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Applying the Parallelism Approach to the Experience of Aging in the Arabic Andalusian and Spanish Poetry

Imad Abedalkareem Ababneh

Department of Basic Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, Amman Arab University, Amman 11100, Balqa, Jordan

ABSTRACT

This paper conducts a comparison between the image of aging in works of Arabic Andalusian literature and models from Spanish literature by adopting the approach of parallelism, as identified in the American school in the field of comparative literature. Since there are no clear historical links between the two that might indicate the civilizational-literary influence and impact, parallelism as a method is implemented throughout the study. The framework of the image of aging along with its all artistic and literary manifestations remains the common fiber between them. The Poetic models targeted in this paper are considered fertile ground for unveiling similarities and differences relevant to the imagery of aging. By analyzing the extracts qualitatively from Andalusian and Spanish poetries, the study addresses the existential dilemma of aging in poetic expression highlighting the notion of mortality aesthetically, culturally, and imaginatively via poetic representation and symbolism. Two groups of extracts are addressed belonging to two groups of poets in which a pair from Arabic and Spanish literature respectively is categorized based on form of parallelism. The pairs of poets are given as follows: Bendetti with Ibn Zuhr, José Martí with Al-Ghazal, León with Ibn Kafaja, and Rosalía de Castro with Ibn Arabi. These pairs are classified based on the most prevalent element of intertextuality within each pair including imagery, style, representation, theme, or symbolism.

Keywords: Comparative Literature; Andalusia; Aging; White Hair

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Imad Abedalkareem Ababneh, Department of Basic Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, Amman Arab University, Amman 11100, Balqa, Jordan;
Email: imadababneh@aaau.edu.jo

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1. Introduction

Unquestionably, the initial nature of the development of the field of comparative literature shaped its features and sub-disciplines based on the historical moment of the intersection between the influencer and the influenced. It also involves investigating the historical conditions of this encounter and its contexts between the two parties. It addresses the history of literature within its national arena implementing formal and thematic characteristics and analyzes changes occurring over some time. Within a systematic framework of concise ideas along with the integration of a sound methodological approach, comparative literature emerged under the umbrella of the historical approach marking the birth of the field and emphasizing the concept of influence and impact. Through addressing historical-literary relationships between the two literary worlds, Western intellectuals integrated a scientific quality into their approaches to studying human phenomena such as the literary experience and subjecting its components to rational analysis and argumentation.

The convergence between nationalities and civilizations has also expanded for various psychological reasons, as among European nationalities since there are many influential historical unities and disunities within. The French school, for instance, took the lead in adopting the historical approach in the 19th century in comparative studies. By addressing the relationship of impact between French literature and other models of European literature and emphasizing the relevance between various national literatures, the French demonstrates the central European approach in the field with the support of historical evidence within that founding era. During the peak influence of the French school, literature was brought closer artistically to other disciplines of expression and knowledge systematically, unveiling resemblances, affinities, and influences. It has further investigated literary events and texts simultaneously across different languages and cultures, even within a single heritage, to better understand and document scientific descriptive works of literary history^[1]. Two dimensions have been considered in detail by this school: the difference in language and the existence of the historical influence and impact, whether direct or indi-

rect.

Differently from the historical approach, the parallelism movement emerged rejecting the fundamental principles concentrated on comparative studies. It was established against the core role implemented by the French school, addressing the internal relationships of similar texts that are not determined by the authority of influence and impact but rather by centralizing the texts themselves and a deep analysis of their form and literary structure. Wellek^[2] at the Chapel Hill conference, titled “The Crisis of Comparative Literature”, presented a sharp critique of the French school, going against the immersion in tracking the historical facts of influence and impact, investigating the intermediaries and historical markers between one literature and another, and emphasizing the history of literature without paying attention to the aesthetic and artistic aspects of the text itself. Therefore, he conceives the necessity for comparative literature to be adopted from a universal perspective and through intensifying the consciousness of the unity and the consistency of the creative experience. He perceives that comparative literature is a literary discipline that is independent of linguistic, racial, and political boundaries.

It is worth mentioning that comparative literature that adopts parallelism does not ignore the historical dimension in its study, as emphasized by Henry H. Remak in his article published in 1960, titled “Comparative Literature at the Crossroads: Diagnosis, Therapy, and Prognosis”. Remak did not differ from Wellek in his critique of the French approach and in his investigations of comparative studies based on literary influences. Providing an alternative approach to the French historical theory, he immersed parallel studies by adopting literary criticism methods without excluding the history of literature.

Parallelism is defined as “dividing literary works into formal and thematic elements”^[3]. The researcher usually addresses universal elements, including freedom, will, alienation, realism, love, and others. The aim is to discuss these issues in different types of literature or to study similar and formal elements occurring in two or more literature, such as artistic imagery, poetic structure, or dramatic construction, among other formal literary elements, without centralizing the angle of influences and their relation-

ships^[4].

The term “parallelism” or “resemblance” is one of the fundamental terms in the American model in the field of comparative literature, and it stands contrastive with “influence and impact” in the French model, as explicated before^[5]. It provides an investigation of two similar literary texts without enforcing a protagonist or antagonist relationship between them by emphasizing the textual elements that are sufficiently intelligible to introduce a justified comparative study.

In fact, the term is originally a geometric mathematical term (borrowed from Euclidean geometry) adopted by the American approach of comparative studies, denoting a binary relationship between two geometric objects, such as parallel lines or planes, and this relationship necessitates these two objects not to intersect at any point in space. Similarly, the concept itself is manifested by addressing literary works without the condition of intersection, as opposed to “influence and impact” which embodies extension and convergence. As Joseph Bakar emphasizes, it is “the discovery of similarities in the environment, thought, mood, or style between different works that are not coordinated by historical relationships, without any certain, real influence and impact”^[1]. Sangia^[6] also defines it as “Parallelism theory does not give importance to the link of causality and no importance to influence. There is a possibility of dealing with literary texts not being in contact of whatsoever kind but having similar contexts or realities. If influence exists between literary texts, the importance does not lie in the influence itself but rather in the context. If the context does not allow for influence to be effective, influence will never take place in the first place”^[6].

Parallelism is essentially a search-based approach for similarities of common human causes, which function as tools in shaping the ideas within a text. These commonalities arise from intersections found coincidentally throughout a close investigation, delineating their boundaries with human emotions. This process proceeds in addressing such similarities between different texts to provide a ground basis for comparison and implements a cultural and cognitive convergence. Comparative literature is contingent on the principle of interaction and telepathy between cultures and nations through unveiling

the textualizations of the universal human experience to bring humanity close together in the field. Parallelism as a literary concept in comparative literature promotes equity between different cultures and literatures, encouraging opportunities for dialogue, justice, and diversity. It neither favors one culture at the expense of another nor diminishes the value of any culture since it represents a coalition that builds bridges of communication between texts and a window for transcending knowledge, exploring moral universals, and differences within literary traditions^[7].

From this angle, this study adopts the belief that a comparative approach of parallelism is a literary reading of the text itself as the text represents more of a universal human form of creativity rather than a subjective form belonging solely to the author. Critics have enthusiastically embraced the universality of literature in adopting the tendency toward addressing comparisons among writers from various cultures, emphasizing the cumulative efforts of human intellect in literature and knowledge^[8].

