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The Fragmented Sexual Identity in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*

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The Fragmented Sexual Identity in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*

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By

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This thesis entitled "The Fragmented Sexual Identity in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Nawa Raj Khanal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

My study in Bartheleme's *Snow White* is to show the fragmented sexual identity of the main female protagonist, Snow White. In quest of establishing sexual identity, she happens to make sexual relationship with many lovers. Out of her lovers, she does not choose anyone. If she had chosen one and established her relation, she could have maintained her sexual identity. But she fails to do so. She does not work with patience and rationality and works with sexually motivated impulses. So, she indulges herself only in the fulfilment of her sexual desires. But, she even becomes unsuccessful to satisfy herself sexually what to speak of maintaining sexual identity. Infact, she takes faulty way to materialize her quest into reality. Her aim and her action do not seem harmonious. Thus, Snow White's unsuccessful sexual relationship with many lovers has created fragmentation in her sexual identity. If she had caught only one lover and strengthened her relationship with him to her best, she could have succeeded in maintaining her sexual identity. But, she does not do so and falls in confusion, frustration, and identity crisis.

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I. Introduction

Donald Barthelme (1931-1989), a short story writer, novelist, editor, journalist and teacher, was born at Philadelphia in USA. He was blind from his birth, but he decided to become a writer at the age of ten. He admitted at the University of Houston in the early fifties and became editor-in-chief of the school newspaper. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the National Book Award, plus numerous other literary prizes. Several times married and divorced, Barthelme wrote with both deep feeling and sardonic style about the quality of personal lives, relationship, and material fortunes in contemporary America. In 1962, he moved to New York, and the next year published his first story, "L'Lapse" in The New York Times. With the help of his daughter he wrote a children's book, *The Slightly Irregular Fire Engine*, which earned him the National Book Award for Children's Literature in 1972.

Barthelme's attitude towards his father is delineated in the novels-*The Dead father* and *The King* as he is pictured in the characters King Arthur and Lancelot. He wrote over a hundred short stories. They are collected in "*Come Back*," "*Dr. Caligari*," "*Unspeakable Practices*," "*Unnatural Acts*," "*A city life*," and "*Sadness*," and later compiled into two best of books, "*Sixty Stories*" and "*Forty Stories*". His contribution to literature is remarkable. Barthelme is often called a highly philosophical writer. His deepest intellectual roots seem to lie in the philosophies of existentialism and postmodernism. One has the impression that his unique decentralized style is an organic function of the author's intimacy

with such thinkers- Barthes, Sartre, Foucault and Derrida. Both existentialism and postmodernism emphasize, in their different ways, the problems that follow in a world devoid of absolute normative or intellectual standards. Thus, they seem responsible to decrease belief in God and the decline of religious authority. In absence of a belief in God, all values become equally true and false while it is unclear how much of the positive conclusions of existentialism and postmodernism Barthes accepted. It is obvious that this framing of the human situation made a deep impression on both the man and his fiction.

Barthes is famous mainly for his short stories and he is a relentless innovator and experimenter. His principal methods are the collage and pastiche, but he also occasionally makes use of script formats and more traditional forms. His earlier novels tend towards narrative disjointedness in describing ordinary life, while his later works gravitate towards using more traditional form in describing surreal scenarios. Barthes uses self - reflexivity to portray Snow White's function in the contemporary world. Self-reflexivity emerges in the narrator's questioning of his / her statements or constant reflection on issues that are often illogical too.

He undermines the narrative conventions of traditional writings and evokes a parodic effect. This parody is not a coherent parody of a particular genre, but it is scattered throughout the text. The function of such a parody is not to evoke a mocking effect and to ridicule the parodied text but to point out a difference between past and present forms of experience. He has hardly shown spatial-temporal reference of the text. There is not a chronological development of plot too. It becomes vague and difficult to understand the text thoroughly. Another aspect of his writing is economical but sometimes there is unnecessary

description. There is not logical link of ideas. But different theories are applied in his writing. Visual references and topographical variations are dominant especially in his novels. He brings allusions and references to strengthen his ideas but his events and actions go back and forth to make confused or difficult to understand clear communication. Barthelme also rejects self-enclosed epic style of fiction.

While reading *Snow White*, it provides an appropriate framework to examine how Barthelme develops a simultaneous stylistically creative and playfully subversive narrative that focuses less on the actual and more on the imaginary. Within his profoundly self-conscious narrative, he consistently sets a broad range of textual and visual references that allude to a variety of social discusses aesthetic forms in a narrative space that continuously oscillates between the literal and figurative. Through his promotion of this type of free flowing inter-referentially, he strives less to complete and more to disassemble the contemporary individual and social subject without, however, simply erasing central voices.

Donald Barthelme worked steadily throughout his life. He wrote four novels- *Snow White, The Dead Father, Paradise, and The King*. In *Snow White*, Snow White-the female protagonist of the novel cohabits and makes love with her seven lovers in the shower room. She is tall and physically beautiful. Bill is the leader among the seven dwarfs-Kevin, Edward, Hubert, Henry, Clem, Bill and Dan. These dwarfs involve themselves to wash the buildings and tend the vats in which they prepare their father's recipes of Chinese baby food. Snow White and the dwarfs enjoy by drinking alcohol and having sexual relation with them. Snow White waits for her prince figure, Paul, for a long time. He is busy trying to fulfil

his destined role, his heroic form. After a series of self-conscious meditations, he enters a monastery, then quits, journeys around the world, and at last returns to New York. There, he plays a role of a trained dog to watch over Snow White. At the later part of the novel, he is being conspired against by the villainous Jane, the stepmother figure. Jane attempts to poison Snow White, but Paul intercepts the drink, consumes it himself, and dies. Barthelme's story depicts different events which show sexual connotation throughout the novel. These sexual connotations represent Snow White's and her lovers' dissatisfied sexual life. One after another, her lovers come into the shower room and have physical relation with Snow White. At the beginning, they feel that their relation is interesting and marvellous but later they cannot satisfy their emotion and passion of sex. Because of Snow White's sexual dissatisfaction with her lovers, she feels loneliness and her life become ambivalent and dissatisfactory. But, she is not totally hopeless and accelerates her love towards another lover-Paul.

Oral myths, legends, songs, fairy tales and other genres are part of different oral and folk traditions. These were understood as genres sending a strong moral and didactic message during Romanticism. This was in keeping with contemporary belief in the educational and moralistic function of the fairy tales to express the national identity of different nations. In its written form the fairy tale tends to be a narrative in prose about the fortunes and misfortune of a hero or heroine. Magic, supernatural elements, and happy endings provide the basic structure and narrative conventions of the fairy tale. The narrative convention of fairy tales tend to give a simplistic vision of reality and are aimed at evoking pleasure. They usually carry a strong and often simplistic, didactic and moral message, but often educational function as well.

The rapid growth of advanced technology including mass media has developed the popularity of fairy tales. At the same time, fairy tales have changed in their character. They have become the products of visual rather than oral or written culture, a change, which expresses the sensibility of the postmodern period. Visual images produced on television, in videos, in the movies have replaced the written word and sound and have become an influential means through which the people's vision of reality is not only filtered, but also manipulated. Visual versions of the traditional fairy tales have become models influencing children's imaginations.

Postmodernist literature has often used and, at the same time parodied the narrative conventions of fairy tales. Through the use of parody, irony, and other narrative strategies, its aim is not to undermine the traditional narrative conventions for its own sake but through the underling to give a critique of the traditional objective, unitary vision of reality mediated by traditional narrative techniques, used mostly in popular genres, which evoke a make-believe, mimetic representation of reality. Through the use of intertextual strategies it aims to point out a sensibility of contemporary postmodernist culture influenced by visual media. In addition to this, postmodernist literary works, use and parodies the older forms of representation. Postmodern literary texts, using, reworking, alluding and referring to other texts, emphasize the instability of the referent, of the signified, its imperfectness and inability to express a clear, understandable and unified vision of reality. The use of the narrative techniques of traditional genres shows one of the basic aesthetic tenets of postmodernist literature. Postmodernism tends to emphasize the separateness of art as a way out of chaos and disillusionment, which does not claim originality.

