



Infatuated with Death; Emily Dickinson and Fadwa Tuqan: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Objectives: This study conducts a comparative parallel study of the poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan to highlight the interconnectedness of the human experiences in receiving the grand human experience of death, which emerges as a common element despite their differing temporal and spatial contexts. Their poems on death reveal their profound thoughts and perspectives as death permeates into their poems in exceptional and distinctive ways; as a result of the two poets adopting Romanticism as their philosophical framework. Consequently, this study highlights the substantial impact of Romanticism on the development and spread of Comparative Literature.

Methods: The study relies on Comparative Literature as its methodology, exploring the historical origins of this field. Initially, Comparative Literature had a Eurocentric focus with racial undertones, but eventually evolved to encompass literature from all nations. The study deals in particular with the topic of “death” in the poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan, as it permeates a significant portion of their poetry, by conducting a parallel comparative analytical study to elucidate and manifest the two poets’ perspectives on the subject of “death”. Additionally, it examines similarities and differences in their views, occasionally drawing from important shared life experiences that profoundly influenced their fascination with death and its prominent presence in their poetry.

Results: The death poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan establishes an ideological connection; emphasizing the unity of the human experience despite the differences in temporal, and spatial contexts, as well cultural and referential frameworks. In their poetry, Death has appeared as an authoritative dictator, a source of wisdom and a shaper of their unique perspectives on love. For Dickinson, love is intertwined with death, while for Tuqan, it represents an escape from it. This is a result of both poets being influenced by aspects of the Romantic movement, thereby contributing to the development of comparative studies.

Conclusions: Comparative Literature provides a platform that honors literature among nations, enabling its notable dissemination and exchange. Notably, the poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan brings them together through their exploration of death, compelling us to acknowledge and appreciate the shared nature of their most profound human experience and their appreciation of it.

Keywords: Death, Tuqan, Dickinson, Comparative Literature, Romanticism.

المفتونتان بالموت؛ إيميلي ديكينسون وفدوى طوقان: دراسة مقارنة

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ملخص

الأهداف: تجري هذه الدراسة مقارنة متوازية لشعر ديكينسون وطوقان؛ لبيان التقارب بين تجارب البشر في تلقي التجربة الإنسانية الكبرى (الموت) الذي يتبلور في شعرهما كعنصر مشترك. على الرغم من سياقهما الزماني والمكاني المتباينة؛ حيث تكشف قصائدهما المتعلقة بالموت عن أفكارهما العميقة ورؤاهما من خلال تغلغل الموت فيها بطرق استثنائية ومميزة؛ جراء تبني الشاعرتين الرومانسية كإطار فلسفي لهما. فتبين الدراسة تأثير الرومانسية الكبير في تطور الأدب المقارن وانتشاره.

المنهجية: تعتمد الدراسة على الأدب المقارن كمنهجية لها؛ فتستكشف الأصول التاريخية للأدب المقارن الذي كان في البداية يركز على نحو عنصري على أوروبا، ولكنه توسع فيما بعد ليشمل جميع الأمم. وتتناول الدراسة على نحو خاص موضوع “الموت” في شعر ديكينسون وطوقان، لانبساطها على مساحة شاسعة منه. من خلال إجراء دراسة تحليلية مقارنة متوازية لتوضيح وجهات نظر الشاعرتين في هذه الموضوعات وتجلياتها، والتدقيق في وجوه التقاطع والاختلاف عند كليهما، بالاستناد أحياناً إلى تفاصيل مشتركة مهمة في حياتهما كان لها أكبر الأثر في افتتاحهما بالموت، وظهوره البارز في شعرهما.

النتائج: شعر الموت لديكينسون وطوقان يؤسس لصلة أيديولوجية؛ تؤكد وحدة التجربة الإنسانية على الرغم من اختلاف الأطر الزمانية والمكانية والأسبقية الثقافية والمرجعية. لقد ظهر الموت في شعرهما كحاكم مطلق، وباعت للحكمة، ومشكل لوجهات نظرهن المميزه حول الحب الذي كان لديكينسون يترادف مع الموت، في حين أنه كان يمثل لطوقان هروباً منه. وذلك كنتيجة لتأثر الشاعرتين بمظاهر المذهب الرومانسي، ما أسهم في دفع الدراسات المقارنة إلى الأمام.

الخلاصة: الأدب المقارن هو بمثابة منصة تتركز الأدب بين الأمم، وتمكن نشره وتبادل بطرق ملحوظة. فقد جمع شعر ديكينسون وطوقان بينهما من خلال استكشافهما للموت، ما يجبرنا على الإقرار بالطبيعة المشتركة لأعمق تجربة إنسانية وتقديرها عندهما.

الكلمات الدالة: الموت، طوقان، ديكينسون، الأدب المقارن، الرومانسية



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1. Introduction

Comparing Dickinson and Tuqan, two eminent writers, is akin to comparing the moon and stars. Both celestial bodies are essential, complete, and valuable. The act of comparison entails an intellectual pursuit that uncovers the differences, similarities, and unique qualities of each poet. The purpose of comparison is to gain a better understanding and a deeper comprehension of each writer. Ben Hutchinson, in his book *Comparative Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, cites George Steiner's words that "to read is to compare" (2018, p.2). Comparison helps to shed light on one writer to understand the other better.

Comparative Literature is a global discipline that entails comparing literary works from different cultures, languages, and time periods to establish connections and deepen understanding. Within this framework, literature serves as a melting pot of human experiences, traversing the boundaries of language, culture, and time to express universal themes and archetypes. According to Jost, literary works should be studied together based on their historical era, aesthetic category, genre, or thematic motifs (Jost, 1974, p.13). Despite profound differences such as geography, culture, and history, the poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan shares an ideational connection, resonating within the aesthetic genre of Romantic Poetry and exploring similar theories of death. By studying this relationship, Comparative Literature expands our appreciation for the intrinsic value of literary works and their infinite usefulness in illuminating the human psyche.

