



## *Psychoanalytical interpretation of the Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "The Two Voices"*

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### Abstract

The study offers psychoanalytical interpretation of Alfred Lord Tennyson poem "The Two Voices". The study applied Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis and Tennyson's poetic work. The study highlights the conflicting desires and the inner recesses of speaker's mind, thoughts and struggles with inner experiences and psyche. This is a qualitative study for which primary data was obtained from the text of the poem and secondary data was obtained from the research articles and books. Data was analyzed, keeping in mind the constructs of the theory. Results indicate that the character's superego took hold of the character, thereby preventing him from the ultimate destruction

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis, Superego, Qualitative study, Inner recesses



## Introduction

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist and a founder of psychoanalysis. He was born on (6 May 1856 - 23 September 1939). Psychoanalysis is a procedure for the investigation of mental processes which are almost inaccessible in any other way. Likewise, psychoanalysis is a clinical method to closely examine the conflicts in the human psyche and inner world, and also put insights upon the hidden thoughts in the human mind. Freud greatly contributed to the field of psychology with his influential theories on the human inner-self or inner-world. His groundbreaking theories left a lasting impact. He was born in Freiberg Moravia, later he studied medicine at the University of Vienna. In this university he developed interest in neurology and started studying the human brain and psyche.

By this Freud critically examines the human mind. He believed that the understanding of human psychology is the crucial element to gain comprehensible understanding of the hidden thoughts and emotions. His work on his patients suffering from hysteria and other mental illnesses led him to develop a groundbreaking theory of psychoanalysis, where he critically studies human psychology. He left a profound impact in the field of psychology. His influential writings mark sustainable long-term impacts on humans. Later on many great theorists contribute to the different aspects of psychology. Sigmund Freud examines the unconscious mind of humans to critically analyze human hidden thoughts.

Hossain (2017) asserted, Freud emphasized on the unconscious mind of humans. He studied the human mind's different roles to shape human behaviours, thoughts, emotions and actions. Furthermore, he put insights on the important aspect of id, ego and superego. Defence mechanism, individualisation and different archetypes. Likewise, Freud emphasized on the childhood experiences and the interpretation of dreams, slip of tongue as they are the pathway to understanding the unconscious mind. Psychoanalysis is simultaneously a form treatment, a theory and an "investigation tool" (Lothane, 2006, p. 711).

The central tenet of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the concept of the unconscious, from which he derived two corollary concepts: hidden meaning and repression. The concept of repression is essential, not only to an understanding of the Unconscious but to psychoanalysis itself. Freud described it as the "cornerstone" of psychoanalysis (Freud, 1914g, p. 16) and viewed repression as "the prototype of the Unconscious" (Freud, 1923a). In fact, Freud viewed repression as the mental process that creates the Unconscious.

Freud proposed three structures of human personality, which he termed id, ego, and superego. At birth, we are all "id" – a series of sexual and aggressive impulses that seek gratification (Freud, 1923a). The ego protects itself from the Unconscious by developing repressing forces (defense mechanisms) that keep repressed material from breaking through to consciousness (Freud, 1937). According to Freud, the superego develops between the ages of four and six years. The superego is formed out of the internalized or introjected values of parents (or significant other caregivers) (Freud, 1923a) and society and becomes the person's conscience from which an ego ideal, the standard by which one measures oneself, is formed (Kilborne, 2004). Sigmund Freud divides the human brain into three parts: conscious, unconscious and preconscious mind. He put great emphasis on the unconscious mind that shapes human behaviour and emotions. The unconscious comes into being when we are very young through a process which provides a term as repression.

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), was an English poet. He was a great representative poet of the Victorian age. In 1850 he was appointed as Poet Laureate of England during Queen Victoria's reign. He is widely regarded as a dominant figure of the Victorian era. He is considered as a mouthpiece of Victorians. His poetry appeals to readers' emotions and thoughts. His poetry contains the element of universality that appeals to today's reader. His poetry highlights the dominant themes of mortality and identity, mortality and transience, love and loss, nature and



human connections. His famous poems are “In Memoriam(1850)”, “The Two Voices” written in 1833, “The Eagle”, “The Day-Dream”, “Ulysses”, “Break, Break, Break”, “A Dream of Fair Women”, “The Lady of Shalott”.

