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Anguished Psyche is Selected Poems of Sylvia Plath

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by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled *Anguished Psyche in Selected of Sylvia Plath* is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis paper's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no materials which to a substantial extent has been accepted for award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled *Anguished Psyche is Selected Poems of Sylvia Plath* submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Bishu Thapa, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research looks into the portrayal of *Anguished Psyche in Selected Poems of Sylvia Plath*. The cause of her psychic disorders will be explored and the responsible factors contributing to her mental depression will also be analyzed through textual analysis based on the writing of psychoanalysis as discussed by Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Lacan. In “Lady Lazarus” poem, Plath comparing her enemy with Nazi who is the male authority figure in the poem. After the death of Jews in Nazi concentration camp; Hitler used their body for commodity. Speaker expresses her anger towards Holocaust patriarchy. In this poem, Plath compares patriarchal brutality as the brutality of Hitler. Again her identity has been commodified like Nazi. “Lady Lazarus” is really about Sylvia’s suicidal attempts and near death experiences. Plath describes the speaker’s oppression with the use of World War II Nazi Germany allusions and images. She develops a German images to denote Nazism and in turn, oppression. Here, references to Nazis and Jews is actually a metaphor also used in “Daddy”, and is really painting a picture for the reader. Like the Jews in the Holocaust, she is a victim, while the doctors and others figures are her oppressors like the Nazis.

Likewise, in the “Ariel” the red eye metaphorically stands for patriarchy against which she protests through suicide. It is the confession of suicide but that suicide is a tool to fight against the patriarchy. Freud believed that aim of life is death, and for Plath life was poetry. So, by extension, poetry for her now becomes death. She is disturbed by cultural differences for male and female. Her deep meditation on the culture leads into trouble. To get relief from trouble she expresses her mental split through poetic lines (art). Her personal and literary career was not running smoothly. This proves that Plath’s mental breakdown does not allow her to see good in things around her. And airy spirit is used as symbolic expression of her distorted psyche.

Contents

Declaration	II
Letter of Approval	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Abstract	V
1. Introduction: Psychoanalysis and Plath's Poems	1 - 7
2. Imagery and Symbols Shaping Anguished Psyche in Plath's Representative Poems	8 - 23
3. Conclusion: Revelation of Anguished Psyche in Sylvia Plath's Poetry	24 - 25
Works Cited	

Introduction: Psychoanalysis and Plath's poems

Psyche refers to the mind and those activities that enrich the mind. Originally, it is the Greek concept of the self, encompassing the modern idea of self and mind. Religious, Philosophical and literary texts defines psyche with a great variety of contradiction perspective. In psychology, the psyche is the totality of the human mind, conscious and unconscious. Psychology is the science of human behavior, soul and mind including conscious and unconscious phenomena as well as feeling and thought. It includes feelings, attitudes thoughts and other mental processes. Anguish is an emotion. It is a feeling of severe pain, mental suffering, distress, anxiety and sadness. Anguish is related to misery, dread, despair and depression. Sigmund Freud is considered the inventor of psychoanalysis. In his remarkable work, *Creative Writers and Daydreaming*, Freud says “anguished psyche refers to the unconscious mind of which nobody can be directly aware. It is an artist who allows this part of mind to come to expression in a very distorted form” (78). Anguish is one of the feelings that brings together and tears apart people, families and societies.

In literary field, “Psychoanalysis” is a term which is formed with the combination of two words ‘psyche’ and ‘analysis.’ Here, ‘psyche’ means the human mind and ‘analysis’ talks about the way or method to reveal the things which are in human mind. So, psychoanalysis is a set of theories and therapeutic techniques which is done to read the human mind as therapy or methodology. Psychoanalysis treats literature as a patient and tries to uncover unconscious aspect of the text or unconscious state of mind. In *Critical theory today*, Tyson quoting Sigmund Freud, whose psychoanalytic discoveries emerged from his recognition that anguished psyche is the product of a mind itself, argues that psyche consists of three level:

The conscious mind, the subconscious mind and the unconscious mind. The Unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desire, and unresolved conflicts. We have many evil desires and fears. We try to control those guilty desires by our conscious mind but they are not erased. They are stored in the unconscious level. The conscious mind is that portion of the mind of which one is presently aware. The subconscious consists of that which is not in immediate awareness but it is easily accessible (12).

Freud had said the unconscious is formed through the repression of guilty desires, fears and painful experiences. Jacques Lacan says:

The unconscious is structured like a language in another way that involves loss or lack. The mirror stage is the pre-linguistic stage. In the mirror stage, the child discovers his own image, which becomes 'other' to the self, thereby establishing subjectivity. In the symbolic stage the child enters language and the subject, now linguistic, is continuously deferred down the chain of signifiers (29).

