

Eros and Thanatos: A Study of Selected English verse

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پوخته

ئەم تويژينه وهيه به شيكى ههلهينجراوه له پروژه تيزيكي دكتورا به ناو نيشاني غهريزهى ژيان و غه ريزه ي مردن لهدراسه كردنى چهند شعريكي سلفييا پلاث و ئان سيكتون . ژيانى مروّف كاريگه ر بووه به هيّزي جوراوجور له وانه غه ريزه ي ژيان و مردن كه له لايهن فرويد وه ناسيندران . ئەم دوو غه ريزه يه له ملاملانتيه كى به رده و امدان به دريژايى ژيانى تاكه كه س

چه مكي مردن له به ره مه شيعريكاني شاعيرانى ئەده بي ئينگليزيدا گرنگى خو ي هه يه ئەم تويژينه وهيه هه ندىك له و شاعيرانه ده خاته روو كه به تايهت ئەو چه مكه له خو ده گرن . له ميتودي رافه كردندا ، ئەم تويژينه وهيه شيوازي خستنه رووي ئەرستوتالي به كارد هينيت كه برتبييه له (پاثوس و ئيثوس و لوگوس).

ملخص

هذا البحث مأخوذ من رساله الدكتوراه بعنوان "الحياة والموت في دراسة بعض قصائد سلفيا پلاث و ائان سيكتون" ان حياة الانسان متأثرة بأنواع القوى المختلفة منها غريزة الحياة و الموت التي المعرفة قبل فرويد. فهاتان الغريزتان في صراع دائم على مدى حياة الفرد و هذه الدراسة يهدف الى البحث و التقصي عن تأثيرات هاتين الغريزتين في حياة الشاعرتين و قصائدهما كما ان هذا البحث يسلط الضوء على اسلوب الارضاء الارسطوي الذي باثوس، ئيثوس و لوجوس . الموت في الشعر الانجليزي له اهميته البالغة في هذا البحث كما ان هناك توضيحات لأشعار انجليزية اخرى اهتمت بالموت.

Abstract

This paper is an extract from a PhD dissertation which is entitled "Eros and Thanatos: A Study in Pelected Poems of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton". Human life is affected by various forces, among which are the instinctual drives, Eros and Thanatos, which are introduced by Sigmund Freud. The two drives are in a constant struggle throughout the life of an individual. This study aims to investigate the effects of the two drives in some English verse.

This thesis focuses on the Aristotelian method of persuasion; Pathos, ethos and logos and sheds light on some poems of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton which they used these methods to persuade the reader. The death in English poetry has its own significance in this study. Some of English poems which concerns about death are illustrated.

Key words: Eros, Thanatos, Ethnicity, Ethos, Pathos, Logos.

1- Eros and Thanatos

The twentieth century was the era in which some well-known scientists and theorists developed their works and took part in shaping the mentality of the reading public among the people. Their writings had an immense effect on their contemporary generation and the next generation as well. Among these eminent figures were Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Karl Marx (1818-1883) Charles Darwin (1809-1882) Albert Einstein (1879-1955).

Sigmund Freud is one of the most noted scientists in the twentieth century. His theories about the human psychology and the forces which influence it are the sources of many arguments among people in general and the writers in particular. Some scholars disagree with his findings and refuse his ideas while others use them in studying the human psyche. However everyone agrees on his immense and extensive influence in the field of psychology. Freud reinstates a series of concepts which has been either ignored or misunderstood. He is the father of psychoanalysis. He has several theories in the field of psychology; among which are his thoughts regarding the nature of the child's psychosexual stages and the Oedipus complex, his division of the psyche into Id, Ego, and Super-ego, the importance of the unconscious mind and the defense mechanism. Yet, his ideas concerning the drives and the importance of the instincts in human life are of immense significance. (Neu, 2006: 1).

