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Term Paper

Networks of personifications in E. Dickinson's poetry

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## INTRODUCTION

According to William Hazlitt “Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions.” Poetry has a rich history intertwined with the use of literary devices to convey meaning and emotion. Among these devices, prosopopoeia, or personification, can be traced back to approximately 300 BC, as detailed by Demetrius of Phalerum, an early rhetorician. Personification, firmly entrenched in both rhetoric and literature, finds its origins in ancient works such as those of Homer.

Intricate networks of personifications, presenting abstract concepts like death, nature, time, hope, and despair with human characteristics, are what define Emily Dickinson's poetry. Dickinson brings these abstract ideas to life, creating vivid imagery and allowing for a deeper exploration of complex emotions and existential themes. These interconnected personifications often interact within her poetry, forming a web of symbolic relationships that enrich her work with layers of meaning and interpretation.

**Aim:** The term paper aims to analyze Emily Dickinson's use of personification in her poetry and its networks.

**Object:** The object of the paper is Emily Dickinson's poetry, particularly focusing on the use of personification within her works.

**Subject:** The subject of the paper is the analysis and exploration of how Dickinson employs personification and creates interconnected networks.

**Tasks:** To achieve the research aim, the following tasks will be undertaken:

- 1) to identify the notion of “personification” and define its features;
- 2) to outline the main features of personification in Dickinson’s works;
- 3) to study the specifics of networks of personifications in Dickinson's poetry;
- 4) to determine the overlapping of personifications within Dickinson's poetry.

**Methods:** To accomplish these tasks, the following methods are employed:

- 1) general scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization;
- 2) linguistic analysis methods: contextual analysis, intent analysis, pragmatic analysis, semantic analysis, stylistic analysis

In the process of research, attention will be paid to identifying recurring motifs and patterns of personification across Emily Dickinson's poetry, as well as examining their thematic significance and literary effects.

The study of this topic is important due to its potential to deepen our understanding of Dickinson's unique poetic style, thematic concerns, and contributions to the broader literary landscape. Additionally, analyzing the networks of personifications in her work can shed light on the ways in which she engages with complex emotions, philosophical concepts, and the natural world.

## CHAPTER 1. EXPLORING PERSONIFICATION AND NETWORK THEORY

### 1.1 Understanding Personification as a figure of speech

According to William Hazlitt “Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions.” Poetry has a rich history intertwined with the use of literary devices to convey meaning and emotion. Among these devices, prosopopoeia, or personification, can be traced back to approximately 300 BC, as detailed by Demetrius of Phalerum, an early rhetorician. Personification, firmly entrenched in both rhetoric and literature, finds its origins in ancient works such as those of Homer. (Hazlitt, W., 1818)

According to Arthur Quinn, “The simplest definition of a figure of speech is “an intended deviation from ordinary usage.” (An intended deviation from ordinary grammatical usage is the specific figure of speech, enallage.)” **Figures of speech** are expressions or linguistic devices that are used to convey meaning in a nonliteral manner. Figures of speech can include techniques such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, personification, and others, which add depth, nuance, and imagery to language. (Quinn, A., 1982, p.6)

**Personification**, or prosopopoeia, is a figure of speech which applies human identity or features to something not human like an inanimate object or an abstract concept. Personification is used to establish moods, places, and to lend depth, familiarity, and readability to many areas of fiction. (Melion, W. S., & Ramakers, B., 2016, p.1)

Personification provides poets with a distinctive tool for explaining difficult concepts or phenomena in a more accessible and engaging way. Personification can take many distinct forms, each underlines a different facet of human nature that is applied to non-human objects or abstract ideas. Personification has various functions in poetics such as improving language quality and increasing the reader's interaction with the text. Moreover, it communicates allegorical or symbolic meanings.

Personifying an abstract idea or force can help the poem's greater themes, concepts appear more clearly to the reader.

There are several different types of personification that can be applied by the author in order to achieve a certain result such as humanization, anthropomorphism, pathetic fallacy, zoomorphism, and conceit.

- Humanization involves giving non-human entities human-like traits such as emotions, intentions, or physical attributes. For example, describing the wind as “whispering secrets” or the sun as “smiling down on the earth.” (RedKiwi, n.d.)
- Anthropomorphism is a specific form of personification where non-human entities are depicted as having human-like behaviors, motivations, or personalities. For instance, portraying animals with human emotions or actions. (Litcharts, n.d.)
- Pathetic fallacy is a type of personification that attributes human emotions or moods to nature or inanimate objects, often reflecting or mirroring the feelings of human characters or the overall mood of a scene. For example, describing a stormy sky as “angry” or “ominous” during a tense moment in a story. (Litcharts, n.d.)
- Zoomorphism involves attributing animal-like qualities or characteristics to non-human entities. This can include describing objects or abstract concepts using animal imagery to evoke specific associations or emotions. For instance, describing a car as having a “growling engine” or a forest as “alive with the chatter of birds.” (MasterClass, 2022)

Through the ages, various writers have used personification in their works to create inanimate characters, animated settings, and add suspense.