In postmodernist literary work, various narrative strategies, conventions, and myths are reconsidered, transformed, or recycled to show the connection between cultural products, social reality and cultural codes representing particular cultures. Reality is perceived and understood as a copy; as a collection of images, which has already been used in the past. The language and narrative conventions of fairy tales are parodied to criticize traditional linguistic representation of the forms and genres producing a simplified image of reality. This is not a traditional parody with a mocking intent, but a neutral parody, a postmodern reality, showing a difference between the past and the present. Parody and irony are the means the authors use to criticize the consumer culture, the simplified vision of reality conveyed through media.

Donald Barthelme undermines the traditional narrative conventions of fairy tales in order to construct a postmodern vision of the world. Postmodern parody and irony are understood as important means, narrative strategies, and tropes, which have subversive function. It provides a critique of both the linguistic representation of traditional and popular genres and the vision of the world these genres convey. In postmodern age, cultural activity is dominated by media industries. For postmodernists, the loss of unity is not something to be mourned, but something to be celebrated. The postmodernism's aesthetic is not only fractured and fragmented it is flat too. Postmodernism, in this sense, is a cultural epoch, which reflects the triumph of capitalism. The postmodernist condition is read as one in which the transition from the industrial age to the information age is complete.

Donald Barthelme, an American postmodern writer, is mainly known for his novels and short stories. Postmodern fiction in America often extends the

novel beyond its conventional boundaries. There are many such writing which is necessarily fragmented , a palimpsest of past forms super- imposed upon each other, and a collage of current uses, many of which may be short lasting. Critics and reviewers have their own views about Donald Bartheleme and his novel, *Snow White*. Horst Ruthrof describes this strategy as a "schema of openness, in which meaning ... is something on move, a dynamic which at times is deceptively slow but never come to rest in social discourse" (30). Barthelme often set his formal textual innovations in the context of parody, satire and irony. Barthelme is the writer mainly responsible for bringing this free-spirited and highly self-conscious effort of writing to the forefront of American literature. Jack Kroll opines:

Donald Barthelme is one of the best, most significant and carefully developing young American writers Taking the tale of Snow White, he has constructed a well-Scaled, many-styled, bitter and funny language machine ... we hear the singing dwarfs of our childhood, and the voice of a splendid writer who knows how to turn spiritual dilemmas into logic, and how to turn that logic into comedy which is the true wised up story of our time. (Afterword)

These sentences show that Barthelme has taken the source of his novel from the early fairy tale and reconstructs and modifies it in new manner. It has elements of postmodern fiction.

He engages in a playful retelling of a fairy tale and at the same time, pokes fun at contemporary society by challenging conventional hierarchies of meaning, philosophic system of thought. John Barth has written about the writing of Barthelme and his motives of delight as:

His writing is not only excellent thing that Donald Barthelme leaves those who knew him personally or professionally. He was by all accounts a first-rate literary coach, a conscientious literary citizen. But fiction is our longest-lasting souvenir and the one that matters most to those of us who knew him mainly, if not only, as delighted readers. (The New York Times 1-2)

John Barth appreciates Barthelme as a first-rate literary coach. The product of Barthelme's imagination is an ongoing delight. *Snow White*, a curious as well as an innovative novel, is being stylistically appropriate and remarkably entertaining performance that is sufficient to ensure its worth. Another critic Pearl Bell has written about Barthelme's work as:

Barthelme's stories do not pretend to any ideas, comic or otherwise, about the "trash phenomenon" – the steadily mounting detritus of words and things that forms his image of American life. If all men are equal, all things are also equal than a writer whose works consist almost entirely, or so he likes to claim, of the raw sewage of spontaneous expression. (4)

His stories consist of free and frank ideas. They are open to interpret. He thinks that it is not necessary to pretend reality. So, he gives equal importance to all interpretations. The critic, George Wicks, called Barthelme, "the leading American practitioner of surrealism today ... whose fiction continues the investigation of consciousness and experiments in expression that began with Dada and Surrealism a half century ago" (1). George Wicks finds Barthelme as a practitioner of surrealism because he has broken conventional modes of artistic organization to experiment with free association and in nonchronological order.

Barthelme is not restricted by the fragmentation of contemporary life, but rather juxtaposes strange forms and fragments in a way that creates new form and releases new meanings. He is more interested in human experience than in making value judgements about it, and the purpose of his writing is to exercise the full play of his own imagination. Lois Gordon elaborates, "He rejects the traditional chronology, plot, character, time, space, grammar, syntax, metaphor, and simile, as well as traditional distinction between fact and fiction" (3). He begins to write suddenly. He never prepares a draft for writing. So, Time Magazine quotes:

Donald Barthelme's work creates the impression that something miraculous happened to him overnight-as if, blind from birth, he could suddenly see, or, fluent only in Urdu, he abruptly grasped English entire. The result is quite an explosion, on staccato burst of verbal star shells, pinwheel phrases, cherry bombs of Joycean puns and wordplays... an amusingly refurbished fairy tale novel of the absurd. (Afterword)

It means his writing is imaginative and fictitious. It does not have any coherence and fixed intention, somehow it seems that his writing is a play of romantic children. He borrows mosaic from visual art to develop textual openness. In this sense, Nicholas Sloboda writes:

In addition to intertextual references, Barthelme further develops his textual openness by adopting the principle of mosaic or collage from the visual arts. Specifically, he juxtaposes fragments of discourses, imagery, and narratives without, however coordinating these "pieces" in an overall unity or predetermined design. (5)

It means through the use of mosaic or collage, postmodern literature has given the impression of openness.

Larry McCaffery draws attention to the problematic interrelationship that Barthelme establishes between his characters and traditionally perceived varieties. Larry McCaffery observes, "Barthelme's characters find themselves constantly confronting worn-out system which fail to operate successfully.... psychiatry, existentialism and literary criticism, are among ... [his] favourite targets" (104). Barthelme, however, does not satirize and criticize these various systems of thought from any fixed position, just as his method does not involve associating them with particular characters. He thus develops a textual space in his narratives for the active emergence of a variety of other discourses. Snow White who is presented in the novel is totally different from the ancient fairy tale prototype. She has become parodic version of famous fairy tale as Jaroslav Kusnir writes:

Snow White has lost her mythical innocence as a representation of goodness, traditional values and morality as well as the literary tradition a fairy tale represents. By becoming vulgar, erotic, pseudo-intellectual constructed of clichés associated with contemporary consumer sensibility she has become a parodic version of her pretextual ancestor. (4)

Barthelme has brought simple story from ancient fairy tale and put different elements and to make a parodic version of postmodern text. In such situation, Snow White has lost her previous mythical innocence and morality and has become vulgar and erotic by adopting consumer culture. However, Snow White's identity is immediately undermined since she is depicted as a morally corrupted

pseudo- intellectual who has to struggle with both traditional meaning and the consumerist reality of the contemporary modern world.

In this way, the above mentioned critics have expressed their opinions in regards to the style of Barthelme's writing in the novel, *Snow White*. The critic, Jack Krill, finds elements of postmodern fiction in Barthelme's novel, *Snow White*. He opines that the early fairy tale is the source of this novel and he has modified it in new manner. Another critic, John Barth, considers *Snow White* a curious as well as an innovative novel, which is stylistically appropriate and remarkably entertaining. His style of writing mentioned above matches with the protagonist, Snow White. She has also lost her previous mythical innocence and mortality and has become vulgar and erotic by adopting consumer culture. She goes away from traditional life style and adopts postmodern life style, which matches with the novelist's postmodern style of writing. There is dominance over traditional and rule-bound way of living of the female protagonist in the novel. In traditional way of living, there is tendency to conceal sexual desires as far as possible but she does not do so. She does not think to repress her desires but as her desire is to extreme, it has devastating consequences which create fragmentation in her identity.

II. Sexuality and Freudian Psychoanalysis

The term, 'sex' can be defined biologically, psychologically, and genetically. Biologically, sex is the combination of characteristics that differentiate the two forms or parts of organism reproducing themselves by the fusion of gametes (fertilization). Psychologically, sex is the behaviour directly associated with the meeting of two sexes and in some species their copulation, to allow the fusion of the gametes to take place. Genetically, sex is determined by the presence or absence of the smaller 'Y' chromosome in some relevant chromosomal pair. Generally, sex is what makes males and females different from each other. It also attracts them to each other and involves deep feelings and desires. Through sex, a man and a woman may become interested in each other, fall in love, get married, and have children. In another word, sex is the sum of the peculiarities of structure and function that distinguish a male from a female organism, the character of being male or female, or of pertaining to the distinctive function of male or female in reproduction. Sex is conceptualized as normal instinct, which demands fulfilment through sexual activity. Within such a thought sexuality is considered as a normal phenomenon that is universal and unchanging, something that is part of biological make up of each individual. In other words, such an argument is based on premise that our feelings and activities about sexuality are determined biologically.

