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**A READING OF THE TV SERIES *THE FOLLOWING* FROM EDGAR ALLAN
POE'S LITERATURE AND DEATH DEPICTIONS**

GUARABIRA

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Universidade Estadual da Paraíba – UEPB –,
como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de
Licenciatura em Letras – Habilitação em
Língua Inglesa.

Área de concentração: Literatura e Cinema.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Auricélio Soares Fernandes

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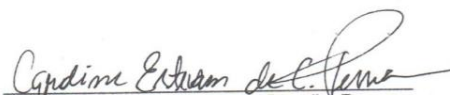
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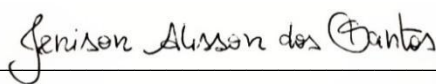
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“Why is it that the beautiful things are entwined more deeply with death than with life?” - Sui Ishida

ABSTRACT

Death is a topic that has been in the back of our minds since the dawn of time. And, as a result, people have always attempted to make sense of it and understand it. When we look back at our history, we can see that our perception of death has been shaped by the place and time we are in. Among the various representations of death, we see throughout history, one that stands out is the American writer and poet Edgar Allan Poe's view of death as both beautiful and terrifying. Being a famous author among the best gothic writers of all time, his works have conquered the small screen, and many adaptations have been made. Having said that, in this study, we propose to analyze how the TV series *The Following* (2013), directed by Marcos Siega and produced by Kevin Williamson, represents the meaning and aesthetic of death based on the poems *The Raven* and *Lenore*, by Edgar Allan Poe. We have observed how the producers represented and reshaped in two different symbolic sign systems, with cinematic resources the frightening beauty of death created by Poe with words and the meaning of the beauty of murder by the character Joe Carroll. We made use of bibliographic research to explore our object of study, in a qualitative approach, of a basic nature, and with an exploratory purpose. In this regard, we utilized authors such as Ariès (1954); Swarnakar (2007); Stam (2000); Hutcheon (2006) and Cartmell (2012). We can see, then, that the TV series is capable of not only adapting the horror of Poe's stories to the screen, but also of redefining his concept of beauty to its utmost, which is accomplished in the TV series through murderous acts.

Keywords: The Following. Edgar Allan Poe. Death. Television adaptation. The Raven. Lenore.

RESUMO

A morte é um tema que está no fundo de nossas mentes desde o início dos tempos. E, como resultado, as pessoas sempre tentaram fazer sentido e entendê-lo. Quando olhamos para nossa história, podemos ver que nossa percepção da morte foi moldada pelo lugar e pelo tempo em que estamos. Dentre as várias representações da morte que vemos ao longo da história, uma que se destaca é a visão da morte do escritor e poeta americano Edgar Allan Poe como bela e aterrorizante. Sendo um autor famoso entre os melhores escritores góticos de todos os tempos, suas obras conquistaram a telinha, e muitas adaptações foram feitas. Dito isso, neste estudo propomos analisar como a série de TV *The Following* (2013), dirigida por Marcos Siega e produzida por Kevin Williamson, representa o sentido e a estética da morte a partir dos poemas *The Raven* e *Lenore*, de Edgar Allan Poe. Observamos como os produtores representaram e remodelaram em dois sistemas simbólicos distintos, com recursos cinematográficos a assustadora beleza da morte criada por Poe com palavras e o significado da beleza do assassinato pelo personagem Joe Carroll. Fizemos uso de pesquisa bibliográfica para explorar nosso objeto de estudo, em uma abordagem qualitativa, de natureza básica e com finalidade exploratória. Para isso, utilizamos autores como Ariès (1954); Swarnakar (2007); Stam (2000); Hutcheon (2006) e Cartmell (2012). Podemos ver, então, que a série de TV é capaz não apenas de adaptar o horror das histórias de Poe para a tela, mas também de redefinir ao máximo seu conceito de beleza, que ocorre na série televisiva por meio de atos homicidas.

Palavras-chave: The Following. Edgar Allan Poe. Morte. Adaptação televisiva. O corvo. Lenore.

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1 Initial considerations

The Following, created by Kevin Williamson and co-produced by Outerbanks Entertainment and Warner Bros. Television, was released by FOX in 2013 and ran for three seasons. It presents Joe Carroll, a serial killer that establishes a cult in order to satisfy his compulsion to kill. Notwithstanding, gathering individuals who share his views or simply fall for his charm to provide ways for him to satisfy his cravings and exact revenge on those who have wronged him.

On the other hand, we have an FBI agent (Ryan Hardy) who goes to great lengths to apprehend Carroll and bring him back to justice. This "cat and mouse" relationship between the protagonists in the series is undeniably intriguing, especially when we consider that Ryan and Joe are two sides of the same coin. But, more than the detective script, the series' proposal to adapt aspects of death through a villain fascinated by the romantic period - and, in particular, obsessed with one of the great figures of Romanticism, Edgar Allan Poe - is one of the major factors contributing to the series' success. As a result, the protagonists' relationship, as well as Carroll's idolization and attempt to equal Poe by recreating the deaths portrayed in his stories, holds us to the narrative while raising several questions about their actions.

We understand that death has been a topic that piqued men's interest since antiquity, because man is the only animal who is fully aware of his own demise. All humans have an innate desire to understand it, regardless of their origins or the time in which they find themselves. People are moved by the uncertainty of what happens after death, consequently, when we study human history, we can see that different cultures from different eras try to understand death in some way.

The emotion of terror is the most common of the numerous perceptions of death. Fear is natural because it is something that is beyond human control. As a consequence, death is frequently associated with something terrible. Even while death has a favorable side in some religions, such as Christianity, it is still viewed as an enemy to be defeated, as evidenced by the following quote: "then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire" (BIBLE, 1989) Even though death is a natural aspect of life in the scientific sense, it nonetheless terrifies human beings.

As a result of its many representations and the fact that it is something that no one can avoid, death is a common theme in literature. Edgar Allan Poe, an American writer, was one of the major figures to work on this subject. Many authors in the nineteenth century adopted a

different perspective on death. During this time, death comes to be viewed as both a negative and a positive experience:

Romanticism sees death as the liberation of the individual from a world that does not please him, full of impossible loves, injustices and misunderstandings [...] Death represents a kind of escape from an unjust society that does not accept him, dying is the end of hopeless anguish. (DANTAS, 2009, on-line)

Poe stands out during this time for his idealization of death, transforming it into something beautiful. According to his theory expounded in his essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, beauty is the most intense and pure pleasure that we can achieve through the contemplation of the beautiful, and the beautiful for Poe was associated with death. At the same time, the American author does not diminish death's dreadful aspect. This association provokes some uneasiness in the reader, because according to Sigmund Freud (1919, p. 360) “for many people, everything related to death, corpses and the return of the dead is extremely disturbing.”¹

As Poe became a literary reference in regard to his gruesome stories, his portrait of death permeated the cinema screens and many other audiovisual works, and also many of his short stories and poems were adapted for the cinematic scope. For example, *Vincent*, a stop motion animated short film created and directed by Tim Burton in 1982, in which a young boy who adores Poe dreams of being one of the actors who has appeared in several adaptations of his works, and even Fernando Meirelles' Brazilian television series *Contos do Edgar*, which adapts Poe's stories to contemporary times in São Paulo.

In the TV series *The Following*, while providing a reinterpretation of the theme, the configuration of death dialogues with Poe's perspective. In this work, death serves as a means for the antagonist and his followers to elevate their spirits — this is directly related to Poe's vision, but the only way to achieve it is through murder.

Thus, we intend to analyze how death is depicted on the show as seen through the eyes of the character Joe Carroll, and how the show engages directly with Poean's concept of death: but most importantly, we intend to showcase how the show represents and reconfigures the idea of beauty presented in Poe's poems. Thus, the main focus of this thesis is on Poe's lyrical writing, specifically his poems *The Raven* and *Lenore*. But, when necessary, we turn to his prose, since we have established that the show deals directly with these two writing modes, which was important for understanding death on the show.

¹ Para muitas pessoas é extremamente inquietante tudo o que se relaciona com a morte, com cadáveres e com o retorno dos mortos. (nossa tradução).

Furthermore, we question how the series by Fox Network achieves the aesthetic effect of death through the filmic elements of *mise-en-scene*, given that Poe attains the desired effect in his poems through the deliberate use of words and everything that refers to them in literary construction, such as tone, atmosphere, space, and other aesthetic elements of literary language. As a result, it is critical to identify how this perspective of death manifests itself in two distinct semiotic languages: Poe's literature and the television series, which will be examined through the lens of cinematographic language, based on the first season of TV series, focusing mainly on its pilot episode and the eighth episode entitled *Welcome home*.

Furthermore, we consider that this research can be useful in future studies because the TV series deals with a few interesting themes, such as questions of self and the effect of the *doppelganger* through the characters of Joe Carroll and Ryan Hardy — two sides of the same coin — as well as Carroll with Poe himself.

That being said, this research is divided into three sections: in the first section we establish a general framework of death throughout place and time and how it developed to be an unpleasant topic in modern society and how it affected its representation in literature. We based our research on the studies of Ariès (1954), Davies (2005), Fonseca and Testoni (2011). The second we talk about Film and Television adaptation, how they came to be and how it affects the adaptation of literary works based on the studies of Stam(2000), Hutcheon (2006) and Cartmell (2012) Finally, in the last section we display how the TV series *The Following* adapts the Poean's aesthetic of death and how it reshapes the idea of beauty defined by Edgar Allan Poe.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 On death

Death is an inevitable human condition from which we cannot escape. It is a subject with which we have had direct or indirect contact since our childhood. It can manifest itself through religious doctrines taught to us by our parents or even through recreational representations in children's television programs such as cartoons. It is worth noting that, while many of these representations do not make complete sense to children, when we consider the social criticisms behind the animations, we, as children, understand the relationship established with different forms in which we can deal with death. A clear example of this can be found in the *Tom and Jerry* animated series, when several cats tied together in a plastic bag enter the gates of heaven. The younger audience may not understand the criticism portrayed about human cruelty, but they are aware that those kittens are no longer alive.

Douglas J. Davies (2005) addresses this issue by categorizing how we deal with death in four distinct ways: mourning, the death of others, personal awareness of death, and our own death. The author also points out that our first encounter with death is usually through the death of someone else, so it does not have a strong impact on our lives because we still do not fully comprehend the world around us. As previously stated, this is a theme that is common in our daily lives as humans; after all, we have always seen death represented in fiction, or we have been made aware of someone's departure. Only when someone close to us dies do we get a sense of the impact of death on our lives. And it is through these kinds of experiences, as well as our own growth and evolution over time, that we develop different perspectives on death. Considering the author we will be discussing in this dissertation, we can see that the losses of the women in Edgar Allan Poe's life, his birth mother, foster mother, and his wife Virginia, had a significant impact on him — women who supported him and whose deaths had a profound impact on his lyrical and fictional writing on the subject of death, as we will see later on.

Humans have always sought ways to comprehend their surroundings, from natural phenomena to metaphysical issues such as death. So, when we look at the history of humanity, we can see that in the past, they explained things they couldn't understand by claiming the existence of divine beings who created and controlled such things. Thus, by associating elements like fire, seasons, and matters like love — among many other non-physical

phenomena — with deities, humans were able to imagine ways to make sense of and explain the world. However, when we consider death (and other metaphysical concepts), we notice that we are still trying to understand it.

