

**PSYCHOANALYTICAL DISCOUSE ON POETRY OF
SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS**

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Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of Master in
Philosophy in English.

By

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, **NIYA KENT**, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *PSYCHOANALYTICAL DISCOURSE ON POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS* is a bona fide record of research work done by me under the supervision of **PROFESSOR N.D.R. CHANDRA**, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during the period of my research (2019-2021). The dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree, fellowship, diploma to any other universities or institutions. This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the Degree of **Master of Philosophy in English**.

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *PSYCHOANALYTICAL DISCOURSE ON POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS*, is a bon fide record of research work done by Miss Niya Kent, Regd. No.: 55/2020 N.U./M.PHIL./ENG. Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2019-2021 submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. This dissertation has not previously formed the basis of award of any degree, diploma or other title and the dissertation represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The term 'Psychoanalysis' is linked to the psychological theory which investigates the link between the conscious and the unconscious elements of the mind. According to this, the mind is in a constant state of conflict with the repressed desires, fears or conflicts and understanding these conflicts through various methods is what psychoanalysis is about. Psychoanalytic theory helps us to understand the personality and personality development of an individual. The term became especially popular when it was established by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud in the early 1980s. He went on to establish his own school of thought which was later expanded forward by Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung. Others such as Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan who belonged to the neo-Freudians also made vast contributions in this field. Anna Freud and Erik Erikson are two other significant names whose studies have dealt great insight in this area of study.

There are three main applications of psychoanalysis –

- Applied Psychoanalysis which applies the principle of psychoanalysis to the study of art, literature and real – world settings.
- Neuro psychoanalysis, which applies neuroscience to psychoanalytical topics such as dreams and repressions.
- Psychoanalytic theory, that explores the unconscious mind and its influence on the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of humans.

In this regard we will look at the development of the psychoanalytic theory, its application in literature and the refinement it went through by the various analysts mainly putting emphasis on a few of them mentioned above.

SIGMUND FREUD (1856-1939)

Sigmund Freud was born on 6th May, 1856. He was an Austrian neurologist who popularised psychoanalysis as a field of study. Famously known as the 'Father of Psychoanalysis' Freud discovered a clinical method called psychoanalysis for treating the patterns of abnormal behaviours, emotions and experiences which can otherwise be understood as a mental disorder in an individual. Sigmund Freud initially developed the method of psychoanalysis from Joseph Breuer who was his mentor and friend. Prior to that Freud attended a three-month fellowship where he studied about the scientific research on hypnosis conducted by a renowned neurologist named Jean-Martin Charcot. He then began using hypnosis as a method to treat his patients in his private clinical practice. During that time his fellow friend Breuer had a patient named Anna O who was diagnosed as suffering from hysteria, a condition that arises from overwhelming or excessive emotions. Breuer and Freud compiled a book on Hysteria based on their encounter with cases such as Anna O. According to them the condition of these excessive emotions was due to traumatic experience(s) and these emotions related to the trauma were not shown directly although such emotions did not disappear from life. In other words, the individual displayed these emotions in the form of behaviours and by allowing the flow of emotions the patients seemed to recover from the symptoms. It is through the case study of Anna that Freud discovered Free Association, a method in which patients relayed their suppressed emotions or conflicts of the mind which dwells at the unconscious level. At some point Anna had

developed hysterical pregnancy when she fell in love with Breuer. This made Breuer abandon his client and at the same time lost interest in the study of hysteria. Freud picked up the study and furthered his research on the relation between the conscious and the unconscious.

Freud talks about three things, the conscious which is aware of the present feelings, thoughts and perceptions; the preconscious that carries the available memory and the unconscious which is not easily available but forms the largest part of the mind. According to Freud, these unavailable instincts or memories at the conscious level is associated with trauma. Freud proposed three major developments – the first is that the unconscious constitutes the majority of an individual's mental processes. The second is that libido or sexual desire controls or motivates all human behaviour. This claim has been rejected by analysts such as Carl Gustav Jung and Alfred Adler. The third is that because of certain restrictions or taboos placed on certain sexual desires, most of the desires are excluded from our conscious awareness. In order to understand the conscious and unconscious, Freud proposed three psychic zones namely Id, Ego and Superego. They can also be referred to as the three psychic zones.

1. The Id is described as the primary source from where the libido stems. It basically stores all our desires and knows no morals or socials and is described as lawless. The Id functions to satisfy our desires for pleasure without paying heed to the consequences good or bad. It functions purely on the pleasure principle. It does not see that in pursuit of fulfilling one's desire or pleasure it is likely to cause harm to the individual in particular and to others in general. Its instinct is purely gratification of the desires and deriving pleasure, therefore if the Id goes unchecked it is likely to pose destructive consequences.

2. Because of the lawless nature of the Id, it is necessary for a governing factor to keep it in check which is the Ego. It forms the rational part of the mind and functions on the reality principle. Although the Ego isn't as strong as the Id, it keeps the uncontrolled desires in check by releasing it in a non-destructive pattern of behaviour. It can be said that the Ego constitutes the conscious part of the mind which tames the Id as well as serves as a medium between the mind within and the mind outside.
3. The Superego is the third psychic zone that constitutes the moral restrictions. It works on the principle that punishes for bad behaviours and rewards for good behaviours according to what society deems fit. In other words, it governs behaviours on the basis of good and bad behaviours.

Whereas the Id is dominated by the pleasure principle and the Ego by the reality principle, the Superego is dominated by the morality principle (Guerin et al. 158).

It may also be noted that many scholars hesitate to accept these three psychic zones proposed by Freud. Apart from this, Sigmund Freud in his most prominent book "*Interpretation of Dreams*" which was published in 1900 talks about the workings of the unconscious mind through dreams and their interpretations. He says,

...there is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and that on the application of this technique every dream will reveal itself as a psychological structure, full of significance, and one which may be assigned to a specific place in the psychic activities of the waking space. (Freud 9)

Dreams are a product of mental activities which have been suppressed is what Freud believes. He goes on to describe them as events of hallucination. He talks about the concept of wish fulfilment, the ability to temporarily reduce physiological and psychophysiological

distress by countering unpleasant tensions on the mental level, or in other words, by evoking a positive, opposing, mental act, representing a state in which the wish is fulfilled. Wish fulfilment may involve the unconscious level which may not necessarily reach consciousness. Freud also emphasises on traumatic dreams in his book. Repetitive dreams are a result of strong guilt feelings and the repressed memories or feelings manifest themselves in the form of dreams. In interpreting dreams, Freud proceeds to ask the dreaming person the events of the day or the day prior by asking what comes to mind spontaneously in relation to the elements of the dream. In talking about wish fulfilment, Freud in his book *Interpretation of Dreams* says that it fulfils a wish unfulfilled in reality. However, while some dreams may be clear and simple, others are more complex and not easily deciphered. He brings forth four possible sources of dreams:

- Recent and significant experiences and memories;
- Important childhood memories;
- Physical sensations during sleep such as thirst or alarm clocks;
- Trivial experiences

He further analyses dreams which are universal such as flying, death of a relative and says that these are fulfilments of a wish as well. However, since they are common dreams that everyone dreams, they must reveal something profound about the human nature. This is how Freud first proposed the 'Oedipus Complex' which talks about the tendency of the son having a strong feeling of attachment towards the mother while in daughters the tendency to develop attachments to the father is referred to as the 'Elektra Complex'. These kind of wish fulfilments are not possible and therefore views it as an authoritative source of dream for everyone.

Further, Freud refers to “dream-work” which transforms the contents of dreams i.e., the thoughts and wishes into the actual contents i.e., the narrative of the dream. Two important processes are involved here – Condensation and Displacement. Condensation refers to the process by which several images are combined within one which means that the people we dream about could be a combination of two real-life individuals. Displacement is a process by which abstract thoughts are substituted by concrete structures.

The main idea of Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* is that dreams are a way of wish fulfilment. Unpleasant dreams have been described to serve as warnings or as forbidding us from fulfilling certain wishes. When the wishes are cruel, the brain distorts them to manifest it in the form of nightmares. The *Interpretation of Dreams* is widely considered as Freud’s masterpiece.

Another important proposed theory of Sigmund Freud is the psychosexual development. Freud believed that personality developed through a series of childhood stages in which the pleasure-seeking energies of the Id become focused on certain erogenous areas. These five psychosexual stages are – Oral (0-1 year), Anal (1-3years), Phallic (3-6 years), Latent (6-puberty), and Genital (Puberty–Death).

The Oral Stage

During the oral stage, the infant’s primary source of interaction occurs through the mouth, so the rooting and sucking reflex is especially important. The mouth is vital for eating and the infant derives pleasure from oral stimulation through gratifying activities such as tasting and sucking. Because the infant is entirely dependent upon caretakers who are responsible for feeding the child, the child also develops a sense of trust and comfort through this oral stimulation. The primary conflict at this stage is the weaning process i.e., the child must become less dependent upon the caretakers. If fixation occurs at this stage,

Freud believed that the individual would have issues with dependency or aggression. Oral fixation can result in problems with drinking, eating, smoking or nail biting.

The Anal Stage

During the anal stage, Freud believed that the primary focus of the libido was on controlling bladder and bowel movements. The major conflict at this stage is toilet training i.e., the child has to learn to control their bodily needs. Developing this control leads to a sense of accomplishment and independence. According to Freud, success at this stage is dependent upon the way in which parents approach toilet training. Parents who utilize praise and rewards for using the toilet at the appropriate time encourage positive outcomes and help children feel capable and productive. However, not all parents provide the support and encouragement that children need during this stage. Some parents punish, ridicule or shame a child for accidents.

According to Freud inappropriate parental responses can result in negative outcomes. If parents take an approach that is too lenient, Freud suggested that ‘anal-repulsive personality’ could develop in which the individual has a messy, wasteful or destructive personality. If parents are too strict, Freud believed that an ‘anal-retentive personality’ develops in which the individual is stringent, orderly, rigid and obsessive.

The Phallic Stage

Freud suggested that during the phallic stage, the primary focus of the libido is on the genitals. At this age, children also begin to discover the differences between males and females. Freud also believed that boys begin to view their fathers as a rival for the mother’s affections. The ‘Oedipus Complex’ describes these feelings of wanting to possess the mother and the desire to replace the father. However, the child also fears that he will be punished by the father for these feelings, a fear Freud termed ‘castration anxiety’.

The term 'Electra Complex' has been used to describe a similar feeling experienced by young girls. Freud, however, believed that girls instead experience 'penis envy'. Psychologists such as Karen Horney disputed this theory, calling it both inaccurate and demeaning to women. Instead, Horney proposed that men experience feelings of inferiority because they cannot give birth to children, a concept she referred to as 'womb envy'.

The Latent Stage

During this stage, the superego continues to develop while the id's energies are suppressed. Children develop social skills, values and relationships with peers and adults outside of the family. The development of the ego and superego contribute to this period of calm. The stage begins around the time that children enter into school and become more concerned with peer relationships, hobbies and other interests.

The latent period is a time of exploration in which the sexual energy is repressed or dormant. This energy is still present, but it is sublimated into other areas such as intellectual pursuits and social interactions. This stage is important in the development of social and communication skills and self-confidence. As with other psychosexual stages, Freud believed that it was possible for children to become fixated or stuck in this phase. Fixation at this stage can result in immaturity and an inability to form fulfilling relationships as an adult.

The Genital Stage

The onset of puberty causes the libido to become active once again. During the final stage of psychosexual development, the individual develops a strong sexual interest in the opposite sex. This stage begins during puberty but lasts throughout the rest of a person's life. Where in earlier stages the focus was solely on individual needs, interest in the welfare of others grows during this stage. The goal of this stage is to establish a balance between

the various life areas. Unlike many of the earlier stages of development, Freud believed that the ego and superego were fully formed and functioning at this point. Younger children are ruled by id which demands immediate satisfaction of the most basic needs and wants. Teens in the genital stage of development are able to balance their most basic urges against the need to conform to the demands of reality and social norms. Freud's psychosexual stage is considered controversial and a number of observations and criticisms have been done on a number of grounds, including scientific and feminist critiques.

ALFRED ADLER (1870-1937)

Alfred Adler was an Austrian medical doctor and a psychotherapist. He founded the school of individual psychology which meant focusing not only on the individual but also the entire environment and the people associated with the individual. In this regard he broke away from Sigmund Freud's school of psychoanalysis.