But, sexuality refers to all attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours that might be seen as having some sexual significance. It does not only include in its domains merely genital sexual activity. Sexuality covers the whole area of personality related to sexual behaviour, and the terms like 'sex' and 'sexuality' are the subject of constant confusion. The aim of nature is procreation but the aim of

individual is to achieve the fullest possible satisfaction in the sexual organism, though the desires for procreation remain there in one corner. Sexuality and eroticism are the intricate intersection of nature and culture.

Before the seventeenth century, sexual practices were taken as a matter of secrecy but at the beginning of the century, people had little need of secrecy. Since the seventeenth century, sexuality was concerned with recent devices of power and it started expanding by leaps and bounds. The family conveys the law and juridical dimension in the practice of sexuality and it also conveys the economy of pleasure and the intensity of sensations in the regime of alliance. Family allowed us to understand a number of facts about sexuality. Since the eighteenth century, the family has become an obligatory locus or affects, feelings, love; that sexuality has its privileged point of development in the family. For this reason sexuality is incestuous from the start. The family is the most active site of sexuality.

Up to the eighteenth century, three major explicit codes governed sexual practices; canonical law, the Christian pastoral, and civil law. They determined each in its own way, the division between licit and illicit. There were all centered on matrimonial relations: the marital obligation, the ability to fulfil it, the manner in which one complied with it, the requirements and violences that accompanied it. It was this domain that was especially saturated with prescriptions. The sex of husband and wife was troubled by rules and recommendations. There was most intense focus of constraints on the marriage relation. It was taken more serious than any other relation. It was required to give a detailed accounting of itself. It was constant suspicion. If it was found something lacking, immediate realization or mistake was required. In the eighteenth century, sex carried on displaying a

kind of generalized discursive matter. And these discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very space and as the means of its exercise. Sex was driven out of hiding. It was restricted to lead a discursive existence. The singular imperialism compels everyone to transform their sexuality into a constant discourse to the multiple mechanisms in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justices.

The discursive explosion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries caused this system centered on authentic alliance to undergo two changes. The array of practices and pleasures continued to be referred to it as their internal standard; but it was spoken of less and less, or in any case with growing moderation. Efforts to find out its secrets were abandoned; nothing further was demanded of it than to define it from day to day. The legitimate couple, with its regular sexuality, had a right to more discretion. It tended to function as a norm one that was stricter, perhaps, but quieter. On the other hand, what came under scrutiny was the sexuality of children, mad men and women, and criminals; the sensuality of those who did not like the opposite sex, reveries, obsessions, petty manias, or great transport of rage.

In the nineteenth century, sexuality was carefully confined into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule, children were prohibited to talk about sex. They closed their eyes and stopped their ears wherever they came to shows evidence to the contrary. Silence was imposed upon them. The nineteenth century family was really a monogamy and conjugal cell. But it was also a network of pleasures and powers linked together.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Sigmund Freud became the rising star on the theory of sexuality. The link between sexual desire and language is one of Freud's most important contributions to theories of sexuality, and it has meant that psychoanalytic studies of sexuality and literary production have been at the forefront of critical and theoretical projects. Freud's theories of sexuality are important because of the ways in which sexuality is accorded central status in his attempts to understand human relations, pleasures, and satisfaction, and the place of the sexual subject in culture. Freud and psychoanalysis have been associated with a view of sex in which the sexual is aligned with the genital, in terms of biological instinct. Sigmund Freud connects sexuality with instincts in his own work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* as follows:

That extension is of a twofold kind. In the first place sexuality is divorced from its too close connection with the genitals and is regarded as a more comprehensive bodily function, having pleasure as its goal and only secondarily coming to serve the ends of reproduction. In the second place the sexual impulses are regarded as including all of those merely affectionate and friendly impulses to which applies the exceeding ambiguous word "love".

(38)

Freud's observation leads him to conclude that all subjects are sexualized that children are sexual subjects as much as adults, as a consequence, all children are sexually perverse. Sexual pleasure as theorized in psychoanalysis is not linked to a specific activity like heterosexual genital relations, but to the satisfactions associated with particular functions and bodily zones. Freud continues to use the word "sexual" for genital and non- genital relations. Lois Tyson remarks,

"Sigmund Freud realized that our sexuality is part and parcel of our identity. He believed that even infants are sexual beings who pass through stages-oral, anal, and genital- in which pleasure is focused in different parts of the body "(26). There is a close connection between our sexuality and our identity because the organ of our sexual being is in the nature of the affirmation or disruption of our self that occurs in childhood.

The study area of sexuality covers more than that we generally consider to be belonging to the area of general sex. Germaine Greer writes:

Sex is actually a magical, suggestive and utterly indefinable ideal it includes gender titillation, neurology, psychopathology, hygiene, pornography and sin, all hovering about actual experiences of the most intractable subjectivity and therefore as ideal force on religion. (336)

This is to say that sexuality covers the whole area of personality related to sexual behaviour.

Throughout the nineteenth century, sex seems as a very distinct order of knowledge, especially in those areas of knowledge concerning biology and psychology of reproductive norms of society. But, in the second half of the twentieth century many theorists define sex and sexuality in different ways. Michel Foucault, a twentieth century theorist, views sex as, "not only a matter of sensation and pleasure, of law and taboo, but also of truth and falsehood, that the truth of sex becomes something fundamental, useful or dangerous. Precisely or formidable in short that sex was constructed as a problem of truth "(56). Foucault, in History of Sexuality vol. I., argued that the field of sexuality must be

understood from the viewpoint of a history of discourse. He further says, "the history of sexuality is a series of studies concerning the historical relationship of power and discourse on sex" (90). In his examination of the relationship between truth and pleasure, Foucault has said that sexuality must not be described as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient of a power, which exhaust itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely, rather sexuality should be thought of as an effect of the relationship of power. He further opines:

Sexuality appears rather as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power, between men and women, young people and old people, parents and offspring, teachers and students, priests and laity, an administration and a population. Sexuality is not the most intractable in power relations. (103)

Foucault proposes that the discourse of sexuality is not simply the natural expression of some inner drive or desire. The discourses of sexuality concern the operation of power in human relationships as much as they govern the production of a personal identity. By stressing the ways in which sexuality is written in or on the body, and in showing how the homosexual is forced in the cultural visibility. Foucault begins to dismantle the notion that sexuality is a transparent fact of life. If sexuality is inscribed in or on the body then it is texts and discourses which make the sexual into something that is also textual. There are two types of sexuality-male sexuality and female sexuality and two sorts of sexual relationships-reproductive and non-reproductive. It has been generally accepted that there are specifically separate erotic zones in both male and female. Whatever might be the differences between male and female sexuality, it is now

increasingly accepted that all sort of sexual behaviours including lesbian, gay, sadism, masochism, pornography, prostitution, rape etc. come under the study of sexuality. In opposition to this, for instance Judith Butler thinks that our feelings and activities about sexuality are the product of social and historical forces. For these theorists, sexuality is shaped by the context of social contact with which we live. Sexuality cannot be treated in isolation. It cannot be understood if it is separated from other human activities. Sexual behaviour is a social behaviour; it is not just the consumption of some biological drive.