Tennyson was awarded the chancellor's gold medal at Cambridge. He was greatly influenced by romantic writers like John Keats and other romantic poets. This is the evidence from his poetry that is rich in imagery and symbolism and deals with nature. T.S Eliot marked Tennyson as “the saddest of all English poets. His technical skills and mastery inverse and diction provide a great surface to his poetry which deeply indulge in the moral themes. At last Tennyson poetry marked a profound and sustainable influence on English literature.

In this research I depicted Alfred Lord Tennyson poem “The Two Voices” written in 1833 and applied the theoretical framework psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. Lord Tennyson's poem “The Two Voices” is a masterpiece of Victorian literature. This research contributes significantly to highlight the deeper understanding of Tennyson poetry creation and poetic genius by which he explores the deep hidden thoughts and struggle inside the human mind. The poem's narrative is simple but it appeals to a complex exploration of human struggle and human experiences. This research provides the comprehensible and critical interpretation of Tennyson's work. Likewise the study explores the psychological process and structures in Tennyson poetry, by critically examining the poem “The Two Voices” by the lens of psychoanalysis. The study aims to shed new light on the poem's hidden meanings and highlights the significance that contributes to gaining a deeper understanding of the human psyche.

The poem “The Two Voices” is the exploration of the nature of ambiguity and hope. The poem highlights the inner conflicts and struggles in the speaker's mind. It was two opposite forces and voices that speakers heard. By applying psychoanalysis it will be helpful to critically examine the hidden thoughts, human struggles and experiences. Through his inner voices the poem significantly highlights the questions regarding human condition, the nature of reality and meaning of life. This research study highlights the complex interplay among the psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud and “The Two Voices” poem by Tennyson for the sake of adding new information into the existing knowledge to appeal to the reader's emotions and thoughts.

### Research Objectives

The study endeavors to achieve the following research objectives.

- To explore “The Two Voices” By Alfred Lord Tennyson from a Psychoanalytic perspective.
- Explore how the inner conflict in the human mind leads to psychological struggles.

### Research Questions

The focuses on the find out the answer of the following research questions

- What element(s) of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory do we find in Tennyson's poem “The Two Voices”?
- How does the inner conflict in human mind lead to psychological struggles as depicted in the poem “The Two Voices”

### Statement Of The Problem

The study aims to critically examine the Alfred Lord Tennyson poem “The Two Voices” from the psychoanalytic theoretical framework by Sigmund Freud. It examines the psychological conflicts, struggles and role of the psyche to shape overall behaviour of human beings. The study explores the internal conflicts between two voices. It highlights the struggle between the conscious and unconscious psyche. Moreover, it puts insight on the conflicting struggle between; id, ego and superego, by putting a comprehensible account on analysing how it affects and shapes the behaviour and actions of human beings. The study explores the role of the repression of the Freudian remarkable concept to gain comprehensible insights on the changing behaviour of individuals, conscious and unconscious psyche.



### Significance Of The Study

The study is significant as its aim to provide a comprehensible understanding on the psychological factors by analysing the poem written by Alfred Lord Tennyson "The Two Voices" by the theoretical framework Psychoanalysis. The study will put valuable insights into the field of Psychoanalytic studies. Moreover, the significance of the study relies on the deepening understanding of the human psyche, as it highlights the internal struggle between the human mind. More importantly, it highlights the universal struggle between the conscious and unconscious psyche of human beings. Moreover, the study is significant because it puts insights on the role of repression which ultimately shapes human behaviours. Similarly, the study is significant because it reevaluates the literary Canon of Tennyson the Victorian Age and relates the writing of Tennyson with the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis by exploring and highlighting the universality of psychic conflict and struggles. The study aims to put insights on important aspects of; id, ego and superego the unconscious struggles and conflicts to understand the overall relevance with the Tennyson poem "The Two Voices". Ultimately, as a result the study will prove a significant and notable addition to the existing bulk of knowledge.

### Research Design

Leavy, P. (2017) suggested that research design is considered as building a structure to organize the research accordingly. For instance he argued that architects work with different types of structures to construct one thing. Similarly, research design plays an important role to construct or plan the research to organize it in a well manner. Moreover, there were different types of research design, he argued that a social researcher has five primary structures; quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, arts-based and community based participatory. Ultimately, all these approaches towards research work are known as research design. Research design is selected on the basis of the topic and purpose of the research.

Leavy, P. (2017) argued that to move forward in the research, researcher must consider the two notable questions; firstly, What do we want to achieve; and how do we execute that goal. However, this process of building a methodology and planning the overall research how to proceed it further and how it will be carried out. There are so many tools and methods to plan out the research construction.