“In order to know how a man thinks, we have to examine his relationship to his fellowmen. The relation of man to man is determined on the one hand by the very nature of the cosmos, and is thus subject to change. On the other hand, it is determined by fixed institutions such as political traditions in the community or nation. We cannot comprehend the psychic activities without at the same time understanding these social relationships.” (Adler 26)

Adler moved from the grounds of Freudian view of sex and libido to one which emphasised on the individual evaluation. According to him, an individual has to come in terms with three things or forces i.e., societal, love related and vocational forces. He based his theories on pre adult hood development of an individual and laid stress on matters relating to areas of hated children, physical deformities at birth, birth order, etc. He proposes that the individual determines the best for himself/ herself when it comes to the needs, desires,

interests or growth of oneself. Adler's study puts emphasis on inferiority as essential for motivating an individual. It is the drive for gaining superiority that pushes an individual to develop certain traits and behaviours. Following, are some of the ways in which a person, responds to their influence:

Compensation

Compensation is how a person makes up for the inferiority of mental or physical functioning according to Adler. The individual who realises or believes himself/ herself to be inadequate in certain areas of life develops a sense of defence in an attempt to make up or compensate for the inferiority.

Resignation

As opposed to compensation, resignation refers to the tendency of reconciling with the disadvantages. Instead of feeling the need to make up or compensate, the individual resigns or gives in to their inferiority. Majority of the people fall under this category.

Over Compensation

This reflects exerting a more intense and powerful impulse in order to achieve development which goes beyond the normal range. Owing to this intensity it could prove to be positive or entail a negative impact on an individual. There are some who over indulge in the pursuit of making up for their disadvantages that they either end up geniuses in that process or end up being neurotics. When we talk about how inferiority plays a role in developing an individual's personality, Adler talks about two types of feelings attached with it – primary and secondary feelings of inferiority. Primary feeling of inferiority is the normal or original feeling present in an infant or child- the feeling of dependency. This feeling helps a child to develop, however, it is possible for a child to develop an excessive amount of inferiority

which stems from inappropriate parenting which may be in the form of abuse or pampering and also from handicaps.

The secondary feeling of inferiority is the feeling present in an adult – the feeling of insufficiency or the need to achieve perfection. Inferiority complex is the feeling of one's incompetence in certain areas where others seem to be succeeding in. This factor is what Adler finds vital in how an individual's personality is developed over time.

The need for communal life forms an important aspect in Adler's study of individual psychology. He asserts the importance of community as a vital phenomenon in the personality development of an individual. Man is by nature weak and requires a social life in order to progress. The very core of an individual's personality growth lies in the community he/ she interacts with. Social life became a necessity, because through the community and the division of labour in which every individual subordinated himself to the group, the species was enabled to continue his existence. (Adler 29)

In general, Adler's individual psychology takes into account the individual's surrounding, the people associated with it and the society's influence. All of these factors prove to be an important determinant of an individual's personality development. It could mean that the upbringing of a child or the conditions in which he/she is born relatively determines the development of personality over time. A child born with physical handicaps is likely to feel inferior to those who are born without it. In such cases if a child is ridiculed or shamed then it is likely that he/she would have feelings of incapability or inferiority towards others as they grow. Of course, it is important to note that the upbringing of parents as well as the way a society treats such children will determine whether they will rise above their inferiority complex or regress towards it. Encouragement and positive impacts on the child will allow him/ her to overcome their inferiority by motivating them to make up or

compensate for their inability in other ways. However, ridicule and shame with no positive impact will further their inferiority and either make them reconcile with what they lack or develop an even more inferior feeling towards the society.

Further, Adler also talks about the conscious and the unconscious. He was of the opinion that we can control our consciousness to a certain degree if we are attentive. He says,

...we can consciously force our attention to a certain degree, the stimulus to that attention lies not in consciousness, but in our interests, and these, again, lie for the most part in the sphere of the unconscious. (Adler 97)

In talking about the conscious and unconscious, Adler brings forth two types of human beings. The first types of human beings are referred to those who live a conscious life, who are aware of their surroundings and views the world in an objective manner. The second type of human beings are those who see the world partly and in a sense of prejudice. These types of people direct their behaviours and manners in an unconscious manner since they view the world only from a small part or perspective. This is why there is bound to be oppositions among people living in any society since it is inhabited by two types of human beings.

Overall, the Adlerian approach views personality as a whole and not as the mere result of component forces. The Adlerian school of thought adopts a radical view which works on the nature-nurture approach whereby the individual's development in creating a personality is seen in response to the demands of nature and how it nurtures the individual. However, it is important to note that it is not absolutely determined by that alone. The individual is bestowed with a self-awareness and for self-development and striving for social usefulness and contribution to the society. Thus, community life serves as an

important threshold when it comes to nurturing the personality of an individual. Adler's psychology gives importance to an individual's growth, expansion, overcoming, completion and security from birth until death.

CARL GUSTAV JUNG (1875-1961)

Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist as well as a psychoanalyst. He founded analytical psychology/ analytic psychology which is a method of investigating archetypes as well as the unconscious. He had collaborated with Sigmund Freud for seven years on psychoanalysis after which he went on to develop his own idea of the psyche. Jung did not restrict himself to the scientific methods alone in the study of the psyche. Instead, he viewed dreams, myths, folklores and coincidences as vital in the understanding and working of the human mind. It is evident that the unconscious cannot be studied by direct methods but according to Jung the unconscious served as a medium for furthering his hypothesis.

Jung's view on the unconscious was subsequently different from Freud, although they collaborated together for several years and was influenced by Freud's work. He did not emphasize on Freud's theory that the importance of sexual development as an instinctual drive. Rather he emphasized on the collective unconscious. Jung believes that it is the part of the unconscious which has been inherited from our ancestors. He did accept Freud's theory that libido was important in developing an individual's personality, however, unlike Freud, he did not believe that libido served as the core for personality development although it may serve as one of the forces in that respect. Like Freud, Jung regarded that the psyche constituted of a number of separate but interacting systems. He named three main systems namely the ego, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious.

The Ego

For Jung, the ego represented the conscious mind of an individual since it constitutes all the memories, thoughts and emotions that an individual is aware of. Therefore, the ego becomes largely responsible for feelings of identity and continuity.

The Personal Unconscious

Talking about the importance of unconscious in relation to personality, Jung talks about two layers of the unconscious. The first layer of the unconscious he describes it as the personal unconscious which is similar to Freud's version of the unconscious. The personal unconscious refers to the memories or thoughts that have been temporarily forgotten or repressed. He mentions an important element attached to it which he calls 'complex'. A complex is a collection of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and memories that focus on a single concept. The influence on the individual becomes greater based on how much the elements are attached to the complex. The more elements attached, the greater the influence. Jung believed that the personal unconscious was much closer to the surface than Freud suggested and Jungian therapy is less concerned with the repressed memories and childhood experiences. According to Jung, the present and the future was the key to understanding the analysis of neurosis and its treatment.

The Collective Unconscious

The collective unconscious is by far the most important difference between Jung and Freud. According to Jung, the collective unconscious is a universal version of the personal unconscious, mental patterns or memory that are shared with other members of the human species. He calls this as archetypes and are represented in various cultures which have been passed down from our ancestors and expressed through art, literature and dreams.

The form of the world into which [a person] is born is already inborn in him, as a virtual image.” (Jung 188)

According to Jung, as a result of evolution, the innate characteristics present in the human mind has been imprinted. These stem from our ancestral past, for instance, certain fears such as the fear of dark or the fear of snakes or spiders, etc. are a sort of conditioning that has been passed on from our ancestors. This means that these fears were born from the past and such has been the conditioning over the years that these fears retained over time. Jung calls these ancestral memories and images as archetypes.

Jungian Archetypes

Jungian archetypes can be defined as the images, memories or themes that stem from the collective unconscious. They have universal meanings across various cultures which are inherent in literature, religion, art or dreams. Jung is of the opinion that different cultures share similar beliefs in one way or another because they are born out of archetypes shared by the entire human race which becomes a part of the collective unconscious. For Jung, the past is the gateway of the human psyche which directs our present behaviour. Out of the multitude of archetypes he places importance particularly on four namely, the Self, the Persona, the Shadow and the Animus.

The Self, according to Jung is the main aim of every individual in order to attain the state of selfhood. The self provides a sense of unity in experience, meaning that it is an individual themselves that strives towards attaining a certain level of self- actualisation. Achieving self -actualisation is the highest point that an individual has reached in their life.

The Persona can be described as the mask or the outward appearance that we present to the world. According to Jung, every individual possesses their own persona that he/ she

chooses to show the world outside. The real person is masked behind it thereby concealing the real self or as a sort of defending one's true identity to the world by creating a persona.

The Shadow according to Jung is the animal side of our personality which is quite similar to the id proposed by Jung. Just as Freud's id talks about the instinctual desires which are not tamed, so also the shadow is the source of both our creative and destructive energies. Since Jung traces the unconscious to the past, the shadow may be perceived as the instinct for survival.

The Anima/ Animus is referred to as the mirror image of our biological sex. This means the unconscious masculine tendencies in females and the unconscious feminine tendencies in males. Both the male and female manifest the behaviour and attitudes of one another by virtue of living together for centuries, thus, the psyche of a man contains certain feminine aspects to it. Similarly, the psyche of a woman also contains certain masculine aspects. Jung argues that these archetypes are a result of living together thereby sharing collective experiences (McLeod).

Jung's ideas have not been as popular as Freud's. This might be because he did not write for the laymen and as such his ideas were not greatly disseminated as Freud's. (McLeod) However, his contribution in the field of psychoanalysis is extensive in the sense that the archetypes that he proposed are inherent not only in religion, arts or culture but in literature to a great extent. Perhaps, the study of the unconscious is one of his greatest contributions in the field of psychoanalysis along with his proposed archetypes.

ANNA FREUD (1895-1982)

Anna Freud was a British psychoanalyst and the sixth daughter of Sigmund Freud. Like her father, she followed the path of psychoanalysis and may be also considered as the

founder of child psychology along with Hermine Hug – Hellmuth and Melanie Klein. Anna was exposed to psychoanalysis from a very early age and by the time she was 14 years old she was already attending meetings along with her father. She is best known for her contributions in child psychoanalysis, ego psychology and defence mechanisms.

Child Psychoanalysis

As the founder of child psychoanalysis, Anna Freud was interested in understanding and working with children. There were several psychoanalysts who had taken up child psychoanalysis before her but Anna Freud was the first to systematise and refine it, turning it into a distinct form of therapy.

Anna Freud preserved the basic theories of psychoanalysis while using child analysis as a mode of therapy. She believed that children under the age of 6 years cannot be psychoanalysed and that there were other methods for the younger children. In conducting the therapy for children, Anna Freud paid special attention to gain the children's attention as well as their trust because unlike adults the children did not seek analysis voluntarily. It was thus, important to gain the attention as well as the trust of the child patient in order for any progress to take place. She asserts that child analysis is similar as well as dissimilar to adult psychoanalysis. Similar in the sense, even in a child it involves the process of making the interpretations into a conscious realm. It is dissimilar in the sense, in a child, the superego has not been properly tamed.

For this reason, Anna Freud concludes, the child analyst must play a dual role – keeping one eye on the child's internal world and the other eye on his or her external reality, being equally skilled at intervening at both levels. (Midgley 28)

Ego Psychology and the Defence Mechanisms

In the year 1936, Anna Freud published “*The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*”. In her opinion, there was a general bias and many psychoanalysts focused on the id at the expense of the ego. It is difficult to observe the id because it is always unconscious. On the other hand, the ego was present partially within the conscious mind. The ego acts as a medium between the id and superego, therefore, it was only proper to conduct the observation by means of the ego according to Anna Freud.

The ego may be observable but it is possible for certain conflicts to arise because of the strong impulses of the id as well as the representations of those demands in the superego. This surge in conflicts may give rise to anxiety and in order to resolve or alleviate the anxiety, the ego builds up defence mechanisms. These defence mechanisms develop with the structures of personality.

