

**THE PERCEPTION OF LOVE**  
**IN “THAT I DID ALWAYS LOVE” BY EMILY DICKINSON**  
**AND “LOVE AFTER LOVE” BY DEREK WALCOTT**

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**ABSTRACT**

The goal of this study was to learn more about the perception of love in “That I Did always Love” by Emily Dickinson and “Love after Love: by Derek Walcott.

The research method used is the descriptive-qualitative method. Abrams theory becomes the main key in this research. The results of this research showed that the perception of Emily Dickinson about love in her poem “That I did always Love” that Life is nothing without love. She forces to have love and it must happen into her life. Because she desires to be loved, wanted, needed, missed, and prioritized by the man she wants. Where in real life she has never felt what love is. Therefore she seems so desperate to feel and get love. In contrast to Derek Walcott's perception of love in his poem “Love after Love”, he considers that there is no need to rush into looking for love; he wants all his readers to focus more on improving themselves and loving themselves and allowing true love to find them.

Keywords: *desperate for love, Emily Dickinson, self-love, Derek Walcott.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

This paper will examine the perception of love in “That I did always Love” written by Emily Dickinson (1863), and “Love after Love” written by Derek Walcott (1976). Dickinson’s poem” That I did always Love “tells about what someone demands from love because someone’s life is nothing without love. Someone desperately needs love to make them feel happy. “Love after Love” tells about someone who fixes her self-concept after a break-up.

The research question guiding this study is (1) what are different perceptions of love in “That I did always Love” and in “Love after Love”? The purpose of this paper is

to identify poets' perception of love in two poem using expressive theory as the approach. The research method used is the descriptive-qualitative method.

## **PHARAPRASE**

### **“That I did always Love” by Emily Dickinson**

This poem is about the expression of the writer's need for love, and she will do anything to get love. If people constantly ask her that she has always been adored and loved. She can give evidence that she loved until she died. She will never live if she can't feel love in her entire life. She thinks that life needs love, because love is immortality. If people have any doubts about this. She will prove more that love is the most important thing above everything else.

### **“Love after Love” by Derek Walcott**

The subject of this poem is the poet assures people who have been heartbroken that they will be reunited with their loved ones. They'll do it by reconnecting with their genuine selves, which the speaker equates to cheerfully greeting their-self at the door or in the mirror and inviting their-self to a meal.

This experience, according to the poet, is similar to falling back in love with their-self after a period of separation. The poet encourages grieving people to connect with and nourish the part of themselves they've ignored throughout their previous relationship, the inner "stranger" who truly understands and loves them.

The poet then advises them to get rid of the relics of the failed relationship, such as love letters, photos, unpleasant notes, and, metaphorically, the self-image they gained from it. The speaker encourages them to take advantage of everything their lives still have to offer.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher will apply the method of descriptive-qualitative research. Ary, Jacob, Razavieh and Sorensen (2010: 419) point out qualitative study uses words and images in order to give the answers to the research questions.

## Source Data and Data

The primary source of data for this study were poems “That I Did always Love” by Emily Dickinson and “Love after Love: by Derek Walcott.

## Data Analysis Procedure

For the first step in data analysis, the researcher will reread the poems “That I Did always Love” by Emily Dickinson and “Love after Love” by Derek Walcott as the main data. The researcher should reread the data because it is difficult to grasp, evaluate, and interpret the data if the researcher just read it once. It is recommended to read the data at least twice.

## DISCUSSION

This section deals with the answer of the research question and the author will explain about the personal life of the poets. According to Britannica (2021), Emily Dickson born in Dec. 10, 1830, Amherst, Mass. She began composing in the 1850s, and by 1860, she was experimenting with language and prosody, aiming for vivid, exact phrases and epigrammatic concision while keeping to the Protestant hymn's essential quatrains and meters. Love, mortality, and nature are among the subjects of her deceptively simple poems, whose depth and intensity contrast with the seeming tranquility of her life. Her countless letters are sometimes on par with her poems in terms of expertise. By 1870, she had reduced herself to wearing only white and refusing to see most guests. Only 10 of her almost 1,800 poems are known to have been published during her lifetime.

Emily was often kept home from school as a child because her parents and others thought she was fragile. As a result, she prefers to be alone. She wrote down all of her feelings in her solitude. As a result, her exceptional composing abilities were recognized by both teachers and pupils. When Emily became a grown girl, she decided not to marry and focused more on writing poetry. So according to her personal life story in Britannica (2022), the researcher uses the poem” That I did always Love “to analyze the meaning of it, line to line. The poet is using the terms love several times to claim what her feeling is. Here are the citations and also analysis about this poem:

In the first and second line the poet tried to answer what people wanted to know about her feelings, here is the citation:

“That I did always love, I bring thee Proof” (Dickinson, 1863:1-2)

According to her personal life story in Britannica (2022), she never married. So she realized that people really wanted to know about her life that she is loved or not, she was lonely or not. She tried to convey that she could prove that she always loved by her man. She said like this because she didn't want anybody to doubt her.