Significance of Study

This study addresses the transition of a person from youth to old age. This study emphasizes the phenomenon of aging and physical fragility in poetry. It stands as a contribution to literary intertextuality based on the approach of parallelism between Arabic poetry and Spanish poetry.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This study examines the thematic and stylistic parallels between Spanish and Andalusian Arabic poetry by revealing the similarities and differences between prominent samples of selected contrastive groups such as between Al-Zuhr and Benedetti, Al-Ghazal and Marti, Ibn Khafajah and Castro, and Ibn-Arabi and Leon. The study aims to show how different poets belonging to different cultures and societal different belief systems may address similar themes such as social justice, human experience, and existential reflection.

2.2. Parallelism Approach

The parallelism approach as defined by the American

School of Comparative Literature identifies and examines the thematic and stylistic commonalities across different literary traditions. The methodology of this approach relies on showing aspects of comparison of texts belonging to different eras and cultures, yet, they unveil universal value, experience, and morality that unify world literature ^[9].

2.3. Thematic Parallels

These parallels are deduced by analyzing each comparison according to the following conceptual criteria:

- Aging and Mortality
- Identity and Self-Reflection:
- Existential Themes

2.4. Intertextual Connection

By adopting intertextuality, the study can understand the relevance of one text to another despite their diverged cultural backgrounds. This key concept in comparative literature supports the investigation of unveiling the resonance or divergence of themes such as aging and identity across the selected comparison groups providing insights on the similar philosophical questions raised in these various works. The study adopts Kristeva's concept ^[10] of intertextuality to reveal the interconnectedness of these various texts.

2.5. Historical and Cultural Contexts

Moreover, paying attention to the historical and cultural contexts of these comparison groups can explain the linguistic make-up of certain expressions and thematic nuances providing highlights on the shared or diverged elements across the various poetic treatments ^[11].

3. Methodology

Primarily, this study analyzes various examples of Arabic and Spanish literature qualitatively investigating the image of aging, symbolizing an imagery of death, approaching the end of life, and signaling the beginning of the fading of the joy of life. The extracts from the target poems are collected and then, subjected to poetic literary

translation through a combination of machine translation, and human translation conducted by the cooperative work of three certified translator academicians in the English Department at Amman Arab University, in addition to human literary editing, especially since such poems require tremendous efforts in preserving meaning, rhyme, and literary language. In the qualitative part, the poems are categorized based on the parallelism approach and examined thoroughly in reflecting on the shared thematic properties of each group of poets from both the Arabic and Spanish literature.

3.1. Data Collection and Text Selection

The study identifies a range of poetic extracts from selected works in Arabic and Spanish literature that address the theme of aging as they are filtered based on their relevance to the theme and their interesting cross-existential and cultural telepathy through the parallelism method.

3.2. Translation Criteria

The study utilizes ChatGPT machine translation of poetic extracts as a source of understanding some selected in English, while other extracts that have expert official translations in the literature have been provided with their citations. Even though machine translation is sometimes exposed to erroring and unfaithfulness in rendering some poetic expressions and styles, ChatGPT is a useful interactive platform that may prove efficient in providing a melodic functional translation of special texts such as poems [12,13]. The study combines the AI output with post-editing expert translation of three certified translator academicians from the English Department at Amman Arab University that have ensured the accuracy of delivering the thematic message of the poem. As poetic translation is a highly-specialized form of rendering and requires literary expert effort, AI translation stands as a way out for researchers when especially edited intellectually and linguistically by human intervention. This rendering process of machine translation and post-editing is executed according to the following criteria:

- Linguistic Faithfulness: The human translators have ensured the perseverance of the intended meaning at

least ideationally without distorting the cultural contexts within.

- **Literary Faithfulness:** By commanding the AI translators to provide literary equivalence of the extracted poem in terms of rhyme and style, the human translators re-edited any irregularities that may distort the balance between meaning and melody without tyrannizing each other in the process of rendering.

- **Iterative Revision:** The human translators adopt a multi-faceted revision procedure in which each poem is reviewed post-editing and post-translation in terms of accuracy and style.

However, the study acknowledges interpretation challenges in maintaining faithfulness to both the meaning and style of the poem, especially in word choices and cultural nuances. Yet, the study believes that providing translated texts of poems that may have no recording of translation in literature is significant to display to readers to bridge the linguistic relevance across cultures, especially when poetic equivalence may not be tenable due to the expert status of this form of translation to literary researchers. Therefore, the study mitigates this issue by emphasizing the interactive power of newly-neural AI translators such as ChatGPT in rendering a significant portion of the human translator's work and being simultaneously supported by post-machine editing and expert evaluation^[14]. This translation approach can be useful in making certain poetic extracts tenable in researching poetry and therefore, accessible to readers.

To improve your methodology based on the review comments, it's important to clearly articulate both the qualitative and quantitative aspects, provide a more robust framework for the translation process, and address the accuracy and reliability of the translations. Here's a revised version of your methodology that integrates these elements:

3.3. Qualitative Analysis

The study integrates the parallelism approach into the qualitative part of the study by revealing the thematic and structural commonalities between Arabic and Spanish poems without depending on historical similarities. By

categorizing the poem into thematic nuances such as aging as loss, aging as wisdom, or aging as resistance, each poet delves into their literary highlights psychologically, symbolically, morally, and existentially. This analysis, therefore, comprises of two elements:

- **Thematic categorization:** Poems are divided into thematic motifs and repetitions of aging, existence, the other, and death. This categorization explores various cultural contexts through the distinct philosophies of expressions across these poems.

- **Literary Interpretation:** The study employs multi-targeted analysis examining the symbolism of aging such as the universal feature of gray hair and the style of expression that transcends different cultural attitudes and philosophies toward the morality of death, fear of mortality, and human relations with 'the other'; the female figure.

By adopting the qualitative descriptive-analytical method and translation methodological rigor, this study explores a full examination of aging in Arabic and Spanish poetry via a parallelism approach unveiling universal human experiences toward the dualities of life and death, the paradox between surrendering and desiring, and the highlights of romanticist tendencies or nihilistic lamentation.

4. Research Questions

1. What are the forms of literary parallelism between Arabic Andalusian poetry and Spanish poetry?
2. What are the literary features thematically and spiritually shared between the two forms of poetry?

5. Discussion

5.1. The Image of the Aging in Spanish and Andalusian Arabic Poetry

The status of the Spanish poet is not much different from that of the Andalusian poet in their perspective of the impact of aging on their souls. The appearance of gray hair and the departure of women from their lives instill fear and anxiety the most in their hearts. This is no surprise for poets since they are known for their emotional expressiveness and their awareness of the dualism of life and death,

youth and aging, and closeness and separation. As poets experience psychological and existential transformations at the moment of revelation, they use the most concise and precise linguistic terms and metaphors to express the intensity of the momentary emotions.

The appearance of gray hair symbolizes a sign of the consequences of time passing on aging. It manifests that a significant portion of one's life has passed, and a sudden change shocks the freshness and energy of youth. It confirms the initiation of a new stage of life that foresees the decline of life. The nostalgia is agonizing, with the poet left with a feeling of decay and the fading of the joy of life and the loss of its captivating charm. As Time cannot be sensed directly, we feel its effects gnawing at our bodies and weakening our strength. The sign of gray hair has more underlying dimensions within the human psyche we feel at the onset of the transformation.

No matter the difference in skin color, or hair color, whether it is blonde, black, brown, or red, it is all doomed to white hair. This transformation is striking and a poetic source of wonder and influence. The color unifies after the difference, and it is a phenomenon with enduring permanence for as long as humans have existed. Here, gray hair turns into a universal symbol that goes beyond any specific language or culture. Humans continue to observe this gradual change as time passes or when they look at themselves in the mirror. The change in the hair's color represents not only an aging sign, but also the transition from one state to another.