Anna Freud’s developmental perspective, and her willingness to try to integrate psychoanalytic thinking with ideas emerging in other fields concerned with understanding the complex process by which babies and infants transform into first children and then adults, is probably what makes her work most relevant to psychoanalysis. Anna Freud’s developmental perspective is an important bridge between her work as a psychoanalyst and her role, more broadly, in bringing the findings of psychoanalysis to the wider community, through what she might have called ‘applied work’. The primary reason why Anna Freud championed psychoanalysis was because she felt that its way of understanding the mind – and especially the developing mind of the child – was of huge relevance to those living and working with children in a whole range of settings: schools, hospitals, residential care settings, child guidance clinics, law courts, social services, etc. Psychoanalysis, as she conceived it, not only enabled people to understand what might go

wrong in children's development, but also offered a way of thinking about healthy development and what was needed to promote it. (Midgley, p.200-201)

ERIK H. ERIKSON (1902-1994)

Erik H. Erikson is without a doubt one of the most outstanding psychoanalysts of the last century. It is Erikson's basic assumption that in the course of a lifetime, the human being goes through eight developmental phases, which are laid out in an internal development plan. On each level, it is required to solve the relevant crisis, embodied by the integration of opposite poles presenting the development tasks, the successful handling of which is in turn of importance for the phases. In detail, Erikson studied the possibilities of an individual's advancement and the affective powers that allow it to act. This becomes particularly obvious in the eight psychosocial phases. This demonstrates that Erikson did see development as above all; a lifelong process. (Scheck 3)

Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust

In this phase, basic trust refers to the trust that the infant develops towards the mother as well as the infant towards oneself. The mother provides the basic needs of the infant thereby gaining the trust. However, a crisis appears in the second half of the first year of life according to Erikson. Here, the mother turns away from giving all of her attention to the infant to other activities. Failing to overcome this conflict builds the basic mistrust.

If basic trust was built, there is a predominantly optimistic attitude towards other people. If this basic trust is lacking, there is the risk of developing a general basic mistrust, not just towards the world, but also towards oneself. (Scheck 5)

Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

This phase talks about the second and third year of life where autonomy is developed. The physical abilities as well as the personality of a child increases and hence the struggle for autonomy begins. Being able to be less dependent on parents is the first step to achieve autonomy. For instance, the ability to control the bowel movement means that the child moves away from being changed frequently by the parents and becomes independent. However, shame and doubt creeps in if the child is unable to achieve certain goals. It is, therefore, necessary to maintain a balance between autonomy and dependency.

Initiative vs. Guilt

In the fourth and fifth year of life, the child shows initiative as he or she becomes aware of the surroundings and also recognizes the differences between himself and others. The child also sees an increase in physical activities as well as learn language through which he or she is able to communicate with others. The discovery of sexual orientation also takes place and the child starts to feel attached towards the opposite sex parent while trying to assume the role of the parent of the same sex. It is in trying to discover the sexual realm that the child fantasises of secret deeds. At the same time, conscience also develops and when the child realises whether his or her act was right or wrong, the feeling of guilt emerges out of it. The crisis that needs to be handled at this age in order to help a child develop properly is by maintaining a balance between a certain level of initiative as well as regulating normal authority.

Industry vs. Inferiority

This phase covers the sixth year of life to puberty where the child becomes more exposed to the world and feels the need to be productive or to contribute and be recognized for it. This desire to make oneself useful is considered as industry by Erikson. In this stage, the

child discovers that by contributing something of value, he or she can garner appreciation from others. In cases when a child fails to do so, he or she feels inferior due to the inability in contributing. In the absence of an encouraging parent or teacher, the child is likely to develop inferiority complex in the course of his life. If the capabilities as well as positive attitude are nurtured to the child at this stage then the feeling of inferiority is removed.

Identity vs. Role Confusion

This stage constitutes from puberty to about eighteen years of age. It is an overwhelming stage in which an individual seeks for one's own identity. A more stable identity can be realised if the crisis in the previous stages have been balanced and resolved properly. In the search for identity, an individual seeks the kind of profession he or she needs to acquire to become industrious to the society. It is also a time where the body goes through rapid changes and is likely to cause role confusion. Not being able to determine for oneself becomes a conflict within one's own personality. The question of one's sexuality, of how he views oneself, of how people view him, are all aspects of role confusion.

Intimacy and Dissociation from Self – Centredness

This stage occurs in early adulthood where an individual starts to work or is working. Several relationships are built during this phase which may include friendships with both genders or a more intimate relationship with the opposite sex. The prospect of marriage also hovers at this stage which will lead to building a family. When an individual maintains a proper and balanced relationship with others, he does not run the risk of being isolated. At the same time, by understanding the needs of the other person, an individual does away with his or her own feelings of self – centredness.

Generativity vs. Stagnation

This stage covers the mid adulthood where two persons in a sexual relationship desire to procreate. Two people who find themselves an identity and intimacy with one another can prepare to take responsibility in caring for their offspring. This concept of generativity establishes the next generation and this act can be considered productive to the society. However, there are people who remain unmarried or do not have children of their own. This desire to be alone isolates a person and may develop hatred or hostility towards others who have a family.

Integrity vs. Despair and Disgust

This phase covers only to those who have gone through the above seven phases and is now an older adult. Having lived life and undergone various stages an individual is at its peak in this stage. He or she can either look back on the achievements, lifestyle and how his or her life unfolded over the years. The feeling of satisfaction of having lived a satisfactory and fulfilling life brings a sense of integrity to the person. On the other hand, on looking back at the past, if an individual has not been able to accomplish or complete certain areas of life in a satisfactory manner, then he or she is likely to feel despair and disgust. The lack of meaningful past experiences will breed these feelings of despair and disgust because one cannot go back and undo or redo the life tasks.

LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Of all the critical approaches to literature, the psychological has been one of the most controversial, the most abused, and – for many readers – the least appreciated. Yet, for all the difficulties involved in its proper application to interpretive analysis, the psychological approach can be fascinating and

rewarding. Psychological interpretation can afford many profound clues toward solving a work's thematic and symbolic mysteries, but it can seldom account for the beautiful symmetry of a well – wrought poem or of a fictional masterpiece. (Guerin et al. p. 152-153)

Among psychoanalytic literary critics, there is much disagreement concerning how psychoanalytic concepts can be best applied to our study of literature. What role should an author's literary output play in our psychoanalysis of his or her life? To what extent is it legitimate to psychoanalyze literary characters as if they were real people? When doing so, which psychoanalyst theorists offer us the best insight? What role do readers play in “creating the text they're reading by projecting their own desires and conflicts onto the work? (Tyson 33-34)

It is not possible to find every psychoanalytic concept in all the literary works. As such, in reading psychoanalytically it is necessary to see which concepts are present in the text. This will enable the readers to understand the work at a deeper level as well as yield a better and meaningful understanding of the existing psychoanalytic interpretation.

There are critics who object to the use of psychoanalysis as a method in understanding the literary characters. Their argument is based on the fact that literary characters are not real and therefore it is not possible to analyse their psyche.

This practice has been defended by many psychoanalytic critics on two grounds:

1. When we psychoanalyze literary characters, we are not suggesting that they are real people but that they represent the psychological experience of human beings in general; and
2. It is just as legitimate to psychoanalyse the behaviour represented by literary characters as it is to analyse their behaviour from a feminist, Marxist or African

American critical perspective, or from the perspective of any critical theory that analyses literary representations as illustrations of real-life issues. (Tyson 34)

In this regard, just as we apply certain theories in understanding a particular text, similarly application of the psychoanalytic theory helps an individual to thoroughly understand both the writer as well as his or her works. This involves identifying psychoanalytical concepts within the text to ascertain what the writer is conveying or tries to convey. For instance, Sigmund Freud in his book *“Interpretation of Dreams”* (1900), talks about dreams as a source for fulfilment of wish which has not been fulfilled in reality. Apart from wish fulfilment, Freud has mentioned other factors in connection with dreams. However, we will look at wish fulfilment in the context of understanding the application of psychoanalysis in literature. For instance, we may view a particular work as a dream because they are images created from the creative thoughts of a writer. Just as dreams represent some real- life people or experiences, so also, a work of an author may include real people and situations. In talking about wish fulfilment, the dreams are considered as a gateway to fulfilling those unfulfilled desires. We can apply this concept to literature, in the sense that an author concocts characters or situations either purely out of their imagination or by adding certain real- life experiences or individuals. This could mean that whatever they produce may likely be a sort of wish fulfilment which is not possible in reality. A writer may leave hints of his desires, wishes, frustrations, angers, his or her emotions as a whole in the work that he or she produces. These emotions may be because they were not acknowledged or fulfilled, therefore, through his or her work the writer attempts to fulfil those desires.

Let us take an example of Kamala Das whose works we will discuss in length in the following chapters. Most of her poetry stems from the need for an identity. She writes about female oppression by the male counterparts. Keeping this in mind and studying her

life, we come to understand that she has been a victim of the patriarchal society and her poems have been a way of expressing her protest against such oppression. She does not like the idea of the superiority of males over females when in reality she has lived her whole life conforming to the standards of the male oppression. Her marriage at an early age at the whims of her father as well as a husband who does not understand her emotional or physical needs are clear indications of the fact that Kamala Das lived in the confines of the patriarchal society. Her wish to have a husband who understands not only her emotional needs but also her physical need leads her to explore sexuality as well as her own identity. She wishes to define herself and not how society defines her as a woman whose roles are fixed. All of these needs that Kamala is denied in her life takes shape in the form of poetry. Needless to say, this is just a tiny example of how psychoanalysis helps a reader to understand both the author as well as their works. Many psychoanalysts have put forward their theories on how the study of psychoanalysis helps in understanding the nature and behaviour of humans as well as their personalities. They differ in certain areas but the common factor binding these psychoanalysts is the fact that it helps in a better understanding of human behaviours. If we look closely, we may understand that psychoanalytic concepts have become part of our lives. The way we perceive things and react to it, our angers, fears, frustrations, etc are all related to psychoanalysis. Human experience itself is considered a concept of psychoanalysis as Jung talks about it in his theory of “collective consciousness”.

Thus, it is not surprising to note that psychoanalysis can be applied to literature since literature itself is the product of an individual’s mental capacity and the ability to give words to the emotions which are abstract. If we want to understand literature from every sphere of criticism, then naturally psychoanalysis evidently falls under this too.

If psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behaviour, then it must certainly be able to help us understand literary texts, which are about human behaviour. (Tyson 11)

This is especially true because writers tend to elaborate on those aspects of the society which are or cannot be casually addressed. The societal drawbacks, problems and society's influence on an individual or the community as a whole are matters of controversial nature. Inequalities, racism, casteism, religious intolerance, etc are all products of a society's mentality which cannot be easily curbed. These kinds of issues when it takes form in literature, it becomes controversial. It feels easier to go with what has been prescribed as right than to rebel against it even when it's wrong so as not to be targeted as enemies of the system. Literature has proved to be an outlet for such rebels who refuse to justify and be a part of the façade that society imposes. Thus, the application of the psychoanalytical method on literature greatly increases our knowledge of the text and the underlying meaning or motive of the writer.

CHAPTER 2: PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY OF POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH

SYLVIA PLATH (1932-1963)

Sylvia Plath was an American poet, novelist as well as a short story writer. She is best known for her works, *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960), *Ariel* (1965) and *The Bell Jar* (1963). She is best known for her contribution in the genre of confessional poetry. It is a style of poetry that focuses on a personal level, emphasising on the experiences, psyche and personal trauma such as mental illness, sexuality or suicide, which are considered as a taboo in society.

The following study will dedicate to five of Sylvia Plath's poems namely – *Lady Lazarus*, *Daddy*, *Poppies in October*, *Edge*, and *Waking in Winter* from a psychoanalytical view.

LADY LAZARUS (1962)

This poem appeared in *The Collected Poems* which was first published in 1992. It is a dramatic monologue where there is a speaker whom we know as 'Lady Lazarus'. It talks about death and oppression and the poem shows the multiple suicide attempts made by the speaker.

I have done it again.

One year in every ten

I manage it – (Plath 244)

These lines tell us the number of times the speaker has attempted suicide. Judging from the fact that she is doing it every ten years is suggestive of the fact that her attempts have been futile and she is yet to succeed.

One major theme of the poem that we can identify is 'death'. The lines mentioned above talks about the speaker's failed attempts in committing suicide which is indicative of the poet's pre – occupation with death. This provides an insight into the suicidal mind of the speaker. Using this theme of 'death' from the poem we will attempt to understand it in the context of psychoanalysis. The theory of psychoanalysis talks about death by suggesting that humans have a "death drive".