It is argued that Comparative Literature has its origins in an era where its practices were highly Eurocentric and rooted in racism. In their book, *Comparative Literature for the New Century*, De Gasperi and Pivato note that the historical development of Comparative Literature had the disadvantage of being Eurocentric; "English men compiled lists of writes in order to prove their glorious achievements in all subjects of learning; Frenchmen, Italians, and Germans did exactly the same" (Jost, 1974, p.7). However, it is also noted that the study of literary texts in Comparative Literature does not rely on power relations such as the ones found in postcolonial studies, as it deals with different languages and cultures. The roots of Comparative Literature's racism are traced to the post-World War II era, where one race, religion, culture, and language were valued over others. This was seen as a problem in Comparative Literature, which needed to be addressed. Moreover, the French School of Comparative Literature, according to Yousef Bakkar, stressed the importance of influence and reception as prerequisites for conducting comparative research and focused only on Western texts and ignored any work that was not considered to be Western (2018, p.43). It sought to understand human reality by tracing the roots of specific themes only in Western texts. To do this, French scholars often disregarded literary works that reflected the political, historical, social, and cultural experiences of millions of people across the world due to their prejudices. This approach compromised the truth, denying the validity of literary works that could have added to our knowledge of humanity. However, the study of Comparative Literature has come a long way since its racist beginnings. Today, scholars try to avoid the pitfalls of Eurocentrism to create a diverse and inclusive discourse where people of all cultures, languages, religions, and races are valued equally. Comparative Literature now ensures that the voices of different cultures are heard and that the study of literary texts is free from any form of prejudice.

The American school of Comparative Literature held a broader view of literature compared to the French, who were more focused on their national literature. Instead, the American school sought to explore human archetypes in literature to understand universal human truths that transcend national, historical, and linguistic barriers. European critics supported this approach, recognizing the similarities and differences between European and non-European literatures. French critic Goette was an advocate for "some form of general literatures which he described as some particular literary pieces in which we must well perceive in order not to fall prey to national mistakes" (Tagem, 1980, p. 24). According to M.F. Guyard, Goette, "All Literatures should often learn from a foreign country" (qtd in Wuneng, 2000, p. 2). Zepetnek asserts that "Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion of the other," (1950, p. 15) echoing Goette's goal in discussing literatures. "[G]reat writers and critics have recognized that diversity means wealth and that variety is the spice of intellectual life", says Jost. He claims that "to see their oneness and unity beyond all appearances", it is fundamentally required to study all varieties of national and international literatures to be aware of their "multi-formity" (1974, p. 9). In this regard, Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion, emphasizing the importance of learning from foreign literatures. According to Vantagem, Vajai claimed to be able identify more with a writer from a distant nation than with his neighbor (1980, p. 26), underscoring the idea that literature transcends national boundaries. Furthermore, Nada argues that Comparative Literature fosters tolerance for diverse languages and literary genres by promoting

comparisons between national and international literatures (1980, p. 26). By exploring literature across cultures, Comparative Literature allows readers to appreciate the value of different literary traditions instead of relegating them to the margins. In sum, Comparative Literature emphasizes the importance of exploring literature from different cultures to understand universal human truths. This approach rejects narrow nationalistic perspectives in favor of a more inclusive view of literature that recognizes its value across linguistic, cultural, and historical boundaries. By promoting cross-cultural dialogue, Comparative Literature challenges readers to recognize the diversity of literary traditions while recognizing their inherent unity.

American Comparative Literature focuses on comparison through "parallelism" rather than influence. This approach centers on uncovering literary aesthetics and artistic values that expose symmetry in setting, idea, mood, or attitude across literature not historically connected or influenced. Comparing unrelated works side by side is considered a valid practice of Comparative Literature, providing insight on individual traits and qualities. Tahir Makki emphasizes uncovering the recombinant and dissimilar in national literary traditions (2010, p. 178). This field examines whether an idea has moved from one environment to another but does not imply a personal connection between authors. Instead, an idea may have spread and been absorbed through imitation, simulation, or influence (Nada 1980, p. 25).

Bakkar suggests that a literary genre may evolve naturally leading to similar growth, or a writer may feel drawn to another type of writing that expresses their innermost thoughts and feelings instead of their country's literature (2018, p. 8-19). This approach reveals all literatures as part of one huge Literary Genome. The innovative approach of parallelism allows Comparative Literature to better appreciate cultural differences and similarities in the global landscape. This outlook opens a new way of understanding world literatures, removing the constraints of traditional thoughts and practices. Parallelism permits Comparative Literature to explore the interconnectedness found in different literary works and generates a more robust understanding of the literary landscape. Ultimately this approach benefits both the individual and the field, leading to new discoveries and insights that contribute to the worldwide dialogue of literature.

2.The Two Poets and the Blossoming of Comparative Literature

The Romantic Movement emerged during the mid-eighteenth century in Western Europe and rapidly spread throughout the world. At the time, many intellectuals believed that they were experiencing a unique era, which they referred to as "the spirit of the age" (Greenblat, 2006, p. 6). This period marked the germination of new ideas that would eventually lead to revolutions in different parts of the world and the downfall of monarchy and tyranny. The spirit of the age was the driving force behind significant historical events, such as The American Revolution of 1775 and the French Revolution of 1798, which had a worldwide impact. The Romantic era was characterized by various scientific discoveries, inventions, and innovations that challenged the prevailing religious and political beliefs of the time. Furthermore, many political and religious leaders were found to be corrupt, and their teachings were proved false.

Despite these changes, the price of skepticism was insecurity and fear of death. Many intellectuals emigrated to find safer havens and more promising opportunities. The Romantics believed that the individual was the center of political, social, and moral life. They argued that every individual's mind was the creator of the universe they perceived, making knowledge a product of individuals' minds, rather than external elements, a concept first proposed by Descartes in his philosophical works (Greenblat, 2006, p. 13).