For Lacan the unconscious is structured like a language. The unconscious is formed through an experience of loss which is never fulfilled. Sylvia Plath who is at the centre of iconoclastic movement "Confessional Poetry" Struggles to transcribe anguished psyche into the lines of her poetry. The most representative poems "Daddy," "Ariel," "Lady Lazarus," and "The Colossus" deal common features related to neurosis like obsession with death, intense suffering, negative feelings, emotional experiences and imagination. In these poems, she also uses wild images and

symbols of cries and aggressive claims which suggest that Plath is interested knowingly and unknowingly to express her anguished psyche. Images like broken idol in “The Colossus,” airy spirit in “Ariel,” obsession with death in “Lady Lazarus,” and hatred towards male in “Daddy” present Plath’s preoccupation with the expression with her neurotic mind.

In *The English Studies Book*, Rop Pope defines “Psychology for our purposes can be initially defined as the understanding of mental and emotional processes as these relate to language, literature and culture” (96). Psychoanalysis is the study of these processes in individual people. It is concerned with techniques for resolving mental and emotional problems and with people realising their full potential. Likewise in *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams defines “psychoanalysis” “as a procedure for the analysis and therapy of neuroses, but soon expended it to account for many developments and practices in the history of civilization, including warfare, mythology, and religion, as well as literature and others arts”. “Freud proposes that literature and other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consists of the imagined, or fantasized, fulfillment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety”(257). Human behavior is always guided by their psychology. When we understand their psychology, we will know the deeper reality about them. Freud talks about the conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious states of mind. He also developed the concepts of id, ego, and super ego. He invented many others concepts such as oedipal complex, sibling rivalry, dream displacement, dream condensation, repression and many other ideas. Psychoanalysis deals with our unconscious and desires. When our desires are not fulfilled, they are stored in our unconscious mind. Therefore, unconscious is the storehouse of guilty desires, fears, needs, worries, troubles, wounds and unsolved conflicts. Psychoanalysis is a theory that discusses the unconscious. One of the major concept of the theory of psychoanalysis

is the formation of unconscious. In Freudian psychoanalysis, unconscious part of human mind is made up of unfulfilled desires particularly, sex desires. We are not directly aware of this faculty of unconscious. Even if we are not conscious of it this faculty plays a very powerful role in our life.

Freud's theories belong to what we call classical psychoanalysis. Some psychological theorists have attempted to offer different theories from that of classical psychoanalysis or mainstream psychoanalysis. Among such innovative theorists are Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Lacan. In *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams quoting Carl Gustav Jung says, "Jung's emphasis is not on the individual unconscious, but on what he calls the "collective unconscious" . . ." (260). Jung talks unconscious being collective rather than individual. For him collective unconscious is the result of shared and collective memories of the past. Lacan theorizes it in relation to the issue of language. Jacques Lacan offered a different theory regarding the formation of the unconscious. Freud had said that the unconscious is formed through the repression of guilty desires, fears, and painful experiences.

Lacan says that the unconscious is formed through an experience of loss which is never fulfilled. Lacan argues that the operation of the unconscious resemble two very common processes of language that imply a kind of loss or lack: metaphor and metonymy. Lacan defines unconscious as the result of repressive of language. However and in whatever the unconscious is defined the most important concept about it is that it guides the activities of the individual in their practical life. It also means that we are not always in the control of conscious alone.

Literature is an art form that imitates human life through the written discourse whether it is written or spoken. It is impossible to create any literary texts without using language. To create literature we need language, without language we can't express anything. Literature is the

reflection of reality, society, culture and so on. Literature portrays the society or social reality. It is in oral or written form that reflection is used by the language. So, to express the reflection we need the language. Therefore, language and literature are interdependent. Language is the medium of communication and literature itself is the communication. It gives the meaning of the life on the basis of language. Language in literature is marble, cements, sculpture, clay, metal, and statue. Language is the materials of the statue, without language it can't be metal or statue. So, they are interrelated.

Literature is a term which expresses or describes different subjects or subjectivity which is related to the human world as the imitation. Literature is very important to reveal the fact of human world, feelings, emotions, ups and downs etc by modifying the reality in the form of reading, writing, and the thinking. In literary field, "Psychoanalysis" is a term which is formed with the combination of two words 'psyche' and 'analysis.' Here, 'psyche' means the human mind and 'analysis' talks about the way or method to reveal the things which are in human mind. So, psychoanalysis is a set of theories and therapeutic treats literature as a patient and tries to uncover unconscious aspect of the text or unconscious state of mind. In *Critical Theory & Practice: A Course book*, Keith Green quoting literary critic Shoshana Felman says: "While literature is considered as a body of language - to be interpreted – psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge, whose competence is called upon to interpret. Psychoanalysis, in other words, occupies the place of a subject, literature that of an object; . . ." (143). Literature is subject to be interpreted whereas psychoanalysis is a body of knowledge to interpret the text. It means psychoanalysis helps to analyze or interpret different subjects or text. If literature is an object, then psychoanalysis is a subject. Psychoanalysis can be interrogated by literature. The work of art or literary analysis resembles the work of the psychoanalyst. Literary text is to be

known or viewed by us as a subject of knowledge. Psychoanalysis itself is a subject to know literary objects. So, there is a necessary connection between psychoanalysis and literature.