We cannot isolate gender from sexuality. Gender is a term for the social and historical construction of sexual difference. As such, gender is to be distinguished from essentialist conceptions of sexual identity founded on a natural core of biological sex or the body. This now commonly accepted definition and distinction was introduced by feminist theory and criticism of the 1970s. The elision of sex with gender equates male and female with masculine and feminine respectively. Judith Butler views that "sexuality is never fully expressed in a performance or practice. There are no direct expressive or causal lines between sex, gender, gender presentation, sexual practice fantasy and sexuality" (165). Butler further opines:

The category of "sex" is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a "regulatory ideal". In this sense, then, "sex" not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce demarcate, circulate, differentiate- the body it controls. (1)

In her view, sex is normative in the beginning and becomes a productive power gradually. This productivity is to circulate and differentiate the body. For her, it is more productive rather than normative. Butler remarks, "sex is not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the one becomes viable at all that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility" (2). It means sex is an ideal construct, which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or a static condition of a body but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize sex. Butler further writes:

If gender is the social construction of sex and if there is no access to this "sex" except by means of its construction. Then it appears not only that sex is absorbed by gender, but that "sex" becomes something like a fiction, perhaps a fantasy, retroactively installed at a prelinguistic site to which there is no direct access. (5)

These lines show the inevitable relation between sex and gender. In the absence of one, another cannot work properly. Sex is biological construct where as gender is social and cultural construct.

Hence, human sexuality is one of the clearest and most consistent barometers of our psychological state in general. Sexuality is an inescapable human reality to which we must live a relationship. Our sexuality is not a matter of biological drive- discharge mechanisms but a matter of meanings.

Social problems of the present world do not only result from poverty, wars, political conflicts, revolutions and religious orthodoxy. Social unrest is but also due to a matter of personal relationships. That is to say, interrelationship

among individuals, their different subjectivism and social disturbances cause difficulties in the society. Human experiences like anxiety, fear, desires, emotions etc. are the elements that provide a strong support for those sort of difficulties. It is for this fact that these human experiences need to be studied systematically and scientifically for the establishment of peace and order in the society. It is Sigmund Freud who, for the first time, studied these experiences in an order. He systematically and scientifically studies these factors and developed a separate and important area of knowledge of human experiences. This field of knowledge, we call psychoanalysis. Thus, "psychoanalysis" is a term first coined and developed by Freud himself in Vienna, in 1896. *Encyclopedia of Psychology* defines psychoanalysis as, "Psychoanalysis is used in three ways: to designate a loosely knit body of ideas, the nature of human mind, in particular personality: to describe a technique of therapeutic intervention in a range of psychological disturbances and to designate a method of investigation" (86).

Psychoanalytic literary criticism emerges specifically from a therapeutic technique, which the Viennese neurologist Sigmund Freud developed for the treatment of hysteria and neurosis at the end of the nineteenth century. So psychoanalysis is the 'talking cure' that emerges out of the dialogue between patient and the therapist in which human sexual desires, fantasies and anxieties are expressed through dreams, jokes and slips of tongue. The therapy began from the initial observation of the patients relieved of their neurotic symptoms by recalling the memory of certain events and ideas related to infantile sexuality. Psychoanalysis can therefore be read as an important device for analyzing the unconscious drives hidden in literature. In other words psychoanalysis is a method of investigating mental process and treating neuroses and some other

disorder of the mind. But it soon expanded to account for many developments in the history of civilization, including warfare, mythology and religion as well as literature and other arts. Freud believes that literature and other arts like dreams and neurotic symptoms consist of the imagined and fantasized fulfilment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standard of morality.

The foundation of Freud's contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. He puts forth three premises which are as follows; first, the most of the individual's mental processes are unconscious. Secondly, all human behaviour is motivated by sexuality. Freud designated the prime psychic force as libido, or sexual energy. Thirdly, because of the powerful social taboos attached to certain sexual impulses, many of our desires and memories are repressed.

Freud says that the motive of human beings after all, an economic one. All of us have to labour for our survival. And for this unquestionable reality we have to suppress our desires to pleasure and satisfaction. Freud opines that if we repress our desire too much it might cause neurosis. Neurosis, according to Freud, is an element of creation as well as a cause of our unhappiness. So, to keep our civilization on, to keep ourselves happy we have to express those desires through socially acceptable means, and only our society moves on. Freud, moreover, opines that those unfulfilled and suppressed desires, feelings, and emotions are transferred into a place of mind, which we call unconscious. These repressed desires, Freud Says, come out through slip of tongue, jokes, mistakes, dreams and through literary works. It is on the basis of this fact; he takes artists as neurotics and day-dreamers and art a kind of escape from life.

The forces, which we assume to exist behind the tensions caused by the need of the id are called instincts. Freud said that the instinctual drives are of two types: Thanatos (death instinct), which is a destructive force, and Eros (love instinct), creative one. The thanatos is associated with aggressiveness, destruction and death; the Eros leads to bodily pleasure that may be assumed to different forms. The sources of unconscious have shaped the growth of psychosexuality that is also known as libido. Freud asserted that instinctual sexual drive appear not only in “sexual acts” but in most fundamental acts like a mother nursing the infant, an act that produces pleasure which Freud defines specifically as sexual pleasure. In an essay, “The Theory of Symbolic Response,” Colin Wilson writes, “The Freudian view implies that the man is a kind of machine in that his fuel is power called libido, and that a man whose libido is healthy and unadulterated will be somehow a well adjusted machine” (222-223).

Freud’s discussion of infantile sexuality is split into ‘oral’, ‘anal’ and ‘phallic’ stages. Throughout all these stages, the child always desires the pleasure that comes from the contact with its mother, so the child is incestuous. The child’s desire to obtain his mother as the sexual partner is what leads to Oedipus complex in Freud’s view.

A fundamental concept in the psychoanalytic theory of personality developed by Freud is Oedipus complex. The term ‘Oedipus complex’ is really derived from Sophocles’ Greek tragedy Oedipus the king, a drama in which the chief protagonist unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother (Sophocles brought this term from Greek Myth). Within the framework of Freudian psychosexuality the Oedipus complex is what ends the ‘phallic phase’ and forces the child into the ‘latency phase’. Freud elaborates his study of Oedipus complex

by discussing the notion of 'penis envy' that is concerned with the possessing or lack of the penis by the female child, and the 'castration complex', the idea of considering the fear of the male child that the sexual organs might be cut off by the father, and after this period because of his fear of being castrated, he represses his Oedipal desires of the mother.

'Electra Complex' is a term which corresponds to the case of the girls wishing their father as a sexual partner. Like the boy, the girl forms a powerful attachment to her mother during infancy. At about two or three years, however, she feels that she lacks a penis and evokes strong feeling of inferiority and jealousy (penis envy). She responds by intensifying the envious attachment to her father who possesses the desired organ and by responding to the mother who shares her apparent defect that allowed her to be born in this condition, and who now looms as a rival for her father's affection.

While the girl has twofold attitudes (love and jealousy) towards her parents, her complex (sometimes called Electra complex) typically takes the form of desire for her father and hostility towards her mother. The girl eventually seeks to compensate for supposed physical deficiency by having her father's baby preferably a baby boy who will bring the longed for penis with him. The attachment of pleasure, which was the goal of infantile sexuality, is revived and the highest degree of anticipated sexual pleasure is tied to the final act of intercourse. Freud further writes, "The sexual instinct is now subordinated to the reproductive function: it becomes, so to say, altruistic. If this transformation is successful, the original descriptions and all the other characteristics of the instinct must be taken into account in the process" (73). Freud writes, "In every case in which tension produced by sexual process is accompanied by pleasure, even in

the preparatory changes in the genitals, a feeling of satisfaction of some kind is plainly observed" (81). Though sexual pleasure demands at its primary objects to the genital zone, the other erotogenic zones are no doubt accompanied by pleasure while on the other hand such as stimulation leads to an increase of sexual excitement or produces it. Regarding eye as erotogenic zone Freud writes on sexuality as, "The eye is perhaps the zone most remote from sexual object, but it is the one which, in the stimulation of wooing an object, is liable to the most frequently stimulated by the particular quality of excitation whose case when it occurs in a sexual object we describe as beauty" (73). We know that the pleasure principle is proper to a primary method of working on the part of the mental apparatus.

Under the influence of the ego's instincts of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principles. In Freud's own word, the pleasure derived from sexual act is the "End Pleasure" while the pleasure obtained due to the excitation of the erotogenic zones is known as "Fore pleasure". Fore pleasure is thus the pleasure that had already been produced, although on a similar scale, within the infantile pleasure of sexuality.