The Romantic era set the stage for Comparative Literature to emerge. This period saw an increased mobility of literature across different nations, cultures, and languages, which sparked the curiosity of thinkers and critics. They began to balance and compare these works to understand the different shades and effects of ideas. This cultural exchange also had an impact on the writers who migrated from parts of the Arab world to Europe and America (Bakkar, 2018, p. 15). These migrations, which occurred between the 18th to the 20th century, had a significant influence on Arabic culture and literature. These Arab emigrants moved to both North and South America, encountering Western intellectuals, mostly English and American. They had the opportunity to read American Romantic Poetry and the poetry of transcendentalist Emerson, Whitman and Dickinson. Upon returning to their mother countries, according to Makki, they published in literary journals, established clubs, and used what they learned to renew the world of Arabic poetry, prose, and criticism. They refined the melodies of the poem and added new visions

and aspects of philosophy, leading Arabic literature in a new and distinctive direction. These individuals became known as “Al-Mahjar Poets”; “the Immigrant Poets”, leaving a clear resonance in the Arab world. They impacted not only those who returned to their countries but also those who stayed in the West and continued to write (2010, p. 51).

Emily Dickinson was one of the earliest American female poets whose views must have influenced Fadwa Tuqan. Dickinson herself mingled with people who influenced her romantic tendencies. Dickinson's father introduced her to a young man named Benjamin Franklin, who worked in his law office. Franklin became a frequent visitor to the Dickinson household, often engaging in discussions about Transcendentalism in their parlor. They spent a considerable amount of time together, taking long walks, appreciating, and studying rare flora, and engaging in literary conversations and debates (Ward, 1961, p. 23-4). During their interactions, Dickinson shared some of her poetry with Franklin. He encouraged her and praised her impressive talent. However, it was uncommon for women to be writers during that time in New England. Most women writers focused on prose, as poetry was still considered a domain for men. Dickinson, on the other hand, found inspiration from poets like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, whom she read and admired. Despite this influence, she developed her own unique style.

According to Tim Landzendorfer, Dickinson's writing expands on the American branch of Romantic thought known as transcendentalism. She reacted to and complicated Emerson's ideas about the self (2015, p. 1). Dickinson's Romantic style is manifested in her unconventional and distinctive way of thinking and expressing herself. Her poetry exhibits daring innovations that are unparalleled in the history of American Literature. She had a deep fascination with botany and incorporated it into her poetic imagery. Her use of unexpected and fresh metaphors, her broken meter, unusual rhythmic patterns, and striking assonance captivated even esteemed critics of her time. When she was eventually persuaded to publish some of her poetry, she insisted that they are published unanimously.

On the other hand, Reyhaneh Mollazadeh (2013) argues that Tuqan's encounter with death had a profound impact on her poetic abilities, transforming her into an exceptionally poignant poet of elegy. After the loss of her brother Ibrahim, she reached the pinnacle of emotional and artistic sincerity, evident in the profound verbal expressions that permeate her poetry. One of her predominant romantic characteristics is her use of storytelling as a technique, employing a unique philosophical undertone to explore the tragic nature of existence. Additionally, nature serves as a vast realm for Tuqan to escape the constraints of reality and societal norms, allowing her to express herself freely. Tuqan observes nature through her inner most being, allowing her imagination to gather fragmented images in a way that nature becomes intertwined with her very essence, or rather, the poet becomes an integral part of nature. The poet draws inspiration predominantly from the tranquility of silent nature rather than the bustling life within it, reflecting her subjectivity and underlying melancholy. While we often witness the poet's approach towards nature, a sense of gloom emanates from her emotions. Instead of finding delight in the sounds of nature, her joy is overshadowed by a profound sense of annihilation that resides within her. The most important romantic sentiment that Tuqan resorts to is Love; it even transforms into a symbol representing the perpetuation of life, transcending the boundaries of individuality. Tuqan bestows great significance upon love and skillfully expresses the transparent emotions and psychology of the modern Arab woman. Through her radiant and sincere portrayal, Tuqan captures the female's sense of fear, albeit in an unsettling manner. It is from this perspective that love becomes a sanctuary and a means of escape from the adversities she encounters in the world.

The impact of Romanticism on the two poets is evident in their unique observations on death. Poets like Dickinson and Tuqan, were voracious readers of Romantic writers of their time, they likely drew influence from their readings to create their unique observations. Thus, Comparative Literature played a significant role in the evolution of literature in general and Romantic Literature in particular, allowing for cross-cultural exchange and the creation of new ideas and visions.

A. Emily Dickinson

Born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson is recognized as one of the greatest American poets of all time. Growing up in a prominent and reputed family, The Dickinson's were known for their strong religious beliefs, regularly attending the Congregational Church in Amherst. However, Emily herself had conflicting feelings towards religion and never officially joined the church. Emily was the middle child and had a brother and sister whom she shared an excellent relationship with throughout her life. Despite being the most intelligent, Emily did not receive the attention and care she deserved. According

to Kirk, her brother Austin received the most attention and was expected to do better academically and make a name for himself. He was "the one who was expected to do well in school and make a name for himself in the world" (2004, p. 20).

Unlike their mother, Emily's younger sister Lavinia acted as her emotional and psychological support throughout her life. According to Kirk, Emily's mother could read and write, but only to support building an ethical and successful family, often taking notes from sermons about what mothers should teach their children concerning morality (2004, p.12). Despite this, Emily's relationship with her mother was bitter, and it was only when their roles reversed in later years, and Emily tended more to her mother's needs, that the two connected. Dickinson declares that "she did not hold much affection for her mother until their roles reversed in later years and she was tending more to her mother's needs" (Kirk, 2004, p. 3).