Psychoanalysis considers the literary text as the expression of unconscious. It is through or by literature human unconscious comes out. For Freud, creative writing is the best way to release oneself from unconscious. So, creative writing (work of art) or literary text is the field to apply psychoanalytic theory. No doubt, the language and literature are deep rooted in human civilization and civilization itself is the product of human mind. Freud believes that human beings are controlled and guided by unconscious. We have many repressed desires and fears. The repressed desires emerge only in dreams and in creative activity that produce a work of literature. In *Critical Theory & Practice: A Course book*, Keith Green quoting Freud says: “The assumption that there are unconscious mental processes, the recognition of the theory of resistance and repression, the appreciation of the importance of sexuality and the Oedipus complex – these constitute the principal subject – matter of psychoanalysis and the foundations of its theory” (147). According to Freud psychoanalysis is the theory that discusses the unconscious that means the unconscious is the storehouse of guilty desires, fears, needs, worries, troubles, wounds and unresolved conflicts. The guilty desires and impossible longings are repressed by our conscious mind which is called the theory of repression. So people, especially creative writers like Plath, sublimate their hidden desires, painful experiences and emotions, those wounds and unresolved conflicts and express these desires through writings. It is through metaphor, symbols and images, writers reveal their desires.

It is the outpour of a neurotic anger through the channel of creative art, or poetry. It is a kind of therapy. Plath’s poem is significant for its allusion, assonance, symbols and images. The poem must be interpreted symbolically and psychologically without limiting it to the poetess’s

life and experiences also. Freudian psychoanalysis interprets images and symbols to see how author's mind is functioning, especially unconscious motives depicted in the work. Like Freud, Lacan also says that through metonymy and metaphors (displacement and condensation), writers reveal their unconscious. While interpreting the text we see metaphors, symbol to understand how author's psyche is functioning. For Lacan the unconscious is structured like a language. The subject learns and internalizes the structure of society and different of gender by language. Human identity is the construction of language and linguistic system. Development of sexuality and human psyche is the process of linguistic practice and behavior. For Lacan and his psychoanalysis there is no signified but only the chain of signifiers. A sign never takes the subject to the reliable concepts or signified. The interplay between signifiers never reveals in the production of signified. Signified is something that is abstract & beyond human approach. It is the concept created by the word in our mind. Language affects our experiences of our bodies and minds.

Our experiences of our own sexuality is bound by the function of language. It is because of language we know the difference between men and women. All the gender concept, thoughts, difference are the products of linguistic signifiers. Human body has no relation to define someone male and female but it is only the concept developed through language. The sign 'woman' indicates more than one signified, including lady, girl, lesbian and so on. Lacan insists that language operates authority over the signified. When, human beings arrive at the age of symbolic order he or she has to replace all the forms of unconscious by linguistic items. In symbolic stage human beings are accompanied by language but this language itself is incomplete, inadequate and imperfect. It is through language we know the difference between ourselves and other.

Imagery and Symbols Shaping Anguished Psyche in Plath's representative Poems

Imagery means to use figurative language to represent objects, actions and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses i.e. sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. In, *A Glossary Of Literary Terms* M.H. Abrams defines that “This term is one of most common in criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. Its applications range all the way from the “mental pictures” which, it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of a poem, to the totality of the components which make up a poem” (128). Usually it is thought that imagery makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds. The word “imagery” is associated with mental pictures. However, this idea is but partially correct. Imagery to be realistic turns out to be more complex than just a picture. Images drawn by using figures of speech like metaphor, simile, personification and so on serve the function of beautifying a piece of literature.

Likewise, Symbol is used in a work of art. Symbol is an object which stands for abstract ideas, concrete object representing in poetry. It is difficult and complex in poetry. Flag stands for nationality. Likewise black cloth symbolizes protest and mourning. Symbol is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. Symbol is a figure of speech that used when an author wants to create a certain mood or emotion in a work of literature. It is the use of an object, person, situation or word to represent something else like an idea in literature. The use of symbol requires the understanding of literary tradition. In *A Glossary Of Literary Terms* M.H. Abrams defines that “In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term “symbol” is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself” (320). Generally, it is an object representing

another, to give an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Symbol is the most complex metaphorical device of word game. In its simplest sense, it is a comparison between a concrete entity and abstract idea. Symbol is an object or act representing something in the unconscious mind that has been repressed. Symbol can be “universal” or “local” to a particular poem and its context, or both. For example, the moon is a universal symbol of love. In *A Glossary Of Literary Terms* M.H. Abrams says:

