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**The Use of Sexual Imagery in Dickinson's Love Poems**

**The Use of Sexual Imagery in Dickinson's Love Poems**

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**by**

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## **Abstract**

Emily Dickinson's love poems depict that she fell in love with some men. However, none of her lovers could become her husband. She failed in her love affairs due to their parting and untimely demise. Therefore, she could not fulfill her sexual desires and impulses in her life. Dickinson repressed those desires into her unconscious mind to be erupted in distorted forms in her love poems. Her failure in several love affairs inspired her to write love lyrics exploiting sexual imageries in them. She sought sexual pleasure through the varieties of sexual imageries in her poems. She chose to live a reclusive life within her father's homestead and compose love lyrics in large numbers as an alternative outlet of her suppressed feelings. The Freudian interpretation of her love poems exposes her as a woman of unfulfilled sexual desires. Her love poems are dream visions of such desires and search for a sexual partner. As the poetic persona cannot meet her sexual desires, she disguises her inborn sexual identity even though she fails to do so. Thus Dickinson's love poems are the expression of unadmitted sexual desires that resulted in extreme sexual frustration in her life.

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## I. Introduction

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson (1830-1886) was born in Amherst, Massachusetts as the middle child of Edward Dickinson and Emily Norcross Dickinson. She had an elder brother, Austin and a younger sister, Lavinia. This family had a moderate brickbuilt beautiful homestead with a rich garden. It was a New England puritan family. Her father was a puritan orthodox. He influenced most of the activities of all of the family members by guiding what was morally wrong and right, and what to do and what not to do in accordance with puritan culture. Further, Dickinson family was the center for many of the social activities; education and politics, for example.

Emily Dickinson spent her leisure time doing some chores: knitting, cooking and gardening. She consumed her most of time writing a large number of poems about 1775. She also read many books by English poets and novelists like Emily Bronte, George Eliot, Keats and above all Shakespeare. She could read the books from her father's advanced library as well. However, her father hardly allowed Dickinson to read the books whatever was available in it. She writes, "He buys many books, but begs me not to read them, because he fears they joggle the mind" (88 qut. in Whicher). Certainly, it might have some psychological impact for the creative genuine, Emily Dickinson. It denotes that her father had imposed morally strong censorship to his daughters.

Perhaps, it may be the sole reason why both of Emily sisters could not choose their life partner in their life times; she could not make her own choices because "his gods were her gods; his granite integrity was her also" (This was a Poet 27-28).

As Dickinson family was a devout Christian family, all of the family members regularly attended Church in the morning and afternoon along with Emily Dickinson.

However, she had no interest of becoming a Church member. Therefore, Whicher notes, "Emily alone of her family, never became a Church member, but she was a regular attendant at services until at least her 25<sup>th</sup> year" (9). Thus she could not share the religious life of her generation. She felt impelled to turn aside from the way of truth, as her contemporaries understood it.

Emily Dickinson began to learn the rudiments with her brother and sister at the district school. But paper and ink does not tell us at what age she was admitted and how long she studied there. Her biographers speculated she might have studied there around four years. After this school, she was admitted at Amherst Academy before she was eleven. In this academy, she got the basic knowledge of History, Algebra, Arithmetics and languages like English, Latin, French and German.

Emily showed her brilliant power in writing English composition. However, she was a good student, dread examinations and exhibitions. She had no inclination to display her talents in public.

She was quite familiar with her teachers while studying at Amherst college. She found them engaging as well as earnest. During this period her love affair began with some men. She came close to Leonard Humphrey, the principal of the Academy. George F. Whicher comments on, "He was one of her intimate circle to whom she look up as her 'master' (52)". But the death failed to judge their intimacy. He died on November 30, 1850. The whole village was shocked by his death. Emily also shared the general sorrow. In the course of her official education Dickinson passed an examination of junior class on the first books of Euclid at Mount Holyoke Seminary. She then commenced the study of middle class with chemistry and physiology besides carrying on a rapid review of Algebra. But we do not have any records whether she passed the senior class.

Around the end of her teenage, her intimacy with Benjamin F. Newton grew up. Her biographers have given him much space in the pages discussing their love affair. He was one of the law students at her father's office. They spent their time at her father's garden. They shared their romantic feelings which was not to be continued for long because her father interfered their love affair. Eventually the young man quit from Amherst as a disappointed lover. He married Miss Sarah Warner Rugg on June 4, 1951. However, it did not go for long time because he died on March 24, 1953. Thus his separation and marriage and the final death caused a lack and a great sorrow in her life. It was the hardest blow, which she changed into generatic force writing love lyrics. Therefore writing love poems was one of the mediums to bear the pain of separation. The result was her excessive and explicit sexual imageries in them and reflection on them as her unfulfilled sexual desires, separation and death. Whicher comments their love affair thus:

. . . Ben Newton became particularly dear to her. He was the guide to her taste and the awakener of her mind. When he left at the end of two years she thought of him as an elder brother, loved indeed very much and mourned and remembered. For the short remainder of his life their friendship was continued by correspondence. (86)

Similarly, Dickinson's biographers have written the pages about the love story between Emily and Reverend Charles Wadsworth, a married clergyman of Arch street Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, whom she first met at Washington or Philadelphia in spring of 1954. He was a substitute for Newton.

However Wadsworth also could not fulfill her desires because he also abandoned her alone after some time. Now she was to repress her sexual impulses



which appeared through sexual images in her love poems which bore the terrible theme of sexual frustration. Whicher writes about their relationship:

In her letters [. . .] written during the last four years of her life, she characterized him as the beloved clergyman, her 'Shepherd from little girlhood and her 'dearest earthly friend'. He was the 'fugitive whom to know was life'. (99-100)

Dickinson herself has also reflected on their love affair thus: "he was a dusk gem, born of troubled waters, astray in any crest below[. . .] I do not yet fathom that he has died, and hope I may not till he assists me in another world" (100 qut. in Whicher). Thus these are the unfulfilled and repressed desires which have been erupted in her love poems.

Furthermore, Denish Donohue writes, "her most impassioned relationship was with Judge Otis Phillips Lord. It appears that Emily Dickinson was in love with him for the last six years, of his life, from 1878 to 1884" (454). Otis Philips was an Amherst college graduate of 1834, with large and lucrative law practice before he was appointed to the Massachusetts superior court in 1859. They engaged in love with each other very shortly after his wife died on December 10, 1877. Vivian R. Pollack notes, "She engaged in a gratifying sexual and emotional relationship with lord that had the capacity to shock which says as much about the repressive sexual mores of the time as about her behaviour" (52).

Similarly, Dickinson's relationship wi3th their friend and sister-in-law, Susan Gilbert is also questionable. Some critics of her biographies have shown their interest. Pollack, for example, notes, "[. . .] she maintained a lifelong attachment to her brother's wife, who lived right next door, some readers assert that Dickinson was America's first great lesbian poet" (252).

Thus, Dickinson fell in love with some men and at least with a woman whom she could not marry in her life. Therefore, her desires and impulses were repressed into her unconscious mind. They got their outlet into her love poems. Her large number of the poems deal with the theme of her frustration due to lack of sexual fulfillment.

These are some examples to prove that Dickinson was sexually repressed and ultimately she chose writing love poems as a medium to express her sexual frustrations in reclusion.

The use of sexual images recurs in many of Dickinson's love poems. This reveals that she had been sexually repressed when she could not fulfill her sexual desire in her life time. Since she was unable to gratify her sexual impulses, she chose to use sexual imageries in her love poems as a means to express sexual dissatisfaction.

This study is concerned with sexual imageries in Dickinson's love poems. It is important to know what imagery means and stands for. The word imagery is a derivation of the word 'image'. Therefore it is better to know what an image is. The word 'image' has many connotations and is used in fields like art, architecture, philosophy, theology etc. The main concern of the term here is to know how and from where the word originated in the literary field and, to know what it generally means and stands for. The word 'image' comes from Latin 'imago' meaning picture. 'Imago' implies for a representation of any person, or thing sculptured, painted or otherwise made visible. In poetry or story it denotes mental picture drawn by the descriptive wording.

While describing an image, C. Day Lewis says, "an image is a picture made out of words" and that "a poem may itself be an image composed from multiplicity of images" (quoted in M.H. Abrahams 121). Therefore, the image is any work of art

which reflects a certain picture that is felt or perceived by our senses. On the other hand, an image is a kind of word picture describing what someone or something is like. In this way, the word or phrase that describes something in a poetic way can stand for a particular image. In poetry the image is presented through imaginative description or comparison that stands for something and produces a picture in the mind of a reader or listener. Such image may be an animate or inanimate.

The sets of descriptive details in a poem or any work of art which create a kind of picture in mind, at the time of reading, are called imagery. It may be defined as a word picture exhibited in the written work. "Imagery is equivalent of imageries. The images in general or taken collectively are imagery" ("Image" 826). "Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, ideas, thoughts, states of mind any sensory or extrasensory experience" (Cuddon 413). The use of imagery in any work of art helps to bring pictures to the reader's mind. The word pictures or ideas in the poetry concern the imaginatively perceived sensory experience. The pictures, objects or sounds which occur in poet's works are marks of his/her individuality.

The images are categorized according to the use of language, way of representation and signification. The images can generally be divided into three groups; "literal, perceptual and conceptual" (Cuddon 413). The literal are presented without the use of figurative language. The perceptual and conceptual images are expressed through figurative language. The perceptual images can be perceived through sense organs like "visual (see), auditory (hear), tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste) and kinesthetic (sensations of movement)" (qtd. in M.H. Abrahams 121). But to know conceptual images one should have the idea of it only through imagination and thought. These lines, by

Emily Dickinson, *I'm wife, I have finished that* (141) illustrates the basic differences among literal, perceptual and conceptual images:

How odd girl's life looks  
 Behind this soft eclipse !  
 I think the earth seems so  
 To those in heaven now.  
 ..... (141)

Here, the phrase 'girl's life' denotes literal image; the phrase 'soft eclipse' is a perceptual image and the phrase 'in heaven' is conceptual.