An allegory is a literary device in which historical events, abstract concepts, or moral precepts are symbolically represented by characters, locations, or events. The surface plot in an allegorical narrative has a deeper, frequently symbolic significance that goes beyond the literal interpretation. Authors employ allegory to make difficult concepts or moral teachings more approachable and interesting. Even

though personifications also play a significant role in allegorical narratives, there's often confusion between personifications and allegory itself. Sometimes, people overlook the individual personified characters. To address this, scholars use the term 'personification allegory,' which refers to both the technique of creating allegory through personification and the resulting narrative structure. (Melion, W. S., & Ramakers, B., 2016, p.3) Personification emphasizes the exterior aspect, which is by definition the surface meaning, whereas allegoresis calls attention to hidden or abstract meanings and allegory indicates that the surface meaning is not the final target of interpretation. Personification and metaphor thus function in typically opposing ways. (Melion, W. S., & Ramakers, B., 2016, p.11)

Eventually, many scholars have observed that Emily Dickinson employs personification as a rhetorical device to construct vivid images that evoke metaphorical conditions, therefore expanding the reader's imagination to contemplate issues and themes that resonate with their everyday experiences. (Prof. Ayad Hammad Ali, Inst. Omar Saadoon Ayyed, p.38)

## **1.2. Network Analysis Theory and its application to Emily Dickinson's works**

**Network theory** offers a systematic framework for comprehending the intricate interconnections among various entities within a given system. It posits that these entities, or “nodes,” are not isolated entities but rather integral components of a broader network, wherein relationships and interactions between nodes play a pivotal role in shaping the structure and dynamics of the system. (Hachmann, G., 2023)

Hachmann defines Network Theory as an analytical approach that focuses on the relationships and connections between elements within a system. In the context of literature and the arts, these elements can include characters, themes, motifs, artistic techniques, and cultural contexts, or figures of speech such as personification in our case.



Hachmann's essay outlines the methodology of network analysis, which involves identifying and mapping the connections between elements within a literary work. Applying Network Theory to the study of networks of personifications in Emily Dickinson's poetry involves analyzing the relationships and connections between the personified elements within her poems. Here are the steps to applying it to Dickinson's works:

1. Identification of Personified Elements;
2. Mapping Relationships;
3. Analysis of Network Structures;
4. Exploring Agency and Creativity;
5. Case Studies and Interpretations.

In Dickinson's poetry, we can identify various elements that are personified, such as death, nature, time, hope, and despair. Each of these personifications represents abstract concepts or forces that are given human-like qualities.

Using Network Theory, we can map the relationships and connections between these personified elements within Dickinson's poetry. For example, we can analyze how death interacts with nature, how time affects the portrayal of hope and despair, and how different personifications intersect and overlap within individual poems.

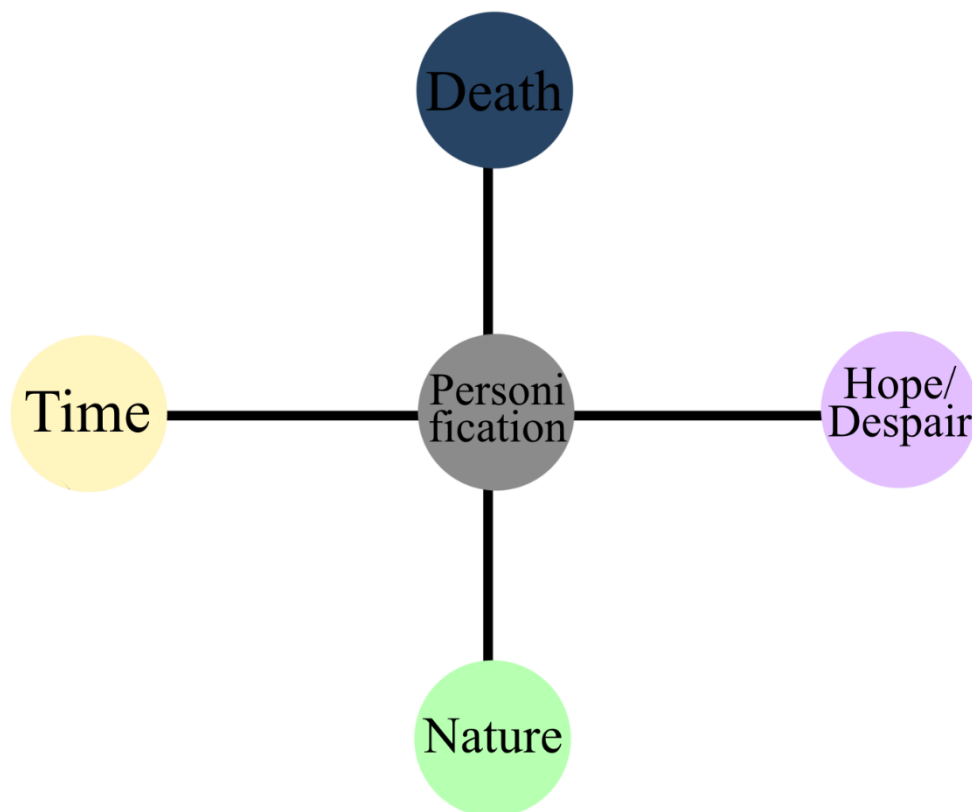
By examining the network structures formed by these personifications, we can gain insights into the thematic and symbolic patterns within Dickinson's poetry. For instance, we might find that certain poems contain dense clusters of personifications related to themes of mortality, while others emphasize the interplay between hope and despair.

Network Theory allows us to rethink the concepts of agency and creativity within Dickinson's poetry. We can analyze how Dickinson creatively employs personification to fill the abstract concepts with vivid imagery and emotional resonance, consequently shaping the thematic content and aesthetic impact of her poetry.