Research design and statistical analysis provide a comprehensible understanding and coverage of the design principles and statistical concepts, the necessary elements to make sense of real data. However, as per APA recommendations emphasis and stress is placed on data exploration to select the research design, it affects the size measures, confidence intervals, and using power analysis to determine sample size (Routledge et al., 2013).

Bergin, T. (2018) argued that the ability to analyse raw data is an increasingly important skill in different fields. Including psychology, business, politics, sociology and environmental studies. Quantitative data is number or numerical data which is mainly focused on the numbers. While on the other hand, qualitative data does not focus on numbers but it considers the text, the images or opinion-based data. Qualitative data is used to uncover the complexities that could not be analyzed or treated through the quantitative method. Similarly, quantitative data analysis explores or detects the patterns and relationships which are undetected or unexplored by a qualitative data analysis approach.

More importantly, In this research study mainly focused on the qualitative research design to approach the overall research. Qualitative data analysis approach is selected for this research study because this research is opinion based research and there is no any numerical data the research study analyse the poem of Alfred Lord Tennyson "The Two Voices" from the lens of theoretical framework Psychoanalysis, to highlight the hidden conflicts and struggles inside the human psyche. Although, the research study employs the qualitative approach to analyse and utilise the gained data and highlight the content of the poem through the lens of theoretical





framework Psychoanalysis. The research study analyzes the content of the poem and draws the psychoanalytic interpretations which can vary from person to person and every person has their own critical opinion. In this research study there is no any number or numerical data in the form of percentage. Only the poem of Alfred Lord Tennyson, “The Two Voices” , fully indulges in psychoanalytic interpretations.

#### **Data Type**

Ajayi, V. O. (2017) asserted that primary and secondary data is marked as the fundamental aspect of any research. In this regard the data plays an important role in the set of values of quantitative and qualitative data. Data is important for any research method or tool. Data is considered as facts and figures from which the conclusion is drawn and final discussion can be analysed. However, data is defined as the fact that can be depicted from the existing information and knowledge. Although, gathering data can be from different and various sources is the skill in the research; primary data sources and secondary data sources.

Vetter, T. R., & Mascha, E. J. (2017) argued that the fundamental step in designing or conducting a research study is to identifying the outcomes from the primary and secondary sources of data. Furthermore, primary data arise directly from the primary study aims or objectives, meanwhile secondary data study outcomes arise from directly connectivity with any secondary study aims or objectives.

Significantly, in this research study the primary data source is the direct taken from Tennyson's poem “The Two Voices”, analysed in depth to critically highlight the Psychoanalytic interpretations and the hidden psychologically struggles. The primary data is analysed through the lens of the theoretical framework Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. Meanwhile, secondary data sources including different research articles from the existing bulk of the knowledge, and already published books, journals, research papers, psychoanalytical texts, the biographical information about Tennyson's and Freud to critically examine the content of the poem “The Two Voices” with Psychoanalytic interpretations.

#### **Data Analysis Technique**

Arya (2020) suggested that textual analysis is the term that every researcher is familiar with, it was related to qualitative research design because in this approach texts are analysed and as the result different outcomes and interpretations arise. The textual analysis is the close reading of the text to understand its hidden meaning. Textual analysis is something understanding the process of interpretation as the effect of a relationship between a reader and a text (Arya, 2020).

However, the textual analysis of the poem “The Two Voices” by Alfred Lord Tennyson through the lens of the Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud highlights the inner turmoil of a speaker. Who is torn between continuously conflicting two voices. The one voice encourages him to take his own life and give up from everything. Meanwhile the other voice encourages him for hope and provides more hope for life and emphasizes to think about the meaning and purpose of life. The inner struggles highlight the questions regarding the existences, and putting insights in existential crisis and despair. The speaker's psyche was fragmented and disintegrated with two voices.

#### **Data Analysis**

The poem “The Two Voices by Alfred Lord Tennyson” is analyzed by the lens of theoretical framework Psychoanalytic perspective. It examines the Theory of Personality; id, ego and superego. Remarkably, it highlights the struggle between the Conscious mind and Unconscious mind by Sigmund Freud perspective. Moreover, it examines the hidden struggles and conflicts inside the mind of the poet. The poem explores the two conflicting voices which are opposing each other within the poet's mind. One voice demanded morality and search for reason, the other voice repressed the voice of logic and reason by arguing and demanding for desire and passion. The Two Voices was written during the Victorian era, it was written by Alfred Lord Tennyson.



