* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957) 198.

<sup>24</sup> Davidson 199.

<sup>25</sup> Poe 578.

focuses on structural elements, as has been discussed; sonorousness, repetition, rhythm – in connection with the various effects of these elements on the symbolic value and the expressiveness, as regards the reader. The scope of “The Philosophy of Composition,” then, goes beyond simple formalistic structure, by taking into account the effects that touch upon the imagination of the readers, by acknowledging the poetic tone and the true poetical thesis. However, by including symbolism in his description of creation, he does not digress from the sphere of mathematics by a significant amount, and introducing “Eureka” seems to be a fundamental act in his literary theory. Using physics as his structural framework allowed him to include many more levels of artistic creation than one of mathematics did; the element of imagination and the workings of an artist’s mind. The Universe in “Eureka” is compared to the artwork, the notion of the contraction and expansion of the Universe being equivalent to the abovementioned poetic imagination, as may be seen in “a principle was discovered sufficient to account, physically, for that final, universal agglomeration which, I repeat, the analogical, symmetrical or poetical instinct of Man had predetermined to understand as something more than a simple hypothesis,”<sup>26</sup> or “let us say, rather, in indulging a hope – that the processes we have here ventured to contemplate will be renewed forever, and forever, and forever; a novel Universe swelling into existence, and then subsiding into nothingness, at every throb of the Heart Divine?”<sup>27</sup> Procházka explains this theory of imagination, stating that:

[the collapse of the universe and the return to the original particle] of course means annihilation, but the end is already predetermined in the beginning. Because of this, Poe calls the universe ‘God’s plot’, and compares its pulsation with the process of artistic creation which repeats, according to Coleridge’s *Biographia Litteraria* (1817), divine creation in the finite limits of the work of art.<sup>28</sup>

It finally seems to be evident that “Eureka” is an essay where Poe largely elaborates on his formalistic approach of “The Philosophy of Composition” and includes the mathematical level, as well as the abstract artistic imagination, “I design to speak of the Physical, Metaphysical and Mathematical – of the Material and Spiritual.”<sup>29</sup> Such tendencies to include that necessary part of artistic creation may be noticed in “The Philosophy of Composition” in Poe’s explanation of the poetic tone and the phenomena of Sadness and Beauty, but it is evident that the realm of

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<sup>26</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 97.

<sup>27</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 103.

<sup>28</sup> Procházka et al. 73.

<sup>29</sup> Poe, *Eureka* 7.

mathematics does not offer the optimal framework. The essay's title "Eureka" may signify the epiphany that it is not mathematics, but physics, which can accommodate this metaphysical element regarding the true creation of art.

Despite the possibility of their lack of authenticity, the two critical essays have been shown to provide an enlightening perspective on the analyzed works, all the more so because the same writer has composed them. They both reveal illuminating literary theories that often are evidently present in the short stories and "The Raven," and offer new interpretations and explanations based on Poe's literary views regarding his works' formal aspect, as well as content. Greater understanding of Poe's works may be achieved by becoming acquainted with the higher structural framework that seems to be behind and beyond Poe's short stories and poems – the mold according to which the works are created, the underlying foundation upon which, it seems, Poe built them. Comprehending Poe's deeper philosophical and literary theories furthermore aids one to more accurately interpret and appreciate the metaphorical and symbolical aspects so frequently and skillfully used throughout his works.

## 5. Conclusion

Although Poe is one of the most well-known writers, he is not often explored in terms of literary theory, despite his rich use of metaphors and symbols. The importance of these devices is not only figurative, and thus, in Poe, obviously connected to psychological elements, but also structural, serving the purpose of unifying the piece of writing with a higher framework of literary theory. Upon first reading, Poe's work may seem to be nothing more than a horror story, but it has been shown that, rather, it involves a complex structure of precisely calculated language, images and figures that are focused on a single effect. In poetry, that ultimate effect would be one of experiencing Beauty – by various means that, to many readers, may remind of horror. Poe's short stories function similarly, but often times, they tend to be even deeper in terms of structure, especially one that involves the plot and the figures. A primary short story of that sort is "The Fall of the House of Usher," where the problems and issues regarding allegory and, connected with it, the idea of unity, doubling and splitting, and ultimately, the sphere of psychological implications, is so complex that, when explored, reminds one of a self-enclosed Universe (or some such existence). This, in turn, shifts focus to the theoretical works of Poe, especially "Eureka," where such a phenomenon is, indeed, the essence of artistic creation.