A United States congressman, Dickinson's father held a conflicting view of women, possibly due to having daughters whom he favored over other women. In an article on women's education, he argued that it should primarily help them excel at household duties and intellectual conversations with their husbands, without dominating them. He wrote, education enhances women's "ability to perform at domestic tasks and to be a social partner to their husbands' professional lives in that they may hold up their end of intelligent conversations without dominating them" (Kirk, 2004, p. 16). Despite this, he sent his daughter Emily to study at religious-focused schools, Amherst Academy and Mount Holyoke Seminary. Curiously, despite her religious education, Emily was one of the few who rejected Protestantism and did not follow a conventional religious path. Dickinson's father's attitude towards women likely influenced Emily's perspective on religion and her unique identity as a writer. Emily feels that both her parents failed her, yet "traces of her longing for her mother and father pervade the poetry" (Cody, 1971, p. 104).

Dickinson witnessed the Great Revival, a social and religious movement that swept through New England and revived religious fervor among the people. Despite this, she viewed the movement with skepticism. In addition to her religious ambivalence, she actively supported the abolitionist movement during the 1840s and 1850s. This movement aimed to abolish slavery and was organized primarily in the Northern states. The impact of the Civil War also touched Emily's life, as she experienced the loss of people she cared about (Kirk, 2005, p. 1-3).

Emily Dickinson, during the later years of her life, became agoraphobic in order to avoid the social pressures and obligations that came with interacting with people. According to Benfey, she gradually reduced the number of visitors she met and never got married. She rarely traveled and generally preferred being alone as though she had valid reasons for wanting to be left alone (1984, p. 35). She behaved in a way that suggested that she sought solitude, and Millicent Todd Bingham concurs that it was the only "sane" thing for her to do in the circumstances (Cody, 1971, p. 26). Emily wrote approximately 2000 poems but did not publish them as she was against publishing her works. Emily's poem (709) suggests that there is a fault with publishing works as it is ruled by greed, and she firmly believed that private thoughts were pure while anything public was tainted. Poem (441) reflects her excoriating fear, that her poems and letters would be read and criticized negatively. The poem reads:

This my letter to the world

That never wrote to Me-

.....

Sweet Country men Judge Tenderly of me (1995, 211)

Her poems mainly discussed growth, society, death, and suffering. Emily created a powerful and authoritative voice in her poems, revealing and articulating unprecedented issues and emotions. Her poetry was experimental, laborious to comprehend, cut off with dashes, poorly punctuated, commonly used unconventional capitalization, and did not have titles.

B. Fadwa Tuqan

Fadwa Tuqan was a Palestinian poet born in Nablus in 1917. She was the seventh child of her family, who were highly regarded for their adherence to traditions and social status (Dardanji, 1994, p. 46). Tuqan received her primary education in Nablus but did not attend secondary school, as it was not customary for girls at the time. Despite this, her passion for poetry was encouraged by her brother Ibrahim, who gave her the name "Um Al-Tammam," inspired by the poet Abo Al-Tamam. Unfortunately, Tuqan faced repression from her family, including her father, during her early writing stages. As a result, she used

several pseudonyms, particularly when publishing "Ghazal Poems," which were frowned upon for women. Tuqan's self-education led her to become an accomplished poet at an early age, and her legacy remains an inspiration for writers across the region (Bakkar, 2019, p. 11).

Fadwa Tuqan, a prominent Arab female poet, acquired numerous nicknames and titles such as "The Blessed Olive", "Oak", and "Violet" following her success. Her literary works, including ten book collections and poetry, were translated into various languages, including French, Italian, and English. Tuqan's prose, which includes an autobiography titled *A Mountainous Journey*, *A Hard Journey* and critical essays, were also celebrated. During her lifetime, she received several honorary awards, medals, and prizes. Her poetry was frequently discussed in poetry evenings and symposiums held in her name (Bakkar, 2019, p. 1-15).

Fadwa Tuqan is widely known as one of the most influential Arab poets who revolutionized Arabic poetry and introduced new forms of expression that were absent in the traditional Arabic poetry. Her poetic journey started when her brother Ibrahim, a prominent Arabic poet who introduced her to classical poetry and modern poetry which were written in the previous centuries. At the beginning of her poetic journey, she was influenced by the classical style and form of expression. However, she soon realized that this style was limiting her expression. Tuqan turned to Romanticism, a movement that was dominant among young Arab poets in the early 20th century. Tuqan on this says: "I found that the poetry of these exiled poets was closer to my psychological composition and mental structure. ...my greatest ambition became writing poetry that derives its beauty from simplicity, flexibility, honesty, and poetic formulation without pretension" (Tuqan 1988, p. 1). She found that this movement suited her psychological composition and mental structure perfectly. For her, Romanticism was a kind of emancipation from the traditional form of Arabic poetry. She declares: "In fact, the story of this classic preamble, and the complete attention to the word and its resonance, and the style of expression created all these I felt were obstacles not allowing for movement, flow, and spontaneous and honest composition of poetry" (Tuqan, 1988, p. 90). It allowed her to express her feelings in a free-flowing and spontaneous manner, which was something that she had always wanted to do.

Tuqan's poetry was deeply influenced by her personal experiences and struggles. Her rough experiences with death and the closed traditional society she was born into made her poetry deeply personal and intimate. She found that Romanticism was the perfect arena to express her feminine experience and to deal with the sorrows that accompanied it. Fakhry Saleh declares that: "Tuqan is one of the Arab female poets who developed contemporary Arabic poetry and moved it from the circle of imitation and masculine worldview to the level of transparent and sincere expression of feminine feeling" (2004, p. 2). Her poetry dealt with forbidden love, aborted emotions, death, early brotherhood, the world that is closed onto the self, oppressed femininity, and the sorrows of the Palestinian who has been suffering from colonialism. Tuqan's contributed to the development of contemporary and moved it from the circle of imitation and traditional masculine worldview to the level of transparent and sincere expression of feminine feeling. Her legacy continues to inspire Arab poets and readers to this day, and her poetry remains a testament to the power of personal experience and the need for honest expression in the world of poetry.