Through case studies of individual poems or thematic clusters, we can apply Network Theory to reveal hidden patterns, structures, and influences within Dickinson's poetry. This can lead to new interpretations and insights into the creative processes underlying her work, as well as the distribution of agency among the personified elements within her poetic universe.

Overall, applying Network Theory to networks of personifications in Dickinson's poetry offers a fruitful approach for analyzing the complex relationships and symbolic networks within her works, enriching our understanding of her thematic motives and poetic techniques.

Before delving into the analysis of specific poems, let's examine an example of a personification network in Emily Dickinson's poetry that we can currently surmise. This network involves the personification of various elements such as death, nature, time, hope, and despair, which are recurrent themes across multiple works. However, to understand how these elements intersect and influence one another within this network, we have to take a closer look at the poems that explore such themes.



## Conclusions to Chapter 1

After examining the theoretical framework and summarizing the results, such conclusions can be drawn:

1. Personification is a figure of speech which applies human identity or features to something not human like an inanimate object or an abstract concept and it provides poets with an effective method for making difficult ideas more approachable and interesting, improving language quality, and encouraging reader interaction with the work.
2. Emily Dickinson employs personification as a rhetorical device to create vivid imagery and evoke metaphorical conditions, thereby expanding readers' imaginations and prompting contemplation of themes relevant to everyday experiences.
3. Network theory provides a systematic framework for understanding the intricate interconnections among various elements within Dickinson's poetry. It emphasizes that these elements, including personified entities, are not isolated but interconnected components of a broader network.
4. In Dickinson's poetry, various elements such as death, nature, time, hope, and despair are personified, representing abstract concepts or forces that possess with human-like qualities.

## CHAPTER 2. PERSONIFIED FIGURES IN DICKINSON'S POETRY

### 2.1. Portrayal of Death, Nature, Time, Hope, and Despair as Personified Figures

#### 1) Analysis of Dickinson's portrayal of death as a personified figure

Emily Dickinson resided primarily at the Dickinson Homestead in Amherst, Massachusetts, throughout her lifetime, with a brief exception of fifteen years when her family lived on Pleasant Street. During her time at the homestead, Dickinson had a vantage point from her upstairs bedroom window that allowed her to regularly observe funeral processions passing by her home en route to the cemetery. This constant exposure to funeral processions served as a frequent reminder of mortality in her daily life. (Jassim, I. H., 35)

In most of her works Dickinson personifies death as a figure or a presence. Death is often portrayed as a suitor, a courteous gentleman, or a kindly escort. This personification serves to explore the poet's fascination with mortality and the afterlife.

For example, in the poem “**Because I could not stop for Death**” Death is personified as a chariot driver who kindly arrives to take the speaker on a carriage ride towards eternity, highlighting its role as an enigmatic force.

Because I could not stop for Death –  
 He kindly stopped for me –  
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
 And I had put away  
 My labor and my leisure too,  
 For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
 At Recess – in the Ring –  
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
 We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –  
 The Dews drew quivering and Chill –  
 For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
 My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
 A Swelling of the Ground –  
 The Roof was scarcely visible –  
 The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
 Feels shorter than the Day  
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
 Were toward Eternity – (Dickinson, 1999)

“Because I could not stop for Death” is considered one of Emily Dickinson's most notable poems. It is acclaimed for perfectly capturing her fundamental concepts of immortality and death, with its imagery of movement and destination offering profound insights into the moment of dying.

Emily Dickinson personifies death in her poem “Because I could not stop for Death—,” presenting it as a kind and kind figure that approaches the speaker to represent the passing from life to death. Rather than being portrayed as a menacing force, Death is depicted as a courtly suitor who extends a polite invitation to accompany him on a journey towards eternity. The speaker, dressed in gossamer and tulle, is overtaken by Death's carriage while occupied with life's pursuits, suggesting

that death comes unexpectedly and without warning. Despite the suddenness of Death's arrival, the speaker accepts death in a cool, collected manner, illustrating the poem's central theme of death as a smooth and peaceful passage. The main character of the poem doesn't seem to be in pain or afraid even though they are inevitable marching towards mortality, which suggests that they have come to terms with death. The final verse, in which the speaker reveals that they have achieved immortality, confirms the ultimate goal hinted at by the presence of "Immortality" in the carriage. (Jassim, I. H. 41-43)

On the other hand, in the poem "**I heard a Fly buzz – when I died**" Death is depicted as an intrusive presence, personified by a buzzing fly that interrupts the speaker's final moments.

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -  
 The Stillness in the Room  
 Was like the Stillness in the Air -  
 Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -  
 And Breaths were gathering firm  
 For that last Onset - when the King  
 Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away  
 What portion of me be  
 Assignable - and then it was  
 There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -  
 Between the light - and me -  
 And then the Windows failed - and then

I could not see to see – (Dickinson, 1999)

The main idea of this poem is the transformation of death into a mundane and anticlimactic event, symbolized by a single fly that dominates the scene with its buzzing noise. Despite the solemnity of the occasion, the speaker perceives death as an underwhelming experience, satirizing the traditional view of death as a release from life's pressures and a glorious entry into immortality which is drastically different from the previous poem "Because I could not stop for Death". Instead of a majestic figure like "the King" coming to claim her, the speaker encounters only disappointment and the futile efforts of the soul to prolong life.