While elaborating his concept of libido, Freud gives the "ego-libido" to the idea of quality of libido and further says, "The ego-libido is however, not conventionally accessible to analytic study when it has been put to the use of cathecting sexual objects, that is, when it has become object-libido" (83). It is hard to say anything of the behaviour of the libido in the id is the super-ego. All that we know about it relates to the ego, in which at first the whole available quota of libido is stored up. The ego libido seems as a narcissistic libido in contrast to object-libido. It is worth nothing, however, that Freud was not particularly

interested in luring what be called perversions. In Freud's view perversions are the sexual behaviours that do not fit into "not-incestuous" reproductive, heterosexual model, what is seen from that definition is that not-incestuous, reproductive, heterosexual union is an ideal and natural form of sexuality. He addresses the question of perversion in the first essay "The sexual Aberrations," though in this essay Freud is more interested in neurosis, which he defined as a negative version of perversion. Perversion might be thought of as libidinal drives that may be socially inappropriate, but which nevertheless get expressed and acted on. Neurosis by contrast, is a consequence of those libidinal drives that get repressed into the unconscious, but which are so powerful that the unconscious has to spend a lot of energy to keep these drives from coming back into the unconscious. The effort requires keeping such ideas or drives repressed that can cause hysteria, paranoia, and obsession compulsion among the neurotic disorders.

Dreams, as everyone knows, may be confused, unintelligible or positively nonsensical. What they say may contradict with all that we know of reality, and we behave in the like insane people. Since, so long as we are dreaming, we attribute objective reality to the contents of the dream. But within the framework of psychoanalysis it is accepted that dreams are the disguised fulfilment of the suppressed or repressed wishes. In dreams, wishes do not appear exactly as they are: rather they appear in symbolic forms and displace real conscious wishes. Freud accepted dreams as the royal roads to the unconscious event and that the form of dream eventually emerges in a compromise formation between the demands of unexpressed sexual impulses and the resistance of moral attitudes, which exercises a censorship function.

Thus, in terms of psychosexuality, the dream has both a manifest content and latent (repressed) content. In other words, dreams reappear in symbolic forms that what is repressed through dreams. It is fruitful reason that symbolization as the term is used in psychosexual analysis, in a process, which serves not only to represent but also to disguise the latent content of the dreams that the dreamer himself/herself may not know. In short, dreams may arise either from the id or from the ego. The mechanism of dream-formation is in both cases the same and so also is the necessary dynamic precondition. The ego gives evidence of its original derivation from the id by occasionally ceasing its functions and allowing a reversion to an earlier state of things.

Freud introduced another important aspect, the structure of human personality into psychoanalytical theory. Freud has assigned of the mental processes to three psychic zones: the id, the ego, and the super ego. He has shown the relationship between Id, Ego and Superego as their collective relationship to the conscious and unconscious. Freud says that most of the individual's mental apparatus (process) is unconscious. It helps to clarify the relationship between ego, id, and superego, as well as their collective relationship to the conscious and unconscious. We know that the id is entirely unconscious and that only a small portion of the ego and the superego is conscious. We came to know the nature and functions of three psychic zones as follows.

Id is a container of unconscious wishes and desires or the reservoir of libido which is the primary source of all psychic energy. It functions to fulfil the primordial life principle, which Freud considers to be the pleasure principle. The id is the source of all our aggressions and desires. It is lawless, asocial, and amoral. Its function is to gratify our instincts for pleasure without regard for

social conventions, legal ethics, of moral restraint. Id is manifested through dreams, jumble of thoughts, and intoxication. It has no concern with logic, time sequence, and morality.

Id is governed by pleasure principle, which is the depository of the innate instinctual drives. The Id is always seeking immediate gratification of primitive irrational and pleasure seeking impulses, it is seen at an early stage of development but it becomes dominant in adult personality of normal people. Hence, the id is the underground storeroom of buried thoughts, feelings, and desires, experiences that are repressed and prohibited to come on the surface or adult moral personality.

Ego is the rational governing agent of the psyche, which regulates and opposes the instinctual drives of the individual. So that it may be released in non-destructive behavioural patterns. Freud points out that ego stands for reason and circumspection, while the id stands for the untamed passions. Whereas the id is governed by the pleasure principle, the ego is governed by the reality principle. Hence we can say that the ego plays vital role as mediator between the id and the super ego.

Superego is the moral censoring agency, which primarily functions to protect society. When a child becomes able to learn something he comes in contact with rules, regulation, morality, standards, values and codes of society, this develops another aspect of personality called superego. So it is precondition of social, moral, legal and rational consciousness, which protects the individuals and society.

Freud attributes the development of the superego to the parental influence that presents itself in terms of punishment for that society considers to be bad

behaviour and reward for what society considers good behaviours. Superego is highly dominated by morality principle. Thus superego is a censor that classifies all the function of human personality on the basis of social values. It is the superego, which prohibits id and ego to operate wish fulfilment and sometimes, it wars with both id and ego to operate wish fulfilment and sometimes, it wars with both id and ego. Thus superego is the norms and values oriented to judge the human psychic personality.

III. Fragmented Sexual Identity in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*

Donald Barthelme's novel-*Snow White* is a playful mid- 1960s' novel, which presents incongruous reconstruction of the popularized disney version of the traditional fairy-tale. Set in the modern-day world, Barthelme presents Snow White not as a virginal maiden, but as a tall seductive woman who habitually makes love in the shower with her seven dwarf-lovers. Snow White, the protagonist of the novel, spends her life through the pleasure of sexual experience and consumerist way of life. She is a contemporary young woman as well as parodied version of a famous myth, indulging in both the physical and spiritual life. Physical in the sense that Snow White involves in sex and alcohol. Her knowledge about art, literature and intellectual ideas represent spiritual life. She tries to maintain her sexual identity but fails to do so and falls in confusion.

However, the protagonist, Snow White is presented as more physical than intellectual. Her physical description is focused more than her intellectual aspect. The novelist talks about her physical structure and sexual vigour. From the very beginning, the description of Snow White's beauty spots and her hair and skin attract reader's attention. Snow White's long hair is described as black as ebony and her skin as white as snow. The novel begins:

SHE is a tall dark beauty containing a great many beauty spots: one above the breast, one above the belly, one above the knee, one above the ankle, one above the buttock, one on the back of the neck. All of these are one on the left side, more or less in a row, as you go up and down. (3)

The enumeration of the beauty spots, many of them placed around Snow White's sexual organs: breasts, belly, knee, ankle, buttock, neck etc. appeal to the reader's sexual imagination rather than to his / her sense of beauty and innocence and alludes to sexual pleasure. These beauty spots and graphic patterns represent sexual connotations. Such sexual connotations are developed and mentioned further in the novel.

Barthelme's Snow White represents the fragmented sexual identity of the female protagonist and there is not much gap between the past and the present, between spiritual and physical experience. The past world is symbolically criticized and rejected through the depiction of Snow White's moral and material corruption in a contemporary advanced world. In other words, through Snow White's rejection of innocence and tradition, the contemporary world is rejected because it does not bring to Snow White either physical or spiritual satisfaction. Barthelme emphasizes Snow White dissatisfaction through his use of fragmentary composition, self-reflection and imagery evoking incompleteness. This imagery is represented by unfinished sexual acts, by Snow White's unfinished education or by the failure of the protagonist's artistic ambition, which all undermine the completion of any meaningful action. Snow White is asking, "Which prince will come? Will it be Prince Andrey? Prince Igor? Prince Alf? Prince Alphonso? Prince Malcolm? Prince George?" (77) is thus symbolically asking about the role to be fulfilled in this world. It shows her incomplete sexual identity. It is because of the absence of her more preferred lover named Paul. The reason for desiring him more is that he looks sexually more active and she thinks that he can fulfil her excessive sexual impulse and when her sexual desire is fulfilled, her life can be happy, comfortable and satisfied. In fact, she experiences sexual relations

with all these dwarfs to find who has capacity to silence her desire and she finds the capacity with Paul. But Paul might not feel the same as she felt. It may show that Paul is either sexually less interested or he is sexually more aggressive than her. An omniscient narrator comments on her education:

Beaver college is where she got her education. She studied Modern Woman, Her Privileges and Responsibilities, the nature and nurture of women and what they stand for, in evolution and in history, including householding, upbringing, peacekeeping etc. Then she studied Classical Guitar I, ... Then, she studied English Romantic Poets II: Shelley, Byron, Keats. Then she studied Oil Painting I. (25)

It depicts Snow White's educational background and her interests in different fields. But her education is incomplete and unsatisfactory due to the lack of sexual fulfilment. Snow White is not a traditional type of woman because she cannot hide her desires as they do. But it does not mean that traditional women do not have desire for sex. They also have but they conceal their desires due to their fear of society. They have more repressive power but Snow White cannot repress her motives, as she is more open and sexually motivated. When she does not find suitable environment to quench her thirst for sex, she tries to compensate it by reading about modern women, English Romantic poets, playing guitar and so on. She also cannot complete her education due to her search to fulfil her desires. There is a defeat of intellectuality by sexuality. Sexual power has been more dominant than the power of intellectual knowledge. It shows that quest of knowledge is negligible when one is sexually unfulfilled. If she had got sexual satisfaction, she might complete her education as well. Her unfulfilled sexual act

with many dwarfs makes her sexual identity fragmented. So, she is hanging in between physical aspect of life and spiritual one.