This study is more concerned with sexual images, therefore, we should know what does it mean in particular. If the images, either they are literal, or perceptual or conceptual stand for sexual desires or activities are particularly called sexual images. They reveal the speaker's desire for sexual hunger and sometimes they also can draw mental picture of sexual activities. Therefore, such images can express both fulfilled and unfulfilled desires of the speaker. So we have to identify the sexual imageries according to the nature, shape and size of the object used or ideas presented in any work of literature.

Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychoanalytical criticism, propounded his theory of psychoanalytical criticism in early 20th century that brought a great revolution for interpreting any work of art challenging the traditional reading. According to this theory, the work of literature reflects the unfulfilled sexual desires of the author in his/her work. These desires remain crushed in the unconscious zone of the mind of the author due to strong social taboos. Therefore, the author lets them come out through mediums of work of art which is accepted by the society where he was born. The authors do not express the 'latent content' of their mind directly but in a

disguised way, so in twisted forms which is called 'manifest content' of conscious mind. The sexual objects appear in different forms like condensation, displacement and through symbolism. Such sexual imageries which come up in distorted forms can be both male and female. For instance, Guerin Wilfred, et al. editors write:

[...] The psychoanalytic critics tend to see all concave images (ponds, flowers, cups, or vases, caves and hollows) as female or yonic symbols and all images whose length exceeds their diameter (towers, mountain peaks, snakes, knives, lances and swords) as male or phallic symbols (132).

Thus when we encounter such objects while reading a work of art, we relate them with sexual activities and ideas. They disclose the repressed sexual desires in unconscious mind of the authors in convenient ways, that is bearable in the society.

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson wrote in 19th century and her works bear multifaceted meanings in 20th century. Therefore, critics have discussed her work from different perspectives. Many critics have made their best attempts to delve into her poetry and expose the most possible meanings. Some of the critics observed death and loneliness as an unquestioning theme. Denish Deonoghue comments, "[...] the solitudes she chose to know; it was like the solitudes of space, sea and death but greater than these, because deeper" (453). Thus the solitude in which Dickinson lived her life measures the same heights of death. The solitude in Dickinson's life parallels that of death, and therefore death is celebrated in her life. This solitude has greater and deeper meaning because it is more than those space, sea and death. So the theme of death is important in Dickinson's poetry. Furthermore, Dorothy Z Baker while commenting about the "*Twelve Songs of Aaron Copland*" writes:

in 'I felt funeral in my brain', Copland's Dickinson imagines herself reduced in her final movement to the single sense of hearing. In the elimination of senses that occurs in the process of dying, the speaker is limited to only the powers of her ears. While she speaks of feeling the funeral in her brain, she employs images of no other sense describing the rite as a "drum" and hearing the treading and lifting of the coffin.

(7)

Dorothy Z Baker reviews Dickinson's poem possessing extreme theme of death in life. Dickinson feels death coming to take her with him. She has used the image of no other senses but that of ears only. Therefore, she hears death treading and lifting her coffin. Thus these images of death obviously reveal its theme.

Furthermore, Aaron Copland has also noticed nature a significant part of man in her poetry. Nature is mother, moral teacher and companion to man so it guides man to right path and proper direction; it gives love and warmth and it is always with man. Copland, in Dickinson's poetry, finds:

Nature, the gentlest mother, in which nature is fashioned as a maternal force that loves and guides all her children-flora, fauna, and by extension the people on earth. The poem begins in the day and ends at dusk to emphasize the regularity and stability of this force and this concept. (qtd. in Baker 2)

Whereas there are other critics who have read Dickinson's poetry having antireligious elements. They have claimed that Dickinson has created her own material foundation. Christ is no more God but her lover who comes to her as a suitor and so her gentle lover. Similarly, Bible is not a holy book rather it is treated only as a

source of tropes and metaphors that can help to create beautiful work of art. Thus she has altered her vision at Christianity. Denis Donoghue, for example, states:

[...] she took her Christianity not as she found it but as she altered it. She read her Bible as a rhetorical manual. Her poems and letters are full of references to Genesis, Revelation, the Psalms, and the Gospels, but the references are in variably rhetorical. Nothing is necessarily to be believed only entertained as a trope. (457)

Therefore, he claims that Dickinson has shattered the traditional belief regarding God and Bible where she has entertained them as something else. She is not satisfied reading Bible from religious point of view but finds it a beautiful rhetorical manual that helped her by providing beautiful tropes for her poetry.

He further says: "[...] there are several poems in which Gabriel is invoked, but Emily Dickinson's Gabriel is merely an idealized version of Samuel Bowel [...]" (457). The traditional God, Gabriel, has stood as her lover Samuel Bowel, in her poems. For Dickinson, thus, God has been changed into a living person – a mortal, rather than an immortal unseen figure. He is the man of blood and flesh. She has shared her heart with him. Neither she wants to imagine about him nor makes any figure of him but she has desires to spend her life with him.

However, these readings of Emily Dickinson's poetry cannot satisfy the readers of her poetry who encounter her recurrent use of sexual images in her love poems. This research attempts to deal with frequent use of sexual imageries that reveal her sexual frustration. The above themes for her poetry did neglect the sexual images and their meaningful interpretations in Dickinson's love poems. The critics who were not satisfied with these themes have deciphered sexual images to reveal her sexual frustration.

Different biographers of Emily Dickinson have reflected on her provisional love affairs with, Benjamin Franklin Newton and Reverend Charles Wadsworth. In spite of her love affair with them, she remained frustrated because of their untimely demise and separation. Therefore, Dickinson devoted herself to write the poems about love which give some hints and images of her unfulfilled sexual desire. She attempted to satisfy her sexual desire through the expression of words and images in her poems. George F. Whicher, in *This was a Poet*, puts supporting ideas of love in her love poems, "[...] most obvious is that a large section of her poetry deals ostensibly with her love for a man whom she could not marry and with the way in which she met the frustration of her hopes (80)".

This sexual frustration is displayed in her love poems with the help of sexual images. Such images are bold enough to deal with the theme of sexual hunger. The poem entitled "*I started Early - - took my Dog - -*" (255) is a beautiful example to reveal her sexual desire.

But no man moved me – till the tide  
 Went past my simple shoe –  
 And passed my apron – and my belt –  
 And passed my bodice – too –  
 .....  
 And made as he would eat me up. [255]

In the above lines of the verse, the scene seems to be social on the surface but when we work out sexual images used in it, we find it changed into a rape scene. Here the high rised up 'Tide' stands for male sexual organ i.e. penis or phallus whereas the shoe as the female sexual organ i.e. vagina in psycho-sexual term. When the strong 'tide' rose up and past the speaker's apron, belt and bodice and the poetic person here



becomes naked and ultimately raped. Of course, it is obvious that the poetic person here is a woman because the garments described here 'bodice' and 'apron' are traditionally put on by women. Thus, Dickinson likes to be raped and thus fulfill her sexual desires if not in her practical life through her poetic imagination as she is unable to satisfy her sexual impulses with her lovers.

But at times, Dickinson's poetic persona also plays 'Hide and Seek' between two sexes. In such poems the poetic persona is self torturing because she could not fulfill her sexual desires remaining in her inborn sex therefore, she seeks to get it fulfilled from disguised sexual identity anyhow. Dickinson's poetic persona, for example, in her poem entitled "*I'm woman, I have finished that*"(140) speaks thus:

I'm woman, I've finished that  
That other state;  
I'm Czar, I'm woman now ! (140)

Obviously, the poetic persona of this verse is neither female nor male but both. In the first line of the above stanza, very clearly the persona is of female kind. Since she herself claims to be so. Whereas in the final line she is no more a woman but she has been already changed into Caesar. Caesar is alluded from Shakespeare, a famous tragedy "*Julius Caesar*". Dickinson has used such poetic persona who can change the sex according to the demand of situation to have sexual intercourse at any cost.

Dickinson uses such poetic persona Caesar, to refer not to mean only that she is Caesar but also to convey her feelings that she is also dwelling a sexually unfulfilled life which is almost equivalent to Julius Caesar's politically unhappy life, i.e. political tragedy. Therefore, sexually unhappy and politically unhappy life of Dickinson and Julius Caesar measure the same heights of tragic life. One met tragedy because of his political hunger and the other encountered tragedy because she could

not fulfill her sexual hunger. Actually both of them are swept off by passion. They could not suffice their desires in real life. Therefore, we can state that her unfulfilled sexual desires inspired her to compose such poems in large number.

## **II. Discussion of Theoretical Tools**

Psychoanalysis is a method of investigation, which deals with the interpretation of the unconscious apparatus of the human mind. The primary concern of this method was to treat the neurotic patients suffering from their painful childhood memories basically sexual desires crushed under the unconscious level of the mind due to powerful censorship imposed by the conscious mind. Hall, in this context, notes, "The unconscious[. . .] represents instinctual drives and infantile goals, hopes, wishes, and needs that have been repressed, or concealed from conscious awareness, because they cause internal conflict" (412). Thus unconscious is a reservoir that contains a handful materials to be interpreted by the experts. Those materials of the unconscious are often sexual desires which could not get fulfilled in real life. It is believed that if the neurotic patients are treated with the method of 'free association', a chaotic expression of past experiences and events, the patients could be brought into awareness.

Sigmund Freud propounded psychoanalysis as a method of investigation of the human mind in the early twentieth century and came into fullfledge development between the period of two great world wars. Now it is in the acceleration of further development. Before this method was introduced in medical science, the neurotic patients were treated by hypnotism. But in due course of time Freud and his followers found psychotherapy more scientific and convenient than that of hypnotism, and the medical scientist practiced it in greater range. Thus, the method was popular all over the world very soon. Later on, it impressed, not only psychotherapy but the wide spread range of human knowledge, like warfare, mythology, religion and so on. The method influenced art and literature as well. Therefore, it was included as

psychoanalytical criticism in literature that focused particularly on the interpretation of author's mind, historical background and biography as well.