3. Poetry of Death in Dickinson and Tuqan

Dickinson and Tuqan were renowned literary figures who shared a profound fascination with death, it was at their prefrontal cortex, a theme that influenced much of their poetry. Death pervaded their thoughts and infected their creative processes, emerging as a dominant symbol in their work. For Dickinson, her obsession with death stemmed from her roots in a highly religious family and community. Her social circle's preoccupation and understanding of the Bible and its teachings, combined with her observations of people dying around her and her view of the cemetery from her bedroom window, influenced her writing. "During her long girlhood, spent in a house where the windows looked down on the graveyard, she had lived in daily awareness of death, and, in mourning the loss of two young men who had been important to her, had come to feel the insecurity of the tenure of life" (Ward, 1961, p. 40). In contrast, Tuqan's relationship with death developed from her life experiences as an Arab woman from a traditional Arab family and a Palestinian girl from a colonized land where women were often suppressed intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically and victimized. Through their poetry, both Dickinson and Tuqan personified death, portraying it as an overwhelmingly powerful and a transformative force, a wisdom provider, an illuminator of religious beliefs, and an emotional destroyer and so each of them had a unique stand towards love. Their depictions of the theme allowed them to explore

the deeper aspects of human existence and contemplate the eventual fate of all living beings. Overall, the powerful presence of death in their poetry marked Dickinson and Tuqan as celebrated literary voices and contributed to their lasting legacies.

4. Analysis and Discussion

A. Death's Authority and Dictatorship

Dickinson's poetry speaks to the undeniable fact that death holds sway over us all, and that when this profound truth of the human experience happens, it is final. Ward aptly phrases this as the "sudden realization that life may cease at any moment," is a common experience for those entering adulthood (1961, p. 40).

In poem (749), Dickinson confronts this harsh reality head on, asserting that "All but Death, can be Adjusted" (1995, p. 367), conceding that everything else in life has the potential to change, but that death is a constant, unable to be shifted or altered. Dickinson employs the technique of enjambment, where a sentence or phrase flows uninterrupted across multiple lines, to emphasize the inescapable finality of death. There is no cause or respite from its inevitability, highlighting the futility of our attempts to control and shape the world around us. Even the most formidable and enduring structures or systems can be altered or destroyed by the force of death. Dickinson employs the imagery of citadels to underscore the impermanence and vulnerability of the most powerful institutions and structures. The line "Strung like a Bridle, tight" metaphorically represents the way in which we are all bound and controlled by the relentless certainty of death. Additionally, the lines "Systems settled in their Sockets" and "Crammed conveniences of Fate" allude to the motion that everything in the universe has its rightful place and order. Dickinson suggests that even the most chaotic and unpredictable aspects of life ultimately adhere to a large cosmic order, indicating a grander plan or design. Death persists as an enigmatic force, "*exempt from Change*," that acts as a stubborn dictator, exempt from any pleas, desires, or interventions from people, leading them to face their mortality and be at the mercy of its rule.

Death has a controlling and defining power over both the living and the dead. Dickinson characterizes this power in poem (360), where she states that "*Death sets a Thing significant*" (1995, p. 170). In this context, death asserts its authority by attributing value to individuals and their belongings. Even the most insignificant things that we previously overlooked suddenly acquire significance when they are no longer in our attention or possession. This prompts the living to cherish them in a way they never did before. Throughout the lifetime of the owner of these possessions, Dickinson refers to them as objects that "The Eye had hurried by". Dickinson observes that death is a subtle influencer, tormenting us by recalling forgotten memories and compelling the living to mourn their departed loved ones. It also entices us to catch a glimpse of what lies beyond life. With her poetry, Dickinson depicts a world in which death reigns supreme, and where both the living and the dead must submit to its unyielding authority.

Dickinson argues that death's power lies not only in its unchangeability, but in its ability to turn concrete matter into abstract or even nothingness. Nature, for Yvor Winters, is a symbol of death one leaves human life and joins nature (1984, p.100). Death deteriorates and eradicates humans, and in poem (860), Dickinson reflects on this process. She declares: "*Absence disembodies—So does Death*" (1995, p. 411). Within this poem, Dickinson explores various ways in which the soul departs from the body, highlighting death as the most severe and devastating departure. Death engenders a profound sense of loss, devoid of any prospect of reunion. It conceals an individual from the world, burdening both the departed and those left behind with the anguish of their absence. Concluding the poem with the line "Tenderness decreases as we prove," Dickinson suggests that death allows one to relinquish their physical form, their identity, significance, and very existence, eventually fading into eternal oblivion. Death, portrayed as an experienced educator, imparts lessons of absence and the absence of affection by forcibly separating people from one another.

On the one hand, Tuqan acknowledges the authority, potency, command, and persecution of death as it deprives her of those who gave purpose to her existence. Yousef Al-Yousef likened Tuqan's situation to that of being trapped in a vast, yet confining mine, where escape is impossible. "One could sense as if she were imprisoned in a big but also narrow mine, and as she tries to escape from it, she hits into its thick walls" (Al-Yousef, 1981, p. 37). In her book of poems *In Front of the Closed Door*, she articulates her anguish and suffocation upon losing her brother Nimr, in her poem "An Elegy to Nimr," where she implores the Creator. She says:

*Oh, the madness of this life and fate
 Without wisdom, he dies
 Oh death, how evil and treacherous you are
 From me you rob my loved ones and siblings
 Oh crazy Death, oh how blind you are
 Oh deaf death (Tuqan, 1993, p.320-321)*

According to Tuqan, death operates as an arbitrary dictator with no rational basis for its decisions. In her poem "*In Front of the Closed Door*", she speaks directly to the creator of this tyrant, seeking a clarification for its purpose and asking for access to its secrets as she roams aimlessly without any explanation. She says:

*In vain, you do not return an echo or a sound
 Come back, nothing is here, but loneliness
 Silence and the shadow of death (Tuqan 1993, p. 342)*