Significantly many social changes transform society; urbanization and immigration. More importantly, Victorian values emphasized morality and restraint which unconsciously affected the mind of the poet. The central idea of the poem highlights the inner turmoil of the poet's mind about the existence of life. However, throughout the poem the conflicts about the moral values and the desire running inside the mind of the poet. Besides, the Victorian age emphasized on moral goods. Notably, the study highlights societal pressures and the struggle of the individual to neglect their own desires and the value of societal customs and societal expectations. Which ultimately is the reflection of the strict social rules and norms of the Victorian era. Let's delve deeper through the textual analysis of the poem article framework of Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud.

### Theory of Personality Id

Freud (1974) suggested that Id is the only component of personality that is present in human beings from birth. It operates on the principle of pleasure. However, if Id gave the free rein it could lead to behaviour that would be seen as socially unacceptable. The Id is the primitive, instinctual part of the mind. Id seeks immediate gratification of desires and needs without considering the outcomes or consequences.

Likewise, with the reference of the poem "The Two Voices By Alfred Lord Tennyson" there are two Id's; a positive Id and negative Id. Firstly, the "The despairing voice" is representing Id, who argue that life is meaningless. As it is marked as an instinctual, emotional and impulsive desire as far as it wants to escape from life. It seeks meditate relief from the pain and suffering. It lacks concerns for moral and traditional values or outcomes. However, this is called the negative part of the Id. Secondly, the "Hopeful voice" as it appeals for life, for spirituality and argues that if you die who will come and cry for you, your death is just meaningless to everyone. It represents the positive part of Id. It works on conscious and societal ideals.

Id operates on the immediate satisfaction or gratification without considering the consequences of the actions. It operates below the level of conscious awareness. It is unconscious. The Id seeks pleasure. It is the basic source of emotions such as fear, anger. However, in the poem "The Two Voices" highlights the desire of the poet to end his own life. It is better to escape from the realities of life. The poet considered death the better solution and the only solution to escape from suffering. Because the poet is unable to face the crisis. He wants to end his body and escape from life. His vision towards life seeks the immediate gratification without considering the consequences and circumstances of the actions. The voice explicitly suggest the suicide as the mean to end the suffering. To escape from the pain and trouble of life.

"A still small voice spake upon me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?"

This expression of the poet highlights the inner struggle or internalised pain, see are you that it would be better not to be alive at all. Ending life is the only solution to end the pain. This lines highlights the internal psychological struggle between the hope and hopelessness of life and its escapism from life.

"Again the voice space unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely twere better not to be.

Here the poet is in too much pain, arguing that it will be better for me to escape from life and the harsh realities or sufferings of life, besides just living in pain. Although these lines reflect the deep inside pain of the poet inside in his psyche.

'For I go, weak from suffering here:  
Naked I go, and void of cheer:



What is it that I may not fear?'

This expression of the poet is hopeless, full of pain. Due to the constant pain of suffering making him weak to survive. He states that if there is anything left it does not fear, it reflects deep pain. The expression of it can be observed in the following lines when he intends to show that life is miserable to spend.

"I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

Here, the poet laments our death, that he might die but still life will go on, nothing will stop with my death. Nature is beautifully continuous even when a person is in pain or suffering. The poet argues that the thorn bush will still bloom.

"I said, 'When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay;

Here the poet's tone is quite serious about his escapism from life. He imagines that people will say that he passes so quickly with the guilt or fear of life. The poet argues that people will disrespect my body or clay. My death is not significant to anyone after sometime everyone is busy in their own life. These lines reflect the struggle between conscious or unconscious mind thoughts. Reflecting the poet (Id) desire to escape.

"As far as might be, to crave out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about-

These lines reflect the poet's wish to create a room for human doubts. He wants to make his mind free from every thought of his escapism and wants to explore the understanding of everything.

"O dull, one-sided voice, 'said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die?

Ultimately, these lines reflect the positive desire or (Id) of the poet. He criticized his inner voice calling it dull and one sided. This moment marks a shift in awareness. The poet wants to see a balanced perspective. He argues that the desire for death flatters me with the false comfort of death.