Thus, it interprets the work of literature concerning past memories, desires and wishes of wish fulfillment of the author. The work of literature fulfills the wishes of the author, which are particularly sexual desires repressed in unconscious level of the mind due to strong social taboos. The wishes and desires cannot communicate directly in real life. Therefore, they appear in distorted form in literature. When an individual cannot fulfill his desires in practical life, he tries to gratify them through the medium of his work, dreams and fantasies. So the authors are like neurotic patients. They get the sense of fulfillment of sexual desires through their creation. Therefore, the work of literature is the prime source of satisfaction of the buried unconscious desires of the author. The following excerpt by M.H. Abrahams further clarifies it:

Literature and other arts, like dream and neurotic symptoms consists of the imagined, or fantasized, fulfillment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety. The forbidden mainly sexual ("libidinal") wishes come into conflict with, and are repressed by, the "censor" . . . in the unconscious realm of the artist's mind but are permitted by the censor to achieve a fantasized satisfaction in distorted forms which serve to disguise their real motives and objects from the conscious mind. (248-9)

In this way literature consists of imagined or fantasized fulfillment wishes which are denied or prohibited by social standards or moral principle. Those restricted 'libidinal' wishes come to struggle with moral laws are thus repressed in the unconscious realm of the authors' mind by 'censor'. However, those desires are permitted to get fulfilled in distorted form, disguising real motives and objects from unconscious mind.

Psychoanalytical criticism thus focused sexual theme of any literary work challenged; repudiated all contemporary modes of criticism. The literary work deals with author's sexual desires repressed into the unconscious mind. The author has nothing to express in his work except wish-fulfillment. To this method the truth is subjective and differs from individual to individual.

If we turn over the pages of history of psychoanalysis some traces can be found back in the ancient Greek philosophers' works as well. Therefore, it is unjust to be reluctant to their vision in our study to decipher the historical development of psychology. Plato locates desires thus, "Desires has its seat in the loins, it is a bursting reservoir of energy, fundamentally sexual" (22 qtd. in Dunant). Here Plato states close relationship between desire and loins. Desires are fundamentally sexual. Such desires come into existence when the individual involves in sex related activities. They, however, are not permitted directly but disguised in different distorted forms in reality.

Similarly, while defining the functions of art Aristotle considers author/reader psychology. He writes:

The function of art is catharsis, purification; emotions accumulated in us under the presser of social restraints and liable to certain issue in unsocial and destructive action, are touched off and sluiced away in harmless form of theoretical excitement [ . . .]. (74 qtd. in Dunant)

The work of art makes the author get rid of painful emotions or desires and wishes suppressed into unconscious mind due to social restrictions. The superficial pleasure of the work actually release still greater and deeper psychic pleasure and thereby liberates tensions of the author as well as of the reader.

However, Spinoza, the 17th century philosopher, does not distinguish between desire and intellect. The will and the intellect are associated together to cause action. Both of them originate in the mind and reflect action in social standards. Thus the authors will are also consumed through their artistic creation which is accepted by social customs, rules and regulation. Spinoza remarks, "[. . .] will and intellect are one and the same thing; for a volition is merely an idea which [. . .] has remained long enough in consciousness to pass over into action" (177 qtd. in Dunant).

In 19th century William Wordsworth gave supreme priority to the feelings which originated from emotions. They are also the past memories remembered in peaceful environment. He focused on powerful feelings. Such feelings are purely psychical. Therefore poetry can be the creation of the past painful desires, memories and wishes which are recollected by the poet in peaceful situation. Thus the question is how and where do the feelings originate from? Certainly, for the psychological reader feelings are the unconscious material designated in the form of poetry. Wordsworth defines: poem as –"Spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility" (qtd. in H. Adams). Thus Wordsworth has directly or indirectly contributed a lot to further the development of psychoanalytical criticism.

To sum up, we find the seeds of development of psychological criticism in the pages of the history. Therefore, the history of psychological development in literature should be read very carefully without any symptoms of partiality.

#### Psychoanalysis: A Theoretical Framework

Psychoanalysis is a method of psychological study of the psychosexual development of personality, the unconscious mental activities, means to treat neurotic patients, interpretations of dreams and phantasies of individuals. It describes how the

unconscious material of the mind effects to psychosexual personality development in different stages. Moreover, it, of course, investigates upon and treats neurotic. It views unconscious as a fertile zone of the mind for artistic creation. Page describes it:

The term psychoanalysis has three different meanings: It is, first, a school of psychology emphasizes the dynamic, psychic determinants of human behaviour and important of personality. Secondly, psychoanalysis refers to a specialized technique investigating unconscious mental activities. Finally, psychoanalysis is a method of investigating and treating mental disorder especially the psychoneurosis. (179)

This is how psychoanalysis sets its course of development in different categories. It studies human behaviour, unconscious material and was applied for the treatment of psychoneurosis. Therefore the meaning of psychoanalysis is contextual but not general.

Sigmund Freud, the innovating father of psychoanalysis, was one of the brightest students. Previously he had strong interest in social science. However, he studied medical science at Vienna University and worked for six years in psychological laboratory. After some time he shifts his career as a medical practitioner. He chose neurological field. With the collaboration of his friend Joseph Breuer, he developed a method for treating mental illness. He called it mental catharsis. It could eliminate the sources of mental disturbances from the patient's emotional system.

Freud advanced more reliable method to analyze and investigate the patient's psychic problems. He made the patients remember some of the past events which he called 'free association.' In this technique, he let his patients relax mentally as well as

physically to bring out spontaneous flow of reminiscence, through the means of 'free association'. Freud has accomplished an elaborate theory of dream analysis entitled 'The Interpretation of Dream' in 1900. It is a great landmark in the historical development of psychoanalytical theory. As Woodworth notes it:

The forgotten experiences and admitted desires and attitudes that come to light in 'free association' were so often of a sexual nature that Freud early came to emphasize the predominant if not exclusive important of sexual difficulties and conflicts in causation of any neurosis. (165)

Therefore, the desires and experiences are forgotten, they are the sexual by nature. They provide vital energies through the means of 'free association.' To Freud, these memories cause neurosis patients. He considered psychoanalysis as a method that deals with psychic traumas of the individuals, a method of treatment, and a theoretical psychological system. At times he extended his psychological theoretical practice to interpret many 'practices in the history of human civilization which includes warfare, mythology, religion, literature and other arts.'

In his comments on the workings of the artistic imagination in twenty third lecture of his 'Introduction to Psychoanalysis' Freud set forth the theoretical framework of psychoanalytical criticism. Here, in this study we are more concerned only with theoretical concept of psychoanalysis. The aim is directed to study some of the selected love poems by Emily Dickinson.

Two Basic Instincts: Eros and Thanatos

Freud exposed the two fundamental powerful psychic forces of human beings. They are namely 'Eros' and 'Thanatos'. The former one denotes the forces of life whereas the latter one to the forces of death. Thus, they lead quite opposite directions to the individuals. These two psychic energies are innate and unlearned. In the



psychoanalytical technique, Freud presents two basic modes of thinking: primary and secondary process. The primary process of thinking is directly concerned to life instinct or pleasure principle whereas the secondary process belongs to reality principal or ego.

The instinct of Eros is better known as love, or sex, or life instinct. Human body seeks to fulfill psychological needs such as hunger, thirst, breathing and defecation. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the most motivating force of life, is widely known as 'libido'. It stands for the vital force of sex motive. Sex energy is the creative and intellectual source of life instinct. Freud uses sex in a broad sense. It doesn't mean only copulation. Its meaning goes beyond that. It also, therefore, represents love, tenderness and sympathy that combines two human beings into one. Freud makes this point clear, "The concept of sexuality and at the same time of sexual instinct had, it is true to be extended so as to cover many things which could not be classed under the reproductive function" (45).

Death instinct is a vital force of living organism. Certainly, in course of time, every living being is guided on the path of death. Therefore, their behaviours, feelings and attitudes to some extent reveal death instinct as well. All the aggressive behaviors and feelings, destructive will and hostility motive manifest in death instinct. Freud gives more emphasis on hostility and aggressiveness of human behaviour. Woodworth comments on it in the following extract. "There must be a primal, unconscious drive toward death, and it must be present in every individual from the beginning to the end of his life" (184).

Life and death instincts are integrated whole attached to each other as they are like two different sides of the same coin. They are, so, inseparable. Pleasure and pain, love and hate, tenderness and hostility are motives of life and death, and which seem

cooperative ambivalences and antagonistic. These two are inseparably fused in human behaviors or activities. It is often seen quarrelling and hurting in courtship. When the life motives get victory over death instinct: love, courtship, happiness and creation get birth. Due to life instinct life becomes bright, hopeful and meaningful. On the other hand, death instinct cause depression and meaninglessness. There is aggression, hostility, hate, pain that lead humanity towards darkness and ultimately to death. In this context Freud opines thus:

Another striking fact is that the life instincts have so much more contract without internal perception-emerging as breakers of the peace and constantly producing tensions whose release is felt as pleasure-while the death instincts seem to do work unobtrusively. The pleasure principal seems actually to serve the death instincts. It is true that it keeps watch upon stimuli form without which, are regarded as dangers by both kinds of instincts, but it is more specially on guard against increases of stimulation from within, which would make task of living more difficult. (57)

Accurately, human nature is a bundle of contradictory principles. Thus, life is very difficult to understand and live. It becomes clear that the opposing action of the two basic instincts provide the different kinds of ebbs and flows in life.

#### Anatomy of Human Mind

Freud's division of the mind is another theory that contributes a lot to his psychoanalysis. He divides human mind into three levels: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The conscious is the topographic zone of the mind which deals with the real world. It censors the unconscious materials that frequently emerge out and upward to get the sexual desires fulfilled. But it does not let happen so

because it is the duty of the conscious mind to control the activities which are unadmitted in the prevailing society. It provides immediate awareness, perception, thought or feelings of mental events and memories. It is also the process or sequence of events. William James acknowledges it as a stream of consciousness; the continuity of mental process. It refers to the experience of an object or event as the present movement.