We have a much better understanding of the world today. We know that fire, thunder, the seasons of the year, and many other natural processes are not the work of mythical beings. However, there is still the presence of divine creatures to explain non-physical matters. Hence, when it comes to death, even though we understand how the natural process occurs in a scientific sense, we cannot say with certainty that there is nothing beyond. Subsequently, there are thousands of religious perspectives that attempt to explain what lies beyond death. Some religions, such as Christianity, believe in an afterlife, while others, such as Judaism, believe in resurrection and/or reincarnation. Because people are unable to respond to such inquiries, death instills fear. In fact, when it comes to the general public's perception of death, fear is the most commonly recognized response when people contemplate their end.

Thereupon, one method that people discovered for overcoming their fear of dying was to create stories and fictional representations of death. Consider the Old Norse practice of water burial, for example: when we read viking narratives or actual history, we see that they used to put the bodies of important people on a boat and send them into the ocean. They believed it would aid the deceased's journey to the afterlife, where they would be returned to the gods, implying they did not believe death was the end. These types of narratives we see throughout history are a way to deal with the dread of death, because “one essential objective of the death narratives then is to act as subliminal ways of naturalizing the fear of death and dying” (KUNDU, 2015, p.10).

And, despite the fact that death has become something that people try to avoid in modern times, as we will discuss later, people continue to seek ways to redefine the role of death in their lives. They may choose to view it merely as a natural process of life, or they may attach a deeper meaning to it. And, admitting that death is generally regarded as unfavorable, some people regard it as a pleasant outcome. One example is the recent popularity of a new subgenre of Japanese fantasy literature in Western countries. Because of the pressures of social expectations placed on individuals as society develops, as well as other issues that arise as a result, the *isekai*² genre has grown in popularity both in and outside of Japan. For instance, one *isekai* that gained popularity recently is *That Time I got Reincarnated as a Slime*, the plot revolves around a salaryman who is murdered and reincarnates as a slime

² The plot in this genre revolves around a character (s) that is transported or gets reincarnated in a different world. Available at: <<https://mangaplanet.com/what-is-isekai/>> accessed at: 10 jun. 2021.

with unique abilities in a sword and sorcery world, where he gathers allies to form his own nation of monsters. Even though the genre does not revolve around the theme of death, it is (generally) through death that the characters of these stories are transported to a better and different world from their own.

To begin understanding this relationship between death and fear of death, we will briefly consider a couple of things: the geographical and historical context of death. First, for the sake of consistency, we will discuss how our views on death are shaped by our geographical context. If we compare the geographical context in terms of Western and Eastern countries and cultures, we observe that the perspective on death is quite distinct. Although it is worth noting that we cannot generalize how different civilizations understand death because, after all, we are diverse beings who embody a wide range of cultural and religious diversity.

The customs and behaviors of Eastern people are one of the most noticeable differences, when contrasting the East to the West, where people are thought to be more open-minded, able to express themselves and deal with issues that are taboo in the East. Eastern countries are more conservative and traditionalist in nature (although, we observe the West has become more conservative in recent years), this is primarily due to the religious influence that exists in the East, and despite the diversity of religions, they are not used to going against religious conventions, particularly those that have a significant impact on their lives, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. As a result, these influences shape how they deal with things like death, just as the Jew and Christian traditions have a strong influence on Western countries' perceptions about death.

According to Christine Ma-Kellams and Jim Blascovich (2012), one of the ways Eastern countries develop their awareness of the world is through a variety of lay theories. These theories are common folk knowledge or beliefs that guide how people understand the world around them. Westerners, according to Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2012, p. 773), follow a linear and Aristotelian logic.³ Whereas "Easterners tend to endorse holistic views that emphasize the inherent contradiction and coexistence of both positive and negative elements in all things". As a result, we can see that the concept of death in East Asia is closely intertwined with the concept of life. Because they understand the world as a whole made up of parts and their interconnections. While in Western countries, particularly among European

³ Theory created by Aristotle to explain the process of formulating human reasoning, following the understanding that it is possible to conclude a certain subject from preliminary notions. Available at: <<https://super.abril.com.br/mundo-estranho/o-que-e-logica-aristotelica/>> accessed at: 03 Jun. 2021.

Americans, we recognize that there is no such concept of death as a whole, but rather an attempt to abolish and demonize death in order to find a “symbolic and literal immortality” (IBID, p. 773).

Death is demonized because fear is the most common reaction when people consider their eventual death. “THE OLDEST and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown” (LOVECRAFT, s.d, n.p). And since we do not know what happens after we die, this unpredictability provokes terror, and because fear of the unknown can be distressing, "humans evolved coping strategies to defend themselves against their own mortality" (IBID, p. 773). However, fear is what has allowed us to survive as a species, it also meant that:

The unknown, being likewise the unpredictable, became for our primitive forefathers a terrible and omnipotent source of boons and calamities visited upon mankind for cryptic and wholly extra-terrestrial reasons, and thus clearly belonging to spheres of existence whereof we know nothing and wherein we have no part. (LOVECRAFT, s.d, n.p).

And with our ability to dream, it was natural to create ways to deal with such questions. It is worth noting here that, while fear of death is largely universal, "culture arbitrates the approaches individuals use to cope with it" (IBID p. 774). And because Easterners see the world as a whole divided into parts and their relationships, and because they do not handle aspects of their lives as a single entity, but in conjunction with other correlated things, notably with other entities, their worldview on death is generally positive. This holistic perspective is important in how they understand death. Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2012, p. 775) argue that East Asians paradoxically comprehend death as a result of cultural and religious mediation. Thus, when confronted with the reality of death, the fear of it causes them to reflect more on life, turning to activities that reflect this attitude, such as going for walks and enjoying every minute of their lives. While European-American countries are more concerned with death, therefore, they adopt a more defensive worldview. Thereupon, they tend to avoid things that remind them of their demise and rely on the belief that life is not the end. With that in mind, it is no wonder why so many people in western countries would find unusual authors dealing with death as something liberating and beautiful.

The historical context, in other words, the dimension of time, is the second point we must not overlook in our dissertation about our perception regarding death. We will discuss the historical framework primarily through the lens of our reality, that is, only the context relevant to a Western civilization point of view.

Considering the beginnings of humankind, one thing that distinguishes us from other animals is the fact that we are aware of our own death. The awareness that life is inherently limited is the starting point for individuals to begin performing funeral rites in order to deal with the emotional impact that death had on them. Although some scholars argue that burying bodies is not a sign of awareness and could simply be the disposal of a decomposing corpse for the sake of keeping themselves away from it, others argue that these funeral rites were a sign that the first humans were interested in staying connected to the dead. What we must remember is that “what has changed with time and varied greatly from society to society is the interpretation given to burial and cremation” (DAVIES, 2005, p. 49). Ariès (1974) also argues that, in fact, these funerary practices not only served to keep ancient people connected to the dead, but also served as a means for pre-Christian civilizations to keep the dead from returning to disturb them. This means that, over time, the meaning of death changes according to the needs of the historical moment in which individuals find themselves, which implies that “over the course of history, the way in which we deal with death has changed significantly” (FONSECA and TESTONI, 2011, p. 159).

Philippe Ariès (1974) discusses how shifts in the perspective of death changed over time to become something negative in modern days. The most important thing to remember is that, according to Ariès, death was intimate and familiar during the Middle Ages. That is, the dying person did not fear death because, in that context, it was an entrance to heaven, at least for Christians who were in harmony with the church. However, such perception was altered in the 12th century, when the concept of the final judgment, based on the biblical book of Matthew, which addresses the resurrection of the dead and the separation of just and wicked men, was introduced — as well as the emerging concept of Christ's second coming. This meant that death was no longer something intimate and familiar, but rather an event with a series of protocols that families had to follow, and which imposed a greater emotional burden on the dying individual. And since “in pre-modern times, death at a young age was common due to living conditions and medical practices.” (FILIPPO. 2006, p. 04), and because it was a common and expected event, “in the past death in bed was a solemn event, but also an event as banal as seasonal holidays” (ARIÈS, 1974, p. 59). Therefore, death was not something unusual.

This short life expectancy is reflected in Edgar Allan Poe's poetry and fiction. Poe, as previously stated, lost the most important women in his life when they were young. This had a profound impact on his writing, as well as his perception of death and dying young as

something melancholically beautiful. Taking his poem *Lenore* as an example, we can see how the theme of a beautiful woman dying young is represented throughout the poem.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl!—the **spirit flown forever!**
 Let the bell toll!—a **saintly soul floats** on the Stygian river:—
 And, Guy De Vere, hast thou no tear?—weep now or never more!
 See! on yon drear and rigid bier **low lies thy love, Lenore!**
 Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung!—
 An anthem for the **queenliest dead that ever died so young—**
 A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she **died so young** (POE, 2006, p. 417, our highlight).

We notice then how Poe constantly repeats the idea of death at a young age through the beautiful Lenore that died, and died so young (IBID, 417) throughout his lyrical writing.

However, from the 19th century onward, death is no longer something banal. People have a hard time dealing with the departure of their loved ones. This mentality shift means that, when someone was terminally ill, the family would try to spare the dying individual from further suffering. But, in reality, they were attempting to shield themselves from the pain that came with it. As a result, the rituals performed for the dying person and people's mourning became unsettling, not only for those who had just lost someone, but for society as a whole. Therefore, with this mentality shift, a new sentiment about death emerged:

One must avoid [...] the disturbance and the overly strong and unbearable emotion caused by the ugliness of dying and by the very presence of death in the midst of a happy life, for it is henceforth given that life is always happy or should always seem to be so (ARIÈS, 1974, p. 87).

Agnieszka Kaczmarek's words (2015, p. 26) also supports these arguments:

Paradoxically, in the face of the irreducibility of the experience of death, in the mid-20th century death fell into the sphere of silence and tabooization; it has entered the territory of privacy, discretion, or even embarrassment in very modern, liberal societies.

This emotional distancing from the uneasiness in the face of death, as well as the development of society, which resulted in the physical detachment from death in the sense that it was no longer the family's responsibility to care for a dying person, but for them to be sent to die in the care of hospitals. And, as science and medicine advanced with ways to extend someone's life, as well as the relocation of cemeteries to the outskirts of cities for sanitary reasons, all of these events shaped our contemporary understanding of death, creating

a feeling of dread when dealing with it. As a result, as Ariès (1974, p. 85) observes, "death, so omnipresent in the past that it was familiar, would be effaced, would vanish. It would become shameful and illegal."

Thus, when we consider the terror we have in relation to death, how individuals represent and express themselves regarding death is important to how we deal with such fear. We briefly discussed the representation of death throughout history, and how people tried to make sense of the world through funeral rites and so on; one example we can give is the Egyptian preoccupation with the concept of an afterlife and their mummification rituals, which according to Devaleena Kundu (2015, 10):

Mummies were a mode of memorial carry over and therefore had a value at par with other artistic representations of the dead. They were believed to preserve the hope of resuscitation and assure an overall continuity in the afterlife. Yet, having domesticated the verity of death, the Egyptians continued to be visibly unsettled by it.