Sometimes, Snow White involves in writing. Through writing, she expresses her unfulfilled feelings and desires. Human needs and desires have no limitation. Human behaviour is motivated by sexuality. The narrator narrates about her writing, "She's written a dirty great poem four pages long, won't let us read it, refuses absolutely, she is adamant" (10). This sentence shows her unfulfilled desires and emotions which are repressed in her unconscious part of mind. She is able to express it through her writing a poem. Here, 'dirty' is presented as a derogatory term for sex but the theorists of sexuality take it as a natural phenomenon. Barthelme links his characters' linguistic free- play with a bodily promiscuity. These characters reveal their constant interest in sexual matters. Barthelme presents a scene in which the dwarfs openly steal Paul's Olivetti 22 typewriter:

It was a fine Olivetti 22, that typewriter, and the typewriter girls put it under their skirts. Then George wanted to write something on it while it was under their skirts. I think he just wanted to get under there, because he likes Amelia's legs. He is always looking at them and patting them and thrusting his hand between them. (50)

Here, the dwarfs establish a literal connection between the writing process and sensual or even sexual expression. They also reveal their almost constant interest in sexual matters. By developing a bond between text and bodily imagery throughout the novel, Barthelme thus exposes another level of inter- play between Snow White and the dwarfs.

Barthelme develops his textual openness by adopting the principle of mosaic from visual art. This textual openness resembles with Snow White's sexual openness. Specifically, he juxtaposes fragments of discourses, imagery and narratives without coordinating these pieces in an overall unity or predetermined design other than an approximate resemblance to the fairy tale. Commenting on his aesthetic strategy in general, Barthelme has described his structural concept as interplay between mediums.

Barthelme's strategy involves extending words beyond their already determined meaning and denotations by combing the literal with the figurative. One of the dwarfs declares, "There is a river of girls and women in our street. There are so many that the cars are forced to use the sidewalks". Again, the dwarfs observe that the neighbouring town also has "a girl river there they don't use much" (15). The word river overshadows girl, which it is meant to modify. Here, we find the description of girls who are sexually vigorous, but they are not finding favourable condition to satisfy their sexual desires. They cannot fulfil their repressive sexual desires, because of which, they move openly in search of the fulfilment. Their internal desires can be seen in their outer behaviour. They might be few in number to show their desire in the beginning but when they are defeated by their hidden sexual desire, they are compelled to display outside.

The dwarfs are also motivated by sexual behaviour. Whenever they talk to each other, directly or indirectly they express their sexual impulse and are in search of their physical satisfaction. They want to pacify their desire even by seeing the girls and their clothes and outer sexual organs. They are never satisfied in sexual play. Wherever they are, they find to be in search of their sexual or physical fulfilment. One of the dwarfs says:

If you happen to be looking out of a window of a house near the curb, or if you can move your window nearer the curb, you can sometimes see one sitting in her absolute underwear, in the hot weather, and then going through that shrugging business, and sort of hitching the shift up over her hips, and then shaking her head to get the hair to fall the right way, and all that. (73)

It shows that human beings are never contented in sexual matter. The more sexual experience they get, the more they try to have. It is completely an endless experience. It does not say one is young, old or handicapped. Even those who are physically unable have desires for sexual relationship.

One of the dwarfs compares a girl with the earth and her sexual organs with the features of the earth. He says, "The earth is broad and flat, and deep, and high" (75). When one gets satisfaction in sexual experience, s/he is naturally forced to be oblivious of the values and norms the mind sets in sexuality. It means emotion is more powerful than rationality. There is no place for rationality when one is very emotional. The satisfaction in sexuality is the most powerful one. The more one tries to suppress it, the more it bursts out. When Snow White talks with herself about her long hair and her venerable life, she says, "This motif, the long hair streaming from the high window, is a very ancient one I believe, found in many cultures, in various forms. Now I recapitulate it, for the astonishment of the vulgar and the refreshment of my venerable life" (80). Snow White is so much excited while she sees her own long hair. Whatever she does and sees finds a kind of similarity with her sexual expression directly or indirectly. At the same time, she accepts that her sexual relationship is the main reason for her fragmented life.

Donald Barthelme's characters display their desires without repressing. They are open and frank to express their sexual interest in the novel. The dwarfs, for example, use textbook terminology in their attempt to diagnose Bill as, "Withdrawal is one of the four modes of dealing with anxiety. We speculate that his reluctance to be touched springs from that. Dan does not go along with the anxiety theory" (4). Along these lines, the hero, Paul also analyzes himself and recognizes that he prefers inaction and that far from being happy in the traditional role of fairy tale prince. He desires to be discovered as a new television star. Snow White also uses a psychoanalytic vocabulary while trying to understand both her own self and her desire for Paul, "Is there a Paul, or have I only projected him in the shape of my longing, boredom, ennui and pain?" (102). In this way, Barthelme playfully projects his characters' sense of despair and isolation.

Aesthetic aspect gets remarkable position in the text. The figure of women as the aesthetic object is shown in *Snow White* to be always subject as well as subject of representation. Snow White loses sexual interest in the dwarfs' shower room. Dan offers a possible aesthetic solution as:

Now, what do we apprehend when we apprehend Snow White? We apprehend, first two three- quarter - scale breasts floating toward us wrapped, typically, in a red towel. Or, if we are apprehending her from the other direction; we apprehend a beautiful Snow White arse floating away from us wrapped in a red towel. (100)

There is a similar comparison between Snow White and red towel. It means she is as passionate as red color. Her passion for sex knows no bounds. To see this oceanic passion in her, a lot of lovers pursue her madly. But the irony is that neither she is able to pacify their passion nor her own. She is a failure in her

sexual life. On the other hand, Snow White feels frustrated to be unable to attract Paul. He just behaves lightly. How much affection she is having towards him, he is not so. This frustration creates anxiety and psychological agony within her. And the reason why Paul is not so eager towards her is that he is not finding sufficient sexual pleasure with her. The root cause is the sexual dissatisfaction that results in frustration within her psychology.

All the dwarfs see fantasy in which they are making sexual intercourse with Snow White. It shows they are not fulfilled in their relationship with her. Whatever they are not getting in reality, they try to get even in fantasy. This fantasy is mixed with anger and dissatisfaction. The dwarfs express:

We had a Fantasy, A fantasy of anger and malevolence. We were dreaming. We dreamed we burned Snow White. Burned is not the right word, cooked is the right word. We cooked Snow White over the big fire, in the dream ...Snow White was horizontal. Kevin threw more wood on the fire, in the dream. Hubert threw more wood on the fire. (109)

These sentences show dwarfs' dissatisfaction with Snow White. They express anguish and anger in their dream. Their dreams revolve around Snow White. Their unfulfilled desire and passion are emerged as a fire in their dream. Slowly and gradually, Snow White doubts on her own sexual organs for not getting pleasure and, for not providing the same to her lovers. She observes all her parts and starts thinking why she is unable to live fulfilled sexual life with these organs. But she is not clear about the reason. She neither develops cynical nor hopeful attitude after observing her physical structure. The narrator narrates, "In her chamber Snow White removed her coat and then her shirt, and then her slip, and

then her bra. The bare breasts remained. Standing by the window Snow White regarded her bare breasts, by pointing her head down." (144). She observes her nude breasts and regards her nice looking breasts lacking something that took place under the tree and one of the dwarfs narrates the event as :

Under the tree, Paul stood looking through the window at Snow White, with her bare breasts. "God Almighty," Paul said to himself." It's a good thing it occurred to me to stand under this tree and look through this window. It's a good thing I am on leave from the monastery. It's a good thing I had my reading glasses in my upper robe pocket." Paul read the message written on Snow White's unwrapped breasts." (148)

Paul also understands that Snow White is not contented with her sexual experience. Although Paul gets pleasure to see her with bare breasts, he also feels anxiety to see her pathetic psychological trauma after noticing a message hidden on Snow White's unwrapped breasts.