Some symbols are “conventional” or “public”: Conventional symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture. Some conventional symbols are the Christian cross, nation’s flag and so on. Writers use conventional symbols to reinforce meanings. A public symbol in literature is one that holds a commonly known meaning. For example a raven / crow is associated with death. A rainbow is associated with hope and promise. (320)

In one sense all words are symbolic because a sound sequence (concrete) represents an idea or concept (meaning) but in poetry, symbols are usually images with conventional meanings. The rose, clay, sky, spring, cupid and dove are some examples. All these have conventional symbolic meanings. However, poets can also create their own symbols called ‘private’ symbols. If we cannot give literal meaning of a word in a poem, it is necessary to give it a ‘private’ symbolic meaning. Poets create private symbols with pressing implications often repeated and reinforced. Likewise in these representative poems “Daddy,” “Ariel,” “Lady Lazarus,” and “The Colossus” I found many imagery and symbols which express Plath’s anguished psyche.

Plath’s poem “Daddy” is the poem of anguished psyche through which Plath tries to get relief and expresses her hatred towards male. To become an independent self, she tries to kill her father’s memory in “Daddy.” She does so by a metaphorical murder. It is an aggressive poem. In

this poem the daughter and speaker relationship with her father is described through a series of metaphors implying suffocation, rejection and violation of war. The story recounts the speaker's attempt of loosen herself from the pull of her dead father by marrying someone like him and then by dissolving the marriage to find freedom. The poem refers to Plath's suicide attempts at the age of twenty as a previous attempts to join her father. Such craze for death also depicts Plath's mental problem due to hatred towards male. Rejection and the war Plath dramatizes in the poem illustrate that "Daddy" is the poem of anguished psyche. The poet begins with he does not do anymore referring to the fact that she feels like she has been a foot who has been living in a black shoe for the last thirty years.

In the poem "Daddy" from its opening image that of father as an 'old shoe' where the speaker identifies herself as the foot that is restricted by the shoe. Shoes are for protection but here they could imply repression from the confining image of the father. A shoe sometimes suggests following a particular path in life. It perhaps the speaker is also suggesting that she can no longer follow her father's path and must pursue her own. The fact that the shoe is black could also represents the father's shadow over her. Plath compare her identity with Jew "I began to talk like a Jew / I think I may well be a Jew" (34-35). Comparison with Jew is Plath's psyche problem since she finds herself weak in the hands of male dominated society. Freud believed that aim of all life is death, and for Plath life was poetry. So by extension, poetry for her now becomes death.

In Christina Britzolaskis book *Sylvia Plath and The Theater of Mourning* is all about Plath's poetry constitutes a psychic theatre which makes the work of mourning inseparable from its performance in language and shows how she engaged with the legacy of modernism to arrive

at this distinctive mode. In *Sylvia Plath and The Theater of Mourning* Christina Britzolaskis argues:

The Nazi- Jew metaphor is an extreme manifestation of Plath's anguished experiences. It signals a radically simplified and unstable dialectic of anguished self and at work in the poem's language. This protective dialectic of which the speaker represents herself as both victim and perpetrator is acted out through the metrical parallelism of rhyme which becomes an 'engine Plath's negation,' are the effect of a profound ambivalence towards poet's psychological problem itself. (1)

Images of victimization in "Daddy," barbed wire, fascist, brute, devil and vampire are so frantic and imposing that the poem seems more out of control than it actually is, when it is read rapidly and angrily. Poem, indeed, seems like a run away train barreling through one psychic nightmare after other, until the speaker pulls the emergency cord that irrevocably separates the self from the tormenting other.

In the very last line, "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through," unlike the image patterns, which keep multiplying from one form of demonization into another, the stanza remains stable at five lines a piece. In fact, at the same time a rhyme is repeated more than 60 times. Such expression is considered to be a sign of a disordered psyche. "It stuck in a barb wire snare / Ich, ich, ich, ich / I could hardly speak" (26-28). These lines explain Plath's inability to talk due to psychological trauma in the male dominated society. Her female ego is in conflict with male culture. She argues that she could hardly speak of suffering created by the social condition. "Marble-heavy, a bag full of God / Ghastly statue with one grey toe / Big as a Frisco seal" (8-10). Here, Plath appears to describe father as the patriarchal statue, who has also created troubles

in her mind. ‘Marble-heavy, a bag full of God, Ghastly statue with one grey toe, and then shockingly, he becomes a Nazi playing tormented to Plath’s Jew.

In this poem “Daddy”, Plath argues “But they pulled me out of the sack (61) / A man in black with a Meinkampf look” (65). “They pulled” is the metaphor which is symbol of male power. “They stuck”, that is bad image of male, and ‘man in black with a Meinkampf look’ illuminates Plath’s hatred towards male who never let her become free from their power. The poem refers to Plath’s suicide attempts at the age of twenty as previous attempts to join her father. Such craze for death also depicts Plath’s mental problem due to hatred towards male. Indeed, “Daddy” aims at revealing Plath’s anguish in language that is the reflection of poet’s mind.

