

# **THE FEMALE CHARACTER AND EXTERNAL CONDITIONS IN SYLVIA PLATH'S POETRY. A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## **Abstract**

In Sylvia Plath's (1932-1963) life and work many facets and mechanisms of the female and melancholic psyche were explored. However, the present literature review is a survey of the papers published between 2010 and 2020 that approach in one way or another, self-examination and promoted awareness of the typical human characteristics of Sylvia Plath's poetry and the external circumstances of female figures. The Review aims at providing a better understanding of the current knowledge about the female character portrayed by Sylvia Plath.

**Keywords:** Female Character, External Conditions, Sylvia Plath's Poetry, A Literature Review.

## **1. Introduction**

Many aspects and structures of the female and melancholic mind had been discussed in Plath's life and work. The present literature review, however, is a survey of the papers published between 2010 and 2020 that approach, self-examine and encourage understanding of Sylvia Plath's typical human attributes in one way or another. The review aims at presenting a wider knowledge of the female character depicted by Sylvia Plath in her poetry. However, the review is structured by grouping the works that sound similar in presenting the subject matter or the purpose of each one of the reviewed studies.

## **II. Critique**

### **2.1.A Woman with a Mental State Disorder**

Sylvia Plath's childhood affected her life in the long term. Her writings show how she really felt about herself and the people around her. All the critics agreed that "Morning Song" expresses Plath's conflict in her personality. She shows her revulsion at being dead in a grave by saying "feels like hell". Moreover, in "Daddy," her mental state disorder can be seen when she describes her father and husband (Alnaqbi and Allen, 2013).

Most feminist commentators have argued that insurmountable male inequality is what contributed to the obsessive alienation issue of Plath. Christina Britzolak argues that, faced with male dominance, Plath tackles a far broader problem than mere feelings of isolation and futility (Mehta; 2019). The images in Ariel take on a stronger significance to the life of the poet, representing her emotional state more strongly (Abdulameer ;2020 ).

### **2.2. Oppressed Female**

Plath's various rhythms appear in poems like Elm '(1962) and the "Rain Now," this big hush' contrasted with "Now I split up into bits like clubs floating around." Plath's Mirror '(1961) portrays a woman who sees herself in the mirror as well as in it. Plath replicates the passive photographs taken on the mirror's surface here, and she defends her female identity through these pictures. In a speaking mirror, the repressed female voice comes to the surface and the woman acquires the power to regulate her language and the evidence the mirror provides: she defends her feminine stereotypes in these images. The repressed female voice is brought to the surface through a speaking mirror (Georgant; 2010).

### **2.3. Mystic Woman**

Plath's ability to apply mysticism to her writing was not completely established in 1956, but she had achieved much with complex meanings since her youthfulness. Dates and past incidents are verifiable. If you think any of these are examples of the premonitions provided by Sylvia Plath is up to you (Abdulameer ;2020 ). Within terms of psychoanalysis, attention has been given to the various factors that can theoretically affect the human psyche, sometimes negatively. The emphasis was primarily on the female psyche, so the study centered explicitly on the following: the effect of the Electra / Oedipus complex on the relationship between the girl / woman and the father figure, both her real father and the abstract order that acts as a father in patriarchal culture, and consequently with her romantic relationships. Also the symptoms and possible effects of melancholia and death-drive were investigated, in particular as an act of self-affirmation in terms of suicide. To the degree that it was feasible and logical, these psychoanalytic ideas were linked to Plath's work, and to certain aspects of her life by

inference. The power of the symbolic order in Plath's work has been explored as well as how these can silence women, the female writer in particular. Many core concepts include the role of the woman as object of product and desire and the role of the mother figure in perpetuating patriarchal pressure. In numerous of Plath's figurations, the power of symbolic order has been explored as well as how these can silence women, particularly the female writer. It has also explored the role of the mother figure in perpetuating patriarchal pressure on her daughter. The more downsides of feminist philosophy were stressed, while neglecting the more constructive aspects and alternatives of the philosophy (Alice:2011).

#### **2.4. Silenced Woman**

Through comparisons to the Holocaust, a common experience Plath's writings show the brutality in terms of the aid of the best figurative vocabulary using simile and metaphor. Use Holocaust imagery may better be viewed as a deliberate effort to organize tools of shock for the readers' attention. Holocaust imagery has been promoted as the most popular and criticized elements of Plath's references to global events. Because of its immediate emotional meaning the Holocaust became a powerful metaphor for her. Plath saw both her and the victims. However, in *Ariel* Plath claims an acute familiarity with the Holocaust-not a distant American observer any more. She becomes a credible witness, and sometimes a survivor. Plath was also said to "not have won the right to use the events." Later poetry by Plath represents a crucial connection between the politically engaged Holocaust verse project and the haunted cultural poetics of the 1950s. These are more than nostalgic laments about the trauma and pain of the 1940s, and offer nuanced philosophical meditations on historical consciousness (kumar;1012).