In combination with the repetition of words, phrases and questions their juxtapositions were created these techniques make a reader aware of the language of different utterances, self-reflections, illogical statements, and unfinished fragmentary sentences that reinforce the fragmented sexual identity of Snow White. The words and sentences are deprived of their referential function very often, and thus they become mere objects material things, recycled as in contemporary culture.

Barthelme portrays Snow White as a young woman who habitually makes love with her lovers in the contemporary world. She has many lovers but they fail

to satisfy her sexual hunger. Through the use of self- reflexivity, she thinks and rethinks about her sexual life. Her sexual life becomes unsatisfactory by her sexual relation with multiple lovers. Her lovers' constant questioning on different issues is often illogical and nonsensical. Their illogical statements are coming out of their repressed sexual desires. This can be seen in the following example:

Kevin spoke to Hubert. "There is not enough seriousness in what we do," Kevin said. "Everyone wanders around having his own individual perceptions. These, like balls of different colors and shapes and sizes, roll around on the green billiard table of consciousness ..." Kevin stopped and began again. "Where is the figure in the carpet? Or is it just ...carpet? He asked. "Where is".(129)

Kevin and Hubert are dwarfs. They are not serious about their personal lives and their individual perceptions about sex, love and life are like balls of different colors and shapes and sizes. But, they cohabit together with Snow White. Here, Snow White is taken as a green billiard table and their sexual play with her is like playing balls on the green billiard table. The dwarfs try to yoke their sexual desire with different events and games. They try to give logic in illogical manner.

In *Snow White*, Barthelme rejects any possibility of seeing and explaining the world as it is in the traditional fairy tale, realistic or modernist conventions, and emphasizes the plurality of discourses, worlds, and understandings of reality. The depiction of the protagonists' behaviour and the psychological motivation of their acting is presented in a simple description which is manifested themselves in dialogic exchanges. The rejection of a traditional vision and understanding of the

world manifests itself in Barthelme's use of ironic comments, such as, "what is Snow White thinking No one knows. She came into the kitchen and asked for a glass of water. Henry gave her a glass of water" (16). In fact, she is intending for sexual thirst. Her asking for a glass of water is understood literally by Henry. So, there is irony because what she expects and what she gets do not match at all. There is lack of reading between the lines. Barthelme engages in an ongoing exploration of the properties, relations and structure of both actual and fictional worlds, thus extending his text beyond the parameters of the expected and the realist. This narrative strategy allows him to suspend the characters' own notions of certainty and progression in themselves; instead, it promotes alternative interpret actions and conceptions of knowledge.

The story that Barthelme incorporates is the letter that Jane writes to Mr. Quistgaard, a person she chooses at random from the telephone book. She begins her letter by explaining the reason behind her decision to write to him, "I have seized your name ... in an attempt to enmesh you in my concern" (44). She engages in a series of abstract observations about meaning in their lives as:

You and I, Mr. Quistgaard, are not in the same universe of discourse ... We exist in different universes of discourse. Now it may have appeared to you, prior to your receipt of this letter, that the universe of discourse in which you have existed, and pattered about, was in all ways adequate and satisfactory. (44-45)

Through these sentences, Barthelme draws attention to Jane's serious observations, while at the same time mocking the repeated use of the celebrated structuralist expression "universe of discourse" in critical writings. The existing

condition of Jane and Quistgaard is totally different. We find there is a huge gap of shared world between them.

Occasionally, Snow White becomes uncomfortable with repetitive use of words. Looking at herself in a mirror, she says:

These breasts, my own, still stand delicately away from the trunk, as they are supposed to do. And the trunk itself is not unappealing. In fact trunk is a rather mean word for the main part of this assemblage of felicities. The cream-of-wheat belly! The stunning arse, in the rococo mirror! And then the especially good legs. (144)

Most of the characters turn to drinking at one point or another. All of them take language as a means of escape. Troubled by their deteriorating relationship with Snow White, the dwarfs busy themselves with a description of a room's interior decor. Dan decides it is not really Snow White that troubles them but the red towel she wears. The comic events in the novel serve a serious purpose. Like the questionnaire, Barthelme inserts into his novel, the purpose of which is not to demolish the reader's confidence in the author. Barthelme's reader is delighted, but at the same time dismayed and provoked by the ludicrous literal-mindedness of the characters in the situation reported.

Delight in formal experimentation is one of the characteristics of contemporary American fiction. Another, either explicit in the choice of subject matter or implicit in the narrative treatment, is the scornful criticism of the contemporary culture and its audience. While the former has received considerable attention from critics, the latter has more often been cited as a given than discussed in any detail. The very unconventionality of this curious book has

obscured for many readers the degree to which it serves as a remarkably detailed and in some say even melancholy of the contemporary American mass culture. This innovative fiction is being stylistically appropriate and remarkably entertaining performance which are sufficient to ensure its worth. Barthelme's style parodies empty language- language as gesture rather than language as communication – and acknowledges that Snow White is finally a form of cultural statement. A sense of inner emptiness, calculating seductiveness, intense fear of old age and death, fascination with celebrity , fear of competition, decline of the play spirit, deteriorating relations between men and women leading to her fragmented identity are the characteristics noticeable throughout the novel.

Reader should direct their attention to the surface of the work and such techniques are graphics and topographical variation. Calling the reader's attention to the technological reality of the book, this is useful in keeping the mind on that surface instead of undermining it with profundities. Although Barthelme does draw the reader's attention to the surface of Snow White, he does so chiefly in order to show the ways in which language and explanations mediate between self and experience.

When there appears conflict between emotion and rationality, there is dominance of emotion most of the time. When we are very emotional, our rational faculty of mind gets marginalized. Although we know that we can make mistakes when we are swept by heart, we cannot control it. The values set by mind becomes negligible in front of the power of erotic needs. Our mind is overcome by heart when we start enjoying the pleasure of sexual relationship. The conventional rules and assumptions are put at side when we are overcome by our

powerful sexual impulses. This argument is also supported by the remark of the novelist, Barthelme, quoted below:

THE VALUE THE MIND SETS ON EROTIC NEEDS
INSTANTLY SINKS AS SOON AS SATISFACTION BECOMES
READILY AVAILABLE. SOME OBSTACLE IS NECESSARY
TO SWELL THE TIDE OF THE LIBIDO TO ITS HEIGHT, AND
AT ALL PERIODS OF HISTORY, WHENEVER NATURAL
BARRIERS HAVE NOT SUFFICED, MEN HAVE ERECTED
CONVENTIONAL ONES. (76)

This remark is also presented strongly in the novel, which indicates the dominance of emotion over rational aspect of human beings.

In the novel, the dwarfs often make jokes and create laughable situation. They express their sexual interests through jokes and laughs. Similarly, at times, they use archaic and obscure words in their dialogue. It is the expression of their unfulfilled sexual relationship. When they are dissatisfied sexually, they make use of obscure words and when they are motivated by sexual impulses extremely, they crack jokes and exchange laughter and merrymaking.