Death is an omnipotent force that takes away Tuqan's chance of returning, a phenomenon every living entity undergoes. Her poem "*Autumn and Evening/Khareef wa Masa*" reflects her restless state of mind caused by death's cruel and merciless grip on all forms of life on earth. The cyclic beginning and ending of natural elements triggered her contemplation on her own journey and the finality of death that leaves no room for renewal like the other natural elements, which wilt and revive. Though she faces similar annihilation as natural elements, she differs as she cannot return. She raises her voice, questioning her destiny. Eventually, her body will crumble into dust, consumed by worms, while the days of her life nibble away at her. She says:

*The garden will return to its lushness and secret fertility
 The light will return with the soft dawn
 But when I wither and my flowers wither
 But when tomorrow will fade away the light of my day
 How did he resurrect me from my external withering and extinction?!
 Oh Death! Who are you? Are you harsh or affectionate? (Tuqan, 1993, p. 11-12)*

B. Death: The Catalyst for Sagehood, Maturity, and Wisdom

Death is a profound sage whose wisdom seeps onto the poets Emily Dickinson and Fadwa Tuqan. It is a force that metamorphoses individuals in unimaginable ways, making them lose their old selves to gain new perspectives that can never be retrieved. The devastating experience of losing a dear one makes one realize the impact of death.

For Dickinson, her poetry revealed that death had made her a mature person. William Cooney describes Dickinson's experience with death as a "courageous recognition that life itself cannot be understood fully except from (just as light cannot be fully appreciated without the recognition of its opposite) the vantage point of the grave" (1998, p. 1). Ward declares that Dickinson's "allegiance now goes to an inner authority, whose claims are recognized as of greater force than those of the human father or the father God of whom he is representative" (1961, p. 45). Paul Ferlazzo on the matter of maturity states: "The moment of breakdown...is the end product of a larger period of time in which the mind has gradually been undergoing deterioration through tension, trouble, and trauma" (1976, p. 82). According to Jame Wright, "Dickinson's poetry is often noted for its expression of theological doubt, studies of her verse prove that her doubts did not cause her to abandon theological inquiry; rather, it may have caused her to rely more heavily upon experiential acquisitions and expressions of theological knowledge wherever possible" (2017, p. 38).

In her poems, Dickinson creates personae who are dying or dead, which seem to offer sage advice against fearing death. She advises that one must come to terms with it and be prepared for its arrival. For instance, in her poems (712) "*Because I could not*

stop for Death" and (465) *"I heard a Fly buzz when I died"*, Dickinson creates a romantic journey with Death in the former poem and a deathbed scene with a buzzing fly in the latter. These poems reflect and remind readers to come to terms with the pettiness of death, customs, religion, family, law, and every structure in our societies.

Death is a profound event that can reveal surprisingly genuine relationships with those who inspire us and whom we connect with intellectually and spiritually rather than physically. This can be understood from poem (645), where she declares: *"Bereavement in their Death to feel Whom We have never seen—"*, (1995, p. 320) This idea is aptly captured in Elizabeth Browning's elegy (1995, p. 320), where Dickinson mourns the loss of a dear friend and laments the fact that she only came to appreciate their true value after their death. Dickinson describes Browning as an essential block to her life, providing her with nourishment and well-being. The sudden death of Browning made Dickinson aware that some people whom we may consider strangers are valuable components in our lives. In the poem, Dickinson uses the term "kinsmanship" to describe the strength of her connection with Browning, highlighting the idea that true friendship is a spiritual relationship that does not necessarily require physical proximity. Dickinson's reflections remind us that death can illuminate our relationships with others and prompt us to cherish those connections while we still have them.

According to Dickinson, death brings about a figurative death and rebirth of some of the living, enabling them to become wiser and mature. In her paradoxical poem (817), she declares that *"A Death blow is a Life blow to Some"* (1995, p. 397) as death enables her to experience and view life in a new and more conscious light. Due to the loss of a loved one, one is suddenly forced to see the world in a new perspective, looking at the world and its contents and happenings in a totally different way. The contents of one's world change forever and hence their outlook on life changes for the better. Furthermore, Dickinson suggests that physical death marks the beginning of spiritual life. She notes that humans tend to find significance in the possessions of their loved ones after they have passed away. Even the most insignificant things that belonged to them become more valuable. Dickinson describes how finding the most incidental things like a crayon or a piece of wool *"tucked away among the dust upon the closet shelves"* can bring solace after a loved one has passed. This may be due to the need to protect one's sanity, but more importantly, it is a way to care for both the deceased and oneself.

Death has made Tuqan a keen observer, allowing her to see things in a unique way. She often reflects on her evenings spent in nature, where her companions are silence, shadow, and ideas. Tuqan is captivated by the beauty of existence, which makes her long to embrace the universe. In her poem *"The Poet and the Butterfly"* she declares:

*I may end up like you forgotten, with no friend or companion to remember me
Oh: How cruel death is, which ends us in a deep deathly cave (Tuqan, 1993, p. 16)*

Tuqan finds beauty in the smallest things that many people overlook. However, her enthusiasm is dampened when she sees a dying butterfly on the ground. Yet, instead of simply ignoring it, Tuqan uses its fading heartbeat to express the depth of her feelings about death and the potential extinction of humankind. Huda Othman sees a parallel between Tuqan and the butterfly, evident in the title of her poem *"The Poet and the Butterfly"* where she connects them with the word "and" Tuqan's search for beauty mirrors the butterfly's freedom to fly without any limitations. *"The butterfly represents freedom, flying from one place to another without any restriction condition; likewise, the poet goes from one meadow to another in search of beauty. However, the butterfly's refraction came through death, while the poet's refraction came through suppressing the poet's freedom...as if she were dead alive"* (2011, p. 343). But while the butterfly met its demise, the poet's freedom was suffocated, leaving her feeling *"dead alive."* Tuqan's moving elegy mourns the loss of the butterfly, while also reflecting her own fears and anxieties about the end of life as we know it. The butterfly represents the loss of freedom in death, a tragedy that Tuqan reminds us of in her poignant poem.