Analyzing Poe is a unique opportunity, because everything seems to be, as explained above, inter-connected, and discussing the topic of metaphors and symbols provides as much insight into the works themselves as into the theoretical essays. It has been shown in this thesis that metaphors and symbols themselves are vast subject areas which may be approached from many perspectives – but are, above all, deeply connected to communication, the human mind, understanding and imagination, as regards the use of language. Psychology, then, is one of the primary concerns. Poe, as has been discussed, uses metaphors and symbols to increase the depth of his work – it allows for the use of contrasts, usually those connected to the mind, such as reason and non-reason, and the exploration of the psyche, especially by the use of metaphors and allegories. It has been established that Poe's frequent allegories are those of the mind, mainly represented by buildings and their interiors, but a certain amount of increased depth is added by the Poesque elements of doubling and splitting, denoting the complexities of his works.

“The Fall of the House of Usher” has been explored to the greatest extent, for the Roderick-Madeline and Roderick-narrator dynamic is especially potent. The allegory of the mind may be discussed as regards the house, as well as the characters and, of course, the rooms, and even the plot has been deconstructed with the allegory taken into account. The theme of doubling and splitting is richly portrayed, due to precise details, such as the tarn, the fissure on the house, the term of “House of Usher” and, especially, the role of the narrator, Roderick and Madeline in the context of the story. It has been discussed that there is a significant split of the psyche, and Poe skillfully depicts this by metaphors, such as the fissure, as well as by the differences between Roderick and Madeline, who may represent reason and passion, or perhaps the conscious or subconscious mind. There has been noticed a level of ambiguity as regards metaphors and symbols, as several images are closely tied to symbolism, and the complexity of several metaphors and the structure of the short story also endow the story with a strong symbolic layer. Moreover, with consideration of “Eureka,” the plot is especially intriguing, for the dilapidation of the house following the dying embrace of Roderick and Madeline becomes significant also on a theoretical level, functioning in accordance with Poe’s notion of the workings of the Universe and human imagination: the constant process of unification and disintegration, or the contraction and expansion of matter.

Logically following this story, “Ligeia” and “William Wilson” have been explored, for they share the primarily allegorical reading of “The Fall of the House of Usher,” as well as the heavily incorporated theme of doubling. They also greatly involve the psyche – aspects such as obsession in “Ligeia” and the conscience in “William Wilson” play an important role and show, to a great extent, Poe’s interest in the topic of psychology. The theme of doubling has been explored more deeply, revealing differing approaches: Ligeia’s and Rowena’s doubled, but mutually exclusive, existence in one body due to the power of suggestion of an infatuated and obsessed mind, revealing a more allegorical depiction, as opposed to the abstract doubled existence of two parts of a single mind which carries with it a symbolical interpretation based on the connoted idea of the mystery of one’s individuality. “The Raven” has been analyzed last due to its versed form, as well as its slightly different reading; it has been explored and established that due to the symbolical ambivalence of the raven, the poem cannot be read allegorically. Furthermore, its rich contrasts and psychological layers (such as longing and self-torment), especially achieved by symbols, have been discussed.