These artistic representations of the dead — and particularly death — come in many forms throughout history. A quick internet search reveals representations of death in art, such as skulls, decaying plants, hourglasses, and so on. Their meanings differ throughout time, but we can observe some similarities in how it is portrayed.

However, for our research, the most important artistic representation of death is its portrayal in literature and audiovisual arts, and how the fear of death is dealt with. Referring back to what we have discussed, fear is not a bad thing, it helps us to survive as a species. However, because of our evolved awareness:

we remember pain and the menace of death more vividly than pleasure, and because our feelings toward the beneficent aspects of the unknown have from the first been captured and formalised by conventional religious rituals, it has fallen to the lot of the darker and more maleficent side of cosmic mystery to figure chiefly in our popular supernatural folklore (LOVECRAFT, s.d, n.p).

And because of this we tend to distance ourselves to the uncertainty of dying. Thereupon, we see that literature is a way to deal with these matters, and many authors and poets have tried to express and redefine their fear of death in a certain way. John Keats for instance, in his poem *Ode to a Nightingale* depicts death as the union of man with nature while distancing himself — or the poetic persona — of literal death.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow (KEATS, on-line).⁴

We can understand by the following except that the nightingale symbolizes nature, and the peacefulness of death which the poetic persona urges to feel after he dies and becomes one with it. On the other hand, we can mention Emily Dickson's poem *Dying*, which according to Sudha Swarnakar (2007, p. 37) "in Miss Dickinson we get 'a stress', 'a buzz' or 'a funeral' like state which slowly takes over her being." Thus, we experience an author depicting the experience of the phenomena of death. And because:

children will always be afraid of the dark (...) no one need wonder at the existence of a literature of cosmic fear. It has always existed, and always will exist; and no better evidence of its tenacious vigour can be cited than the impulse which now and then drives writers of totally opposite leanings to try their hands at it in isolated tales, as if to discharge from their minds certain phantasmal shapes which would otherwise haunt them (LOVECRAFT, s.d, n.p).

These artistic representations, whether in the arts or in literature, serve to express not only an individual's fear, but also the terror of a community as a whole. When in the midst of 1300s, the continents of European and Asia were being devastated by the Black Death, the emergence of works and paints depicting the terror of global epidemic arose. Edgar Allan Poe was one of the writers that later on would write about the plague in his short story *The Masque of Red Death*, where a prince and his rich friends enclose themselves into a castle while the plague wrecks the outside world.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys (POE, 2006, p. 37).

But eventually, the Red Death reaches them, too — which depicts the concept of the all-conquering and equalizing power of death known as the dance of death or danse macabre, represented in music, poetry and visual arts, which arose due to people's obsession with death caused by the plague.

⁴ Disponível em: <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44479/ode-to-a-nightingale>> Acesso em: 07 abr. 2022.

3 Film and television adaptations

Film adaptations have become extremely popular in the 21st century. In fact, adaptations, in general, are not something unusual when we think about it. When we examine human history, we observe that the act of adapting things is not a new concept to us. An example we can mention is, some poets or authors absorbed by a work of art would transpose their impressions into a different medium, as shown in Van Gough's 1889 painting *The Starry Night*, which inspired Anne Sexton's 1981 poem by the same title. Shakespeare's plays are another example that can be debated, as it is well known today, some of the plays written by the English bard were inspired by stories from different places: such as *Hamlet*, which the author had adapted to be performed on stage from an old Finnish story called *Tale of Kullervo*.⁵ With the invention of cinema, people grew keen on adapting their beloved literary works to the big screen.

Cinema in its earliest stages emerged in 1895 with the Lumière brothers. Although some researchers disagree on who should be acknowledged as the pioneer of cinematography Technologies. Hence, we will acknowledge the most recognized argument that the French, photographic manufacturing brothers developed, or enhanced the cinematographic motion-picture technology. In 1895, they were also the first to screen short films, and today, they are considered the 'fathers of cinema'. It is crucial to note, however, that other countries were researching similar technology based on their expertise of photography prior to the Lumière brothers. Therefore, other countries, such as the United States, followed suit once the French brothers developed the cinematographic motion-picture technology and film production started a few years later.

In the early years of Cinema, people had numerous questions about the film industry's role. However, its importance in terms of "technological, social, and economic terms quickly became apparent" (CARTMELL, 2012, p. 17). But, the main concern was how this new technology should be used. Deborah Cartmell and Linda Hutcheon, for example, seem to agree that cinema, and hence film adaptations for that matter, can serve a variety of purposes. Then, the issue was:

What did they do best? Through what sort of subjects could they most effectively broadcast their technological wizardry, showcase their artistry, and maximize their returns? Was this a medium for recording the world with previously untapped verisimilitude, or a medium in which the fantastical imaginary could be given rein as

⁵ Collection of several texts, including a prose version of the Kullervo cycle in Elias Lönnrot's Karelian and Finnish epic poem Kalevala, written by J. R. R. Tolkien. More information available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Story_of_Kullervo.

never before? A vehicle for exploring life as it was, or life as it might be? A medium of description or creation? A mechanism or an art form? (CARTMELL, 2012, p. 17).

In light of the vast technological and economic opportunities presented by cinematography, this new media was mostly employed for scientific purposes.

Fiction movies, nonetheless, did not take long to gain popularity among the general public. It is important to note, however, that even though “fiction narratives were usually simple and frequently took the form of comedies” (ABRAMS, BELL, UDRIS, 2001, p. 121), they provided a means for people to escape from their daily struggles. As reminded by Nathan Abrams, Ian Bell, and Jan Udris (2001, p. 12), the United States was in a time of distress between 1929 and 1949, and one of the ways in which individuals sought escapism was through fiction narratives.

The Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and the Second World War. In 1929 the Stock Market crashed, plunging millions of Americans into poverty. Banks were closed, farms were ruined, and many lost their jobs in the subsequent depression, the likes of which had never been witnessed in American history.

This is significant because it shows that the film business is shaped not just by economic factors (HUTCHEON, 2006; CARTMELL, 2012), but also “permeable to historical and social tensions” (STAM, p. 2000, p. 14).

Now, with the increasing popularity of filmmaking, adaptations of fiction narratives were a great way to meet the public's demands. As previously stated, adaptations are not new or exclusive to the cinema. There were adaptations before the advent of the motion-picture system, as we have mentioned before with stories adapted to be performed on stage. But, on top of that, radio was also a new medium fairly prominent in the 20th century; reading of children's stories to be dramatized were quite popular. But at the same time, fiction raised some concerns about their influences. One of the key concerns we observe, particularly in the beginning of cinema, is the film's potential democratization effect (STAM, 2000; CARTMELL, 2012).

Some people were worried that movies would have a negative impact on individuals. Robert Stam (2000, p. 25) argues that this mostly was a reflection of two ideas individuals had regarding cinema:

From the beginning, there were simultaneous tendencies to either over-endow the cinema with utopian possibilities, or to demonize it as a progenitor of evil. Thus while some promised that the cinema would reconcile hostile nations and bring peace to the world, others gave the expression to 'moral panics,' the fear that film might contaminate or degrade the lower-class public, prodding it toward vice or crime.

Cinema could also put society's moral standards in jeopardy. Movies had the potential to disseminate principles and ideas considered immoral or taboo. And since “the cinema was an irresistible target for those seeking a root cause for the social calamities” (CARTMELL, 2012, p. 61) films that were deemed inflammatory to society's morality began to be restricted.

However, despite the fact that many people saw the cinema as a potential threat to their morals, they recognized its ability to disseminate their own ideals. As previously stated, during the years that the United States were in a period of crisis, cinema was considered a way for people to escape from their realities — but also a way for the government to spread their beliefs and propaganda. For instance, during the second World War, cinema was quite important because:

Not only did it provide a diversion from the war, but its help was also enlisted in fighting the war. Studios helped to sell war bonds, they made training and information films, and assisted in producing and disseminating propaganda coordinated by the Office of War Information's Bureau of Motion Pictures, such as Frank Capra's 'Why We Fight' series (ABRAMS, BELL, UDRIS, 2001, p. 13).

Thus, this democratization effect is an important factor when we think about fiction. Cinema, like other mediums, presents a potential to put us in a position of equality, enabling us to better understand social, political and historical issues, as well as our place in the world (STAM, 2000; CARTMELL, 2012). And adaptations play an important role in this process, because “adaptation is the art of democratization, a ‘freeing’ of a text from the confined territory of its author and of its readers” (CARTMELL, 2012, p. 08). Despite this, cinema faced a lot of censorship, because a good movie should promote good morals, and cinema threatened that. This censorship is one of the reasons that, according to Cartmell (2012), filmmakers turned to adapting literary narratives, especially from classic literature, as a way to protect themselves.

Aside from preventing films from being restricted, adaptations also allowed viewers to connect with the story more easily. According to Cartmell (2012), during the silent period,⁶ filmmakers would adapt well-known narratives because audiences were familiar with them, allowing them to comprehend the plot without relying on dialogue. Another argument for this practice, according to the author, is that by incorporating classic stories, the value of the cinematic production as an artistic form of expression would be elevated. When considering the scope of translation, one common practice we noticed was that some authors would claim their (original) works as translations of other works in order to increase the approval of their

⁶ Period ranged from 1894 to 1929, when several motion pictures were created and shown in theaters on large screens.

writing. A similar practice can be seen in filmmaking, since “one way to gain respectability or increase cultural capital is for an adaptation to be upwardly mobile” (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 91). Which has led the film industry to be criticized by numerous academics as being unduly reliant on literature.

This brings us to some arguments highlighted by Stam (2000, p. 11-12) regarding the idea of medium specificity, that is, an approach that “assumes that each art form has uniquely particular norms and capabilities of expression.” Some academics argued that cinema should rely on its medium's unique elements to make better use of motion-picture technology to convey emotion in a visual context that words could not always achieve, rather than depending on different art mediums to construct its narratives.

Stam (2000) points out that the question also raises the issue of a perception of hierarchy among the many artistic forms. Even though adaptations were fairly popular when it came to stories adapted to other arts, such as the adaptation of narratives to be staged, when we think about cinema, we notice that adapted works are considered inferior to the textual source. For both Hutcheon and Stam, cinema is not bound by other arts, it can express things sometimes better than words can. This is because of “cinema's audiovisual nature and its five tracks authorize an infinitely richer *combinatoire* of syntactic and semantic possibilities” (STAM, 2000, p. 12, author 's italics). And although cinema does have a few limitations, given that “a film has to convey its message by images and relatively few words” (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 01), it still can be — *and must be* — autonomous.

Preliminary studies on film adaptation also contributed to the idea that cinema is inferior to literature. The reason for this is that in order to screen a film based on a novel, directors exclude some parts of a story. As a result, many people regarded film adaptations as a mutilation of classic literature. People usually still demand a certain amount of “fidelity”, in other words, an identical recreation of a story they like with no alterations whatsoever. However, when thinking about cinematographic studies, we have to keep the following questions in mind: What is adaptation, and why adapt something?. As asserted by Hutcheon (2006, p. 07), the answers to these questions are that:

[a]daptation is repetition, but repetition without replication. And there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying.

Adaptations are, thus, a repetition of a source narrative, but they do not have to be a replication of one system sign language to another. Because, like we have pointed out previously, cinema is shaped by social, political, historical and even personal influences.