The preconscious mind is the storehouse of memories which can be recalled in consciousness. Those memories and desires, which are dimly conscious, constitute preconscious mind. It is a recalling process to consciousness. They are forgotten but remembered at urgent. The 'unconscious' mind, in his view, is a reservoir of buried thoughts, emotions, feelings, wishes, and impulses which are not permitted to come into conscious mind. The contents of the unconscious come from two sources: animalistic feelings and strings, which have never been conscious. Bridges further makes it clear:

The nature of unconscious is, according to Freud, dynamic. It consists of repressed childhood wishes, which are ever striving to express themselves. The energy that strives for expression is sexual energy. Freud calls it 'libido'. The sexuality of the unconscious is, however, perverse sexuality. (75)

The unconscious materials are extremely powerful and dynamic. Freud believes that the inhibited feelings and wishes of childhood days remain striving as a part of active unconscious. He takes sex energy as a motivating force of human life. The theory of unconscious motivation plays a significant role in the theory of psychoanalytical practice.

## Division of Personality

The divisions of personality is one of the most significant personality theories in psychoanalytical criticism. In 1927 Freud introduced the structure of human personality into psychoanalytical theory. The three major divisions of personality, according to Freud, are: 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Superego'. Each personality has its own sources of development. The 'Id' is the source of all psychic energy. The 'Ego' and 'Superego' are the product of 'Id'.

The Id consists of drives, inherited instincts or urges. It is a container of wishes and desires. It emerges in dreams, organized thoughts and intoxications. It has nothing to do with logic, time, sequence, and social standards. Therefore, it is asocial, amoral, chaotic, but it always struggles for immediate wish fulfillment. It leads towards destruction as does not concern about what is logical. Never thinks about what is wrong and right in the society. It is just for the sake of pleasure principle and avoidance of pain. It is a reservoir of the 'libido', the psychic energy. Unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses are originated in Id. It lacks ethical judgment and social norms. It seeks immediate gratification of primitive irrational and pleasure seeking impulses. For example, Guerin et al editors, write:

The Id is, in short, the source of all our aggressions and desires. It is lawless, asocial and amoral. Its function is to gratify our instincts for pleasure without regards for social conventions, legal ethnics, or moral restrains. Unchecked, it would lead us any lengths- to destruction even self destruction- to satisfy its impulses for pleasure. (130)

The Ego is our ordinary social self. It regulates our daily life and protects from any mishaps. It also maintains the worldly functions and makes them as realistic and rational as possible. It is a balancing force between inner psychic demands and outer

reality. It is executive director of personality whose functions are perception, memory, learning, choice, judgment, and action. It is rather mixture of both mainly conscious and partly unconscious in contact with Superego and Id respectively. It is the rational governing agent of the psyche. Thus it is a regulating agency that protects the individual. It regulates the instinctual drives of the Id so that they may be released in non-destructive behavioural pattern. In infantile, the Id is dominant and in some occasion Id rules over Ego that creates abnormal behaviour of the Id which embraces the pleasure principle for immediate gratification; the Ego comes to the reality principle to block the irrational and anti-social gratification.

The Superego is called conscience. It is the most developed Id. It imposes moral sense and strongly denies all the immoral activities which is caused due to Id. When the child acknowledges something like rules, regulation, morality, values and codes of the society this develops another aspect of personality called Superego. Initially a child requires his notions of right and wrong, good and evil from his parents. The punishment given to him/her on his/her acts develop negative values, the reward develops positive attitude. The peripheral culture and other social authorities enforce to form the Superego. It is also known as internalized parental codes. It is the moral censoring agency, the repository of conscience and pride. About Superego Freud views:

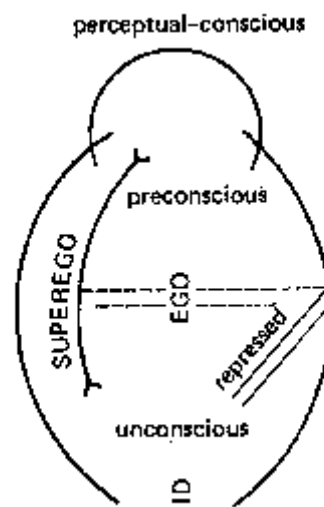
[. . .] representative of all moral restriction, the advocate of the impulse toward perfection, in short it is as much as we have been able to apprehend psychologically of what people call 'higher' things in human life. (130-1 qtd. in Guerin 95).

Thus the Superego either directly or through the ego, serves to repress the drives of the Id, to block off and thrust back into the unconscious, those impulses towards the

pleasure that society regards as unacceptable such as sexual desires aggression, primordial instincts.

It is the Superego which prohibits the Id and Ego to operate wish fulfillment and sometimes it struggles against both. Thus the superego is norm and value, the supreme judge of the human psychic personality.

The human mind and personality theory can be illustrated in the following diagram-



(qtd. in Guerin et. al. editors, 129)

Stages of Psychosexual Personality:

Freud has given great contribution by formulating psychosexual development theory of personality in the field of psychoanalytical criticism. It ruptured the traditional meaning of sexuality at maturation. Conventionally, sex was understood as copulation between two opposite sexual organs but Freud postulated a dynamic meaning of sex. According to him sexual activities either in male or female person do not start from puberty but they start right from the birth of the child. They take places in different stages with the growth of the child from prenatal stages to adulthood.

What is different is only the source and the way of gratification. Freud has said that

the sexual attitude sets out from the very beginning of childhood though the sex drive of infant is not intensified because of unmaturing sex glands and hormones. In his views, mouth, anus, genital organ are the three main erotogenic zones of the human body that give sexual pleasure. He has introduced five stages of psychosexual development of personality of a child from birth to puberty: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital.

The oral stage is the beginning stage of sexual activities of a child. It starts from the birth and regulates until the age of two. The newly born baby specifies his/her sexual motives through breast sucking. As he/she goes on growing he does the same biting whatever comes to be handy. He sucks the pacifier or bite it. If the baby is sucking or biting something that is related with sexual motives but the hungry baby's motive is not related with sexual desires. At this stage the autoerotic drive is localized in, for example, mouth, tongue and lips. In the same way at oral biting stage, the infant gets pleasure through biting, destroying and swallowing, and its sources are teeth and jaws.

The anal stage starts from one year and remains up to four years. The phases: expulsive and retentive are commonly observed at the oral stage. In this stage, according to Freud, the child obtains sexual pleasure through toilet training. The anus is the chief source of sexual pleasure. When the child plays/holds his own stool and urine it also counts sexual pleasure says Freud.

The phallic stage is very important from psychoanalytical point of view in the development of adult personality. This period initiates from three and lasts at six. In this stage, the child recognizes his/her sexual organ. The sexual energy is focused in the genital organs and the child gets pleasure in manipulating and stroking it. For the male child, the mother becomes the source of sexual pleasure whereas the father of

the female child. Therefore, the boy demands sexual love from mother and the girl from the father respectively. It results in rivalry relationship between the son and the father, and the mother and the daughter because both of the children claim for their parents of opposite sex as their love objects. Freud, further, illustrates this situation borrowing the phrase 'Oedipus Complex' from Greek tragedy. In girl's case it is called 'Electra Complex'

In phallic stage, the boy is very much proud because he possesses penis which his sister lacks. However, he has also pain of losing or damaging it by his father. This fear is known as 'castration anxiety'. The girl does not find the penis since she lacks it. Therefore, she has strong desire to get it. It is called penis envy. Towards the end of the phallic stage every child identifies himself or herself with same sex parent if s/he is deviated from this normal sense, s/he tends to be homosexual, asocial and amoral.

The latency is the fourth stage of psychosexual development of personality. It starts from somewhere between 6-7 years and continues upto puberty: Libidinal desire is not to emphasize in favour of new interests and activities. At this stage girls and boys play and study together. Freud believed that the sexual impulse was suppressed in the service of learning.

The genital stage is one of the most important stages from the view of psychosexual development of personality theory. At this stage, the children are most curious and enthusiastic to have experiences of sexual union between the two opposite sex. The sexual energy, according to Freud, is reawakened and the drives and impulses are directed towards fulfillment of sexual wishes.

The psychosexual development of childhood experience plays a vital role to construct adult personality attributes. When the normal process of psychosexual



development is blocked the personality is also deviated from normal course. The oral character is extremely dependent on others for the maintenance of his/her self esteem. If 'Libido' stays fixed at any stage, oral personality results from difficulty in toilet training and adult behaviours are marked by stinginess, excessive orderliness, and cleanliness and unusual rigidity, the phallic male is most hostile towards women and incapable of feeling love. The phallic female is motivated by penis envy to assume a masculine role and strives for superiority over men. The genital character is marked by sexual and psychological maturity that makes the possible mutually fulfilling relationship with opposite sex.

#### Dream Interpretation

The systematic study and analysis of dream is Freud's another great contribution to psychoanalytical criticism. The classical work, 'The Interpretation of Dream' (1900) by Freud, explored the dynamic role of unconscious mind and he described dream as the 'royal road to the unconscious'. To Freud, dreams represent disguised desire, wish fulfilling expression of unconscious and unacceptable thoughts. When the memories and experiences during the childhood are buried into the unconscious mind they reveal in sleep in disguised form in dream. The dreams very often appear in deviated or disguised form due to conscious censorship. Therefore, the 'latent' of the dream thoughts seek for the possible way of exposing themselves in 'manifest' form in the phenomena of social reality. As 'latent content' of dream thoughts do not get direct access into conscious mind, they are distorted in different forms which can be accepted in reality through means of 'condensation', 'displacement', and 'symbolism'. So they can get the way to consciousness.

According to Freud these three means of distortion of dream play a vital role to release unconscious desires for formulation of dream. The 'condensation' takes

place when the parts of dream thoughts are omitted and again-fused unconscious elements into a single entity. On the other hand, 'displacement' is the process of dream distortion in which the unconscious objects of the desire get substituted by those thoughts that are recognizable to the conscious phenomena. 'Symbolism' is the way of representation of repressed sexual desires by non-sexual ones which resembles them. Here the non-sexual objects of conscious desires are associated with those sexual objects of the unconscious mind. Therefore dreams represent those wishes, demands and desires which are repressed into unconscious and their instinctual gratification is fettered in conscious state of mind. While interpreting dreams Freud notes, "We have found some dreams which appeared openly as wish fulfillment, and others in which the wish fulfillment was unrecognizable and disguise by every possible means" (589). Dreams are sometimes open wish fulfillment and at other wish fulfillment in disguised forms. So, some or the other way wish fulfillment.