Death is the ultimate abandonment: no matter how close
we are to our loved ones, no matter how important we
are in our communities, when we die, we die alone.
(Tyson 22)

It is a universal fact that every individual is fated to die. Even after knowing this absolute truth, we are not bothered by it and go on with our lives pushing the idea of death into our unconscious mind. Why does the death drive exist then? This can be answered simply by the concept of psychoanalysis. While it may not be true for all, certain crisis, fears, guilt or unresolved conflicts operate in the minds of individuals. These feelings or emotions either recede or become overwhelming at a certain point. This is when an individual in order to escape from these particular feelings experiences the death drive. The individual sees death as an escape from such painful memories or emotions.

Sylvia Plath in her poem describes death as something calm. She uses words such as 'seashell' and "pearls", which evokes the imagery of a sea. Death is seen as an escape from the remnants of the daily life. Perhaps the attempt to commit suicide stems from the poet's disappointment with life and the society.

As a seashell.

They had to call and call

And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls. (Plath
245)

In the final lines of the poem, the poet talks about resurrection –

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air. (Plath 247)

The very idea of resurrecting and eating men indicates that her dissatisfaction is directed towards men and the patriarchal society. Thus, she wants to die and be reborn into the woman she wants to be – the woman who is not willing to conform to male oppression once she is reborn. Here, we can say that the speaker's inclination towards death as well as viewing death as an escape is caused because of the oppression she faced as a woman in a society which was dominated by the male influence.

DADDY (1962)

“Daddy” is another controversial poem of Sylvia Plath which gives insight into the relationship between the poet and her father. It is both a representation of Plath's attachment to her father as well as an attempt to break free from his influence.

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

In which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo. (Plath 222)

From the first stanza of the poem, it is evident that the poet feels suffocated living under the shadow of her father. She describes her father to that of a black shoe and how she lived like a foot in that shoe for thirty years. In all those years the poet describes that she was scared to even breathe or sneeze. This indicates how much of an authority the father had on the poet's life.

Bit my pretty heart red heart in two.

I was ten when they buried you.

At twenty I tried to die

And get back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do. (Plath 224)

These lines are in contrast to what she describes in the first stanza. Here the poet says that her father broke her heart. He died when she was ten and she tried to commit suicide at the age of twenty as a way of reuniting with her father. She was obsessed with recovering her father that she thought even his bones would do. This excessive feeling of attachment towards the father finds its basis in the female version of 'Oedipus complex' that Freud proposed called the 'Electra Complex'. It is a girl's unconscious competition with her mother for the possession of her father. In this regard, the poet, although in the beginning mentions her desire to break free from her father, yet in the later part of the poem she becomes desperate to be with him. This is partly because her father died when she was very young and hence could not fully experience a father's love. All throughout her life, for thirty years, she lives longing for him. Her obsession with the father was to such an extent that she marries a man who resembles her father. Maybe as a consolation of what she could not have with her father. This indicates that the poem shows concepts of certain psychoanalytical elements such as the 'Electra complex' and also addresses the plight of women under the influence of patriarchy.

Patriarchy is considered as vital in understanding of the poem psychoanalytically, because, in psychoanalysis, inferiority complex is a concept that exists in the development of an individual's personality. The force of patriarchy puts pressure on women. Assigned roles are given to the genders where women resort to become the weaker gender. As such, a feeling of inferiority develops among the female gender. It is by default that the male counterpart gets to play the dominant role in a society.

The poem opens with such feelings of inferiority from the poet. As the poem progresses, the concept of inferiority is replaced with the feelings of attachment towards the father.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two –

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now. (Plath 224)

Here, the poet talks about killing although she has not killed anyone literally. The two men here refers to her father and her husband. She compares her husband to a vampire and tell her father how he sucked her blood for a year. The act of sucking blood may be seen as the role of man retaining the upper hand in the life of a woman. Once she realised that she is done with placing her father as the centre of her obsession, she tries to do away with those emotions. The poet in describing the killing means that she is no more mentally attached to her father or his image. Since her husband is also a product of the image she created of her father, it is as though she is killing him too while trying to kill his father mentally.

The poem, thus, talks about the relationship of the poet with her father and how it influenced her life. From trying to be free of the clutches of her father, to acquiring a strong

feeling of obsession and finally the decision to break free from these feeling is what the poet portrays in this poem.

POPPIES IN OCTOBER (1962)

This poem can be read as a contrast between life and death and also as a poem which focuses on the concept of femininity. It is a short poem consisting of twelve lines in four stanzas. We will talk about the poem in view of life and death as well as from the feminine perspective.

Even the sun-clouds this morning cannot manage such
skirts. (Plath 240)

The first line of the poem talks about the incomparable beauty of the poppies. The ‘skirts’ here refers to the petals of the flowers. When we look from the view of life and death, we may understand that the beauty of the poppies is seen as something which cannot be compared even to the sun or clouds. This could mean that the beauty of the poppies makes the world look dull in comparison. The poet views the world as devoid of beauty by giving importance on the beauty of the poppies.

Understanding from a feminine view, the ‘skirts’ which is also referred to the petals of the poppies have feminine elements. The poet by mentioning the petals as skirts points towards a feminine perspective of the poem. This concept is further enhanced by the next lines –

Nor the woman in the ambulance

Whose red heart blooms through her coat so
astoundingly. (Plath 240)

The poet mentions a woman in an ambulance, while also painting a picture of her heart blooming through her coat. It is not possible for the heart to bloom in that manner. And

since the woman is in an ambulance, it can be said that she is wounded. Another way of seeing the woman in the ambulance is perhaps the poet's decreasing interest in life and increasing fantasy towards death. The bright red flowers of the poppies and the blooming heart of the woman are of the same colour which may also stand for blood.

The choice of flower is also interesting because poppies are connected with ideas of slumber and slumber, here, could refer to death. Another interesting discovery is that opium which is a drug is made from poppies. Thus, we can say that life and death is a constant approach in this poem.

So, if the poet is really talking about death in this poem, then she has described it as something beautiful. This also implies that she views death to be a better place than life. At the same time, the relation between poppies and death can be clearly seen when the speaker compares the flower to a woman bleeding in the ambulance. The word 'blooms' and 'astoundingly' indicates the poet's fascination with death. It may be opined that she does not see death as something harsh. From the very first line of the poem, we understand the speaker's view on the world as dull in contrast to the beauty of the flowers. One may expect that the speaker describing the vibrant beauty of the poppies is decorating the world and making it beautiful. However, it is completely different. The rich and overwhelming beauty of the flowers overpowers that of the world and according to the poet, instead of beautifying the world, it presents how dull and bleak the rest of the world is from the poppies.

Why does the poet view the world in such a dull manner? The answer may lie in the understanding that the poet feels no attachment with the world. Perhaps it is how the world treated her, perhaps it is how the society treated her, perhaps she is not satisfied with her life or perhaps she is not getting the most out of what she expected to. So many assumptions

can be made here but the common tie that we can identify is her unfulfilled desires which may be in the form of physical, mental, or social desires. This feeling of dissatisfaction breeds a pessimistic outlook on life. The poet therefore finds it easier to choose death and to believe that in death there is peace and comfort. Of course, to die means to leave behind the physical world along with all its attachments and that is precisely what the poet sees.

As discussed earlier, the poem can also be viewed from a feminine perspective. The first indicative factor of that is the description of the petals as ‘‘skirts’’. It could imply that those who do not appreciate the flowers are men. The woman bleeding in the ambulance could also mean that her condition was caused by the actions of men. Perhaps by painting the picture of a woman in an ambulance, the poet is trying to convey the hardships that a woman faces or is facing in the society. The bleeding woman could also signify a sort of sacrifice that a woman makes for her family or children.

EDGE (1963)

This poem is the last poem of Sylvia Plath which was written six days before she committed suicide. The title of the poem itself is indicative of a border between life and death. This poem is about a woman who committed suicide after killing her children.

The woman is perfected.

Her dead (Plath 272)

The opening lines of the poem tells us that in dying, the woman is perfected or finds perfection. This perfection could be seen as the peace that comes when one is free from life, to reach a state where there are no flaws in any way.

Body wears the smile of accomplishment (Plath 272)

The smile that the poet mentions in the above line brings to our understanding that in choosing death, the woman felt happy and accomplished. It could be the accomplishment of an eternal rest or of freedom from the daily shackles of life. Whatever it is that the accomplishment is about, the smile that the body wears indicates that in dying the woman feels no regret and instead feels pleased.

As we read further into the poem, we discover that she lays beside her dead children. Every single event that unfolded that night was witnessed by the moon. This is shown from the lines-

The moon has nothing to be sad about,
Staring from her hood of bone.
She is used to this sort of thing.
Her blacks crackle and drag. (Plath 273)

The poet tells the moon that it has no reason to be sad for. The moon bore witness to the events that conspired and the woman assures the moon as it stares from above. Here, the cyclical phases of the moon which is eternal can also be viewed as the struggle of women. Just like the moon changes shape as it wanes over fixed period of time, so also the struggle of a woman is eternal like that of the cycle of the moon. It is a never-ending process. This also shows Plath's view that women go through more difficulties in life than men. Men may not be entirely free from struggles but they are definitely free from the oppression of the opposite sex. Women on the other hand have to bear the struggles of being born as the weaker sex and all throughout the life, face oppression from men.

This is probably why the poet sees death as an escape from such oppressions. Plath in her poem talks subtly about death and seems unbothered to cross the border between life and death. It is not a hard decision for her to take if she were asked to choose between life and

death. Just like the woman in the poem, she would happily smile and choose death over life. This poem was written several days before Plath committed suicide. In her other poems as well, Plath had a growing interest on the idea of death. The poem “Edge” was written several days before she committed suicide which may be seen as a reflection of the depth of her depression. In this short ten- line poem, Plath succeeds in asserting the conspicuous nature of death.

Through the psychoanalytic lens, as seen in her earlier poems, the concept of death drive is evident here too. Most of Plath’s poems show this tendency because of her pre – occupation with death. A close study of Plath’s life reveals that she suffered from depression, a condition which eventually led to her suicide. Most of her dissatisfaction in life stemmed from the unsuccessful relationships she had with her father and later with her husband. The growing disparities in her life furthered her condition of mental illness. Thus, because of these insecurities and unfulfilling relationships that she experienced it may be opined that the only light she saw at the end of the tunnel came in the form of death.

Death as a recurrent theme in Plath’s poetry arrests our attention to probe not only from the surface level but at a deeper level. The question as to why Plath is obsessed with the idea of death may be answered by understanding how the emotions, fears, insecurities, etc drive an individual to seek solace in death itself. This is possible by applying psychoanalysis to the poem of Sylvia Plath so as to gain a deeper insight on how the conscious or unconscious mental state of an individual influences the thought process as well as governs the actions of an individual.

WAKING IN WINTER (1960)

Waking in Winter by Sylvia Plath narrates the landscape, the resort, and the people who reside there. It is a gloomy poem that shows the hopelessness and loveless atmosphere.

I can taste the tin of the sky – the real tin thing.
Winter dawn is the color of metal,
The trees stiffen into place like burnt nerves,
All night I have dreamt of destructions, annihilations-
(Plath 151)

The poem begins with the poet describing the winter sky and says that it is the color of metal and tastes like the real tin. This describes that the winter sky was dull, cold and bleak. Further, the poet also describes that the trees are stiff as if they have been burnt and compares them to the “nerves” of the human body.

In the fourth line, she talks about her dreams which are of “destructions and annihilations”. We notice that the poet paints a rather unpleasant picture of that particular winter day.

An assembly-line of cut throats, and you and I
Inching off in the gray Chevrolet, drinking the green
Poison of stilled lawns, the little clapboard gravestones,
Noiseless, on rubber wheels, on the way to the sea resort.
(Plath 151)

From the above lines, we come to understand that the poet is travelling with a companion on a “Chevrolet”. Plath describes the places that they pass which are as unpleasant as the winter sky and talks about death. The words “poison” and “gravestones” depict the idea of death in this poem. We also get the idea that the poet and her companion are heading towards a resort.

How the balconies echoed! How the sun lit up

The skulls, the unbuckled bones facing the view! (Plath
151)

These two lines tells us that the poet has reached her destination and she began to describe the people who are already present there. Plath makes use of the word “skulls” to tell us that the people there are lifeless. It could also mean hopelessness in the sense that skulls are nothing but empty bones which have no value.

Space! Space! The bed linen was giving out entirely.

Cot legs melted in terrible attitudes, and the nurses -

Each nurse patched her soul to a wound and disappeared.