Freud thought there were competing drives, death (Thanatos) and life (Eros). One may know that the death drive is interested in negativity, risk, destruction, and that it takes the 'born to die' approach. The life drive, on the other hand, is concerned with preservation of the human species and life. It controls the libido, which is the sex drive. It also controls our needs for health and safety in the form of food, sleep, and shelter. It focuses on positivity, pleasure, and takes the 'born to live' approach. (Freud, 1989: 37).

Joseph Brown discusses the importance of Freud's division of the drives and says that the theory which holds the most importance is that of the interaction between the two drives: Thanatos and Eros; Thanatos being the drive of death and destruction and Eros being the drive of creativity and love (Brown, 2002:2). Freud believes that instincts have an important role in creating the personality of a person. They are the impressive forces which have a great impact on the behaviour of human beings. Freud is one of the leading scientists who have bestowed theories concerning the reasons behind human beings' act and pretended of studies the motivations that stimulate them. (Brown, 2002: 3)

Freud notices the lack of the investigation about the instincts he thought that it is a problem in the field of psychology: that is why he calls for serious actions toward producing a theory which focuses on the instincts. He believes that psychoanalysis can have a role in making effort toward that aim. Freud announced his call by saying that "there is no more urgent need in psychology than for a securely founded theory of the instincts on which it might then be possible to build further" (Freud, 1989:36). He believes that, there is a problem within the study of the instincts and he tries to solve it. He discusses Eros instincts through combining the self preservation instincts with the instincts of species preservation. Later, he contrasts them with "an instinct of death or destruction which works in silence" (Freud, 1989:36).

He identifies the death instinct as a sort of resistance within the living things. An exterior factor results in the end of a situation in which things exist inorganically. Instincts are considered as wishes towards the restoration of that inorganic state. (Freud, 1989: 36) Andy Solomon comments on this idea and declares that "the death instinct was visualized by Freud as propelling the individual toward the organic state Freud believed to be the origin of all organic life." (91) In fact, readers of the book, "The Freud reader" remark Freud's defense of his theory and his refutation of the other scientists' accusation that his thoughts regarding instincts lack scientific proofs and accuracy. He attempts to prove the credibility of his thoughts and portray the importance of his theory. He announces that their criticism was based on a complete misunderstanding of the facts



because basic concepts and certain definitions are only possible in figure based sciences but psychology is one of the natural sciences in which “clear-cut general concept worthless and indeed impossible” (Freud,1989:36).

Freud starts to write a theory that studies the instinct in 1920. He discusses the nature and characteristics of the instincts. He collects the instincts in two groups, the first group contained life instincts whereas the second one includes death instincts. Giving a title to each group, he uses the word “Eros” to refer to the life instincts and the word “Thanatos” indicates the instincts of death. It must be mentioned that Freud used “Eros” for the life instincts but there are some other writers who, later, used “Thanatos” in referring to the death instinct. In fact the origin of these words are the Greek mythology as “Thanatos was the demon of death” Thanatos is “the Greek mythological personification of death” while “Eros stands for the god of love in the Greek culture” (Solomon, 1994:90).

However, Freud makes some changes in his study of the instincts until he reaches his final explanation of those drives. He begins his ideas by drawing a contrast between the instincts of self-preservation or the “the ego-instinct” and “the libidinal instincts”. The latter can be explained by using “love” as an example of it while hunger can be used for the former one. Later, Freud builds upon his theory and replaced the aforementioned contrast with a new one. This time he sheds light on the dissimilarities between the “narcissistic” and “object-libido” he argues the conflict between a person’s love for oneself and his / her love for another person. Freud obviously includes the human instincts with the study of human manners. Nevertheless, he is not the first one who discusses the instinct of life and death. Previously, some biological scientists and philosophers referred them and expressed their concern with those instincts. Later, in their studies about those drives, some of his colleagues refuted his claims. Andy Solomon declares that they pointed “to certain weakness in his formulation and offered alternatives for his thoughts” (90).