As for women, poets have devoted significant themes about them in their poems, where they became the inspiration for poets and the triggers of the creativity of their poetry. Women represent the essence of life itself and imagination. Poets portrayed their successes and failures in love, and their adventures with women, with their artistic depictions of their sensual and moral characteristics. They left no aspect of women without description, and there is no doubt that women occupy the minds and the world of men in general. They captivate the souls of poets and their experiences in some fashion. The presence of women in poetry is essentially a profound symbolic concept that lies beyond the objectifying gaze, which is a trivial idea that obscures the aesthetic value and its relationship to the po-

etic experience. Women are symbolic beings and have an instinctive fascination open to the imagination, emanating from the mist of mythology, the memory of nature, fertility, and growth. When a woman enters the poetic world, she embodies the poetic language, and her presence carries the poetic symbolism. In fact, one of the prominent features of poetic language, in any transcendentalist experience, is the skill to conceal meanings behind symbols with effective control in literary texts.

It is noticeable that women are a dominant creative presence regarding the experience of aging, and their presence always attends to the poet's mind, whether in the Arab or Spanish creative context. Their symbolic presence is a crucial element of the poetic experience, enabling the poet to express his vulnerability or affirm his strength. They are more probably haunted by anxiety about the transformation of women (the beloved) from their lives in old age. Their attitude towards women tends to challenge and deny weakness, with the certainty of recurring to their youth that they once lived in an attempt to convince themselves that there was no rupture between the past and the present.

The current study consists of four comparisons, which are:

- Denial of reality and the shock of aging
- Realization of the destructive nature of time and the acceptance of aging
- The experience of aging and its relation with the other (i.e., the authority) in the space of the prison
- The fear of aging and living in solitude with nature.

5.2. Comparison One: Denial of Reality and the Shock of Aging

The first comparison of the two poetic excerpts deals with the human loss of the vitality of youth and the entry into old age along with the deprivation of a woman's love. The two poets, Mario Benedetti and Ibn Zuhra Al-Ashbili are both haunted by the fear of aging. They ponder the dialectic of old age and youth and open up their poems to a dark, agonizing perception of the transition into old age, which happens rapidly. This transformation is not

limited to their relationship with time; it also encompasses changing human relationships. One notable aspect is the relationship between a man and a woman.

5.2.1. Benedetti’s Text

Mario Benedetti mournfully portrays his aging body in **Table 1**, revealing his perspective and his reaction to it. He goes on his denying struggle with his reality, as he rebels against the signs of aging, such as the fallen teeth and the remaining gray hair on his head. However, he refuses to succumb to this physical fatigue and, despite his boldness, the poet no longer views time as an objectifying element in his life.

Table 1. Bendetti’s Síndrome.

In Spanish	Translated
Síndrome	Syndrome
Todavía tengo casi todos mis dientes	I still have almost all of my original teeth
casi todos mis cabellos y poquísimas canas	I have almost all my hair and very little has turned silver
puedo hacer y deshacer el amor	I can still feel the thrills of love,
trépar una escalera de dos en dos	I can climb the stairs two steps at a time
y correr cuarenta metros detrás del ómnibus	and I can run forty yards behind the bus...
o sea que no debería sentirme viejo	so, I shouldn’t feel old
pero el grave problema es que antes	but the serious problem is that before, in my youth
no me fijaba en estos detalles	I didn’t pay attention to all these details ^[15]

To Mario’s consciousness, time has ceased to be a mere element that contains humans and objects. It has instead turned into a force that determines the literary-artistic beauty and a conceptual material he is involved in and presented in the form of desires. Mario’s attitude toward time does not embody a final position for him. The signs of the departure of youth and bidding farewell to the freshness of life subjected his poetic experience to the effects of time.

This is not a physical issue, as expressed in phrases like “climbing two stairs” or “running forty meters behind the bus”, but rather extends to his persona characterized by narcissism and confidence that he is still capable of continuing his adventures with women, capturing their hearts, and being desirable. However, this cannot preclude the fact that he overlooks the truth that aging has taken its toll on him, and his pretense of strength is merely a

psychological defeat that afflicts the elderly, as a result of women’s disinterest in him. He expresses a sudden revelation of the impact of time by saying in **Table 2**:

Table 2. Benedetti’s second extract.

In Spanish	Translated
pero el grave problema es que antes	Yet, the grave dilemma lies in the past,
no me fijaba en estos detalles	I failed to notice these intricate cast.

Despite human awareness of time and its relation to the nature of things as well as the surrounding universe since their consciousness, through the transformations that happen in things and the alternation of night and day and in seasons, along with the physical changes of weakness and debilitation, Mario Benedetti is overwhelmed by a deep feeling of being pursued by the future and opposing his desires. He feels victimized by time, which steals out of the blue his youth. To him, the poetic experience is the aesthetic form of existential anxious questions that occupy his mind. He experiences a complete detachment from reality and wishes for the unattainable. He desires to freeze time in the youthful stage and recapture the time of delight. When the poet’s sense of time intensifies, his sense of the harshness of death also multiplies, and the experience of love is an experience in which time plays a fundamental role. It lies in the loss of what we love and are attached to in terms of life’s pleasures, creating pain within us.

5.2.2. Ibn Zuhr’s Text

The experience of Mario Benedetti is not much different from the experience of the Andalusian poet Ibn Zuhr Al-Hafid^[16], the grandson of Al-Ashbili. He addresses the dilemma of aging as a separation from the joy of life with all its pleasures after the youth has faded. The first thing that triggers fear in him is the graying of his hair itself, as it symbolizes one of the signs of weakness and old age that no one wants to show, especially when it is relevant to a man’s ego toward their relationship with women. It is also one of the first signs of approaching death and parting from life. The suddenness, which is an action of time that attacked his young body, stands as a common theme between him and Mario. He looked in the mirror and he found a reflection that he did not recognize. He wondered

about the young man he used to be, sparking a silent dialogue between him and the mirror. Without words, the mirror told him that the boy he used to be had turned into what he perceived now, revealing his denial of such a transformation. The point of transformation made him deny himself and ask about the young man he was yesterday. In that, he says in **Table 3**:

Table 3. Ibn Zuhr’s Poem.

In Arabic	Translated
فأنكرتُ مقلعتايَ الذي رأته أنِّي نظرتُ إلى المرأة قد جُليتُ وكنْتُ أعهدُهُ مِن قَبْلِ ذاك فتى رأيتُ فيها شبيخاً لسْتُ أعرفهُ متى ترخَّل عن هذا المكان متى؟ فقلْتُ أين الذي بالأمس كان هنا قد كان ذلك وهذا بعد ذلك أتى فاستجملتني وقالت لي وما نطقْتُ الغواني يقرن اليوم يا أبتنا كان الغواني يقرن يا أخي ولقد صار	I gazed upon the mirror unveiled, It denied my eyes the sights that hailed. An Age man appeared, unknown to me, Once youth’s promise, now a mys- tery. I questioned, “Where is he of yester- day?” When did he depart from this abode’s display?” The mirror, silent, left me in the dark, Past and present merged, a timeless arc. Once minstrels sang, “Oh brother dear,” Now they chant, “Oh Father, hold us near.”