(Plath 151)

In these lines, the poet describes the kind of people who are settled there and specifically mentions nurses which also gives us an idea that there are sick people among them too. Sickness is an unpleasant condition which relates with the melancholy and dark mood of the poem. The nurses are treating the wound but disappears after their work is done. This portrays lack of concern for the wounded or sick.

Overall, the poem is presented in a dark and gloomy setting. The sky, the landscape and the people in the resort have nothing but dullness and hopelessness in common. In this poem too, Plath clearly indicates towards the concept of death by creating a scene which is lifeless. From the beginning of the poem, Plath sets the mood for a continual sense of nothingness. This lifeless depiction of every aspect in the poem clearly points towards the idea of death. Moreover, Plath’s use of the word “skulls” and “bones” could only mean that it is indicative of the remains of an individual after death. It can be argued that Plath found herself drawn towards the concept of death in more ways than one. All of her poems discussed above showed the influence and the tendency to achieve death as the ultimate

answer for all her questions. Plath saw freedom in entering the gates of death. Her fascination with the idea of death may be due to the death drive that governs an individual as a result of the suppressed or unfulfilled desires or wishes as proposed by Freud. It may not be fully true but we cannot deny the fact that Sylvia Plath welcomed death and openly wrote about it in her poems. Death became a recurring theme in her poems so much that it becomes impossible not to notice it at first glance. To sum up, we may come to the conclusion that the confessional tone in Plath's poetry opens up several doors for exploring her poems from the psychoanalytic perspective.

CHAPTER 3: PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY OF POETRY OF KAMALA DAS

KAMALA DAS (1934-2009)

Kamala Das was an Indian poet who wrote in English as well as in Malayalam. She is well known for her bold and frank writings which talks about female sexual desire and the experiences of being an Indian woman. Her writings were personal in nature and she paid special attention to the Indian society which functions on the roots of patriarchy. “*My Story*” which was published in 1976 is an autobiography of Kamala das and is considered as one of her most notable works. We shall look at a select few of her poems namely – *An Introduction*, *My Grandmother’s House*, *The Old Playhouse*, *The Dance of the Eunuchs* and *The Freaks*. In studying the poetry of Kamala Das, we will focus on the main themes that connects the poems mentioned above. We will also look at her poems from a psychoanalytical perspective and how it reflects in her poems.

AN INTRODUCTION (1965)

The poem “An Introduction” appears in Kamala Das’s first collection of poems “Summer in Calcutta” in 1965. This poem is autobiographical in nature and confessional in tone. Das presents the life of an Indian woman living in a society governed by patriarchy.

I don’t know politics but I know the names
Of those in power, and can repeat them like
Days of week, or names of months,

beginning with Nehru. (Das 7)

This is the opening lines of the poem where the poet says that she does not know politics but she has knowledge of those in power in her country. She says that she can repeat the names of the politicians like days of the week or names of months. It depicts that since the power to rule the country were mostly held by men, it was easy for her to name them. Thus, the beginning lines of the poem points out how deeply patriarchy is rooted in the country.

I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,

I speak three languages, write in two, dream in one. (Das
7)

These lines talk about the poet herself and describes her Indianness from the colour of her skin, to the place she was born and the languages she spoke. The poet specifically mentions that she dreams in one language because the world of dreams is the same for everyone.

Don't write in English, they said, English is

Not your mother- tongue. Why not leave

Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,

Everyone of you? Why not let me speak in

Any language I like? The language I speak,

Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses

All mine, mine alone. (Das 7)

The poet questions everyone who tells her not to write in English since it is not her mother tongue. From the context of the Indian perspective, the English language is considered as the language of the colonizers. Kamala Das sees no problem in writing in any language because whatever she writes becomes her own. This asserts the poet's search for an identity of her own.

...I was child, and later they
Told me I grew, for I became tall, my limbs
Swelled and one or two places sprouted hair.
When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
But my sad woman- body felt so beaten. (Das 7)

Through these lines, the poet presents the predicament of women in general. In a society where patriarchy takes the upper hand, the women have no say in marriage and other important aspects of life. By profiling her own marriage at a young age and how her husband was concerned with fulfilling his own desire in love making, the poet introduces us to a general idea of the plight faced by women of her country. Female sexuality is explored in Das's poem. In a society dominated by male, it is near to impossible for a woman to express opinion on her own sexuality. It is considered enough that a man does what he wishes to with his wife without paying heed to her physical needs as well. Das protests against such inequalities meted out to females in her poem by presenting her own painful experiences of love and sex. The question of sexuality does not seem to exist for women in a patriarchal society. The rules have been made but it benefitted only the dominant gender. Thus, the feelings or emotions of women were seldom of any concern. This is why Das rebels against this cruel system openly in her poem. She is not afraid of the consequences that will arise in her quest for establishing a stand in the search for her own identity. This bold nature of Kamala Das is what distinguishes from her contemporary female writers. In the light of psychoanalysis, the concept of sexuality is an important aspect of Freud's study. He proposed that the instinctual drives of an individual begin from the time of infancy, which has been refuted by many researchers. However, we cannot

deny the fact that sexuality is an ever-present phenomena in both the genders and at one point or another the exploration of sexuality becomes connected to the search for an identity. It is only through an awareness of one's sexuality that allows an individual to form an identity of his own.

Similarly, Kamala Das in her poem "An Introduction" seeks to break free from the shackles of society which prevents her from exploring her own sexuality. This drives her to a search for her own identity and not the one that society prescribes for her. Patriarchy is seen as the oppressive force in her poem that restricts women from having opinions of their own. This is the main reason why women do not have an identity of her own. She possesses the identity that her father, husband or the patriarchal society prepares for her. The confines of marriage, societal restrictions and the vast differences between men and women is what Kamala Das seeks to do away with.

It is imperative to know that from a psychological perspective, Kamala Das's rebellion against the patriarchal society and the search for her own sexuality portrays her dissatisfaction in areas such as her marriage and sex life. It is this failure in the fulfilment of such need that finds an outlet in the form of poetry for Kamala Das. Through her poem, she voices out her opinions on the oppression of women but at the same time it also brings to surface her innermost desires which have remained unfulfilled because of the so-called patriarchy. The poet's quest for finding an identity stems from her own struggle with herself. Because the poet is unable to freely express her own sexuality, she struggles to grab her own identity.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE (1965)

“My Grandmother’s house is a short poem that talks about love which has been lost, nostalgia as well as the emotional pain attached with memories of the past. In this poem, the poet looks back at her childhood and the happy days she spent at her grandmother’s house in Malabar. It was there that she felt the most loved and she compares those times with that of her present situation which is devoid of love and affection. Thinking back on the past brings happy memories but at the same time there is also emotional pain involved with it because the life she is living in the present does not have a fraction of the happiness that she experienced in the past.

There is a house now far away where once I received
love... That woman died,

The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved... (Das
14)

The above lines talk about the house of the poet’s grandmother which she recalls as a place where she received immense love. The death of her grandmother took away the warmth that was once present in the house.

How often I think of going
There to peer through blind eyes of windows or
Just listen to the frozen air. (Das 14)

These lines present to us the longing of the poet to go back to her grandmother’s house. It can also be understood as the poet’s desire to experience the same kind of love and warmth once again. Revisiting an old place or feeling indicates that the poet is unhappy with her present situation. This is why she finds a way to escape the loveless state that she is in right now by going back to her childhood.

...I who have lost
My way and beg now at strangers' doors
to
Receive love, at least in small change? (Das 14)

The deplorable plight of the poet is depicted in these lines. The poet talks about how she has lost her way. She never had to beg for love when she lived at her grandmother's house. However, now, in the present scenario, even her own husband feels like a stranger to her and she has to beg for love which she otherwise received so freely when she was a child.

In understanding this poem from a psychoanalytical perspective, we may put forward that "regression" which is a part of the defence mechanisms can be identified in the reading of this poem.

Perhaps one of the most complex defences is 'regression', the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived. Regression can involve a return either to a painful or a pleasant experience. It is a defence because it carries our thoughts away from some present difficulty.
(Tyson 15)

Thus, we may understand that the poet's defence mechanisms are in play which lets her escape the loveless experience in her present state by taking her back to when she was a child. Because the past carries the warmth and love of her grandmother. She is able to recall this experience and describe it as one which was happy and contented. On the other hand, the present is devoid of any love. By returning to the pleasant experiences of her past, Kamala Das forgets her plight in the present even if it just for a moment.

The poet longs for the same kind of love that she once received as a child. It came so freely to her but now she has to beg for love. It is because the husband does not prioritise her

emotional needs let alone the physical needs. When the poet mentions that she is compelled to receive love, we come to understand that the relationship between the poet and her husband do not operate on the emotional level of understanding. It is one-sided in the sense that the husband is concerned only about satisfying his desires while paying no heed to the poet's longing. This emotional pain that the poet experiences lead her to regression and she finds herself peeping into the past to soothe the pain that the present is meting out on her. That becomes a source of escape for the poet from her daily struggles in her search for love and affection.

THE OLD PLAYHOUSE (1973)

“The Old Playhouse” published in the year 1973 is a poem in which Kamala Das voices against patriarchy. The Indian society is characterised as a male-dominated society which prescribes certain roles to both the genders. However, among the roles prescribed, the male retains the upper hand while suppressing the female. This poem is a form of protest against such concept of male superiority.

You planned to tame a swallow, to hold her
In the long summer of your love so that she would forget
Not the raw seasons alone, and the homes left behind, but
Also, her nature, the urge to fly, and the endless
Pathways of the sky. (Das 22)

The poem starts with the poet comparing herself to a swallow and the husband who wishes to tame her by the power of his lovemaking. He not only wants her to forget the time she spent in her home before marriage but also her very own nature, her freedom and the

endless possibilities that lay ahead of her. In short, he wants her to forget her very own identity by subjugating her.

... it was not to gather knowledge
Of yet another man that I came to you but to learn
What I was, and by learning, to learn to grow, but every
Lesson you gave was about yourself. You
Were pleased
With my body's response, its weather, its
Usual shallow
Convulsions. You dribbled spittle into my
Mouth, you poured
Yourself into every nook and cranny, you
Embalmed
My poor lust with your bitter-sweet juices. (Das 22)

The poet in the above lines says that when she married him, she did not come to gain knowledge about other men but to learn, grow and develop her own personality. But she found out that her husband was only centred on himself and his needs. It was enough for him that his needs were satisfied. As a result, the process of love making became one-sided. He failed to understand that the poet's response to his love-making was purely physical and never reached the emotional level which would connect them into a feeling of oneness. Thus, the poet describes that such one-sided love making has made her mind "an old playhouse with all the lights put out."

The poem emphasises mainly on the dominant role of the male counterpart. The husband achieves this superiority by subjugating the woman in every sphere. In a typical Indian

society, the system of patriarchy which has been passed down from generation to generation conforms conventional roles to a woman and places superior roles to the male counterparts. This is why the emotional and physical needs of women are never considered in the first place. Kamala Das in this poem brings to light the existing inequality between a man and a woman.

In living a life of confinement, the poet has lost all her value as a woman and feels suffocated. All freedom is lost and the poet is always in search of true love and affection. By conforming to the whims of patriarchy, a woman loses her own identity. One's identity defines a person, however, in the case of the poet, the male dominated society has stripped her off her right to explore her own identity.

The practice of patriarchy is so deeply rooted in culture and has been passed down from our ancestors that even though there are loopholes that only pose disadvantages for women, no measures are taken to correct it. This is because the practice of confining women to fixed roles has become so normal that the dominant gender sees nothing wrong in doing so. They have become comfortable in acting as a superior gender and do not want to let go of that position.

This kind of mentality is precisely what rots and degrades a society. The ideals of patriarchy work only in favour of the male counterpart. It is only bold women writers such as Kamala Das and their continuous efforts in striving for their own identity that lays down the several loopholes that exist in such unequally divided roles. And compels the society to look at it as discrimination against the female gender.

THE DANCE OF THE EUNUCHS (1965)

This poem is another remarkable work of Kamala Das which is included in the collection “Summer in Calcutta” (1965). This is an autobiographical poem which carries a confessional tone. The poem portrays the barrenness in the poet’s love life and her melancholy attached with it.

It was hot, so hot, before the eunuchs came
To dance, wide skirts going round and round,
Cymbals
Richly clashing, and anklets jingling, jingling... (Das 18)

The poem begins with the description of a hot atmosphere. Eunuchs are generally excluded from the society because they are neither male nor female. The poet paints a picture of the eunuchs dancing because being socially excluded from the society, they have to earn their living by means of singing, dancing or begging.