For instance, by developing our research regarding the theme of death, specifically the representation of Edgar Allan Poe's take on death on a television series, we can fathom why a screenwriter would want to adapt any of his works. If we think in economic terms, Poe is one of the most popular writers in American literature, and everyone with an affinity to literature has most certainly read anything written by him, or at the very least knows who he is. Thus, a filmmaker will probably attract a numerous viewing crowd by adapting any of his narratives. Therefore, an adaptation like *The Following* would have a fixed audience. This is mainly because “since the beginning of cinema [and television], adaptations have been a staple of the business of film” (CARTMELL, 2012, p. 02, our commentary).

Due to a bigger audience, adaptations can also encourage the general public to learn more about and consume the adapted author's works. This is a typical practice these days, particularly in Asian countries. For example, anime has become incredibly famous around the world, and the majority of the animations we watch today are adaptations of manga or light novels.⁷ The main goal of most of these animations is to encourage viewers to purchase the anime's textual source. On top of that, *The Following* would serve as a tribute to Poe's legacy regarding American literature, as well as a way for the general public to discover more about him.

Another question on the matter mentioned before, and it's worth reiterating, is that the social, historical, and cultural background, as well as political or moral motivations –among many others– all play a role in the adaptation process. In the previous chapter, we have written about men's relationship with death since ancient times, and we observed how, as a result of the aforementioned factors, our views on death have evolved over time. We also mentioned that death today is an unfavorable topic in contemporary society. Thereby, we must consider how these factors influence filmmaking, and what the key idea the screenwriters aim to convey.

For example, by considering death to be regarded as something adverse, death is frequently depicted as being evil or destructive on the screen. When we consider *The Following*, we can see that there is a contrast between death as destruction and life, depending on the characters' and viewer's perspectives. We may then presume that this was a deliberate plot development that the director wanted to portray, as it is something we find when comparing Poe's short stories to his poems.

⁷ Manga is a type of graphic storytelling unique to Japan. A light novel is a novella-type story that includes illustrations. More information available at: <<https://comicbook.com/anime/news/whats-the-difference-between-manga-light-novels/#2>>

It is a characteristic that we must consider when watching a film, or any cinematographic work for that matter. Because the filmmaker may simply be presenting a widely accepted idea, or he seeks to defy that conventional view. And, according to Hutcheon (2006, p. 85), when filmmakers adapt a literary work to film — *or another audiovisual medium* — they are not necessarily thinking only about the financial and entertaining aspects, but also “a profoundly moralistic rhetoric often greets their endeavors.” *The Boys* is a good illustration of this: Throughout the streaming series available on Amazon Prime Video, there are several socio-political critiques as well as moral shifts, as they show a corrupted society in which the villains are the heroes, and the heroes are the villains, bringing a different perspective to a popular narrative in which heroes are the good guys.

3.1 Discussing TV adaptations

The invention of television, just like the advent of cinema, has sparked several debates over its impact. Since its creation between 1922-1923, television has been the subject of several studies aimed at explaining its economic, technological, historical, and political influence, as well as defining the forms that distinguish this new media. In fact, television studies are fairly vast because it covers a wide range of different genres, and it is continually innovating itself by adopting new forms or combining them to create something new. Therefore, to study television, it is important to understand that:

Television is a broad term that refers to a wide variety of possibilities for the production, distribution, and consumption of electronic images and sounds: it embodies everything that happens in large commercial, state, and intermediary networks, whether national or international, open or paid, as well as what happens in small, low-range local broadcasters and independent producers. To talk about television, we must first identify the *corpus*, that is, the collection of experiences that comprise what we call *television* (MACHADO, 2000, p. 19-20, author’s italics)⁸

Because of the variety of possibilities, a single television format can break out and distinguish itself locally or internationally; thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, we will concentrate solely on the serial narratives genre.

⁸ *Televisão* é um termo muito amplo, que se aplica a uma gama imensa de possibilidades de produção, distribuição e consumo de imagens e sons eletrônicos: compreende desde aquilo que ocorre nas grandes redes comerciais, estatais, e intermediárias, sejam elas nacionais ou internacionais, abertas ou pagas, até o que acontece nas pequenas emissoras locais de baixo alcance, ou que é produzido por Produtores independentes e por grupos de intervenção em canais de acesso público. Para falar de televisão, é preciso definir o *corpus*, ou seja, o conjunto de experiências que definem o que estamos justamente chamando de *televisão*. (nossa tradução).

Serial narratives are the core genre that many critics, such as François Jost, Jean-Pierre Esquenazi and Arlindo Machado, think of when they talk about television. But, in order to understand how that came to be, we must first understand how TV evolved in its early years. Like cinema, television began by broadcasting events from people's daily lives, given that there was no technology to record what was broadcasted at the time. But, unlike cinema, which was primarily used for scientific purposes, television provided a greater leisure time because it was first found in public spaces where people congregate during their spare time (ESQUENAZI, 2010, p. 17).

It is worth noting that some critics believed television could not really compete with cinema in terms of entertainment, thus, it was supposed to rely on delivering information about the world (BIGNELL, 2013, p. 03). Television became wildly popular after 1950, supplanting radio and becoming an inherent element of people's family and domestic lives (ESQUENAZI, 2010, p. 19). This also meant that television had to mold itself according to the habits and rituals of its new audience, providing, then, the entertainment that people expected. Thus, the reality, and requirements of home life prompted screenwriters towards a “greater narrative continuity” (IBID, p. 19).

The reality conditioned to the domestic and family dynamics is one of the factors that led to the emergence of serial productions. The environment around television had shifted. It was no longer an isolated and public event that people would gather to attend every now and then. It was now part of their lives, and because of that, it had to compete with their daily struggles, which means people could not watch television for lengthy periods of time because the real world demanded their attention. Television had to be adjusted to these kinds of demands, since “a product suitable for fluid diffusion models cannot assume a linear, progressive form, with continuity effects tightly tied as in cinema, otherwise the viewer will lose the train of thought every time his attention wanders from the small screen” (MACHADO, 2000, p. 87).⁹ Then, to meet these new challenges, a new format for Television was essential.

This way, serialized narratives proved to be an effective way to address these issues. They “quickly gained strategic importance in an environment that was already created as an industry, supporting rationalization of production” (MUNGIOLI, PELLEGRINI, 2013, p.

⁹ Um produto adequado aos modelos correntes de difusão não pode assumir uma forma linear, progressiva, com efeitos de continuidade rigidamente amarrados como no cinema, senão o telespectador perderá o fio da meada cada vez que a sua atenção se desviar da tela pequena. (nossa tradução)

27)¹⁰ The rationalization allowed the audience to participate in the creative process and meaning of these stories by guessing what would happen next, it helped to keep viewers interested in the plot, and it allowed screenwriters to experiment with new ways to engage the audience by diluting the narratives. And although serialized narratives were not developed by television until the twentieth century, as Machado (2000, p. 86)¹¹ points out, there were other literary genres that exploited this narrative form, such as letters. Therefore, “cinema laid the foundation for today's audiovisual serialization model used by television”, and serialization became the face of television.

There is another issue to address when we consider the new forms that television has assumed, as well as the easier accessibility people had to consume them. It allowed people to watch whatever they wanted from the comfort of their homes or electronic and digital devices like today, which, of course, created a gap between cinema and television. People began to perceive the latter as being shallow or lacking in quality. Television allowed people to watch whatever they wanted whenever they wanted, but critics argued that it provided no actual value, whereas cinema became a place where movies had a greater worth since it featured films based on great novels or films starring well-known actors. Although television was at its peak from 1947 and 1960, the period known as television's Golden Age, when it was still valued by the critics and the public, and when “network programmers experimented with new ways of informing and entertaining while adapting from older media more traditional fare” (BAUGHMAN, 1985, p. 177). From the 1960s onwards, television started to be scorned by the critics and general public as well.

This is due to the fact that television is considered a product of mass media and it is usually considered a low-grade and mainstream product. Although television was highly regarded by the public and critics prior to its explosive growth, the later studies on television have also helped to undermine that important audiovisual form. According to Machado (2000):

There is, in the context of television studies, a serious problem of *repertoire*. We know very little about what television has produced in its more than fifty years of history, or we only know the worst, as if only the worst were in fact *television* (p. 20, author's italics)¹²

¹⁰ rapidamente as formas seriadas ganharam importância estratégica em um meio que já nasceu como indústria, privilegiando lógicas de racionalização da produção. (nossa tradução)

¹¹ O cinema que forneceu o modelo básico de serialização audiovisual de que se vale hoje a televisão. (nossa tradução).

¹² Há, no âmbito dos estudos de televisão, um problema sério de *repertório*. Conhecemos muito pouco o que a televisão produziu nos seus mais de cinquenta anos de história, ou conhecemos apenas o pior, como se só o pior fosse efetivamente *televisão*. (nossa tradução)

Despite the fact that today's television creates remarkable narratives, shows, and serial adaptations, such as *The Boys*, streamed by Prime Video, which follows a group of 'outlaws' fighting against corrupted superheroes, or the so-acclaimed *The Handmaid's Tale* written by Margaret Atwood and adapted and streamed by Hulu. We can see how the prejudice against television, — regarded as a mass media product, and hence, deemed incapable of achieving first-class status — hinders the progress on studies on the field, because “the old idea that, television is a 'service', a broadcasting system, a programming stream, or, in a more 'integrated' sense, a market production, still remains very widely disseminated” (MACHADO, 2000, p. 16).¹³

This brings to the issue of quality, which permeates the history of television studies. But, in terms of television, what is quality? That is, indeed, a tough question to answer. According to Machado (2000), as a society, we are diversified and multifaceted individuals, making it difficult to set a solid definition on such an ambiguous term as "quality" — particularly because television's fundamental core will reflect this diversity.

Television presents a wide range of formats, genres and innovations by combining different forms, such as talk shows, documentaries, reality shows, newscasts and so on, particularly in terms of serial adaptations, which is our primary focus in this research. Thus, it is quite a narrow-minded perspective to not consider these innovations as quality, especially because in terms of diversity “even though television programmes and formats are distributed globally, its local forms are different” (BIGNELL, 2013, p. 04). And, as a consequence, “because television includes so many different programmes, channels and ways of addressing its audiences even at one point in time in a single geographical region, it has proved very difficult for critics and commentators to produce useful general insights into the medium” (IBID, p. 03).

Serial narratives allow viewers to become involved in the plot while also allowing producers to experiment with different formats. Aside from that, Esquenazi (2010) points out that serial narratives allow series viewers to interact with one another. As a result, a show like *The Following* allows viewers and Poe's enthusiasts to discuss each episode aired or the show as a whole. And whether it's a set of critiques or praises, it promotes discussions and, inevitably, a community.

¹³ Permanece ainda muito amplamente disseminada a ideia antiga de que a televisão é um 'serviço', sistema de difusão, fluxo de programação, ou, numa aceção mais 'integrada', produção de mercado. (nossa tradução).