[17]

5.2.3. Parallelism between the Two Poets

Even though a poet is inherently possessed by a memory that surpasses that of other people in Table 3, with an ability to evoke the elements of this memory with its small and detailed details, and then re-invest it to shape his poetic work, the relationship between the two poets with time remained a stressful relationship, with all its unpredictability and an unwillingness to succumb to the new stage of life. This memory recalls the life of a person through known stages of his life, childhood, youth, and old age. It seems that the attachment of the two poets is confined to one age period that freezes time for them, which is the period of youth. The thrill of life is only present when there is good health and youth. If this thrill fades away, there is no longer a sense of joy or meaning to life, especially as aging in this context is not imaginary or anticipated but rather a tangible and experiential reality. The two poets have turned their attention to the psychological impact left by aging on their psyche. This gloomy feeling

affects their relationships with each other, especially women. Everything makes them feel that the era of youth has passed, and the time of pleasure and carefreeness is over, and the woman’s view of them has become a parental view that makes their hearts ache. This leads to feelings of alienation that overcome a person when the silver hair enters their lives concerning their relationships with time and the fear of abandonment. Mario Benedetti stands out for his rejection of reality because he fails to adapt to the new stage. Despite the dominance of incapacity and transformation, he did not announce his surrender to these changes, especially in his ability to make love with women. This sentence reflects the image of the human will that goes against the logic of defeat and submission over time. Therefore, time is perceived as the essence of the idea of love and death together. The more the sense of time intensifies, the more the sense of death intensifies. This hedonistic feeling for life probably attempts to seize a generous share in the time that remains for him.

As for Ibn Zuhr, he turned to the past, the days when he was a young man graced with beauty and charm. However, he was not able to confront reality and appeared to be surrendering to what he had changed. The feminine loss becomes a poignant scene filled with despair and frustration, as he links the woman in his mind to the past time that cannot be retrieved. This is evident in the last segment when compared to the image of the happy past. It is worth noting in the two texts that the woman represents an intelligibly dominant presence, a beauty that bestows self-pleasure and psychological contentment. This symbol of the woman’s presence emphasizes that the woman described in their poetic experience is a part of the poetic language steeped in symbolism, carrying within its folds. Talafha et al. [18] emphasize that the poet implements the mask of a feminine being of which the reader cannot see traces of a flesh-and-blood person. The woman is a symbolic being with innate seduction that opens the door for the reader’s imagination. The reader is confronted with an antagonist contrastive movement to the first image in which the falsehood of life is emphasized. This movement is unexpected as it comes without a dramatic prelude sharply in the text. This falsehood is related to the temporality of the contradictory fates characterized by the power

of the nihilistic nature of the dualism of life and death.

5.2.4. Stylistic Representation and Symbolism

Benedetti emphasizes the significance of psychological resistance against aging, especially since the persona of his poem craves youth perseverance despite the decays of aging. By the usage of juxtaposition between vital imagery and inevitable decay, the resistance manifesting the human struggle is intelligible and ingrained in the poem. Benedetti rejection of aging can be characterized as denial as discussed in psychoanalytic theory when one denies an inevitable ending, yet this form of denial is not violent shaped, but rather clinging to a life of resisting empowerment. In *Síndrome*, the poem's structure is characterized by a 'sensible' paradox between empowering language and gloom mirroring the human contradiction between the body's surrendering and the mind's desire^[19, 20].

Furthermore, Benedetti emphasizes the betrayal of the body as it stands as a constant reminder of mortality as he personifies this betrayal in the conflicting dialogue between the persona and their own body. This usage of metaphorical language sheds light on the philosophical weight of the existential shock of the passing of time, which is visualized as an undefeatable adversary responding to aging through human resistance against nature^[21].

By contrast, Ibn Zuhr's perception of aging is oriented on the intense emotions of sorrow and tragedy triggering an existential crisis when encountering their aged body. Differently from Benedetti, Ibn Zuhr chooses to be drawn by the recognition of the consequences of aging^[22]. Utilizing the mirror as a symbol of self-reflection of the truth of identity, the poet emphasizes that this self-identifying turns into an agency of psychological aggression subjugating the individual to surrender to the absence of futility. Traumatizing self-image can turn into a powerful experience in battling the fated reality of aging and physical decay.

The use of imagery by Ibn Zuhr is specifically tragic as hair gray and withered skin are representations of the identity conflict and absence of social empowerment that go beyond the fear of death itself. Arab Andalusian poetry usually associates youth with honor and beauty to the extent that it laments the nihilism of death as this life stands

religiously as an 'underworld' mortal reality. The self-mirroring is a feature of this realization that strips one's life from the concept of value personally and socially.

5.2.5. Cultural and Philosophical Aspects

Both poets integrate philosophical extrapolation in their work as Benedetti, being a modern Latin American, explores the human's struggle with aging. His existential conception conceives the human dilemma of being trapped in a decaying body whose mind paradoxically desires to be eternal; in other words, the poet philosophically points out the internal battle between the mortality of the body and the eternity of the mind. This philosophical treatment seems to be associated with modern existentialism in which human life is conditioned by its finite nature and aging always appears as a reminder of this limitation revealing a sense of attachment by the persona

Ibn Zuhr's intake, on the other hand, seems to be linked to Arab determinism as the poem does not centralize a rebellious figure as shown in Benedetti's while the Arab poet chooses to be a realist in accepting the fate of the inevitable ending of the body, and thus, one's life, emphasizing a sense of helplessness. This philosophical perception is also rooted in Islamic thought visualizing the passing of time as part of God's plan and internal acceptance indicates the wise surrendering to the natural order without upholding the false power of ego that I should remain existing in youth and vitality. Therefore, the poet's agony is rendered out of the sordid realization of the incapability of the loss of youth and emphasizes understanding the fatalism of one's life is a dignified confrontation to the inevitable ending^[23].

5.2.6. Literary Techniques

Benedetti's personification revolves around perceiving aging as an antagonist adding an empowering aura to the poem in the sense of human resistance^[24] while Ibn Zuhr affirms the cultural religiously-fatalist acceptance of aging reflecting life wisdom instead of a senseless feeling of fighting against the inevitable. The persona's paradox by Ibn Zuhr between self and reflection adds a notion of intimacy and valuing life through existential admission while Benedetti directs the struggle to the external forces

including the status quo's expectation of youthfulness and vitality in one's life; in other words, he refuses to submit the human energy to the process of aging. Moreover, as the two poets utilize symbolism of the 'gray hair', 'withered skin', or 'fading beauty, each differs in their tone. Arab thought is more consistent in upholding the cultural submission to aging without resistance while Latin thought is more of a dynamic revolutionary nature resisting social, psychological, and physical forces of aging.

Undoubtedly, both poets go beyond simple lamentation of the loss of time and youth as they reflect on the psychological and existential weight based on either modern existentialism as in Benedetti's work or on Andalusian nihilism or Islamic fatalism as perceived by Ibn Zuhr. Their intake on death extends beyond superficial denial as it reveals the universal human experience connected to understanding the self, social identity, and the concept of time with respect to aging.

1. **Denial**: "A defense mechanism in which a person refuses to accept reality or facts, thereby blocking external events from awareness. If a situation is too much to handle, the person may refuse to experience it."

Source: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.). Denial. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved from [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/denial)

2. **Shock**: "A sudden and intense reaction to a traumatic event, often characterized by confusion, disorientation, and inability to process the event fully."

Source: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.). Shock. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved from [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/shock)

3. **Attachment**: "An emotional bond or connection with another person, object, or experience, often characterized by a strong desire for proximity and a sense of security."

Source: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.). Attachment. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved from [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/attachment)

4. **Helplessness**: "A psychological state in which an

individual feels unable to change or influence their circumstances, leading to feelings of inadequacy or lack of control."