Lastly, Poe's theoretical pieces have been acknowledged, and connections have been made between them and his works – for example, elements such as the topic and understanding of Beauty, the emphasis on form and the formalistic scheme and the subsequent portrayal of metaphors and symbols, as well as the focus on unity and the depiction of Body and Soul through the metaphor. Finally, a comparison of the two critical essays has been attempted to trace the development of Poe's critical theory, and it may be surmised that sciences are the major frameworks underlying the structure of his works – mathematics and physics, specifically. Mathematics is especially evident in "The Raven" and the process of creation according to this doctrine is analyzed in Poe's "Philosophy of Composition." "Eureka," on the other hand, discusses a wider range of artistic creation, using the scientific study of physics, to involve not only accuracy, but also imagination. It may be seen through this thesis that the scheme of Poe's work is buried in complex and intriguing ideologies, and the structure and purpose of his works is more meticulous and deliberately calculated than may at first seem apparent. Critically speaking, it is a path from formalism to a theory encompassing that which formed the main topic of his works; the human mind.

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## Summary

Tato bakalářská práce pojednává o tvorbě Edgara Allana Poea, jednoho z nejznámějších spisovatelů amerického romantismu. Cílem je průzkum jeho užití metafory a symbolu v souvislosti s duševními stavy, tedy způsoby Poeova zobrazení duševních stavů jako jsou rozum, cit, touha, strach a hrůza, šílenství nebo posedlost. Práce zároveň zkoumá Poeovu tvorbu v rámci literární teorie týkající se jak metafory a symbolu, tak Poeovy vlastní teoretické doktríny. Metaforika a symbolika jsou významné rysy Poeovy tvorby a vztahují se k mnohým dalším prvkům jeho děl. Bakalářská práce rozebírá toto obsáhlé téma – zaměřuje se zejména na jeho souvislosti s tématem psychologie (metafory a symboly představující či vyvolávající různé duševní stavy) a analyzuje úlohy těchto figur v kontextu aktuálních textů.

Práce se člení na tři části; první kapitola pojednává o literárních teoriích týkajících se metafory a symbolu. Jde o seznámení se s definicemi a o bližší popis těchto figur, např. pojetí symbolu a jeho hlavní rysy (tj. inherence vyvolané představy nebo abstraktno představováno něčím hmatatelným). Část této kapitoly je také věnována psychoanalytické literární teorii, tedy vztahům metaforiky a symboliky k podvědomí a nevědomí čtenářů. Diskuse zahrnuje i pojetí reality v rámci literární tvorby, což je vhodné téma k problematice metaforiky a symboliky, kdy se hranice mezi realitou a fantazií stávají nejasnými.

Následující kapitola se zaměřuje na Poeovy texty, tedy na povídky *Zánik domu Usherů*, *Ligeia* a *William Wilson* a známou báseň *Havran*. Jejich analýza se vztahuje k případům metafory a symbolu, tedy k figurám, které Poe hojně využívá a které proto často plní důležité úlohy v rámci díla. Hlavním cílem rozboru je zjistit základní rozdíly v implementaci těchto figur ve vybraných dílech, např. rozsah výskytu metafory a možnost alegorické interpretace a dále rozbor symboliky a její vliv na eventuální alegorickou interpretaci díla. Součástí této analýzy je také poeovský prvek dvojnictví, který se v různých formách objevuje ve všech povídkách zkoumaných v této bakalářské práci.

Jako první je zkoumána povídka *Zánik domu Usherů*, kde je zjištěna komplexní struktura jak povídky samotné, tak metafory a symbolu. Nejexplicitnější alegorie je samozřejmě vložená báseň *Strašidelný zámek*, kde je palác vnímán jako lidská hlava (např. okna jsou oči, dveře jsou

ústa apod.). Hlavním záměrem této alegorie je nastínění celkového smyslu povídky, protože ten je v básni zdůrazněn explicitností alegorie. Je zde alegoricky popsán rozdíl mezi rozumem a šílenstvím, čehož Poe dosahuje popisem nejprve jasných oken, rudých dveří a celkového vnitřního klidu tohoto paláce a náhlou proměnou v naopak rudá okna (oči) a vnitřní chaos. Tato báseň navíc symbolizuje šílenství Rodericka Ushera, neboť on je jejím autorem. Poe podobně užívá Roderickovy malířské a hudební tvorby, která je kvůli své iracionalitě a nepředstavitelnosti podivná až hrůzostrašná. Tyto detaily nastiňují konečný vývoj povídky, kdy Roderick zešílí. Komplexita povídky zde ovšem nekončí. Podobně jako v Roderickově básni, i skutečný dům Usherů připomíná lidskou hlavu (opět je užita analogie okna a oka). Tentokrát popis přesněji odkazuje na Rodericka Ushera zejména užitím metafory, která označuje plíseň na domě jako pavučinu (nebo obdobnou síť) a současným tvrzením, že Roderickovy vlasy strukturou také připomínají síť nebo jinou takto strukturovanou tkáň.