Plath’s another poem “Ariel” is a very powerful poem written in October, 1962, less than six months before Sylvia Plath’s suicide in February 1963. The title word “Ariel” itself is a symbol of invisible power to control bad things. Here Plath uses “Ariel” as a symbol of feminine ego or spirit that wants to break the male culture and make itself more powerful. It is the symbol of struggle towards freedom. Ariel is the name of a horse Plath often rode and also the airy spirit in Shakespeare’s *Tempest*. Ariel was carefree spirit who yearned for release in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Emphasis on this invisible power depicts Plath’s psychological problem. She creates airy spirit to express private anguished psyche. In other words, Airy spirit is the product of Plath’s anguished mind as she fails to see good things happening in her life. She herself becomes spirit to reveal her anger.

In the lines Plath says “Hauls me through air –Thighs, hair; Flakes from my heels” (16-18). Sometimes pulls speaker into air, images of hauling, the speaker’s thighs, hair and flakes

illuminate poet's extreme anger. Speaker does not know what makes her so moving. But cry in the line twenty four "The child's cry" reveals Plath's wishes to get freedom from evil power. Since such event cannot take place in real life, event portrays Plath's inner emotional life shaped by anxiety and depression. Plath wants changes but changes are impossible. She creates a kind of airy spirit within her to bring change through violent action. She wants to reveal the social injustice and fight against the patriarchal culture. Hence, creation of airy spirit illustrates Plath's anguished psyche. "Stasis in darkness / Then the substanceless blue / Pour of tor and distances" (1-3). The poem begins with the slow beginning of the ride, the predawn stillness: a stasis in darkness: then rider in hurtled forward and merges with the horse to become 'God's lioness,' she escapes and dissolves:

Dead hands, dead stringencies.

And now I

Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.

The child's cry

Melts in the wall.

And I

Am the arrow, (21-27)

In these lines the speaker talks about the oppressive and monotonous rituals by patriarchy are described by Plath's 'dead hands, dead stringencies' exemplify the restrictive measures of patriarchy. Extreme desperation and despair resulting from her single handed battle against patriarchy makes her mouthful of blood. She also refers to her extreme sense of helplessness and

vulnerability arising from her resistance against patriarchal ideology. She has transformed foam to wheat, child to arrow. Here, she uses the image of 'foam to wheat', it is the symbol of creative potentiality. She denies that woman are child produce machine. She has transformed herself into glitter. She has transformed herself to the arrow that is the symbol of patriarchal authority.

The child's cry melts in wall: such images may suggest psychic problem caused by desire for sexual act. The rider is the female, the horse seems to be a male symbol but horse and female rider are used to reveal Plath's tormented psychic experiences. In Jon Rosenblatt book *Sylvia Plath: The Poetry of Initiation* deals with the emotional material from which Plath's poetry arises and the specific ritual transformations she dramatizes. It covers all phases of Plath's poetry closely following the development of images and idea from the apprentice work through the last lyrics of the poem "Ariel".

Am the arrow

The dew that flies

Suicidal, at one with the drive

Into the red

Eye, the cauldron of mourning. (27-31)

In these lines Plath compares herself with the dew and arrow at the same time. Arrow can shoot, but dew commits suicide as soon as sun appears in the sky. She wants to shoot like an arrow by committing suicide like dew. Suicide is the mode of protest for her. It is through suicide she wants to assert her existence. Then the red eye metaphorically stands for patriarchy against

which she protests through suicide. It is the confession of suicide but that suicide is a tool to fight against the patriarchy.

The poem moves from 'Stasis in darkness' to 'Eye, the cauldron of mourning.' This movement can be described as an expression of Plath's suicidal impulses and angst. Images of suicide and angst reveal Plath's anguished psyche.

God's lioness,

How one we grow,

Pivot as heels and knees! - The furrow

Splits and passes, sister to

The brown arc

Of the neck I can not catch, (4-9)

In these lines the speaker is not clear. Complexity of meaning presents poet's mind's problem. She uses image of God whom she rejects. Metaphor 'we' conveys that both male and female or Plath and Daddy grow in the same way. But she is disturbed by cultural differences for male and female. Her deep meditation on the culture leads into trouble. To get relief from trouble she expresses her mental split through poetic lines (art). The word 'I can't catch neck' describes Plath's anger to end male domination.

In the poem Plath uses many images "Nigger-eye / Berries cast dark / Hooks" (10-12). These lines are associated with images of darkness, blood and female body, such as split of furrow of the ploughed earth and the higher eye / Berries. These images suggest identification

with a subjugated animal sexual otherness. These images are produced out of Plath's mental process, usually negative images with aggressive sound present Plath's anguish.