Source: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.). Helplessness. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved from [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/helplessness)

5. **Determinism**: "The belief that all events, including human actions, are determined by preceding events or natural laws, leaving no room for free will or personal agency."

Source: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.). Determinism. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved from [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/determinism)

5.3. Comparison Two: Awareness of the Destructive Effect of Time and Acceptance of Old Age

5.3.1. José Martí's Text

In contrast to the melancholy perception of time, the poet José Martí in his short poetic piece titled "No Me Quitas Las Canas" in Table 4 presents a state of surrender and inner conviction that the restoration of the time of pleasure (the past, youth, love, recklessness...) cannot be regained. He seems to be embracing the authority of death, or in other words, it is the ability of the self to comprehend life and its course, and his feeling of the passage of time through gray hair is a sign of his submission to the action of time. Gray hair alters the essence of beauty, and the maturity and paternal view of women is a natural change in the relationship between men and women. In this piece, he addresses a girl who wants to remove the gray from his hair in order to hide it, but he refuses, implying that gray hair is a sign of nobility. This is intelligible in his poetic justification, and he describes gray hair as the result of a lightning strike. He does not lower his head in submission, and in the second section, he adds an aura of acceptance and respect for this gray hair by letting the woman kiss it, as being something sacred and worthy of reverence. The hidden meaning the poet intends is that gray hair has an influential and transformative power over human relation-

ships. He is submissive to what he is and seems prepared for that moment. This view sees gray hair as a counterpart to wisdom, sobriety, and restraint, while youth is associated with recklessness and extravagance, both of which are indispensable to a human being as in **Table 4** ^[25].

Table 4. José Martí’s extract.

In Spanish	Translated
No Me Quitas Las Canas No me quitas las canas que son mi nobleza: cada cana es la huella de un rayo que pasó, sin doblar mi cabeza. Dame un beso en las canas, mi niña: ¡que son mi nobleza!	Don’t Take Away My Gray Hair don’t take away my gray hair What is my nobility: Each gray hair is a trace of light- ning What happened, without bowing my head. Give me a kiss on the gray hair, my girl: What is my nobility!

5.3.2. Al-Ghazal’s Text

José Martí’s perspective is not significantly different from that of Yahya Al-Ghazal. He realizes that old age and its features are an inevitable stage of life, and he does not

ignore that gray hair is a reality that must be accepted and adapted to. In the poem, he humorously recounts how he was asked by Princess Nod, a Norman princess, to dye his hair with henna (an Arabic plant-based hair dye) to hide his gray hair, and he agreed to her request. He goes on to say that the princess was delighted with the black color of his hair after dyeing it with henna as if she had returned him to his youth. This gesture, of course, cannot obscure the realistic facts or break the law of time. However, the poet subverts what poets have complained about the ill omen of gray hair. He highlights the aesthetic aspect of the white color of gray hair. He indirectly compares the white color of gray hair to the rays of the sun. The white hair, when dyed with henna, becomes like a sun obscured by fog, but as soon as the fog clears, the white light of the sun reappears. He argues that it is not necessary to deny the wisdom of gray hair. It is the flower of understanding, nobility, and knowledge that he has acquired over the years, as he says in **Table 5** ^[26]:

Table 5. Al-Ghazal’s extract.

In Arabic	Translated
بَكَرَتْ تُحْسِنُ لِي سَوَادَ خُضَابِي فَكَأَنَّ ذَاكَ أَعَادَنِي لِشَبَابِي مَا الشَّبَابُ عِنْدِي وَالْخُضَابُ لَوَاصِفٍ إِلَّا كَشْمِسٍ جُلَّتْ بِضْبَابِ تَخْفَى قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ يَقْشَعُهَا الصَّبَا فَيَصِيرُ مَا سَتَّرْتَ بِهِ لِذَهَابِ لَا تُنْكِرِي وَضَخَ الْمَشِيبِ فَأَيْمًا هُوَ زَهْرَةٌ الْأَفْهَامِ وَالْأَلْبَابِ فَلَدِّي مَا تَهْوِينِ مِنْ شَأْنِ الصَّبَا وَطَلَاوَةِ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَالْأَدَابِ	The morning bestowed an artful grace, As if it rewound me to my youthful days. Gray is to me just a descriptor’s hue, Like the sun veiled in morning dew. It hides a bit, and then the breeze unveils, Revealing what was kept behind veils. Don’t deny the evident strands of gray, They’re the bloom of wisdom, I’d say. In my possession are youth’s delights, And the elegance of manners that ignites.

Yahya Al-Ghazal in **Table 5** and José Martí in **Table 4** have revealed their submission to the power of aging as a natural element of life; however, they diverge in their philosophies of this inevitable acceptance ^[27, 28]. By way of illustration, Al-Ghazal perceptualizes the temporal change of hair’s color into gray as reflective of wisdom and maturity, emphasizing the tremendous value gained over time ^[29]. This view is normative in the sense it resonates with the status quo’s perception of gray hair as ‘reverent’, ‘wise’, or ‘well-cultured’. In his poem, Al-Ghazal blends a sense of humility and gratitude for the fateful aging of one’s life with a projecting feeling of sarcasm against human helplessness in denying and hiding the signs of aging.

Therefore, he reflects upon the humanity of aging itself as it transcends along with its marks and signs onto the human bit by bit creating a paradoxical projection of sympathy and irony ^[30]. This reminds us of the opposing perceptions of Heraclitus, on the one hand, conceiving sympathy toward humanity due to the tragedy of its calamities and Democritus, on the other hand, perceiving life as a comedy, especially in pondering onto the stubborn behavior of humans in mutual dealing, within themselves, and with outer elements ^[31].

In the case of Martí, gray hair is perceived through morality rather than knowledge. Despite aging, he emphasizes that this symbol transcends reverence and charisma

confirming that one's inner power and moral dignity have not faded away and remain alive within them^[32]. He further emphasizes that gray hair is a testament to a life of resistance and power rather than a symbol of humility as indicated by Al-Ghazal. He mirrors aging as a representation of willpower to resist against fragility of aging placing a mark of distinction in one's life. Martí's works adopt the aesthetic aspect of time passing by centralizing the significance of one's values. Through having a true appreciation of values as inner requirements of the pride of one's life, time passing turns into a manifestation of values gained and preserved till the end rather than a loss of power and resilience; whereas, Al-Ghazal seems to be fond more of a Sufi-like attitude in which one should submit to the absence of youth and entertainment while projecting a persona of wisdom and knowledge^[33].

Nevertheless, such perceptual realities may remain idealistic for both poets, while in fact, a woman's disregard for a man can create a significant psychological trigger that goes beyond feeling lonely and stigmatized. This trigger may reveal the vulnerability of the masculine persona along with its pressure on men for their success in attraction and seduction, self-centralization in the relationship, and women's approval. Upon this feminine neglect, men can be drawn to bitterness recognizing their loss of power of attracting and depriving them of a charismatic image that is normatively inscribed in the women's minds and societies. As soon as a man loses the willpower to be the center of attention and to be 'the white knight', they begin feeling a loss of self-worth and meaninglessness, emphasizing the antagonist reality to the above-mentioned poetic perceptualities.

This tragic reality leads us back to the symbolism of gray hair as an agonizing feature of the dreadful passing of time rather than a manifestation of wisdom or noble pride. The human experience affirms that this agony is maximized if centralized in depth with a woman's absence or rejection, projecting a paradox between the willpower to elevate a self-image of a masculine ideal and the submission to the challenging surrounding reality. Behind the paradoxical struggle between a woman's absence and his compensating desire by finding solace in turning as a lofty high-value man, there always remains this shallow water

that reveals the internal sense of masculine-oriented disappointment.