Theoreticians like Hartmann, C. Brenner and Kernberg have a different point of view about the death instinct. Brenner notes that “Freud’s original view is that aggression is beyond the pleasure principle, a formulation in which aggression leads to pleasure only when fused with libido and directed outwards.” Hartmann believes that aggression bears the same relation to pleasure / unpleasure as does libido, so that discharge of aggression leads to pleasure while lack of discharge leads to unpleasure (Brenner,1987:30-31).

Ernest Jones is among those who are ardently against the concept of a death instinct. Such a reaction to this notion from these psychoanalysts shows that they regarded it as something completely new on Freud’s part.(Jones qtd in “Discussion of beyond the pleasure principle”:80-87) Despite the death instinct of Freud being new and extra theoretical idea in one way or another makes explicit what was implicit in all his previous theoretical work. The death instinct is a concept that accomplishes an internal need in psychoanalytic metapsychology. One of the few authors who realizes this connection is Frank J Sulloway, who links it to the biological foundation Freud recommended for his psychological study. Sulloway states that “Freud’s theory of the death instinct has a perfectly rational logic in his own psychological term.” (395) In fact the concept of Eros or life instinct has scarcely been subject to arduous objections and it has not received as much attention as the death instinct received from Freud’s commentator’s.

2- Eros and Ethnicity

Eros is the Greek word for romantic or sexual love. The term erotic is derived from Eros. Freud used the term Eros to go beyond a mere innuendo to a “love instinct” or a “sexual instinct” but “to connote the whole of the life instincts as opposed to the death instincts” (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2003:153). The term Eros has been normally used as a synonym for the whole class of life instincts of which the ‘love instinct’, or ‘sexual instinct’, is a sole instance of the class. Eros, creativity and love, can assist in the continuity of life. Yet, when uncontrolled, it causes many cruel acts such as pedophilia, sadomasochism and rape (Brown, 2002: 8).



Freud believes that there are five intersecting stages of psychosexual development in children: oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital. According to Freud, the signs of Eros and Thanatos show up from the very beginning of the infant's life during the oral phase. During that phase the infant's mouth and lips become the most aphrodisiac part of the body. Later a baby's teeth start to appear and the baby begins to bite along with sucking. When the child puts things in its mouth, it is unsure whether to bite or to suck it. Freud thought that this uncertainty is an example for love and hate (Ehrmann, 2005: 98) .

Freud said that seeking happiness is the purpose of life. The human beings struggle to be happy, strive for happiness and try to remain so. In other words, the main goal of life is to be free from mental anxiety and physical pain (Freud, 1989: 729). According to Freud's "pleasure principle" happiness is interrelated to the fulfillment of the desires; humankind are able to achieve happiness by an entire satisfaction of their desires. (Freud, 1989: 729). On the other hand Freud believes that aggression is innate and exists within the nature of the human beings. It must be controlled because it is an instinct which ruins society. He thinks that human beings have an unconscious desire to destroy both themselves and others, for instance, he believes that people see their neighbor as an object that can be used and exploited to the farthest point. In his view, the aggressive nature of a person makes him/her wish to disgrace his/her neighbour and cause him pain and wants to torture or to kill him (Freud, 1989: 749). Because of aggression nature leads society to collapse, a different factor is needed to connect the individuals of a society together. That factor is Eros due to its ability in combing families, races, and nations into a coherent unity (Habib, 2005:586).

It is worth mentioning that the term 'other' is linked with racism, the term "otherness" is used by a nation, or a group of people who consider themselves as superior while others are inferior. This distinction is sometimes based on skin colour, social class, education, religion and so on. This issue has been exposed by Foucault and Szasz, for instance during the Second World War the Jew was regarded as others in Nazi Germany. To exclude people from the social order, they justified this to others. The word Jew does not mean a person with certain kind of religious belief but it meant "vermin" gas him. (Bolaffi,2003: xviii)