Image of "black sweet blood / shadows / something else (13- 15), suggests confusion and assertive spirit. She finds herself in the shadows as something else without identity. She sees splits and passes, niggers, berries and shadows. These images reflect the split in her psyche. The instable and desperate state of her mind hinted by the things she saw on her journey. That means Plath lived in a period of patriarchal society. Women of her time were rarely known for many accomplishments. In her case, it was difficult for Sylvia to get poetry published, while she was living. However, it is also believed that much of her writing incorporates several other themes such as her feelings towards a society that was male dominated. Her personal and literary career was not running smoothly. This proves that Plath's mental breakdown does not allow her to see good in things around her. And airy spirit is used as symbolic expression of her distorted psyche.

"Lady Lazarus" is narrative of anguished psyche. Plath uses images of death and suicidal impulses to dramatize anguish. Thus, the poem becomes stage to perform Plath's anxiety of being a woman. The title of her poem, itself, is an allusion to the bible. The biblical character, known as Lazarus, was a man whom Jesus resurrected from death. Plath creates figure "Lady" who was restored to life by Christ, to reveal her obsession with death.

First stanza of the poem, "I have done it again / One year in every ten / I manage it" (1- 3), is a powerful and chilling indicator of anguished psyche, bristling with rage and a kind of desperate bravado. The stanza refers to previous suicide attempts, speaker faces one every decade, the first one being an accident and the second a failed attempt at reaching death. In the poem "Sheep on Fog," Plath describes her state of mind through images of sheep and fog.

Sheep is weak and innocent creature. Fog is confusion that puts sheep in trouble. She fears in “Sheep in Fog,” that her search will lead instead to a “starless and fatherless” (15) heaven, carrying her into dark water. Such dark water is the subject of “Lady Lazarus” because it describes her obsession with death through portrayal of attempted suicide three times.

A companion to “Daddy” in which the poet again fuses the world of personal pain and corporate suffering is “Lady Lazarus.” In this poem a disturbing psychic tension is established between the fragmented experiences of the tortured Jews. She becomes as a result of the suicide she inflicts on herself, a Jew: “A sort of walking miracle, my skin” (4). Bright as a Nazi lampshade,” (5). The speaker moves from images of miracle to concrete human being Jews who suffered historically. Plath also suffered physically and mentally. Her imagination compares her with a kind of power-miracle which can’t be seen and also with object Jews who can be seen. Both images to dramatize Plath’s psyche in terms of suffering that makes the poet wish for the total destruction.

This poem is Plath’s affirmation of suicide as an art. She presents suicide as an art of dying. Suicidal attempt, for her, is a gateway to transcendental. Plath chooses to die by her own hand because she is completely helpless in her single handed battle against patriarchal and chauvinism. Plath uses the biblical myth of Lazarus, in the poem. In the Bible, dead Lazarus got new life through the grace and mercy of Christ. In the same way, the speaker also wants to be reborn. So that she can take revenge on males. She is describing her suicide by dying is an art. She has developed her career in dying. This line is masochist self. This is where we are shown her perfectionist and masochistic selves and intertwining as she makes sure that she is real about it. “Dying, Is an art / like everything else / I do it exceptionally well” (43-45). In the stanza, she speaks of herself in hyperboles, calling herself a smiling woman boasting that she has nine times

to die, exclaiming that dying is an art that she does ‘exceptionally well,’ asserting that comeback in broad day knocks her out. The poem belongs to elegy and death, to the woman whose psyche is tormented by separation with loved once.

The speaker compares herself with the different images like “A cake of soap / A wedding ring / A gold filling (76-78) and so on. All these images convey the image that patriarchy takes benefit from her in many ways. “Lady Lazarus” is a representation of the psychology of suicide. A suicide attempted is motivated by the wish to get attention and exact revenge on those who have withheld attention in her part by making them feel responsible for one death. Death is like cleaning herself from the patriarchal society. She wishes to be reborn by herself. Moreover, suicide attempt is a result of her anguished psyche. She develops an obsession with death due to psychological problems. Plath’s analogy of the strip tease or the sideshow conveys with force and precision or the ambivalence of suicidal despair. She had extended that metaphor through the entire poem, holding its complexities in balance “Lady Lazarus” might have achieved the stability of the tone and judgment lacking in “Daddy.”

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge

For the hearing of my heart-

It really goes.