She flies away in *Ariel* like an arrow toward the sun, which is a sign of man, meaning. She flies against her oppressors for killing them. And she eventually understands in this poem her tenderness as a female whose soul is as precious as the dew. Plath portrays herself and the kind of poetry she's writing through a cluster of images during this time. She identifies with a defiant character, "Godiva," who wants to strip off her white and pure clothes (Abdulameer;2020). The phallogocentric structure of language at Lacan undermines language's position as a neutral mirror of objective reality. Thus, Sylvia Plath rediscovers female experiences in her poems using "feminine writing" and thus exhibits female language productivity (Marzieh and Farideh;2016). For the poet, suicide as a picture is the "true definition." It can be concluded that "it is a language that talks, not the speaker; to write is to reach the stage where only the language acts, 'performs' and not 'me'" by a prerequisite of impersonality" (Pordzik;2014).

#### **2.5. A Meditative Post- Modern Woman**

When personal memories are turned into entertainment Plath's poem explores a genuinely post-modern "revolutionary memory" moment and gives us a blueprint for finding new ways of leveraging dominant ideology's hegemonic suture points. Plath said her poems had arrived, specifically: "Out of the sensuous and emotional experiences I have" "I cannot sympathize with these cries from the heart that are informed by nothing except a needle and a knife" Plath: "I believe that one should be able to control and manipulate experiences"(kumar;1012).

#### **2.6. Death and Rebirth**

Plath's multiple analyzes pay careful attention to her struggle with depression and death, due to her status as a confessional writer. Sylvia Plath's life and suicide were well-described in her writing. Plath suffered from depression and suicide(Alice:2011). Plath's poetry frequently celebrates and chooses life, although through a trajectory of death to rebirth. In Plath's later poetry, the ascent (in "Ariel," the ride) is the purifying process. When we read her poetry without eyeing her life, a more accessible, optimistic reading can be obtained. In accordance with Viktor Shklovsky's theories, Plath used performativity as a way to defamiliarize death and rebirth. For certain poems, rebirth is performative, and the cycle is often an implied allegation evidently aimed at people. Besides having the "terrible," divine gift of rebirth, by all appearances this female is ordinary. Her first reaction to the crime or crisis is silence, which takes place at a location identified as a "valley of death" or wintering / hibernation spot. Gift from the speaker is seen in her victorious ascent(tStenskär;2014).

#### **2.7. Mythological Character**

Plath associates herself with the Phoenix image; thus, she is a "red-hair witch" resurrecting from the ashes. -- event, scenario, and circumstance takes on a symbolic aspect until it replaces the ideas with a collection of images. The poem emphasizes that the persona feels that this environment is her only home and she reaches a depression from which she can get

no progression: "I simply cannot see where to get to." Even the image of the church, which is supposed to provide her with the security that religion provides, is accompanied by the images of the graveyard (Abdulameer ;2020 ).

### **2.8.Middle-Class Women**

The mythopoetics of whiteness in Plath's poetry indicate a diversity of potential interpretations. The images of white, middle-class women also ironically point to a lack which permeates her poetry. These insights do indicate a restrictedness of thematic scope, but should not be seen as discrediting Plath. Sylvia Plath managed to model her oeuvre to partially coincide with her life, which she mythologised for that purpose. Such poetic methodology does not imply a confessional inappropriateness. When approaching her poetry without prejudice(Matović;2018).

### **2.9. The Plight of the author**

Plath follows a strategy that, according to Barthes, was instituted by Proust. She uses Lady Lazarus as a possible author person, but in fact it is only representing a fragment of the fictional author. Therefore, Lady Lazarus is in no way the author, mistaken as such by the "crowd." Rather, she is the language of the numerous works and texts the come to live again and again, that "acts, performs." Lady Lazarus severs a purpose beyond defying the author, substituting it with a fragment to be confused with a real person. Michel Foucault acknowledges an inherent power of writing above going "beyond its own rules and transgressing its limits" Lady Lazarus is performing her own death as a means of escaping it. One major motif of the poem is its allusion to the Holocaust and the figure of Ilse Koch. Gubar understands the use of the lyrical "I" as an absent personification, termed "prosopopoeia""Lady Lazarus" is in strong tension with commercial and consumerist culture, critic says. It questions the naturalisation of the almost cannibalistic desire for the one and only author. "Lady Lazarus" functions as a poem opposing the ideological force of imposing a definite, genuine author to a specific literary work. Lady Lazarus as a fragment of the real author manages to "rise out of the ashes," to be constituted by the interpreter himself(Pordzik;2014).

### **III. Conclusion**

Thus this literature review is a survey of existing knowledge of the female character depicted by Sylvia Plath in the papers published between 2010 and 2020 that explore in one way or another, self-examination and understanding of Sylvia Plath 's typical human qualities and the situational factors of women characters more extensively.

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