The dream is also a mental process like others and it is also meaningful, purposeful, and symbolic. We interpret and analyze in systematic way to find out the most possible meaning and its purpose and the symbolic value of it. Freud believed that dream is simply wish fulfillment of those wishes of Id and Superego, which remain ungratified in real life and so they are fulfilled in sleeping stage when the Ego is in relax. Those dreams create violent inner conflict for the gratification of unconscious Id, which is a great threat to Ego. The unconscious thoughts and wishes get fulfilled in distorted forms in dreams.

#### The Defense Mechanisms

The defense mechanisms are understood as a way of controlling those intense demands of Id and Superego by the executive director of the reality principle, the ego. When the anxiety becomes overwhelming, the ego must defend itself. It does so by

unconsciously blocking the impulses or distorting them into a more acceptable, less threatening form. The techniques are called the 'ego defense mechanism'. Some of them are mentioned below for our purpose. They are: repression, regression projection, displacement, introjection, reaction formation, sublimation and denial.

Repression is called motivated forgetting. It is not being able to recall a threatening situation, person or event. It is dangerous, and it is a part of most other defenses. It is the way of blocking from the consciousness of those feelings and experiences that arouse anxiety. Freud believed that people's inability to remember much about their early years is due to having repressed disturbing sexual feelings toward their parents.

Denial blocks external events from awareness situations difficult to handle. It refuses to experience at stress.

Projection transfers attributes, its own thoughts and feelings to another person. For example, a little girl talks about how jealous of her the new baby is, when she herself is jealous of the baby.

Introjection is a way of taking into your own personality characteristics of someone else. It is designated to solve some emotional difficulties. For example, a widow attempts to lessen her intense love towards her dead husband by wearing his clothes and behaving like him.

Sublimation is the transforming of an unacceptable impulse, whether it be sex, anger, fear or whatever into a socially acceptable even productive form as study, work, sports and hobbies.

Reaction formation is actually what you hate by heart to something, someone, events but show love and affection. Saying the opposite of what one really feels.

Displacement is the redirection of an impulse onto a substitute target. If the impulse, the desire, is okay with you, but the person you direct that desire towards is too threatening you can displace to someone or something that can serve as a symbolic substitute. Someone who hates his or her mother may express that hatred, but direct it instead towards, say, say women in general.

Regression is a movement back in psychological time when one is faced with stress. When we are troubled or frightened, our behaviours often become more childish or primitive. A child may begin to suck their thumb again or wet the bed when they need to spend sometime in the hospital because he/she is getting sick.

#### An Overview on Introversion and Extroversion

According to C.G. Jung there are many polar opposites of normal development of personality. Introversion and extroversion are the two prominent polarities among them. The introvert personality is guided by subjective feelings opposite to objective ones. He/she is fond of loneliness, thus does not pay any attention to physical and social environment. He/she centers himself/herself within self. While in crowd he/she feels lonely and lost. He/she is hunted by inferior complex; he is socially ill-adapted, self-centered, introspective, pessimistic, envious, worries and so on. In this context Watson notes:

His picture of the world lacks rosy hues, as he is over critical and finds a hair in every soup. Under normal conditions he is pessimistic and worried, because the world and human beings are not in the least good but crush him. So he never feels accepted and taken their bosom. (350)

Thus, the psychic life of introvert personality moves wholly within himself, while, the extrovert personality is oriented towards objective facts. The crowds and masses are the matter of super priority to loneliness but not for him/her. He searches

his identity in collectivity. He is happy with the external world and its happenings. The extrovert lives according to external necessities, centering his/her interest and attention in immediate local environment and he/she is guided by pleasure principle. He judges the value of life on the basis of existing social reality. Jung says the 'Libido' moves towards outer world and his/her interests, values and attitudes are guided by the impression of external world. But in the case of introvert personality, 'libido' has inward thrust.

Jung argues that there are four basic psychic functions i.e. thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting. Thinking and feeling are rational functions, and sensation and intuition are irrational functions. Therefore, thinking and feelings are guided by reason and judgment whereas sensation and intuition are dominated by pleasure principle. Thinking and feeling are masculine personality traits, and intuition and sensation are feminine but each individual is capable of all four functions.

Jungian theory of personality division has considerable importance in literature, anthropology and linguistics. In this study, not only Freud's theoretical concepts but Jung's are also taken as important tools to interpret some love poems by Emily Dickinson.

### **III. The Use of Sexual Imagery: A Modality**

This research is concerned with close examination and interpretation of the sexual images in Dickinson's love poems to reveal her sexual frustration. For this purpose, I have selected especially Freudian psychoanalysis as a basic theoretical tool. It observes the images as male and female persons and their respective sexual organs and sexual activities.

Therefore the images which elongate their length are male sexual organs where as those which are concave, stand for female sexual organs. When we encounter the hollow objects, for example, cups and cupboards, boxes, cases, we relate them with female sexual organs, i.e. vagina in psychoanalytical term. On the other hand, snake, worm, dragger, hammer stand for the male sexual organ i.e. penis. Similarly, the verbal images like playing, flying and climbing up and down stand for sexual activities. Thus the relation of those objects and verbal images produce the meaning. Dickinson has used such images to reveal her sexual frustration.

Certainly all of the research works have their limitations. They cannot go beyond the boundaries set on. This research is bound within its area and scope. Here, I would like to discuss the criteria of my study. The study proceeds on the basis of the knowledge I have got through reading the available materials and the instructions of my supervisor.

For this study I have selected traditional psychoanalysis as my tool for the interpretation of Dickinson's love poems. It has also different theories and methods which deal with varieties of aspects of human behaviours and their determinant factors. But I will select only those aspects which contribute to a great extent to further my research smoothly and reach to the expected conclusion. Among those mechanisms, the division of the mind, the division of the personality, dream

interpretation, life and death instincts, and the defense mechanisms are crucial ones in my study. I have also included Jungian model of introvert and extrovert personality traits in this study.

In the preceding chapter, however, I have discussed the development of psychological theories in chronological order and their contributors. I consider the psychoanalysis developed by Freud and Jungian interpretation of introvert and extrovert personality theories the most cooperating theories in my research. This study has taken biography of Emily Dickinson into consideration when necessary. It considers some of the love affairs of Dickinson which give significant hints to compose such poems. The sexual images in her poems are discussed to reach into a logical conclusion. Therefore, I observe the love affairs Dickinson had and also the views critics has laid on those affairs.

The division of the mind theory plays a very significant role in my study. It deals with how those unconscious apparatuses are exposed by the author in the love poems. Certainly, those wishes and desires are not expressed directly but she has moulded them in distorted forms. Therefore I have not interpreted the poems literally instead I have tried to find out the intended meaning. The conscious mind always tries to keep the person healthy and social by maintaining the harmony between the unconscious demands and superconscious morality. The conscious mind balances the personality by controlling and letting the wishes to be fulfilled in well balanced way. The desires and impulses germinate in unconscious mind and demand for the immediate fulfillment but the conscious mind does not let happen so.

Similarly, the role of the id, ego and superego is considered as the crucial mechanism. The id and the superego conflict and the ego operates in accordance with the reality principle. It brings balance between the pleasure principle of id and

morality principle of superego. The id does not have any sense of good and evil, right and wrong polarities. The superego knows only morality. Both of them make a person asocial and amoral creature. Therefore, the responsibility of the ego is to bring good and perfect harmony between id and superego. The imageries of the love poems are analyzed on these grounds.

Another basic tool applied for the interpretation of the sexual imageries in Dickinson's love poems is dream interpretation. With the help of this tool, the dream materials in the poem are treated accordingly. We know that dreams are caused due to repressed childhood memories and wishes in the social phenomena. The desires in the dream are not expressed directly but in distorted and disguised form. For this, 'condensation', 'displacement', and 'symbolism' operate while dreaming. Therefore, we must observe those dream images from different perspectives if they have any symbols or metaphors that have sexual connotations. If so, how do they appear in socially accepted manner? Similarly, the sexual images in the poems do not appear directly but in dream distortion. We have to deal with them in a way to grasp the intended meaning of the poems.

Unless we have mastered over both male and female sexual symbols, we are puzzled and confused in the labyrinth of the sexual symbols. Therefore, it is necessary to know what symbols intend the sexual connotations, how they appear in the poem and what is their nature.

Defense mechanisms are other Freudian concepts viewed in this research. They protect the person from any dangerous happenings; situations, persons and events. The defense mechanisms play a vital role to control the desires and impulses of id and superego transforming them into bearable ones. If a person is a victim of any anxiety, s/he is upset. The defense mechanisms protect her/him in this moment.



Some of the defense mechanisms included in my study are repression, regression, projections, introjection, sublimation, denial, displacement, and reaction formation. One or the other mechanisms consciously or unconsciously come frequently while analyzing the poem. I also do not go beyond them. I interpret the poem observing them scrupulously. The role of the defense mechanisms is also to distort the real anxieties into something else caused due to basic human instincts. Dickinson does not express her sexual frustration in a direct way but in metaphoric and symbolic language. These images work due to defense mechanisms. They distort the real anxiety of the author into acceptable ones.

Thus, there are many more mechanics of psychoanalysis which further this research and help to reach into a logical conclusion. They prove that Dickinson, of course, has expressed her intense sexual passion in her love poems. They value how Dickinson lived a sexually unhappy life because of unsuccessful love affairs. They cause sexual tension and she releases her sexual desire through her love poems. For the psychoanalytical readers of her poems, the sexual images are explicit and visible. We can have sense of them when we penetrate into Dickinson's love poems.

In Dickinson's love poems, the protagonist cannot fulfill her sexual motives remaining in her original sexual self. Therefore, sometimes she disguises as a male person. She seems to be an androgyne, a person having both male and female sexual identity. But why does Dickinson do so? Certainly she wants to fulfill her sexual impulses either way. But this technique fails in her life. So she is depressed and lives a sexually unhappy life. Of course, disguising one's own original sex, and hiding it, is a kind of self torture. If she were happy, she would not disguise her inborn sex role. In short, it shows that Dickinson lived a sexually unhappy life. These are some clues to display the unhappy sexual life in Dickinson.