And there is a charge, very large charge, (58-61)

She further attacks those on lookers who have come to see her scars (body). Her body has some scars because of suicide. She doesn’t think that they have come with love for her. She thinks it was great strip tease done upon her. She is an unattainable and expensive as she needs to charge

them ‘for the hearing of her heart’ or her naked psyche. This kind of business ‘really goes,’ says the author. Plath, here, makes a connection to the fact that the holocaust business has become a highly profitable entertainment industry over the years. *The Psycho- Political Muse: American Poetry Since Fifties* in this book Paul Berslin drawing a link between radical politics and radical poetics, he locate a source for confessional, deep image and projective schools of verse in radical interpretation of Freud that elevate the unconscious above the rational conforming forces of social culture. Paul Berslin argues:

“Lady Lazarus” is legitimately mimetic representation of the psychology of suicide. The enemy is unspecified, turns out to be a German male authority figure, perhaps a scholar of Otto Plath, who thinks of the speaker as his pure gold body. An inward confrontation with father image replaces the confrontation with the intrusive crowd. The poem enters a realm as his fantasy as the ‘Herr Doktor’ rapidly assumers the cosmic proportion as Herr God, Herr Lucifer. The clammy imagery of the . . . grave cave . . . and like sticky pearls . . . gives way to an imagery of death by mental disorders. The resurrection of Lazarus becomes the birth as the phoenix and the extended metaphor of a public spectacle abruptly disappears. The threat of the final line and ‘I eat men like air’ has connection with Plath’s own troubled psyche. (247)

In the lines ‘Herr Doktor,’ ‘Herr Enemy’ speaker is comparing her enemy with Nazi who is the male authority figure in the poem. In the poem crowd has victimized her. So, here is irony that is more tortured letting her dying. After the death of Jews in Nazi concentration camp; Hitler used their body for commodity. Speaker expresses her anger towards Holocaust patriarchy. In this poem, Plath compares patriarchal brutality as the brutality of Hitler. Again her identity has been

commodified like Nazi. Plath is revolted by her own dehumanization and she would love to triumph over the enemy after dies.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer,

Beware

Beware,

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air. (79-84)

Additionally, she acknowledges no power greater than herself, as Plath accomplishes her own resurrection, unlike the Biblical miracle of Lazarus. She feels that suicidal experience is miraculous to her. We can clearly see how she grows stronger by the end of the poem as she rises 'Out of the ash' like a mythical phoenix with 'red hair.' Finally, with her concluding verse, 'I eat men like air,' she declares that she defeated all her enemies, all the men in her life: the doctors who kept reviving her, the businessmen who sold her body to the crowd, and perhaps her father.

"Lady Lazarus" is really about Sylvia's suicidal attempts and near death experiences. Plath describes the speaker's oppression with the use of World War II Nazi Germany allusions and images. She develops a German images to denote Nazism and in turn, oppression. Here, references to Nazis and Jews is actually a metaphor also used in "Daddy", and is really painting a picture for the reader. Like the Jews in the Holocaust, she is a victim, while the doctors and others figures are her oppressors like the Nazis. She wants to emancipate herself from this

patriarchal society through death. She never feels guilty for suicide. She glorifies her suicide attempt. She seems infatuation with death.

Shoves in to see

Them unwrap me hard and foot-

The big strip tease

Gentleman, Ladies,

These are my hands

My knees.

I may be skin and bone, (27-33)

The speaker speaks before imagined audiences. The usage of ‘Gentleman, Ladies’, here is purely satirical and is meant to mock the audience. The crowd is aggressive as it ‘shoves in to see,’ and its interest is lascivious as they undress her, ‘unwrap’ her; it is ‘The big strip tease.’ This crowd also seeks an illicit source of arousal, if not from her naked body, then from her naked psyche. She offers herself to the crowd like a vulgar piece of meat. She simply tells that she has hands, knees and foot. This expression can’t be heard from normal person. Only people with psychical problems do so. Hence, the poem deals with Plath’s mind revealing her obsession with death.

“The Colossus” is equally powerful poem like “Daddy”, “Ariel” and “Lady Lazarus” in which Plath speaks of her own disordered Psychological experiences. In this poem, she uses images of broken idol, oracle, wiser, and sun to project mental condition. The hatred towards men and the unhealthiness of her parental condition continue to ground the figures of “The

Colossus.” The speaker’s identity hangs on a broken idol out of the stream of civilization. The broken idol represents Plath’s broken mind filled with hatred towards male and frustration over the loss of her father.

In the last three lines of the poem “My hours are married to shadow / No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel / On the blank stones of the landing” (28-30), the speaker presents a striking image. The image has considerably pathos and beauty which links with the growing despair of the poems. It expresses the submission of the restore to broken statue. She shows that in our life everything is temporary and shadow. She accepts her isolation almost with fervor though life is blank and lonely.

I shall never get you put together entirely,

Pieced, glued, and properly jointed.

Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles

Proceed from your great lips.

It’s worse than a barnyard. (1-5)

Symbolically the speaker is speaking oneself. She finds it very difficult to think properly because of unsuccessful career. Plath wants to live above male authority and, but she fails. What she experiences and feels in only male voice in form of male-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles. What male speaks becomes worse to her ears. She says that she can’t do things entirely in the presence of male culture. The extreme negative attitude towards male projects Plath’s sick mind. “The Colossus” is Plath’s admission of defeat and analysis of her own impotence. Plath transfers elements from the myths and rituals of the dying god to the colossus figure and elaborates them

with references to Greek Tragedy to make her poem a complicated, often enigmatic, study of her own anguished psyche. Plath selects the ancient role of the female who mourns the dying god, or the heroine who tends the idol, and brings her poem as felt experiences.