"I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" challenges traditional views of death by portraying the dying moment in a physical, rather than spiritual, perspective. The speaker emphasizes the physical reality of death, represented by the personification of death as a buzzing fly around a corpse, rather than the soul's journey to heaven. This physical viewpoint challenges conventional religious beliefs that death ushers in an afterlife and challenges romantic ideas of an angelic death. (Jassim, I. H. 37-38)

Furthermore, by personifying death through a fly, the deathbed scenario loses its solemnity and is dramatized rather than evoking shock or sorrow. Even though the speaker claims she "could not see to see," the poem explores death imaginatively, with the poetess narrating the experience from a point of view that is outside of human consciousness.

## **2) Exploration of Dickinson's use of nature as a personified force**

Emily Dickinson acknowledges the autonomy of the natural world while still approaching it with an empirical curiosity. Although she is interested in scientific theories and methodologies, she criticizes science for its over reliance on explanations and answers, which she argues lessens the sense of wonder one has for the wonders of the natural world. Nature in her poems is often personified as a powerful force, often depicted as a nurturing mother or a wild, untamed entity.

Dickinson uses nature to symbolize both beauty and danger, exploring themes of growth, decay, and the cycle of life. (Cano Trilla, 2021-2022, p.13)

“**Nature, the gentlest mother**”. Nature is personified as a nurturing and maternal figure who cares for all living beings, embodying both gentleness and power.

Nature, the gentlest mother  
 Impatient of no child,  
 The feeblest or the waywardest,—  
 Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill  
 By traveller is heard,  
 Restraining rampant squirrel  
 Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,  
 A summer afternoon,—  
 Her household, her assembly;  
 And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles  
 Incites the timid prayer  
 Of the minutest cricket,  
 The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep  
 She turns as long away  
 As will suffice to light her lamps;  
 Then, bending from the sky,



With infinite affection  
 And infiniter care,  
 Her golden finger on her lip,  
 Wills silence everywhere. (Dickinson, 1950)

The main idea of the poem "Nature, the Gentlest Mother" by Emily Dickinson is the personification of nature as a nurturing and caring mother figure. Through this personification, Dickinson highlights the complexity and virtue of nature, contrasting it with the separateness of humans. The poem emphasizes the harmonious relationship between nature and its elements, portraying humans as outsiders to this order. (Ahmed, H., 2020, p. 379)

Nature is portrayed with human-like qualities and actions possessing a sense of maternal care and authority. It is personified as a mother figure, characterized by her gentleness and patience towards all living beings. Nature's interaction with the speaker is described as a conversation, emphasizing the richness and beauty of her presence. Also, the voice is portrayed as having the power to evoke a sense of reverence and spirituality even in the smallest of creatures. Moreover, Nature's affection and care are described as infinite, suggesting a boundless and nurturing presence that extends to all living beings. These instances of personification contribute to the poem's portrayal of nature as a maternal and nurturing force, highlighting its role in sustaining and nurturing life while also commanding respect and awe.

The recurrent theme of nature personified as a protective mother, shielding her children, the bird and squirrel, from human intrusion, underscores the sharp contrast between the environment's serenity and humanity's disruptive inclinations. In particular, the stanza that describes the squirrel and bird's interactions with their surroundings hints at a deeper meaning that illustrates Nature's defense against human interference. This portrayal symbolizes the divide in characteristics between Nature and the nature of humanity. (Ahmed, H., 2020, p. 381-382)

### 3) Examination of Dickinson's portrayal of time as a personified entity

Emily Dickinson held a different view of time than the general consensus that it can heal all wounds. She perceived time as a force of constant change and instability, which she feared. Seeking stability, she opted for seclusion. Time is personified as a relentless force, often depicted as an indifferent observer. Dickinson often explores the passage of time and its effects on human experience, using personification to evoke a sense of inevitability. (Roy, A., 2015, p. 170)

The poem "**A Clock stopped –**" demonstrates a skillful use of personification to provide inanimate objects with genuine human traits, enhancing the poem's imagery.

A Clock stopped -  
 Not the Mantel's -  
 Geneva's farthest skill  
 Can't put the puppet bowing  
 That just now dangled still -

An awe came on the Trinket!  
 The Figures hunched -with pain -  
 Then quivered out of Decimals -  
 Into Degreeless noon -

It will not stir for Doctors -  
 This Pendulum of snow -  
 The Shopman importunes it -  
 While cool - concernless No

Nods from the Gilded pointers -  
 Nods from Seconds slim -

Decades of Arrogance between  
 The Dial life -  
 And Him. (Dickinson, 1999)

In Emily Dickinson's "A Clock stopped –," the clock can be interpreted as a metaphor for time itself. Therefore, the personification of the clock as experiencing emotions and agency is equated to personification of time. By doing so, Dickinson extends the metaphor beyond the physical object to explore deeper themes of mortality, the passage of time, and the human experience.

Dickinson provides a reflection on mortality, time, and the human experience by portraying the clock as experiencing emotions and agency.

"A Clock stopped – the act of stopping is presented as a deliberate action, suggesting that the clock itself decided to cease functioning. The description of pain experienced by the clock implies a sensitivity or awareness beyond mere mechanical function. The clock's pain is depicted as deeper and existential, not merely physical. Additionally, the clock's history of stopping suggests a pattern or intentionality, as if it has deliberately halted before. Finally, the clock's indifference to repair attempts implies a stubbornness or autonomy, as it remains unresponsive to the efforts of the repairer. Through these examples, Dickinson crafts a vivid portrayal of the clock as a sentient being with its own thoughts and experiences.