They dance, oh, they danced till they bled... There
Were green
Tattoos on their cheeks, jasmines in their hair,
Some
Were dark and some were almost fair. Their voices
Were harsh, their songs melancholy; they sang of
Lovers dying and or children left unborn...
Some beat their drums; others beat their sorry
breasts
and wailed, and writhed in vacant ecstasy. (Das 18)

The lines given above shows us a picture of the eunuchs dancing and singing with jasmines in their hair. The very act of dancing and singing signifies feelings of joy and celebration. However, in this poem, the dancing and singing does not mean joy or celebration. Rather it is that of melancholy and emptiness. The voices of the eunuchs are described as “harsh” and their songs are filled with “melancholy”. Even the songs that they are singing of tells sad tales and unfortunate situations. The joy on their faces is only a mask that they present while dancing and singing in pain.

Kamala Das in this poem talks about the eunuchs to convey her own emptiness in life, the absence of love and happiness. Just as the eunuchs are not included as part of the society, the poet also feels disconnected from society. The eunuchs are looked down for not conforming to a particular gender, while the poet is looked down because she is a woman. Such is the irony of the society.

The eunuchs seem to be dancing and singing but that is only a mask that they are wearing to conceal their true pain. Similarly, the poet may seem to be happy but in reality, she is not. Internally, the poet is struggling because of the absence of joy and love in her life. The poet is struggling because of her pending emotional needs.

From the psychoanalytic standpoint, the poem contrasts between what is shown outwardly and the inner conflicts. The poet masks her inner feelings, desires and pain while projecting a superficial outward appearance. What may appear to be joy is in fact only a persona that the poet creates in an attempt to satisfy the society in which she lives in. otherwise she is just empty inside and has to bear her own sufferings. Masking her true feelings is the poet’s way of protecting it from the judgements of the society. She deems it fit to keep all that she is feeling to herself because the patriarchal society would never understand the struggles of being a woman.

Just like the eunuchs, Kamala Das is also a victim of the society who is looked down upon. Patriarchy demands a woman to remain subjugated, look after the family and fulfil the physical desires of her husband. Thus, through this poem, Kamala Das tries to convey that the position of a woman in the society is not better than the transgenders.

THE FREAKS

“The Freaks” is a short poem which talks about the poet’s dissatisfaction in her marriage. This arises because of the lack of love between the poet and her husband. And the lack of love is due to the husband’s inability to understand the poet emotionally.

He talks, turning a sun-stained
Cheek to me, his mouth, a dark
Cavern, where stalactites of
Uneven teeth gleam, his right
Hand on my knee, while our minds
Are willed to race towards love;
But, they only wander, tripping
Idly over puddles of
Desire... can this man with
Nimble finger- tips unleash
Nothing more alive than the
Skin’s lazy hungers? Who can
Help us who have lived so long
And have failed in love? The heart,

An empty cistern, waiting
Through long hours, fill itself
With coiling snakes of silence.....
I am a freak. It's only
To save my face, I flaunt, at
Times, a grand, flamboyant lust. (Das 19)

The poem starts with the poet describing her husband's appearance. She describes his face as "sun-stained" and his mouth "a dark cavern" which indicates that the husband is ugly and maybe even old. The poem is about love making and the dissatisfaction that follows. In the lines mentioned above, the poet mentions that both are mentally prepared to make love but their minds continue to "wander" and fail to fulfil their desire. This poem talks about how the female persona becomes a non-participant in the act of love making. The main reason for this is because in a male dominated society, it is a woman who must submit to her husband and not vice-versa. She is conditioned to satisfy her husband's needs in every way while setting aside her own fulfilment of needs. Kamala Das's honest portrayal of a loveless relationship between a husband and wife gives us an insight on the damages posed by the patriarchal society. Male superiority denies women of their emotional needs and this frustration takes shape in the form of poetry for Kamala Das. Through her poetry, Das rises above the conventional norms and voices out against the frustrations meted out by society on a woman.

CHAPTER 4: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) and Kamala Das (1934-2009) are two significant women poets, whose bold expressions in their works has left a remarkable impact in the field of poetry. These two women poets broke the conventional mode of writing by exploring themes which were considered controversial. It was Sylvia Plath who largely propounded confessional poetry as a style of poetry which was also adopted by Kamala Das in her poems. Regardless of the different countries they were born in, both these women poets shared a common entity, i.e., womanhood. And it is this very entity that pushes them to explore a wide variety of possibilities which appear as themes in their poetry.

This chapter will be dedicated to identify certain similarities as well as dissimilarities between Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das.

SIMILARITIES IN THE POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS

- **Confessional Tone and Autobiographical Nature of their Poetry** – Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das share similarities when it comes to the confessional tone as well as the autobiographical nature of their poetry. Sylvia Plath is best known for her contributions to confessional poetry. Let us take an example of one of her poems to illustrate both the confessional as well as the autobiographical aspects. We shall take into account one of her

most controversial poems “Daddy” which was written in the year 1962 and talks about the relationship between Plath and her father. This poem is considered controversial because it is not only autobiographical but also confessional to the extent that Plath clearly shows the kind of relationship she desires to have with her father. This tendency to develop a romantic relationship with one’s father is named “Electra complex” in psychology.

The poem “Daddy” as discussed in earlier chapters begins with Plath talking about the suffocating relationship she had with her father. She wishes to break free from his clutches and that wish comes true when her father died when she was very young. Surprisingly, Plath did not feel free and instead found herself drawing more towards her father even though he was no more. This very strong feeling of attachment towards her father drove her to attempt suicide as a way of reuniting with his father. She was angry with her father because having died when she was just a child meant that she was deprived of the parental care and love. This unfulfilled parental love became the reason for her inability to detach herself from her father completely so much that when she got married, she chose a man who somehow resembled her father in some ways. Thus, the poem “Daddy” takes us on a journey of Plath’s struggle in the relationship with her father. It thus, not only serves as an autobiography but also confesses the love she had for her father for so many years until she finally decided to let go.

Similarly, Kamala Das’s poem “An Introduction” also serves as an autobiography as well as presents a confessional tone where the poet confesses the desire to explore her sexuality in a society which was governed by patriarchy. This poem is autobiographical in nature because the poet walks us through her whole life from when she was a child until she attains adulthood. In the poem, Kamala Das talks about patriarchy and how it controlled most of her decisions and actions as she was growing up. As a writer she was told not to write in English. As a daughter, she was asked to behave and dress like a girl. And as a

wife, she was asked to live under the whims of her husband and fulfil his needs without asking any questions. By talking about patriarchy, Kamala Das touched upon a very sensitive topic. She also talks about exploring her sexuality in the poem by saying that her physical needs were not met emotionally. The relationship she shared with her husband was based solely on her husband's tendency to satisfy his physical needs. There was a lack of love and this stripped off all the joys in the life of Kamala Das.

Thus, we can see that both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das employed confessional as well as autobiographical elements in their poems. Both these women poets are bold enough to talk about topics which are both controversial as well as sensitive. It is through this confessional tendency in their poems that we understand what they are running after or their motive in writing a particular poem. Both these women writers displayed their desires by pouring it into their poems in a confessional manner. This is the first similarity that we notice between Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das.

- **The Search for Identity** – Another important aspect which both the women writers share is the search for identity. Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das faced problematic relationships with their male counterparts. As such, the search for one's own identity became a strong entity. In the case of Kamala Das, she was married off at a very young age by her parents. Her husband was much older than her and her experience of an intimate relationship was shattered after her marriage. The husband was only bent upon fulfilling his own desires. He did not pay heed to the emotional or physical needs of Kamala Das. This was because the society in which Kamala Das lived in was that of patriarchy which places superiority in the actions of a man while suppressing those of the woman.

It therefore wouldn't be surprising if the husband is self-centred because that is how society constructed a man to behave. While a man was treated as the superior being, a

woman was placed with restrictions on her roles in every sphere of life. Kamala Das protests against such inequalities between genders in her poems. She openly writes about her dissatisfaction and lack of love in her marriage. She portrays her husband as a man who only lives to fulfil his desires. She painfully describes the emptiness in her life because of the lack of love. Owing to all these disappointments in life, Kamala Das began to search for her own identity as a woman not defined by her husband. The first important step to finding one's identity was in exploring one's own sexuality.

As a woman, her husband was never able to make her feel like a woman. This was partly because the role of patriarchy in the Indian society was very strong. Owing to that very reason, Kamala Das did not get the proper affection and love that she thought would be given to her. This dissatisfaction in her married life as well as in the failure of her husband to fulfil her emotional as well as physical needs caused the absence of love in their marriage. Between the two of them, there was marriage but there was no love. Kamala Das, therefore began protesting against male dominance in the society and strove for equal rights between the genders. The search for one's own identity became important to assert one's existence in the society. Instead of being looked down for a woman, Kamala Das wanted to do away with the age- old concept of one gender's superiority over the other. This would only be possible if she could find her very own identity to secure a place in society.

Like Kamala Das, Sylvia Plath too had problematic relations with the men in her life which included her father as well as husband. As discussed earlier, Sylvia Plath had a very complicated and straining relationship with her father. When he was alive, Plath felt like she was living under the shadow of her father. She describes her father as the shoe and herself as the foot that resides in the shoe. This made her want to be free from his influence and this wish came true when her father died. At that time, she was only ten years old.

After his death, although, instead of feeling a sense of relief she began to develop anger towards her father, perhaps for dying too early and snatching away her right to parental love and affection.

The absence of such love led her to develop a growing attachment with her father and at the age of twenty years, Plath attempted suicide as a way to reunite with her father. Her obsession with her father was so intense that even in a romantic love, she looked for the image of her father. Sylvia Plath spent thirty years of her life fantasizing and seeking for lost love that she did not realise that she had no identity of her own. She identified herself with her father. It was only after thirty years that she finally decided to let go of the obsession and the need for her father's affection. All this time, her father existed in the mental image she created for herself. She finally decided to let go of that attachment and freed herself from it. By letting go of the attachment that she had with her father, Sylvia Plath began a journey in search of her own identity which was not defined by anyone else but herself.

Thus, we may conclude that the situations may not have been the same for Kamala Das and Sylvia Plath. Nevertheless, both these women writers faced difficulties in dealing with the men in their lives which later on helped them to strive towards searching for their own individual identity.

- **Female Oppression** – This is another shared aspect in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das. The topic of female oppression is commonly shared by both the women poets as both viewed female oppression as a result of the existing male dominance. Plath, in her poems, bring out the dependency of women on men in her poems. Man is the oppressor and woman, is the prey. Sylvia Plath in her poems “Daddy” and “Lady Lazarus”, writes

about her attempts to get rid of her rage, grief and feelings of guilt that she felt after her father's death through suicide.

The father figure plays an important part in the life of Sylvia Plath as through this role, she faces the anguish of unfulfillment of certain areas of love from her life. She views men as blood-sucking vampires in her poems. Marriage for her was a failed attempt as she gained nothing out of it. When we talk about how Plath views female oppression, we may understand that male dominance plays an important role in enhancing the oppressive feelings of a woman. Most of Plath's life was a constant struggle because of her failed marriage and failed relationship with her father.

Even in the death of her father, she could not free herself from the authority of her father as a man. The grip over her life was no longer hers as her emotions of rage and affection all stemmed out of her attachment with her father. Thus unconsciously, her mind and actions associated with her emotions were indirectly controlled by the authoritative might of her father. Moreover, her failed relationship with her husband indicates her absence of control in her own marriage. Her husband's infidelity was something which Plath did not anticipate. It only reflects her not-so-significant existence in her husband's life.

The concept of female oppression comes more strongly in the poems of Kamala Das. Born and brought up in a patriarchal society, Kamala Das faced discrimination and feelings of inferiority from a very young age. Restrictions were placed on the life of a girl and simple things such as clothing were also controlled by the society which sided with patriarchy.

The role of men in the life of Kamala Das is the source of all sorts of female oppression. Her father married her off at a very tender age and thus begun the series of having to feel as the inferior sex. Her husband is perhaps figurative of the typical male model in a patriarchal society. From the moment Kamala Das entered the institution of marriage, she

has mentioned her dissatisfaction and disgust at the union of a man and woman who fail to attain a feeling of unity with one another. Male dominance is rampant in every area of life and it is no exception when it comes to the love life of the poet.