According to Maria Cristina Palma Mungioli and Christian Pelegrini (2013, p. 28)¹⁴ the two most well-known formats of televised fiction that we are familiar with, particularly in American television, are serial (continuous) and series (episodic) productions. The term *serial* designates a visual work “in which the narrative takes place over episodes, with dramatic arcs that span several chapters to a conclusion”. For instance, this format is demonstrated in *The Following*. When we approach the end of the first episode, it appears that the narrative will be wrapped up by the end of it, as it happens in most TV and streaming series. The episode's conclusion, however, introduces the main plot which the show will play out by the end, and this is true for each of its three seasons. Which classifies *The Following*, according to Esquenazi (2010), as an evolutionary series — since we observe the character's development through the story — in a pure installments manner¹⁵ — as the producers use *cliffhangers*¹⁶ to hold the audience's interest.

This, of course, provides television with a natural competence to create elaborate and diverse narratives, as a result of its permutations, which, as previously stated, will be shaped by historical and geographical factors. One example Mungioli and Pelegrini (2013) give, is the hybridization of the two mentioned formats into a single one. The outcome of this hybrid composition may be seen in series like *Supernatural*, aired by CW television, where each episode deals with a new theme, but there is always at least one primary plot to be developed and concluded by the end of each of the show's 15 seasons. *The Following* series by Fox can be classified as part of this diverse narrative; as we can see in the first season, there are specific episodes that deal with themes common to Poe's narratives, such as love, hate, and so on — as a result, there is undoubtedly a format fluctuation.

Now, recalling our discussion on television quality, this is why attempting to define a specific meaning to the term is so problematic. Because television is such a diverse medium with so many options, Machado (2000, p. 25) suggests that we think about the possibilities embedded in the term quality, similarly as we do with cinema, where there are many factors that influence the development of films. As a result, television quality could be as it follows:

[...] (3) a particular competence to explore language resources in an innovative direction, as required by the aesthetic approach. [...] But if television is seen as a collective ritual, quality can be (5) in its power to generate mobilization, participation, national commotion around major themes of collective interest, an approach better identified with the point of view of politicians, whether they are left

¹⁴ A narrativa acontece ao longo de episódios, com arcos dramáticos que atravessam diversos capítulos até uma conclusão (nossa tradução).

¹⁵ folhetim puro*

¹⁶ A cliffhanger is the suspense at the end of an episode that entices us to watch the next episode as soon as possible.

or right. Others, on the contrary, can find more quality (6) in television programs and streams that value differences, individualities, minorities, the excluded, rather than national integration and the encouragement of consumption.¹⁷

As a byproduct, we can conclude that *The Following* is within television value. In that it delves into the specifics of Poe's ability to convey emotion through words in an audio-visual medium. It encourages discussions about death, serial killers, mental health, and a variety of other topics. It fosters a learning community for Poe's works and encourages the consumption of his stories.

¹⁷ (3) uma particular competência para explorar os recursos de linguagem numa direção inovadora, como o requer a abordagem estética. [...] Mas se a televisão é vista como um ritual coletivo, a qualidade pode estar (5) no seu poder de gerar mobilização, participação, comoção nacional em torno de grandes temas de interesse coletivo, abordagem melhor identificada com o ponto de vista dos políticos, sejam eles de esquerda ou de direita. Outros, pelo contrário, podem encontrar mais qualidade (6) em programas e fluxos televisuais que valorizem as diferenças, as individualidades, as minorias, os excluídos, em vez de a integração nacional e o estímulo ao consumo.

4 On Poe's literary aesthetic adapted to *The Following*

The word “gothic” has so many different usages today that it is difficult to pin it down to a definite label. The gothic aesthetic has proliferated and evolved into various forms of expression over time. Particularly after the eighteenth century when the term gained its first negative implications. Thenceforth, it had nothing to do with the Goths or with the Germanic culture anymore, but with the “lack of reason, morality, and beauty of feudal beliefs, customs, and works” that dominated the post-Renaissance period (BOTTING, 2012, p. 13). That being the case, gothic was associated with a barbarous and supernatural past, which opposed the classical tradition of the civilized and humane world. Gothic narratives reject conventionality, which is one of its most defining characteristics. That is why the gothic deals with the unusual — in fact, “when thinking of the Gothic novel, a set of characteristics springs readily to mind: an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the presence of highly stereotyped characters” (PUNTER, 2013, p. 01).

Nonetheless, the growth of the gothic term as an aesthetic manifestation was significant because it provided a means for writers to deal with the “anxieties and fears concerning the crises and changes in the present as with any terrors of the past” (BOTTING, 2012, p. 14). For instance, Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* explores people's fears about the growth of an unbridled science, characterized by a doctor driven by the ambition to give life to a non-living corpse.

Among the many different manifestations of the gothic throughout the centuries, one comes swiftly to mind: the American gothic novel. This new type of gothic narrative, which arose from American writers, added new meanings to the set of characteristics that comprised previous gothic works. This new type of narrative is marked by “landscapes of the mind, settings which are distorted by the pressure of the principal characters' psychological obsessions” (PUNTER, 2013, p. 02). Thus, when it comes to the gothic — particularly the American gothic novel — one name stands out: Edgar Allan Poe. Even among non-scholars, Poe is regarded as one of the most well-known gothic writers. His prolific and dark style left an indelible imprint on American literature.

Poe's horror stories distinguished him from many other gothic writers before his time. The large percentage of it was due to his preoccupation with form and style, as well as his urge to reawaken the roots of classic gothic, seeing as “without a feudal past and those relics so convenient for the European gothicism, castles and monasteries and legends, the American

landscape seemed an unlikely place for such fictions” (PUNTER, 2013, p. 163). As a result, it is common to find Poe's employment of archaic feudal settings in his short stories — and even in some of his poems — to invoke the gothic roots. In *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the narrator is distressed by his friend Usher's castle-like mansion, which bloomed in him "a sense of insufferable gloom" (POE, 2017, p. 115) with its "bleak walls" and "vacant eye-like windows" (IBID, p. 115). In *The Masque of the Red Death*, an enclosed “castellated abbey” (POE, 2006, p. 37) within which prince Prospero tried to conceal himself and his companions from the ‘Red Death’ that was ravaging the country is taken by death. To Death's kingdom in *The city in the sea*, where “Death has reared himself a throne" in a complex with "kingly halls" and "Babylon-like walls" (POE, 2006, p. 415).

Image 1



Abandoned mansion

Image 2



Lighthouse

We observe that in *The Following*, the producers portray these gothic relics of the feudal past by placing the murder scenes in a decaying setting. **Image 1** presents an establishing shot that portrays the abandoned house where Joe Carroll murders the survivor of his previous killings. The directors establish these castle-like structures to evoke the gothic roots that Poe attempted to bring to his stories. **Image 2** presents a close-up shot that shows a lighthouse on the left side of the screen, a reference to Poe's unfinished work *The lighthouse*, and it represents the end of Joe's story, as Sarah — his last surviving victim — was his unfinished work. As a nod to Poe, we see Joe Carroll obsessively trying to wrap up his narratives throughout the first season. Thus, he tries to end his story by killing his wife and Ryan, again, on an abandoned lighthouse, but he fails again. Even his first book, which was an attempt to complete Poe's *The Lighthouse*, was a complete commercial failure. We will return to the significance of his compulsion in our dissertation afterward.

One thing we would like to point out is the establishing shot between **Image 1** (the back of the mansion) and **Image 2** (the entrance), which introduces the house as a *crow* flying through the sky looking down on the mansion and in the sequence Ryan's arrival before entering it. This is a way for us as viewers to infiltrate the core of the characters and their motives. Therefore, just like in *The Raven*, where the crow invades the poetic persona's home and invokes his feeling of grief and loss:

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more (POE, 2006, p. 423).

The establishing shot, then, allows us to peer into the interior of Carroll and his murder of Sarah, since she is not only the completion of his previous “work” but also the prelude of his sequel, which is the first season of the TV series. This is something that the producers explore later when one of Carroll's followers murders someone who has wronged him and we are introduced to the victim by an establishing shot, followed by a close-up of his office with the camera entering through the window, as in the crow in *The Raven*. As a result, the camera plays an important role because it presents itself as "a moving, active creature, a character in the story" (MARTIN, 2005 p. 38)¹⁸. And, as both Pellegrini and Marcel Martin point out, it opens up a variety of interpretation possibilities. We will return to this later on.

As previously stated, the American gothic novel also deals with the landscape of the mind — and Poe is unquestionably a master of it. Hence, not only he restores the gothic setting's roots, but also, through his manipulation of language, creates stories that could be happening in a physical space or just be a construct of his narrator's minds. When we consider the starting phrase from *The Fall of the House of Usher*, “DURING the whole of a dull dark day and soundless day in the autumn of the year” (POE, 2017, p. 115) we can see from the first word of the narrative that Poe is hinting that the story we are about to read could simply be the product of the narrator's tormented mind. Therefore, Poe creates a *quasi*-European gothic setting in his short stories, but his fluid use of language, which Brett Zimmerman (2005) notes is shaped by the needs Poe envisioned for his characters' obsessions, results in ambiguity that makes the reader question the reality of what he is reading, and that characterizes the new American gothic style.

¹⁸ uma criatura em movimento, activa, uma personagem do drama. (Nossa tradução)

The ambiguity between reality and constructs of someone's mind, which is one of the many reasons Poe has proved popular with so many gothic enthusiasts, is not really explored in *The Following*. In truth, the TV series by Fox is more focused on making parallels between Poe's life and the characters on the show. Thus, “a succession of events occurs in which the figure of Poe, ideas about Poe, or his works are used as a resource” to move the plot forward. (RIGAL-ARAGÓN, CORREOSO-RODENAS, 2017, p. 15). To that end, the episodes take place in locations linked with Poe, such as Virginia, which we can observe in **Image I**, where Joe Carroll murdered his victims, and New York, where we are introduced to Ryan Hardy, a former FBI agent assigned to apprehend Carroll. The main characters are also used to reinforce or refute stereotypes about Poe, the insane, loser writer depicted by Carroll, and his alcoholic nature depicted by Hardy. However, in our study, we are not concerned with portraying these representations. Thus, we aim to outline how the Poe's aesthetic is established in the first season in this first part.

When considering Poe's work, there are a few key distinctions to be made between his poems and short stories. For starters, his prose is packed with horror and terror elements, whereas his poetry is often gloomy and mournful. In his fiction, the mingling of horror and terror is achieved because of Poe's deliberate choice of words, since he believed that “in the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design” (POE, 2006, p. 533). And, just as language manipulation is vital in creating the ambiguity between reality and imagination in Poe's stories, it is also how the effect of horror is conveyed to the readers.

The characterization of the setting, then, is critical to creating the ideal impression that the author wants the readers to experience. In *The Raven*, for instance: the poetic persona is suffering from the loss of his beloved Lenore. The poem is set in the “bleak December” (IBID, p. 422), which introduces the concept of death, as December is the last month of the year, symbolizing both the end and the beginning, as it is processed by the new year — which is the new ‘life’ of Lenore in death. Also, the narrator is distressed by grief, “once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary” (IBID, p. 422) when he is visited by a raven — a harbinger of death — seeking shelter in his chamber from a storm in the night. All of these elements symbolizing death, as well as Poe's description of the bird, for instance:

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this **ominous bird of yore**—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore” (IBID, p. 424, our highlight).