Snow White herself realizes that she is overtly sexual. She often talks about her physical organs-breasts, belly, eyes etc. It indicates her interest to attract man counterpart sexually. She looks very interested to beautify her sexual organs so that her lovers find satisfaction in her. She gives less emphasis on her intellectual life and more emphasis on her physical life. It displays the power of sexuality over morality and society. Snow White and the dwarfs drink beer frequently but they are never satisfied. It indicates the fact that they are not

contented in their sexual relationship. Neither Snow White nor the dwarfs feels satisfied. It also shows that sex is an unfulfilled activity. The more one involves in it, the more s/he desires for it and ultimately it leads to frustration and anxiety. Snow White says, "Who am I to love (12)?" It displays her discontentment that results in frustration. Similarly, the dwarfs are also unfulfilled as they remark, "She already loved us but it wasn't enough (12). From this, we may guess that sexual relationship only does not give satisfaction. It should not be only physical. It should be supported by psychological aspect. If there is any anxiety in course of sexual intercourse, it does not give satisfaction. Knowingly or unknowingly she may feel that she is falling into her identity crisis. Similarly, Snow White's anxiety about words reveals her sexual dissatisfaction. She says, "Oh, I wish there were some words in the world that were not the words I always hear (6)," It is the expression resulted by her failure to get the lover who can satisfy her perfectly but can not find him. Due to this, she is frustrated and irritated.

Towards the end of the novel, a number of disjunctive network appear in close succession graphically distinguished from the rest of the conventionally printed text through the use of bold capitalization and ellipses. One example of such style proves it which is shown as, "SNOW WHITE THINKS: WHY AM I ...GLASS ... HINCHED AGAINST THE WALL ... INTELLIGENCE ... TO RETURN ... A WALL ... INTELLIGENCE ... ON THE ... TO RETURN ... HE'S COLD MIRROR (166)". The Capitalization or the letters emphasizes her excessive sexual desire and the ellipses and the disjunctive words display her failure to establish a stable identity. As her sexual desire is too extreme, it is difficult to be fulfilled and as it is not fulfilled she is frustrated and goes on making her relationship with her lovers and out of these lovers, she can not decide

which one is best for her and this inability of decision has created a devastating fragmentation in her identity as a whole. When she is aware of her identify crisis, she does not think to reconstruct it. She does not seek for other alternatives. At this junction, her knowledge, education and intellectual earning should support her but it does not happen. Her intellectual achievement is already powerless and functionless because of her involvement in sexual game played for a long time. If she works with rationality, she may find some other ways to reconstruct and assemble her shattered identity. But, her rationality is completely inactive. It shows that she is unsuccessful to maintain her physical as well as spiritual identity ultimately. But she spent so much time and energy to maintain her physical or sexual identity. The pain that she gets from her failure to maintain sexual identity is more terrible and intolerable.

At the end of the novel, there is also a display of sexual jealousy. Jane, a stepmother figure, feels jealousy of the beauty and attraction of Snow White. Jane wants to kill Snow White by providing poisonous vodka Gibson but accidentally it kills Paul. One of the dwarfs narrates this event as:

Jane gave Snow White a vodka Gibson on the rocks. "Drink this,"
She said. "It will make you feel better." "I don't feel bad physically"
Snow White said. "Emotionally is another story of course." "Go on,
"Jane said. "Go on Drink it." "No I won't drink it now," Snow
White said. "Perhaps later. Although something warns me not to
drink it at all." (174)

This event shows jealousy hidden in Jane's psychology. But this jealousy is the result of Jane's Sexual harassment. When she finds a lot around Snow White and no one with her, she develops envious attitude towards her. On the one hand, Paul

is killed by Jane. On the other hand, Bill, the leader of those dwarfs, has been hanged. Dan becomes the new leader among them.

At the end of the novel, Snow White offers chrysanthemums on Paul's grave. She had tried to make him her best lover through whom she might get satisfaction but he did not understand her. In fact she was also not satisfied with her sexual intercourse with him. She had wanted much more sexual enthusiasm from him but she failed. This reality is supported by the following argument of the novelist, "But she was fond of his blood, while he was alive. She was fond not of him but of the abstract notion that to her, meant "him". I am not sure that this is the best idea (180). Here, the statement-she was fond of his blood, while he was alive-means she had wished for more vigorous sexual inclination towards her from him but she also used to think his sexual relationship with her would be better if this relationship was supported by his psychological and intellectual preference. The novel ends with the description of Snow White's failure in life and the reason behind this failure is her unsuccessful sexual relationship with many lovers that resulted in her fragmented sexual identity.

IV. CONCLUSION

In Bartheleme's *Snow White*, the protagonist, a young woman living in a modern world, leads both physical and spiritual aspect of life by involving herself in the pleasures of sexual experience with many dwarfs and she involves in art, literature, music and academic studies that represent her spiritual aspect of life. She is educated but fails to build her career because her spiritual knowledge is shadowed by her physical impulses. As she is a young woman, she cannot sideline her youthful desires. She wants to establish relationship with a man counterpart to pacify her youthful desires and succeed her physical aspect of life. Her physical desires dominate her spiritual knowledge and morality. At the beginning of the novel, Snow White is presented as a beautiful woman who has anxiety in life. Her anxiety in life can be fulfilled at the later part of the novel but this ray of hope is shattered by her dissatisfied sexual life. Her study in different fields may make reader hopeful for her success in life. But, at the later part of the novel, her unsuccessful sexual relationship with many lovers makes her sexual identity fragmented.

She gives first priority to maintain her sexual identity as if a young woman does not have sexual fulfilment with a man counterpart, she becomes frustrated; her intellectual earning also decreases and her whole career falls at crisis. But the way she adopts to maintain it is not effective. She makes directly sexual relationship with more than a man and indulges herself in the sexual pleasures. She seems to pay more attention to satisfy her youthful instincts than to establish her identity. The more sexual relation she accelerates, the farther she moves from her quest to build her identity. Furthermore, she even cannot gratify her youthful thirst. The more relationship she builds with them, the more dissatisfied she

seems to be. Even after making relationship with them, she can turn back to her aim. She can concentrate her relation with only one selected the best one from them but she even lacks this rational way. She does not have decision–power. Thus there appears a big problem for her to maintain her sexual identity.

If she made her relationship with only one lover from the beginning, she could be on the right way to build her identity. She could also fulfill her sexual impulses from him. When she gave her heart and soul to him, he would also response her lover very profoundly. Even then if she failed to find his love; if she could not get perfect sexual contentment, she could search for alternative ways. Then she could try for another man and one day she might get the man of her search and full satisfaction. Then when she had only one lover and when both were contented to each other, her Sexual identity would be maintained. But she does not pay her attention to this side. She seems to be more sexually passionate. It is natural that when one is young, s/he tends to pacify sexual impulses, but they should also think now they can pacify themselves in a better way so that their sexual identity itself will not be at crisis. But she tends to pacify her sexual thirst in such a way that her identity also falls in confusion. She herself is blameworthy to fragment her sexual identity.

Her identity becomes fragmented by working more with emotion than with mind. Her heart works faster than her mind. In other words, there is a defeat of rationality by emotionality. Due to which, she falls in the ocean of remorse, guilt and frustration. She falls in such a wide ocean of sexual love with them that she finds it almost impossible to come out of it. It is also already late to avoid the lovers and think of having relationship with any other fresh candidate. At last, she does not have any other alternative except to undergo severe mental agony,

caused by the incorrigible mistake made from the beginning. Thus in the novel, her emotional love with the dwarfs results in complete fragmentation in her sexual identity and it seems almost impossible to build up her fragmented identity and restart to maintain it with any other man with full hope and rational approach.

In the novel *Snow White*, I find how one's identity gets a complicated turn when s/he does not choose the appropriate way to maintain it. Indeed, the question of identity is a very complex matter. Every person quests for establishing a fixed identity but gets a lot of confuses and hindrances. In this novel as well, the female protagonist's identity is in very fluid state. She tends to set up her identity but fails miserably as the way she follows is unsuitable and unsuccessful. Even at her devastating state, she does not understand about her mistaken steps. She does not realize that what she did to succeed her intention is faulty for a long time but when she is totally failure, only then she seems to acknowledge her wrong steps and looks remorseful and frustrated. According to postmodern assumption, she should enjoy the mood of life she is encountering with. Whatever happens to her, she should enjoy without any worry to the happenings. We can guess that she is happy with her way of living but to analyze her life from another perspective, she is certainly anxious about her identity. But, I think that even in postmodern life style, one realizes the terrible moments happening to him or her but s/he does not expose the frustrations and conceal them and try to enjoy whatever happens to him or her. In my view, even the people living in this era have realization of their failure in life inside but they try to shadow it forgetting this reality and enjoying the superficial moments. To sum up, in this novel, found that people enjoy the outside world but it becomes very hard to forget the reality happening in their life.

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