Furthermore, this compensating behavior of the feminine image proves to be acting as a defense mechanism by ways of rationalization or 'loftiness', while internally, the masculine image is scattered among these psychological pressures turning them into a circular behavior of the same failure. The more they perceive they are being a passerby and no longer this attention-based 'macho' or 'charismatic figure', the more this false submission to replica realities leaves a trace of self-loathing within the self. There is a high risk for a man to avoid confrontation with the female figure and live in denial as it may constitute a route for self-pity and self-hatred that poison their lives.

5.4. Comparison Three: The Experience of Aging and Its Relationship with the Other in the Prison Space

There is no doubt that poetry that addresses the nihilistic nature of time is filled with the radical feeling of fear. It could be that the most tragic events facing Man are those painful moments attached to the impossibility of retrieving the past. Simultaneously, there is this agonizing feeling of failure to stop the wheel of time passing, as it deprives us step by step of all that was granted in the past. Time consumes our strength and walks us through the unknown of the future along with its fragility and inability to do our activities in life as in the past. This feeling of nostalgia for the past instills this pessimist feeling of mortality. When one slips into old age and sees gray hair as a harbinger of death and a turning point away from the bright and glorious life, they reflect on the impact of change. Yet, they attempt to confront their existential crisis by proving their resilience in encountering life and pushing it to the furthest point, grasping the last breaths.

5.4.1. León's Text

This can be observed in poets such as Fray Luis de León and the great Sufi mystic Ibn Arabi, who chose confrontation and navigation in this life, breaking the walls of the prison of fear of approaching death. Despite the physical weakness and debilitation caused by aging and

what the prison and jailer added in terms of torment, their hearts soared beyond this enclosed space into a cognitive and intellectual realm capable of breaking the chains of the prison. The First Text in **Table 6** by the Spanish poet Fray Luis de León:

Table 6. León's extract.

In Spanish	Translated
De nuevo, ¡oh Salamanca! estoy aquí, de la prisión salido. La frente toda blanca, el cuerpo envejecido. ¡Si las canas me hiciese más temido! Sosegado ya un tanto vuelvo a emprender la vía abandonada sin rencor ni quebranto. ¿Fe y vida está salvada? ¡Pues todo no ha quedado en la estacada! Mañana hacia la ciencia seguiré sin sentir recelo alguno ni cargo de conciencia. ¡Dulce oficio oportuno que enseñar y aprender es todo uno! Pero es camino largo que hay que seguir tenaz con firme anhelo. A veces, cierto, amargo hasta romper el hielo; más grato cuanto más lejos del suelo. ¡Dulce camino loco! ¡Empresa más feliz cuanto más nueva! Que si es cierto que el poco saber nos pone a prueba, el mucho, si se alcanza, a Dios nos lleva.	Once more, O Salamanca! I stand here, freed from the prison's hold. Forehead now all white, the body, weathered and old. If only these gray hairs made me more feared! Now calmed, to some extent, I resume the abandoned path once trodden, without rancor or lament. Is faith and life truly not forgotten? For not all have been left downtrodden! Tomorrow, towards knowl- edge, I shall continue without a shred of doubt, nor burden of conscience. Sweet timely profession, where teaching and learning meld throughout! Yet, it's a lengthy road, to be pursued tenaciously with steadfast desire. At times, true, it's a bitter load, even to the point of breaking the ice, but sweeter the higher it takes you from the mire. Sweet, crazy path! A venture more joyous the newer it is! For if it's true that the little knowledge tests us, much, if attained, brings us closer to the divine.

The first text is by the Spanish poet Fray Luis de León, who addresses the University of Salamanca. This university was the site of intense theological debates, which led to his imprisonment on charges of heresy. After several years in prison, he has emerged with a white forehead and an aging body. He reflects on the prospect of growing old, wondering if his gray hair would make him more anxious. However, he has found some peace and is ready to resume his abandoned path without any resentment or regret. He ponders whether faith and life have been saved and whether he can proceed with his scholarly pursuits without fear. He embraces the idea that teaching and learning are the same. He recognizes that the path ahead is long and requires determination and dedication. While sometimes it may be bitter, it becomes more pleasant the further one gets from the ground. He finds solace in this journey, and the pursuit of knowledge leads to God. This text reflects Fray Luis de León's experience as a prisoner who faced theological controversy and imprisonment. Despite the physical and mental pain the prison

had on him, he emerged with a sense of inner peace and a renewed dedication to his scholarly pursuits. Fray Luis de León's experience represents a form of resistance and spiritual transformation in the face of adversity. Despite the challenges and illness he faced in prison, his spiritual strength allowed him to view his release as a rebirth and a new opportunity for life in an environment where survival was at stake.

5.4.2. Ibn Arabi's Text

The conditions of Fray Luis de León's life parallel those of the Andalusian Sufi poet, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, known as the "Great Sheikh" [34]. He too was accused of heresy due to his philosophical ideas and faced imprisonment. The prison served as a space for both poets to resonate with their inner selves and their spiritual connections with God. In this solitary, they built a new spiritual and intellectual world, transcending the physical limitations of their confinement. The prison became a place for deep introspection, inner struggle, and a search for divine knowl-

edge and wisdom. The experience of imprisonment deepened their relationship with God and their understanding of divine realities, as he says in **Table 7**:

Table 7. Ibn Arabi's extract.

In Arabic	Translated
كان لي قلبٌ فلما ارتحل بقي الجسمُ محلَّ العلل	I had a heart, and when it departed, The body remained, a dwelling for ailments.
كان بدرًا طالعاً إذ أتى مغرب التوحيد ثم أفل	Once a rising moon, it set At the horizon of monotheism, then declined.
زاده شوقاً إلى ربّه صاحب الصعقة يوم الجبل	Intensifying his yearning for his Lord, The companion of the thunder on the mountain,
لم يزل يشكو الجوى والنوى ليلة الإثنين حتى اتصل	He continued to complain of sorrows and woes, On Monday night, until he was connected.
فدنا من حضرة لم تزل تهب الأرواح سرّ الأزل	Approaching from a presence that incessantly Blows the spirits, the secret of eternity,
قيل من أنت فقال الحجل قيل أهلاً سعة مرحباً	He knocked on the doors when he drew near, They asked, "Who are you?" He replied, "The stone."
خرّ في حضرته ساجداً وانمحي رسم البقا وانسجل	They said, "Welcome, spacious and hospitable," The door opened, and when he entered, He prostrated in his presence, vanished,
وشكا العهد فجاء النداء يا عبيدي زال وقت العمل	The traces of existence are erased and recorded. He fulfilled the covenant, then came the call, "O my servant, the time for action has ended."
رأسك ارفع هذه حضرتي وأنا الحقُّ فلا تنتعل	Lift your head in my presence, he said, "I am the Truth, do not wear shoes."
رأسك ارفع ما الذي تبتغي قلت مولاي حلول الأجل	Lift your head, what do you seek? I said, "My Master, the arrival of the inevitable."
قال سجنني قال مت واعلمن أن في السجن بلوغ الأمل	He said, "Imprison me, die, and know That in imprisonment lies the attainment of hope."
يا فوادي قد وصلت له قل له قول حبيب مُدِل	O my heart, you have reached him, Tell him the words of a lover extending.
لولا ذاتي لم يصح استوى وبنوري صح ضرب المثل	If it were not for my essence, the comparison wouldn't hold, And by my light, the example was set.