She emphasizes the fleeting nature of life and the pointlessness of attempting to control time through the metaphor of the stopped clock. Her use of personification invites readers to consider the inevitability of death and the limitations of human existence.

#### **4) Exploration of Dickinson's depiction of hope and despair as personified entities**

Emily Dickinson's letters and poems reflect a complex understanding of the human condition, integrating both despair and hope. Despite expressing despair about the world, Dickinson also finds joy in the mere act of living. Her writings often

juxtapose these opposing emotions, with each stance dramatizing the other. Dickinson's despair and hope, paradoxically, can coexist and even reinforce each other, allowing her to "choose life" despite pessimism. Dickinson uses hope to explore themes of perseverance and optimism in the face of adversity, highlighting its ability to uplift and inspire. Dickinson's optimism endures and even triumphs in the face of extreme despair, enabling her to get through moments when hope itself seems hopeless. (Brantley, R.E., 2013, p. 125-126)

In the poem, “**Hope is the thing with feathers**” hope is personified as a resilient bird that resides in the human soul, singing a melody of perseverance and resilience.

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -  
 That perches in the soul -  
 And sings the tune without the words -  
 And never stops - at all -  
  
 And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
 And sore must be the storm -  
 That could abash the little Bird  
 That kept so many warm -  
  
 I’ve heard it in the chillest land -  
 And on the strangest Sea -  
 Yet - never - in Extremity,  
 It asked a crumb - of me. (Dickinson, 1999)

Hope is depicted as a living creature, personified with the ability to reside within the soul and provide comfort and resilience. Hope is portrayed as singing a tune without words, symbolizing its perpetual presence and unwavering nature. The personification of hope as the most consoling during difficult times suggests that

hope is sentient and capable of offering consolation. Despite vulnerability, hope remains resilient, enduring challenges without faltering. Additionally, hope is portrayed as self-sufficient and independent, never seeking anything in return, even in the most desperate circumstances.

Dickinson reflects on the strength of hope and gives it depth and emotion through these personifications, which supports the poem's exploration of the nature of hope and its enduring presence in the human experience.

In the poem “**Despair's Advantage Is Achieved**” despair is personified as actively seeking to achieve its goals, implying a certain degree of agency or intentionality.

Despair's advantage is achieved

By suffering—Despair—

To be assisted of Reverse

One must Reverse have bore—

The Worthiness of Suffering like

The Worthiness of Death

Is ascertained by tasting—

As can no other Mouth

Of Savors—make us conscious—

As did ourselves partake—

Affliction feels impalpable

Until Ourselves are struck— (Dickinson, 1999)

Despair is personified as an active force or entity. It is depicted as achieving advantage through suffering and providing assistance to those who have experienced

adversity. Dickinson likens despair to death and suffering, suggesting that its impact can only be understood through firsthand experience.

Furthermore, despair is portrayed as a dark and oppressive presence, often symbolized as a shadow or heavy weight. Through personification, Dickinson conveys the overwhelming sense of hopelessness and existential angst associated with despair exploring the depths of human suffering.

Through these personifications, Dickinson portrays despair as a powerful and influential force that shapes human experience and perception. However, there isn't a direct personification of hope in this poem.

## **2.2. Intersecting and Interacting Personifications within Dickinson's Poetry**

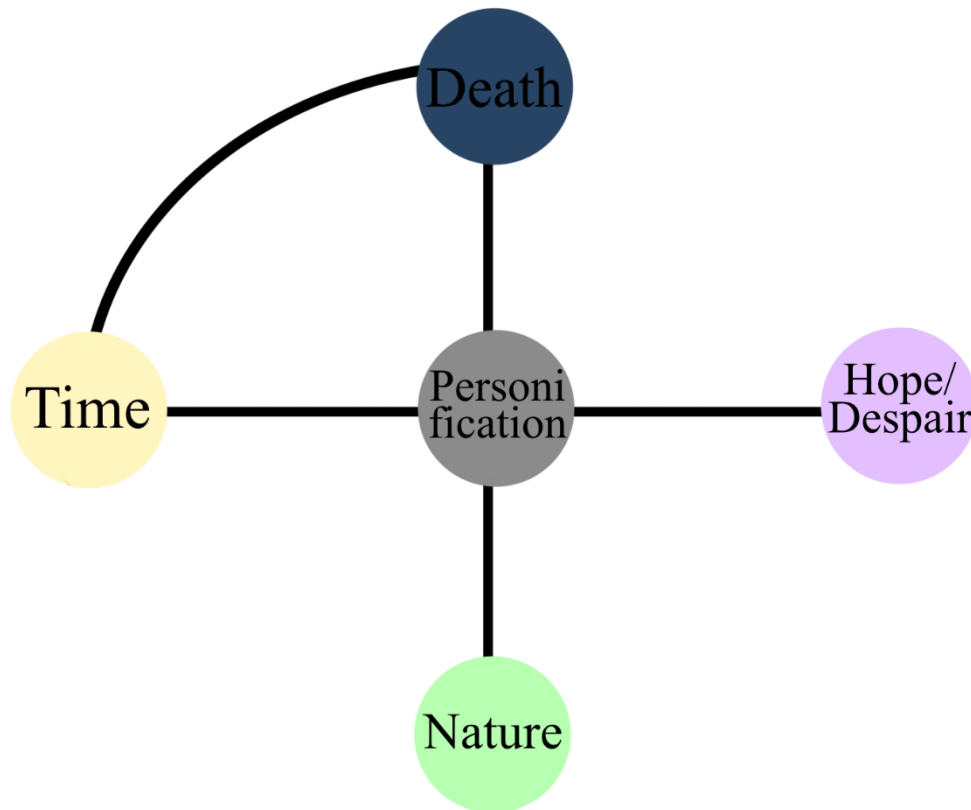
Having identified instances of personification in Emily Dickinson's poetry, including death, time, nature, hope, and despair, it is essential to acknowledge the presence of overlapping personifications representing multiple concepts. This necessitates a thorough examination to define the network of personifications within her works.