#### IV. Sexual Imagery in Dickinson's Love Poems

We encounter frequent and explicit use of sexual imagery while reading Dickinson's love poems through Freudian lenses. These images seem to reveal the sexual frustration caused due to unsatisfied desires in her life. Rather her sexual desires were repressed into the unconscious level of the mind because in her life, she failed in the love affairs she was engaged into. Therefore, the sexual repression inspired her to compose love poems in a large number exploiting obvious sexual imageries in them. The recurring use of sexual images in her love poems expose her inward sexual desires.

There is invocation of parting and death in Dickinson's love poem. It indicates that she did not consummate her love affair. Such pain and agony got a broad space in her love poems. Those lovers are not with her but the memory of them is still starving and so haunts her mind frequently. Dickinson writes, "you left me .../a legacy of love" and "boundaries of pain" (131) in her love poem *You Left Me, sweet, two legacies*.

You left me, sweet, to legacies,—  
A legacy of love  
A Heavenly Father would content,  
Had He the offer of;  
You left me boundaries of pain  
Capacious as the sea,  
Between eternity and time,  
Your consciousness and me (131)

The pain of parting, has been left for her as a token of love, is vast and spacious. It is immeasurable. We cannot measure it with any tools available. Therefore, she

compares it "capacious as the sea/between eternity and time" (131). Thus, her love affair with those people has exceeded even the space and time. She is helpless. She is nowhere and unwanted but cannot escape their remembrance.

In the second and third line of the first stanza of the same verse she notes that if such love was offered to the "heavenly father"(131), he would be happy. But in the case of the protagonist the love did not bring happiness rather brought vice versa. It resulted into inward pain and agony. It refers to separation or may be death of the lover that has proved itself as an immeasurable matter. The 'you' in the poem is no more with her. (He) has left her alone. So she is burning in passion.

Generally love affair is expected to bring happiness in the life of both parties involved. But here love causes psychological trauma, inward pain and agony, a heavy thing causing disappointment. So, here, it is not productive and fruitful but leads into futile life. The protagonist's life has transformed into meaninglessness without any strength and hope. She has lived an unwanted life. It has become a life only for the sake of life. It causes nothing meaningful because it has not met with any wish fulfillment. The generative force of the life has been vanquished. Now she can do nothing but repress her desires and lust as the anxiety into her unconscious mind that erupts into her love poems.

Of course the poem *You left me, sweet, to legacies-* is one of the fine example of Dickinson's love poem that reminds us of the separation of Dickinson from her lovers. It is furnished with the images like "legacy of love"(131) and 'sweet'. The 'sweet' denotes here the beloved who is not with herself. He is absent.

Dickinson has noted the loss of someone dear and near who could gratify her sexual desires and impulses in her love poems. The desire to be with and have sexual intercourse with him can be clearly seen in them. The protagonist in "*I HELD a jewel*

*in my fingers*" hallucinates the desired person. Images in the poem prove this. It continues—

I HELD a jewel in my fingers  
 And went to sleep.  
 The day was warm, and winds were prosy  
 I said: "T will keep."  
 I woke and chid my honest fingers,—  
 The gem was gone;  
 And now an Amethyst remembrance  
 is all I own (150)

The protagonist is intoxicated and has become crazy of love making activities. That is expressed through the images like 'jewel' and 'amethyst' remembrance. She has got a jewel and holds it into her hands but does not wear it, why? Because the 'jewel' here bears the symbolic meaning. It is the symbolic expression of the desire having sexual intercourse to 'hold' it. The phrase 'went to sleep' contributes for the same thing. Sleeping actually means to have sexual consummation for the lovers.

The nature of the jewel features like that of the jellyfish which is very difficult to hold it up: like that of jelly fish the 'jewel' escapes out of her fingers. She finds that the jewel has already gone when she reawakens. The verbal image 'woke' denotes that she has a dream of going into bed with her partner but it fails as immediately as the "gem was gone." (150)

Thus the protagonist has a desire for sexual intercourse, to kill her sexual passion. She has nothing but only remembers the 'amethyst' that she does not possesses in her real life. She fails to have the amethyst, so she scolds/blames the fingers for letting the gem go. Thus the 'gem,' 'amethyst,' 'jewel' are the disguised

form of male or female or both sexual organs. The female protagonist sleeping with the object that resembles masculine sexual organs that reveals her sexual dissatisfaction. If she were happy with her present situation she would not express such feelings of loss. This dissatisfaction has caused great pain and agony resulting into frustration. The protagonist represses all the memories and desires and they are exposed in something else. The desire to have a sexual partner have changed into the desires of having 'gem', an ornament, that actually women possess. In this way she experiences her beloved.

Although Dickinson's biographers have failed to bear sufficient proofs for her love affairs but they have considerable place in some of Dickinson's love poems. They are contextual and noteworthy. It is said that Dickinson fell in love with Benjamin F. Newton, a law student who spent two years in her father's office. They met in the garden but were forbidden by Emily's father. The issue was further proved by George F. Whicher:

When the first collection of Emily Dickinson's poems was published guarded allusions to her supposed "love-story" began ... with an early attachment to an eligible young man whose attentions were forbidden by Emily's father on the ground that the suitor's prospects were not sufficiently hopeful. Gossip specifies a lovers' meeting in the garden interrupted by lantern light, a stern father ordering the young man off the premises, a defiant Emily promising never to leave her home until her lover could claim her and to wear nothing but white for his sake and a broken hearted lover dying after a few years of agonized separation. (82)

Similarly, the love affair between Charles Wordsworth and Dickinson is also noticeable in the writing of George F. Whicher. He notes:

Emily fell deeply in love with a married man, usually a clergyman,  
[...] he reciprocated her love and urged her to elope with him but she  
negative the proposal; that he removed to a distant city and there  
dragged out the remainder of a disappointed life while she shut herself  
up from the world in her father's house. (82)

Therefore, the love poems by Dickinson got fertile sources from catastrophes of love affairs in her life. While interpreting those poems we consider these incidents as significant ones. It is contextual to interpret "*I Cannot Live with You*" in this regard. She writes:

I cannot live with you  
It would be life—  
And life is over there  
Behind the self  
  
The sexton keeps the key to—  
Putting up  
Over life-his porcelain—  
Like a cup—  
  
Discard of the Housewife  
Quaint—or Broke—  
A newer serves pleases—  
Old ones crack— (126)

In these opening stanzas, Dickinson states she could not live with 'you'. It is erotic loss protested against separation and death. 'You' are 'life' someone or something or even 'you' have taken away 'you/life/love'. It is as though a communion cup, a holy thing has been locked away by a 'sexton,' a maintainer of church property and grave digger. Life/love/communion cup are 'Behind the self,'— sitting behind the self, hidden behind the closed door. The grave digger handles 'our' 'lost life/loss' as though it were 'his', as though he were a 'Housewife' putting away broken, cracked, unwanted porcelain.

Thus, the church authority blocks both of the lovers to consummate their love affairs. There the church stands for morality principle that hinders unconscious desires of the poet. The sexual images of the female person appear in distorted form as 'porcelain' and 'cup'. Moreover, the 'key' is the male sexual organ. However, both of the lovers cannot 'live'/'sleep' together in the same bed due to strong censorship of the church authority. This porcelain is the projection of the female sexual organ into acceptable form as though it belongs to the church itself. The dashes appear almost in each line of the verses break the syntactic structure to mean what she actually wants to say cannot tell us in complete form because what she wants to convey is a socially unacceptable thing, the love making.

In the forth and fifth stanza, it becomes further clear that she could not live with 'you' because 'you' is already dead. He is no more alive. she notes: 'I could not die—with you —' (136). Therefore there is separation between both of the lovers. It breaks her love affair and so she failed to fulfill her sexual desires.

I could not die-with you-

For one must wait

To shut the others' Gaze down—

You—could not— . . . (136)

Thus "I could not .../you—could not—". The separation between both of the lovers is a must and imposed by the death. It is the logic that distances an unbearable pain and an emotional loss that feels like physical death, by transposing it to the future and by projecting the speaker's feeling on to the beloved.

"They'd judge us—how?"(137) in the sixth stanza indicates how the society considers their love affair. They love each other but it has a tragic ending. The society is not ready to allow them to love if both of them remain alive. Therefore, one of the lover's death was the demand of the society. Therefore, she condemns the time and situation "where you were not—/so we must apart-/you there I here —"(138). In the last line of this poem she concludes that she would leave the 'door ajar,' a vaginal symbol open with the hope of game which would result into "white substance" (138) like that of 'white rush' in W. B. Yeats "*Lida and Swan*"

She further expresses her sexual frustration in her another love poem. "*A Narrow Fellow in the Grass*" goes thus:

A Narrow Fellow in the Grass

Occasionally rides —

you may have met him--did you not

His notice sudden is --

The Grass divides as with a comb--

A spotted shaft is seen --

And then it closes at your feet

And opens further on --

..... (459-60)



The excerpt gives a vivid picture of the "A Narrow Fellow..."(459) whose sex identity is not clear at first. However, the "A Narrow Fellow"(459) does not identify its gender, the objective pronoun 'Him' and the possessive pronoun 'His' reveals that 'Fellow' is a male person. He is small, the descriptive word narrow before the noun 'Fellow' suggests. The very person is spotted and compared with comb. Therefore, it divides the grass as the comb does hair. To evaluate this poem from psychoanalytical perspective, we must be familiar with the sexual imageries used here. The 'spotted shaft' and the 'comb' here are the male sexual organs or the phallic symbols and the 'grass' stands for pubic hair around the sexual organs. Thus the penis is seeking for the vagina removing the pubic hair around uterus. It is to say that the sexual consummation is pictured in distorted form rather directly mentioning it. Since for the ego and the reality principal, in psychoanalytical term, sexual activities are supposed to be unacceptable, amoral and asocial for the existing social norms and values.

The 'spotted shaft' goes further because it likes the 'Boggy acre.' The 'Boggy acre' is the uterus and the 'corn' stands for clitoral symbol in the following stanza. 'Fellow/a Boy' that resemble with little boy, a penis in daily use language. Here the daily use language is deviated by the poet demanding special focus on it by the psychoanalytical reader. With the arrival of this fellow the protagonist feels 'a whip lash' transport because it passes until it reaches the 'Boggy acre.' Therefore, the protagonist is too much curious to possess, "stooping to secure/it wrinkled and was gone" (459) .