In the third and fourth line, the poet shows about her desperation. She needs love so much. Here is the citation:

“That till I loved I never lived – Enough –” (Dickinson, 1863:3-4)

In the third and fourth, the poet emphasizes the readers that she recognizes that the man she loves is her life. She says like this because she thinks her life will be miserable if she cannot live with him, he is the love of her life. In this case, she puts him on a pedestal. She show how important to have him in her life. She is craving his presence in her life.

In the fifth and sixth line, she still shows her desperation about love. Here is the citation:

“That I shall love alway-I argue thee” (Dickinson, 1863:5-6)

In these lines, she shows about her needs, she really needs love from her man. Therefore she forces herself shall to feel and get love, she shall have him for real, so she can touch him, feel him, smell him, hugs him. She needs love for real not only in her mind. Because it is enough to have him only in her imagination. She forces love to show up instantly in her reality.

In seventh and eighth line, she conveys about her beliefs about what love is. Here is the citation:

“That love is life-And life hath Immortality” (Dickinson, 1863:7-8)

In these lines she claims that love makes life immortal, because love makes life more meaningful. Love makes life very beautiful. Love will not make her a lonelier woman. Love will not make her suffer. Love will always make her a very special woman. In this line she expresses her longing for this rare emotion she never had in her life. In ninth and tenth line, the poet tries to convey furthermore. Here is the citation:

“This—dost thou doubt—Sweet—Then have I Nothing to show. But  
Calvary —” (Dickinson,1863:9-10)

In these lines, the poet further conveys to the readers that if they have any doubts about love, she can prove that being loved by her man is the most important thing in her life. She just needs love and nothing else. She assures love will be able to change a person for the better. She convinces life will be different when she will be loved, wanted, needed, missed, and prioritized by the man she wants. She really needs love and love must happen into her life.

The reason Dickinson seems desperately wants to be loved in this poem, because she never married until the end of her life, so this poem is an expression of her true feelings about her desire to be loved, wanted, needed, missed, and prioritized by the man she wants. Where in real life she has never felt what love is. Therefore she seems so desperate to feel and get love.

The second poem is “Love after Love” written by Derek Walcott. According to Britannica (2022), Derek Walcott was born January 23, 1930, Castries, Saint Lucia. West Indian poet and playwright whose works focus on the cultural experience of the Caribbean. In 1992, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He started composing poems at a young age, went on to teach at schools in Saint Lucia and Grenada, and published essays and reviews to Trinidad and Jamaican periodicals. His plays were first staged in Saint Lucia in 1950, and he studied theatre in New York City from 1958 to 1959. Walcott had a very happy childhood because his parents were very supportive of

his desire to write poetry. By the age of 19, Walcott had self-published his first two volumes, *25 Poems* in 1948, and

*Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos* in 1949, with the help of his mother, who paid for the printing.

In 1954, Walcott married Secretary Fay Moston, and they had a son, Paul, but the marriage terminated in divorce two years later. Walcott married for the second time to Margaret Maillard, a hospital almoner, and they had two children, Eizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw and Anna Walcott-Hardy, before divorcing in the mid-1970s. Walcott married Norline Metivier for the third time in 1976, but the marriage did not last.

In 1976, he wrote the poem "Love after Love". There are four stanzas in this poem. He expressed his feelings about his failures in his marriage, which is so painful because he loved too much and couldn't be himself, and in this poem, Walcott actually teaches how to love yourself first in order to get true love. In this section, the researcher will analyze line to line from this poem to make it clearer.

The poet addresses the readers directly, using the terms *you*, *your*, and *yourself* several times. So here are the citations and also analysis about this poem:

In the first line, Walcott believes the time will come to start self-love. Here is the citation:

"The time will come" (Walcott, 1976:1)

Breaking up might be difficult since you were physically near, shared a bond that they can't have with anyone else, and shared life experiences. They were ecstatic. They shared their heart no matter how long or short their relationship was. And that's one of the main reasons why breaking up is so difficult. But, no matter what happens, they must face it, even if it is painful. Therefore after breakup, the poet realizes that self-love will not come quickly after a breakup, but it will come in time.

In the second line, Walcott assures the joy will come. Here is the citation:

"When, with elation" (Walcott, 1976:2)

After breaking up, sometimes people actually see it as the toughest thing that has ever happened to them; they don't want to immediately move on and improve

themselves, because it feels so painful and feels like they need time to mourn. The poet wants them to look at this problem from a different perspective; of course they have to look at this problem in a more positive way of thinking. Because lamenting sadness is just a waste of time. Therefore the poet informs the readers that a positive event is on the horizon because people appear to be excited about it, and not just a little bit excited. Whatever occurs appears to be a source of immense joy, or "elation."