“The colossus” is a statue, a father, a mythical being; he is a ruined idol, pithy and historical as the Roman Forum’, and at the same time a figure whose great lips utter ‘Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles’. For this is a statue that makes ‘bawdy’ sounds of base animals like pigs and mules. All these images represent speaker’s father in this poem. She also compares her statue with her father in this poem. The person in the poem crawls over him, squats in his ear. “The Colossus” himself is both a stone, idol with ‘immense skull plates’ and fluted bones and acanthine hair and at the same time a natural wilderness covered with a hill of black cypress. Much remains beneath the surface in the poem, and much on the surface appears Plath’s confused state of mind.

In this line, “Arches above us. O father, all by yourself” (17) there is a word ‘O father’ helps us to realize that helpless and absorbed figure is described crawling laboriously like an ant over the ruin of God. Like a child, she is searching her dead father among the fragments of the past. At the first the broken statue seems comic and absurd but then we realize something deeply serious and disturbing underlying this. The poem, “The Colossus” explores personal experiences and Plath’s relationship with dead father whom she both adores and hates. Such struggle between love and hate portrays poet’s mental problems. Her father died when she was eight. Father still has influence over her mind. She is haunted by memory of hatred. These two things memory and hate put Plath into trouble. The poem reveals picture of the devastating strength related to her psyche. It is clear that Plath feels incomplete within herself. She has no certain directions. The symbol ‘broken idol’ explained and illustrated in the poem projects Plath’s broken self.

Conclusion: Revelation of Anguished Psyche in Sylvia Plath's Poetry

This research has to explore and examine the anguished psyche as revealed in Sylvia Plath's representative literary works, "Daddy," "Ariel," "Lady Lazarus," and "The Colossus." In modern literary art, many great minds reveal their anguished psyche through poetry, drama, fiction, and essay. Poetry becomes the reliable medium to neurotic artist like Sylvia Plath to dramatize interior world. The research study has reached to the conclusion that Sylvia Plath uses images and symbols, such as obsession with death in "Lady Lazarus," hatred towards male in "Daddy," broken state of mind in "The Colossus," and invisible spirit to fight against male in "Ariel". These images and symbols are at work to reflect Plath's struggle with an anguished psyche. Plath is very often examined as a confessional poet in revealing variety of abstract feelings and fragmented experiences she had. But the cause of the imagination to produce such self-revealing poetry lies in Plath's neurotic mind. The traumatic upheavals in the life of Plath and the social structure of the contemporary period have compelled her to seek a means to liberate her anguished psyche through confessionalism.

In literature, the written language is reflection of the mind of the author. In poetry, the speaker is made of the language. His or her use of language is the representation of character's figure of flesh and blood. Images and metaphors used in poetry reflect the author's mental process and language is the representative of character's mind, the unconscious dominance in the product of the literary text and the character it has is a result of imagination. As imagination itself is not more than daydreaming, it is beyond normal activity of the human mind. The imagination of the author is also different from that of the ordinary people. If the speaker of poetry is produced by the unconscious mind of the author, in reality, the fictitious speaker also has the same unconscious mind. In fact, the unconscious mind of the speaker dominates the poetry.

In Plath's poetry, the speaker, mouthpiece of the author, uses images and symbols to express love for dead father, hatred towards male and frustration over the unsuccessful literary career. Plath's poetry is charged with high emotions about her conflicting relationship with her father. She also uses holocaust imagery and classical myths to describe her distorted psychic experiences. Her suicide seems almost a literary act, as death and suicide dominated her poetry.

Representative poems give emphasis on Plath's fragile psyche and the solitary ego. Her world is limited within herself as she can't free from her preoccupation with death, hatred, jealousy and frustration. So Plath explores and defines her limited world filled with rigid and paralytic complexion of the mind.

Plath's poetry doesn't go beyond her personal and domestic experiences, her poetry is an expression of anguished psyche shaped by patriarchal culture. Plath domestic experience is not good one. She fails to have good relationship with her husband and their separation ultimately make her mentally weak. The ego within her makes Plath fight against male. She does so through literary work. The kind of madness and ecstasy or a kind of elegant dreaming back, extremity of the mind and fear justify Plath's revelation of anguished psyche. She envisions a world lacking color, light and texture and values emotional paralysis, a fearful depression and frustration. The poet finally concludes her long poem "Daddy" by bidding goodbye to her father, which portrays a bitter touch of anguish, love and despair. The speaker's looming father figure was to her a symbol of oppressor, male dominance and so on. The oppressive image of father in "Daddy," depicts Plath's tension towards male culture. She defines herself as victim of male. And she tries to transform herself into something high like airy spirit and something low, broken idol. Such unbalanced thought describe Plath's complexion of the mind.

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