5.4.3. Parallelism between the Two Poets

The parallel between Fray Luis de León and the Great Sheikh manifests the transformative power of spiritual resilience and the quest for higher knowledge, even in the harshest of conditions. Their experiences in prison enabled them to transcend physical and worldly limitations and build a spiritual and intellectual realm that was enriched by their deep connection with God. Because of their religious beliefs, both poets faced imprisonment, which resulted in physical fatigue and aging. However, their determination and strong spiritual connection allowed them to prevail over the hardships of prison life. Fray Luis is distinguished from Ibn Arabi in his resistance in showing rejection of the other and exercising will for achieving a revolutionary purpose, while Ibn Arabi cancels the other from his poetic emotional world for the sake of seeking a higher form of communication with divine knowledge.

5.5. Comparison Four: Fear of Aging and Solitude in Nature

The artistic vision of the issue of aging and senility can be defined as an existential crisis that transcends the temporary problems living within the poets. It is an existential struggle for human destiny. Both Spanish and Andalusian literature address the signs of fear and dread of aging through the lens of nature, as seen in parallel between the Romanticist poet ROSALÍA DE CASTRO and the Andalusian Naturalist poet Ibn Khafaja.

5.5.1. CASTRO's Text

ROSALÍA DE CASTRO's poem "Dicen que no hablan las plantas" portrays the sensitivity of the poetic passage as in **Table 8**, choosing a symbol that represents life's transformations in a narrative form, as if it summarizes the lives of humans in a simple story. Nature, personified and knowledgeable of its own fate, emerges as a

vibrant speaker (the plants, birds, waves, etc.), expressing the dualism of life and death. The poet makes nature speak loudly and expressively about the profound life-and-death cycle. The poet breaks the claims that the beginning of her poetic story states that this nature is silent and devoid of speech. Instead, it listens and responds with emotions and great respect for life. The poet's emotions are stirred by the magnificence of life that is threatened with extinction in all circumstances, as she understands the ironic contradictions within the human psyche when hope clings to the dream by resisting the passage of time and the desire for

eternal youth. However, the speaking nature reveals that the harsh law of time will soon come upon it. Time is portrayed as an unforgiving, bitter winter that makes it shiver, wilt, and grow old, just as the white hair resembles a frost on the meadows. This image acts as a contrast to the world of dreams that the poet experiences, as an eternal spring shining in the fields. Nevertheless, the poet returns once again to the world of dreams and hope. The reality can only be faced with hope, as it provides a sense of the continuity of life, perhaps alleviating the weight of approaching death. In this context, she says in **Table 8**:

Table 8. Extract.

In Spanish	Translated
<p>Dicen que no hablan las plantas, ni las fuentes, ni los pájaros, Ni el onda con sus rumores, ni con su brillo los astros; Lo dicen, pero no es cierto, pues siempre cuando yo paso De mí murmuran y exclaman: — Ahí va la loca, soñando Con la eterna primavera de la vida y de los campos, Y ya bien pronto, bien pronto, tendrá los cabellos canos, Y ve temblando, aterida, que cubre la escarcha el prado.</p> <p>— Hay canas en mi cabeza; hay en los prados escarcha; Mas yo prosigo soñando, pobre, incurable sonámbula, Con la eterna primavera de la vida que se apaga Y la perenne frescura de los campos y las almas, Aunque los unos se agostan y aunque las otras se abrasan.</p>	<p>They say that the plants do not speak, not the brooks, nor the birds, Nor the waves with their roar, not with their brilliance the stars, So they say: but one cannot be sure, for always when I go by, They whisper about me and say “Ah, there goes the madwoman, dreaming, Of the everlasting springtide of life and the fields, And yet soon, very soon, her hair will be grey, And trembling, frozen, she sees that the frost is upon the grass</p> <p>-There are gray hairs in my head, there is frost on the lawns, But I press on dreaming, poor, incurable somnambulist, With the eternal spring of life that goes And the perennial freshness of the fields and souls, Although some were scorched and although others scorch. Stars and fountains and flowers, will not murmur of my dreams, Without them, neither can one admire - nor can one live without them.</p>
	<p>(Flores, K., They Say That The Plants Do Not Speak - They Say That The Plants Do Not Speak Poem by Rosalia de Castro (poemhunter.com))</p>

5.5.2. Ibn Kafaja's Text

Ibn Khafaja's ^[35] verses intersect with those of the poet ROSALÍA DE CASTRO as he seeks the beauty of his youth. The first thing that stirs his fear is the graying of his hair and the signs of aging, as they are the first signs of approaching death and the departure from life. Poets often feel the impending approach of death when they reach a certain age, and this age may vary among individuals. The best stage of life is considered to be youth, where the pleasures of play, joy, and enchantment with the joys of life are at their peak. The poet did not miss the opportunity to address the elements of nature while he was in the prime of his intellectual and emotional fervor. He lamented his youth and the dominance of time, and the solitude he experienced maximized his mental and emotional struggles.

In his lament for his youth and the passing of time, he drew upon the elements of nature at the peak of his intellectual and emotional fervor. As he reached his sixties and felt the approach of death, he turned to nature, seeking to share his sorrows, pain, and tears in a funerary manner that suggests the sorrow of lost years. He no longer possessed anything but memories, and the elements of nature came to share his sorrow, invoking the cloud with its heavy tears along with the mournful cooing of the dove in its crying. Ibn Khafaja demonstrated his inclination to understand what would happen to him after his death, especially regarding the elements of life that were dear to him. He did this through olfactory imagery when he mentioned the fragrant cypress tree, which held cherished memories for him. This deepened his pain and grief as expressed in the

extract in **Table 9**.

Table 9. Ibn Kafaja's extract.

In Arabic	Translated
وَطَارِحَنِي بِشَجْوِكَ يَا حَمَامًا فَقَدَّ وَقَيْئُهَا سِتِّينَ حَوْلًا وَنَادَتْنِي وَرَائِي هَلْ أَمَامَ وَكُنْتُ وَمِنْ أَلْبَانَاتِي لُبَيْنِي هُنَاكَ وَمِنْ مَرَاضِعِي الْمُدَامِ يُطَالِعُنَا الصَّبَاحُ بِبَطْنِ حَزْوَى فَيُنَكِّرُنَا وَيَعْرِفُنَا الظَّلَامِ وَكَانَ بِهَا الْبَشَامُ مَرَاخَ أُنَيْسٍ فَمَاذَا بَعَدْنَا فَعَلَّ الْبِشَامُ فِيَا شَرِّخَ الشَّبَابِ أَلَا لِقَاءَ يُنِيْلُ بِهِ عَلَى يَأْسِ أَوَامِ وَيَا ظِلَّ الشَّبَابِ وَكُنْتُ تَنْدَى عَلَى أَفْيَاءِ سَرْحَتِكَ السَّلَامِ	O clouds, will you not halt my tears, O cloud, And will you not cast me off, O dove? For she fulfilled her obligations towards me for sixty years, And called me to her. Do I have any choice? I used to be, from my infancy, right there Among them, and one of my wet nurses. Morning looks upon us from the depths of silence And disowns us, and darkness recognizes us. Basham was a place of delightful companionship, So what happened to our joy after Basham? O youth's crevice, won't there be a reunion That will restore hope to the desperate? O shadow of youth, you used to give greetings To your wanderer, may peace be upon her.

5.5.3. Parallelism between the Two Poets

It seems that both poets contemplated the elements of nature and used them as a means of inspiration, influence, and amazement. Nature provided them with the ability to delve into the depths of the human psyche and made it a repository for their thoughts. Aging represented a point of contact with death for both poets. Nature portrayed the yearning for life and the fear of mortality, but the Spanish poet stands out for her strong will towards life and the desire to live it despite the looming reality of old age.