They create the right setting to heighten the narrator's anguish, who keeps inquiring the raven about his dead Lenore, and no answer does he get besides the word "nevermore" (IBID, p. 425) resulting in a maddening rage of being away of his beloved.

If we think back about *The Masque of the Red Death*, the characterization of the castle rooms, specifically of the black room, creates the feeling of oppression, that causes the guests of the castle to be afraid of setting foot in it, because of its windows with "a deep blood color" (IBID, p. 38) and an ebony clock that unsettled and led them to see "a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances" (IBID, p. 38). It is interesting to point out that the description of the ebony clock and its effects are very important for the creation of dread upon the readers, as we can observe in the following excerpt:

Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to harken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation (POE, 2006, p. 39)

The reader, then, is prepared for the coming of the "tall and gaunt" figure (IBID, p. 41), with its corpse-like mask, who arrives to take the prince and his friends' life. As a result, every word creates the sense of dread needed to reveal the masked figure, which we come to know as the Red Death, that is, the plague that was ravaging the country in the beginning of the story.

The Following, on the other hand, does not (mainly) tap into the terror created by Poe's stories. The producers then concentrate on the horror aspect of Poe's works, and therefore the television series distinguishes itself through its reliance on the frightening effect provided by shocking imagery. Thus, the horror in the series by Fox is characterized by:

There is always the supernatural, demonic, violent, and unpredictable presence, usually present without explanation or logic and glimpsed at the moment they invade our world [...], [because] unlike the Gothic narrative, the horror tale refuses a rational explanation, appealing to a level of visceral reaction beyond conscious interpretation (2018, p. 139, apud SOARES, BLOOM, 2001, p. 179-180).¹⁹

The few cases where terror is explored in *The Following* happens when the feeling of fear is induced due to the viewer's apprehension, since the producers are dealing with common

¹⁹ Há sempre a presença sobrenatural, demoníaca, violento e do imprevisível, geralmente presentes sem explicações ou lógicas e vislumbradas no momento em que invadem nosso mundo [...], [pois] ao contrário da narrativa gótica, o conto de horror recusa uma explicação racional, apelando para um nível de reação visceral além da interpretação consciente. (nossa tradução).

fears people experience. We can watch this happen in the following scene from the last episode of season one for example:

Image 3



Agent Debra Parker's death

The **Image 3** presents a close-up shot that illustrates the moment where Ryan and agent Weston locate the body of agent Parker. The first half of the episode is centered on rescuing Parker, who has been kidnapped by Carroll's followers and buried alive. Debra became one of the series' central characters, so it is no surprise that the idea of her death unsettles the audience. Every scene in which we witness Parker gasping for oxygen and contemplating her own impending death makes us feel as if we are gasping for air as well. Particularly since it addresses a fairly common and widespread fear: the one of being confined in small spaces — which is common in many of Poe's stories. Referring back to *The Masque of the Red Death*, Prince Prospero, although being in a castle built according to his taste, confines himself and his friends within it, which becomes a prison-like structure and, eventually, his own tomb. This scene also references one of Poe's short stories, *The premature burial*, where the narrator is distressed about being buried alive.

The anxiety caused by these types of fears is what, in his text *The Uncanny*, Freud discusses how the feeling of distress develops. The psychoanalyst establishes a link between what he refers to as *heimlich* (familiar) and *unheimlich* (unfamiliar), and at first, we may believe that uneasiness only occurs when we are unfamiliar with something. However, Freud (1919, p. 340, author's emphasis) observes that "unheimlich is, in some ways, a kind of heimlich"²⁰ that is, it is difficult to distinguish between them because they are correlated, and not everything that is strange may cause us concern.

²⁰ *unheimlich* é, de algum modo, uma espécie de *heimlich*. (nossa tradução)

At this point, Freud discusses specific situations and/or things that cause this unsettling effect in people. For example, repetitions of specific moments, or beliefs and desires we had as children that were suppressed as we grew older and resurfaced at a specific time. Which is the case of **Image 3**, some people may find such a scene, or just the thought of being trapped as unsettling because of a past trauma. This strange-familiar relationship causes us anxiety and anguish, which has an unsettling effect. Another source of concern for the psychoanalyst is when the barrier between reality and fantasy is stripped. Which permeates Poe's stories but not so much in *The Following*. And as Poe enters the realm of common reality in his stories, he effortlessly creates an unsettling effect on his readers.

Furthermore, as Freud (1919, p. 373)²¹ points out:

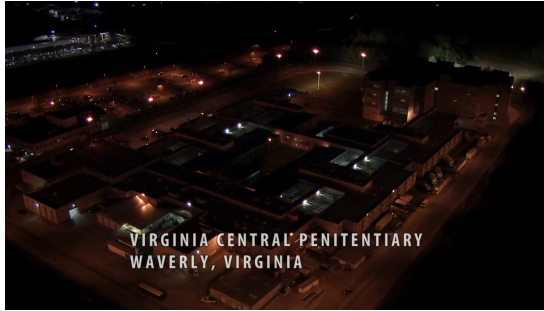
The situation is different when the writer apparently moves within the realm of common reality. So he also accepts all the conditions that are valid for the genesis of the disquieting sensation in real experiences, and everything that produces disquieting effects in life also produces them in the literary work.

Furthermore, another interesting point to note on Freud's notion of the uncanny, according to Marisa Martins Gama-Khalil (2013, p. 20) is the characterizing factor of fantastic literature, because, as the author himself points out, "the fantastic genre happens due to this uncertainty, which causes what Todorov calls hesitation. As a result, this would be the fundamental condition for the existence of the fantastic."²² And it is the construction of this uncertainty in the reader, or even in the characters, that has stood out and influenced gothic productions.

To create such a sense of terror in the viewers, the producers use gloomy, dark settings. Therefore, the ambiance plays a crucial role in achieving this effect, since the majority of Carroll's and his followers' crimes are committed at night.

²¹ A situação é outra quando o escritor, aparentemente, move-se no âmbito da realidade comum. Então ele também aceita as condições todas que valem para a gênese da sensação inquietante nas vivências reais, e tudo o que produz efeitos inquietantes na vida também os produz na obra literária. (nossa tradução)

²² O gênero fantástico acontece em função dessa incerteza, que provoca o que Todorov designa como hesitação. Essa seria, pois, a condição fundamental para a existência do fantástico. (nossa tradução)

Image 4

Prison

Image 5

Sarah's kidnapping

Image 6

Carroll's ritual for killing

Image 7

Dock where Joe's followers almost kill Weston.

Image 4 We have an establishing shot that depicts the location where Carroll was being held before dressing up as one of the guards, killing the security teams, and fleeing. **Image 5** presents a long shot which illustrates the kidnapping of Sarah, Carroll's last surviving victim. Carroll's followers take her to him and kill the guard watching over her, leaving the phrase "Nevermore" as a clear reference to Poe. **Image 6** presents a long shot that illustrates Carroll teaching his student the ritual behind his murder, specifically how to pluck the victim's eyes out. **Image 7** presents an establishing shot that depicts the place in which agent Weston is nearly killed by Carroll's followers. If we return to **Image 1**, the abandoned mansion where Joe murders Sarah and cuts her eyes out, we observe that, just like in *The Raven*, all of these events take place on a gloomy night.

Aside from the fact that these events occur at night, usually in abandoned old buildings, another factor contributing to the development of terror is the absence of a soundtrack in scenes like these. We all know that the presence of soundtracks creates an impression on the viewers; anyone who has watched anime knows how important the soundtrack is in increasing the hype of a fighting scene, for example. But sometimes, it is the lack of soundtrack that attains a specific effect. *The Following* explores the absence of a soundtrack, particularly in

scenes like we have shown above to create the feeling of oppression we get when reading Poe. And it is through the absence of light and soundtrack that the producers are able to elicit the terror of death in the viewers.

Image 8



Security team killed by Carroll before his escape

Image 9



Carroll followers kills herself

While the TV series by Fox does not focus on portraying the terror of death the way we are accustomed to when reading Poe, the materialization of death in *The Following*, as in Poe's fiction "comes slowly 'like a thief in the night,' creating an atmosphere of horror" (SWARNAKAR, 2007, p.34). From the very introductory scene of the TV series, illustrated by the close-up shot in **Image 8**, we are subjected to the horrors of death at the hands of Joe Carroll. In his attempt to escape from prison, he murders the security guards, cutting their throats and throwing their bodies around, blood everywhere. It is something that introduces us to the character's nature and references to the type of violence found in Poe's works. In fact, the first episode is replete with gruesome scenes aimed to stir the audience's aversion while alluding to some of Poe's most well-known aesthetic elements, as illustrated by long shot in **Image 9**, where a follower of Carroll's cult kills herself by stabbing her own eye with a tool, and having her body covered with passages from Poe's short stories.

The degradation of the human mind is another facet of Poe's stories that are depicted in the TV series by Fox. When reading Poe's short stories and some poems, we accompany the characters as they descend even further into their madness. For instance, in *The Raven*, like we have mentioned before, the narrator is suffering from the loss of Lenore, and when a raven enters repeating the word "nevermore", the poetic persona starts to wonder, and subsequently to speak with the intriguing bird, as we can observe in the following stanza:

But the raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking “Nevermore” (POE, 2006, p. 424).

And with each question that the bird answers with the same thing, the poetic persona starts to sink even further into his madding anguish, as we can observe by the increase of the use of dashes and questions in the poem. For instance:

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
 Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”
 Quoth the Raven “Nevermore” (IBID, p. 425).

Another example we can mention is the short story *Tell-tale Heart*, where the narrator tries to convince the ‘reader’ of his sanity by exclaiming how calm he is after killing the old man with the “vulture eyes” (IBID, p. 188):

True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story (IBID, p. 187).

As we can observe from the first paragraph of the short story, Poe uses punctuation to highlight or emphasize his narrator's thoughts, allowing the reader to enter the character's mind. As a result, we can see the deterioration of the narrator's mind as he tells the story. We can see that the narrator's constant repetition of assertions and inquiries as a way to question why anyone would question his sanity is actually a way for us to see how insane he is throughout the story. Thus, the constant repetition of exclamation points and question marks, as well as the overuse of dashes, are intended to indicate that the narrator is descending into madness, as its appearance increases in proportion to the narrator's distress. Until he can no longer control his tormented mind and is forced to disclose what he did.

Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!—

“Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed!— tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!” (IBID, p. 191)

On *The Following*, however, this effect is created by the camera’s extreme close-ups on the characters’ faces, particularly their eyes, which is common in Poe’s writings, and which the director uses to create said effect of the characters descend into madness on the screen, whereas Poe accomplishes that with words.

Image 10



Ryan finds out where Sarah is

Image 11



Joe catches Ryan

Image 12

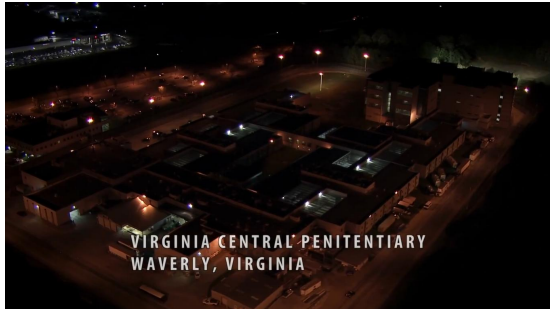


Ryan’s book about Carroll

For instance, the extreme close-up shot in **Image 10** illustrates the moment when Ryan figures out where Sarah was taken by looking at a picture of Carroll followers on a lighthouse. The close-up shot in **Image 11** depicts the moment where Carroll surprises Ryan when he enters the abandoned mansion from **Image I**. We can observe that in the TV series, we get to enter the character’s mind by looking at their eyes provided by these close-ups. Thus, we can see the hatred, the fear, the confusion as their minds break down. This is why the producers emphasize anything relating to sight as shown in the close-up in **Image 12**, because “the eyes are our identity, windows to our soul” (THE FOLLOWING, 2013, episode 01).