In fact if one takes a look at the biography of Sylvia Plath, one will realize the mixture of ethnicity in her parents. Her father (Otto Plath) was a German American and her mother (Aurelia Schober) was a Jewish Austrian. One may note that psychologically this difference had an impact on Sylvia Plath because as it is mentioned above during the Second World War the Nazi party misguided the German people to regard themselves as superior and the Jew as inferior or others meaning implicitly that the Jews only deserved to die and practically there is holocaust example during the second world war. It can be said that this issue unconsciously remained fresh in Plath's mind and had impact on writing her poems. In addition to the above example; there are also the Armenian genocide, the Anfal Campaigns, the Halabja pogrom and the Semele tragedy of Assyrian. Ethnicity invited Thanatos to take away the lives of numerous people.

Ethnocentrism, the term implies the tendency of members of an ethnic group who consider their group above all others and to evaluate outsiders according to the group's own criteria. Many ethnic groups have a tendency to define themselves using terms meaning 'good, beautiful, brave, excellent, rich, men' whereas often the members of other groups are defined in insulting terms such as 'ugly, cowards, lice'. The same trends also exist in complex societies. The Jews look upon themselves as the 'chosen people'. The Greeks regarded all foreigners as 'barbarians' and the Chinese considered their country to be the centre of the world.

3-Thanatos, Pathos, Ethos, and Logos

3-1 Thanatos

As we have seen in the section above, Sigmund Freud defines *Thanatos* as the 'death instinct': a drive towards death. It is one of the internal forces, it is opposite of *Eros* the 'life instinct': a drive towards life. *Thanatos* is responsible for self-destructive behaviour, such as aggression, that could



even result in one's own death. It is usually applied in psychoanalytical situations when trying to diagnose why an individual might be displaying self-destructive behaviour. For example, an individual with no control over their anger/aggression could be displaying such behaviour due to an imbalance in their internal forces favouring *Thanatos* and thus giving it more power which strengthens the drive towards death. (Carel: 4) This might be clearly noticed in the late poems of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton.

While Freud write his theory about death drive some questions occupied his mind he asks himself ; is death a negation of life? Is it a part of life or an external border? His struggle with these questions is somehow unsolvable and it is hard to formulate the death drive because he encounters many different ideas and not all of which are well-suited with one another. Thus one might find in the death drive an attempt to unifying opposite aspects, namely aggression, the drive towards complete rest and the Nirvana principle. The death drive is an attempt to collect an extensive range of tendency together in an explanatory influential way. Therefore the death drive has various objects and modes of action, different manifestation, and is used by Freud r clarify the regulation of numerous psychic functions. This difficulty is the source of some confusion about the concept and its place within Freud`s wide drive theory (Carel, 2006: 115)

According to Carel "Freud introduces death in the form of the death drive into psychic dynamics in order to go beyond a mechanistic explanation of psychological processes to a total metaphysics of life and death. This metaphysical vision does not consider death as the final stage of organic life, but sees it as a meta-principle constituting and influencing life processes. On this observation, life and death drives are not conflictual forces, but the death drive is an organising principle and ethical imperative. As such it structures the psyche, rather than being its pathological distortion .The urge to return to an inorganic state (to die) and the drive to return to an earlier state (the conservative drive) come out in both Eros and Thanatos as two types of repetition. Viewed as repetition, death is not a simple opposition or negation of life, but a basic element that constitutes life's regularity. On this view, the death drive regulates repetition, which in turn forms the fundamental patterns of life. It is noteworthy that Death is created by the same forces that create Life. To conclude that according to Heidegger and Freud death is a general structure and force within life whose existence is a given fact" (2006: 118).

3.2 Pathos, Ethos and Logos

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, in his "Treatise" 400 B.C wrote one of the most important works on argumentation. He explained that arguments are more persuasive when applied in three distinct but inseparable dimensions: pathos relates to emotion, ethos means credibility and logos refers to reason each one of them has its own significance in persuading the audience.