Vzhledem k tomu, že dům je srovnáván s vnější podobou hlavy, byl v tomto světle zkoumán také interiér. Uvnitř domu se nacházejí temná zákoutí, jejichž popisy odpovídají vnitřku mysli. Nejzajímavější ovšem jsou postavy, tedy Roderick a Madeline Usherovi. Protože je jejich významová funkce velice důležitá, je vhodné určit, jakým způsobem je má čtenář interpretovat. Jelikož se nacházejí uvnitř metaforické mysli, je pravděpodobné, že představují rozštěpené části psychiky. Analyzované možnosti rozštěpení jsou např. rozum a cit, kdy Roderick představuje spíše rozum (a tedy i jeho krizi, nastíněnou ve vložené básni a na konci samotné povídky) a Madeline cit, představený zejména zvýšeným výskytem vášně v její přítomnosti (např. Roderickův pláč nastupující po jejím průchodu místností). V tomto případě povídka implikuje, že hrdinovo šílenství je způsobeno potlačením citové stránky jeho psychiky. Další možná interpretace je, že Madeline má představovat podvědomí, jelikož se objevuje spíše v temnějších a méně navštěvovaných částech domu a kvůli jejímu vzácnému výskytu vůbec. Roderick by v tomto případě byl spíše alegorií vědomí, protože on jedná s externím prvkem – vypravěčem. Spojena s tímto pojetím alegorie je interpretace, že Poe odkazuje na Freudovo rozdělení psychiky na *id*, *ego* a *superego*. Umožňovalo by to alegorizovat také vypravěče, který by představoval *superego*, Roderick *ego* a Madeline *id*. V tomto ohledu je významné pohřbení Madeline, které provedl sám Roderick, což implikuje vědomí potlačující podvědomí. Nicméně, důležité je zejména toto alegorické rozštěpení lidské psychiky, prokazující Poeovy literární schopnosti v souvislosti se zobrazením psychologických prvků.

V rámci této povídky je také důležité téma dvojnicství. Roderick a Madeline jsou dvojčata, ale to není jediný případ dvojnicství; Roderick a dům jsou stejně tak zdvojeni, podobně jako význam fráze „House of Usher“ (tj. rodokmen Usherů a zároveň jejich skutečný dům). Dále je dům zdvojen svým odrazem v jezírku a rozdělen na dvě části díky prasklině. Toto může odkazovat na konflikt psychiky odehrávající se uvnitř domu (tj. hlavy), ale rodokmen Usherů je zároveň degenerovaný kvůli nerozvětveným generacím, což symbolizuje spíše pád struktury a řádu. K tomu také dochází na konci povídky, kdy se skutečný dům rozpadá. Je tedy zjištěno, že tato povídka má i důležitý symbolický podtext, poukazující na její komplexitu a mnohvrstevnost jak významovou, tak v rámci literární teorie.

*Ligeia* následuje po *Zániku domu Usherů* hlavně protože rovněž obsahuje motiv dvojnicství, který se zde aktualizuje také zejména na konci, podobně jako v *Zániku domu Usherů*, kde Madeline a Roderick umírají ve sjednocení (smrt nastupuje po jejich vzájemném objetí). V *Ligeii* je toto obdobné; tělo mrtvé Roweny, která je pravým opakem Ligeii (např. Rowena je blondýnka, Ligeia tmavovláska), se postupně mění ve zjevení Ligeii. Toto postupné přetělování je důkazem dvojnicství Roweny a Ligeii a zároveň poukazuje na alegorické pojetí těchto žen; jev má totiž představovat vypravěčův duševní stav posedlosti a zjevení Ligeii (a možná i její celkovou existenci) lze chápat obrazně. Zjevení Ligeii, je-li pouze obrazné, poukazuje na vypravěčovu schopnost vsugerovat si tuto představu důsledkem své posedlosti touto ženou. Ovšem, má-li Ligeia být chápána obrazně v celé povídce, je možné vysvětlit si její postavu nejen jako alegorii posedlosti, ale také jako alegorii iracionální touhy po dokonalosti (Ligeia je totiž vypravěčova představa absolutní bezchybnosti – je jeho ideálem krásy).