More specifically, Ibn Khafajah's anxiety as shown in **Table 9** cornered him and he found his only solace in the representation of nature in sharing this horror experience [36]. By provoking images and elements of nature that are intensifying and mirroring internal struggle, clouds and cooing of doves trigger the sorrow prevailing in him. The poet intentionally emphasizes that sorrow is in collective relation to nature as they are one entity lamenting a life without a companion or child, and thus, to the masculine perception, a life without purpose. This is further evident in his recalling the scent of the balsam projecting his sense of isolation and the loss of youth while reflecting on the horrifying passing of time that always reminds him of the gloominess in his self and simultaneously, manifested in nature's elements and colors. From a gender-based perspective, the poet as a male Arab figure transcends the agony of his masculinity by a more powerful entity such as nature. In the ancient Andalusian context, Ibn Khafajah expresses the existential weight of the passing of time as

Man realizes that their lives are no longer youthful nor vital leaning gradually to death [37].

However, the Spanish poet Rosalia de Castro takes a romanticist stand against the nature of reality by expressing the thin mask of reality as distinct from dream. As a female poet, Rosalia emphasizes her idealist perception of youth as a phase that should be internalized constantly despite time. In other words, the Spanish poet chooses to hold onto life against the inevitability of death. She further elaborates on the paradox of fear of aging and the desire to maintain youth and life vitality by asserting that gray hair does not stand as a symbol of decay, but it represents a conflicting nature of the challenge of fading away and the clinging to a sublime persona that resists against the passing of time [38]. The poet does not deny death, but affirms that the power of youth resides in both physique and spirit. By contrast to Ibn Khafajah who conceives aging as an inevitable form of nihilism, the poet exercising her feminine interpretation adopts the idol of youth as an immortal entity always reviving hope in all human stages. More in detail, her poem emphasizes the distinction between the relationship of men and women with time, especially since women carry the burden of social pressures in preserving their beauty as a feminine ideal centralizing physical beauty compared to men who seem to be more nihilistic in thinking. This stems from the historical social expectation of a woman's attractiveness and youth as a necessary factor in judging the female figure [39,40].

The prominent difference between Ibn Khafajah and Rosalia lies in their perceptions of time and nature. The

former submits to the nihilism of life and chooses to accept death as he accepted life before with lamenting and grief. Therefore, it seems that the masculine tendency of nihilism and obsession with death as an ending in aging is rooted in ancient Andalusian nihilism. Both the gender and cultural dimensions of the two poets constitute their expression of aging from structuralist adaptation. As a woman, Rosalia holds onto life as she asserts that the power of youth is spiritual in the first place and cannot decay despite aging and the appearance of gray hair. Between Andalusia and Spain, one may sense the divergence between the two poets in perception, yet, one may feel the convergence of the two in having an interesting philosophical stance of aging as a source of paradox of love, sorrow, hope, and fear.

5.6. The Findings of the Study

This study highlights the significance of parallelism as an effective analytical method in examining literature across different languages without centralizing the history of literary influence. This method carries the demonstration of its effectiveness in unlocking the universal expression of human suffering within the stage of aging. By bridging universalism across different literary works pertaining to different cultures, parallelism functions as a mirror of the various thematic commonalities in world literature, emphasizing the fascinating literary telepathy in the ancient world of Spain and Andalusia.

By reflecting on the notion of aging among Spanish and Arab Andalusian poets in relation to human existential crisis toward time and mortality, they manifest an interesting area of philosophical studies contemplating the concepts of love, fear, and death profoundly, idealistically, and even nihilistically. Intelligibly, their feeling of the existential weight of mortality and aging is evident in having gray hair as a prominent symbol in their poems as it is attached physically and socially to the loss of life pleasure and vitality, thus, intensifying their expression of lamenting or their desire for constant desiring for reviving. This study has shown how the study poem samples affirm this paradoxical feeling of lamenting and desiring resulting in turning the poet either nihilistic or resistant against time.

The study has revealed how these poems manifest the existential dilemma of aging psychologically, physically, and philosophically. They all admit the psychological struggle of loss causing constant conflicting feelings leading to anxiety and fear of the unknown. This affirmation of the conflicted psyche toward aging is compatible with their philosophical intakes on the symbolism of gray hair as a certain transformation subjecting Man to accept death and recognize the weight of the loss of life's powerful features. The study emphasizes that these poets in the ancient world reevaluate the essence of life value as a source of contemplation of human existence, death, and aging.

The study shows how the poet stands at a crossroads between denial and acceptance; between maintaining the concept of desire and annihilation and nihilism of the body. Instead of surrendering, he may resist not only physically by keeping a progressive health, but also spiritually through preserving youth internally. Alternatively, the poet may perceive aging as a vital source of wisdom and charisma, and therefore, the notion of desire is transferred as a source of pleasure to a source of value and morality. Philosophically, the poet reflects on aging not only nihilistically, but also morally delving into human relations with the other in a respectful depth that resonates with this stage of life.

The study further delves into the image of women from a gender-based perspective as it holds a special literary position in the poetic representation of the data provided. It stands as a reflective symbol of more than the image of the other as it extends to grasping the meaning of life or as a comforting resistance against death and a lonely ending. The poet explores the meaning of existence through their existential attachment to the female figure. Women are depicted as 'paradoxical' between accepting and maintaining in the sense death is defied spiritually despite the inevitable decay of physique and beauty in aging. Therefore, the poets hint at the distinction from a gender-based perspective that man centralizes woman figure to reflect on his existential understanding while woman idealistically and spiritually aims at overcoming death and normative mortal beauty. Overall, the study draws attention to the role of women as a mirroring window that goes beyond romantic love, but rather a philosophical bridge to

understanding one's self and identity through aging and the duality of life and death encompassing deeper meaning of purpose and existence.

Last, but not least, the study highlights Rosalía de Castro's understanding of aging as an exemplification of the philosophy of a female poet compared to a male poet influenced by a nihilistic somehow religious interpretation of aging. In her poem, *They Say Plants Never Speak*, she elevates the emotional intensity of the struggle between the reality of aging and the dream-like desire of maintaining youth, in other words, the psychic war between mortality and immortality; between acceptance and desire. To Rosalía, the challenge against women is the psychological warfare of aging as it strips from her the most historically prominent features which are beauty and elegance. Due to the pressures of the ideal of beauty, the poet interprets aging through resisting and maintaining rather than adopting a nihilistic Andalusian sense of surrendering. By exercising resilience, the woman can utilize a psychological response to aging that extends beyond the passing of time and confront the ending with vitality instead of lamentation.

6. Conclusions

This paper addresses the psychological suffering that poetry from both Arabic Andalusian literature and Spanish literature depicts based on the experience and attitude of the poets toward aging and its consequences. The paper reveals based on the Parallelism approach that poets in both forms of literature react to aging by either rejecting the sudden change through indulging in pleasures or by surrendering as a wise form of acceptance to such a stage of one's life. Moreover, this paper emphasizes that women remain a source of creativity in both forms of literature as their presence embodies the representation of life itself and their absence as the loss of life. Through illustrating various extracts belonging to different poets from each of the Arabic and Spanish literature, it is intelligible that the issue of aging is an existential trigger of Man in both literary cultures, and the question of immortality is poetically emphasized in parallel philosophically, existentially, and aesthetically using a variety of representations and sym-

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Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to Imad A. Ababneh.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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