3.2.1 Pathos

Pathos is the Greek word for both "suffering" and "experience." Pathos is a means of persuading an audience of an argument by creating an emotional response to an impassioned appeal or a convincing story. Pathos or the emotional plea, means to convince an audience by appealing to their emotions. Authors use pathos to invoke sympathy from an audience; to make the audience feel what the author wants them to feel. A common use of pathos would be to draw pity from an audience. It is the use of language, examples, diction, or images to create an emotional reaction in the reader. The most common types are anger at a social injustice, sympathy for another's misfortune, or laughter at an unusual situation (Wisse,1989: 3-4).

The reader may be unconcerned with an issue unless they identify themselves in the matter. Therefore, the writer may attempt to connect to him/her audience by evoking emotions or by suggesting that writer and audience share attitudes, beliefs and values, In other words, by making a plea to pathos. Even if an appeal to pathos is ineffective, such an appeal should complement with the other ways of persuasion that is to say in addition to making use of pathos, the author ought to establish him/her credibility (ethos). It might be noticed that persuasion also depends on the power



of the hearers; their judgements when they are pleased and friendly are not the same when they are pained and hostile. It is important for the author to understand the desire, values, and needs of the audience, in addition to it must be known how to motivate the audience from anger to happiness, what irritates them and lead them to fear and what animates them and arouse their sympathy (Wisse, 1989: 23).

It is worth mentioning that there is a profound feeling in Sylvia Plath's poems, what mainly attracts the reader to her voice is their pathos and there is a great suffering in her voice. The suffering of Sylvia Plath is the absence of her father and the lack of love. The readers who have the same misery as she does, get involved with her and sympathize with the writer. Helen Vendler argues that much of Plath's poetry is written as an outburst of emotion for instance, Plath's later poem "Daddy has been viewed by a number of critics as a poem with a high emotional content. (1980:57). Plath's "Electra on Azalea Path" verbalises the misery and guilt she had experienced for more than twenty years, over the death of her father. This poem also reveals the way in which the emotion of grief and guilt, expressed through her poetry, allowed Plath to evaluate her condition and her apparent role in her father's death, intelligently. There is no resolution to her grief and guilt depicted in her poem. She assessed the situation, and made a judgment in relation to the role she played in her father's death.

In discussing the emotion in Sexton's poetry, Diane Middlebrook agrees with Wagner Martin and Thomas McDonell that the emotion is a genuine attempt to reach readers who have had similar emotional experiences. Middlebrook echoes the views of McDonell when she says " Anne Sexton was one of those rare poets whose work was cherished by a wide audience because her voice gave such powerful expression to the anger and pain of women at a time when anger and pain were sparking modern feminism" (1992: 79)

Much of Sexton's poetry asserts her misery and her inability, either to experience or to express her guilt. Critics such as Maxine Kumin have noticed that Sexton's poetry was for her a means of keeping herself alive longer than would have been expected(xxiv) . McClatchy argues that Sexton through poetry reveals her own private situation. It is poetry "that can include and reflect personal experience; a human rather than a disembodied voice; the dramatic presentation of the flux of time and personality; and the drive towards sincerity" (1978:225)

It can be noticed that the issues in Sexton's poetry that catch the attention of the criticism are different from those in Plath's poetry. Sexton's poetry focuses largely on herself, her problems with her parents, her marriage, her children, her suicide attempts and her insanity, while Plath looked more at the people who caused her problems and the ones to whom she attributes blame.

3.2.2 Ethos

Ethos comes from the word "ethikos" which means "moral" and "showing moral character." Used for the study of morals, it is the origin of the modern English word ethics. In 'Rhetoric', ethos is one of the three artistic proofs or method of persuasion discussed by Aristotle in 'Rhetoric' as a component of argument for speakers and writers, their ethos is made from their credibility, presentation and similarity to their audience. It is insufficient to have logical reasons to create an effective argument; the content must also be presented well by a trustworthy source to become believable. Ethos is particularly important to keep the audience's interest as well. For example, talking to the audience as equals rather than listeners. The speaker must convince his/her audience that he/she is someone they should believe. He/she does this through appeals to ethos. The speaker might not directly state his/her credits, but he/she should in some way present his authority to the audience. Some speakers have innate authority and others have to prove it.