### **Death and Time**

We had already observed how death is personified in the poem **“Because I could not stop for Death”** as a courteous gentleman who takes the speaker on a carriage ride. However, time is also personified in this poem as a guiding force, with the carriage passing through various scenes representing different periods of the character's life. Immortality is also subtly personified through the image of eternity, which the speaker enters at the end of the journey.

This connection between time and death suggests that they are intertwined aspects of the human experience, with time serving as a constant companion on the journey towards mortality. The subtle personification of immortality through the image of eternity at the end of the journey further reinforces the interconnectedness of time and death in the poem. Throughout the journey, the speaker passes through various scenes, such as **“Recess- in the Ring”** and **“Fields of Gazing Grain,”**

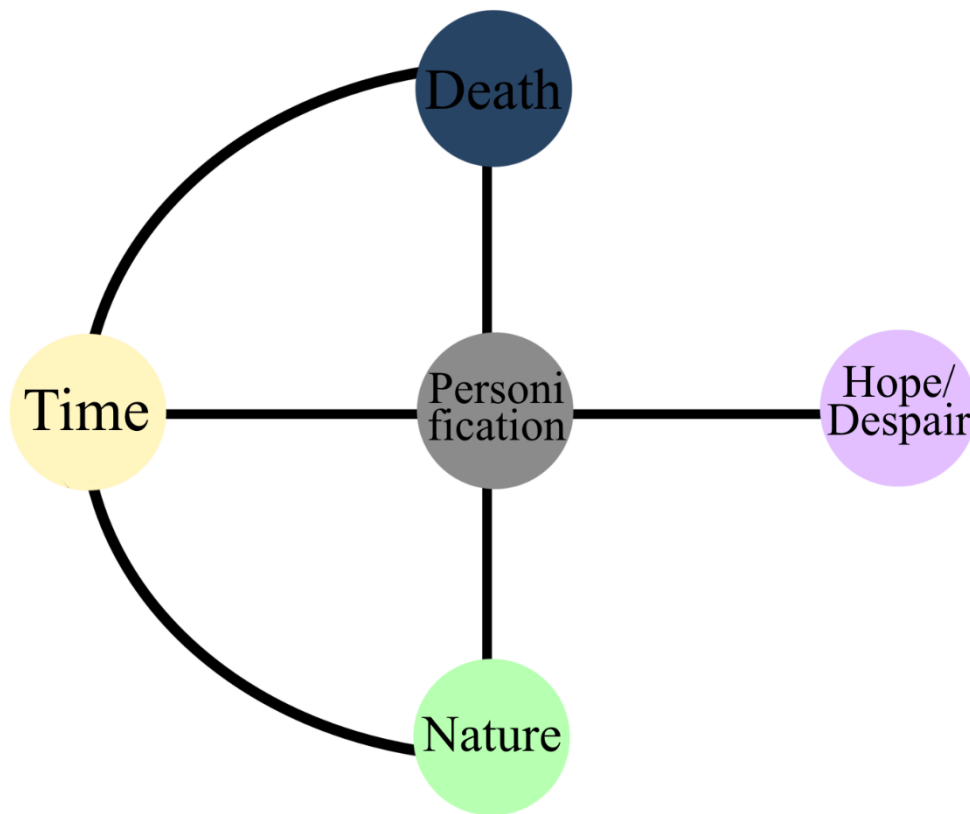
symbolizing different stages of life. Despite the absence of explicit emotions, the poem conveys a sense of tranquility and acceptance towards death, emphasizing the inevitability of the human journey towards the unknown.



### **Time and Nature**

In the poem **“The morns are meeker than they were”** nature is personified as a gentle force that undergoes subtle changes, reflecting the passage of time and seasons. The personifications of time and nature intertwine to convey the subtle changes and passage of seasons. The connection between personifications of time and nature in the poem lies in the portrayal of nature as a reflection of the passage of time. By depicting nature's transformations, such as “the berry's cheek becoming plumper” and “the maple wears a gayer scarf”, the poem suggests the cyclical nature of seasons. Thus, time is metaphorically personified through nature, serving as a subtle yet omnipresent force that influences the changes observed in the natural world. While these instances of personification are subtle, they contribute to the overall imagery and tone of the poem, enhancing the reader's understanding of the natural world and its dynamic characteristics.