Tuqan has developed the belief that death operates outside the confines of logic and reason and disrupts the natural balance and aesthetics of the world. As a result, she feels compelled to confront the disorder and chaos of death with fierceness and indignation. This creates in her deep anger and so in the same poem she raises her voice to God and declares:

O Creator of existence, If only you protected him from the futility of death and the recklessness of annihilation! (Tuqan 1993, p.17)

The terms futility and recklessness hold significant meaning when observing the destructive impact on Mother Nature's aesthetic system, as well as the pleasure derived from it. Tuqan asserts that the act of death is akin to a madman destroying a beautiful, organized place in a thoughtless manner, arousing concern, and prompting questioning. Tuqan's questions to God are fraught with painful paradox as she addresses, "O Creator of existence..." She questions how creativity could be compatible with an act as reckless as death, which terminates what God has made. This leads the reader to contemplate the reason for the creation of existence in the first place when death is inevitability. The choice of futility and recklessness accurately captures Tuqan's emotional and poetic experience with artistic integrity. Tuqan is also keenly aware of the pity one feels when observing the natural cycle of objects coming to an end.

Death transformed the lives, personalities, outlooks, and poetry of Dickinson and Tuqan. Their early poetry lacked depth and sophistication, but after experiencing death, they matured and became wise sages with strong, sensitive outlooks on life and existence.

C. Love and Death

Love was the answer for these two poets when dealing with the subject of death; they both relied on love to address their difficulties that were brought on by death, albeit they used it in different ways. Love was the second driving force for both Emily Dickinson and Fadwa Tuqan. For Dickinson, death becomes love, a positive persona, a dear friend who is more intimately acquainted with her than even her family members and fellow Amherst society members. According to Howells, Dickinson was a "Puritan longing for sincerity and veracious conduct, which was almost a hysterical shriek in the nature of some New England women" (1984, p. 33). She sees death as her savior, a source of love that allows her to heal and escape from the societal pressures that have restricted her freedom of thought and ideas (Ward, 1961, p. 57). Being separated from the community by her inability to conform to its accepted standards" becomes her bliss (Ward 1961, p. 38). As a result, Dickinson becomes preoccupied with death. On Dickinson's preoccupation with death Kao, Audiey declares:

Many if not nearly all of us become more cynical and jaded as we get older, and our capacity to love and show compassion diminishes over time and experience. In medicine, our ability to show compassion and empathy towards those in need also changes and matures throughout our professional careers. In some respects, this maturation provides us with necessary protection against heartache, but this maturation often goes too far (2001, p. 31).

This is probably what led Dickinson to personify death in this intimate way.

Dickinson viewed death as an inherent aspect of existence and regarded it as a grand companion worthy of her affection, thereby harboring no apprehension towards it. Some of her most famous poems "encourage putting aside the accepted and narrowing creed ...and bring us face to face with new objects of worship": death itself! (Carmen 1984, p. 48) In poem (712) which reads: "*Because I could not stop for Death- / He kindly stopped for me-*" (1995, p. 350) Dickinson portrays death as not just an end to life but also as a companion who waits patiently for us throughout our existence. Dickinson personifies death as a gentleman who is kind, civil, and patient, and she describes him as a friend or even a lover. In one of her poems, she speaks of death as a positive force that brings closure to life, free from all its difficulties and struggles.

When Death comes to take her life, the poet never portrays it as evil or possessing any negative characteristics. Instead, she sees it as a natural part of life, and death becomes a companion who watches the movie of her life with her, in a flashback. In this movie, she sees different stages of her life, such as her childhood years reflecting in children in the ring, or her adulthood symbolized by the setting sun—she sees *children* in the ring to reflect her early childhood and then "*Fields of Grazing Grain*"; her adulthood life, "*the setting sun*" which symbolizes her later years until the time of her death. In the same poem, Dickinson speaks of her lack of romantic love during her life and her inability to find a groom. Death then becomes the groom that she never had, fulfilling her desire for a partner, love, and relationship. This view of death may seem controversial, but it reflects Dickinson's

unique and personal take on life and death. To her, death was not a frightening figure, but rather a close and gentle friend.

In her poem (510) Dickinson states, "*It was not death, for I stood up* (1995, p. 248)," where she draws a poignant comparison between the inherent difficulties of death and the struggles that she encountered in life. Despite the often-unbearable nature of death, the other issues that she experienced were worse, even leading her to despair. She asserts that there were certain people and events in her life that served as true culprits, as they caused her to experience far more traumatizing things than death itself. Her relationships with members of society left her feeling "shaven", stripping away all that was natural and original from her life. For Dickinson, this was worse than being dead. In the same poem, she describes her life as "fitted to a frame", suffocating and engulfed by chaos.

The difficulties derived from society's attempts to force her to think and act in accordance with cultural and religious norms may represent the true source of her trauma. This constant pressure made her sad and rebellious, pushing her to translate her paradoxical experiences and feelings into poetry. Writing gave her a sense of freedom, allowing for inward isolation and introspection, where "freedom could come to her through inward isolation" (Ward 1961, p. 31). For Dickinson, the suffocating experiences that surrounded her daily life proved more difficult to bear than death itself. She believed that these issues were oppressive, leaving her feeling trapped and unable to negotiate or battle them effectively.