Poslední zkoumaná povídka je *William Wilson*, která obsahuje zvláštní typ dvojnicství, jež explicitně odkazuje na téma psychologie; hrdina je totiž zdvojen ve svém *alter ego*, které je nejprve chápáno jako druhý člověk s vlastnostmi podivně shodnými s hrdinovými, ale během vývoje povídky a zejména na konci je odhaleno, že druhý William Wilson je součástí psychiky prvního, nýbrž svědomí. Po tohoto odhalení dosahuje konečným duelem obou Williamů, kdy se William Wilson po smrti *alter ega* vidí v zrcadle se zabodnutým nožem – je tedy jasné, že se jedná o sebevraždu. Obraznost je zde opět významná, jelikož právě díky obraznosti postav (nebo pouze *alter ega*) se nemusí jednat o skutečnou sebevraždu, ale o sebevraždu morální, protože William Wilson tímto zabil své svědomí. Obě postavy zde mohou fungovat jako alegorie částí psychiky, kdy skutečný William Wilson je alegorií freudovského *id*, poněvadž jeho způsob

myšlení a činy vypovídají o absenci svědomí a touze činit zlo nebo reagovat na pohnutky podvědomí. Druhý William Wilson by tedy představoval *superego*, které má korigovat lidské podvědomí díky vlivům společnosti a morálce. Významná je tedy konečná sebevražda, kdy *id* vítězí nad *superegem*. Způsob implementace této alegorie je v povídce ovšem zvláštní podstata samotné sebevraždy (William Wilson který *se* zabil, když se zbavil svého svědomí) a vykazuje o jisté míře symboliky: nýbrž o tajemství, komplexitě a hloubce lidské osobnosti. Alegorický výklad této povídky tedy není zcela jednoznačný.

Báseň *Havran* v rámci této bakalářské práce slouží hlavně k porovnání s povídkami a kritickým esejem *Filosofie básnické skladby*, který na tuto báseň odkazuje. Přestože obsahuje metaforická zobrazení (např. havranovo klování hrdinova srdce, reprezentující spíše destruktivnost nostalgických vzpomínek a nesnesitelné touhy po zesnulé Lenore), báseň s sebou také nese silně ambivalentní symboliku. Havran je symbolem zla (považuje se za zlé znamení) a absence rozumu. Poe tohoto dosahuje užitím kontrastů, např. umístěním havrana na bustu bohyně Pallas (Athéna), která je naopak symbolem moudrosti. Další kontrast je zbarvení této busty v porovnání s havranem, tedy bílá a černá barva, opět symbolizující dobro a zlo. Poe tímto sduzuje pojetí rozumu s bílou barvou a dobrem a naopak havrana černé barvy s absencí rozumu a zlem. Na druhou stranu, zobrazení havrana také vyvolává mýtus Prométhea důsledkem jeho metaforického klování hrdinova srdce. Havran je dále asociován s proroctvím, jelikož jej takto hrdina vnímá. Toto proroctví sice může být zlé, ale hrdinovy nekonečné otázky, přestože zná havranovu neměnnou odpověď „již nikdy více,“ zároveň implikují citové sebetýrání. Abstraktnost havrana tedy může být vysoká, jelikož celý rozhovor s ním může být pouze výplod hrdinovy fantazie a důsledek duševního stavu vyvolaného smrtí Lenore. Ambivalentní symbolika ovšem znemožňuje alegorické pojetí havrana a spíše odvrací čtenářovu pozornost k formální stránce básně a temnému světu podvědomí. Důraz na formální stránku je silný, protože Poe používá přesné metrum a neochvějný rým, připomínající zařkávání. Užitím této metody básnické skladby vytváří jednotný, mnohvrstevný celek a jistou harmonii.