### Ego

Ego is the rational part of the human psyche. Ego psychoanalysis is a branch of psychoanalytic theory that emphasizes the role of the ego in development, functioning, and defense mechanisms and using unconscious strategies like repression, denial and protecting The Mind from anxiety. As it focuses on its capacity for reality testing, adaptation, and mastery. Sigmund Freud, the founder of Psychoanalysis argues that "Ego is the part of the id which is modified with direct influence of the external world".

Ego psychoanalysis is a theoretical approach within psychoanalysis that highlights the ego's autonomous functions, including perception, memory, motor coordination, and defense mechanisms, proposing that the ego plays a central role not only in mediating conflicts among the id, superego, and reality but also in fostering healthy adaptation and development (Hartmann, 1939; A. Freud, 1936).

Ego is an important part of human psychology, it is the balanced approach. It operates on the principle of reality. It seeks a sense of identity. It is responsible for decision making. It is the mediator between the conscious and unconscious mind. It helps to navigate the world around us. It is the mediator between primary desire (Id) and the internal moral compass (the Superego) acting as reality principle. Ego in psychoanalytic perspective is means and ways. However, in the poem the voice forces the poet to escape the world. The poet mind is deep delves into the



suicidal thoughts show's how the ego's attempt to balance the conscious or unconscious mind thoughts.

The ego is trying to find a way to escape from the pain and suffering, which is the reality (conscious mind). Because after death there will be no suffering. Otherwisely, it's also driven by unconscious thoughts and feelings such as spiritual awareness. The poet's suicidal thoughts and feelings are the ways for the ego to try to take control and find a solution for suffering and troubles even if it is a drastic one. At the last poet attempts to a way to cope with suicidal thoughts with suicide to end his suffering. The ego becomes the meditating force between conscious mind (awareness of pain) and unconscious mind (desire of escape). Ultimately poet suicidal thoughts are an expression of the ego's struggle to balance these opposing forces.

“Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

In the following lines the poet argues that seeking strength is useless because my pain is covering my soul, and devastating my whole psyche. Due to this pain the poet feels weak. The poet says that it will be better to stay silent or not to live and escape from pain. However, these lines provide the ways and mediums to the poet to escape from life.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

The poet shames himself because he hasn't a healthy body, a healthy and peaceful mind. Poet mind is full of two conflicting voices and miserable thoughts inside his hidden psyche. He argues that finding peace isn't true peace, because conflicting thoughts make my mind dull. Lastly, the poet argues that due to this lack of things I am ready to escape from life.

'Sick art thou-a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

In these lines the poet's expression is quite confused or struggling with internalizing conflicting thoughts. Throughout the poem the poet is worried or scared, about the people. This fear makes the poet act like a coward. The pathway of fear dominates the shadow to escape from pain and suffering.

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

Here, in these lines the poet is questioning himself, why people feel fear of death. When it seems final and peaceful. It happens that life is going to truly end. If a person simply dies and rests in peace without dreams then why do people not clearly understand the truth that life is ending soon.

“A still small voice spake upon me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?'

This is the poet hidden psychological voice, that force him to commit suicide and escape from Life the horse suffering of the life. The voice is deeply sorrowful. The poet thinks that escaping is the only solution to the pain. Here's the poet is motivated by ego to commit the suicide.

“Again the voice space unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely twere better not to be.

Again these lines provide the ways to poet to commit the suicide and end the life. It reflects the deep hopelessness and fear of psychological struggle. The poet is sad for his suffering. The





conflicting voice make him to show to commit suicide to end your body ultimately the suffering will also end up.

“Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.’

Here, the poet is calm about his death. He thought after death he would rest peacefully. The poet tells you that once we die, our ears will fill with dust. No more we were able to hear the truth and reality of life. It suggests that with the end of life or death all suffering and pain will end.

### Superego

According to Freud (1923), the superego is the part of the personality that holds internalized moral standards and ideals acquired from parents and society, functioning as a moral conscience. "The superego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression... the stricter will be the domination of the superego over the ego" (Freud, 1923, p. 34).

The superego is the remarkable part of the human personality. It operates on moral principles. Superego is like an inner critic, which teaches what is good or bad. Super ego is the voice of reason and logic. It seeks the reason behind every action. It does not operate on the pleasure principle. With the reference of the poem, the superego is the counter of the opposing voice. It evokes spiritual awareness, and the light of hope. It seeks moral goods. Superego continual in the poem neglecting the voice with counter argumentations, highlighting the significance of hope and meaning of life. Throughout the poem the superego is trying to hold on to moral principles and values. At the last super ego over all the desires and pleasure principle of suicidal thoughts. Provoking the spiritual light and the light of hope.