Of course, it is obvious that the images mentioned here describe that the protagonist is really very much interested to have sexual intercourse because she still remains unsatisfied after copulation. The penis is wrinkled immediately after copulation was over. The verbal noun image 'stooping' connotes the posture of the

female body at copulation. However, the first line of the last stanza proves that the scene mentioned in the preceding paragraph is nothing more than a dream vision.

But never met this fellow

Attended ...

without a tighter breathing

And zero at the bone (460)

The protagonist in the poem never met with him. He never came in her life.

Therefore, she is suffocated with the want of it. She is desperate and disappointed even at the bone. It dramatizes that Dickinson never got sexual desires fulfilled. This is a wish fulfillment poem by Dickinson at list in dream symbolism if not in her practical life. Her sexual frustration is lively mentioned in this poem through the craftsmanship of sexual imageries. Nobody seems to have come to propose her in her life for any love making activities. In this context Pollack comments on: "She complained to her brother that she had not received any valentines, that she had looked in vain for one of Cupid's messengers (35).

Thus she is in complete state of sexual anxiety. She has nothing regarding the sexual desires but has to repress them in her unconscious mind which erupt like that of volcanic sexual images in distorted form in her poetry. How painful was the sexual life of Dickinson without any sort of experience in this field. Anyone can easily speculate that she must be burning inside and must have to invest her energy to repress those passions of sexual desires. What she could do more than writing love poems expressing her desires in the language of metaphors and symbolism. The defense mechanism isolation has blocked sexual passions transforming them into intellectual work of writing poetry.

The more we penetrate through the lines of Emily Dickinson's love poems the more varieties of sexual images we encounter in them. In this context let me see how she has presented the anxiety of sexual repression resulting into sexual frustration in "*In Winter in My Room*". The preamble of the poem begins thus:

In winter in my Room  
 I came upon a worm --  
 Pink, lank and warm --  
 But as he was a worm  
 And worms presume  
 Not quite with him at home --  
 Secured him by a string  
 To something neighbouring  
 And went along.

.....  
 I would not believe it if I heard  
 But state with creeping blood--  
 A snake with mottles rare  
 Surveyed my chamber floor  
 In feature as the worm before  
 But ringed with power--.

The very string with which  
 I tied him--too

..... (682-83)

In the above lines of the verse, the scene seems to be controlled by a snake charmer. The protagonist is well trained at holding the worm/snake. As though she is a biologist and wants to give a detailed description of them on the surface. But the deep level interpretation of the sexual images available in it compel us to experience a crime committed which is analogous to that of "*Paradise Lost*." Here the 'snake,' 'worm,' 'him' stand for the male or male sexual organ i.e. penis or phallus whereas 'home,' 'room,' 'chamber floor' connotes the female person or female sexual organ i.e. vagina or uterus. And images like 'tied' and 'secured' are implied for the desire to have sexual intercourse and the image 'surveyed' indicates the copulation itself. The 'string' stands for the pubic hair or the penis itself.

Certainly these lines dramatize the sexual activities. There is the juxtaposition of both male and female sexual organs. The 'worm/snake' is captured by the protagonist. He then 'surveys' the 'chamber floor' which causes 'creeping blood.' Now it is obvious that the protagonist lost her virginity. The poetic persona here is a woman because what she possessed is equivalent to male sexual organ. Therefore, she is seduced by the serpent. Thus, Dickinson has unconscious desires to have sexual relationship. She likes to be seduced and fulfill her sexual desires actually not in her practical life but through her poetic imagination as she is unable to fulfill her sexual impulses with her beloved.

Moreover, the image 'hissed' is the echo of the sound produced at copulation. She goes on telling that "he fathomed me"(683). If it is not the presentation of sexual activities, what does it mean by the male person (he) measuring the depth of the female person (me)? Certainly, there cannot be most and the closest meaning of 'fathomed me' as beyond the copulation. That is why we claim that Dickinson has been strongly repressed, which she has been releasing in using varieties of sexual

images in her love poems. Similarly, a "rhythm slim" (682) is also the echo of sexual activities.

In the final stanza of the same poem she concludes thus:

That time I flew  
 Both eyes his way  
 Lest he pursue  
 Nor ever ceased to run  
 Till in a distance town  
 Towns on from mine  
 I set me down  
 This was a dream (683)

Again the image flying is related to the sexual activities. Therefore, when both of the partners involved in love making activities, she fixed her "Both eyes in his way"(683), at the act of copulation. However, the male partner is not artful because he did not pursue her before the sexual game. Rather he began to cope with her without persuasion and without any expected delay. We can know it when she says "Nor ever ceased to run" (683). The penis enters inside the womb i.e. distance town, 'On mine.' Although this is the poem on copulation, it did not occur in Dickinson's real life. It is because at last she says that "this was a dream" (683). Thus this poem is the dream hallucination. As we know that Freud interprets a dream as a royal road to unconscious desires. Here unconscious desire to cope with the male partner to gratify her sexual desires are exposed. Here it seems to be contextual to quote what Farmington Hills comments about love affair of Dickinson: "There was no fulfilling love affairs. She stayed close to home, reading, working, in her garden, doing chores, and writing her poetry" (4).

To quest Dickinson's unsatisfied sexual desires we can see other sexual images in her "*I Started Early Took My Dog*". In the second last stanza of this poem she speaks thus:

And He—He followed—close behind--  
I felt his silver Heel  
Upon my Ankle—Then my shoes  
Would overflow with pearl. (255)

The metaphoric language is always complex and indirect. Therefore, to discern its implied meaning we must know first what the images stand for. In the course of interpretation of sexual meaning of the poem we should decipher male and female sexual organs. "His silver Heel" (255) in the above verse stands for phallus and 'shoes' and 'Ankle' for womb and clitoris respectively. The "overflow" with pearls" (255) means flow of sperm and ovum at copulation. Thus Dickinson feels that she is seduced and therefore the 'white substance' is overflowing at the movement.

In short, we can claim that Dickinson always wrote the poem about love and sex. Both of them were not the truth of her living life. But they were only dreams. The dreams for the sake of a dream. She loved; however she was not loved. She wanted to make it love, but turned it into dust. Therefore, she lived a life of intense passion of sex. She is 'a cat on a hot tin roof.' She frequently attempted to squelch passion, desires and impulses but they erupted more violently in her love poems. The recurring sexual images in her love poems are available proofs for it. To burn in passion is the curse to her life. She transformed her sexual energy into creation of love poems. Therefore, erotic passion is the most acknowledged source of her love poetry. This is most visible for all of Dickinson scholars.

The forthcoming poem "*He was weak, and I was strong--then --*" extends the same theme of Dickinson's love poems. Her life proceeds on lamentation for the sex.

She writes:

He was weak, and I was strong--then--

So he let me lead him in --

I was weak and he was strong then--

So I let him lead me—home (89-90)

Thus these lines of the verse reflect the unidentified male person who was not strong enough so he could not fulfill her desires. Therefore, "he let me lead him in --." But after sometime he is dramatically strong while she was already weak. She has no more desire/interest to what she actually wanted beforehand. Now she was disappointed looking at the poor condition of her incapable partner. To make it lively, she selects two opposites: 'weak' and 'strong'.

Because the meeting of the two lovers did not turn fruitful, it is time to part from each other. Neither of them was stronger for the intended activity. The final line of the poem concludes in humiliation. Dickinson has become the victim of morality anxiety. She says, "we did not do it--tho—" (89). She has no other ideas except surrendering against the society due to its strong and powerful restrictions. Thus the superego crushes her sexual impulses into the darker zone of the unconscious mind. Therefore, she seems to be aware and accepts social norms and rules where she lives her life.

Although, Dickinson hoped to have her desires fulfilled remaining in her own sex, that causes intense disappointment throughout her life. It was not possible to be happy with the same condition. So she thought the other outlet to be free from her burning passion. That is why she attempted to disguise her sexual identity. To meet

this goal, she has displaced herself from femininity to masculinity. It may be that she was the victim of 'penis envy' in psychoanalytical term. she further claims that neither of the male person can sexually assault her because she has transformed her sex into male. For example:

No Rack can torture me--  
 My soul at Liberty --  
 Behind this mortal Bone.  
 There knits a bolder one  
 .....  
 You cannot prick with saw--  
 Nor pierce with scimitar  
 Two Bodies—the other fly--(183)

There are some images which refer that Dickinson is not a female person but androgyne, having both feminine and masculine sexual identity. She is the male person because the 'Rack,' 'Scimitar' and the 'saw' which here stand for male sexual organ cannot 'torture,' 'pierce,' 'Prick' or seduce her. She is also armoured with male sexual organs. Nobody will try to 'bind one' with her having sexual intercourse because the other flies.

Thus this is the other way of consolation to herself for sexual depression. She attempts to find out the alternate way of becoming happy with her newly discovered sexual vision. If one is able to protect herself from the male person it develops the energy of male sexuality. Therefore, the vision of changing sexual identity into other's is very clear.

Of course, to disguise one's own sexual identity from natural to artificial one is the effect of sexual despair. This makes clear that Dickinson lived a life of both male



and female person. She is upset. She challenges the social norm of heterosexuality into autoeroticism. In this context of the Dickinson scholars, Pollack comments thus, "While some biographical critics such as Paula Bennett believe that Dickinson was primarily autoerotic, others have suggested that whereas Dickinson had what we would today call bisexual desires [. . .]" (40). Thus, this is a testimony that proves Dickinson had bisexual desires which she wants she get fulfilled any how. One cannot live his/her life without fulfilling one's wish for sexual desires. He/she tries to meet it in either way one can practice in his/her life.

Dickinson also wanted to do the same by applying both sex what the scholars described about her sexual desires. Therefore, her poetry and life were shaped by social restriction upon her. On this fact Buchbinder notes: "... her life and poetry were shaped by the constraints of sexual ... norms of her society" (135). In this way social norms manipulated her sexual desires and therefore she violated social sexual norms by disguising her natural sex into artificial one. Thus the control of the superego is released through some other way, the displacement of sexual identity, a female disguising as a male person. This is some how a safe way of getting fulfillment of her sexual impulses. This is the fine and authentic vision of sexual frustration in her life. The defense mechanism introjection is at play and defending her sexual depression through distortion of sexual personality.