In the third and fourth line, the poet assures that the readers will be happy if they start falling in love to their selves. Here is the citation:

"You will greet yourself arriving at your own door, in your own mirror"  
(Walcott,1976:3-4)

The poet assures the readers by using the word "you" that they will get happiness, where the readers will pick up their happiness at the door of their own life, and of course they will pick up that happiness after they become their own version of their selves. The reason they will be happy if they become their own version of their selves. Because they will have identity in their new relationship. Therefore, they will give boundaries to others and they will be happy to enjoy new relationship.

In the fifth line, the poet assures the readers furthermore about the new version of themselves. Here is the citation:

"And each will smile at the other's welcome" (Walcott, 19786:5)

When they improve their selves, love themselves again, put their selves on a pedestal, and become the person they want to be who is respected in their new relationship. Surely they will be happier. Therefore, the poet appears to be confident that the readers and their alternate self will be delighted to see each other. It means when they become the new version of their selves, they will be happy.

In the sixth line, Walcott tells readers to enjoy life more. Here is the citation:

"And say, sit here. Eat" (Walcott, 1976 :6)

Becoming someone they want to be, of course, takes time and process; therefore they must enjoy their life during the process of going. So, the poet asks the readers to love themselves more, to have "Me time", to pay attention to their self; to sit quietly, to enjoy a good meal, and start caring for themselves.

In the seventh line, the poet assures the readers about the stranger will come. Here is the quote:

"You will love again the stranger who was yourself." (Walcott, 1976:7)

It's a lot simpler to love someone else when they love their self. They don't need someone else's approval or love when they accept and love their self, and they are more inclined to trust that they will find someone who loves them and loves them back. Because of their self-acceptance and positive outlook, they can be more open in relationships and embrace being alone. Overall, this viewpoint implies that when you sense a connection, it is genuine and not motivated solely by a need for acceptance or affection. Therefore the poet emphasizes to the readers that they will love the stranger that was their self again, implying that they used to love their self before entering a relationship. However, the person who they were back then now appears to be a stranger.

In the eighth and ninth line, the poet assures the readers to return their hearts to themselves. Here is the citation:

"Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart to itself, to the stranger who has loved you" (Walcott, 1976:8-9)

The poet invites the audience to return their hearts to themselves, as if they are now deserving of their love. They are still loved by their prior self, and they are anxiously waiting to be loved "again" by their current self. Let say simply be kind to themselves, experience the love within, and radiate that love. Take care of both their mind and body. Remove their toxic Beliefs. Begin to believe in themselves and everything else that can help them accomplish greater heights and better life goals.

In the tenth till twelfth line, Walcott conveys the readers to be loyal to one's identity. Here is the citation:

“All your life, whom you ignored for another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf” (Walcott, 1976:10-12)

With a lesson on the significance of being loyal to one's identity, the poet assures the readers that they will feel happy once they return to who they truly are. After all, despite being "ignored," this person's self is the one "who knows [them] by heart" and has been present throughout the person's "life." This idea demonstrates comprehension and devotion, and delight will ensue when this individual reclaims their identity.

In thirteenth to fifteenth line, the poet assures the readers to make their past stories to be their lesson. Here is the citation:

“The photographs, the desperate notes, peel your own image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.”(Walcott, 1976 :13-15)

The poet says that the readers should make the past as a lesson and start fix themselves as a new version of them. Then surrender because true love will find them. The reason they must surrender or let go is when they let go means they trust that everything will work out for them, they do not worry at all when or how love will find them. Just believe that love will find them, because love will come no matter what

The poet gave good advice in this poem, because he experienced several failures in his marriage, so this poem is his way of expressing his feelings about how important it is to love himself before starting to enter into a new relationship, where he experienced suffering during several previous relationships which made him not free to express himself. He didn't even feel like himself. Therefore, it is necessary to have an identity in order to be respected and loved by a partner. Walcott also gave very good advice so that there is no need to rush into looking for love; he wants all his readers to focus more on improving themselves and loving themselves and allowing true love to find them.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up everything that has been wrote so far, the perception of Emily Dickinson about love in her poem “That I did always Love” that love is life. Life is nothing without love. Everybody cannot understand how powerful and magical love is

until they have felt it. So, she forces to have love and it must happen into her life. Because she desires to be loved, wanted, needed, missed, and prioritized by the man she wants. Where in real life she has never felt what love is. That's why she seems so desperate to feel and get love.

In contrast to Derek Walcott's perception of love, he considers that there is no need to rush into looking for love; he wants all his readers to focus more on improving themselves and loving themselves and allowing true love to find them. He spoke like this in his poem "Love after Love" due to his experience of several failures in his marriages

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