In Emily Dickinson's poem "The Lilac is an ancient shrub," the connection between time and nature is intricately depicted through celestial imagery and botanical symbolism. The sun, embodying both the source of light and the measure of human time, serves as a personification for the concept of time itself. Its descent in the poem signifies the passage of time. Simultaneously, the lilac personifies nature, emerging as a timeless emblem of its enduring beauty and resilience, juxtaposed against the backdrop of the setting sun. Through this interplay, the poem evokes a harmonious relationship between time and nature, where the rhythms of the natural world reflect the unfolding of time, prompting contemplation on the cyclical nature of life and the eternal interconnectedness between time and nature. (Anderson, C. R., 1959, p. 403-404)

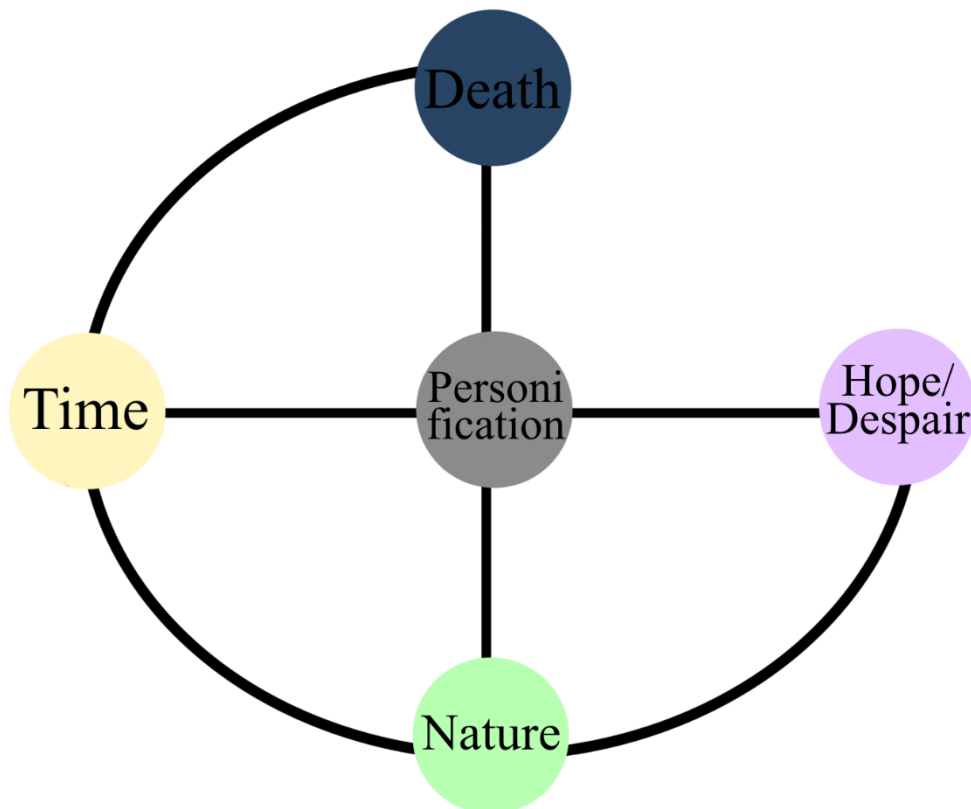


### **Nature and Hope**

In the poem **"Hope" is the thing with feathers**, the connection between personifications of hope and nature is vividly portrayed through the imagery of the bird. Hope is personified as a resilient bird with feathers that perches in the soul, embodying the enduring spirit of optimism and comfort in times of adversity. This personification not only integrated hope seamlessly into the natural world. Through



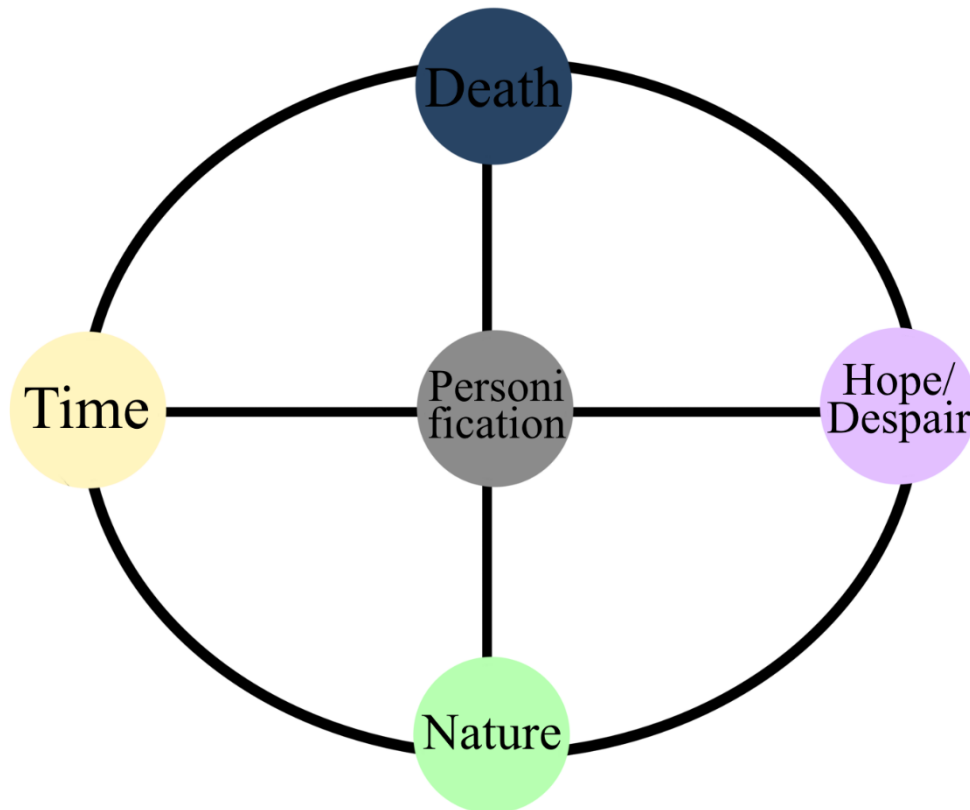
the imagery of the bird enduring storms and remaining steadfast, nature is personified as a powerful force that supports and sustains hope, reinforcing the interconnectedness between human emotions and the broader understanding of the natural world. Consequently, this connection enriches the poem's thematic depth, highlighting hope as an integral aspect of both human experience and the timeless cycles of nature.