Aristotle believed that audiences are more likely to be satisfied when an argument comes from someone who has a good reputation, power, and authority. In a sense, ethos does not belong to the speaker but to the audience. Thus, it is the audience that determines whether a speaker is a high- or a low-ethos speaker. In fact the readers believe in good men more fully and more readily than



others. The reputation and moral of the writer is the most effective means of persuasion. The ability of the writer to persuade relies on his/her credibility of the subject he/she presents, and the position of the author comes from his/her academic, professional credentials, social standing, and integrity of character and trust worthiness.

One might notice that Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton could attract the pity of the audience through the powerful language of their poems and their literary position in society is away to have a huge impact on the reader and satisfy them to read their poems. The readers are involved with their subject matters; therefore, one can argue that Plath and Sexton are successful in convincing the readers to read their literary works.

3.2.3 Logos

Logos is a Greek word meaning “logic.” it is a literary device that can be defined as a statement, sentence, or argument used to convince or persuade the targeted audience by employing reason or logic. In everyday life, arguments depend upon pathos and ethos besides logos. Logos is used in citing facts, in addition to statistical, literal, and historical analogies. For Aristotle, Logos is the most important way of persuasion. it is the third persuasive technique he mentions in ‘Rhetoric’ besides pathos and ethos. It is a way to build an effective argument. In many ways, logos is the most important of the three persuasive appeals because it is the most honest. There is logic behind an argument that tries to persuade an audience by using logical arguments and supportive evidence (Matsen etal: 120).

It can be said that, there is a certain logic in Sylvia Plath`s poem “Daddy” when she thought that the only way to see her father again is death because people can only meet the dead people after they die in the purgatory world, therefore, there is logic in her late poems once she talked about committing suicide and she was truthful with her reader and she committed suicide to reunite with her father.

There is also logic in Anne Sexton`s poem for instance, in her poem “wanting to die” she talks about her inner conflict between life and death and her several attempts of committing suicide. Her death wish is deeply rooted in her person and may have been unavoidable anyway because she was so highly conscious of her psychological problems thus she was more realistic than the other poets, she thought that death was the only solution to get rid of all her problems and her isolation from the society. There is logic in it for once someone dies all the suffering and mystery will die with him/her.

4- Death as a subject matter in English verse

Death itself as a word is one of the most frequently used words in the poetic diction of poems written in English. Naturally, lexical items like love, life, and death form the poetic triangle well-known in literature. At the end of Beowulf`s epic, there is the tragic scene, which is the death of Beowulf. This section is known as “Beowulf`s funeral” Beowulf is a hero and in the culture of heroism the emphasis is much placed on virtue in which warriors would rather die than live in shame. The noble funeral that Beowulf receives validates his choices in life. The poem Beowulf exemplifies this culture`s emphasis on memorializing departed heroes; indeed, the mere existence of the poem itself is a testament to Beowulf`s virtue and the esteem his people placed upon him. Moreover, all of the Geats gather around to lament the death of their lord. The Geats sing dirges for Beowulf and say that “ he was of world kings, the mildest of men and the gentlest, kindest to his people and most eager for fame.” (Gwara,2008: 313, 320)

Then twelve warriors rode around the tomb,
chieftain's sons, champions in battle,
all of them distraught, chanting in dirges, *His people lament*
mourning his loss as a man and a king.
They extolled his heroic nature and exploits
and gave thanks for his greatness; which was the proper thing,



for a man should praise a prince whom he holds dear
 and cherish his memory when that moment comes
 when he has to be convoyed from his bodily home.
 So the Geat people, his hearth companions,
 sorrowed for the lord who had been laid low.
 They said that of all the kings upon the earth
 he was the man most gracious and fair-minded,
 kindest to his people and keenest to win fame.