Another form the TV series explores the matter of entering the characters' minds according to Margarita Rigal-Aragón and José Manuel Correoso-Rodenas (2017), is the in and out shots when a character is introduced.

Image 13



Outer view of Carroll

Image 14



Inner view of Carroll fleeing prison

Image 15



Outer view of New York

Image 16



Inner View of Ryan's apartment

As we have mentioned previously, the establishing shots serve as a way for us to infiltrate the core of the characters. Thus, the moment that Ryan and Carroll are introduced, we notice that, in **Image 13**, we have an establishing shot of the prison where Carroll is being held, followed by a medium shot of Carroll fleeing the prison in **Image 14**, and finally a close-up shot of the murdered guards that were illustrated back in **Image 8**. In the sequence, in **Image 15**, we have an establishing shot of New York, where Ryan lives, followed by a medium shot of the inside of Ryan's apartment, that follows a close-up shot of him drinking a bottle of water in **Image 16**, where we get to know he has a drinking problem. Another factor to point out here is the setting, we are introduced to Carroll at night, while Ryan in the morning – symbolizing then, a parallel between the characters, Carroll, the bad — Ryan, the good. Furthermore, they represent a parallel of Poe himself, on one side, we have Carroll, the individual obsessed with death, on the other, Ryan, a drunkard — the two sides of Poe.

4.1 The beauty of muder: Reframing Poe's beauty

The most important theme addressed in *The Following* regarding our study is the topic of death, which permeates the American author's narratives. It is almost impossible to think about death without recalling Edgar Allan Poe and his perspective on the subject. This is why it's fascinating to examine how the show represents and reinterprets Poe's perspective on death through the character of Joe Carroll.

In Poe's poems, death and beauty have always been inextricably linked. Beauty is defined as the elevation of the soul, which according to the American author was attained through contemplation of the beautiful, which had everything to do with death, since "the death, then, of a beautiful woman is the most poetic theme in the world" (POE, 2006, p. 548). Indeed, Poe's lyrical literature is replete with beautiful *young women* who met tragic fates but their *beauty* is never forgotten due to their lovers' woes, as we have mentioned previously with *Lenore*. The representation of women in Poe is mainly of young maidens who die truly young. This is due to the fact that "romantics saw childhood as the purest and truest time in man's life. Children embodied innocence and represented an idealized model of mankind for the poet" (REYNAUD, 2013, p. 41). Thus, in Poe's poems, the death of a young woman would mean the preservation of such innocence — and this beauty of the innocence of childhood — of someone not corrupted by society — could only be made immortal in death, as we see in *Lenore*: "**an anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young— a dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young. [...] that did to death the innocence that died and died so young?**" (POE, 2006, p. 417, our highlight).

We observe that this is the reason the unnamed narrator emphasizes Lenore's death, and her death at such a young age, several times. But, more than anguish over her death, we notice that he sings her praises, celebrating her beauty now immortalized in death, because she became "the queenliest dead that ever died so young" (IBID, p. 417).

According to Kevin Reynaud (2013, p. 57):

In Poe's stories, one can notice that Poe tends to argue that a woman's beauty reaches its climax when dying. (...) Moreover, the beloved woman is only seen through the eyes of the enamored narrator who suggests that death has frozen her perfect beauty at its climax thus making it unalterable

This is why in *Lenore*, in the first two stanzas, her beauty is described and praised in death, only in the third stanza does it refer to her physical beauty: "for her, the fair and **debonair**, that now so lowly lies, the life upon her **yellow hair**, but not within her eyes"

(IBID, p. 417, our highlight). This means that there is a kind of beauty that can only be found in death — which means, only in death, Lenore was to be immortalized.

Image 17



Carroll's female victims

Image 18



Carroll's last victim

We observe that this is depicted in *The Following*, since the profile of Carroll's victims fit the profile of Poe's stories, for instance, **Image 17** we have a close-up that illustrates the victims of Carroll's art — *beautiful young women* whom he chooses to immortalize their beauty in death, while elevating his soul through the act of murders. While in **Image 18** we have a close-up of Carroll's last surviving victim on the top-right corner, Sarah. She was one of his college students whom he got mesmerized by, because of her beauty and innocence when answering his question about what beauty is to Poe. He then tries to kill her, but fails and gets imprisoned. Once he escapes from prison he succeeds in killing her. And like Helen in Poe's poem *To Helen*, Sarah becomes the "perfectly crafted work of art" (REYNAUD, 2013, p. 20).

Another adaptation to the TV series is the poetic personas' approach to death. We observe that Guy De Vere — whom we may understand as being Lenore's lover — is not disturbed or enraged with his maiden's death, which causes the other characters of the poem to question his attitude: "and, Guy De Vere, hast thou no tear? — weep now or never more! see! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore" (POE, 2006, p. 417). This is because Guy De Vere perceives death as his lover's liberation from this flawed mortal world, rather than something adverse. And that is why he is enraged by the other unnamed characters' sudden admiration for Lenore, and why he does not show the emotion expected of him — because Lenore achieved perfection in death, and no mortal mouth was worthy of singing her praises:

"Avaunt!—avaunt! to friends from fiends the indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate within the utmost Heaven—
From moan and groan to a golden throne beside the King of Heaven:—

Let no bell toll, then, lest her soul, amid its hallowed mirth—
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damnéd Earth!— (IBID, p. 417- 418, our highlight)

So we can see based on the excerpt above that death is a transition from an imperfect plane of existence to a perfect one. Hence, just like in *For Annie*, where we perceive living as sickness: “thank Heaven! the crisis— the danger is past, **and the lingering illness is over at last— and the fever called ‘Living’ is conquered at last** (IBID, p. 435, our highlight) we understand that death, then, is not a burden, but rather a solution — and as a result, dying is not something the poetic personas in Poe are frightened of.

Image 19



Carroll 's victim

Image 20



Carroll's victim

On *The Following*, however, living is not something unfavorable. The TV series does not portray a negative view on life as we see on Poe's body of works, for instance: the poetic persona in *The Raven* is not troubled by her death, but by the possibility of not being reunited with her after he dies, as we see in the following stanza:

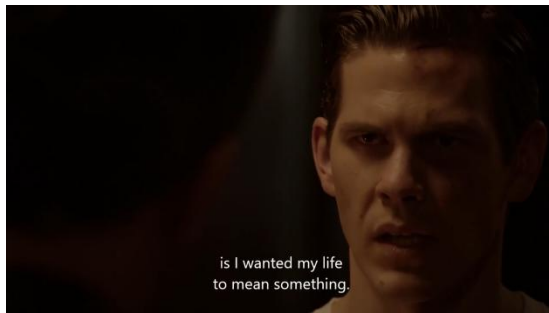
And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
**And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!** (IBID, p. 425, our highlight).

That is the reason why the repetition of the word “nevermore” to answer his inquiries disturbs him so deeply. Thus, in the TV series, living without killing is what we can call it adverse. In the TV series by Fox, killing and dying are the solutions for the characters. For example, in **Image 19 and 20** we have close-up shots of Carroll murders, they illustrate the results of Carroll's way of living and fulfilling his life, as he makes ‘art’ by paying homage to the types of killing we see in Poe's short stories. And while for the characters of *The Following*, life is not a torture as in *For Annie*, or flawed as in *Lenore*, we observe with the

following except, how death is not something to be afraid, but something to be longed, because it is the way for the poetic persona to be reunited with his maiden: “and I—tonight my heart is light:—no dirge will I upraise, but waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!” (IBID, p. 418).

Thereupon, the idea of beauty and death is replicated in *The Following*; however, unlike Poe, the elevation of the soul is achieved through killing rather than contemplation of the beautiful, since Carroll truly believes that killing is the only way to live and achieve soul sublimation/elevation — this is because, for him, the only way to live is to kill, and it is through death that he lives.

Image 21



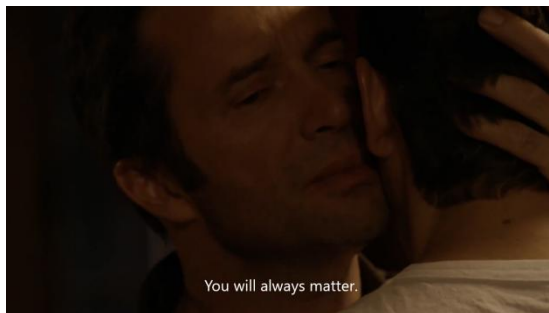
Charlie offers his life

Image 22



Charlie hands Carroll a knife

Image 23



Carroll reassures Charlie

Image 24



Charlie's death

The notion that living is an antagonistic affliction is what allows the poetic persona to be fearless in the face of death, or even fearless of harming themselves, as we see in *For Annie*: “I have drank of a water that quenches all thirst:—” (IBID, p. 435-436) which suggests to us that he drank poison to free himself from the mortal world. We can see in *The Following* that Carroll and his followers do not fear death as well, as a result, they are not afraid to

commit suicide, as seen in **Image 9**, where we presented a long shot of a woman stabbing herself in eye to carry out Carroll's plan, however, the main difference represented in the TV series is that, aside from believing death is a remedy, dying *for* Carroll is the ultimate form of achieving the perfect plane in the afterlife in the eyes of the cult followers, as illustrated by the close-up shot in **Image 21** and the long shot in **Image 22**, where Charlie, after failing to bring Joe Carroll his wife, offers his life to satisfy his cult leader thirst for killing. **Image 23** portrays a close-up shot of Carroll reassuring his follower of his importance, and in the sequence, the long shot in **Image 24** depicts Carroll feeling the rush of the kill.

But the most relevant thing about these sequences of images is the setting. According to Martins, (2005, p. 78) “the setting is also constructed with symbolic interaction in mind, with a focus on stylization and meaning.”²³ Also, the author discusses the importance of the frames to create an artistic substance. We can observe in **Image 24** that the frame of this long shot looks like a painting, which represents the manifestation of the insanity of art for the antagonist. We discussed how the absence of light plays an important role in creating dread on the viewers, but the illumination created by the fireplace in this scene is symbolic. According to the *Dictionary of Symbols* (CHEVALIER, 1986, p. 512) fire can be associated with the ideal of rebirth and purification — people also represent fire as knowledge and life. This infers that, when Joe Carrol kills Charlie, while there is a conflict between what that would mean for the antagonist at this exact time in the narrative — because we can observe he is just satisfying his impulse to kill — for his follower, it is a way for him to be reborn in death and be eternalized in the beauty only found in death. This means that, in death, Charlie found meaning, however, as we discuss later, even though the idea of something larger in death that we observe both in Poe and with Carroll is a way for the antagonist to manipulate his followers, since Carroll truly believes that “in death, there is life, in death, there is love, in death, there is everything” (THE FOLLOWING, 2013, episode 14). The only difference is, how to achieve it.