Poslední kapitola pojednává o Poeově literární teorii nastíněné v jeho kritických esejích *Filosofie básnické skladby* a *Euréka*. Interpretace vychází z rozborů v předchozí kapitole a porovnává Poeovy teorie s jeho díly, tj. zjišťuje, do jaké míry Poeova díla odpovídají jeho teoretickým názorům. Následovně se oba eseje porovnávají a tímto se posuzuje Poeův vývoj v rámci literární teorie. Ve *Filosofii básnické skladby* je zřetelný důraz na formální aspekty

básnické tvorby, připomínající matematiku. Podle Poea je téměř každá část skladby básně, např. výběr slov, odůvodněna formálně (tedy z hlediska zvuku, délky nebo přízvuku slova nebo některých jeho slabik). Kvůli těmto radikálně formalistickým názorům však mnoho kritiků tento esej vnímá jako ne zcela pravdivé zobrazení Poeovy filozofie; toto je ovšem obtížné zjistit či dokázat. Eсей nicméně není čistě formalistický, jak by se na první pohled mohlo zdát, jelikož Poe vychází také z důležitých tematických rysů – smutku spojeného se smrtí krásné ženy. Jeho matematický strukturní rámec ani nevynechává význam básně; ten má být vždy přítomen jako podtext, ať už se jedná o explicitní nebo skrytý význam.

Eсей *Euréka*, který Poe napsal těsně před svou smrtí, pojednává o metafyzice a stvoření Vesmíru a zároveň nastiňuje některé jeho názory na osobnost, existenci duše a básnické imaginace, srovnávané s nekonečným fyzikálním procesem Vesmíru, tj. rozpínáním a smršťováním hmoty. Důraz je kladen na pojetí jednoty a na proces nekonečného nutkání hmoty splynout v jedno, než se hmota opět roztrhne na mnoho částic. Mnohé v tomto eseji se vztahuje k rysům např. *Zániku domu Usherů*, kde se smrt Rodericka a Madeline a současný rozpad domu tímto stávají významnými. Po jejich splnutí objetím následuje jejich smrt a zánik domu, tedy roztrhnutí této jednoty – stejně tak, jako je roztrhnutá hmota popsána v *Euréce*. Dále se v eseji objevuje prvek hmatatelného těla a abstraktní duše, což je jedno z hlavních témat Poeovy tvorby – např. mnohé alegorie psychiky poukazující na přítomnost abstraktní části lidské existence a její splnutí s fyzickým tělem. Tato myšlenka se zároveň vztahuje k fungování básnické imaginace, které Poe tolik nerozebíral v předchozím eseji *Filosofie básnické skladby*, ale které se jeví jako nezbytné v rámci doktríny umělecké tvorby. Je důležité si povšimnout, že v obou esejích Poe používá vyšší strukturní rámec exaktních věd k vysvětlení metody umělecké tvorby, ale vzhledem k potřebě zahrnout i procesy imaginace je rámec fyziky vhodnější než matematický. Lze tedy říci, že v *Euréce* se tímto snaží překonat formalistický rámec své předchozí teorie.

Bakalářská práce celkově analyzuje Poeovu tvorbu se zaměřením na metaforu a symbol a jejich důsledky na zobrazení duševních stavů, v souvislosti s Poeovými teoretickými názory i s moderními a současnými přístupy k problematice metafory a symbolu. Výběr jednotlivých děl umožnil široký náhled do Poeovy tvorby, jelikož zahrnuje jak povídky, tedy prózu, tak poezii a kritický esej. V rámci Poeových děl byl mezi metaforou a symbolem zjištěn složitý vztah, který tyto figury může činit navzájem se vylučujícími nebo naopak doplňujícími se, což má za výsledek komplexní strukturu díla a jeho významu.