In fact many English poets have written about death, for instance John Skelton in his poem “upon a dead man`s head” writes about death and he states that the skull is what holds the mind; it is the cavity that holds our perception of the world, society, and our beliefs. By the power that we have to produce creative thought through our mind which means our skulls we are able to think, connive, and eventually die. In “Upon A Dead man`s Head,” John Skelton shows a man`s progression of thought when he faces his mortality by seeing a skull. At the beginning of this poem, the man reacts with shock against what his lover has given him. He directly addresses his lover: “YOUR ugly token,” He addresses her in a very accusatory tone, “YOUR” being fully capitalized implying a raised tone followed by a negative adjective ugly. He is annoyed that she has broken his discussion of worldly lusts such as wealth, and sex, instead focus on this rotting head and death which is something inevitable and every one must die and become dust so the woman is used as a catalyst for the man`s reaction to death.

YOUY ugly token
 My mind hath broken
 From worldly lust
 For I have discust
 We are but dust
 And die we must
 Our eyen sinking
 Our bodies stinking (Warren, 2005: 22)

Barnabe Googe in his poem “An Epitaph of the death of Nicholas Grimald” talks about life and how everything fades and passes quickly nothing remains. He believes that death is jealous upon human kind`s pleasure and it is the enemy of the pleasant and happiness of human beings. It always brings grief, sadness, and moaning. There is no solution for death, throughout the history human beings have been seeking for immortality and testing many ways for getting unending life, in addition to that some kings in the past such as pharaoh, Haman, and Namroot claim that they are gods and they give life to people and able to end up the life of any one they want, but all their attempts are failed and what they claim are only rumors they die just like the ordinary people.

Behold this feeling world, how all things fade,
 How every things doth pass and wear away,
 Each state of life by common course and trade
 Abides no time but hath a passing day.
 For look, as life, that pleasant dame, hath brought
 The pleasant years and days of lustiness,
 So Death our foe, consumeth all to nought;
 Envyng thief, with dart doth us oppress. (Warran,2005:50)

Walter Scott publishes the ballad of “Helen of Kirkconnell” Helen is a beautiful girl she is admired by the local lads. There are many suitors for her hand yet she loves but one calls Adam Fleming. All who loves her reluctantly accepts that her heart belongs to someone else except one



young man names Robert Bell. His love lasts to Helen especially as he is suitable one by her family for Robert is from a well known and wealthy family.

She would meet the man she loves, Adam Fleming, in the twilight on Kirkconnel Lea or in the churchyard. Their meetings are brief, infrequent and full of the pledge of undying love. Helen is torn between love of her parents and their desires for her future, and the love she is unable to restrain for her manly and beautiful Adam. Love supersedes all bounds and though Helen is heart sore at the subterfuge which she employs to meet with her heart's desire, she knows that Adam is the only man she would ever love. Several times she has passionate and emotional meeting with Adam at the Bell Tower.



Site where Fair Helen was murdered

Unbeknown to the two young lovers, they are watched. Robert Bell of Blacket House is insane with jealousy and determined to rid the world of his competitor for Helen's hand. Accordingly one night he follows the two lovers to their secret assignation and waits, watches, profuse with an insane desire to confront his rival. He is armed with a gun which made his intentions clear. When he sees the young lovers embrace any caution he may have felt is thrown to the wind. He observes lovers carefully and waits for them to part so he can get a clear shot at Fleming. The opportunity eventually presents itself and he fires off the gun at his adversary. The two lovers, Helen and Adam, are instantly aware of the ferocity of ill-feeling which confronts them. Helen throws herself in front of her lover and takes the full hit of shot in her breast. She falls dead on the spot, and the shot is actually meant for Adam.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;

O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell Lea!

Curst be the heart, that thought the thought,
And curst the hand, that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirconnell Lea.

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide.
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell Lea.