“An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk: from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

This expression of the poet, highlights the huge transformation that is happening inside the poet's mind. The poet wants to break the old self or hidden boys which emphasize on self - destruction. He wants to get out from the old shell, he wants to shine again, his positivity and superego dominate his psyche.

Thereto the silent voice replied;  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:  
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

The voice answering back to the miserable questions, arising in the poet's mind. The voice argues that your pride is blinding you. The world is so wide. Your death makes no one sad look up at the night sky, the world is world and full of hopes. Search your meaning of life and seek hope and blessings. This following lines or hidden voice encourage the poet to shift from hopelessness to hopeful life.

I said, ‘The years with change advance:  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier change.

The hidden positive voice or superego, encourage poets that as year follow years and day follow days and changes will happen in things, so if you keep your sadness high it will make you unable to achieve objectives. It will continuously block your happiness. Having a negative attitude towards life leads towards destructive tendencies.

‘Consider well, ‘the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?



The hidden voice inside the poet psyche, encourages him to critically think about his decision regarding the death and suicide. The voice raises questions regarding the death it reflects to highlight that look at the face of the dead person who died till two hours ago. Will you find any feelings of passion, any pain or pride? It reflects that death will ultimately end all pains and sufferings, all emotions and feelings.

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

Finally, the superego dominates; it is the final stamp on the poet's psyche. The tone of the poet is religious, reflecting the Biblical Sabbath and Holy Spirit. The internal voice forces poets to emotionally surrender to the Will of God. The poet feels guilt or inner conflict in the face of religious or moral expectations.

#### **Struggle between Conscious and Unconscious Mind**

Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "The Two Voices" is a dramatic monologue that significantly portrays an internal struggle and often interpreted as a dialogue between the conscious (rational, life-affirming) and unconscious (dark, self-destructive) aspects of the speaker's mind.

#### **Unconscious Mind (Dark, Despairing Voice)**

"Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?"

This line shows the unconscious mind conflicting the speaker with deep existential questions and hidden desires, despair, and suicidal thoughts.

"Why shouldst thou live? why shouldst thou toil?"  
"Because the days are evil all,  
And sorrow's weight doth heavier fall."

These lines represent the pessimistic self-destructive inner voice urging surrender and questioning the purpose of existence. Ultimately, emphasizing the end of life. The tone of the poet is full of disillusionment, suggesting disappearance, questioning all efforts and value of life. The poet thought that life is useless because ending life is the only solution of ending the pain and the burden of the sufferings. Although, it is not just a mentally or psychological burden, but metaphorically it expresses the physical burden that continuously down the poet's soul and harms his psyche.

#### **Conscious Mind (Hopeful, Rational Voice)**

"I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from wrong to worse.'"

Here, the speaker's rational, aware and conscious self acknowledges his suffering but fears the moral consequences of giving in to despair. He feels fear of the suicide because of the moral expectations that's why at the last of the poem he turns toward the spirituality the ultimate truth of the life.

"Although I knew not how or why,  
I felt too deeply to deny,  
I felt there was a lower and a higher."

The following lines reflect the conscious mind of the poet and the moral awareness that recognizes an innate sense of right and wrong, and the hope for something greater. The poet greatly distinguished that ending life is not only the solution because he thought my death is not significant to anyone.

Throughout the poem the poet's mind delves into the conscious and unconscious thoughts. The conscious mind is evident in the poet's rational thoughts and awareness of surroundings. Throughout the conscious mind questioning the nature of existence. The conscious mind refers to



the aspect of mental processing that we can think and talk about rationally. It includes everything we are currently aware of, such as thoughts, perceptions, and feelings (Freud, 1915). Conscious mind voice plays the role of the superego. It seeks to operate on logic. Shielding the light on the poet's mind with hope. It helps poets to understand the meaning of life. Life is full of ups and downs. Life is full of struggles. Suicide is not a better way to escape the life. Life is the gift of God's blessing. The unconscious mind contains thoughts, memories, and desires that are well below the surface of conscious awareness but still influence behaviors and emotions. It is a reservoir of feelings and urges that the conscious mind is unaware of (Freud, 1915). On the other side the unconscious mind is the voice of (Id and ego) neglecting the desire of hope and encouraging for the suicidal thoughts. Thinking that life is hard let it to end. Life is full of troubles and death is the only solution to avoid the troubles. Escaping is the only solution to avoid suffering. This voice is coming from the internal deep fears, past turmoils, past experiences, sadness, worries. It continuously makes poets feel hopeless. The conscious mind is fighting with the unconscious mind making the poet's inner struggle.