There is no sense of love in the true sense. The husband only knows satisfaction of his own needs. It is this self-centredness that is the very basis of male dominance which encourages the oppression of women. They are often seen as products of pleasure and hold no value in a society that holds men in high esteem. It is this mentality that becomes the source of a woman's suffering in the society. The system of patriarchy suppresses a woman's voice rendering her speechless even in the face of oppression. This is the reason why women quietly surrender themselves at the mercy of the male counterparts. She feels that there is nothing she can do and accepts her fate as the weaker gender as she may not have economical independency.

Kamala Das in her poems constantly touches on the themes of oppression faced by women in a patriarchal society. She writes of her own experiences as a woman which somehow makes it reassuring for every other woman who reads the poems and relates to it. Thus, we may see that both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das share opinions of similar aspect when it comes to the oppression of women by the dominant male gender.

- **The Longing for an Ideal Love** – There is a lot of anguish that comes when we talk about the longing for an ideal love from the context of both the poets. Love is the abstract feeling that neither Sylvia Plath nor Kamala Das was able to fully understand or exploit. This was partly because of the male figures in their lives that failed to give them what they needed and as such both experienced failure in their marriages.

Ideal love could be in the form of parental affection, or romantic attachments towards a person. In the case of Sylvia Plath, ideal love stood for the parental care and affection that

she did not receive as a child. It brings with it so much pain and anguish because no matter how much she sought for the ideal love, it was impossible for her to grab it because her father, who had the ability to shower her with exactly the kind of love that Plath was longing for, is already dead.

Sylvia Plath substitutes her father by marrying a man who bore a close resemblance to her father. However, she was in for another disappointment that person no matter how similar in his appearance of his father, could never take the role of her father. This meant that Sylvia Plath would never find the ideal love that she is looking for, because the love she seeks is not romantic love but the affection of a parental upbringing. Thus, it was impossible for her to find the ideal love no matter how many images she created of her father. This painful anguish was felt by the poet for several years until she was finally ready to let go of it. By saying goodbye to her father, she erased the pain associated with the idea of love that she so incessantly sought even though she was fully aware of the absence of her father. Thus, to Sylvia Plath, the ideal love is the parental affection and guidance of her father which she never got to enjoy because he passed away too early. All throughout her life, she seeks for this ideal love even after knowing that the absence of her father meant the absence of the kind of love that she is longing for.

On the other hand, when we talk about the longing of an ideal love from the perspective of Kamala Das, we may understand that she entails a romantic love which caters not only to her physical needs but also looks after her emotional needs as a woman. For Kamala Das, her marriage has been the source of all unhappiness in her life. Marriage is the union between two people who become one, but in her case, she never unified with her husband in that sense.

The ideal love that Kamala longs for is absent in her husband. The husband is portrayed as an oppressive character in her poems. She throws a weak light on her husband's role in her life. He not only fails to satisfy her emotional needs but also roots himself deeply in the love for his own self. Kamala Das fantasises over the idea of love because she is yet to experience the warmth of an ideal love that takes care and notices her emotional needs as well. The only form of love that she has ever known is the lust that her husband fulfils at the expense of her body. That is not what her expectation of an ideal love is about. Ideal love for Kamala Das lies in the fact that both the partners are empathetic towards the emotions of one another and as such become unified as one. This is exactly what lacks in her life and in her relationship with her husband. Thus, she longs for that particular love which she may or may not get. It is evident that her husband would not be able to provide the kind of love that she has in mind. However, she still longs for it and that ideal love remains a lingering passion in her life.

- **Tragedy of a Woman's Life** – The tragedy of a woman's life could cover a multitude of areas. It could range from the role of a daughter, a sibling to a wife and a mother. Regardless of that, both poets voice the tragedy of a woman's life partly because there are certain areas in the lives of both the poets which have not been fulfilled. In studying Plath and her poetry, most of her rage and emotions arise as a result of her disappointment towards her father. The role of a woman is to be that of an ideal daughter and an ideal wife. The relationship between Plath and her husband gradually shifted from love to hatred.

The tragedy in a woman's life occurs when a woman fails to complete the roles assigned to her by society. A woman's life is a constant tug of war between pleasing the society and maintaining the roles assigned to her. Failing to fulfil these roles means incurring the ridicule and shame of society. The life of a woman is a tragedy because she

is weighed down by what society considers fit. A woman is defined by the society and not by her own self. There is nothing much that a woman can do as long as she is viewed as a weaker gender who clings on to their male counterparts for survival.

In the same way, Kamala Das also talks about the tragedy of a woman's life in her poems. Kamala Das lives in a society which roots itself deeply on the principles of patriarchy. This type of society demands the absolute subjugation of women and Kamala Das belongs to such a society. It is only fair to call this kind of life as a tragedy for women because there is no say in any matter when it comes to women. She loses her own self and identity in trying to dance to the whims of the male counterpart. Kamala Das shows no backtracking in her portrayal of such irrational inequalities in her poems.

She openly talks about her dissatisfaction in her marriage, sex life and her own sexuality. This kind of topics are controversial because it sheds light on the system of patriarchy as an oppressive force in society. This does not stop Kamala Das from writing about it. In fact, she touches on so many aspects of the patriarchal society that we understand how it becomes a tragedy for a woman.

In her poem "An Introduction", Kamala Das talks about how even the subtlest of concerns such as the way a girl or woman dresses is governed by the principles of patriarchy. It is not just about the manner of dressing but also about how a girl or woman behaves that determines whether she falls into the category of an ideal woman. From the moment a child is born, if it is a girl, then her fate has already been decided before the child even gains awareness of its surroundings. Such is the sorry plight of the women living in a male dominated society. This is perhaps why the life of a woman is viewed as a tragedy.

As a girl reaches puberty, she is married off by her parents because the society believes that the place of a woman belongs in the kitchen and her roles are confined to looking after

the family and her husband's needs. When these roles are assigned, it does not include the needs of a woman. A woman is expected to be selfless in the service of her husband and family.

Kamala Das frequently talks about her disappointment in the very institution of marriage and her disappointment towards her husband is also reflected in her poems. As stated earlier, it is a woman's duty to look after the husband's needs and that in itself is not a problem. The problem lies in the fact that catering of needs only applies to the dominant gender and says nothing for the womenfolk. This indicates that women are expected to be satisfied with the needs and desires of their partners. There is no role reversal in this regard. It has already been decided that women will bear the responsibility of looking after the family and children without expecting anything in return.

The life of a woman is a tragedy because the cycle of oppression is never ending. As long as the idea of a male dominated society exists, this tragedy in a woman's life will continue to play out. Kamala Das has protested against these inequalities and stereotypes, and at the same time voiced out her dissatisfaction with her husband. She makes the readers aware of the kind of person she married and the unhappy sexual life that she shares with him. The experiences of Kamala Das are the collective experiences of all Indian women who face the tyranny of the male in the society.

DISSIMILARITIES IN THE POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH AND KAMALA DAS

Just as there are similarities between the two women poets, it is inevitable that there is bound to be dissimilarities as well. This is because the two women poets do not share the same culture and have been brought up in different countries with their own environments

and society. These factors are bound to influence their thinking which in turn will reflect in their works as a whole.

The first dissimilarity between these two poets is how one was pre occupied with the theme of death while the other on the theme of female sexuality. Sylvia Plath was preoccupied with the theme of death in her poems. In the preceding chapters, we have talked about *Daddy*, *Lady Lazarus*, *Poppies in October*, *Edge* and *Waking in Winter*. In all of these poems, we see the theme of death as a continual occurrence in the poems.

Plath in her poems, talks about death in a fascinating manner. She views death as a better place as compared to life. This may be because of her disappointments in life as well as the loss of her father at an early age. When life has nothing good to offer then it is obvious that death will seem to be the easier way out of it. The reason why death is a constant theme in the poems of Sylvia Plath is because from a very young age she has experienced the death of her father. His death gave her an emptiness because she had no one to give her parental care and support. And this void could only be filled by her father and no one else. The absence of her father was painful for her and all her repressed fears and emotions were directed towards her father in anger. Plath felt abandoned by her father and as such she did not feel the warmth of a father's affection in her life.

Moreover, whenever Plath talks about death in her poems, she views it as a peaceful place. This may be because the emotions that the living carries and feels is too heavy to carry sometimes. In death, there are no such attachments, no feelings, no pain, no abandonment. Perhaps, Plath tries to gain such freedom by plunging herself into the world of death. While Sylvia Plath constantly talks about death in her poems, it is not the case for Kamala Das. In the few poems that we have analysed in the previous chapters, the most constant theme that is present in her poems is the theme of female sexuality. Das is a confessional and

autobiographical poet by nature and therefore, through her poems we gain an insight on the areas which she particularly focuses on. Female sexuality is one such topic which Kamala Das keeps talking about in her poems.

This concept of female sexuality keeps occurring in her poems because Kamala Das has been brought up in a society dominated by patriarchy. In her poems, she talks about how a woman is marginalised and the question of her sexuality is hushed. It is not considered important for a woman to talk about her sexuality. A woman's body is seen as an object of desire by a man and nothing more than that. This is the reason for her unsuccessful marriage.

Patriarchy binds a woman to certain confined roles and as a result prevents a woman from expressing her matters in opinions which relates to her own sexuality. The topic of female sexuality is controversial in a society that is deeply rooted in patriarchy because it is treated as a taboo. However, this does not prevent Kamala Das from talking about it in her poems. She did not care about the controversial nature of the topic and went right ahead with it. This is because she herself suffered from not understanding her own sexuality. It is not considered appropriate for a woman to talk about her sexual preferences. It is because of this that a woman does not find herself emotionally fulfilled when she indulges in a physical relationship with her husband. Kamala Das goes through the same predicament and the relationship with her husband remained only on the physical level and never on the emotional level.

Expressing the female sexuality meant going against the patriarchal system and that is exactly what Kamala does by inhibiting the theme into her poems. She ardently strives towards fighting for the equal rights of women. She protests against the inequality meted

on to females and she openly talks about female sexuality as a rebellion against the already existing social norms binding a woman.

The second area of dissimilarity that we identify is the tendency of suicide which appears frequently in the poems of Sylvia Plath. The theme of suicide does not occur in the poems of Kamala Das. However, the dissatisfaction of sexual life is a recurring theme in her poems.

Talking about Sylvia Plath, in her poems and even in her life, suicide is one topic which always lingers in her poems. She talks about suicide as the gateway to free herself from the shackles of the world by embracing death. Perhaps the most important event in her life was the death of her father which planted the idea of suicide in her mind. We say this because after her father's death she attempted to commit suicide in order to re- unite with her father in death.

The characters in the poems of Sylvia Plath such as in "Lady Lazarus" and "Edge" talks about suicide. In 'Lady Lazarus' the poem gives hints to multiple suicide attempts of the tormented speaker. In the poem, the speaker talks about how she has tried to kill herself multiple times but surprisingly survived. In the poem "Edge" the poet talks about a woman who commits suicide after she kills her children. Taking these two poems as examples, we see how Plath infuses the theme of suicide in her works. The constant appearance of the theme of suicide is also related to her real life attempts at killing her own self.

The tendency to take one's own life arises mainly because of an individual's dissatisfaction with certain areas of his or her life. Perhaps Plath's own displeasure at certain areas of her life was what drove her to contemplate on suicide which in turn got portrayed in her poems. The study of Plath's poems suggests that she does not fear death but is in fact fascinated by the idea of it. She finds a kind of perfection in death. Thus, suicide becomes a dominant

theme in her poems. It is viewed as a path to escape this world with its inequalities and cruel nature. Sylvia Plath's growing fascination with death is responsible for creating characters that symbolise or talk about suicide in her poems. The poet also has her own fears and frustrations which leads her to talk about suicide more openly in her poems.

Unlike Sylvia Plath, Kamala Das does not talk about suicide. Instead, one of her most talked about topic in her poems is the dissatisfaction in her sexual life. Kamala Das in her poems like 'An Introduction' and 'My Grandmother's House', recounts her life as a child and measures her present scenario. She looks at her childhood as the happiest days of her life. In contrast, her present life is filled with emptiness both in her love and sex life with her husband.

This dissatisfaction that the poet talks about is borne out of the society in which she lives in. The poet is looking for a fulfilling love which her husband is unable to give. The reason for this lies in the fact that she lives in a society which places women much lower than that of their male counterparts. This system follows the notion that a woman is required to act as medium for the gratification of a man's physical desire. According to this, it yields profit only for the man because his needs are satisfied, whereas the needs of the woman is not given priority. This is exactly why Kamala Das experiences a dissatisfaction in her sexual life. This also finds its way in her poetry where the poet talks about the female sexuality in general and her own in particular.