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hacked him in pieces sma,
I hacked him in pieces sma,
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Untill the day I die.

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "haste, and come to me!"

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee I were blest,
Where thou lies low, and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirconnell Lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell Lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me.



Sir Walter Raleigh in his poem “What is Our Life” draws the reader's attention to the meaning and concept of life. He compares life to a play of passion or a short comedy. Man's happiness is compared to interlude between long periods of struggle and suffering .He continues his image by saying that the embargo in his mother's womb is like the actor who gets ready in the dressing room to appear on the stage. This actor gets dressed to come on the stage. He draws the reader's attention to the fact that God watches our deeds and actions. Both man's good and evil deeds are recorded in heaven. God does not interfere in man's life. He only gives man the opportunity to act freely according to his inclination and desires but he records his deeds. Yet, every man is destined to die one day. The end of the play represents man's death. In other words, drawing the curtains symbolizes man's death. Death is considered to be the eternal rest. It frees man from the weariness and suffering of life. The poet sheds light on the difference between the unrealistic artistic performance of the play and man's death. The dramatic performance is fanciful and unrealistic, but death is an inevitable fact. In conclusion, the phases of man's life are represented as a dramatic play.

What is our life? A play of passion,
 Our mirth the music of division.
 Our mothers` wombs the tiring-houses be,
 Where we are blessed for this short comedy.
 Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is
 That sits and marks still who doth act a miss
 Our graves that hide us from the setting sun
 Are like drawn curtains when the play is done
 Thus march we, playing, to our latest rest
 Only we die in earnest, that`s no jest

William Shakespeare in his sonnet “71” has written about death. In this sonnet, the speaker is now concentrating on his own death and how the young man is to mourn him after he is deceased. The speaker tells the youth not to mourn for him when he is dead, and that the youth should only think about him for as long as it takes to tell the world of his death. furthermore, he addresses the young man to spread this news to the whole world and tell them that he passed away from this ignoble world The speaker then tells his beloved youth that if even reading this sonnet will cause him to suffer, he should forget the hand that wrote the poem.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
 But let your love even with my life decay;
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
 And mock you with me after I am gone. (Michael, Schoenfeldt: 81)

Thomas Hardy mentions death in his poem “ Ah Are You Digging on My Grave” he argues that , when one dies, no one will care about her/ him. There is no strong relationship between human beings. Some people are opportunist; they remember you, when they need you. After suggesting



many names who may pay a visit to her grave, eventually he realizes the identity of the grave digger which is her dog, it is digging on her grave for hiding a piece of bone not paying a visit to her grave.

Ah, are you digging on my grave
My loved one? Planting rue
No, yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred
It cannot hurt her now he said
That I should not be true (Warren, 2005: 56).

Wilfred Owen belongs to the war poets. The First World War has a great influence on him. He enrolls in the First World War; and he is killed one week before the ending of the war. He is against war, and he knows that in the war only the poor soldiers and civil people are the victims. Sometimes the poor warriors do not know why they fight only the dictators and the powerful countries discern the real reason of war. It is only for their interest and to investigate their new weapons. In this poem there is an argument between two soldiers who die in the battlefield and are cheated by fake mottos.

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall;
By his dead smile, I knew we stood in Hell.
With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange, friend," I said, "Here is no cause to mourn

Conclusions

Sigmund Freud is the father of psychoanalysis and one of the most famous scientists in the twentieth century. His ideas concerning the role of the instincts in shaping human's life are of great significance. Eros and Thanatos are two drives which are in an ongoing struggle throughout the life of an individual. The behavior of an adult and the decisions he/she makes are highly influenced by Eros and Thanatos.

Throughout this study we notice that the theme of death exist from a long time ago since the epic of "Beowulf" until the poems in modern age. It means that the poets in all ages consider that death is final part of our life and it is something unavoidable, moreover, all these poems have a sad and depressing ending. The reader can identify himself/herself in these poem because finally every one encounters death

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