Not this is much. We consider the other forms of sexual depression in Dickinson's love poetry. In those poems images indicate that the protagonist seems to be engaged in some asocial and unhealthy sexual activities. There she no more satisfies her sexual impulses in normal heterosex but the images in those poems reveal that her sexual relationship is not with the male person but with the female ones. The sexual relationship between two females we call lesbianism. This we can also sense in

Dickinson's poems. To discover this sort of theme and meaning of her love poetry we take the example of:

Her breast is fit for pearls'  
 But I was not a "Diver"--  
 Her brow is fit for thrones  
 But I have not a crest.  
 Her heart is fit for home  
 I--sparrow build there  
 Sweet of twigs and twine  
 My perennial nest. (43)

Dickinson talks about "her breast --fit for pearls" (43). The 'pearl' is sexually charged Dickinson imagery. Here 'her breast' is compared with pearls. Whereas 'diver' is Dickinson's code word for man. It refers to the man, specially to the man engaged in sexual activity. It is directly adopted from 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Antony is Cleopatra's diver. Similarly, the 'crest' symbolizes penis, meaning pointed top or something. Therefore, her 'brow' however fits with thrones have no value at all for Dickinson. So she laments that she has no penis so she could have sexual intercourse with her. Thus this is the poem which has tender appeal for women to have sexual relationship between and among themselves. It is important to quote from *Dickinson's Bawdy: Shakespeare ...* by Christin M. Coment. He notes, "Pollack suggests, within some letters and poems Dickinson probably views herself as suppressed Lesbian" (2).

Furthermore, in the forthcoming line Dickinson's identification with 'sparrow' easily call attention to her own lust, perhaps as a challenge to the heterosexual intercourse in which she cannot participate. The 'sparrow' symbolizes feathered lechery, the allusion from Shakespeare. There are other symbols often used by

Shakespeare. She uses bird's 'nest' to refer to a woman's pudent and pubic hair and 'sweet' has a sexual connotation in his work as well often meaning the sweet pleasure of sexual intimacy. Dickinson's imagery of 'building' in her lover's 'nest' could be an explicit image of lesbian sexuality.

This is how Dickinson uses the images of sexual connotation for her depressed sexuality. The unfulfilled desires are expressed in her love poems to display her sexual frustration. Such images are strong enough that can convey the meaning of sexual anxiety and fear. It is only possible to depict sexual frustration throughout her love poetry if not in her real life.

Thus we can claim that Dickinson's love poems are the best ways to express her repressed sexual experiences and memories of the past. The images are not direct. They are indirect and symbolic. Therefore, we consider the symbols of sexual activities and organs to get through the underlying sexual theme of Dickinson's love poems. Thus we are able to conclude that Dickinson is the most sexually suppressed woman. The medium for her to express repressed desires was writing love poems using excessive sexual images. This is the distorted way to express intense sexual frustration.

## V. Conclusion

Freudian psychoanalytical criticism deals with unconscious aspects of the author's mind in his or her creation. This method of criticism was widely practised between the period of two great World Wars. The mode of criticism believes that all literary works are the products of the desires, wishes, thoughts, feelings and childhood memories which are buried under the unconscious level of the authors and due to strong social restriction. Thus they always attempt to come off and get fulfilled in distorted forms in literature, dream and tongue slip in the prevailing society. Therefore, we have to work out the images and symbols to get their intended meanings.

To know the sexual meaning of the poem we must first identify the sexual symbols and images in the poem. The images which give the picture of sexual organ, activities and behaviours are sexual images. They can be either literal or perceptual and conceptual. According to Freudian psychoanalysis all the objects or things that exceed their diameter, for example, stick, tower, hammer, draggers and insects, snake, worm and so on stand for the male sexual organ i.e. penis or phallus whereas the concave objects and things like hollow objects, pond, boxes, cases, cupboard, ship, vessel, table board etc. are interpreted as female sexual organ i.e. vagina or female themselves. Therefore, whenever we encounter with them they connote meaning of sexual frustration in Dickinson's love poems from Freudian perspective.

Emily Dickinson fell in love with different men one after another. Benjamin F. Newton, Reverend Charles Wadsworth and Otis Philips Lord are her highly celebrated lovers by the Dickinson biographers and scholars. They have covered pages of biographies. However, none of them became her husband. Some of them died early while others left her. Therefore, she lived a sexually unhappy life. It has

been expressed in her poems. She was sexually frustrated. She did not get married throughout her life. She chose a reclusive living in white dress as a nun, meaning purity and virginity. Sexual fulfillment became a far cry for Dickinson. So her love poems are the art galleries which depict her desire for sex.

There is the statement of parting and death in her love poems. She cries for the man with whom she loved. He is not with her. He has just left the "legacy of love" and "the boundaries of pain"(131) to her. The pain of parting is a memento of love to her by her lover. The pain is too vast and 'spacious' to overcome. So it is immeasurable. She loved in vain. Love brings happiness to both of the engaged parties. It is a generative force of life. But it brings deep sorrow and is destructive in the life of Emily Dickinson. The pain and sorrow is caused due to sexual frustration. It results into inward pain and agony.

Sometimes Dickinson hallucinates in her love poems. The poems are her dream visions. They reveal her burning passion of sexual hunger. She writes, "I held a jewel in my finger." (131) The 'jewel' is nothing more than the representation of male sexual organ. For Dickinson, it seems to be more precious than any found diamonds. Because the 'Jewel' in her hand escapes out of her finger. She sleeps with it but it never sleeps with her. It goes far away forever. Therefore the poetic persona can do nothing except repressing all her desires which get the outlet in verse.

Dickinson further writes, "I cannot live with you"(136) because the 'you' must have died. (He) is no more with her. In this poem either the society or the death causes them to be isolated from each other. If she had lived with her "it would be life" (137). So her life became meaningless and futile as somebody or someone snatched (him) away. Therefore, she is hopeless and is in despair. Her life without (him) has turned into a leafless tree of winter season. Meaning of life has become a barren land.

She states "the sexton keeps the key" (137) of their love affair. Therefore, her impulses and desires are crushed into her unconscious mind. The superego blocks her desires. The society does not let both of them to consummate their sexual desires during the time they stayed together. On the other hand, she "could not die-with you" (137). The tide of time did not wait until the time of their love making. So she bewails in each of the love poems for the same. The love making in her life is a far-fetched thing because "we must apart- you there I here" (137). She concludes that she would leave the 'door ajar,' a vaginal symbol open with the hope of game which results "white substance" like that of 'white rush' in "*Leda and Swan*" by W.B. Yeats.

Dickinson's serpent poems "A Narrow Fellow in the grass"(459) dramatizes her attempt to terminate her sexual passion. There is a vivid picture of copulation. It looks like a newly married couple's bed room scene where they can share the bed for sexual intercourse. However, the 'narrow fellow' after sometime wrinkles and goes away. The protagonist cannot 'secure it' for sexual ecstasy. In this poem the 'spotted shaft' resembles with penis which looks for 'Boggy acre' the symbol of uterus, but it does not remain strong until the protagonist gets full pleasure.

However, the protagonist neither met this fellow nor [he] came in her life. So she is suffocated with want of it. Therefore, it is the dramatization of Dickinson's unfulfilled sexual impulses. The language of these poems constitute only the images of sexual frustration as though the function of language is merely to express sexual unhappiness. There are the words which suit for sexual imageries to express the sexual depression. The language is moulded in such a way that expresses deep pain of divided soul.

At times Dickinson serpent poem displays the rape scene. In such poem the worm and snake frequently appear. They are the symbols of male sexual organ.

Similarly the 'grass' stands for pubic hair. On the other hand, 'Room' and my "chamber floor" (460) symbolize the uterus. The action word 'surveyed' connotes the sexual activities between the lovers. Thus sexual images have made unadmittable behavior admissible in the society without any restriction. On the surface the snake just enters into the room. But the images reveal their implied meaning. What the ordinary readers find as their meaning differs from that of psychoanalytical readers. After the snakes enter into the "my chamber floor"(460) there she feels the 'creeping blood'. The symbolic meaning of this image is the destruction of her virginity. Therefore, it is the desire of the protagonist to have sexual intercourse in the poetic language. This is a social way of sexual fulfillment. What was thought to be asocial and immoral got erupted in the language of the poetry.

In her other poems Dickinson plays 'Hide and Seek' between two sexes, both male and female. In such poems the protagonist frequently changes the sexual identity and displays the chameleon like nature. Sometimes the protagonist is he and at other times she. It is one of the way of expressing autoeroticism to get the sexual fulfillment. She writes, " I'm Czar, I'm woman now"(140). Isn't it the highest state of sexual dissatisfaction? In this poem, she is not only female person but both male and female as well, an androgyne having both sexual identity. So she can lessen her burning sexual passion. It shows that there is no boundaries and limitation of her sexual frustration. Thus sexual frustration reaches at climax.

As Dickinson did not marry in her life she laments upon it. The same lamentation can be seen when she writes, "No wedlock granted me"(158). It provides that she loved but all in vain. She did to get married with any of the lovers. Since "my friend must be a bird/Because it flies!" (158). Thus Dickinson's lovers either flew away or they died earlier. So she remained sexually unhappy.

Moreover, she has composed the poems in which she comes in the contact of some female persons. She discusses the passionate relationship with them. There is the sharing of love feelings. It has been visualized in "her breast is fit for pearl/But I was not a Diver (40). If she were the 'diver' her breast would be suitable for the sexual happiness. Therefore, she has expressed her sexual dissatisfaction with females as well.

Thus, Dickinson has displayed the optimum state of her sexual frustration. Sometimes, she changes her inborn sex, and at others she has relationship with female but either way she cannot pacify her sexual desires. The more she tries to repress them the more violently they expose in her love poems. There is no love poem in which the classics for sexual fulfillment is not expressed. Henceforth, the sexual frustration is a highly celebrated fact in her love poems.



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