### **Despair and Death**

In Emily Dickinson's poem "**Absence disembodies — so does Death,**" the personifications of absence and death serve as central themes, exploring their profound impact on the human experience. In this sense, death is personified as a force that separates individuals from life. Moreover, absence can be interpreted as an allegory for despair, suggesting that both absence and despair are personified in the poem, intertwining their effects on the human condition. By attributing human-like qualities to these abstract concepts, Dickinson portrays them as powerful forces capable of disconnecting individuals from their physical existence and each other. However, amidst the despair, Dickinson offers a glimmer of hope through the

concept of love and empathy, which transcend physical absence and death, providing comfort and connection.



Emily Dickinson's poetry offers a profound exploration of networks of personifications, revealing intricate connections between abstract concepts contemplating complex themes such as despairing hope, nature, mortality, time, and the human experience of death. The coexistence and overlap of these personifications serve to deepen the emotional impact of the poems and contribute to their enduring power and resonance.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 2**

After examining the interconnected personifications that create the personification network within Emily Dickinson's poems, such conclusions can be drawn:

1. Dickinson's portrayal of death in her works, "Because I could not stop for Death" and "I heard a Fly buzz – when I died," challenges traditional views

- of death as a menacing force and intrusive presence, urging readers to reconsider their perspectives on mortality and the afterlife.
2. "Because I could not stop for Death" emphasizes the interconnectedness of death and time, with time serving as a constant companion and immortality symbolizing the inevitability of the human journey.
  3. Dickinson portrays nature as nurturing, caring, and human-like, symbolizing its protective instinct against human intrusion and its contrast with humanity's disruptive inclinations.
  4. Dickinson personifies time as a constant force of change and instability, challenging traditional beliefs about its ability to heal wounds and emphasizes the fleeting nature of life.
  5. Dickinson personifies hope and despair, presenting hope as a living creature, providing comfort and resilience and despair as a dark, oppressive presence.
  6. "The morns are meeker than they were" highlights the connection between time and nature, highlighting the cyclical nature of seasons and the enduring presence of time in the natural world.
  7. "The Lilac is an ancient shrub" by Dickinson uses celestial imagery and botanical symbolism to symbolize time and nature, highlighting the harmonious relationship between time and nature.
  8. In "Absence disembodies — so does Death," Dickinson explores the profound impact of absence and death on human experience, offering hope through love and empathy, transcending physical absence and death.
  9. Emily Dickinson's poetry explores complex themes like despair, hope, nature, mortality, time, and death through intricate personifications, deepening their emotional impact and resonance.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we can make the following statements:

1. Personification is a rhetorical technique used by Emily Dickinson to create vivid imagery and evoke metaphorical conditions, making difficult ideas more approachable and engaging.
2. Network theory provides a systematic framework for understanding the interconnections among elements in Dickinson's poetry, emphasizing that these entities are interconnected components of a broader network. Dickinson's poetry often personifies abstract concepts with human-like qualities.
3. Emily Dickinson's poetry challenges accepted norms by exploring themes of death, nature, time, hope, and despair through personification, revealing intricate connections between abstract concepts. Through the coexistence and overlap of these personifications, Dickinson's poems resonate with enduring power and deepen the emotional resonance of her poetry, delving into the complexities of human emotions.

## RESUME

The research on the topic “**Networks of Personifications in E. Dickinson’s Poetry**” delves into the intricate web of personifications found in the poetry of Emily Dickinson. It explores the interconnectedness of various personified elements such as death, nature, time, hope, and despair within her works, shedding light on their symbolic significance and thematic depth. The term paper consists of an introduction, two chapters, conclusions to each chapter, general conclusions, a resume, a list of references and a list of illustrative sources.

The first chapter “**Exploring personification and Network Theory**” is theoretical. It lays the groundwork for the study by examining the concept of personification as a figure of speech. It delves into the nuances of personification and its application in literary analysis. Additionally, it explores network analysis theory and its relevance to understanding the interconnectedness of personified figures within Dickinson's poetry.

The second chapter “**Personified figures in Dickinson’s poetry**” is practical. In it, the paper explores the portrayal of death, nature, time, hope, and despair as personified figures in Dickinson's poetry. Through detailed analysis, it uncovers the nature of these personifications and their significance in conveying profound thematic messages. Furthermore, it explores the intersecting and interacting dynamics among these personified figures, revealing the intricate network of themes present in Dickinson's poetic works.

**Key words:** *figure of speech, personification, network theory, death, nature, time, hope, despair, personification network.*

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