Emily Dickinson had a complex relationship with death and society. For Dickinson, death was a friend and source of comfort in a society that trapped her in a state of suspense and discomfort. In her poem (705), she proclaims that "Suspense—is Hostler than death," (1995, p. 374) identifying the uncertainty and strangeness of societal norms as much more hostile than the finality of death. The societal pressures placed on women are criticized in poem (562), where Dickinson asserts, "...give a Giant room/ And you will lodge a Giant/ And not a smaller man" (Dickinson, 1995, p. 562) Christopher Benfey notes that the poem suggests that societal expectations can stifle one's true potential, and only by allowing space for individual growth can one reach full stature (1984, p. 18). Dickinson's observations on society illuminate the pain of those who do not conform to societal norms. She hints in formerly mentioned poem that this suffering can be a kind of torture, which is worse than death. These "smaller deaths" are more painful than actual death, as "Just Death" is a welcomed release in contrast to the "Annihilation" of suspense. Though death represents the lack of life, suspense represents the lack of certainty and stability.

While Emily Dickinson made peace with death, Fadwa Tuqan remained troubled and anxious about the prospect until the very end. However, she found solace in love as a means of coping with mortality. According to Tuqan, love is a remedy for loneliness, despair, stagnation, and death. She believes that love can rise above the distortions of reality and bitter experiences (Share', 2000, p. 71). It is a form of rebirth that helps Tuqan overcome her struggles and gives her clarity and direction in life. She says in her poem "Min Al'amaq/ From the Depths":

*Oh wow, I am a spark of resurrection which your eyes made available in my depths
For life is full of pulse with an overflow of nostalgia, with longings (Tuqan, 1993, p. 52)*

According to Tuqan, love can conquer all life's obstacles. It can resurrect and immortalize souls while fighting against the mortality of death. Love provides stability, security, beauty, nostalgia, and longing; it is the center of life and the foundation upon which Tuqan builds her poetry. Together, love and poetry represent an endless and perpetual power. Through love, Tuqan transcends her social status and finds solace in her identity as a human being and a poet. Love is the driving force in her life, the axis that allows her to navigate through difficult times without losing herself. Love leads Tuqan to writing great poetry, the two integrate to complete each other to represent the eternal and infinite strength As Share' states, " she may be able with love to transcend her social conditions, and with it also find her way towards her freedom and towards realizing her identity as a human being and as a poet at the same time" (2000, p. 87). On this matter in the poem "Story of our Date/Qissat Maw'dna" Tuqan says:

*Is there in love the power of creation that transforms the souls of lovers as they want?
Do you know what passion is? Is it the spirit of life? What is passion? Is it the secret of survival?
Do you know what it is? Tell me, no, don't say, and leave its secret in introversion
.....
And that you and I are a love story that poetry immortalizes despite annihilation! (Tuqan, 1993, p. 71)*

Tuqan regards love as holy and demonstrates her devotion to it. Yousef Al-Yousef asserts that the disruption of this profound and genuine emotional energy will result in enduring distress and leave a profound mark on her life (198, p. 40-41). This motivates Tuqan to persist and confront inevitable death, as it enables her to attain the desired state of immortality. She says in her poem: "Mubarak Hada Aljamal wa Azaab/ Congrats on this Beauty and Torture"

*Oh Love, oh creator
Oh creator of beauty, Oh
Detonator of pains
Oh sender of my beautiful existence, Oh my distraction
.....
Blessed are you, blessed this beauty and this agony. (Tuqan 1993, p. 523)*

According to Mustafwai, Tuqan's poem stresses a love that is never satisfied, and hence, can never end as it doesn't reach fullness or culmination (2018, p.51). For Tuqan, an Eastern woman who adheres to traditional boundaries, this love is meant to avoid reaching saturation as it would indicate the end of the relationship. She is fearful of the finality of love and desires to stay in the flowering stage, instead of moving on to the fruit-bearing phase, which spells decay and death. To her, completion is a precursor to weariness and eventual demise. Hence, she seeks to remain in a state of perpetual growth and beauty, transcending the ever-present threat of mortality. In her poem "End Moftaraq Al-Toroq; At the Crossroads"

*Do not despair if they remain on our path
Our longings are buried buds
That did not bloom under the touch of light
Leave them waiting (Tuqan, 1993, p. 357)*

It is not at all uncommon for poets to experience this brand of love or friendship. In fact, one may argue that in such instances, love transcends all societal and national boundaries, rendering it an entity devoid of any categorization or labels. When possessed by ardent individuals, such love begets empathy and distinction; feverish passion renders love a sublime feeling that propels the poet towards celestial heights, far removed from any terrestrial aspects of existence.

7. Conclusions

The comparison of Emily Dickinson and Tuqan's death poetry is deemed necessary despite diverse contexts, concluding that Comparative Literature investigates works from different cultures to identify similarities, differences, and unique qualities. Comparative Literature began as only focusing on Europe but expanded to include all races and genres as it became clear that human realities and truths cannot be fully understood by excluding any race. The Romantic Movement played a crucial role in this expansion by facilitating the spread and exchange of literature among different nations and the birth of an inclusive Comparative Literature.

Dickinson and Tuqan's works are ideationally related, sharing a prevalent theme of death that overshadows their poetic confrontations and lives. Both fall under Romantic Poetry and necessitate a comparison to understand their visions and reception of death's impact. After studying their poetry, it is found that the poets' fixation on death stems from various sources: bitterness and suffering due to societal oppression, loss, and deprivation, resulting in a disconnection from society; enduring a form of living death that was more excruciating than physical death; and the need to adhere to societal and cultural norms that conflicted with their own beliefs, leading to a sense of alienation from their communities.

The study found that Dickinson and Tuqan both confronted death through acknowledging its power and authority, through wisdom and through love, making their poetry comparable. Despite their similarities, each poet had their own unique experiences. Both poets suffered greatly from their preoccupation with death, leading them to see the insignificance of the world. While

Dickinson found peace and communication with death, Tuqan remained troubled until the end of her life.

It is concluded that the human experience is similar throughout time and space, and that the experiences of Dickinson and Tuqan are similar, particularly with regards to death which is the greatest and most intense experience in life; the enigma of death creates infinite visions and inquiries. Despite distance, race, and culture, human beings are united by the inevitability of death, as evidenced by the striking ways in which the experiences of Dickinson and Tuqan were united. This demands attention and humility.

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