In explaining the reason for her dissatisfaction through her poems, the poet expresses her wish to find a love which is ideal and fulfilling. The relationship that she shares with her husband is limited only to the physical level. Her husband fails to meet her emotional needs along with her physical needs. This is because he is concerned only with satisfying his own desires after which he pays no heed to the needs of the poet. This feeling of dissatisfaction

leads the poet to openly talk about it in her poems and also strives to understand her own sexuality in the process. By talking about it in her poems, the poet is sort of standing against the oppression of women in the name of patriarchy. The system of patriarchy prevents a woman from talking about her sexual desires and Kamala Das seeks to do away with this notion by bringing an equal balance between the sexuality of both the genders.

The third and final dissimilarity that we will talk about are the consequences that both the poets faced as a result of their failed marriages with their spouses. Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das experienced a downfall in their marriages. It may not have been in the same manner but they both faced the crisis of a marriage in their lives. The root of their crisis may be similar but the effect it had on both the poets were completely different. We will first look at Sylvia Plath and how the failure of her marriage affected her and to what extent.

Sylvia Plath was married to Ted Hughes and for a while their marriage was a happy one. There was love between the two and they seemed to be having a wonderful life with one another. However, with the course of time, this love for one another turned into hatred in the case of Sylvia Plath. Her husband's infidelity perhaps served as a final straw for the emotional abandonment that she had kept under control for so long following the death of her father. She was unable to bring herself out from the depths of abandonment and became a victim of depression. She failed to rise above the situation. It was not long after her separation with her husband that she committed suicide.

Success for Sylvia Plath came in death, though the journey from Sylvia Plath, the gifted young girl, to Sylvia Plath, the poet and writer, was one of terrifying and exhilarating proportions and ultimately robbed the world of a transcendent artisan far before her time.
(Agarwal 136)

It was only after her death that most of her unpublished poems were published which came to be widely read and critiqued. The growing mental conditions of the poet eventually led her to take her own life. Thus, we see that Sylvia Plath's response to the ever-growing misfortunes in life found an answer in her death which she so casually talks about in her poems. Perhaps this is how she always wanted to exit from this world and maybe that is precisely the reason death and suicide occupies a special place in her poems.

Moving on to Kamala Das, unlike Sylvia Plath, she was married to an older man whom she did not love nor ever came to love. It was already difficult for the poet as a young girl to be married to an older man whom she did not know. Over the course of years, this union further became more and more bleak as their relationship became one that was solely based on the physical need of the husband.

Kamala Das in her poem "An Introduction" talks about her first sexual experience as unpleasant. She did not feel loved or needed. She only felt wanted as an object of pleasure. This displeasure in her marriage only began to grow as the husband paid no concern on the needs of the poet. This led her to fantasize of an ideal life and she would sometimes regress to her past life which was full of love and laughter. While her present life was empty of love and joy. She appears happy outwardly, but inwardly she feels barren. These misfortunes that the poet faced in her marriage life pushed her to rise against the adversities. She strengthened her consciousness and started talking boldly about her desires which had otherwise been repressed as a result of living in a patriarchal society.

Kamala Das's confessional tone in her poetry is proof of her strong conviction to find her own identity in the society. In her poems, she condemned the system of patriarchy and demands an equal position for women as well. The poet's displeasure in marriage and society was not enough to back her into a corner. Instead, these adversities and the

emotions that she felt served as stepping stones for her to assert her own position and identity in the society. The poems of Kamala Das speaks not only about herself but also about the women who are victims of the so- called male dominant society. Thus, we may conclude that these two women poets, in the face of their failed marriages and dissatisfactions in life, chose for themselves those which they deemed fit. Both the poets faced similar adversities in light of their marriage but what distinguishes them from one another is the decision and the path they chose to walk in the face of such difficulties which makes them different as an individual.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The final chapter of this study will include a brief summarisation of the preceding chapters. It will also discuss the aims of this research and identify the common concept(s) that tie both the writers together in view of the psychoanalytic theory. It will also talk about the role of psychoanalysis in literature. Finally, it will mention the limitations as well as the future directions of the study.

Brief Summary

In the previous chapters, we have discussed in length psychoanalysis and the concepts of Sigmund Freud along with a few other theorists, the application of psychoanalytic theory in the poems of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das, and also made a distinction between these two women poets.

The first chapter is dedicated to learning the concept of psychoanalysis and its application in literature. Theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, Anna Freud and Erik H. Erikson have been mentioned along with their contributions in the field of psychoanalysis. Their ideas and concepts sometimes differ from one another owing to the fact that the discipline of psychoanalysis is vast, which provides a lot of room for study and research. The basic idea from of the discipline proposed by the theorists, emerge from the understanding that psychoanalysis constitutes the study of the human mind. This forms the very basis of the discipline and we gain valuable insight from the ideas and methods discussed by the theorists. The chapter then proceeds to mention psychoanalysis and its application in literature. The theory of psychoanalysis serves as an interpretative tool in literature and aids in understanding both the author and his or her work of art. The second chapter presents five poems of Sylvia Plath which are reviewed from the psychoanalytic

perspective. The third chapter similarly presents five poems of Kamala Das which are also attempted at understanding psychoanalytically. The fourth chapter is a comparative study on Plath and Das which is done by bringing out similarities and dissimilarities in their poems.

Main Aims of the Research

The main aim of this research is to understand the select poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das from the psychoanalytic perspective. It also seeks to identify the common concept that both of these poets exhibit in their poems. We have learned that in psychoanalysis it is vital to assess the overall environment or condition of an individual in order to understand his or her personality. In the same way, when we apply the theory of psychoanalysis in any given work, it is imperative to understand that the writers are also influenced by the society and environment they live in, which includes the relationship with family, friends, colleagues, peers, teachers, etc, or anyone they acquaint themselves with. For instance, both Plath and Das may talk about the same concept in a literary work, but we may notice subtle differences in how they portray the particular concept in their work due to the influence and variation in their surroundings.

The common concept that is identified in both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das's poems are – 'Female Sexuality in the World of Patriarchy'. Both women poets view patriarchy as a wall that a woman needs to climb in order to explore her sexuality. The role of patriarchy is that of an oppressing force, an obstacle that stands in the way of a woman in a quest for exploring her sexuality and identity. Sylvia Plath lives under the shadow of her father as expressed in her poem "Daddy" even though he is no more and finds herself struggling to break free from the emotions connected with her father. As for Kamala Das, she has been breathing and living in the midst of the patriarchal system. Her needs are overshadowed

by that of her husband's and she constantly finds herself seeking for love and happiness from her past memories. Let us take these two instances and try to understand it from a psychoanalytical view. Both the female poets are undoubtedly being controlled by the system of patriarchy and both want to be free from this so-called dominance. The only difference between the two is that while Sylvia Plath is disturbed by the events of her past, Kamala Das is struggling with the present. Plath finds it difficult to do away with the emotional attachments with her father and blames him for it, while Das visits the past in order to escape the present. By applying the theory of psychoanalysis, we may understand that Plath displays "projection" (ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it, in order to deny that we have it ourselves). As for Kamala Das, the defence mechanism called "regression" (the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived. Regression can involve a return either to a painful or a pleasant experience) comes into play. (Tyson 15)

In this chapter, we will also probe on the role of psychoanalysis in literature. Like all other forms of critical theory, psychoanalysis also serves as an important critical theory which helps us to understand literature from the perspective of the psychological standpoint. The role of psychoanalysis in literature is to –

- (i) Investigate an author's creative process in producing a certain work.
- (ii) Studying the author from a biographical context – how the mentality of the author is influenced by the relationship he or she has developed with others in the course of his or her life, the society he lives in and how these factors influence the progress of his or her work.
- (iii) Analyse the fictional characters of an author by using psychological methods or identifying psychological concepts in any given work.

The application of the methods discussed above will allow the readers to decipher the text not only as a product of the author's intentions but also figure out or identify the unintended part of the author's mind. It not only enriches our knowledge but also helps us attain a deeper understanding by deciphering the text through the application of various psychoanalytical concepts.

In psychoanalysing literature, it is not just the work(s) of an author that is studied. It studies both the author as well as his or her work(s). The basis of psychoanalysis is the study of the human mind which determines the behaviour or actions of an individual. This is why it is important to analyse the author along with his or her works. The chief argument behind this lies in the context that any work of art is a product of the author's intention, expectations, disappointments, conflicts, etc. For instance, an author may project the disappointments of his or her life by creating a character in his or her work that portrays those disappointments. We may say that any work of art in literature is the product of the author's life – his surroundings, family, relationships, society, and above all, his emotions.

Limitations of the Study

- Psychoanalysis is a vast subject which encompasses critics and researchers from every nook and corner of the world. Understanding literature from all the existing views of all the psychoanalysts in one single paper would require a more extensive study. The research is limited only to the concepts of the writers mentioned in the first chapter giving special significance to Sigmund Freud. It is not possible to mention each and every proponent of psychoanalysis nor enclose every work produced by both the women poets in a study which seeks to briefly understand psychoanalysis in select poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das. This is the first limitation of the study. Selected poems, five each, from both the writers have been

chosen as the subject amongst the vast number of works that these two women poets have produced. At the same time, the study limits itself to the concepts of certain psychoanalysts while paying special reference to the theories of Sigmund Freud.

- The study is dedicated to understanding the psyche of women writers and how it plays out in their works. It does not include the study of male writers. This is the second limitation of the study.
- The third limitation of the study lies in the context of the selected genre i.e., poetry. Only one genre of literature is focused to bring out the application of the psychoanalytic theory in literature. Five select poems each, of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das are included for understanding the concept of psychoanalysis in literature.

Future Directions of the Study

With regard to the future directions of the study, it is imperative for us to understand that every theory goes through a constant state of changes, improvements or adaptations. This is the same in the context of psychoanalysis as a theory. Over the years since its first inception, psychoanalysis has evolved from classical psychoanalysis to modern psychoanalysis. While some agree with the arguments of Freud, there are some who refute his claims. Nevertheless, psychoanalysis as a school of thought has considerably grown over the years not only in the clinical approach but also from a literary approach. The study of psychoanalysis aims at gaining insight into the mind of an individual. However, it does not confine its scope to an individual alone. As discussed in the previous chapters, an individual and his or her personality and behaviours are influenced by various factors such as family, environment, inter personal relationships, etc. Thus, it encompasses all the components that are connected to an individual.

The study of psychoanalysis will help future researchers to understand not just the individual and his or her patterns of behaviour but also the society in which the individual attaches his identity. Margaret Atwood, Jonathan Frazen and Toni Morrison are three contemporary novelists among the many who have made splendid contributions in the field of literature. These are some of the writers on whom we can use the approach of psychoanalysis. For instance, in Margaret Atwood's novel we can use the tools of psychoanalysis to identify the oppression of women in the novel. In the essays of Jonathan Frazen, we may focus on the familial relationships and the problems that exist and how these problems shape the individual as a person. Finally, in Toni Morrison's novel we may study the society before and after enslavement. Application of psychoanalytic methods in any given literature will allow researchers to gain a clear understanding of the existing society because consciously or unconsciously, an author shows the tendency to portray society as it is along with its merits and demerits and how it impacts the individual living in a particular society. By understanding the society, we are moving towards a collective growth of a healthy relationship between man and the society.

Another future direction of this study is to illuminate various aspects of literature in relation with conflicting as well as non- conflicting states. The possibility of identifying numerous elements through psychoanalysis remains. It means that we should not be hasty in placing a fixed conclusion to any study we conduct, and instead keep the chance of probability open. The psychoanalytical approach to literature will not only amplify the meaning of a literary work but also enlighten the readers as they go through the layers of meaning existing within a text which will in turn create not just readers but critical readers.

The application of psychoanalysis, thus, has no limitations. From the daily mundane activities of a person to its application in literature and medicine, the theory of psychoanalysis will help us to understand the influence of a society of an individual. We

may notice that contemporary writers have shown keen interest in the society of the past as well as the present. this fact itself is assuring in the sense that psychoanalysis draws a relationship between society and the individual to study the patterns of behaviour. Application of the psychoanalytic theory in the study of society will not only help us to understand the society but also allow us to build better and healthy relationship with one another as well as with the society by identifying the elements which are unhealthy not only to the individual in particular, but also the society in general.

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