Hard task, to pluck resolve, 'I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

This line highlights the poet's awareness of the emotional emptiness, that's why lastly he turns towards these spirituality, showing a conscious mind awareness of their struggles. The conscious mind is trying to make a sense of the situation and finding a way forward.

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

The speaker is drawn to navigate "Barren Voices" that resonate with their inner despair, rather than the voice that encourages joy and positivity. This choice reveals an unconscious attraction to pessimistic thoughts and emotions.

### Results

At the last the poet finds the sense of hope and revival. The rational and moral principles won. They overpower the pessimistic voice. The superego and conscious mind pulls towards positivity. On the other hand, Id and unconscious mind pulls towards the darkness and suicidal thoughts. Ultimately, the poet's conscious mind is able to reassert control, leading to a sense of positivity, hope, peace and resolve.

### Summary of Findings

The poem is rich in Psychoanalytic interpretations. Firstly it deeply addresses the Sigmund Freud theory of personality reflecting the; Id, ego, superego. However, the id is the desire of the poet. Ego is the pathway to fulfill this Id and superego operates on the principle of morality searching the reasons. Secondly, it addresses the psyche of the poet's mind and the struggle between conscious and unconscious mind. Whereas, the suicidal thoughts are rooted in the unconscious desire but besides it the conscious mind aware of life and the significance of the life. However, the conflicting voices explore the opposing desires as it represents the internalized turmoil inside the poet mind. However, there were so many themes of psychoanalytical inside the poem not just about content but also in tone and poetic structure.

The internalized turmoil, trauma and conflicts often influence the overall behaviour of human beings as they feel detached from life and seek the inability to move on. With the reference of the poem the poet faces so many unresolved conflicts and disturbed psychology which continuously influences his behaviour. The poet wants to escape from life because he was unable to face reality. Although, inner conflicts are marked as psychological struggles rooted in a deeper suffering with opposing desires and voices.



### Discussion

Alfred Lord Tennyson poem "The Two Voices" is the profound monologue that is held inside the poet's mind. It is critically examined through the lens of Psychoanalytic theoretical framework. The Psychoanalysis theory is deeply encapsulated with the poem that highlights the poet in a struggle, conflicts, despair, existential doubts and searching for the meaning of life. The poems by Lord Tennyson become a Psychoanalytical battlefield, where the superego ultimately dominates and challenges the id of the poet. Continuously, the poet's mind is going through the conscious and unconscious mind struggle; which reflects the deep concern that influences the human psyche. Ultimately, the conscious mind made the decision to serve for life and superego gain victory. The light and the wisdom window are opened. The poem reflects the two competing and conflicting voices, one voice urging the poet towards death and self-destruction. Besides it, there are other urges for life, the meaning of existence and seeking the principle of reality.

### Conclusion

The two voices by Alfred Lord Tennyson offer groundbreaking psychoanalytic interpretations, exploring the suffering and complexity of human beings. Which highlights the designs and meaninglessness towards life. Significantly, it highlights the human desire which is never unified but continuously evolving. As far as this psychoanalytical struggle is concerned, it has a dangerous impact on the minds of the individuals and openly contradicts between opposing choices and voices inside the human psyche. The theoretical framework of Sigmund Freud's theoretical framework is remarkable to analyse the psychological struggles and conflicts, in the poem of Alfred Lord Tennyson. In the poem The conscious and unconscious mind is reflected to internalize voice conflicts or contradiction in the poet's psyche.

### Recommendations

Future researchers could expand the study by comparing other Victorian monologues with psychoanalytic interpretations. As it explores Victorian neurosis and repression. Moreover, the future researcher should analyse the text of the two voices by applying Jungian archetypal theory to read the deeply human mind as one shadow and other as ego projection. Likewise, future researchers should also study the underexplored personal life of Tennyson: personal grief and losses that influence his psyche and causing the psychological struggles marked as the biographical traits influence shape the poem from psychological depth. Moreover, new studies must explore the modern neuro-psychological approaches to Victorian poetry.

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