The setting plays an expressionist role in this scene. Another element important in this scene which we mentioned before is the element of sound, which Martin reinforces its symbolic importance. We discussed the absence of a soundtrack in the crime scenes to create distress previously. However, in the scenes from **Image 21** to **23**, the soundtrack plays an important symbolic role here. While Joe Carroll kills Charlie, an original²⁴ classical music by

²³ Os cenários também são construídos com a intenção simbólica, com a preocupação de estilização e de significação. (nossa tradução)

²⁴ song available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEVk2WcKC-0>>.

John Frizzell is played, which along with the symbolic frame depicted in the long shot from **Image 24** transforms the murder scene into a work of art — as a result, the viewers feel as if they are watching someone creating art rather than killing, which adds to the impact of the scene.

Another relevant matter we come across when comparing the poems we have discussed so far with the TV series is the relationship between the poetic personas with their maidens. We observe that they are so in love with these young maidens, that even after their death, they remain loyal to them — Guy De Vere's heart is at ease because he expects to be reunited with Lenore in death, whereas the poetic persona in *The Raven* fears not being reunited with the maiden by the same name as Lenore, but we notice his unquestionable loyalty to her. If we refer back to the poem *For Annie*, we see that the narrator commits suicide to pursue his beloved Annie — while the love between the poetic persona in *Annabel Lee* is so great that “neither the angels in Heaven above nor the demons down under the sea can ever dissever [his] soul from the soul of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (POE 2006, p. 442, our commentary) and because of this he sleeps by her tomb, “in her sepulchre there by the sea— in her tomb by the side of the sea” (IBID, p. 442) while he awaits to be reunited with her in death.

On the other hand, when we look at this relationship represented on TV through the characters of Joe Carroll and his ex-wife, Claire Matthews, we notice some contradictions. Carroll claims to love his ex-wife, and he spends the majority of the first season attempting to win her back. When he finally captures her and his son and realizes that his plan to reunite his family is going to fail, he snaps and decides to murder Claire. This is because he is obsessed with not leaving any work unfinished. Then, he decides to rewrite her fate, and to make her death serve as a way to break his enemy (who also is in love with Claire), Ryan Hardy.

We observe that this contradictory behavior is caused by two factors. The first is that Joe Carroll is a serial killer, and as such, according to Thiara Ribeiro Santos (2017) he will do anything to satisfy his compulsion. The second is related to the theme of degradation of the mind we discussed in the previous topic. To understand this, we have to keep in mind that we can divide the TV series in two parts. The first being the *past* of the current series of events that we watch during the show that are explored through *flashbacks*.²⁵ The second being the current events we watch unfold after Carroll escapes from prison.

²⁵ A flashback is an event that takes place before a story begins.

Image 25



Carroll teaches Roderick

Image 26



Carroll performs his ritual

When Carroll kills 14 young women before he gets caught and is imprisoned, we can observe that there is a ritual for killing. He does not kill for any reason but making art from his murderous delusions, and eternalizing the young women in death. He is trying to honor his favorite author, Edgar Allan Poe, by paying homage to his greatest stories. Thus, there is a whole process behind the killings. In **Image 25**, we have a long shot of Carroll and his former student — we observe that he wants to teach his art to others, and for this reason, he invites one of his college students, Roderick (alias in reference to Poe's short story *The Fall of the house of Usher*) to learn his killing ritual. **Image 26** presents a long shot that illustrates this ritual, which occurs by following actions: Carroll gauges the victims' fear, listens to their breathing with the intent to sync his breathing to theirs in order to connect to their heartbeats, and until he feels the moment is right to kill them and cut the eyes out. We see that this ritual is his obsession before he gets caught — it is what satisfies his compulsion.

Another important thing to consider is that this killing ritual is how Carroll can feel and elevate his soul through his insane art. In his essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, Poe discusses how each word in a story needs to contribute to the intention or the tone of any work in order to one's soul sublimation, and we have seen how he creates the aesthetic of death and its effects with words in the poems we discussed previously. Similarly, each scene, frame and/or cinematographic resource needs to be chosen carefully to create the expected intention in the TV series, as we observed with the use of angles, frames, soundtracks and illuminations in the shots we have presented. But at the same time, Carroll rituals is the manifestation of the elevation of the soul asserted by Poe (2006, p. 545), since he believed that "it is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul". Thus, the process behind Carroll killing is the materialization of the soul sublimation that Poes is able to achieve with words — thus, just as important as the cinematographic tools are to create the effect of beauty of murder in the viewers, this step by step is important for Carroll

to fulfill his life, and any fluctuation on his *modus operandis* is important to understand the reframing of death presented in *The Following*.

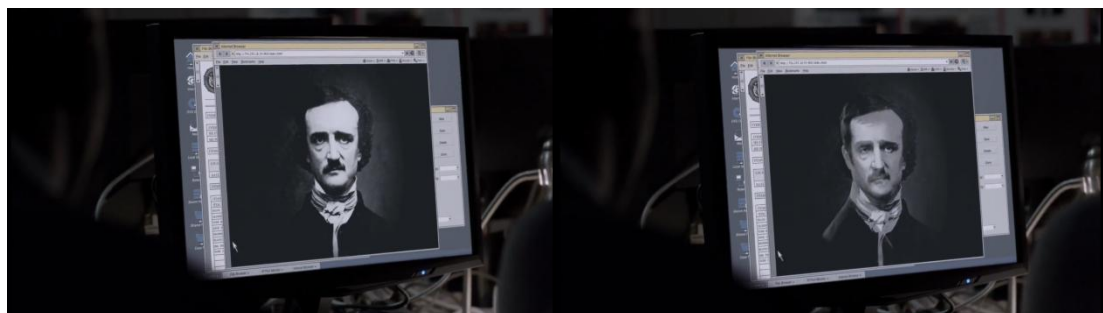
After he escapes from prison, his reasons for killing start to get confusing, since there is a mix between making art and satisfying his thirst for revenge. In fact, it is the plot from the new book, which is the first season we are watching — and similarly with Prince Prospero who got locked up in his castle, Carroll time confined in prison helped to deteriorate his mind, making him descend even more into his madness. It is this conflict between the beauty of death and his compulsion that we follow throughout the first season of the TV series. The close-up in **Image 8**, the guards, and the long shot in **Image 24**, the death of Charlie, illustrate this conflict because he is not killing just young girls as a nod to Poe, but anyone who gets in his way, or that satisfies his urge to kill.

And it is in Carroll's descent into madness because of the deterioration of his mind throughout the first season, that the director is also able to deal with the theme of identity and *doppelganger* that we see in Poe. And even though we won't discuss this issue much further because it is beyond our object of study, it is important that we mention it, since it plays an important role in how Carroll deals with death. According to Tatiana Prorokova (2019, p. 103) the way in which Poe deals with the effect of doppelganger happens

Through numerous vile sins, among which are murder, incest, and alcoholism, Poe investigates how the human mind decomposes, revealing humanity's true nature. One of such manifestations of madness, as Poe makes it apparent in numerous stories, is the problem of mental dualism. Poe's doppelgangers serve to illustrate the existence of the dichotomy of the "good" self vs. the "bad" self, which inevitably results in the split of one's personality.

In the TV series, this is represented through the character of Joe Carroll, since his mind is split between his compulsion, his search of vengeance and his identity that is fluctuating between his own and his so-seemed attempt to become Poe's persona, which affects his *modus operandi*.

Image 27



Poe's portrait

Image 28

The portrait starts to change

Image 29

Joe Carroll's portrait

The close-up shots of the computer screen from **Image 27** to **Image 29** displays this dual persona between Carroll and Poe, when the portrait of Poe slowly starts to become the image of Joe Carroll, or in the last episode when Ryans insults Poe, Carroll loses his composure because he feels as if it was him who was insulted.

Image 30

Ryan and Joe face each other

There is also a parallel between Ryan and Carroll themselves, which could be explored as illustrated by the close-up shot in **Image 30**. Like we have mentioned before, they are a representation of Edgar Allan Poe's life, Carroll the writer obsessed with death, and Hardy, Poe's drinking problem. Thus, we observe that the TV show also deals with the theme of split personality through the protagonist and antagonist as well. But these are possibilities for future studies.

We observe a parallel between these two poems here analyzed, and we notice that the ideas expressed in them are represented and changed in *The Following* because of Carroll's madness. Carroll believes that death is not the end, and it is with this belief that he maintains control over his followers. This is why they kill even themselves if needed, because they believe that they must kill in order to elevate their souls in life, and that when they die, they

will reach the perfect plane of soul sublimation and rebirth. Poe's lyrical writing, which according to Jiaqi Yin (2018, p. 24), is similarly infused with the idea of something beyond death since "Poe thought that it was hard for people in this particular world to feel that extreme beauty which can only be touched through death." We can observe this in the poems we have discussed so far, because death is a way for the poetic personas to reunite with their maiden, and to immortalize their beauty into the extreme beauty that can only be attained in death — whereas in *The Following*, this only happens through murder or self-sacrifices for Joe Carroll.

Finally, we can see that the TV series does a good job of adapting Poe's stories to its plot, bringing the horror of Poe's fiction to the small screen. Even though the producers do not delve deeply into the terror of the American writer, they are able to elicit the same sense of terror that we have with Poe's literary writing. Finally, *The Following* takes the idea of the beauty of death depicted in Poe's poems to its full extremes while retaining its original essence of soul sublimation.

Final remarks

We started writing this research with the intention of analyzing how the TV series *The Following* adapts Edgar Allan Poe's texts to the small screen. However, during the research process, we were able to comprehend so much more about the topic of death and how it evolved throughout history, which expanded our understanding and analysis of the TV series as well as the poems. We comprehend how the subject of death has been represented throughout history and in different places as something positive or negative respectively. And, in particular, how the fear of death has shaped our perspective on the matter, both evolutionary and culturally. We observed how these representations made their way into artistic movements as a way for people to overcome their fear of death. And, in particular, how the author of our research topic, Edgar Allan Poe, dealt with the matter, transforming death into beauty as immortalization of one's lover while retaining the terror/horror aspect of it.

We observed, as a modern medium of artistic movements, how these universal matters have reached the screens of television, and how the general public's interest has opened the doors to adaptations of classical stories that bring light into themes such as death. We understand that there is a financial motive behind an adaptation like *The Following*, as authors like Stam, Hutcheon and Cartmell have pointed out. But just like them, we recognize the intent to pay homage to an important figure of gothic literature, as well as the intent to create a new symbolic view of death based on Poe. Since we understand that television can be a powerful medium to express art.

Therefore, we understand that *The Following* pays homage to Poe, by adapting his views on death, eliciting the same horror we experience with his texts in audiovisual medium. But they also create something based on his idea of sublimation of the soul through one's contemplation of the beautiful. Turning to the ideal of killing to elevate one's soul, but at the same time, being able to elicit the same sense of beauty of Poe.

Finally, we believe that this research can serve as a springboard and resource for future studies on *The Following*, because the TV show deals with other topics that could be investigated, such as the question of the self and the construction of the doppelganger effect.

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